

SCENE 1

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

Here's what we all knew. The stars were dead, and they would stay that way. The pre-Incendiaries knew it too, but not the way we do—echoes of the light still shone down on their world. Now, they're all dead. As in gone forever. Things don't get to come back no matter how much you obsess over them. So, what's the point? All you can do is look up at the neon studded sky and figure out where you go from there, staring up at all that glowing emptiness.

CAINE:

Can we please just go?

AZY:

What? You're not the least bit interested in *how* I got these?

VIC:

What I'm more curious about is why *you* know the navigator's chart. That's ancient stuff.

AZY:

You're asking the same question.

CAINE:

Who cares?

AZY:

See, the stars used to be the guiding force for sailors and pilots alike. Me and my parent used to dig up all sorts of stuff down here—they found a navigator's chart in the shell of an old plane. I've had it ever since.

CAINE:

I feel like we should just be leaving.

AZY:

And I figured someone who wanted safe passage out in the desert would need to find a way through all the dark. Maybe we won't see them ever again, but their coordinates still track—especially with this.

SFX: Azy pulls out papers.

CAINE:

Whoa. Holy...

VIC:

All of this written down—you manually cracked a code?

AZY:

Oh, not just one code. Seventeen.

SFX: Vic shuffles through papers.

VIC:

And it's all stuff about the navigator's chart. 75 miles, Alpha Lyrae Vultura...

CAINE:

How did you pinpoint it to one set of coordinates?

AZY:

I never said that. *That's* impossible.

CAINE:

Wait, what the hell is the point of this then?

AZY:

Careful with that! That disk you're waving is gonna be the *only* copy of these coordinates once I destroy these documents. The thing is, I couldn't figure out exactly where if I wanted to—which I *do*, by the way. I don't know exactly where the origin point of this is and half of it was corrupted when I found it anyways. This is the best shot you all have.

VIC:

And best means...

AZY:

Five locations.

CAINE:

That's basically useless!

VIC:

No, it's not. Not if Lola trusted someone enough to get these. You'd better trust her too.

CAINE:

You know what? I'm leaving. I'm out of here.

VIC:

Caine.

SFX: Caine starts walking away.

VIC:

Oh, come on.

AZY:

Don't worry. Now that I've passed that onto you, I'm getting out of here too. Take one last look. 'Cause this is the last you'll be seeing of all this pre-Incendiary stuff.

VIC:

Hey, uh.

AZY:

Hm?

VIC:

You got a name?

AZY:

Azy. That's all you need to know of my name.

VIC:

Well, then, Azy. Before you get rid of all this, can I take one of your navigator's chart? I've never seen a full one before.

AZY:

Why the hell not? Least you'll appreciate it. See you around. Or maybe you won't.

SFX: Azy tosses Vic the papers.

SCENE 2

SFX: Caine is struggling to get the carabiner hooked back up.

CAINE:

(FRUSTRATED SIGH)

Come on, you stupid..

SFX: Vic walks up.

VIC:

You have to open the hook.

CAINE:

I knew that.

SFX: Vic clips his line and climbs.

VIC:

Come on.

SFX: Caine clips their carabiner *finally* and starts to ascend.

The wind blows.

CAINE:

Took you a while.

VIC:

Yeah, I was just snagging that cute guy's number. His name's Jack.

CAINE:

Ah. Alright.

SFX: The wind blows.

VIC:

You should zip your bag up.

CAINE:

Can't do that when I'm climbing.

VIC:

Okay, don't then.

SFX: The wind blows again.

VIC:

Hey, Caine, stop for a second. I think we should talk for a little bit. You know, I think... You know, you really shouldn't have run out like that.

CAINE:

Okay, well, sorry, you know. I was just getting...*bored* in there, alright?

VIC:

You...okay. You obviously weren't bored, you were on edge.

CAINE:

Oh, wow. Y'know, someone give this man a medal? Now you're trying to figure me out too?

