The Station at the End of the Universe

written by

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Breathing Space, Fading Frontier includes mature content such as adult language, sexual situations, violence, and substance use

This episode contains reference to near death experience, implied bombing attempt, unnerving and terrifying experiences, and implied unreality

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

STATION ANNOUNCER
(sounds like it's coming from a speaker)
Attention everyone! The shuttle to Mars from the Vesperi SPACE stop will be leaving in the next hour. Please have your luggage and personal items on you before you board. I repeat the shuttle to Mars will be taking off in one hour.
(There is a click as the announcement ends)

YUE TANAKA

(in a cheerful,
announcing way)
Well it's our last night here on Vesperi, friends and foes! But it has been a lot of fun spending time with you all. We need to do this again as soon as possible!

LUKE KINGSLEY
(nervous)
Which ones of us are the friends and which ones are the foes?

MYLLIS TANAKA
(teasingly)
Well if you don't already know Lu, I have some bad news.

EMBER SMAUK
(annoyed)
I think I know what I am.

DEVAN HEIGHTS
(comforting to Luke)
Hey now we're all friends here. Don't let Yue's dramatics get to you.

YUE TANAKA
Hey! I'm not that dramatic…. Right?

LUKE/MYLLIS/EMBER
(firmly)
No.

DEVAN HEIGHTS
(fondly like a parent)
Of course you are Yue.

YUE TANAKA
It's been tough to gather the whole group since we left Venus. We all live busy lives now as adults. It's nice to be back at the orbital again. It was good to

see the neighborhood. Seeing it I can remember all of the times we dragged the rest of you along with us as we searched for adventure!

MYLLIS TANAKA
And Devan always had to guide us back to our houses! Always reliable.
(Teasing)
I'm sure you still are.

YUE TANAKA
Although I wouldn't mind having visited Caritas. Get closer down to the planet. Not too close of course. Shame we have to leave again after just two weeks.

MYLLIS TANAKA
Yeah, you all need to come back to Vesperi more often. I get so lonely here! Like you need to tell your jobs you need more vacation time.

EMBER SMAUK
We have a lot of time to kill before the next shuttle arrives and before we have to go our separate ways. Does anyone have any ways to pass the time?

MYLLIS TANAKA
As long as it's not like a card game or anything. They're always so boring without gambling.

EMBER SMAUK
(scoffs)
That's because everyone knows not to gamble with you. You cheat.

MYLLIS TANAKA
(indignant)

Wha-what no, I do not cheat, okay, I simply am just-

EMBER SMAUK
(interrupting)
We know, we know. ‘You’re just lucky is all’.
(scoffs)
Whatever you say Mylls.

DEVAN HEIGHTS
Hey, let’s not get into a fight. I don’t think the station attendants or the other passengers will enjoy it. It is pretty late and this is the last flight out of Vesperi.

There is a sound of a baby in the crowd and someone coughing among the ambience noise of the station.

LUKE KINGSLEY
We could tell scary stories.
(Excited now)
Like we did when we were kids!

EMBER SMAUK
We’re not kids anymore Luke.

YUE TANAKA
No, I think it could be exciting! Scary stories are made for times like these. Hold on, I got one.

YUE TANAKA
(in a hushed I’m trying to tell a scary story voice)
Have you ever heard of the Station at the End of the Universe? It is told on planets, ships, and space stations alike; told late at night. There is no agreement on what this station is like besides a large mostly metal structure. Or where it is exactly. Some say it’s a bright place, cheerful and

inviting. Others say it’s derelict and in ruins. Some claim it’s located in a Black Hole. There are some who claim it’s endless, so large and maze-like that you’ll never find your way through. Others say it’s always there, on the edge of your peripheral vision. Some say it exists outside of our perspective of space and time which is pretty ridiculous if you ask me. Its appearance changes depending on who you ask about it. You'll always find someone who has seen it.

