

The Gambler

written by

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Breathing Space, Fading Frontier
Season 2

Breathing Space, includes mature content such as adult language, sexual situations, violence and substance use. This episode contains mafia-esque torture, gambling addiction and wanted pregnancy.

Additional sensory contact warnings can be found in the show notes.

Intro plays

I ain't got no home to go to
I ain't got nothing to sell
But my stars will never leave me
Even when I'm sold to hell
I was born under a blue sky
And I'll die out in the black
When I'm gone don't no one mourn
me
'cause my debts will drag me back

Intro fades out

Int. SPACE (System Planet and Colony Express) System ship
8B3MD Samuel L. Gravely, en-route. Ship engine and atmo
background

ANNOUNCER
System Planet and Colony Express
System ship 8B3MD, outbound to
Nowhere Station with stops at
Aeolus, SE738, Pallas, SE826, and
Hektor now departing.

Engine noise getting louder for departure, takeoff sounds,
then slowly leveling out.

ANNOUNCER
Next stop, Shelley Spaceport,
Aeolus.

Sounds of a bag opening, bottle coming out, opening

LOREN NAUGHT

(to himself)

"Even broken in spirit as he is,
no one can feel more deeply than
he does the beauties of nature.
Such a man has a double existence:
he may suffer misery, and be
overwhelmed by disappointments;
yet, when he has retired into
himself, he will be like a
celestial spirit that has a halo
around him, within which circle no
grief or folly ventures."

BEL LAMAR

Sorry?

LOREN NAUGHT

(aloud)

Wasn't talkin' to you, kid.

BEL LAMAR

Oh.

Bottle noises, drinking something

BEL LAMAR

But what did you say?

LOREN NAUGHT

"Even broken in spirit as he is,
no one can feel more deeply than
he does the beauties of nature.
The starry sky, the sea, and every
sight afforded by these wonderful
regions."

BEL LAMAR

Oh. Ok. Thanks.

Drinking noises

LOREN NAUGHT

Why'd you ask?

BEL LAMAR
Frankenstein, right?

LOREN NAUGHT
Yeah... wouldn't of expected kid
like you t' know it.

BEL LAMAR
Oh, it's 'cause of my dad. He
loved it. Never really saw why,
but he said there was a line in
there for every situation in life
a man might run into.

LOREN NAUGHT
Did he now.
(pause)
If you want to talk, why not come
over here. No need to be shoutin
across the cabin.

BEL LAMAR
Oh. No. Sorry. I didn't mean to
disturb you.

LOREN NAUGHT
Not disturbed. An' it's a long
flight. Could do with something to
pass the time.

BEL LAMAR
Well... Ok. Thanks.

Bel moves over to Loren.

LOREN NAUGHT
Whatcha got there?

BEL LAMAR
(sheepish)
Hydrocarbon-5. No one said I can't
drink while we fly!

LOREN NAUGHT
I sure ain't gonna stop you.
Where are you headed?

BEL LAMAR
Oh. Um. Nowhere Station.

LOREN NAUGHT
What's Nowhere got a kid like
you'd want?

BEL LAMAR
(indignant)
I'm 19!

LOREN NAUGHT
Question stands.

BEL LAMAR
(proudly)
The Jovian Sweep tournament.

LOREN NAUGHT
That so? Heard they play for
keeps. Think you can keep up?

BEL LAMAR
I played through all the
multi-table tournaments belt-ward
of Saturn. And most of 'em 'round
Jupiter.

LOREN NAUGHT
Win any?

BEL LAMAR
A few.

LOREN NAUGHT
How'r you at Lunar Rules.

BEL LAMAR
(cautiously)
...alright. Why?

LOREN NAUGHT
That's the playstyle. Won't see
Mercury Draw on Nowhere.

BEL LAMAR
No problem. I can play Lunar.

LOREN NAUGHT
All right, then. Wasn't sayin' you
couldn't.

(long pause)

Loren.

BEL LAMAR

What?

LOREN NAUGHT

Name's Loren.

BEL LAMAR

Oh. Yeah. Hi. Bel. Bel Lamar. Nice to meet you.

LOREN NAUGHT

(mild surprise)

Likewise.

(pause)

's a good book. Reminds me of someone too.

BEL LAMAR

What?

LOREN NAUGHT

"I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy--

BEL LAMAR

and I shall again be virtuous."

LOREN NAUGHT

Your dad musta liked it a lot, for you to know that by heart.

(pause)

Don't matter, in the end. They're just words. Person who wrote 'em's long since turned to dust. Guess that's how we all end up, one way or t'other. Words matter more when they're all you got left.

BEL LAMAR

Yeah...I guess. Think I'd rather have the person, than the words, though.

LOREN NAUGHT
Where you from, kid?

BEL LAMAR
Was born somewhere around Terra.
But I was raised on Phobos. Been all over, now.

LOREN NAUGHT
Phobos. That's a moon, right? The dry one, or the wet one?

BEL LAMAR
Wet as the sheets in a Brass House.

LOREN NAUGHT
(laughing)
How's a kid like you know words like that?

BEL LAMAR
I'm not that young.

Pause

LOREN NAUGHT
Said you were born on Terra?
What's it like?

BEL LAMAR
Near Terra. Dad moved us to Phobos practically before I could walk, anyway, so it's not like I think of it as home.

LOREN NAUGHT
(murmurs of assent and understanding)
Ah. Mmhm.

Pause

BEL LAMAR

So where you headed, anyway?
Aeolus? Nowhere?

LOREN NAUGHT
Maybe. Dunno. One place is much
like another. Don't really matter
where I end up, long as I see
somethin' along the way.

BEL LAMAR
You a NoGo? Thought you hitched
rides, not paid for tickets on the
SPACE Shuttles.

LOREN NAUGHT
Not a NoGo. Though I know a fair
few. Good people. Take care of you
when you're down. But I got a
home, and it'll always be there to
come back to.

BEL LAMAR
Yeah? Where are you from?

LOREN NAUGHT
My home ain't where I'm *from* kid.

BEL LAMAR
I don't follow.

LOREN NAUGHT
Home's not the place you're born.
It's the place you *fit*. The people
you fit with. Or sometimes all it
is is th' memory of it. Still, I
got one of those waitin' for me,
when my road is run.

BEL LAMAR
That doesn't sound like a good
thing, how you say it.

LOREN NAUGHT
It don't?

BEL LAMAR
No. I mean. Sure, it's nice. To
remember. Better than forgetting
them. But *memory* isn't worth

anything compared to...to having them around. A *memory* can't be a home.

LOREN NAUGHT

You're still a kid. It's different, when you're as old as I am. But we got a long bit of flyin' ahead of us. You give me some that Hydrocarb, an' I'll tell you a story. Maybe something'll speak to you. Or maybe it'll just help us pass the time.

Loren drinks

Pause

LOREN NAUGHT

You got a vollie? Story would tell better 'longside a smoke.

BEL LAMAR

Hm? Oh. Yeah. I keep meaning to quit. Dad hated it. But...

Passes vollette over, "lights" it, Loren takes a drag

LOREN NAUGHT

Yeah, that's real nice.

(pause)

I grew up on New New Vegas. Back when the Dispatch Family still ran the place. It was real rough then. Not all clean and shiny and chrome like it is now. I got along fine for a while. My parents tried. But then one day I decide I'm grown, and take off, bound and determined to make it on my own. Went half way 'round the station to prove I could. An' of course got myself in mess of trouble, playin' cards with bad people. Losing to bad people. Ended up deep in debt to

people who don't take that
lightly.