VIC:

What is that supposed to mean?

CAINE:

Just that I know what kind of person you are, Vic.

VIC:

Ohhhh, and exactly *what* is THAT supposed to mean?

CAINE:

You think you're charming and cool and really, you're a huge know-it-all who bothers everyone around him.

VIC:

So, you're mad at me because you're *bad* at things.

CAINE:

Hey, I'm good at what I do! If I can remind you, you all didn't have a way of getting around without me! You think you're better at me with Jet—I *made* him!

VIC:

And you left him with me for three weeks!

CAINE:

Because you all asked me to!

VIC:

Look, I know this is all just a way of getting around the fact that you don't trust me. Or Zero Zero! And I have no idea why you even joined us! I don't think you even believe in-

SFX: We hear a rope break. Caine screams.

VIC:

The coordinates!

CAINE:

Are you serious?!

VIC:

Drop down lower and grab the disk!

CAINE:

I can't see it, idiot!

VIC:

It's on the ledge underneath you!

CAINE:

And in case you didn't notice, my rope's almost snapped!

VIC:

Okay, I'm gonna lower myself, grab the disk, then come get you.

CAINE:

What the--Come get me first, Vic!

VIC:

The disk can't *hold on* to the cliff face, but you can! So, hold on!

SFX: Vic lowers himself. The wind gets louder.

CAINE:

Now would be a really good time to come and get me!

VIC:

I'm gonna leave you there if you keep complaining!

CAINE:

I...

VIC:

Hah! Got it! Okay!

SFX: We hear Vic unsheathe something.

CAINE:

What the hell are you doing with that knife?!

SFX: Vic throws the knife with a thud.

CAINE:

(YELLS WITH THE PRESUMED FEAR THAT THEY'RE GONNA GET STABBED. THEY FALL INTO VIC'S ARMS WITH A GRUNT)

SFX: Thud.

VIC:

And got you! See, wasn't so bad! Alley-oop! See, you're fine. Not even a scratch. Let's jive.

SFX: The climbing gear jingles. Caine drags themselves up.

CAINE:

Ugh. Oh. Sweet land. Oh...

VIC:

What a climb! Well, glad the coordinates are okay.

CAINE:

Glad I'm okay too, I guess!

VIC:

Yeah, thanks to me.

CAINE:

Oh my god.

SFX: Footsteps.

CAINE:

"Yeah, thanks to me." Can there honestly be someone more stuck up? Oh my god.

SFX: Footsteps through broken glass.

CAINE:

Where's Jet?

VIC:

What the...?

CAINE:

Where the hell is Jet?! Where is he?

VIC:

You're asking me like I know!

CAINE:

If you had just left when I asked you to, we would have been up here to see him getting stolen!

VIC:

This is so not my fault!

CAINE:

Oh yeah, 'cause you can solve everything! Not to mention not so long ago, I was dangling off a cliff's edge and you almost got me killed for a disk!

VIC:

I have never ever met someone who was saved and was angry about it! You're alive! I have been saying this, over and over! You need to trust—!

CAINE:

Trust you! Oh, sure! Yeah, I'll trust you! Because everyone expects me to trust them to take care of things or to come back if I just keep on waiting, but you are not my brother, *DAX*, and you will never be my family!

VIC:

Dax?

CAINE:

I meant to say Vic.

VIC:

You...I...I get it, okay?

CAINE:

No, you don't.

VIC:

I...Okay. I should've been more clear about the whole...cliff thing. And I should have let you know that you were safe and that...that's my whole thing right now—we're a team and that means we look after each other. I'm not trying to be better than you. I'm not trying to be...I'm not trying to replace anyone. I promise.

CAINE:

It's kind of hard to remember that not everyone is out to attack you when you're so used to being alone. I don't have anybody.

VIC:

You have us. And Jet, as soon as we find him.

CAINE:

I...thanks. Listen, I'm really worried about Jet. I mean, who would've even taken him?