EMBER SMAUK
You mean like seen it, or *seen it?*

LUKE KINGSLEY
That’s black brass!

YUE TANAKA
It isn't! It’s a real place!

DEVAN HEIGHTS
I think I’ve been to the Station.

YUE TANAKA
Wait, really?

MYLLIS TANAKA
Yeah. It’s totally a real place. But you can’t just take a ship to it or anything like that.

LUKE KINGSLEY
What??

EMBER SMAUK
(nervous but trying to hide it)
But it’s not a real place. It’s just a scary story meant to scare people or-

MYLLIS TANAKA
(ignoring Ember)
Yeah! You don’t always end up there by flying through space. Sometimes you just… end up there.

YUE TANAKA
Exactly. Almost everyone has a story about when they ended up on the Station at the End of the Universe.

EMBER SMAUK
(exacerbated)
I-I don’t understand. It’s completely fake!

MYLLIS TANAKA
I mean you know- um…

EMBER SMAUK
(interrupting in a harsh tone)
What have you been there too?

MYLLIS TANAKA
Okay. You don’t have to be rude about it.

LUKE KINGSLEY
Devan h-have you been there as well?

EMBER SMAUK
Oh for the love of- are you serious? There’s no way you all believe you’ve been to this place. It’s black brass! People have told them since the beginning of time or something!

DEVAN HEIGHTS
I mean, everyone’s had that weird experience-- like when they take a flyway they’ve gone down a

thousand times and suddenly it leads somewhere else. Or, or they hear a voice over the comm on a greenline frequency that couldn't exist.

MYLLIS TANAKA
(excitedly, like a child)
Yes, yes, exactly! THAT is going to the station.

EMBER SMAUK
Whatever.

YUE TANAKA
Don't believe me? If we've all been there, then we should talk about it. We should share our stories. That's how black brass spread, right? Through sharing it.

EMBER SMAUK
What's the point if it's not even real?

YUE TANAKA
Because it's fun. You know what that is right? Listen. I'll go first and then you can all decide if you want to share your experiences. And I promise as your dearest friend, I will not judge you or think you're making it all up.

MYLLIS TANAKA
(in a joking tone)
And here I was thinking some of us were your foes?

YUE TANAKA
Dearest foes too. Now let me talk!
(clears throat again before starting in a hushed tone like before)

Now this is a story from when I was about ten years old. I was home in bed sick from something. Not important! Myllis, my dearest twin, was off having fun with the rest of you, leaving me to entertain myself. Not that I was capable of it. I was pretty much bedridden at the time.

LUKE KINGSLEY
I remember that. Myllis tried to convince me you were going to die.

MYLLIS TANAKA
You cried so hard at the thought. I felt terrible.

YUE TANAKA
I thought I was going to die if I'm being honest. I was sooooo bored. The fever was really bad that day. I remember feeling weird. Like I was floating. And since I had nothing better to do with my sick self, I thought why not use that. I imagined I was out in space, just floating among the stars. No spacesuit needed. Nothing to hold me back from really experiencing being there. I could travel sunward if I wanted, fly right into the sun. I didn't have a great grasp of what being out in space without any protection could do to a person, but that didn't matter. I lost myself in the daydream. Of floating in the stars, chasing ships, watching planets from below me.

(pauses)

That's when things changed. Like something took control of my imagination.

LUKE KINGSLEY
(scared)
T-took control?

YUE TANAKA
Took control. I was floating out in space and then suddenly it was like there was this building in front of me. A station of some kind, but it didn't, it didn't look like any space station I've ever seen. It didn't feel like one. It felt like something had intruded upon my daydream and I had no choice but to approach it. I entered the station through some, some doors. Like a door on a fucking house. There was nothing inside. No, that's not right. There was furniture, plants, things like that. Like this place has. But it was dimly lit and there were no people. I wandered through it and-

There is another moment of silence as Yue struggles to speak.

DEVAN HEIGHTS
You don't have to keep going if it's too much.