Scene Break

New New Vegas, Sunrise ManOr, daylight cycle. Crowd noise,
cheering, bells, sirens. Atmo noise under all of it.

RAKE
It's easy.

FERRAH
Very easy.

RAKE
Just jump in, snip the wires.

FERRAH
Switch a few. Watch for sparks.

RAKE
Out the airlock.

FERRAH
Right back here.

RAKE
Easy.

FERRAH
Very easy.

Pause

RAKE
You *can* ride a Flea, can't
you?

FERRAH

You *can* ride a Flea, can't
you?

LOREN NAUGHT
(younger)
'Course I can.

FERRAH
(mimicking)

'Course he can

RAKE

Then better get going.

FERRAH

Get going.

Pause

FERRAH

Why'r you still here?

RAKE

Go and collect. He lost.

FERRAH

He owes us.

RAKE

You owe us.

FERRAH

You owe us. Got to learn to play better.

RAKE

Get better at Sweep.

FERRAH

Or work for us. We don't care.

RAKE

We don't care, either way. But Daquin--

FERRAH

He didn't pay.

RAKE

Didn't pay.

FERRAH

Didn't pay enough.

RAKE

Thought he could cheat us.

FERRAH

Give us less than our due.

RAKE
Should know better.

FERRAH
Should really know better.

RAKE
So we take the skiff. He put in so much work.

FERRAH
So much work. Shame we'll have to break it down.

RAKE
Sell the pieces.

FERRAH
Could break his arms instead.

RAKE
He's a courier, isn't he?

FERRAH
Yes. A courier. Needs his flea.

RAKE
Might be trouble to take it. Lose him his job.

FERRAH
Make him even more hard up.

RAKE
Make him lose more.

FERRAH
Could just break his arms.

RAKE
But he needs to learn.

FERRAH
Needs a lesson.

RAKE
Can't learn without pain.

FERRAH
So we take the flea.

LOREN NAUGHT
Uh. What if---

FERRAH
What? Spit it out, already.

RAKE
Spit it out.

LOREN NAUGHT
What if Daequin...sees me? I...uh.
I mean. Um. I mean, I don't think
he'll just let me take off with
his skiff. Like you said,
he...kinda needs it. It's gonna
be...I mean, he probably an alarm.
Or something...

FERRAH
He's in the Halcyon Dome.

RAKE
Playing Faro Fluid

FERRAH
Losing Faro Fluid.

RAKE
Losing, again.
(clicks tongue)
Should know better.

FERRAH
How he got in this mess in the
first place.

RAKE
Betting.

FERRAH
Losing.

RAKE
Doing him a favor, really.

FERRAH

A favor. Reminding him--

FERRAH

We don't pay for losers.

RAKE

We don't pay for losers.

RAKE

He won't know you've clipped it.

FERRAH

Unless you wait around and he comes out.

RAKE

Then you're in trouble.

FERRAH

You don't touch Daequin's flea.

RAKE

Not where he can see you.

FERRAH

He doesn't like it.

RAKE

He'll pound on you.

FERRAH

So better get moving.

RAKE

Better get moving.

Pause

RAKE

Now!

FERRAH

Now!

LOREN NAUGHT

Oh. Yeah. Got it. Going.

Scene Break

Ext. Halcyon Dome Casino

Cassino noises, with a chipper game jingle and a drill buzzing

LOREN NAUGHT

(talking to himself)

Ok. Carbon flow propulsion. Got it. ...boron microfilament...that's the...green one. Ok. Bypass the microfilament turbine... that's...blue? Yeah. Blue. This is a Gemini mark 5, so it's got magnesium drive pedals. I need to disconnect the propulsion from the casing---

KINTEN LAMAR

"There is something at work in my soul, which I do not understand."

LOREN NAUGHT

(startled)

What?

KINTEN LAMAR

You're doing it wrong.

LOREN NAUGHT

(agressive)

What???

KINTEN LAMAR

That's not the carbon flow line. Cut that, you're gonna get a face full of percussion fluid, and the engine'll seize up when you try to start it.

LOREN NAUGHT

I think I know how to get a skiff started, thanks.

KINTEN LAMAR

Maybe. But don't look like you know how to steal one.

LOREN NAUGHT

I'm not stealing it!

KINTEN LAMAR

Then why aren't starting it with
the thumb key?

LOREN NAUGHT

...because...I... I don't have to
explain myself to you!

KINTEN LAMAR

Ok.

(pause)

But you really don't want to cut
that.

LOREN NAUGHT

I know what I'm doing.

Tin snip, Fluid hits Loren

LOREN NAUGHT

(sputtering)

Fuck. Fuck! God damn it. Fuck!

KINTEN LAMAR

I told you.

LOREN NAUGHT

(spitting and coughing)

God Damn it!

DAEQUIN

(calling from some
distance)

Hey! Don't touch that!

KINTEN LAMAR

(mildly)

That guy seems awful upset you're
working on your skiff.

LOREN NAUGHT

(oblivious)

What?

DAEQUIN

Hey! Fucker!

LOREN NAUGHT

Oh shit. Shit. Shit. Shit.

Wire and machine noises as he tries really hard to get the thing going.

LOREN NAUGHT
Come on. Come on. Start.
Just...start. Come on.

KINTEN LAMAR
Want a hand?

LOREN NAUGHT
No.

DAEQUIN
I *said* don't touch that! What the hell do you think you're doing?!

Engine trying to turn over.

KINTEN LAMAR
You sure?

LOREN NAUGHT
NO!

DAEQUIN
Did the Twins send you?! Those assholes are liars! I paid them! They got back everything! With interest! We're square!

KINTEN LAMAR
(still mildly)
He looks pretty mad.

LOREN NAUGHT
I'm *fine*. I've got this.

DAEQUIN
I paid! My debt ain't higher just 'cause they say it is! I don't owe them *shit*! Tell 'em to come here themselves. Try to take it from me. Fuckin' cowards. Sending some

kid to steal my flea! I'll kick
your ass!

Loren continues to struggle

LOREN NAUGHT
Fine! Ok! Help!

KINTEN LAMAR
You got it.

Mechanical repair sounds, beeping. Engine tries to turn
over. Tries again. Catches

DAEQUIN
(starting to sound a
little desperate)
You little shit! Where do you
think you're going!? I *need* that
skiff. I gotta have it to work!

LOREN NAUGHT
(to KINTEN LAMAR)
Thanks for the assist. We...gotta
go. Now.

KINTEN LAMAR
We?

LOREN NAUGHT
He saw you helping me.

KINTEN LAMAR
(amused)
So you were stealing.

LOREN NAUGHT
I am *not*. He's got a debt! I'm
making a collection. Now come *on*!

KINTEN LAMAR
Nah.

LOREN NAUGHT
He's going to *kill* you!

DAEQUIN
I'm going to kill you!

KINTEN LAMAR
(laughing)
Aw, you're worried about me.

LOREN NAUGHT
I don't even know you!

Sounds of stomping feet getting closer

KINTEN LAMAR
(laughing)
Better take off. I think he really
might try to commit murder.

LOREN NAUGHT
But you--

DAEQUIN
Ok, fucker, now you're gonna--

LOREN NAUGHT
Fuck it. Have it your way. *Get*
your ass kicked.

Flea engine roars, takes off.

Scene Break

INT. SPACE (SYSTEM PLANET AND COLONY EXPRESS) SYSTEM SHIP
8B3MD SAMUEL L. GRAVELY, EN-ROUTE. SHIP ENGINE AND ATMO
BACKGROUND

BEL LAMAR
(a little coldly)
I thought you were supposed to be
teaching me about home. Or family.
Or whatever. Sounds like you just
left a helpless kid to get pounded
after he did you a good turn.
Doesn't seem very home-like to me.

