

**Content warnings for this episode: mentions of death/degenerative illness, and medical trauma.**

**JACK:**

Hi everyone, Jack here. Before the episode starts, I just want to take a moment to thank some of our Patrons for making this all possible. Thank you to Em Moesen, Alti, and Ollie Sciance. And a reminder that our Patron tiers have changed since the last few episodes, so I would double-check and make sure that you're still signed up for the tier you want to be. Anyway, on with the episode!

*[Mnemosyne theme by Sleauxn]*

*[A low-toned glitch noise. Spaceship ambiance can be heard in the background. A ball bounces repeatedly off the cell wall.]*

**VIC:**

What do you know about Huxley?

**JULES:**

You can't let me die in peace, can you?

**VIC:**

You're not gonna die. Even if you are, you're still available until Cavendish drags you back to that lab.

**JULES:**

*[Sighs.]* I'm not indulging your weird, Stockholm-y crush on Huxley.

**VIC:**

It's— It's not a *crush*.

**JULES:**

*[Snorts.]* Yeah, okay.

**VIC:**

It's not! It's— *[Sighs.]* Look.

*[VIC pulls out the envelope. The ball stops bouncing.]*

**VIC, CONT.:**

This is addressed to *him*, but he gave it to *me*. And I have no idea what could be inside, and I just keep thinking that I— I don't know a single goddamn thing about him besides that he hates it here.

**JULES:**

We *all* hate it here. We're risking our lives to get out of here as soon as the orbit's right. That's the *whole deal*.

**VIC:**

Exactly.

*[Beat.]*

**JULES:**

Why would he give you an envelope addressed to him?

**VIC:**

I don't know. It's an old envelope, too. Like... he's been hanging onto it for a while.

**JULES:**

All I know is that he was on the news like a year ago. It was, like, big medical community drama. I think Gesia was involved somehow?

**VIC:**

Hm. I didn't think the medical community *had* drama.

**JULES:**

I don't think they do... usually. He was just a... *very special* neurologist.

*[The cell door opens. EDMUND the guard stands at the door.]*

**EDMUND:**

Ms. Kroeber. I don't wanna keep Millie waiting.

**JULES:**

Oh, but I do. I *really* do.

**EDMUND:**

Well, I don't. She's scary.

**JULES:**

*[Scoffs.]* Vic, when I die, you can't have any of my shit.

**VIC:**

Not even your nice jumpsuit?

**JULES:**

No, I'm gonna be buried in my nice jumpsuit.

*[VIC sighs.]*

**JULES, CONT.:**

*[Sing-song]* Have fun with your crush.

*[Footsteps as JULES and EDMUND leave.]*

**VIC:**

It's— It's not a—!

*[The cell door slams shut.]*

**VIC, CONT.:**

...Crush.

*[VIC sighs, then opens the envelope.]*

**VIC, CONT.:**

Alright. I'm just gonna open it. I'm just gonna... open it.

*[VIC presses a switch on the recorder inside the envelope. A tinny recording starts playing— there is a heartbeat monitor and a ticking clock in the background of the recording.]*

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

*[Weakly.]* Right, I think this is working. You know, usually I'd ask for—

*[VIC shuts off the recording.]*

**VIC:**

Shit— Shit... *Shit.* *[Sighs.]* *[Mocking HUXLEY]* "Oh! Oh, I know what I'll do! I'll give my stupid secret envelope to Vic. I'll let *them* listen to the shitty recording of a guy who sounds like they're dying. No problem! He can handle it!" *[Sighs.]* Goddammit.

*[Beat as VIC collects their breath. He turns the recording device over in their hands.]*

**VIC, CONT.:**

Yeah, yeah. Okay. *[To self]* You said you wanted to know more about Aster. Maybe it's... I'm gonna listen to it.

*[Shuffling as VIC sits down.]*

**VIC, CONT.:**

It's— I'm gonna press play. I'm pressing play.

*[VIC presses play. The recording starts back up again, still tinny, still with the heartbeat monitor and ticking clock in the background.]*

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

—Help with something like this, but it would ruin the surprise. Uh...

