

SCENE 1

SFX: City traffic ambience. Wind.

CAINE:

I hate it here. (SIGHS)

SFX: Someone climbs up a ladder.

VALERIA:

Whew, it is a lot higher up than I remember.

CAINE:

Val?

VALERIA:

Hey.

CAINE:

How'd you find me?

VALERIA:

Uh... let's just say I had a hunch about where you'd run off to. Plus, I'm the one who even showed you how to get up here.

CAINE:

(SIGHS) I'm still mad.

VALERIA:

I get it. And I mean, don't let me interrupt the time-honored practice of teen delinquent brooding.

Can I sit with you?

CAINE:

Whatever.

VALERIA:

I'm sorry Mom and Dad have been really hard on you lately. Losing the radio station was tough for them.

CAINE:

Yeah, I know.

I know it's stupid to be mad at them. But I didn't even do anything wrong!

VALERIA:

I feel like your bloody nose says otherwise.

CAINE:

So? You get into fights all the time.

VALERIA:

Not with Correctors, I don't. I usually take on people I know I can beat.

CAINE:

(SIGHS) Whatever. Val... That guy. He didn't even do anything. And the Correctors just took him. No hesitation.

VALERIA:

I know. It's not fair.

CAINE:

And of course, Mom and Dad got mad at *me* for standing up for him.

VALERIA:

Caine, they're just worried about you. They want to keep you safe. And what you did was really dangerous.

CAINE:

Oh, so what I do is really dangerous. But then you have Mom and Dad turn around and tell Sebastian, "Always do the right thing, Sebastian."

VALERIA:

(SNORTS)

That's because he doesn't do much of anything if no one tells him to.

CAINE:

Ever since Seb quit his job...

VALERIA:

Oh, Caine.

CAINE:

He's never around. You aren't either. And neither are Mom and Dad. I'm alone almost all the time and I... it sucks, okay? Heh. Guess that's why I'm a delinquent.

VALERIA:

(SHE LAUGHS) I know, Caine. I know it's hard not to see us. But as soon as Mom and Dad make enough money, things will be back to normal. Then we can move out once you turn 18 and you can get a job too.

CAINE:

Why though? Sebastian doesn't have one and he's fine. I don't want to have to work all the time for cryptos. I don't get it.

VALERIA:

Don't you want to be able to afford things? Nice things? I mean, look at Glasshouse. It's so beautiful. All the fountains and bridges. And how you can see inside the buildings made of glass and mirrors. It's like they don't have any secrets. Everything's out in the open.

MUSIC PLAYS.

CAINE:

See? Val, that's what I'm talking about. They live so much better than we do. They have so much more. I mean, doesn't that mean they have enough money to fix up the Tollbooth? Or anywhere in the Metropolis for that matter?

VALERIA:

We shouldn't just rely on handouts. It's better to work hard and earn it. One of these days we'll move there and then we'll know we've made it.

CAINE:

Yeah, like in a... hm... one, two, three... oh wait. A million years.

VALERIA:

Well, having a job there is the first step.

CAINE:

Couldn't you have worked with Rossum? I mean, she's kinda mean, but you like her at least.

VALERIA:

Like I said, Mom and Dad want us to stay out of trouble.

SFX: Someone climbs up the ladder.

VALERIA:

Speaking of trouble...

SEBASTIAN:

Hey there. Didn't know there was a party up here.

CAINE:

Are you here to take me back home?

SEBASTIAN:

Nah. Did you ask Valeria that?

VALERIA:

No, because they know we have to go home at some point.

SEBASTIAN:

Says who?

VALERIA:

Uh, says the fact that it'll get very cold up here. And I'm not interested in freezing my ass off.

CAINE:

We can still stay a little longer though, right? I mean, now that you guys are here.

VALERIA:

I think I can manage.

SEBASTIAN:

Yeah, okay, why not? I haven't got anywhere else to be.

VALERIA:

You never do.

SEBASTIAN:

I'd rather stick with you guys anyway, no matter where we were.

CAINE:

Really? What about Glasshouse? Apparently Val already has an eye on the place.

SEBASTIAN:

Glasshouse? In your dreams. I have better places in mind.

MUSIC PLAYS.

CAINE:

Why do you always have to be so vague, Seb?

VALERIA:

Maybe you should... I don't know, tell us about them sometime.

SEBASTIAN:

Yeah, okay. Once we get all our stuff packed, I'll tell you where we're going.