LOREN NAUGHT
(laughing)
A "helpless kid"? What gave you
that idea? Don't think you could
be any more wrong about it. Kinten
was a little thing, maybe 40 kilo
in high g, but he was real clear

about the fact that he was *him*
right from the start. Couldn't
afford to do much about the way he
looked, but *looks* ain't what
someone is. An' Kinten was *tough*.
I'd sooner of thrown down with
both of the Twins together *and*
half their crew than take him on.
Also, he was 3 years older'n me.

Pause

'course, I didn't know that till
later.

BEL LAMAR

Still. You just left. Maybe it's
different on New New Vegas, but
where I was raised, when someone
helps you out, you return the
favor.

LOREN NAUGHT

(still laughing)

He didn't need my help. Not then.
Not for a long time. He could take
care of everyone, himself
included, just fine. Most of the
time, at least. And he was real
good at gettin' up in the helmet
of anyone who didn't treat him
like he wanted.

(pause)

Said you grew up on Phobos. What'r
your people like, teachin' you to
help out others? Seems like
precious few feel that way no
more.

BEL LAMAR

It was just my dad and me.
But it wasn't like that. I mean,
it wasn't *just* us. Dad didn't want
a partner or anything, but there
was a whole town of people. He
always said that that's how the
Belt got settled, and stayed
settled-- people clumping up in
groups, putting down roots, and
then staying there because they

were too damn stubborn to get
dragged off into the black.

LOREN NAUGHT
(chuckles)
Your dad sounds like a good 'un.

BEL LAMAR
Yeah. He was great. When he died--
(cuts himself off, pause,
sniff)
Anyway. What happened to him?
Kinten. You did see him again,
right?

LOREN NAUGHT
'Course I did. Didn't think I
would, though. Just like you,
figured he was just some street
punk. That Sanitation & Disposal
were probably pickin' pieces of
his up off the floor when Daequin
got through. Didn't end up that
way, though. An' next time we ran
into each other, I got to bail *him*
out. My people raised me right,
too.

BEL LAMAR
What happened?

LOREN NAUGHT
Turned out, Kinten was real good
at hotwiring Fleas, but not so
good at picking pockets. Or
respectin' authority.

NEW NEW VEGAS, Red Hand Bar, Tharsis Rise casino, Night
CYCLE. Background people, low conversation, slot machine
noise dominating, atmo under it

JOND
(mildly condescending,
mostly amused)
Hey kid. Sharp suit.

LOREN NAUGHT
Thanks!

JOND
Someone forget to wipe the fabber?

LOREN NAUGHT
(defensive)
It's *in style*, ok?

JOND
Sure, sure.
(pause)
What style?

LOREN NAUGHT
*Modern style! This is Vaporum
orange! And it's got a Mare Lunar
neckline and cuffs! They just got
the pattern file for it on the
Strip!*

JOND
(laughing)
Just playing with you kid. Whatcha
need?

LOREN NAUGHT
Bosses in? Came to get paid for
that package I dropped the other
day.

JOND
In the back. But you don't wanna
stick your nose in there right
now.

LOREN NAUGHT
Why?

JOND
They're handling Business.

Indistinct yelling from the back from one of the Twins.
Muffled sound of blow. Yell of pain.

LOREN NAUGHT
What kind of Business?

JOND
The kind that got caught with
their hand in the pocket of a
tourist, trimming payloads on the

Twin's turf without paying for the rights.

LOREN NAUGHT

Oh.

Another blow and yell of pain

JOND

Yeah.

LOREN NAUGHT

Think they'll be long?

JOND

(prosaic)

Nah. Kid looked half-smothered between the bosses already. An 'bout bit my head off when I read him wrong. Was mouthin' off saying how he'd already helped out one of our people, an' he should get a pass. Quick temper an small size it's not a good combo. They'll prolly learn him quick enough. Or kill 'im.

Another blow and yell

LOREN NAUGHT

Uh...I...gotta go ask them something.

JOND

Sure, kid.

Footsteps as Loren runs off.

JOND

Don't say I didn't warn you.

Door swish.

Pause

Door close swish.

KINTEN LAMAR

(pain in his voice, but flippant)

"I could not understand why men
who knew all about good and evil
could hate and kill each other."

RAKE

You think you're smart?

FERRAH

Think you're being smart with us?

RAKE

You've 8 more fingers.

FERRAH

Can lose a few more.

RAKE

Before you'll need to get
replacements grown.

FERRAH

You're already a shit pickpocket.

RAKE

If you were any good, you wouldn't
of got caught.

FERRAH

We wouldn't of caught you.

RAKE

You wouldn't be here.

FERRAH

We could relieve you of another
one, no problem.

RAKE

Or maybe an ear.

FERRAH

Or an eye.

RAKE

Or you could just

FERRAH
Pay us.

RAKE
Pay us.

KINTEN LAMAR
(trying really hard to be
tough while in pain)
"If I cannot inspire love, I will
cause fear!"

RAKE
(to FERRAH)
This boy's going to let us kill
him.

FERRAH
Might lose his hands first.

RAKE
His hands, then his tongue.

FERRAH
Then his tongue. And then his
head.

RAKE
All he has to do is pay

FERRAH
Don't know why he's making a fuss.
Everyone has to pay.

RAKE
Everyone has to pay.

FERRAH
Another finger, then.

Crackling of laser knife

LOREN
LOREN NAUGHT
(breaking in, yelling)
Wait!

Crackling stops

RAKE
It's the kid.

FERRAH
The flea-catcher.

RAKE
The one who can't play cards.

RAKE
We didn't call for him.

FERRAH
We didn't call for him.

RAKE
Why is he here?

FERRAH
What does he want?

LOREN
I want a bet.

RAKE
A bet?

FERRAH
What for?

LOREN
Whatever the kid owes. If I lose,
I owe you what he owes. If I win,
he doesn't owe you, he owes me.

KINTEN LAMAR
What?

FERRAH
That's a lot.

RAKE
A lot of money. Debt.

FERRAH
You'd owe us a lot, taking it on.

RAKE
A lot to owe.

FERRAH

How do we know you're worth
it?

RAKE
How do we know you're worth
it?

LOREN
Got you the flea back, didn't I?

RAKE
That was an easy job.

FERRAH
Not worth much.

RAKE
Not a lot of value.

FERRAH
Have to offer something bigger, if
you want to buy him off us.

RAKE
We'll bet. But find better stakes.

Pause

LOREN NAUGHT
(thoughtfully)
I win, his debt is cleared. You
win...exclusive labor rights. For
a Terran season.

FERRAH
Jovian Season.

LOREN NAUGHT
Martian Season.

RAKE
Done.

FERRAH
Accepted.

RAKE
But we pick the game.

FERRAH
But we pick the game.

LOREN
Fine.

RAKE pulls out a revolver. Cylinder spins, then metallic noises as three bullets are removed. Cylinder is snapped back into place.

RAKE
For you.

FERRAH
Three empty. Three bullets. One pull of the trigger.

Loren takes the revolver and spins the cylinder.

RAKE
No peeking now.

LOREN
(trying to be calm))
Where am I pointing this thing?

FERRAH
(amused)
At something disposable.

RAKE
At dead weight.

Confused pause

RAKE
At the kid.

FERRAH
At the kid.

Tense moment, Loren spins the cylinder again.

LOREN
(nonchellant)
You got it.

KINTEN LAMAR
Hey! Wait! No...