**VIC:**

*[Overlapping]* I'm pressing play.

*[ISAAC stops to catch his breath.]*

**ISAAC, CONT.:**

Where was I? Right, I remember. See? Still got it... *[Small chuckle.]* Sometimes.

**ISAAC, CONT.:**

I wanted to record something, uh, to leave you. Because, well, you know why... However, I know you don't like talking about it, so I'm gonna humor you. Just this once, though. *Just* this once.

*[Beat.]*

**ISAAC, CONT.:**

It's sunny. It's Tuesday. I know it's Tuesday because I got up for long enough to check the calendar in the kitchen this morning, and I'm assuming you still cross off the days every night. *[Sigh.]* With all your routines, I don't know how you can stand me. I was far too erratic and unpredictable, even when I *could* remember what I was doing.

*[Beat.]*

**ISAAC, CONT.:**

I don't know if you'll ever hear this. I imagine you finding this after I'm gone and locking it in your filing cabinet in the lab, or maybe carrying it around in your pocket but never opening it. It's a very *you* thing to do, hoarding memories and souvenirs that never actually leave their box because you're afraid of "ruining everything." Need I remind you of the good china from my mother in the kitchen—that we never ate off *once*, by the way? Honestly, I'm more pissed about *that* than the slow deterioration of my entire being.

[Beat.]

**ISAAC, CONT.:**

But... on the off chance that this thing falls out and starts playing on its own, I want you to know that I'm using what could really, truly be my last moment of lucidity to tell you that it's okay. I'm alright. And, unless you decide to change career paths and become some kind of necromancer because of me, you'll be alright, too.

**ISAAC, CONT.:**

You're pushing *both* of us too hard. I'm worried that once I'm gone, instead of letting go, you're just going to double down the pressure you've got on yourself. So I'm telling you, right now, that you don't have to do that.

[Beat.]

**ISAAC, CONT.:**

Actually, let me rephrase, you pedantic little man. [Small chuckle.] I'm telling you that you *can't* and *won't* do that. Don't work yourself to death just so you can see me again. Don't—

[The door opens.]

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

Isaac?

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

I'm here.

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

Here? Like, you're really—

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

Yeah.

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

That's— that's, uh, that's good. I'm glad. *[Breathless]* Hi.

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

Hi.

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

How— how are you feeling?

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

*[Overdramatic]* Like I'm dying a slow and painful death.

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

Please.

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

Like a consumptive woman in a long flowing nightgown.

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

I need to keep track of your symptoms.

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

Oh, dear, is that *blood* on my handkerchief?

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

*[Laughing]* Isaac.

*[ISAAC laughs, then coughs.]*

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

Okay, fine, alright. Like a seven on the pain scale. It's a little hard to focus vision-wise, and I'm really fucking tired. Is it Tuesday? I saw the calendar earlier, but I'm not always sure—

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

Yes. I can close the blinds if you want to go back to sleep.

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

No, don't. It's nice.

*[Beat.]*

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

Here, I brought your meds.

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

Delicious.

*[A bottle opens and a few pills rattle out.]*

**ISAAC, CONT.:**

I know my memory is shot, but these are different from normal, right?

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

*[Coldly]* I had to go to a different pharmacy. That's all.

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

Aster...

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

I promise. You asked me not to try anything else, so... I haven't.

*[Beat.]*

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

When I'm gone, I—

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

You're gone, I know. They're— they're just from a different pharmacy.

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

Okay. I love you.

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

I love you, too.

*[ISAAC swallows the pills with water.]*

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

Hm! Gross.

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

You say that every time.

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

*[Cheerfully]* Do I? I wouldn't know.

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

Please don't...

*[Beat.]*

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

Do you want me to stay? I could keep reading to you.

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

No, I think I'm gonna take a nap. Can you hand me the recorder on the nightstand before you go, though?

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

Yes, of course— Wait, this is recording. Did you mean to turn this on?