CAINE:

Man. All of us want to get out of here so badly. Here I thought it was just me being a teenager.

SEBASTIAN:

Nah. There's better places.

VALERIA:

Loads of better ones.

SEBASTIAN:

We'll get there someday.

CAINE:

Mom and Dad are probably wondering where we are.

VALERIA:

(SHE INHALES SHARPLY) Uh...

SEBASTIAN:

...Yeah, probably.

Oh geez, it *is* cold. Maybe we'd better head down.

CAINE:

W-w-w-wait, wait a second!

C-can we get something to eat before we... we head home?

SEBASTIAN:

Are you hungry? I can cook something for you once we're back.

CAINE:

Ew, not *your* cooking.

SEBASTIAN:

Hey, I'm gonna leave you here if you keep complaining.

VALERIA:

You're no fun. Toss me the keys, I'll take us somewhere. I just got my cryptos so it's my treat.

CAINE:

Really? Awesome! Thanks, Valeria.

VALERIA:

No problem.

SEBASTIAN:

Alright. Last one down is a junker!

CAINE:

Says you, slowpoke!

SFX: He starts down the ladder.

VALERIA:

Caine, you are not getting ahead of me!

CAINE:

Hehe, we'll see about that, Val!

MUSIC FADES.

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

A thousand memories of my brother and sister, little moments between all of us that I'd relived through Arcadia and the tapes and pictures I still had of them. Always watching them move ahead of me, farther and farther until I couldn't see them anymore. Until I was convinced that I was by myself.

All the times I spent blaming myself for not doing anything when Sebastian left, for not looking for Valeria when she walked out the door... before I knew it, I was on the floor, clutching the module in my hands.

DAX:

I know it's hard to take in. But it's the truth.

CAINE:

I don't... I don't understand. Why didn't they say anything?  
Why didn't *you* say anything?

DAX:

I've been planning something. And you're going to help me.  
And when all of it is over, we have a chance to see Val  
again. Maybe even Sebastian if she helps us.

CAINE:

W-What do you mean?

DAX:

You did something very special for the both of us. You got  
into Zero Zero. And you didn't just show me where they  
were. No, you showed me that they've got the traitor. And  
you showed me that they've got Lola Sunn.

SCENE 2

SU-JIN:

Dammit. This is bad.

LOLA:

How soon will they be here?

VIC:

We've got thirty minutes at best.

SU-JIN:

They've already got the coordinates so there's not much use in me trying to re-up the shielders and scramblers.

SFX: Door opens. Footsteps.

INDRA:

What's going on? Sounds like you're all awful busy.

SU-JIN:

Correctors. Can't say I didn't expect this, but I also didn't think it would be so soon. How are we going to move all this stuff...? And all our data?

LOLA:

I don't think we can. We're going to need to just secure as much as we can and then leave.

VIC:

There's... definitely not enough time to do that. I don't even think that's enough time to secure either the haustoria--super incriminating by the way--or any of the location data.

INDRA:

You're telling me none of this stuff was protected?

VIC:

It's secure, but not from the Trawlers, that's for sure.

INDRA:

Huh?

SU-JIN:

Trawlers are those quantum computers that Correctors take with them to sites with what might be termed "sensitive data." They're the big guns--they can take down most encryptions they get pointed at, so our usual stuff isn't gonna cut it.

We really didn't have enough CPU power to start encrypting this stuff properly--I mean, asymmetrically--until we installed the haustoria, but even then, it's a *lot* more data than can be realistically processed without a couple months. Aaaand now we have twenty-four minutes to do it.

VIC:

Not to mention how *dangerous* it is to try and encrypt everything. I mean, everything has to be backed up in case of corruption, which is what I was doing before everything went to shit.

SU-JIN:

Look, at the very least, I can take off with the most important drives. I-I'll take them somewhere, I could take them home?

LOLA:

Don't do that. You'll only draw more attention to your family that way.

SU-JIN:

Ugh, you're right. But if we can't handle this on the digital side of things, we've got to do something with the hardware.

LOLA:

I know, I'm thinking.

VIC:

I've gotta redirect the encryption to the important files.  
At least it'll buy us some time.

SFX: Typing.

VIC:

More importantly--where are we gonna take you, Lola?  
There's basically nowhere we could go in the time before  
they get here.

LOLA:

*I'm* not going anywhere.

SU-JIN:

Whoa, whoa, whoa, no. You can't stay here, they'll kill  
you!