The gun clicks as Loren pulls the trigger, no shot is fired.
Rake and Ferrah laugh.

RAKE
The look on his face.

FERRAH
Almost worth not getting paid.

RAKE
Almost.

LOREN
Here's your stupid six-shooter,
Rake. C'mon kid, let's get out of
here.

He helps a pained Kinten up and out of the room. The sounds
change to a New New Vegas street.

KINTEN LAMAR
You... You'd have shot me?!

LOREN
Nah.

KINTEN LAMAR
Three and three is an even split.

LOREN
(laughing)
Sure. But that don't mean it was
50/50.

Pause, Kinton is looking at him blankly

LOREN NAUGHT
Rake loves that stupid shooter.
It's a polymer framed peacemaker,
titanium sleeves and barrel.
Weighs less than mouse's fart. But
the bullets are Gold Hull-Safes
heavy sons of bitch, and I watched
him. They were all on one side of
the cylinder. Wasn't two hard to
tell which way they were sitting
based on the shift in balance. Had
to spin it a couple times to tell

for sure, but I knew I was landing
on an empty chamber when I fired.

KINTEN LAMAR

Fuck.

LOREN

Don't play game unless you know
your odds.

Long pause

KINTEN LAMAR

I don't owe you anything.

LOREN NAUGHT

Didn't say you did.

KINTEN LAMAR

I'm not gonna sleep with you.

LOREN NAUGHT

(clearly blushing)

Wasn't asking you to.

Pause

KINTEN LAMAR

Ok. As long as we're on the same
page here.

LOREN NAUGHT

Sounds like we are.

Pause

LOREN NAUGHT

Smoke?

KINTEN LAMAR

God no. Keep those things away
from me.

LOREN NAUGHT

Say they were worse back in the
day-- you actually smoked them.
With fire.

Loren lighting up, smoking

KINTEN LAMAR
(shuddering with disgust)
Disgusting.

LOREN NAUGHT
You helped me out the other day.
With the skiff.

KINTEN LAMAR
"Thus strangely are our souls
constructed, and by slight
ligaments are we bound to
prosperity and ruin."

LOREN NAUGHT
What?

KINTEN LAMAR
Frankenstein. Or, the Modern
Prometheus.
(pause)
It's a book.
(pause)
I helped you the other day. So
what?

LOREN NAUGHT
So I helped you out here.

KINTEN LAMAR
Ok.

LOREN NAUGHT
So now we're square.

KINTEN LAMAR
Fine with me.

LOREN NAUGHT
Fine.

KINTEN LAMAR
Good.

Pause

KINTEN LAMAR

But if you don't have anywhere else to be right now, I know a great place for Tri-Fri-Pi.

LOREN NAUGHT
I like Tri-Fri-Pi.

KINTEN LAMAR
It's in Downtown. The hubward flyway goes right to it.

LOREN NAUGHT
(tentatively teasing)
You don't have your own skiff?
Thought you would for sure, with how good you are with their wiring.

KINTEN LAMAR
Can't afford to own one. I just know how to fix them.

LOREN NAUGHT
And steal 'em.

KINTEN LAMAR
And steal them.

Pause

LOREN NAUGHT
The flyway's fine.

KINTEN LAMAR
(tentatively teasing)
You don't have a flea either?

LOREN NAUGHT
I don't even fix 'em.

KINTEN LAMAR
Just steal them.

Pause

KINTEN LAMAR
Thanks. For helping me out. Back there. It would have gotten a lot worse.

LOREN NAUGHT

You really gotta be a shit
pickpocket, to get caught by the
Twins. They ain't exactly known
for their powers of observation.

KINTEN LAMAR

(defensive anger)

I do what I have to do.

LOREN NAUGHT

Should learn to do it better,
maybe.

KINTEN LAMAR

Fuck you! If you're going to be an
asshole then I don't want--

LOREN NAUGHT

(contrite)

Sorry! Sorry! I know how it is.
Just maybe you should think of
finding somethin you're good at.
Keep your hands on the rest of
your digits. I was trying to be
helpful!

KINTEN LAMAR

(still a bit sullen)

Fine. Thanks.

(pause, then flirty)

But if you *really* want to be
helpful...

(leaves it trailing)

LOREN NAUGHT

What?

KINTEN LAMAR

You could go get my fingers. Those
things are expensive to replace.

Pause, Loren unsure if that's a joke or not.

LOREN NAUGHT

Didn't think of that.

(pause)

Well. You're welcome, then. You
don't gotta buy me that tri-pi.

KINTEN LAMAR
Said I would, didn't I?

LOREN NAUGHT
Why don't you let me pay. To make
up for the fingers.

KINTEN LAMAR
I got money.

LOREN NAUGHT
(amused)
Flip you for it? Winner pays.

KINTEN LAMAR
What?

LOREN NAUGHT
Flip you. You know...flip a coin?

KINTEN LAMAR
(sound of negation)
Nun-huh.

LOREN NAUGHT
Terran thing. My uncle taught me.
There's a coin--
(holds it out to show
Kinten)
--Physical money. Sometimes they
use it instead of credit. Got two
sides, two pictures--And you flip
it. Like--
(sound of coin flipping,
hand slap thing.)
And bet which way it'll come up.

KINTEN LAMAR
Sure.

LOREN NAUGHT
Call it. Which side's gonna come
up?

KINTEN LAMAR
Uh... What's on it again?

LOREN NAUGHT
Face and a bird.

KINTEN LAMAR
The one with the bird.

LOREN NAUGHT
Got it. Now--
(coin flips, hand slaps
to reveal)
Bird-up. Damn. Well. Looks like
you're buyin'

KINTEN LAMAR
(satisfied)
Good. I said I would, and I do
what I say.
(pause)
Come on, flyway is this way.

Pause, walking through crowds

KINTEN LAMAR
Can I look at the coin? I heard
about them, but haven't seen one
before.

LOREN NAUGHT
Sure.

Hand in pocket sounds, hands over coin

KINTEN LAMAR
Hey! I thought you said this had a
face on it! There's the same bird
on both sides! That's not fair!

LOREN NAUGHT
(amused)
Well, no, it isn't is it.
(pause)
Like I said before, don't the play
game unless you know your odds.

Scene Break

INT. SPACE (SYSTEM PLANET AND COLONY EXPRESS) SYSTEM SHIP
8B3MD SAMUEL L. GRAVELY, EN-ROUTE. SHIP ENGINE AND ATMO
BACKGROUND

BEL LAMAR
They cut off his *fingers*?

LOREN NAUGHT
Just three.
(pause)
Told you, Vegas wasn't such a nice place back then. An' he shoulda known better. You don't pinch on someone's turf without their say-so. Everyone knew it.

BEL LAMAR
That's awful!

LOREN NAUGHT
That's Vegas.

BEL LAMAR
Damn. Dad never talked about anything like *that* when he...
(trails off)
So what happened next?

LOREN NAUGHT
We fell in together.
(pause)
Didn't mean to. Just kept ending up in the same places. He worked crowds around the Sunrise Manor casinos, and the Twins had me there doin' a bit of this and a bit of that. After a while, I'd see him across the flyway and wave. Or he'd catch me finishing up a shakedown, and offer to get me lunch.

BEL LAMAR
(mildly disappointed)
That's it?

LOREN NAUGHT
What do you mean "that's it"?

BEL LAMAR
I-I Dunno. Just thought you were more...

(trails off, then forced
polite)
Thanks for telling me.

LOREN NAUGHT
(cutting him off with
mild amusement)
Cool your jets. Still got a lot of
story to go. An a lot of ride.
Don't wanna run out of one 'fore
the other.

