

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

This episode contains terminal illness, child death, separation from family, and mentions of unethical adoption.

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

The low hum of a ship in motion sounds in the background

AYSIMA

Who taught you how to fight, Mills?

MILLS

You did, Captain.

AYSIMA

See, I thought so, but if I had been the one to teach you to fight...well, you would've been able to take down that kid without giving them a concussion.

MILLS

Aw, this isn't gonna be a thing, is it?

AYSIMA

I dunno, bud. You tell me. Looked like they were smaller than Kitty when we

first found her, but I'm sure they were very scary in the cargo bay.

MILLS

Scary? More like feral. Captain, my nose is broken and they nearly clawed out my eye.

AYSIMA

Aw, it's not the first time your nose been broken. Certainly won't be the last. And they barely scratched your eyebrow.

MILLS

Yeah. Scratched. Because I knocked them out.

AYSIMA laughs

A door wooshes open, steady beep and footsteps

LOU

You two got a reason to be loitering and disturbing my patients?

Door wooshes shut

AYSIMA

We just wanna disturb the one, Lou.

MILLS

What? No. I'm not loitering, I need to get my nose checked out.

LOU

(inhales sharply)
You can wait.

AYSIMA

Really, slamming the kid's head into a crate was excessive, Mills.

MILLS

They were violent!

LOU

They're a hundred pounds at high gravity. *Maybe.*

MILLS

My nose! My eye - I'm injured!

AYSIMA

Ahh, calm down, Mills, you're not in trouble.

MILLS

(sniffs)

Oh, really? So no extra training? No drills?

AYSIMA

Do you want me to change my mind?

MILLS

Nope! No, Captain.

AYSIMA

Mhm.

(sighs)

What's the verdict on the kid, Lou?

LOU

Well. They're awake.

AYSIMA

Well, what're we doing out here, then?

LOU

You were being a nuisance, last time I checked.

AYSIMA

(laughs)

Mutiny.

Door wooshes open and steady beeping returns, footsteps

LOU

Meet Sloane.

SLOANE

What, a man can't introduce himself around here?

LOU

Figured you'd want to save your breath.

SLOANE

Funny. 'cause I ain't got much left, right?

MILLS

What does that mean?

SLOANE

Means I'm dying, slick. Thought I was the one with the head injury.

AYSIMA

Lou?

LOU

(inhales)

He's telling the truth. Don't know how you managed it, kid, but it's the worst case of IDP that I've ever seen.

SLOANE

Yeah, well. I don't tend to do things halfway.

MILLS

IDP?

SLOANE

Interplanetary dust pneumoconiosis.

AYSIMA

Spacer's lung, Mills. How long?

LOU

Two months.

SLOANE

Maybe. If I'm lucky. Doc back on Hektor said I had one.

MILLS

You're dying in a month, and you decided to stowaway on a...uh, cargo ship?

SLOANE

Oh, don't insult me with that. Didn't get a chance to snoop in the crates before you damn near opened my skull on

one, but I'm sure whatever's in 'em
ain't legal.

AYSIMA

Mills, go debrief Kitty—I wanna know
how much time we'll waste getting our
guest back to a station.

SLOANE

I'm sure I'll miss your hospitality.

Door whooshes

AYSIMA

Careful. I'm not convinced that I
shouldn't just space you and be done
with it.

LOU

(sharp)
Aysima.

AYSIMA

He's practically dead already, Lou.

LOU

It's not right, I—

SLOANE

I just...I just need to get to Ganymede.

AYSIMA

That's not in our flight path.

SLOANE

You think I haven't done this before?
Yes, it is. You've got a buyer there,
somebody who wants whatever you're
carrying in your cargo bay.

AYSIMA

And how do you know that?

SLOANE

I've never seen a smuggler's ship with
so little protection. Guess y'all don't
get prying eyes too often. Take me to
Ganymede, and I can fix that for you.

AYSIMA

Seems like an unfair deal. We'll be losing resources to sustain you; food, water, oxygen, medical supplies.