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

I've been keeping a log of my last days for when they write my biography. *[Small chuckle.]* "Dear diary, today my lovely husband came in and tried to poison me."

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

No, I didn't.

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

Hey, I thought it was funny. Don't tell me my comedy skills are degrading, too. Come on, baby. You think I'm hilarious.

*[Beat.]*

**ISAAC, CONT.:**

There he is. I didn't know you were still capable of smiling.

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

*[Laughs sadly]* It's... harder than it used to be.

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

I know. You'll get it back, though.

**HUXLEY [REC.]:**

Maybe. Goodnight. I love you.

*[Footsteps as HUXLEY leaves.]*

**ISAAC [REC.]:**

Goodnight.

*[HUXLEY closes the door.]*

**ISAAC, CONT.:**

You'll get it back. But you're gonna have to try. Really, *really* hard, probably. That's all I want you to do. I hope you hear this. I hope you listen to it. I love you.

*[Beat.]*

**ISAAC, CONT.:**

I... I'm going back to sleep. Bye, Aster.

*[VIC turns the recording off.]*

*[A low-toned glitch noise. Spaceship ambiance can be heard in the background.]*

**LUCY:**

Well. This is Lucy Calvin, recording from the Mnemosyne neurology lab at the beginning of my weapons development project, using the call number GE-16. Unlike the project's previous leader, I have shifted the focus from the psychiatric applications of the preexisting research to a more, mmm... *technological* approach. I also intend to keep these— these *progress* updates strictly business. These are for *archival* purposes, not for airing my own grievances. *[To self]* I differ from our previous leader in that respect as well.

**ROGER:**

Harsh.

*[ROGER straps VINCENT into a chair with velcro.]*

**LUCY:**

Don't interrupt while I'm recording, Roger. My engineer and I plan on developing this... um...?

**ROGER:**

I've been calling it a "memory machine."

**LUCY:**

Fine, this “memory machine,” by programming it with a myriad of settings, so that it can accomplish a myriad of tasks. Information-gathering, for one. An end to lengthy interrogations. A tool for effectively translating human thought into electrical patterns that can be replicated artificially— something that *greatly* interests my Earthside coworkers. But today, we are trying to replicate a function of the machine that was written off as a fluke in previous trials: its ability to effectively hinder, or completely shut down, cognitive function in a subject.

**VINCENT:**

Hey, what?

**LUCY:**

At the moment, of course, the machine needs an experienced operator as well as a subject, so we will be bringing in Mx. Algernon. The wonderful thing about *that* is that he’s already completed this function once before.

**VINCENT:**

Hold on—

**LUCY:**

I’m *recording*, dear! If you could hold your comments? Thank you! As I was saying, over the next several trials, I will be recreating that function; first temporarily, then permanently. Its value as a weapon— especially once we get a prototype for a portable version off the ground— is *unspeakable*. Truly outstanding!

[*Beat.*]

**ROGER:**

I know I said it already, but I really don’t think they’re gonna roll over on this one, Lucy.

**LUCY:**

[*Pointedly*] Dr. Huxley and Mx. Algernon know that their positions here hinge on their cooperation, and furthermore, on the success of my experiments. *And* they know that the success of my *experiments* hinges on their ability to work so closely with this technology, as well as each other. As it stands, I can’t see any problems arising, and if they do, we are prepared for war.

**VINCENT:**

Are you seriously going to do this? This is murder!

**LUCY:**

It's not murder if you still have a heartbeat. *[Sing-song]* Not legally, anyway!

*[The door opens. Footsteps as HUXLEY enters the lab.]*

**LUCY, CONT.:**

Speak of the neurologist. Hello, Huxley.

**HUXLEY:**

What is this? Vincent?

*[The door closes.]*

**LUCY:**

I had her brought in early so that we could catch her up on our work so far, what her purpose is here.

**VINCENT:**

Hey, Hux. Your boss is about to super brain-kill me. Did you give her my name, or something?

**HUXLEY:**

My— What? No. Absolutely not. What's going on?