BEL LAMAR
Oh.

LOREN NAUGHT
He really was a terrible thief. Ok
at break-ins, I guess, but just
didn't have the knack, or the
hands. Weren't no better as a
lifter than I was as a Jovian
Sweep player.
(pause)
Turned out, though, he was good at
that.

BEL LAMAR
Sweep?

LOREN NAUGHT
Yep. Taught him to play. After I
promised I'd play fair. Just for
somethin' t' do, you know? What's
a couple hands of cards between
friends, right? But damned if that
man didn't have the knack. I got
sick of losing to him. So he
started playing for real. For
money. An' that went real well.

So we made it official. Working
together. We could hustle
tourists. Set up for a Sweep game.
Didn't even have to rig it, Kinton
was that good. Paid well, an' way
less risk than the other sharps we
tried. An' once we were workin'

together regular, it just made sense to start living together.

BEL LAMAR
(knowing)
Ooohhhh.

LOREN NAUGHT
Sure, it was like that. But it wasn't *just* like that. Turned out, we made a good team.
(pause)
Got any more of that Hydrocarb?

BEL LAMAR
Nah.

LOREN NAUGHT
Too bad. Talkin' always goes better with drinking.
(pause)
How'd you end up on Phobos? I mean, since you weren't born there an all.

BEL LAMAR
(slightly startled at the personal question, but not upset)
Oh, uh, I don't know, really. Dad grew up there. He moved away for a while, though. Lived on Vegas himself for a bit, actually. Don't think it was anything like when you were there, though. But he said he guessed he was too used to being afraid to stay away for long.
(pause)
That's...uh, kind of a joke. Because of the asteroid's name? He thought he was so funny.

Long pause

BEL LAMAR
If he hadn't...
(EMOTION)

...if he were still around, I probably wouldn't've ever left Phobos.

LOREN NAUGHT

(kindly)

When did he pass?

BEL LAMAR

A Terran year ago.

(pause, a rueful laugh)

This...trip. To Nowhere Station. Playing in the tournament...I guess it's kind of my way of saying goodbye.

LOREN NAUGHT

Why's that?

BEL LAMAR

He's the one that taught me to play. He was good. Really good. I guess he was a big name player, back in his day? Said some people called him a legend, when he was playing in the New New Vegas casinos. Don't know if *that's* true, but damn, the first time I beat him playing fair? It was like I won the Lunar Lottery.

LOREN NAUGHT

Sounds like you've got a story to tell, now.

BEL LAMAR

Not really. I mean, not a good one. Dad died and...I didn't really know what to do. So I started playing. Betting real high. I think maybe I was hoping I'd lose, and then...I don't know, something bad would happen to me. But I just kept winning. And...well, now I guess I kind of owe it to him. To play something real big. I win, and then I

can...then it's time to figure out what comes next.

LOREN NAUGHT

That sounds like a story to me. Why'd your dad leave Vegas? If he was doin' so well.

BEL LAMAR

I don't know. Wish I did. It was something bad. He didn't like to talk about it. Always said he'd tell me when I was older. He just--

(pause

--he just didn't get around to it.

LOREN NAUGHT

How you figure it was something bad?

(pause)

Maybe it was just somethin' you were too young to understand.

BEL LAMAR

No...I could tell. Just looking at his face when he talked about it.

LOREN NAUGHT

I see.

Pause

BEL LAMAR

So what *did* happen next? With Kinten?

LOREN NAUGHT

Well now, I guess the story's somethin' like yours from here out. He got sick of hustlin'. Tried his hand at a couple tournaments. An' won. And kept winning. Then started winning *big*. And then, things got complicated.

Scene Break

NEW NEW VEGAS, Henderson, private apartment, atmo background.

KINTEN LAMAR
(triumphant)
Look at *that*.

Sound of a credit card being thrown on a table

LOREN NAUGHT
(startled)
Huh?

KINTEN LAMAR
The card. Check it. Go on!

LOREN NAUGHT
...this...this for real?

KINTEN LAMAR
Damn straight. 150 thousand. On a Taurus card.

LOREN NAUGHT
How did you...
(pause, then with concern)
You didn't pinch this, did you? Or hustle it? 'cause we'd gotta pay the Twins their cut this time. No way a big score'd not get noticed.

KINTEN LAMAR
I didn't pinch it. Though we really need to talk about how much we lose to the Twins for nothing. We don't *have* to cut them in. And what "protection" are they giving us, anyway? I didn't see them stepping in to stop that guy from breaking your head for you last month.

LOREN NAUGHT
Leave it, Kinten. I need the rest of your fingers, even if you don't.

KINTEN LAMAR

We'd do fine on our own! And I'm
not scared of--

(cuts himself off)

We're not arguing about this
today. Because we're *rich*.

(pause, then a little
unsurely)

We need to *keep* this, Loren. Not
like the last time.

LOREN NAUGHT

(dismissively)

Sure, sure.

KINTEN LAMAR

I mean it.

(pause, then trying to
keep things light)

We already used up all the good
luck on this score. Don't go
trying to double it or something
at the tables.

LOREN NAUGHT

(laughing, not taking
this seriously)

What about the skiff races? I have
a couple real hot--

KINTEN LAMAR

(sudden, actual anger)

I'm serious!

LOREN NAUGHT

(caught by surprise, but
trying to play it off)

Ok! Ok! I won't bet so much as a
dollar. Scout's honor.

KINTEN LAMAR

(letting himself be
amused despite his better
judgment)

You weren't ever a solar scout.

LOREN NAUGHT

Sounds better'n "gambler's honor"
though, don't it?

Kinten laughs.

Pause.

LOREN NAUGHT
So what do you mean we used up the
luck? Where *did* it come from?

KINTEN LAMAR
Won it.

LOREN NAUGHT
What?!

KINTEN LAMAR
(triumphant)
Yep.

LOREN NAUGHT
How?! How?!

KINTEN LAMAR
The Hydra Tower Main Event Jovian
Sweep tournament. I kind
of...well. Won it.

LOREN NAUGHT
What?! What?!

KINTEN LAMAR
(mock anger)
You don't have to sound so
surprised!
(laughing)
150 thousand pot. Winner take all.
And I did.

LOREN NAUGHT

Ho-lee shit.
(pause)
Ho-lee shit. Kinten, that's
incredible.
(as if calculating)
Can't see how we'd owe anyone
anything. It's ours. Free and
clear.

KINTEN LAMAR

(excited)

It is! This could change things for us, Loren. For me. Actually, really change things. We could get off Vegas. Move to...I don't know. Deimos. Phobos. Hell, we could move to *Mars*! Open a bar. Don't need all my fingers to pour drinks! Hell. I can afford to get 'em replaced. And I can afford to fix everything else at the same time. Finally.

LOREN NAUGHT

Shit. Yeah! Shit. You've still got that surgeon's commdress, right? The one that did Mari's work.

KINTEN LAMAR

Wild.

LOREN NAUGHT

Yeah. Them. Or we can find someone closer. Or faster. Or, hell, better. You can...god damn, Kinten. We're rich. We can do anything. We gotta celebrate. What do you want to do? Dinner? New clothes! Oh, shit, we should get us a flea!

KINTEN LAMAR

(laughing, joyful)

Kill your v. Money's not going anywhere. Don't need to spend it all right away. Especially since...

LOREN NAUGHT

(suddenly incredibly worried)

What?

KINTEN LAMAR

Just...there's something else I need to tell you.

LOREN NAUGHT

What's wrong? You in trouble?