LOLA:

They won't. They want information first and foremost--  
details on who else is in Zero Zero and what we're  
planning. They don't like being in the dark. If the data is  
protected, it means I'm protected too. They won't want to  
kill the only person who can access it.

SU-JIN:

Don't put your life on the line like that. It's no good if  
they take you in, either.

LOLA:

There's not much of a choice. They'll come here or they'll  
chase us down if any of you try to get me out. And since  
Caine's not driving, I don't know if we could get out of  
that situation in one piece.

SU-JIN:

I don't like it, but I guess you're right.

LOLA:

Vic and I will stay here and keep working on the data. But  
Caine needs you and Indra to help them.

Don't worry about me, alright?

SU-JIN:

...Alright.

INDRA:

I guess we'd better head out then.

LOLA:

Before you do, Indra... I am so sorry for what I did. And you don't have to forgive me. I know it was wrong. But I will never break your trust like that again if I ever get the chance to earn it back.

INDRA:

Save it for when this is all over, Sunn. I'll grab the rest of my stuff. You do the same, Yi.

SU-JIN:

Okay.

SFX: The door opens.

SU-JIN:

I love you guys. You changed my life.

LOLA:

Come here.

SFX: They all hug.

VIC:

We're gonna be okay. Love you, man.

SU-JIN:

I'll see you again soon.

SFX: The door opens and closes.

VIC:

Seventeen minutes left.

LOLA:

We can handle it.

SCENE 3

DAX:

Correctors are on their way right now to that old radio station you kept visiting. I initially sent them there thinking you'd be there too... but I have a hunch that's where Lola Sunn is holed up.

CAINE:

Dammit. Why am I so stupid? I did mess it all up.

DAX:

Looks like I was right. If you turn them in, you and I go straight to Glasshouse and POTEN Co.'s good graces. We can ask them for anything, like information on Val and Seb. Resources too. It's a win-win.

CAINE:

Wait, wait, Dax, Dax. Please just... just call them off. You can't do this. I have no idea what will happen to them.

DAX:

Killed, probably. They're traitors to the Metropolis. I thought you'd be happier about this.

CAINE:

What the hell are you talking about?! They're my friends!

DAX:

Friends? Caine, you just keep surprising me with how gullible you are. It's a good thing I stepped in when I did, otherwise they might have really brainwashed you.

How long ago did you meet these people? If I was going to guess, you've known them for a couple months at most. Around the time you started slacking off from your job? When you stopped coming home like you used to?

CAINE:

This isn't home. You locked me up! You kept me like a prisoner!

DAX:

Okay. I shouldn't have done that. But I was looking out for you. Keeping you safe like *your family* wanted.

CAINE:

Now you're gonna talk about family? My parents lied to me for years about this... this stupid tracker. When Sebastian went missing, they could have found him! But they didn't. And then, when Valeria disappeared, you could have done something! You could have said something! But you didn't! No one told me anything!

DAX:

You were so young when it all happened, weren't you? You know what I remember? The night before your parents and Valeria left. She told me something.

SFX: Flashback sound.

MARICEL:

Benjie, mahal, it's not going to work anymore. We're going to get in trouble.

BENJIE:

Well, then what's the reason we even installed..

SFX: Footsteps in the apartment above.

BENJIE:

Why did we even put trackers on our kids if we can't even use them?

MARICEL:

It takes too much power. Already we've caused three blackouts in the apartment. Dax won't like it. And I'm scared.

BENJIE:

Why?

MARICEL:

...Paano kung nawala na talaga siya? My heart, hindi ko na kaya.

(What if he's really gone? My heart, I can't handle it.)

BENJIE:

Oh, no, no, no no. He's still alive.

MARICEL:

I pray he is, every night.

BENJIE:

The module's going to power up tonight. I know it will. And we're going to see him and bring him home.

MARICEL:

Sige.

(Go on then.)

SFX: The module starts up and then shorts out.

BENJIE:

No... why?

DAX:

I swear, you don't know when to quit!

MARICEL:

Ben, get away from the—

BENJIE:

No, I know it'll work if we have just a little more power next time!

DAX:

Yeah, there's not going to be a next time.

MARICEL:

Itigil mo yan, Ben!

(Stop it, Ben!)

BENJIE:

Kailangan namin 'to!

(We need this!)

DAX:

Look, the fact is you can't handle these things on your own, so I'm taking this away from you. You can't even take care of your own surviving kids while you-

BENJIE:

Shut up!