YUE TANAKA
No, no I'm almost done. It felt like something was following me. The same thing that brought me in there. I remember wandering deep and I thought something was right behind me. I turned around as if to confront it or my demise and suddenly Myllis was jumping on my bed to check on me. I was back here. It felt so real. Like I had actually gone there… but I had convinced myself it was just my

fever giving me a really messed up dream
(in a forced chipper voice)
So that's my story! Who's next?

DEVAN HEIGHTS
Yue…

YUE TANAKA
Don't Dev. Let's just keep going.

MYLLIS TANAKA
Well as Yue's twin, I might as well go next. Mine is… pretty different.
(clears throat)
Mine also felt like it was just a dream, but I knew I was awake. This was still back on Venus's Bosom.

LUKE KINGSLEY
Don't call it that!

EMBER SMAUK
Everyone calls Vesperi that Luke. Have you seen the shape of the orbital?

LUKE KINGSLEY
Doesn't make it any better! It makes it worse I think.

Sounds of Ember mocking Luke.

MYLLIS TANAKA
Fine, fine Luke. This was back home here on Vesperi. I was out on an errand for our mother. I don't really remember the specifics of what she wanted. I mean I've never been into shopping. I think I had to be like seventeen at the time. Best that I can remember.
(pause)

Yeah. Actually there is a lot of weird stuff I remember about that day. So I was wearing orange pants that I had spilled hot pink paint all over. Devan had just moved away to Ganymede last month. And there was that, that um, lingering scent of, of lavender that always seemed to permeate the settlement no matter what. It was a busy day though. Like you'd think we'd be heading for a Sulfur Storm. I'm not the biggest person out there, obviously, so it was rough navigating the crowds. Pushed around a lot and then suddenly it was like… well…

EMBER SMAUK
Go on.

MYLLIS TANAKA
It was like I was somewhere else. There were people still all around me. Like crowds and everything. And I'm not familiar with everyone and I certainly wasn't then, but it didn't seem like the same crowds. Didn't feel like the same places. Like the halls and the rooms. It was blindingly white and a little unnerving if I'm honest. People were talking- I couldn't really understand any of it. But you know I kept going, knowing I needed to complete my errands, but as I continued I couldn't find any of the local stores. Couldn't find anywhere that was familiar. I, I mean until….

LUKE KINGSLEY
Until what?

MYLLIS TANAKA
(forced out)

So until I was… face to face with some woman. I can't really remember her face or anything, but she grabbed me by the arm hard. Like real hard.

(A pause then laughter)

I thought she was drunk on Polar or something, her breath did smell like it. She said, um…

(taking on the effect of an old woman)

'You're not supposed to be here!' or something like that and suddenly I was back in the earlier crowds near the grocery store. I always thought maybe I went to the wrong place on the orbital. You know took a wrong turn somewhere, somehow, but I was never quite sure. And when I heard about the black brass of the Station at the End of the Universe, that just felt right. I had been to the Station.

YUE TANAKA

(angry but trying to hide it)

Why did you never tell me this?

MYLLIS TANAKA

Why did you never tell me about your experience?

(laughs)

Look, we both brushed it off, Yu. Don't um, don't think too hard about it.

YUE TANAKA

Fine but if you get kidnapped or something, don't come crying to me!

DEVAN HEIGHTS

I ah, I think as the person that came up in Myllis's story, maybe I

should be the next to go?
A-actually, my journey to Ganymede is when it happened.

LUKE KINGSLEY
I thought you said that the journey was safe. Boring even. Has no one told anyone else about their experience before?

EMBER SMAUK
Look, I understand if you all think it’s common to just talk about ‘going to the Station’ but some of us don’t want to believe in that crap.

LUKE KINGSLEY
(dejected)
S-sorry.

DEVAN HEIGHTS
Ember, don’t be cruel. We all had our reasons for not talking about it before. Let me just tell mine and then you two can do yours. We’ve been away from each other for three years. A lot can happen in a short time.