SLOANE

Don't eat much. Don't drink much, either. Pretty soon I'll stop breathing.
(ragged breaths)
And you can't treat me.

AYSIMA

You're sick.

LOU

It's too late, is what he means. At this point, all we can do is -

SLOANE

(overlapping with Lou)
'All we can do is make him comfortable.' I know, Doc. I've heard it before.

AYSIMA

I'm not sure if that makes it even.

SLOANE

I've - I've got connections. Information. People you might be able to use, places you might want to know about. I've been runnin' in a certain kind of circle for years, now. I know how to disappear. I know how to make people look where I'm not.

AYSIMA

You think we don't?

SLOANE

I think that I saw you. I think that I could help you make it so that the next person like me won't.

AYSIMA

Hm. You said two months, Lou?

LOU

Maybe one.

AYSIMA

You have two weeks until we hit Gany.
We'll get you there and no farther.
That's our end of the deal. But I don't
need anything that you've offered.

SLOANE

I don't have anything else to give.

AYSIMA

I want an explanation, to know what
makes a dying man decide to stow away
on a smugglers ship instead of going
peacefully into the void. You've got a
story? You'll tell it.

SLOANE

(weakly)
It's not what.

LOU

Aysima, this can wait—

AYSIMA

He's just giving me some collateral,
Lou. He can rest after this.

SLOANE

It's who. Not what. Who. I have to see
her—I promised. She wanted me to
promise.

AYSIMA

Thank you. That's enough.

Door whooshes open, footsteps, steady beeping fades, door
whooshes shut

AYSIMA

Ah, fuck.

Door whooshes open, footsteps approach, beeping heard from behind
door, then door whooshes shut

LOU

Are you out of your damn mind?

AYSIMA

(sighs)

Lou.

LOU

Don't do that. Don't talk to me like I'm being irrational. You aren't the one who's gonna have to watch that kid die.

AYSIMA

I - I didn't think about that. I'm sorry, I -

LOU

No. You *knew* that I'd be the one there. And that I'd have to take care of him as he...faded away. You just didn't think I'd care.

AYSIMA

Would you rather us turn around and leave him to die alone? Should we take him back to whoever let him get that sick?

LOU

What?

AYSIMA

You think that - he can't be older than 25. You think that someone his age has IDP of that level on their own? He was workin' for someone.

LOU

He's 19.

AYSIMA

(shocked pause)

No.

LOU

He's younger than Mills.

Footsteps, clothing rustles

AYSIMA

(sighs)

I'm sorry, Lou.

LOU

Thank you. And you're right that we can't send him back. But we're not leaving him on Ganymede, either. Not if he doesn't find what he's looking for.

AYSIMA

Who he's looking for. That was the important part.

LOU

Yeah, He's going to stay here until the end if he doesn't find them, alright?

AYSIMA

Alright.

Clothing rustles

LOU

Why'd you make that deal? In there?

AYSIMA

(sighs)

Do you want the answer you expect, or the truth?

LOU

(exhales)

Ah...which is...worse?

AYSIMA

I don't know. I was curious, maybe. I wanted something, and I'm used to getting the things I want. We kept Kitty because she was smart and lonely, and Mills because he was big and loyal, and... none of that will matter, with this kid.

LOU

Sloane.

AYSIMA

I know his name.

LOU

Then use it.

AYSIMA

I'll...try. For you.

(sighs)

It doesn't matter, with Sloane. I was just thinking that it would be more of a hassle to turn around and that you'd be mad at me if I spaced him—

LOU

That's almost romantic.

AYSIMA

(laughs softly)

I try. And that I wanted to know how he ended up like that. Who did it to him. Doesn't cost us anything to take him to Ganymede. Doesn't cost him anything to tell me why he wants to be there.

LOU

You're right. That is worse.

AYSIMA

No it isn't. You thought I'd figured out a way to wring money out of a dead man.

LOU

(laughs)

I'd bet my ring that you already have.

AYSIMA

Keep it on, missus.

Scene break

Steady beeping

MILLS

Morning, Sunshine.

SLOANE

Awww. You.

