Morgan Lee

Prologue - Text Message (received within the last hour)
Age: 45

> TEXT FROM ROWAN LEE: Don’t you dare let them take Aria. I love you both, but get the hell out of here like we planned. Tell Alexandria I’ll miss our chats.

End of Prologue

Scene 1 - For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come?
Age: 45

It's flashing before your eyes, sort of like a movie, your entire life, right towards the end of it. Or maybe that's what you're holding onto; your body and mind automatically distracting yourself from the pain of dying slowly from being shot. The bullets getting rocked back and forth through your body, as it is getting thrown back and forth, from the Omega Protocol-related evasive maneuvers you ordered ***Alexandria*** to do.

You were born into money, but not born to take it for granted. You learned that good fortune meant higher standards. Your intelligence had nothing to do with money. But your hard work and ambition, despite your advantages, was what meant the most to your family. They were proud of you, and what you had done; that you were thinking about the thankless task of saving humankind, not just advancing yourself and your interests at someone else's expense.

Cosmic Lee was your company. Unlike the others in the family-controlled "keiretsu," this was made largely by your efforts, financing, and planning. But the projects against global warming failed. Attempts to stop self-destructive energy practices could not succeed against expertly unprovable extra-legal efforts to maintain the status quo. You shifted towards the spaceflight project, originally sarcastically, so as to indicate how negative you were about humanity's prospects, but it - surprisingly - yielded substantive scientific advances. FTL travel was possible, but not much faster than light, at least for now. (Santos Rojas is a brilliant kid, a Mozart with physics.) Fresh from the fight against fossil fuels, you engaged in the correct, and expertly extra-legal efforts, to maintain your monopoly of this technology. You made plans to build a ship, and store upon it the data needed to recreate Earth elsewhere.

You met the love of your life Rowan at a dive bar, of all places. You shared similar ironic viewpoints; you each didn't realize you each had wealth and the backing of family wealth, and were going to surprise the other with that information. You both even suspected one another at the quality of how well you matched; but time has proven your mutual love to be true. Sometimes fate is strange. Perhaps the world is truly overseen by the unknown, unseen supernatural.

Things in the world got worse. Solutions were possible, but difficult - they would require sacrifice. Messengers were blamed; solutions were declared impossible - and this declaration was enforced by force. The clamor was worldwide. Hope was to be controlled and parceled like a packaged consumer good, with little relation to reality, for a lucrative profit.

You had selected a crew; it would be six. Rowan and your child **Aria** would be on the ship. You built *Alexandria*, including the remarkably perceptive artificial intelligence that Rowan created to help manage it. You secretly ordered the plunder of the world seed bank in Svalbard to help speed preparations, but the news of further negative developments against you came so, so fast.

When the coup came, you were not ready.

You barely made it to orbit… with just Aria. Rowan was halfway around the world, taken by the UEC. The space dock, the Cosmic Lee space dock, was a nightmare, with a shipload of thugs imported from one of the not-so-secret orbital armories. The UEC guard shot you! You shielded **Aria** with your own body. Was there even anyone else on the ship? As the pilot and navigator, you had calculated the first destination. What about a doctor or geneticist to reconstitute the DNA libraries or use the stolen seeds? Was there anyone to man the FTL drives? What about the environmental or maintenance systems?

“***Alexandria***, Omega Protocol,” you said. The ship engaged in evasive maneuvers and forcibly removed itself from the station. (Was that the order it happened?) You’re not going to make it… **Aria** is here. Rowan told you to go. Can ***Alexandria*** do it? Are there UEC spies on board? Are there UEC SOLDIERS on board?

End of Scene 1

Rowan

Scene 2 - Playing in the Dirt
Age: 8

You've heard your family say that space is the final frontier, but it's all you've ever known. That's what you call them, the people you've known your whole life, all eight years of it. **Aria** is basically your big sibling. You're named after one of **Aria**'s parents, the one that died still on Earth.