EMBER SMAUK
(angry)
Fine. Get- just get it over with. I always thought you were the sensible one. Maybe I was wrong.

DEVAN HEIGHTS
(sadly)
Maybe.
(In a calmer voice)
Anyway. This was about six years ago but I still remember what happened pretty clearly. We were heading to Ganymede, me and my family. There weren't any problems with our travel, or at least that

was how it was supposed to be. It was a flight we'd taken, I mean, several times since my mom is- was from there. And my parents were going to go back to Venus in a, in a few months. I was going to stay this time. I had an uncle there who was going to help me with starting my new life. But I guess none of that is really important to the story. It's what happened on the trip there that matters. It had only been a day or so, relatively, since we left Venus. Nothing seemed amiss. But then the power went out.

(There is tension in his voice now)

Our greenline comm wasn't working. Nothing was working. I don't know if you've ever been aboard a ship that went just dead like that. You know more than fear. We all thought we were going to die out there. Who knew when we'd be found. If we wouldn't just be prey for a Vulture. And that's when we saw it. A station just floating out there in space. I got a creepy feeling off of it, but my parents were relieved. It didn't matter that it shouldn't have been there, that we'd never seen it there before. It wasn't attached to anything but… it did mean that we could repair our ship.

YUE TANAKA

I guess we really all are keeping secrets, huh.

EMBER SMAUK

(angrier than before)

You almost died, Devan? This is-

(upset stuttering)

LUKE KINGSLEY
(softly interrupting)
I'm, I'm glad you're safe, but….I mean how did you manage to survive if…?

DEVAN HEIGHTS
Let me keep going. We would have tried to contact the station but there wasn't a way to. Our relief became fear again when my folks realized we couldn't contact it or fly to it. So unless they spotted us back, well... But they did, they did spot us. I think. Or at least something pulled our ship to the station. I remember hearing a voice on our comm which shouldn't have been possible. The voice made my head hurt. And then I don't remember much about what the station was like. It was dark. Kind of creepy. Unsettling. I remember waiting in an area for too long but also not long at all. There were other people there, some of them looked pretty, pretty messed up. It almost felt like I was sleeping. And then suddenly… I… it was like I woke up and we were back on the ship and leaving. My parents never talked about it again. And I never pressed them on it. I… I just wanted to forget that place even if it did, I guess, save our lives.

MYLLIS TANAKA
Well, you have the strongest case for it being real so far. Unless you hallucinated it in your terror. You really don't seem the type to lie about these things. Actually, I don't know if lying is

even something you’re capable of Dev. You’ve always been the best of the five of us.

YUE TANAKA
Or as you suffocated and passed out! And had some kind of bizarre nightmare.

LUKE KINGSLEY
But if it wasn’t real then how did Devan and his parents survive?

There is a long-drawn-out silence. No one in the group wants to say anything.

DEVAN HEIGHTS
I, I don’t know what to tell you all. I… Everything I experienced that day felt like going to the Station. Almost too strange to believe that it was real at all. Like it, like it shouldn't have happened.

EMBER SMAUK
(shouting)
Like you should be dead.

DEVAN HEIGHTS
I, I didn’t say that.

EMBER SMAUK
(furious)
You didn’t have to. You lived and waited until now, six years later, to tell us you could have been lost out in space? Thanks a lot, Devan.

DEVAN HEIGHTS
I’m sorry. I’m sorry. When we survived and just kept going, I just… I thought it would only upset you all. I lived with, with a weird story about it but… Maybe

you’re right. Maybe it was wrong of me to keep it from everyone.

YUE TANAKA
We all kept it a secret. Don’t be so hard on yourself Dev.

MYLLIS TANAKA
Okay, Luke. Hi! It’s your turn. What happened to you?

LUKE KINGSLEY
(nervously)
Not Ember?

EMBER SMAUK
(still furious)
Did it sound like I had something to share?