AYSIMA

Him.

SLOANE

You, I expected. We made a deal. *He* tried to turn my brain into scrambled eggs.

AYSIMA

So you remember the deal. Good.

SLOANE

Sickness of the body, not the mind.

AYSIMA

Except for that concussion that you're recovering from.

SLOANE

Never stopped me before.

AYSIMA

Well, that's something you and Mills have in common. He's here because, unlike me, he doesn't have anything better to do than listen to you talk.

SLOANE

What? No, that-I'm...the deal was that I would tell you.

AYSIMA

I made a deal on the behalf of the ship and crew that I captain. That means your little tragedy belongs to any and all of us. Today it's Mills.

SLOANE

(almost inaudible)
That's bullshit

AYSIMA

Hm?

SLOANE

Aye-aye, Cap'n.

Footsteps retreat

MILLS

I'm not exactly happy about it either, Sunshine.

SLOANE

Aw, am I wastin' your time? Poor rookie, stuck with babysitting the invalid.

MILLS

It's not a rookie thing!

SLOANE

Aw, what is it?

MILLS

I'm...in trouble for, y'know. You.

SLOANE

Mmmm. Ah, you're bein' skittish about your first kill. I *thought* it was weird that you didn't just snap my neck. Listen, so it's a lot easier if you take it -

MILLS

Not that! I'm...I'm in trouble for hurting you. Aysima wasn't happy with me after she learned that you're so...sick and so young. I'm not skittish about killing people, I've done it before.

SLOANE

Mmm...really?

MILLS

Yes!

SLOANE

Okay. How?

MILLS

Well, I was on a different ship before I joined the Silver Crescent. A cargo ship.

SLOANE

Oh, I'm sure.

MILLS

No, like a real one! And, I -
(pause)

Wait.

SLOANE

No, go on, I'm very interested.

MILLS

I can't believe that happened—I'm supposed to be listening to you!

SLOANE

(laughs)

It was worth a try.

(sigh)

Y'know, you picked up on it faster than I thought you would.

MILLS

Yeah, I'm smarter than I look.

SLOANE

Hm, I'm sure you've received an extensive education. Your captain seems the type.

MILLS

Mm. You don't know the half of it. Enough stalling, sunshine. Talk.

SLOANE

(laughs weakly)

You're like a dog with a bone, aren't you? I promise it's not a very interesting story.

MILLS

I think that's for Aysima to decide.

SLOANE

Welp. A deal's a deal. I grew up on Hektor. I was lucky enough to not remember how I got there. Other kids...they'd had parents, had people who cared about them, and they lost 'em. Made 'em soft. They were your kind, y'know?

MILLS

My kind?

SLOANE

Yeah. Kids that somebody loved enough to feed well. Made 'em hungrier, once they were alone. Kids like me we, uh... we were better at being hungry. Or hurt. We were made to be station rats, in a way they weren't.

(pause)

They were always the ones that died first.

MILLS

You...see a lot of that?

SLOANE

'course. Couldn't be squeamish about it when you were...well, lots of them were too sentimental to sell something that could've paid for their last meal. I was better than most. I never stole anything that somebody loved. Not while they were alive.

MILLS

That was...kind of you?

SLOANE

Stupid of me. I was too good at being hungry. At being cold. Leaky suit gets the patch, right? Kids who looked hungry got fed. I didn't.

MILLS

I...I thought there were organizations on stations, you know, places that took care of orphans.

SLOANE

There are.

(laughs bitterly)

For kids who don't look like station rats, of course. I almost took Enora to one, actually, but she nearly broke my arm when I brought it up. Oh, she was pretty enough for it. Just couldn't stand the idea of being somebody's designer child.

MILLS

Enora?

SLOANE

My little sister.

MILLS

You have a little sister?

SLOANE

Hm. I grew up too fast. I was barely eleven when people started looking at me like a threat rather than someone to pity. I needed some way to stay alive—and then I found her.

(pauses)

She was perfect. She looked like she'd been loved before, but she was as clever as any of us station rats.

MILLS

So you...took her in?