Justice is the person who spends the most time with you, teaching you about the hydroponics lab and the difference between weeds and good plants. They look a lot alike, but **Justice** is patient with you, not minding when you take longer shoveling the dirt and manure than you need to, moving slowly through the lab with you. Slower than before. You won't have your mentor around much longer, as Justice has explained the illness they have and the death that will be taking place soon. You don't know how soon. No one really does. Even the doctor can't get it down to the day. You'll just learn as much as you can and spend as much time as possible with **Justice** until then.

You like **Doctor Berg**, but sometimes they sigh when they think you can't hear them. You are a good patient. **Doctor Berg** shouldn't be sad about you. You don't know what's wrong.

End of Scene 2

Rowan

Scene 3 - Don't Go Into the Light
Age: 18

You may be an adult, but you're not ready to go on missions yet. You're happy **Aria** gets to go look at a possibly habitable planet close up, though. Someone should be able to.

You've been doing well with the hydroponics bay and looking after the newest kid on the ship, **Tarachand**. It's been rough without hope of finding a decent planet, though. Just because you've never felt land beneath your feet doesn't mean you don't dream about it.

Aria came back, dragging **Sasha** to the medical bay. **Dr. Berg** said **Sasha** was breathing and had a pulse. You can see the glow in **Aria**'s short planetside recording of **Sasha**, after the accident. It would be hard to miss, even though it faded away soon afterwards..

You may not know what to make of this, but you figure you should keep **Tarachand** well back from that glow.

End of Scene 3

Rowan

Scene 4 - Doing Fine
Age: 28

You've got the hydroponics down pat; a little too pat, to be honest. You're not sure if this is something you'd normally have chosen, if you were given a choice. You know the various recycling systems and where you need to keep tweaking to prevent loss. You think ***Alexandria*** could probably automate much of it.

The trick to hydroponics is redundancy. There's more than one way to scrub excess CO_2 from the environment.

The same has to be true about the crew. **Dr. Berg** is the only one who knows anything about medicine. They are old, and getting older. In this crisis, with **Santos** getting so sick, everyone, including ***Alexandria,*** defers to **Dr. Berg's** opinion on medical matters.

And you can see why - in your off-duty time, trying to read medical books, it's a hard slog. **Dr. Berg**'s always too busy to help you learn their job properly. You wish you could get **Dr. Berg** to see how having a second pair of hands - even yours - would eventually leave them with a smaller workload. The crew needs this kind of redundancy. What if the next medical crisis strikes **Dr. Berg**?

Normally, you'd turn to **Aria** and have a long talk about your position in the future of the crew. You can't talk to **Aria. Aria** is falling apart as **Santos** gets sicker. They've been a pair almost as long as you've known them.

You'll probably never be a good doctor - or even a doctor at all. Still, it's a nice dream - and it keeps you amused more than virtual reality, old books, or hydroponics have managed recently. Even talking to **Sasha**, when **Sasha** isn't busy in VR with ***Alexandria****,* has gotten a little stale.

End of Scene 4

Rowan

Scene 5 - This is It
Age: 38

Aria's being cautious, and you can understand why. And there are issues that you could imagine being problems on this planet. Otherwise, it's the best place you've ever come across, or even seen records about, in all the nearly 40 years of your life.

Growing plants in larger dirts will be a novelty. You wonder where you'll get large enough vats until you realize - of course! - the ground's made of dirt.

Will everyone be okay? **Phoenix** and **Tobie** - probably.

Tarachand seems as happy and amazed as you.

Sasha… Sasha and ***Alexandria***. What's going to happen to them? ***Alexandria*** can't land, and **Phoenix**, at least, probably seems like they'll be staying. **Sasha** will follow **Phoenix**, and then what?

You did see the message from Earth. Maybe - and you may totally be misinterpreting **Aria**'s feelings here - maybe they could go make the trip back if they wanted to?

You want to see this planet, and make a go of it. Do they still need six on the planet to build a colony? Well, they'd need six to get back. Maybe in twenty years or so they could spare volunteers? Or maybe send a reply, for once?

Happiness is just a whole lot of work away. And there's more dirt than you ever imagined.

End of Scene 5