SCENE 3

SFX: Jet boots up.

JET:

Booting up!

JUNKER 1:

Man, how lucky are we to get an all-purpose bot from Glasshouse!

JUNKER 2:

Way too lucky, honestly! We hit the jackpot!

JUNKER 1:

Sucks that we couldn't figure out that car though.

JUNKER 2:

It's old tech, anyways. This here's the future--and our ticket to a glitchful of cryptos!

JET:

Voice module activated! Start time: 1 second! Hello UNKNOWN USER.

JUNKER 2:

Aw, dammit. Maybe we were too lucky.

JET:

Core applications locked! Please engage in passcode conversation to unlock!

JUNKER 1:

This little thing has security measures on it?

JUNKER 2:

An installed vocal lock? Let's see...1111!

JET:

The passcode conversation is not a number!

JUNKER 1:

Haha.

JUNKER 2:

Shut up!

JET:

That's not very nice.

SFX: Tap tap tap. Beep.

JET:

Pressing my face will not do anything either!

JUNKER 1:

I've never seen a bot so sentient.

JUNKER 2:

This is really the kind of tech they have up there, huh?

JUNKER 1:

Activate...uh...

JET:

I am already on!

SFX: An awkward silence.

JUNKER 2:

Um. Hello.

JET:

Hello!

JUNKER 1:

Ooh...uh, what functionalities do you have?

JET:

As an all-purpose bot, I'm manufactured to have all sorts of applications! However, for the safety of the owner, I have locked capabilities for approximately 87.33333333% of them!

JUNKER 1:

Well, what are we gonna do? It barely has any functionality!

SFX: Beep.

JET:

I will inform you that I generally use he and they as pronouns, not it! Thank you for your consideration!

JUNKER 1:

What the hell. It's so chatty.

SFX: Beep. Jet emits a loud error sound. The junkers yelp.

JET:

I have informed you that I use he and they pronouns! (FROM PREVIOUS LINE) Thank you for your consideration!

JUNKER 2:

Okay. Okay. Geez. Um...what are your applications that aren't locked?

JET:

You may: access a safe version of the net! You may: use the calculator application! You may: play a game of Space Pinball! You may use the navigational system, navsys ID:

JET!

JUNKER 1:

Great, he's got all the functionality of a pre-Burn computer.

JUNKER 2:

Well, let's test it out a little bit. Access net.

SFX: POTEN Co. music starts.

JET:

Welcome to your net access on your all- Here, you'll find all sorts of- You've booted up into Safe Mode, which- Thank you for your choosing POTEN Co.'s all-purpose bot system!

JUNKER 1:

It has like, every website blocked off.

JUNKER 2:

Hold on, before we call it a lost cause, let's try a different application. Access navigational system.

SFX: Jet beeps like he's listening.

JUNKER 1:

What, it's on?

JUNKER 2:

Oh-uh-what-

JET:

Searching for location, "what, it's on, oh uh what"! No location found! Please repeat your location!

SFX: Jet beeps.

JUNKER 2:

Nope. This thing's busted.

JUNKER 1:

Ugh. And here I thought we'd found something really exciting.

JUNKER 2:

It's fine, we'll just junk it for parts. I bet whatever's powering it has gotta be worth something.

JUNKER 1:

Aw, that means we have to travel all the way across the market again!

JUNKER 2:

The Shark's one of the only junkers up top. And you remember what happened in the Trench last time.

JUNKER 1:

Don't remind me. Fine, we'll go.

SCENE 4

VIC:

Have you seen an all-purpose bot around? Not for sale, I mean. He's about this big...

CAINE:

An all-purpose bot from the Dome with a navsys installed, version 3.0.7.1...

VIC:

His ID is Jet. He's POTEN Co. brand, but he has custom software installed...

CAINE:

He has a custom personality core installed, maybe someone junked that or sold it to you...

VIC:

No luck.

CAINE:

None here either. And it's getting dark. We need to try something else.