SLOANE

What?

(laughs)

No. We teamed up. Taking her in...to what? The fuel drums that I slept in?

MILLS

Uh, I didn't think that far ahead!

SLOANE

I can tell. No, we worked together. People liked to feel like they were saving her. I'd chase her out of some dark alley and, her screaming her head off, and then some idiot would save the day. I'd lift something off them when I walked off.

MILLS

Clever.

SLOANE

Simple, more like. Simple plans are better. Less likely to get tangled in your own tether.

MILLS

And she became your little sister like that?

SLOANE

(laughs)

That was her only flaw. Something about her made you wanna take care of her. Guess you could say she was easy to love. I was stupid to think I'd be different.

MILLS

Did she love you too?

SLOANE

She loved me like I deserved it. Only person who ever did.

MILLS

She's on Ganymede. That's why you need to get there.

SLOANE

I hope she's there. Its where I left her.

SLOANE coughs

MILLS

Left her? What do you mean?

SLOANE

It's all—

(breathes shakily)

It's the only lead I have.

Footstep approach

LOU

Alright. Visiting hours are over, Mills.

MILLS

What? Lou, it's only—

(sighs)

Yes, ma'am.

A chair squeaks

I'll tell you about my first ship
later, alright, Sloane?

SLOANE
What, no 'Sunshine?'

MILLS
Not lookin' too sunny, Sunshine.

SLOANE
Gee, thanks. I'll hold you to that
promise, though.

LOU
Now get out, Mills.

Footsteps retreat and door whooshes open then shut. A bottle pops
open and pills rattle

LOU
Ah! *Do not take that dry.* I'm getting
you water.

SLOANE
I thought you'd try to give me an IV.
Keep me hydrated.

LOU
Do you want an IV?

SLOANE
No.

LOU
You've got two months left. I'm not
going to do anything to you that'll
make those two months worse.

SLOANE
I'm only here for two weeks, Doc.

LOU
Do you really think you'll find her? On
Ganymede?

SLOANE

I have to try. If she's not there...I'd rather die there than on Hektor.

LOU
I'm a good doctor, Sloane.

SLOANE
Uh...yes ma'am?

LOU
I've never had a patient leave my care worse than when they entered it. I'm not letting you be the first, alright?

SLOANE
What's that supposed to mean?

SLOANE laughs

LOU
It means that you're too young to die alone. Either you find your sister, or you stay here.

SLOANE
I don't get a choice?

LOU
You're smart enough to make the right one.

SLOANE
Well...what about the captain?

LOU
You'll find that she knows better than to push me on this.

SLOANE
(laughs then coughs)
I didn't expect you to be the one calling the shots.

LOU
Just because she's the captain doesn't mean she rules the roost.

Water pours from a dispenser into a cup

LOU

But don't beat yourself up too badly.
You can't read it right every time.
You're young. There are some things
that you can only learn through
experience.

SLOANE

Yeah. I know.

LOU

Here's your water. Now you can take
your medicine. It's a mild painkiller,
okay? If I give you anything for your
cough, we run the risk of your immune
system responding negatively and-

SLOANE

It's okay. I know.
(swallows)
I know that I'm untreatable, Doc.

LOU

I wish you weren't.

SLOANE

I believe you. But I mean it. It's
okay.

LOU

It's not.
(takes a deep breath)
I don't know what Aysima is thinking,
making you do this. Too much
excitement. I'll be right here if you
need me, but right now you need to
rest. You hear me?

SLOANE

Loud 'nd clear, doc.

Scene ends

Typing, then a knock, door whooshes open and footsteps approach

AYSIMA

Well, that was awful quick.

Door whooshes closed

MILLS

Yeah, uh, Lou chased me out when he, uh, started coughing. I guess talking that much isn't good for his throat. I didn't realize IDP was...like that.

AYSIMA

Yeah, it's all in the lungs and mouth and throat. Particulate doesn't want to leave your lungs once it's in 'em. Nothin' new, either. It's been happenin' as long as humanity's been pokin' our nose where it don't belong, and...with the right protection, it's easy to avoid, but I guess...well. He was talkin'?