**LUCY:**

We're testing the machine operator's ability to remove the subject's cognitive function. Vic, obviously, is our little operator, but we still needed a subject. Dr. Cavendish—

**HUXLEY:**

*[Pointedly]* Vic isn't *our* anything.

**LUCY:**

Dr. Cavendish was kind enough to complete the trade we began with Jules. As soon as Vic is here, we can begin.

*[Beat.]*

**HUXLEY:**

All the things we could do here and you're choosing murder?

**LUCY:**

Why is everybody calling it murder? She'll still be alive!

**VINCENT:**

Not very comforting! Hux, get me out of here!

**HUXLEY:**

Roger, untie Vincent. We are *not* doing this.

**LUCY:**

Yes, dear, we *are*. Sit *down*. Need I remind you of how thin that ice is you're standing on?

*[LUCY sharply inhales.]*

**LUCY, CONT.:**

The folks who run this place chose me, their worst corporate enemy, over you. Do you really think you're in any position to order me around? This is the scientific method. You find a phenomenon and try to recreate it. You make a hypothesis and try to prove it. You find an unanswered question, and you *answer it*.

**HUXLEY:**

*[Gritted teeth]* This isn't the kind of question we ask.

**LUCY:**

Isn't it?

**HUXLEY:**

No! Throwing desperate people to the wolves isn't a prerequisite of the scientific process, it's an extension of *torture*.

**LUCY:**

We'll have to agree to disagree. We're pushing forward with this trial, regardless of our personal disputes. Because as long as the two of us are living on this station, *doctor, you* are following *my* direction. You lost the privilege to change a course of action *years* ago. I'm truly sorry it's taken you so long to realize that, but I'm done indulging your misery. We will begin when the guards bring in Mx. Algernon.

*[Tense silence.]*

**HUXLEY:**

*[Suddenly calm]* Okay.

**LUCY:**

"...Okay?"

**HUXLEY:**

You're right. As long as I stay on Mnemosyne, I don't have much of a choice in anything. No one does.

**LUCY:**

Exactly. I'm so glad you've come around.

**VINCENT:**

For *fuck's sake!*

**HUXLEY:**

If you'll excuse me a moment. I left some of my notes back in my quarters.

**LUCY:**

Of course. Hurry back!

**HUXLEY:**

*[Under his breath]* Like hell I will.

**LUCY:**

What was that?

**HUXLEY:**

Nothing, Dr. Calvin.

*[Footsteps as HUXLEY leaves the lab. The door opens and closes.]*

**LUCY:**

Oh! No, the recorder's still on. Roger, you'll have to teach me how to edit this—

*[A low-toned glitch noise. The cell door opens and closes as HUXLEY runs into VIC's cell.]*

**HUXLEY:**

Vic! Vic, where are the others? We don't have time, we have to—

**VIC:**

*[Quietly]* I opened the envelope.

**HUXLEY:**

We... can talk about it later, there's something a little more important—

**VIC:**

Did you— did you kill your husband? And is that why you're up here—?

**HUXLEY:**

*[Interrupting]* That's not why I'm at Mnemosyne.

**VIC:**

Great, that answers *one* of my questions.

*[HUXLEY takes a deep breath.]*

**HUXLEY:**

We only got to be married for six months. That's... hardly anything. We'd been together for longer, but it was... It was a permanent thing. He was going to be there forever. Obviously people get divorced, but... he was going to be there *forever*.

*[Beat.]*

**HUXLEY, CONT.:**

Part of me— part of me knew I was lying to myself. He sat me down on our third date and... made sure I knew what I was getting into, that it was already going—that it was already getting harder for him to concentrate, and that his life expectancy was half of what mine is. But then we were living together, and then we were married... *[Voice breaking]* and he was going to *be* there forever. And *six months later* he gets a headache that won't go away, and...

**VIC:**

I'm— I'm sorry.

**HUXLEY:**

I stopped seeing patients. I applied for every research grant I could find and I put it all into finding a cure. I couldn't even find anything to slow it down. He kept telling me it was okay, he was okay. But he'd gotten his whole life with him, and I'd had six months.