KINTEN LAMAR

No! God no. It's something good.
Really good. To me. I think.
Just...complicated.

LOREN NAUGHT

Tell me.

KINTEN LAMAR

Well...It's just that I might need
to wait a little longer to have my
surgeries.

LOREN NAUGHT

Kinten. What's wrong?

KINTEN LAMAR

I...we...uh.

(pause, breath)

I'm pregnant.

(pause)

I think...I think that I am going
to have the baby.

Long pause

LOREN NAUGHT

(Shocked)

Oh, Ok.

(pause, then with some
humor)

That wasn't...even on the list of
things I thought you were gonna
say. Wasn't something I'd thought
about either, but here we are!

KINTEN LAMAR

(half-laughing)

Wasn't something I thought about
either. But,uh, here we are.

Long pause

KINTEN LAMAR

(uncertain)

Loren? Are you...

Pause

LOREN NAUGHT

(still surprised, but
clearly joyful)

Well now. That's--wonderful.
Didn't--didn't figure that was
something that--Just didn't figure
that'd happen. An I'm...I'm glad.
Just...glad.

(pause)

And now we have t' celebrate.
Won't take no as an answer. You're
gonna let me take my man out on
the strip in style. Dinner!
Drinks! --wait, no, no drinks. But
dinner! Pharaoh's has an authentic
bovine ribeye, an we are going to
both order it.

(pause, then with sort of
gruff emotion)

We're gonna have a baby!

KINTEN LAMAR

(hiding genuine emotion
in amusement)

Yep. Seems so.

LOREN NAUGHT

Get dressed! We're going out
tonight.

KINTEN LAMAR

Hey now, this new information
isn't an excuse to go all spend-y.
If anything, it's a reason not to.

LOREN NAUGHT

(contrite, but still
super excited)

Oh. Sure. Yeah, you're, you're
right.

(pause)

Fine. No ribeye. But I *am* taking
you out! Somewhere! In style!
We'll even just go for tri-pi, if
it makes you feel better.

KINTEN LAMAR

(affectionate)
Fine. *That* I think we can afford.

LOREN NAUGHT
Oh. Shit. I'm gonna have to stop
smokin now, aren't I.

Scene Break

INT. SPACE (SYSTEM PLANET AND COLONY EXPRESS) SYSTEM SHIP
8B3MD SAMUEL L. GRAVELY, EN-ROUTE. SHIP ENGINE AND ATMO
BACKGROUND

ANNOUNCER
System Planet and Colony Express
System ship 8B3MD, in approach to
Aeolus. Docking at Shelley
Spaceport estimated in 4 hours 28
minutes.

BEL LAMAR
(startled)
Damn it. This still your stop?

LOREN NAUGHT
(especially gruff through
this scene)
Dunno. Maybe. Maybe not.

Pause

BEL LAMAR
What happened? To your kid?

LOREN NAUGHT
Why d'you think something happened
to him?

BEL LAMAR
'cause of how you look right now.
It's like my dad. When he talked
about Vegas. You weren't
remembering something good.

LOREN NAUGHT
Guess I'm not.

BEL LAMAR

(more gently than he has
been)

What?

(pause)

I'd like to hear about it. Gotta
be as hard to lose a kid as to
lose your dad.

LOREN NAUGHT

Yeah. It's hard. To lose *anyone*.

BEL LAMAR

People always tell me it's better
to talk about it. To tell stories
about the people you lost. That it
honors them, or something.

LOREN NAUGHT

You really think that?

BEL LAMAR

Nah. Not really. But talking about
them does help you remember.

(pause)

So I'd listen, if you wanna talk.

LOREN NAUGHT

(sniffs)

Yeah...I think I can tell you the
rest.

Scene Break

EXT. HALCYON DOME CASINO, CASSINO NOISE, SLOT MACHINES AND
JINGLES

DAEQUIN

Hey! You!

LOREN NAUGHT

(under his breath)

Shit. Shit. Shit. Maybe I can lose
him.

DAEQUIN

You!

LOREN NAUGHT

Shit.

DAEQUIN

Hold it!

LOREN NAUGHT

What d'you want?

DAEQUIN

I don't want anything, asshole. I
got a message from the Twins.

LOREN NAUGHT

(genuinely surprised)

Huh? But I haven't worked for
them--

Cut off by a punch to the stomach. Several punches, gasps of
pain.

DAEQUIN

They said tell that little
boyfriend of yours he needs to pay
up. They've given him plenty of
time.

LOREN NAUGHT

(gasping in pain)

What?

DAEQUIN

He knows what they mean. Tell 'im
if he don't get them their money,
pronto, they're gonna do a lot
more than give the two of you a
few bruises. Got it?

Silence, then punch, gasp.

LOREN NAUGHT

(out of breath, in pain)

Hey! Hey! Hold on. Hold it. Hold
on

DAEQUIN

(gruff, a bit surprised)

What?

LOREN NAUGHT
They got you doin' their
collections now? How much you owe?

DAEQUIN
Why the fuck you care?

LOREN NAUGHT
Just--
(catching his breath)
Might be able to help. So how
much?

DAEQUIN
(surly)
Enough.

LOREN NAUGHT
An you're working it off on my
skin. What'd you say to a wager?
You win, I take over the debt. I
win, you lay off. Tell the Twins I
got the message, an' leave be if
they send you after me again. You
got a lot to win, an' not much to
lose. So what d'you say for--

Punch cuts him off

DAEQUIN
You gotta know when to leave the
table. Or someone's gonna get
killed.

Daequin continues to beat Loren up, extensively.

Scene Break

NEW NEW VEGAS, HENDERSON, PRIVATE APARTMENT, ATMO
BACKGROUND.

KINTEN LAMAR
Oh my god. Loren! What happened?

LOREN NAUGHT
(strained)
I'm fine. Looks worse than it is.

KINTEN LAMAR
What happened? Here. Sit down. I'll get ice.

LOREN NAUGHT
It's fine.

KINTEN LAMAR
Sit.

Loren sits, Kinten gets ice and puts it in a cloth.
Kinten puts the cloth on Loren's head. Loren winces.

KINTEN LAMAR
Hold still. Ice'll take down the swelling.

Pause

KINTEN LAMAR
(angry)
Who did this to you?!

LOREN NAUGHT
Why do the Twins think you owe them money?

Clicking of ice stops, suddenly silent.

KINTEN LAMAR
Oh. That.

LOREN NAUGHT
You...*don't* owe them money, do you?

KINTEN LAMAR
Well. Uh.

LOREN NAUGHT
Kinten...

KINTEN LAMAR
(defensive)
Look, it's not a big deal, ok?
I'll pay it back tomorrow. I just...kind of let it slip my mind.

LOREN NAUGHT

You let a debt to the Twins slip
your mind?? How much do you owe
them? When did you borrow it? *Why*
did you borrow it? We've got
money!

KINTEN LAMAR

(sullen)

We do now. We didn't, when I
needed it.

LOREN NAUGHT

What?

KINTEN LAMAR

Look, I sort of...They paid the
buy in for me. For the Hydra Tower
Main Event.

LOREN NAUGHT

(cold and very flat)

They did what.

KINTEN LAMAR

(more defensive)

It was 15k. Might as well have
been a million. We didn't have it.
And I knew I could win.

LOREN NAUGHT

God *damn* it. What if you'd lost?

KINTEN LAMAR

I didn't lose.

LOREN NAUGHT

But what if you had?? How the hell
could we have paid 'em back?

KINTEN LAMAR

I didn't lose.

(pause)

I'll get it back to them tomorrow.