MILLS

Yeah, he was. How'd you know that would work? That he'd talk to me before he talked to you?

AYSIMA

Not going to try and figure it out yourself?

MILLS

Nope. C'mon, teach, show me the way.

AYSIMA

I'm an authority figure, and you aren't. He sees you as more of an equal, since you also don't have a lot of power on the ship.

MILLS

Wow.

AYSIMA

He thinks you're a rookie, and we'll let him. He should have someone he feels comfortable around.

MILLS

But you don't think I'm a rookie, right, Captain?

AYSIMA

I think that you're part of my crew,
and that I don't take in the
inexperienced. I teach you because you
can be better. Not because you don't
know enough.

MILLS

Does Lou know that you made that deal
for Sloane's sake, not your own?

AYSIMA

I don't know what you're talking about.
I'm a very selfish person, Mills.
(sighs)
It's human nature. Even the coldest,
meanest motherfucker doesn't want to
die alone. That kid...Sloane risked
kicking the bucket in a stranger's
cargo bay for a reason. He's got a
weight on his shoulders. If we can fix
that before...before he dies, that's a
good thing. And he'll let us. Because
he doesn't have anything left to lose.

MILLS

Enora. Her name...is Enora. His reason.

AYSIMA

Yeah? That's pretty. Was she?

MILLS

He said so.

AYSIMA

Hm. Didn't expect him to be the type to
risk life and limb for a girl.

MILLS

Oh, not just any girl. His sister. Not
blood, but from the way he talked—

AYSIMA

Somethin' like us. I understand, Mills.

MILLS

Yeah.
(sighs)
Think you can find her with it? For
him?

AYSIMA

Now, why would I do that?

MILLS

Oh, I - I don't know. But you've
already started, right?

AYSIMA

Ugh! Get out of my office, Mills,
before I *throw* you out. I expect to
have a report of everything that Sloane
told you in my hands by 1300.

MILLS

Ah. Understood, captain!

Footsteps retreat, door whooshes open and closed

Scene Break

Distant steady beeping, intermittent puffs from a different
medical device

MILLS

You are *cheating*. I don't know *how*, but
you are! There is no way to win that
many games of drift in a row!

SLOANE

What, so I can't...I can't just be good
at something?

MILLS

Stop that!

SLOANE

Huh? Stop what? I'm not doing anything.
I'm just a -
(pretends to cough)
I'm just a helpless, sick, young man.

MILLS

Uh huh. You wanna try that again? I'll
look away so you can get your face
straight.

SLOANE

(laughs)

Watch it, or I'll set your face
straight.

MILLS
"Set my face straight," scary. C'mon,
Sunshine, teach me how you're cheating.

SLOANE
Well, I'm not, but if I was it might
look a little something like this...

Dialogue fades out, footsteps approach

LOU
Oh, are you lost?

AYSIMA
Ah! Damn, Lou, you're going to give me
a heart attack one of these days.
I've been...busy.

LOU
With what? We have a buyer. The
navigation is set. How long before we
hit Ganymede?

AYSIMA
Uh...four days.

LOU
You can't avoid him like this, Aysima.

AYSIMA
(defensive)
What makes you say that I'm avoidin'
him?

LOU
'cause you're never in here, not even
to see me. When's the last time you
came by for lunch?

AYSIMA
Oh, Lou, I'm so sorry—

LOU
I know that you don't like when there
are outsiders on the ship, but it's not

like this is permanent. You promised me that you would try.

AYSIMA

It's not that.

LOU

Aysima, please.

AYSIMA

Lou, I promise it's not that. I am trying. I'm—

(takes a deep breath)

I know that he was too young to be alone on Hektor, and that he was too young when he struck a deal with another kid, and that he was still too young when he started workin' for the wrong people to try and take care of her. I know that her name was Enora. I know that somethin' happened, but it's somethin' that still upsets him, and he wouldn't tell Mills. But that it meant it wasn't safe for Enora to stay with him anymore. I know that he made sure that the family he left her with was good. I know that Mills calls him Sunshine, and I know that Kitty's worried about his hands being cold because she's making a pair of gloves.