DAX:

At least someone's looking out for the Reyes' while you two lose your jobs. This is mine.

MARICEL:

I don't trust you with that.

DAX:

And I don't trust whatever the hell you just said to your husband. We both have to deal with that, don't we?

SFX: Dax leaves. He runs into a POTEN Co. exec.

EXEC:

Oh.

DAX:

Oh. Pardon me.

EXEC:

Not to worry, my friend. Is this the apartment of... ah, um... Maricel and Benjie Reyes?

DAX:

It is.

EXEC:

Excellent. I'm to... have a word with them and their daughter, Valeria.

DAX:

I see.

SFX: The exec knocks on the door. Valeria answers.

VALERIA:

Oh. Hi.

EXEC:

Ms. Reyes. Thank you for calling me.

VALERIA:

Yeah. Yes. Of course. Um, could you give me just one second?

EXEC:

Please. Take your time.

VALERIA:

Thanks.

Dax?

DAX:

What do you want?

VALERIA:

I... I know I haven't always been nice about you. But I have to ask you a favor. I'm gonna make something big happen tonight--something that could make things good for me and Caine. And you, as long as you take care of them.

You were right earlier. I heard you. Mom and Dad can't take care of us anymore. But I can't take care of Caine. Not yet at least. So please keep them safe. Don't tell them anything that would worry them. At least not until I get back.

SFX: End flashback.

CAINE:

Stop lying. You expect me to believe that Val said that to you? And even if she did, even if she said that, she said that she would come back.

Sebastian, Valeria... Why didn't they come back for me?

DAX:

I don't know, honestly. Something must have happened. But, but now? Now? We have the perfect reason to go to Glasshouse--we'll turn in Zero Zero and that'll get us in for sure. I need you, Caine. And you need me. And together we will find her.

CAINE:

No, I... I can't do that to them. I won't.

DAX:

Why not?

CAINE:

If Valeria wanted someone to keep me safe, you did a pretty bang-up job of it. I can't betray Zero Zero. I won't. All they've ever done is help me. They've helped me so much.

DAX:

Did they? Or did they make you help them? I keep very careful inventory of all the things I sell. Stealing parts here and there... I noticed. And you deserved to be punished for that. But I didn't realize at the time that it was because they just wanted something from you.

CAINE:

That's not true.

DAX:

Why do you think they let you join their little gang? Run around with them, pretending you're a hero? You're not a hero, Caine. You know what they wanted. Your bot. Not you.

JET:

Stop it!

DAX:

Oh! So the little bot's gotten a couple new features, has it?

JET:

What you're saying to Caine is wrong. Zero Zero is kinder and better than you ever were to us!

DAX:

Oh really? Prove it.

JET:

Hit the panic button, Caine. Let's get out of here!

CAINE:

Yeah. Yeah, you're right, Jet.

SFX: Click. Ringing.

SCENE 4

SFX: The generator goes down.

VIC:

Shit, no, no, no! Dammit!

LOLA:

What happened?

VIC:

We've been asking the generator to do too much. Even the haustoria can't handle it--sounds like it's down.

LOLA:

Nine minutes until they're here.

VIC:

That's enough time for me to start it again. Can you handle the drives once it's going?

LOLA:

Yes, I can. Go.

SFX: Car zooming.

SU-JIN:

We still haven't figured out where we're taking Caine.

INDRA:

Anywhere but the base is a good start.

SFX: The tires screech.

SU-JIN:

Whoa, slow down! All my stuff's still in the back and some of it is pretty fragile! My grappling hook almost went off.

INDRA:

This is a life and death situation, bud, I'd rather us be quick about it.

SU-JIN:

I'd also prefer we don't die before we help Caine!

SFX: Sirens blare.

SU-JIN:

What the--! No way, that can't be the Correctors already.

That huge rig with satellites that just passed us? That's the quantum computer carrier. They're here.

INDRA:

Alright.

SFX: Indra turns again.

SU-JIN:

(YELPS)

INDRA:

Look alive, sunshine! We've gotta turn around and help Lola and Vass out.

SFX: Beeping.

INDRA:

(GROANS)

JET:

Hello? Please help! We need to get out as soon as possible!

INDRA:

Couldn't have picked a worse time to ask for it!

JET:

Please, we need you here!

SU-JIN:

Just--uh--hang on! We can't help you right now. But I promise--

SFX: Click.

DAX:

Huh. They "can't help you right now."