LOREN NAUGHT

Fine. Good. Ok. Damnit, Kinten,
you gotta *think* before you do this

kind of thing. We're gettin' out
of here in *three months*.

KINTEN LAMAR

Wouldn't be getting out of her at
all if I hadn't done it.

LOREN NAUGHT

Alright. Yeah. But can you keep
your head down *now*? Three more
weeks and we'll be free and clear
on Vesta. With our own *house*.

KINTEN LAMAR

(suddenly angry)

Keep my head down? *One* risky bet,
that *paid off* I might add, and you
tell me to keep my head down? What
about you? You're all over the
station, dropping cash on anything
that has odds! The longer the
better! I swear, Loren, sometimes
I think it's not the payoff you're
looking for, it's the bet itself!
And you tell *me* to keep my head
down?

LOREN NAUGHT

(trying to appease)

It's not like that. I just-- it's
dangerous! Not the betting...the
debt. That's different. I can't
protect you if you get--

KINTEN LAMAR

I don't *need* you to protect me! I
handled myself *fine* before you came
along, and I can now too. I can
pay them back. And I will. And
it's about damn time you know what
it feels like for your partner to
take a dangerous risk!

Pause

LOREN NAUGHT

(apologetic)

I'm sorry. I shouldn't've told you off. You know what you're doing. An' god knows I do like you said-- make an...ill-advised wager, now'n then. An' yours paid off.

KINTEN LAMAR
(still a little miffed)
Thank you for seeing that.

Another pause

LOREN NAUGHT
(thoughtful again)
...what do you think about maybe lettin' it ride?

KINTEN LAMAR
What?

LOREN NAUGHT
The winnings.

KINTEN LAMAR
I don't follow.

LOREN NAUGHT
You did so good...what about doin' a little better. Before we pay 'em back. The Twins won't notice another day or two. An think about how much you could make if you took that credit to the Sweep tables.

KINTEN LAMAR
(angry again)
God damn it, Loren. This is exactly what I mean! You don't know how to stop, when walk away or when to run.
(pause, then a little softer)
I'll go to the twins now. Pay them. You sit there. Try not to bleed on the floor.

Scene break

NEW NEW VEGAS, HENDERSON, PRIVATE APARTMENT, ATMO
BACKGROUND, TV PLAYING SOMETHING IN THE BACKGROUND OR LOW
MUSIC.

Door opens, someone stumbles in, falls heavily.

LOREN NAUGHT
Kinten?!

Gasping, general sounds of pain

LOREN NAUGHT
I'm calling an ambulance.

KINTEN LAMAR
(coughing, speaking
weakly)
No. It's...I'm ok.

LOREN NAUGHT
You're bleeding! You need a
doctor!

KINTEN LAMAR
Can't...afford it. I'm...fine.

LOREN NAUGHT
We can fucking afford it!

KINTEN LAMAR
(with sudden strength &
heat)
Don't.

Pause

LOREN NAUGHT
Alright. Here. Onto the couch.
Sit. Hold on...

Sounds of him moving around, getting things, opening
cabinets, returning to Kinten

LOREN NAUGHT
Press this against it. It'll stop
the bleeding.

Kinten hisses.

LOREN NAUGHT
Yeah, I fuckin' know it stings.
Hold it anyway.

More sounds, etc.

LOREN NAUGHT
Ok. What happened?

Long silence.

KINTEN LAMAR
(halting, still catching
his breath)
The Twins and I ... do not agree
... about how much I owe them.

LOREN NAUGHT
Fuck.

Scene Break

NEW NEW VEGAS, HENDERSON, PRIVATE APARTMENT, ATMO BACKGROUND

KINTEN LAMAR
--they say that because they paid
my buy in, it's theirs.

LOREN NAUGHT
The entire thing?

KINTEN LAMAR
No.

LOREN NAUGHT
Thank God.

KINTEN LAMAR
Just 120K of it.

LOREN NAUGHT
120 thousand... We... did you tell
them--

KINTEN LAMAR

We already spent it? Yeah. They said they didn't see the problem. We can re-sell the tickets. The house. Everything on Vesta. They say they're sure we can get back at least most of what we paid.

LOREN NAUGHT

I guess that's...

(voice catches)

I guess that's what we've got to--

(pause, collecting himself)

I'll go talk to them. Make a deal.

KINTEN LAMAR

(cutting him off, intense)

No.

LOREN NAUGHT

What?

KINTEN LAMAR

No. You are not talking to them. You are not making a deal. I remember how that went last time! What if they ask you to put in FOUR bullets, this time? Or FIVE? Sell yourself to them for a *Neptunian* season?

LOREN NAUGHT

(tries to cut him off)

I wouldn't [do that]--

KINTEN LAMAR

Wouldn't you?? You say you won't, but you get in there, hear the deal, hear the *bet*, and you're gonna tell yourself you know the odds. You can beat them.

LOREN NAUGHT

(tries to cut in again)

I [wouldn't]--

KINTEN LAMAR

But you would. And I won't let
you. Not this time. We're not
selling the house. You're not
playing another stupid game. Not
to pay back those
low-life...extortionists! We'll...
I don't know. We'll leave early.
There've got to be ships
belt-ward. I can get us passage.
We've got enough to bribe--

LOREN NAUGHT

(sadly)

It don't work like that. You don't
just fly away from debt. Not debt
like *that*. With *them*. They'll send
someone for us. Soon as we land,
we'll be fightin' off the worst
kind a bounty hunters. An you know
it well as I do. It won't even be
about the debt. It'll be on
principal.

KINTEN LAMAR

Maybe they--

LOREN NAUGHT

(talks right over him)

Maybe they'd even throw *more* at us
'cause it's not *just* a debt.
'Cause we made 'em look stupid.

(pause)

Let it go, Kinten. For now. Dreams
ain't gonna go anywhere an' we got
time. So we work here a spell
longer. Ain't the end of the
world. We got a good thing right
here. Nice place. Good gig. Later,
after the kid's born, we try to
strike out again. Hell, now you've
got your reputation at Sweep,
maybe won't take no time at all.
There's always another hand to
play. An' you don't know how much
you can win till you figure the
odds.

KINTEN LAMAR

(lost and sad)
I... You're... I'm sorry. I'm
sorry, Loren. This is my fault,
and I am going to fix it. Whatever
it takes.

LOREN NAUGHT
We'll fix it together.

Scene Break

INT. SPACE (SYSTEM PLANET AND COLONY EXPRESS) SYSTEM SHIP
8B3MD SAMUEL L. GRAVELY, EN-ROUTE. SHIP ENGINE AND ATMO
BACKGROUND

BEL LAMAR
What happened? After that? Did
you--
(stops himself)
You never got to Vesta. Did...did
they kill him? Did you lose him?

LOREN NAUGHT
Nah. Didn't kill him. But I lost
him all the same.

BEL LAMAR
How--

LOREN NAUGHT
Got up the next day and he was
gone. Just...gone. Didn't take
much. Some clothes. Couple credit
cards. Left most of it behind. For
me, I guess.

Long pause

BEL LAMAR
That *asshole*. How could he--but
your kid-- he... that's...

LOREN NAUGHT
He did what he thought he had to.
To keep us safe. Me n' the kid
both.

(pause)

Left behind that Taurus card. 172K
on it. More than he started with.
Don't know how he got it. He left
that, and a note. On paper. Just
sittin' there on the table, by the
salt.

Paper coming out, unfolding.

LOREN NAUGHT

(extremely emotional, pausing throughout, choked up)

Dear Loren,
I'm sorry. For a while, I thought
you were right. That we could just
wait a while. Put our dreams on
hold. I thought we could just put
it aside. Get on with living in
the meantime. But we can't. Or, I
can't. Or I can't, with you.