LUKE KINGSLEY
Oh, okay.
(takes a deep breath)
I was pretty young when it happened. I think maybe five? We were traveling from Vesperi to one of the Venus settlements on the planet. Cloud 87, I think. My dad had important business over there. I don’t think he really wanted me to come with him. His five-year-old son. But I didn’t think he wanted to just leave me either.
(pause)
For five years old, traveling between settlements is pretty boring. I had a book to read, something about ancient art practices. More advanced than I really understood but my dad had high hopes and the pictures were pretty. It was ten minutes before I was asleep.

YUE TANAKA

Another dream then.

LUKE KINGSLEY
(flustered)
It-it didn't feel like a dream! I was on the shuttle. My dad was talking to someone on a comm. There was a girl across from me. Seemed about my age but she was… strange. She didn't look unusual but she was alone and that was weird. Humming something to herself. She grabbed my wrist suddenly and said they were waiting for us. I didn't understand. Who were they? Where were we going? My dad is going to be so mad if I just ran off. Where could we even go when we're between an orbital and a settlement? But I couldn't stop her!

MYLLIS TANAKA
Why? You couldn't fight back?

LUKE KINGSLEY
Look at me! She was stronger than a child should be.
(pauses)
That wasn't the strangest thing. The shuttle stopped suddenly and then the door opened. I-I tried to call out to my dad but she dragged me onto a platform. One that shouldn't have been there.
(pauses)
She-she pulled us down dim hallways and then into a control room? It had a lot of machines. And a large screen. It showed different places in the settlement but nothing looked familiar. She walked up to this button and then turned to me saying, 'Want to blow

it up?’ I-I heard voices from outside of the room and I was so scared I just took my chance and ran off. I thought I was just going to get lost but then it was… I was back on the shuttle sobbing in fear claiming some girl was going to blow up Caritas. My dad said it was just a nightmare but, I could still feel how much my wrist hurt from her pulling me.

(Uncertain)

I-I don’t know.

EMBER SMAUK

That’s terrifying. Got an excuse on why you didn’t tell us?

LUKE KINGSLEY

I thought it was a nightmare and it terrified me. I didn’t want to relive it and then it never felt right to bring it up. I thought I could just forget it.

DEVAN HEIGHTS

(calming)

You’re safe Luke. Nothing happened. Nothing exploded. I, I can’t imagine carrying that for fourteen years.

YUE TANAKA

I know I’m the dramatic one but Dev yours is so much worse to keep from the rest of us. You could have died.

DEVAN HEIGHTS

(guilty)

I-I know. I know. It was my job to take care of you all. I, I just thought it was the right thing.

MYLLIS TANAKA

Ah yeah, Devan? You were wrong.

YUE TANAKA
What about you Ember? You're the only one who hasn't said anything about their experience.

EMBER SMAUK
(groans)
That's because I don't have one to share.

LUKE KINGSLEY
I thought you said something strange happened to you earlier. Or, ahh, you told me earlier.

EMBER SMAUK
(sputtering)
No, that's… well it's, it's kind of….

MYLLIS TANAKA
Oh, come on! Spit it out Em!

EMBER SMAUK
(frustrated but nervous)
Someone, fine someone handed me like a business card, a fucking business card, and they said they'd be expecting me there, but the location doesn't make any sense. Like nothing's there, I checked.
(pauses)
It's fine, it's fine though. It's fine because it's just a joke. Some asshole pulling a prank to freak me out. It's not true. I'm not going to some fake made-up station used to haunt nightmares. All of your experiences can be explained if you think about it. It's not real.

LUKE KINGSLEY
(in a quiet voice)

But what if it is?

EMBER SMAUK
Then I'll be the only one next with a story to tell.

There is a crackle of an intercom.

STATION ANNOUNCER
The shuttle has arrived! Please board as quickly as possible. This will be the last shuttle leaving Vesperi Station for the evening. Once again, the shuttle to Mars is leaving.