JET:

You made me hang up!

DAX:

Well, I think we heard all we had to.

They're not your friends, Caine. They're not your family. Valeria is. And I want to help you see her again. So who do you want to choose? These people who turn their back on you once you stop being useful to them? Or the family you love?

SFX: Click! Power starts up.

VIC:

That should do it. Power's running again, I'll be down--ah!

CORRECTOR:

Heh. Vic Vass, live and in person. Didn't think I'd see the day. Guess you couldn't see me coming with that glass eye of yours.

VIC:

Think I'm lucky I can't see out of it. Saves me from having to look too close at your ugly mug.

Ow. Trying to make my face match yours, huh?

CORRECTOR:

I could leave you dead where you stand, you know that? But I won't. See, you're our bargaining chip.

SFX: Comms sound.

CORRECTOR:

Whoever's hearing this, listen up. We've got one of your little renegade friends here. And our Trawler's already scooped up a pretty good portion of the data you all tried to encrypt. You can come up here and give the rest of it to us, including the location of Lola Sunn, or you can listen to your friend bleed out onto the sand. Choice is yours.

SFX: Beep. Driving ambience. Rummaging sounds.

INDRA:

Oh, I hope you're getting your ray gun ready back there, 'cause it sounds like it's getting pretty serious.

SU-JIN:

Uh, not quite.

INDRA:

Then what exactly have you been fiddling with for the last couple minutes?!

SU-JIN:

This needs to work. God, I need time to test it and figure out—

INDRA:

We don't have time! What is it?

SU-JIN:

I-It's for the Trawler, but it could be really dangerous. And I can't be here to operate it with you.

INDRA:

...You're going to get Caine and Jet.

SU-JIN:

Yeah. We can't just leave them there. They called for help.

INDRA:

I know.

SFX: Indra parks the car.

SU-JIN:

Indra-

INDRA:

I can make it back to base on foot. I'm pretty fast. But you're gonna have a hard time getting to the Tollbooth without any help. Take the car.

SU-JIN:

(DEEP BREATH) Okay. And here, take this.

SFX: Su-jin hands a device to Indra.

SU-JIN:

If anyone can get this device onto the actual supercomputer, I think it's you. Just remember, someone's got to activate the radio tower once you do-it works only if there's an active FM frequency. And... stay far away when that happens, okay?

INDRA:

Got it. Good luck, Yi.

SU-JIN:

Good luck, Indra.

SFX: The car revs. Then, footsteps.

MUSIC PLAYS.

VIC:

Don't take another step. I mean it! Get out of here!

LOLA:

It's okay, Vic. It's okay.

CORRECTOR:

Heh. Didn't think we'd get Zero Zero to crumble so easily. Data, two arrests, and one of them is Lola Sunn herself.

LOLA:

Not so fast. I came here to make a deal.

SFX: Rustle.

CORRECTOR:

Don't make any moves with that syringe.

LOLA:

It's not for you. It's for me. This is a highly lethal neurotoxin. It'll kill someone in seconds. And if you don't pay attention to the terms of my deal, it'll be in my veins and then you won't have anyone to make an example out of in Glasshouse.

CORRECTOR:

You're bluffing.

LOLA:

Well, I can inject it into one of you if you'd like to test your theory.

So now it's your turn to listen. I will turn myself in. You can get information out of me. You can even kill me. But Vic goes free. And he keeps the last of our encrypted data.

VIC:

Lola, stop it! Just run away, now! I'm not worth this!

LOLA:

You are. You and everyone else.

VIC:

Don't do this, please.

LOLA:

I have to make the right decision. I've always been selfishly holding my own worth above others. It's time for me to choose someone else.

DAX:

Make a decision, Caine.

CAINE:

Everyone leaves me.

VIC:

You don't have to choose. I'm sick of having to give up something. I've given up enough.

DAX:

All you have to do is stick with me. You've already helped them track down Lola Sunn. You can help get the rest of them too. Just give me their names.

CORRECTOR:

Arrest her. And watch the needle.

CAINE:

I just want to see my family again.

DAX:

That is exactly what I wanted to hear. You made the right choice, Caine.

SFX: They handcuff Lola.

LOLA:

As long as you have the data, Zero Zero lives on. You can keep fighting.

VIC:

Not without you.

LOLA:

It's already over, Vic.

SFX: Cloak swish. A knife slash.

CORRECTOR:

Argh!

INDRA:

Save your breath, Sunn. And let me get those off of you.