I love you. But you can't play it
safe. You always decide the payout
is worth the risk. I think
sometimes the risk is the payout.
I did something stupid-- taking
money from the Twins. But I knew
it was stupid. Even when I decided
to do it. You always think you're
being smart.

And maybe you are. Maybe I'm
wrong. Maybe it's always worth
rolling the dice, and to hell with
the consequences. Maybe you do
know the odds. But I think you
just don't see it when the deck's
stacked against you.

This mistake, though, is mine. And
so I'm going to fix it the only
way I know how. Because if I stay,
it will just get worse. They'll

make sure it does. I stood up to them. Made them look stupid. They think I did. And they've got to hurt me bad enough to make sure no one else ever does it again. And that means they'll go after you. Or after this kid, because that's where it'll sting the most.

So I'm going to get out of harms way, for all of us. Me, you, our son.

I sold the house. I know I said I wouldn't, but I had to. We can't be there together. And the Twins already know that's where you were headed. I bought you a ticket instead. Pre-paid passage. Nebula Transit & Shipping. Anywhere in the system. The card's good credit. It'll get you a long way. And I'm going too. Somewhere. Not even sure where. Just picked a ship with a good name off the outgoing list and got on.

Please don't try to find me. When it's safe, when things cool off, I'll find you. When the Twins have forgotten I was ever a thorn in their side, we'll be able to be together. Raise our kid. Buy that bar we talked about. But for now, we'll fly in different directions.

Maybe it'll do you some good. Maybe you'll figure out what it is you're hunting after. What you're trying to win, that you're willing to let your whole life ride on.

Remember, you're the one who told
me you don't count your winnings
till after you've left the table.

Until we can play our hand
together again,

Kinten

Pause

LOREN NAUGHT

An' he couldn't of left it without
quoting that damn book of his--
"How strange is that clinging love
we have of life even in the excess
of misery!"

Long pause

BEL LAMAR

(baffled and upset)

But...then what?

LOREN NAUGHT

That's it, kid. The end.

BEL LAMAR

Wait, hey, no! That...*can't* be...
there's *got* to be more.

LOREN NAUGHT

Well there ain't.

BEL LAMAR

But...! What about the kid?!

LOREN NAUGHT

He's out there somewhere, far as I
know.

BEL LAMAR

You never looked for him? How
could you not?!

LOREN NAUGHT

'course I did.

BEL LAMAR

And...?

LOREN NAUGHT

And nothin'

BEL LAMAR

You didn't...you haven't...you've never found them?

LOREN NAUGHT

Nope.

BEL LAMAR

And he never wrote you? He said he would write you!

LOREN NAUGHT

He said that, yeah.

BEL LAMAR

So he...but...

(pause)

So you just never heard from him again? He didn't...why didn't he comm you? He said he would?!

LOREN NAUGHT

Dunno. Maybe he thought it wasn't the right time. Maybe it was never safe. Maybe he didn't want to, after a while.

(pause)

I left Vegas three days later. Got on a ship headed beltward. Kept the same commdress. So he could find me.

(pause)

Ended up back there, though. In almost the same place. Doin' exactly what he said I would--making a bet 'cause I thought I knew the odds. Losing. Paying it off doing things I'm ashamed to admit. Then sittin' down at the table to lose again.

Hell. He was probably *right* to stay away. I wouldn't'a been any kind of father.

BEL LAMAR

But--

LOREN NAUGHT

's ok, kid.

BEL LAMAR

(starts to say this,
Loren cuts him off)

It's not!

LOREN NAUGHT

I got memories. Got real good memories.

(pause)

An'...he did comm me. Once. Bit over a year ago. Left a message on that same old commdress. I couldn't ever bring myself to let it go.

BEL LAMAR

Oh! What did he-- did he say-- did he explain--Did you--

LOREN NAUGHT

(sad laugh)

Yeah. He said a lot. Things I needed to hear. An then he didn't need to explain. See, he commed me 'cause he was dying.

BEL LAMAR

I'm so sorry.

LOREN NAUGHT

(bittersweet happiness)

It's alright. Truly. As much as it ever is when someone you love passes.

BEL LAMAR

What about your kid?

LOREN NAUGHT

Yeah, told me all about him too.
Our son. Told me he was doing real
good. Real smart. Card player just
like his daddies.

BEL LAMAR

Oh...so have you met him?

LOREN NAUGHT

I think I might, someday. Time
hasn't been right. I'd just be
some stranger tryin' step in where
his dad stepped out. Mostly, I
want him t' know I love him.
Always did. Always have.

BEL LAMAR

That's...I'm sure he knows. I'm
sure his other dad told him. Good
dads...kids know. When their
parents...

LOREN NAUGHT

I know your dad felt that way too,
kid. I bet he's real proud of you.

Silence

ANNOUNCER

System Planet and Colony Express
System ship 8B3MD, in approach to
Aeolus. Docking at Shelley
Spaceport estimated in 4 hours.

LOREN NAUGHT

(sniffing)

Now, I'm gonna finish this vollie,
an stop jawing.

BEL LAMAR

(tentatively)

We could...I mean...I wouldn't
mind talking with you a little
more?

LOREN NAUGHT

Thanks, kid. Seems like you're a good'un. But I'm an old man, an' all this reminiscing has tired me out. Gonna just rest my eyes for a bit. Before we dock on Shelley.

BEL LAMAR

Oh. Ok.

(long pause)

Thanks. For telling me the story. I...I still would rather have the person. But I can see...I see what you mean. About home.

Bel moves away, Loren lights the vollette, takes a drag. Then light snoring, fading into silence.

Scene Break

INT. SPACE (SYSTEM PLANET AND COLONY EXPRESS) SYSTEM SHIP 8B3MD SAMUEL L. GRAVELY, EN-ROUTE. SHIP ENGINE AND ATMO BACKGROUND

ANNOUNCER

System Planet and Colony Express
System ship 8B3MD, beginning final
approach to Shelley Spaceport,
Aeolus. Please return to your
seats and fasten crashbelts.

Belts being buckled.

BEL LAMAR

(calling over to wake
Lorenup)

Heya.

(pause)

We're landing.

(longer pause)

Hey! We're almost there!

(pause, then with
concern)

Hey...?

(pause)

You...um...you ok?

Long pause, then sound of belts unbuckling, Bel getting up going over.

BEL LAMAR

Loren?

Reaches out to touch him.

BEL LAMAR

Loren? You...uh...Oh god.

Silence for quite a while.

BEL LAMAR

"He died calmly, and his countenance expressed affection even in death."

Dad always said that was the best a man could hope for-- to go out, peaceful, in your sleep. I think that's what he'd have w

(pause)

I wish--god. I wish he'd told me. I wish he'd commed you years ago, not just when it was too late.

But I guess he'd already lost you once. Couldn't bare to do it again.

I still wish you could have gone all in one more time. Bet on the three of us. I think we could have been something good. Maybe a family, not just the memory of one.

(thoughtful, and fading out)

"Your road is run, your journey done. May you at last be still, and in our hearts, find home."

Scene fades out

Thank you for joining us for this episode of Breathing Space, Fading Frontier.anted, for you.

This episode, The Gambler, was written by Lee Seguinte and edited by Erik Seguinte

[VA credits]

Our theme, Blues for the Black, was composed by Michael Freitag with vocals by Jeremiah and lyrics by Scott Paladin.

You can find links to learn more about our cast and crew in the show notes and more information about our show at our website, breathingspace.lawofnames.com.

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