SHOPKEEPER:

Hey, you looking to sell that old radio?

CAINE:

What? No, I'm not giving you my player.

SHOPKEEPER:

No need to be harsh, just asking!

VIC:

I was meaning to ask--why do you carry so that old tech around?

CAINE:

My...parents used to use it a lot. They used to do radio shows, so I play their old tapes on it sometimes.

VIC:

What model?

CAINE:

A 58JX. Why?

VIC:

Wait right here.

CAINE:

Wait, where are you...aaaand he's gone.

SFX: A cloak swish.

CAINE:

Vic?

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

The market was too crowded to pick anyone out of the jumble of people swarming around the place. But the prickle on the back of my neck, the shadow on the edge of my vision couldn't lie--someone was watching me. Following me. If it was whoever took Jet, I couldn't imagine what they were planning by tailing us. Either way, we'd been too obvious asking around for him. I just hoped that Vic's plan would keep us out of trouble.

VIC:

Miss me?

CAINE:

Someone's following us.

VIC:

You sure?

CAINE:

Come on. Let's lose them in the crowd.

SFX: Someone bumps into Vic.

VIC:

Whoa, watch it! Ugh, man.

CAINE:

I think we're good.

VIC:

Okay, well let's pull off and put this thing together.

CAINE:

And what exactly are we putting together right now?

SFX: Clunk!

VIC:

This here is a mini mercury ion clock. And that there on your hip is a 58JX which has a pretty decent radio transmitter inside of it.

CAINE:

You're trying to make a local positioning system by broadcasting a pseudorandom code.

VIC:

Right on! I figure that we can track the unique signature Jet's got. I programmed in a distress signal system for him, but I didn't get the chance to hook it up to any comms. And I'm sure he's smart enough to have started broadcasting it. This device should pick up that beacon he's sending out and lead us right to him.

CAINE:

Okay, but we need a satellite connector, too.

VIC:

Already got that covered. I called Jack and he agreed to lend us a connector as long as he can help us scrap the thing together.

CAINE:

Ah, just dying to make an LPS, huh?

VIC:

You could say that. He said he'll ring me up when he's...where are my comms?

CAINE:

Right here.

SFX: Caine tosses Vic his comms.

VIC:

Huh?

CAINE:

That guy who bumped into you earlier swiped it from you.
You know, your stuff's liable to be stripped off of you.

VIC:

Heh. Thanks.

SFX: Ring ring!

VIC:

Hello, beautiful!

JACK:

Nice to hear you, fairwind. I'm surfaceside. Send me your
location.

SFX: Beep!

JACK:

Got it. Start scrapping, it's getting dark. I'll be there
in a moment.

SFX: Beep!

VIC:

Well, you heard him.

VIC:

Oh. I should ask. Are you...okay with us taking apart your
player for this?

CAINE:

Um...yes. Yes. Yeah. Yeah, definitely. Of course. If it
helps us find Jet, I don't mind. But thanks for asking.
Though, for the record, I am putting it back together
afterwards.

VIC:

Yeah, of course. Sooooo, I'm gonna work on the clock 'cause that means I get to use my mini-welder! Yes! Let's get to work.

SCENE 5

JUNKER 1:

You said you knew where it was!

JUNKER 2:

I do, asshole!

JUNKER 1:

Well, it certainly isn't here!

JUNKER 2:

I *noticed!* I just need to...get my bearings.

JUNKER 1:

Well, hurry it up. We're gonna be out here all night at this rate. Do you hear that?

JUNKER 2:

What?

JUNKER 1:

Did you notice how the bot hasn't said anything since we left the hull?

JUNKER 2:

It's probably just not smart enough to respond to us. Or running out of battery. Or something like that, I dunno.

JUNKER 1:

I guess it doesn't matter too much since we're *clearly* figuring out where we're going right now.

JUNKER 2:

I figured it *out*, okay, we're going this way.

SFX: Footsteps.