YUE TANAKA
Well, friends and foes, it looks like our time together is over. It has been fun getting to spend time together, the five of us.

MYLLIS TANAKA
Maybe we will all have more scary stories to share next time. Who knows. We all have a friend now who's been to the Station.

LUKE KINGSLEY
Please don't say that. I never want to think about it again.

DEVAN HEIGHTS
I'm sure it'll be fine. No matter if it's real or not, we all survived our encounters. I-I mean most people do. I'd imagine that's why people talk about it all the time. Why else would there be a word for what happened to us? Ember, you shouldn't be scared to-

EMBER SMAUK
(defensive)
I'm not scared!
(firmly)

I’m not scared.

DEVAN HEIGHTS
It’s just, it’s one more thing we all share now. Connected together, even as far apart as we are.

YUE TANAKA
(giggling)
Can’t separate this squad!

MYLLIS TANAKA
Oh like the blue string of fate!

EMBER SMAUK
You mean red?

MYLLIS TANAKA
No, isn’t red for romance? Blue is for friends! Trust me, it just feels like a friends color.

EMBER SMAUK
I guess.

LUKE KINGSLEY
We should get going. I can’t be late for my new job.

YUE TANAKA
Be sure to get us souvenirs from your ranch, Lu.

MYLLIS TANAKA
Something cute, oh oh and cool. Like us!

DEVAN HEIGHTS
Stay in touch everyone. Especially you Ember.

EMBER SMAUK
If a mysterious station doesn’t eat me first, sure.

LUKE KINGSLEY

Be safe everyone. I'll miss you. It was fun? I mean most of it was fun. Not this part.

MYLLIS TANAKA
(in a cheerful voice)
Miss you all until the sun goes out and consumes us all!

EMBER SMAUK
Still the worst way to say goodbye.

MYLLIS TANAKA
And you're still no fun.

YUE TANAKA
So long, Venus. Until we return home again.

There are sounds of people walking and boarding a spaceship. Once it fades there is a brief pause of eerie silence.

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

This episode, Station at the End of the Universe, was written and directed by Charlie Neal and edited by Kale Brown

Yue Tanaka was voiced by Ayumi Shinozaki
Luke Kingsley was voiced by Charlie Neal
Myllis Tanaka was voiced by Paige Koch
Ember Smauk was voiced by Eryn "Cerise" Dearden
Devan Heights was voiced by Quill Turner
with additional voice work by Kale Brown

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.

Breathing Space, Fading Frontier is a Law of Names Production

Nebula Cola (after Station at the end of the Universe)

Funky music plays throughout

NARRATOR
There are few things that bring me greater joy while I'm traveling this vast System we call home than a refreshing beverage. And that's why I reach for Nebula Cola.

Can being opened, soda being poured into a glass, carbonation bubbling

Nebula Cola's expertly crafted formula was designed to boost the mood, fortify the body, and sharpen the mind using a carefully curated list of proprietary bioprinted ingredients that you won't find in any other commercially-available carbonated beverage. All those benefits, *and* it still has a crisp and tangy

cola taste that satisfies any thirst!

Nebula Cola is the number one soft drink in the System. With flavors like Nebula Cola Classic, Nebula Cola: Sunspot, Nebula Cola: Void, and Nebula Cola: Stardust, there is something for everyone!

And now: try new Nebula Cola: Black. The same great Nebula Cola taste with a caffeine kick of coffee for those long hauls across the System.

Nebula Cola, For Astronomical Thirst!

Music fades out. Record scratch, music returns

Your favorite soft drink just got *even* better!

Nebula Cola is now a proud member of the YuKon Family of Fine Products! No more trips to the store. No more Waystation Mart runs! Place an order with YuKon and get that supercharged supernova of thirst-quenching power you love delivered to you anywhere in the System in just 24 Terran hours!

Nebula Cola. Now, at the speed of YuKon.

Music fades out, for real this time