LOU

Aysima.

AYSIMA

You wanted me to try, so I am. I'm just not good at this, Lou. I don't know how to care about people like you do. People that won't stay.

LOU

There's never a guarantee that any of us'll be here tomorrow.

AYSIMA

You know that it's different.

LOU

No. It isn't. Mills comes in every day knowin' that it might be the last time he sees him.

AYSIMA

I thought Sloane had more time.

LOU

He should. But things don't go the way they're supposed to. You know that.

AYSIMA

He's gonna be afraid of me, Lou.

LOU

I don't think that he's afraid of anything, based on the past week.

AYSIMA

Yeah, a week of being around you, the person taking care of him, and Mills, who he thinks is a green idiot, and Kitty, who looks like she's never been in a fight in her life, and-

LOU

You're *scared*?

AYSIMA

I am *not*. He's a kid and he's dyin', Lou. I don't want to make him more uncomfortable than he already is. Remember Ceres? When we were seventeen?

LOU

Well, we were seventeen on Ceres for an entire year, so you're going to have to be a bit more specific.

AYSIMA

Alexei.

LOU

Alexei... Alexei? Oh. The last time someone tried to take us in.

AYSIMA

Yeah. He tried to help us, and it scared the shit out of me.

(takes a shaky breath)
I was still stupid enough to think that
we were livin' that way because we
chose it. Havin' a different choice...
felt like losin' everything we already
had.

LOU
That's why you broke his nose?

AYSIMA
Aw, he let me do it. He was twice my
size.

LOU
You think Sloane feels the way you did?

AYSIMA
You don't?

LOU
I think that you're over-anticipating
again.

AYSIMA
Aw, not this again—

LOU
If he's unhappy about you bein' here,
and he's uncomfortable, he'll tell you
to fuck off. He's pretty good at that.

AYSIMA
I've gotten the impression.

LOU
But you have to give him the chance to
say it. You think he'd be any more
uncomfortable with you being here than
he is dyin' on the ship of someone who
hates him?

AYSIMA
I don't hate him.

LOU
He doesn't know that. He's a kid, and
this is the last place he's ever gonna
get to see. The last people he'll get

to know. We should do our best to make it a good one. Be good people.

AYSIMA
(laughs weakly)
I get the feeling that he's not the type that *likes* "good people".

LOU
Yeah? Well, you can ask him. Looks like they're getting ready to start their next game of Five Card Drift, and I am sick of playing. Great conversation starter.

AYSIMA
But I *hate* Five Card Drift. And I'm terrible at it.

LOU
I know that. Sloane doesn't. Might make him like you more.

AYSIMA
Me being bad at cards?

LOU
You being human.

AYSIMA
(sighs)
I love you.

LOU
I love you too. Now get over there, or Sloane's going to look at your cards before you do.

Scene Break

Typing, then a thud

AYSIMA
Ugh, how many Enora's are there in this godforsaken galaxy?

Scene Break

Steady beeping, intermittent puffs, and dripping of a third medical device

Foosteps approach

SLOANE

What, trying to figure out how to knock?

Curtain opens

AYSIMA

I was trying to figure out if you were asleep. My wife would be very unhappy if I disturbed your rest.

SLOANE

Oh, thank you *so much* for your *concern*.

AYSIMA

(laughs)

We both know that I'm not that kind of person.

SLOANE

What, a good one?

AYSIMA

An *artificial* one. You'd hate that more than rudeness.

SLOANE

You're awfully confident about that. I hate to break it to you, but I let go of any moral qualms about lying a long, long time ago. Smuggler to smuggler? We're both full of shit.

AYSIMA

Didn't say liars. I was never good at dealin' with people who pretended like bein' polite made up for the fact that they were scum. Figured you'd feel the same way.

SLOANE

And why is that?

AYSIMA

Do you want an orange?

SLOANE

What??

AYSIMA

An orange?