SFX: Clink.

LOLA:

Thank you.

INDRA:

What's the situation with the radio tower?

VIC:

It's not functional right now, we use the power for Zero Zero.

INDRA:

It needs to be on *now*.

LOLA:

I'll get on it.

CORRECTOR:

Get them! They're all Zero Zero operatives!

INDRA:

That leaves us to deal with the Correctors. Just help me long enough to get this onto that supercomputer. Really hope it works.

VIC:

Alright. Now let's do this.

MUSIC PLAYS.

SFX: Laser fire. The two start to fight.

CORRECTOR:

You play dirty.

VIC:

Funny coming from you.

SFX: Indra cloak swishes behind a Corrector.

INDRA:

Got you.

SFX: Indra knocks them out.

VIC:

Alley-ooop!

INDRA:

On your left!

VIC:

Thanks!

INDRA:

'Course. Now cover me.

SFX: Caine's car revs.

SU-JIN:

Pick up, pick up, pick up...

Caine, Jet, anybody!

SFX: The call doesn't go through.

SU-JIN:

Shoot...

SFX: We hear sirens driving past.

CORRECTOR:

Pull over now! You're entering a live crime scene!

SU-JIN:

That's *really* bad. Who should I call?

SFX: Lola's comms ring.

LOLA:

Su-jin?

SU-JIN:

Lola! Thank goodness you're okay.

LOLA:

I am. I'm heading up to the radio tower now.

SU-JIN:

Good. Then I made the right call. I have to ask a favor of you while you're up there. I can't get a hold of Caine. You've got to broadcast a message to them.

LOLA:

Do you think they're going to be listening to their radio?

SU-JIN:

Caine won't be. But Jet's always scanning airwaves. I'm sure he'll pick it up.

LOLA:

Alright.

Sunn to Vic and Indra. Install the device and get up as soon as you can.

SFX: A radio whine rings out.

INDRA:

Sounds like it's on. Attach this here..

Goodbye, supercomputer.

SFX: Indra whooshes away. Vic punches another Corrector.

INDRA:

There you are. Yi told me to run, so let's get out of here.

VIC:

Right.

SFX: A huge explosion.

VIC:

Whoa, what?! No way!

INDRA:

What was that thing I plugged in?

VIC:

That must've been the first haustoria prototype Su-jin made! What a freakin' genius! We tried to make it work with FM waves at first, but Su-jin's first prototypes always literally blow up in their face. No wonder they're so cautious about everything. Okay, we gotta go.

INDRA:

Yeah, no kidding.

SFX: Radio comms ring.

LOLA:

Everything okay down there?! I heard that explosion.

INDRA:

Oh we're good. Knocked out most of the Correctors. Might've killed one of them, but I'm not going back to check.

LOLA:

I've got a lot of work for the medbay later. I'll see you two up here as soon as possible. I need your help--and Caine needs all of us.

SCENE 5

MUSIC PLAYS.

CAINE:  
(NARRATING)

You spend enough of your life running away from something, then sooner or later, it's going to catch up to you. You know what I couldn't run away from? The fact that everyone I've ever cared about left me behind. Sebastian, my parents, Val... even Zero Zero. The one person who's really been around... I might not like it, but Dax has been around since I was a kid. We argue and disagree almost all the time, but... but maybe that's just what family is? People that you can come back home to. If Val trusted Dax, then maybe I should trust him too.

MUSIC FADES.

DAX:

Let's go. We're expected down at the station soon.

CAINE:

...Right.

JET:

Caine, wait!

DAX:

You can leave that thing behind.

JET:

Listen!

CAINE:

Jet's stuck with me through a lot. I want him to come with me. Besides, his host bot is still at the Zero Zero base. He'd be able to help us get more information.

DAX:

Fair point. Take him.

JET:

Caine, you're not paying attention to me!

CAINE:

What is it?

JET:

Su-jin's been calling.

CAINE:

Now they're calling you? What do they want?

JET:

I don't know--it's hard for me to pick up calls since I'm not in my host bot. But I've been hearing something else too. On station 103.7. Ansible Radio's station.

DAX AND CAINE:

What?

CAINE:

Well, turn it on, Jet.

DAX:

We really should get going.

CAINE:

Why? It's not like you didn't send Correctors to the Zero Zero base. They might have already done the job for us and all I'll have to do is testify.

SFX: Caine turns on the radio.

LOLA:

--ne? Caine?