*[Beat. They both take a deep breath.]*

**HUXLEY, CONT.:**

I was almost out of money, and Isaac was almost out of time, and finally, I thought I'd found something. I was out of resources to run any proper clinical trials— I didn't care. In hindsight, it may not have actually been that promising, it may have just been my own sunk cost fallacy clouding my judgment. But hindsight... doesn't change what happened.

**VIC:**

Did he know what you were giving him?

**HUXLEY:**

He asked me to stop trying new drugs on him the week before. I didn't— *[Sharp inhale.]* I wanted him to be happy. Comfortable, at least.

**VIC:**

...Comfortable.

**HUXLEY:**

He was dead two days later. It's... unclear how much I contributed to that. But I kept looking, kept pushing. It took a full year before anyone started to question how I was still getting funding and supplies. Even longer for them to revisit Isaac's toxicology reports. Legally, I'm only here for fraud and malpractice.

*[Beat.]*

**VIC:**

*[Awkward]* Right. Thank you... for telling me, uh... *[Sighs.]*

**HUXLEY:**

Even if I didn't kill him, I know I let him die. If I'd only pushed a bit harder... *[Voice breaking]* sometimes I wonder if, at the end, I cared more about the unanswered question than I did about him. When he died... I don't know if I was mourning my husband or my failure.

**VIC:**

When you're tangled up with a person like that, it can end up feeling like the same thing—

**HUXLEY:**

*[Interrupting]* But there's a distinction there, and it matters. It was selfish. That— That's why... *[Sighs.]* I know whatever he said on that recording was just so *goddamn kind*, because that's who he was, and I can't listen to it.

*[HUXLEY takes a deep, ragged breath.]*

**HUXLEY, CONT.:**

I can't let him be kind to me. I wasn't kind to him.

**VIC:**

You're right, he was. Seemed like it, anyway. Kind, or gentle, or whatever. And you're... not. I— *[Small laugh.]* I don't think anyone would use those adjectives for you. But I don't think you're a bad... *person*. You've done some bad things, some *really* bad things. To me, to Jules, to Isaac. To yourself, probably?

**HUXLEY:**

I think that I'm just—

**VIC:**

*[Interrupting]* But you've also fought for people, even when you're not supposed to. Even when those people don't think you should, and... you're smart, but you don't hold it over people. Sometimes I don't even think you care. Maybe this entire, elaborate scheme is all a means to an end for you, and yeah, maybe that's bad, but... I think those ends are gonna be something good! I think they could help people. Hell, I think they probably already *have*.

*[Beat.]*

**VIC, CONT.:**

I— I don't know. You loved him, right? Or... love?

**HUXLEY:**

I did. I loved him.

**VIC:**

Look. If being a "bad person" was as straightforward as doing *bad things*, it'd be a lot harder to like you. And it's not easy as it is. I just found out you maybe possibly killed a man, and not to beat a dead horse here, but you've kind of been torturing me for the last few months. Frankly, none of us should trust you in any capacity, but here we are.

*[Beat.]*

**HUXLEY:**

I think... they were right to ship me off the planet. *[Sniffs.]* I don't think I'm supposed to love people. I don't think I can do it without hurting them.

**VIC:**

Maybe not.

**HUXLEY:**

I was hurting you before I even knew you.

**VIC:**

...You were.

**HUXLEY:**

I'm sorry. You don't have to forgive me.

*[Beat.]*

**VIC:**

Are you going to hurt me now?

**HUXLEY:**

No.

**VIC:**

Well, that's something.

**HUXLEY:**

I'm scared that if I... I'm scared that I'll just keep hurting you.

*[VIC sharply exhales.]*

**VIC:**

We don't— I mean, we could just... go our separate ways when we get to Earth. You can't hurt me if you don't know where I am. Is that what you want?

**HUXLEY:**

Of course not. Of course I don't want that.

**VIC:**

Shit, Aster, neither do I.

*[An alarm blares in the background.]*

**VIC, CONT.:**

What's going on?