SLOANE

Are you just going to ignore my question?

AYSIMA

Mm. I'll peel it for you.

AYSIMA starts peeling the orange

AYSIMA

I used to do this for Lou, you know. She hates the feeling of the peel underneath her nails.

SLOANE

Doesn't everybody?

AYSIMA

Maybe. I don't mind it as much, so I peeled 'em instead.

SLOANE

How cute.

AYSIMA

Did you peel oranges for Enora?

SLOANE

What?

AYSIMA

Maybe you didn't have oranges. We didn't have many. There was a busted crate, once, and we stole them in armfuls and ate ourselves sick trying to eat all of 'em before they went bad. Maybe you just ate the food that you couldn't bear wastin' but knew was too dangerous for her. Made sure she never went hungry while you ate the rotted, dirty scraps where she couldn't see it

happen. Kept her as warm as possible no matter what, even when you were so cold that you couldn't feel your toes. Maybe you—

SLOANE

Stop it. Stop that. What are you... how do you *know* I—

AYSIMA

I *don't*. But I did all the same things, when me and Lou were younger. I...here's your orange.

SLOANE

Are you gonna answer my question now?

AYSIMA

Do you still need me to?

SLOANE

No. No, I *don't* - I *don't* think so.

AYSIMA

We'll reach Gany tomorrow. Now, I'm more afraid of my wife's anger than yours, so you're not leaving this ship.

SLOANE

But I'm not—

AYSIMA

You'll give Mills the information he'll need to look for Enora while he's there. That will be his *only* responsibility.

SLOANE

Yeah, okay. Fine.

ASYIMA

Alright. Thank you. Now, you should be resting. Enjoy your orange.

Scene Break

Background noise of a crowded station, multiple unintelligible voices

LOU

Where is he? I can't believe he's late.

AYSIMA

Ugh, it's been three minutes. He's been searching for a screw in a salvage heap for hours. Look, I'm sure there's a good reason that he's late.

LOU

There's never a good reason for a lack of timeliness.

AYSIMA

Sloane is fine, Lou.

LOU

He's alone!

AYSIMA

Kitty is with him. You said he looked fine when we left. Nothing has changed since then. You know how I know?

LOU

Because Kitty woulda told us. But still, I'd rather we be back on the ship than—

MILLS

(distantly)
Captain!

AYSIMA

There he is. And it's not even five minutes after.

LOU

And he's alone.

AYSIMA

You didn't expect that?

LOU

You did?

AYSIMA

Things left behind don't tend to stay where we leave 'em.

LOU

He didn't leave her behind.

AYSIMA

After all these years, does *she* know that?

MILLS

Sorry, Captain, I was talking to the—

AYSIMA

It's okay, Mills.

MILLS

I didn't, uh...she wasn't there. I talked to everyone I could and nobody even remembered that a little girl had lived there—

AYSIMA

I know. It's okay. Let's just get back to the ship.

Scene Break

Steady beeping, intermittent puffs, dripping, whirring of a fourth medical device

SLOANE

Is it time for my eviction notice?

AYSIMA

You know damn well that my wife would have my head if I tried to take you off this ship. You feelin' okay enough for me to ask you some questions?

SLOANE

Ask away, Captain.

AYSIMA

Is there anything that you haven't told me about Enora? Anything that could help me find her?

SLOANE

Nothing. Not anymore. She was always good at hiding.

AYSIMA

Too good. I just don't get it, Sloane, why would she feel a need to disappear like this?

SLOANE

Y'know, I don't really have IDP.

AYSIMA

What?

SLOANE

Well, I do, but it's, um...it's more than that. S'why it's so bad. Y'know, I used to work on gas mining rigs cleaning intake filters.

AYSIMA

That where you inhaled the dust?

SLOANE

(laughs weakly)

Not dust. Frozen acid. Sulfuric, if you wanna get technical. The, uh, the doc back on Hektor couldn't believe I didn't know that jobs like that were dangerous.

AYSIMA

Oh.

SLOANE

Really started to click, then, why everyone on the rig looked at me like I was a freak. I always thought it was 'cause I was too young. I guess it was, in a way.