INDRA:

Don't know if we could tell that they were listening.

LOLA:

Afraid I'm not too good at radio communications.

INDRA:

Well, just say what they'd need to know. If this works, they'll hear us.

MUSIC PLAYS.

LOLA:

I hope you don't think that we've left you, Caine. Things got pretty scary at the base. But we're taking this risk—letting other people hear us—because we need you to hear us.

VIC:

Caine, it's Vic. Look, I hope you can hear us. I know that I've been kind of tough with you. With everyone in Zero Zero. But you guys mean the world to me. I feel like after I lectured you about trusting us, you really took it to heart. It took me a while to realize that I'm still learning about trust too. But you've been with us, trying to figure it out. You're Zero Zero. We're all a team.

INDRA:

You're smart. You're tough. And you've been really brave. But you don't need to be brave right now—you need us to take over for you. We will.

LOLA:

Come back safe, Caine. We care about you. Not just because you've been giving us things or helping us figure out missions. But because you're our friend. And more than that, you're our family. Su-jin's been calling you. They know you've been waiting for us to get you out of there. And if you're still alive, please, please pick up. We love you.

SFX: Caine's comms ring.

DAX:

Don't answer that.

SFX: Caine picks up.

SU-JIN:

Caine!

CAINE:

Su-jin.

DAX:

Give that to me.

SU-JIN:

I need to know where you are. Correctors are *everywhere*.

CAINE:

I'm on the top floor of the building--

DAX:

I said give that to me!

SFX: Dax grabs the comms.

SU-JIN:

Caine?!

DAX:

Are you going to let them trick you like that? They *want* something from you! Don't let them brainwash you!

CAINE:

Give that back!

SU-JIN:

Caine, you've gotta tell me quick, I haven't got a lot of time!

JET:

Processing--and finished! Take a look at the blueprints I sent you! We're up on the north side of the building in the ninth floor position!

SU-JIN:

Perfect! And uh... you might wanna get away from the walls. Just... yeah, towards the center of the room is best.

DAX:

What?

SFX: Explosion.

SU-JIN:

Whoops, sorry about that. Okay, I see you!

We really gotta go now! Get your comms!

CAINE:

Give it to me!

SFX: Caine runs to the edge of the building.

JET:

How are we supposed to get down there?

SU-JIN:

It's gonna sound a little wild, but... I need you to jump.

CAINE:

What?!

DAX:

Look what they're asking you to do! It's suicide!

MUSIC PLAYS.

SU-JIN:

I know that you've had a hard time trusting people. I get it! I can't imagine what my life would be like without my family! And if we had more time, I would find a way to make

this better for you. I promise that when you're with me, I'll spend as much time as you need making you feel safe. But right now, even though it's dangerous, I know it's way more dangerous if you stay with someone who's hurt you over and over again.

DAX:

Get away from the edge, *now*.

SU-JIN:

I know it's scary to leave things that you know. And the thing you're going through is familiar—it might even remind you of home. But you don't deserve to be in pain, second-guessing yourself all the time. And you and Jet both don't deserve to be treated like objects.

MUSIC FADES.

DAX:

You take one more step, Caine Reyes, and you're never going to see your family again. You'll be turning your back on the last person who ever gave a shit about you.

CAINE:

Without the information I have, you're never going to make it to Glasshouse. You don't want me to see Val or Seb again. If you did, you would've told me about the tracker the second you knew that they were still alive. I don't need you.

DAX:

Stop.

CAINE:

You are greedy, manipulative, and abusive.

DAX:

I said stop!

CAINE:

And I am never going to let someone like you hurt me or my family again. I'm coming, Su-jin-

SFX: Dax grabs Caine.

SU-JIN:

No!

JET:

Caine!

DAX:

Don't you dare try to leave! Not when I'm so close to making it out of this shithole!

SU-JIN:

Oh god. Gotta make this shot count...

CAINE:

Agh, let go of me!

SU-JIN:

Don't hesitate. Just fire!

DAX:

You are coming with me whether you want to or-

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

I jumped. A million thoughts raced through my head--how was I going to keep hold on the tracker module? Or my comms for that matter? Was Jet okay? Was Dax going to let go?

And then I started to fall.

SU-JIN:

The time's now, Su-jin, come ON!

SFX: A grappling hook fires and sinks into the building wall.

SU-JIN:

Got it! Grab hold!

CAINE:

(GRUNTS)

SU-JIN:

The grappling hook was only ever going to reach the seventh floor--I need you to slide down from there and fast.