**HUXLEY:**

Oh. Right. Things are going... very wrong. We can't wait for the orbit to line up. That— That's what I came in to tell you. The alarm... they must have found the guard I took down outside the cell block.

**VIC:**

*[Panicking]* You know, most people would lead with "I killed a guard and we have to run" instead of "I feel like I killed my husband!"

**HUXLEY:**

I tried to! And she's not dead. Just incapacitated.

**VIC:**

With *your* upper body strength...? I— I mean, sure. Okay. Get me out of here.

**HUXLEY:**

Right.

*[The cell door opens.]*

**HUXLEY, CONT.:**

I'm trying to make things right. For you, not for him. I hope you know that.

**VIC:**

I know. I just... I need more time to see.

*[A second alarm starts blaring.]*

**VIC, CONT.:**

Can we talk about this more when we're back on Earth?

**HUXLEY:**

Of course.

**VIC:**

Okay.

**HUXLEY:**

See you there.

**VIC:**

See you there.

*[A low-toned glitch noise. The alarms from before continue. Doors slam left and right. HUXLEY and VIC run down the hallway.]*

**VIC:**

Where's Jules? We gotta find— oh, hey. You look like shit.

**JULES:**

*[Gritting teeth]* I was on my way back from Mildred's. What the *hell* is going on?

**HUXLEY:**

Plans have changed a little.

**JULES:**

Yeah. I gathered that. Context clues.

**HUXLEY:**

We're going. *Now*.

**JULES:**

*Shit.*

**VIC:**

Huxley's going to the lab to grab Lucy and Vincent.

**JULES:**

...Vincent?

**VIC:**

Long— long story. We— we can talk about it on the flight home. I'm going to cut the power. Hugo—!

*[The prison PA system crackles to life. HUGO's silky-smooth baritone voice comes through, singing what could loosely be called "opera."]*

**VIC:**

Hugo got the message, okay. Walk with us until the hall clears a little.

**JULES:**

Sure. *[To self]* Shit.

*[More chaos.]*

**JULES, CONT.:**

*[Stage whisper]* Can you two try and look a *little* less suspicious?

**VIC:**

Suspicious?

**JULES:**

You look *way* too awkward. You're walking around like you just got caught smoking in the school bathroom.

**VIC:**

It's the adrenaline.

**HUXLEY:**

*[Overlapping]* I never smoked in the bathrooms.

*[Pause as the others look at HUXLEY.]*

**HUXLEY, CONT.:**

...Not— Not that I smoked in school.

*[The chaos dies down around them. HUGO continues singing over the PA system. VIC lets out a small snorting laugh.]*

**JULES:**

Right... Well. Let's get out of here.

**VIC:**

See you at the escape pod.

**JULES:**

Yeah. See you there.

*[JULES jumps into a vent.]*

**HUXLEY:**

Here's the wire cutters. I'll cover you.

*[VIC starts to open a panel on the floor.]*

**VIC:**

Okay. Uh. Going dark. You'll find your way to the lab okay?

**HUXLEY:**

Yes. And you'll get to the bridge?

**VIC:**

Yeah.

*[Beat.]*

**HUXLEY:**

Vic?

**VIC:**

Yeah?

**HUXLEY:**

I'm going to get you out of here.

*[The alarms and PA system die down as the power starts to fail.]*

*[Mnemosyne theme by Sleauxn.]*

**JACK:**

Today's episode was written by **Jack Loney**. It featured **Leland Heed** as Victor Algernon, **Varis Zima** as Aster Huxley, **Serina Johnston** as Jules Kroeber, **Fin Carter** as Roger Morris, **Noelle Salisbury** as Lucy Calvin, **E.G. Tariku** as Hugo Highsmith, **Rhys Tirado** as Vincent, and **Alex Goldman** as Isaac Huxley. Our editor is **Stoker Leopold** and our music is by **Sloane Van Dyke**. If you like what we do here and want to check out our other shows, follow us on social media, or support us on Patreon, all of that information will be linked in the description below. Thank you for listening!

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