AYSIMA

Sloane—

SLOANE

'course, I wouldn't've been there if, uh, it wasn't for my boss loaning me out. Finnegan used to say that gas rigs always needed able-bodies, but he never told me why they were in short supply.

AYSIMA

She's hiding from him?

SLOANE

He wouldn't have wanted her, not when he had me already.

AYSIMA

But she is, isn't she?

SLOANE

Maybe. Does that help?

AYSIMA

It could. I wish that somebody would've told you sooner. That you would've gotten out before it got so bad. I think...

(takes a deep breath)

I think that if things had gone differently, you would've been a fine member of my crew.

SLOANE

Thanks, Captain.

Scene Break

Typing, footsteps approach

LOU

Still searching?

AYSIMA

Of course I am. But I've got a couple leads. Actually, I've been thinking of calling in that favor from—

LOU

Aysima, I think that you need to stop.

AYSIMA

What?

LOU

Not forever. But for now.

AYSIMA

How can you say that? When he's so close—

LOU
(voice breaks slightly)
I know.
That's why you need to give up. Just
for now. You spend all of your time
here, Aysima, and it's still not
enough.

AYSIMA
I'm not going to find her in time, am
I?

LOU
I don't think so.

AYSIMA
(takes a deep breath)
Okay.
(takes another deep breath, shakier
this time, near tears)
Okay. I'll...I'll be there.

Scene Break

Steady beeping, intermittent puffs, dripping, whirring, thumps
from a fifth device

SLOANE
Captain.

AYSIMA
Kitty said that you were asleep.

SLOANE
Naw, just still. Practicing.

AYSIMA
Hope you're keepin' those jokes to
yourself around Lou.

SLOANE
I'm dying, not stupid.
(coughing fit)
You're not going to find her, are you?

AYSIMA
I am. I'm not giving up. Even...even
after you're gone, I won't give up. We
made a deal, didn't we?

SLOANE

I think you're remembering it differently than me.

AYSIMA

I'm the captain. I can change the rules if I want to.

SLOANE

(laughs weakly)

The power's going to your head.

AYSIMA

I know. It's terrible. I'd like you to make a video. A message. For her.

SLOANE

I'll need help.

AYSIMA

We can do it now. We *should* do it now. I don't want—

SLOANE

There's no time to wait anymore.

AYSIMA

I'm sorry.

SLOANE

You know, I'm not. I wish I could've seen her. She's older now than I was when I left. I wonder if she's thought about that.

AYSIMA

I'm sure she has.

SLOANE

But I'm not sorry.

AYSIMA

I'm glad.

SLOANE

I'm not alone.

AYSIMA

Oh, you've noticed the shifts? We thought we were being subtle.

SLOANE
You know that isn't what I meant.
(coughing fit)
Same cut, different cloth.

AYSIMA
Yeah. Same cut.
(takes a shaky breath)
I promise that I'll find her.

SLOANE
(through a smile)
Promises ain't worth anything.

AYSIMA
This one is.

All five devices stop, there is silence except for SLOANE breathing raggedly

Steady beeping starts again, then intermittent puffs, then dripping, then whirring, then thuds. Abruptly, everything stops

A curtain slides open, footsteps approach

MILLS
Sunshine?

Scene Break

Typing, then a heavy sigh from AYSIMA and a chair creaks

Comm beeps then dings as it connects

AYSIMA
Enora Russell? This is the Captain of the Silver Crescent. But you can call me Aysima. I've been searching for you on the behalf of your brother, Sloane, for a few months now.

You're a very hard person to find.
(laughs)
Sloane was proud of that. Liked to think it was because of him. I, uh, have a message for you from him...

Scene fades out

Outro plays

Thank you for joining us for this episode of Breathing Space.

This episode, The Spacer's Lament, was written and directed by Jeremiah and edited by Kale Brown

Aysima is voiced by Kasha Mika
Lou is voiced by Rachel Scully
Mills is voiced by Lucas Justinian
Sloane is voiced 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.

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