CAINE:

I can't--argh, Dax!

DAX:

You're not getting away so easily.

CAINE:

We're both gonna fall, Dax! Is this what you want?!

DAX:

Don't forget that you belong to me!

JET:

Not anymore! Let *go!*

SFX: Buzz!

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

A white hot arc of electricity shot out of Jet's comms and into Dax's arms. He faltered and slipped, now dangling from my ankle.

DAX:

You're... mine...!

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

In the end, it was his own fault. He couldn't let go of me. If he had earlier, he might have been able to grab onto the wall, something, anything. I clung to the cable Su-jin shot

with all my strength, my arm shaking from the strain, the tracker module in my vice grip. Rubble was crashing down all around us, from the hole Su-jin had blown in the wall. I didn't look down. Especially not when I felt Dax finally let go: bricks, steel, and mortar following him on his path to the ground.

SFX: Dax screams and rubble falls. Caine winces.

CAINE:  
(NARRATING)

I don't know how I made it down to the car. All I knew was that my adrenaline was rushing, blood pounding in my ears, when I got back down to Su-jin. I couldn't think of what to say.

CAINE:

You're here.

SU-JIN:

I am. Like I promised I'd be. But we're not out of danger yet.

CAINE:

Move over. Leave it to me.

MUSIC PLAYS.

CAINE:

I'm the fastest driver in the Metropolis.

SFX: The car revs.

SCENE 6

CAINE:  
(NARRATING)

It took us a while to get back to base. By the time we were there, I only saw the blackened shell of what Su-jin told me used to be a Trawler rig. It looked like the burnt-out comms that used to house Jet--he must have fried the circuits of the system to deliver that shock to Dax. Lola told us everything that happened as soon she could. The data was safe... but we still were in largely the same place we were before. And we couldn't do much to fix that. The radio tower, the Trawler, the Correctors--dealing with all of those situations had taken a lot of resources out of Zero Zero. And Jet...

VIC:

The diagnostic check tells me he's okay, but he... well, he terminated a connection while he was still on another system. It took so long for us to figure out everything even with him around... but yeah, I think he's not going to be online for a while. I'm sorry.

CAINE:

He'll be back. I know he will. Thanks, buddy.

SFX: Caine sets down the tracker module.

LOLA:

That's... the tracker module.

CAINE:

Yeah. A lot of information in this. Plus something I've got a hunch about. Do you have the coordinates?

SU-JIN:

Yeah, I can pull them up.

SFX: Beep.

CAINE:

Take a look at this.

INDRA:

It's...the same coordinates.

CAINE:

This, right here? Is the tracker for Sebastian.

LOLA:

Your brother?

CAINE:

He made it. He made it out of the Metropolis West and settled in one of those communities. And we're going to find him.

MUSIC PLAYS.

END EPISODE.

Under the Electric Stars Season 1 was written, directed, and produced by Eli Ramos for Aster Podcasting Network. It features the voice talents of:

Rhea Anne as Caine Reyes

Robin Guzman as Jet

Christine Kim as Su-jin Yi

Kevin Paculan as Vic Vass

Chaitrika Budamagunta as Lola Sunn

Rey Vargas as Maricel Reyes

John Patneau as Sebastian Reyes

Dominique as Valeria Reyes

David McGuff as Dax Pastore

Stephanie Arata as Haven

Additional voice talents this episode were provided by yours truly, Josh Hazeghazam, Kai Ramos, and Dylan Vodzak. Attributions for the sound effects and music can be found in the show notes.

These episodes of Under the Electric Stars were produced and recorded on stolen Indigenous lands. We pay our respects to the Ohlone, Nisenan, Tongva, Suquamish, Waikura, Periku, Dharug, Wurundjuri, and the Lipan Apache tribes.

A big thank you to all of our Patrons who make the show possible, especially Fran Carr and Ezra Lee Buck, \$20 patrons on our Patreon. If you've enjoyed the first season of Under the Electric Stars, please consider donating to our Patreon at mxeliramos--that's M-X-E-L-I-R-A-M-O-S. You get access to behind the scenes, annotated scripts, and early access to episodes, including the new episodes we're developing that tells the story of Zero Zero's members before they all got together. Pretty much all of the funds go to supporting our actors or paying for our website and hosting, so if you have the means to donate, it would mean a lot to all of us.

Under the Electric Stars Season 2 will resume production in November 2020.