JUNKER 2:

Actually, *this* way.

JUNKER 1:

Oh my god.

SFX: Footsteps. A cloak swish.

JUNKER 1:

Did you hear *that*?

JUNKER 2:

Okay, now you're just being paranoid. There's absolutely nothing--oof!

SFX: Smack!

JUNKER 1:

Who the hell--!

SFX: Footsteps.

JUNKER 2:

They're getting away with our bot!

JUNKER 1:

Well, come on, after them! Hey, that's ours!

SCENE 6

CAINE:

Remind me again why we couldn't just take my car? It's faster.

JACK:

Well, between the fact that your porthole's busted to all hell, the fact that your car's a huge old and clunky piece of work, and the fact that my hoverbike's faster in a crowd, you tell me.

CAINE:

Ugh. How's the LPS?

VIC:

It's homing in on a signal, but we should be heading southeast. Whoever's got Jet is running with him.

JACK:

Roger that.

CAINE:

What the...

JUNKER 1:

Hey, that's our all-purpose!

VIC:

Those look like junkers.

CAINE:

What did I tell you?

JACK:

Great observation, but who are they chasing?

CAINE:

That person in the cloak, down there!

JACK:

I got it.

CAINE:

Hey, that's my bot! Jet!

JET:

Hello Caine! I'm in danger!

SFX: The person keeps running.

JUNKER 2:

Trying to escape through the alleyways, huh?

JACK:

This is exactly why we took my hoverbike.

VIC:

Oh yeah! Yeah!

SFX: The hoverbike guns the engine and squeezes through the alleyway.

JACK:

Whoever you are, you're cornered.

???:

Dammit...!

JACK:

Give us back the bot.

???:

Not on your life. This is my ticket out of here.

CAINE:

Hey come on. He's my bot. Please.

???:

And I'm junking him for all the cryptos his parts are worth.

VIC:

Come on. We just need him back, we're not gonna hurt you, but...

JUNKER 2:

I will.

SFX: Blaster shot. ??? is electrocuted and cries out in pain.

VIC:

Holy...!

JUNKER 2:

It--it's a shock model, I swear, it's not supposed to do that!

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

The junker turned tail and disappeared before saying anything else. Meanwhile, the figure dropped Jet and staggered to the ground. The cloak shifted away and from what I could see...it wasn't pretty. Cyborg. That person's body must have been almost half machinery, failed by the medical system in Metropolis West, just like everybody else. But the generator hooked up to the heart was barely holding it together--the POTEN Co. mark on it was scratched out and painted over with the serial code HH912. And it was billowing a thick dark smoke.

JACK:

You're hurt.

???:

Ugh! Ugh. Dammit, dammit...

JACK:

I'm not leaving you here.

???:

Don't touch me! I'll kill you.

JACK:

You can very well try, but I think with a busted generator you won't get too far.

SFX: Jack lifts the person and puts them on the hoverbike.

JACK:

I'm putting you on my bike and getting you some help.

VIC:

Jack...

JACK:

Sorry, darling, you'll have to find your own way back.

VIC:

Roger that. Come on, Caine. We've got some walking to do.

END EPISODE 3.

Hi, Eli Ramos here, creator and editor of Under the Electric Stars. If you liked this episode, please share it with your friends. You can find us social media: we're @utes_podcast on twitter and undertheelectricstarspodcast on tumblr. You can also find us on Patreon at mxeliramos--that's M-X-E-L-I-R-A-M-O-S. Please support us if you have the means. Our voice talents are as follows: Rhea Anne as Caine Reyes, Kevin Paculan as Vic Vass, Robin Guzman as Jet, and Rey Angel as...well, we'll keep it a mystery for now. Additional voices were provided by yours truly, Inger Junger, Angel Hom, Jason Junker, and Martin Savill. A special thanks to Jordan Davis, our first \$20 patron on our Patreon. And to everyone, thanks for listening, and see you in Metropolis West soon.