

EILEEN

by Karinne Keithley

August 24, 2009

Eileen	(our heroine)
Ernesto	(Eileen's first husband)
Cindy "Panda" Jones	(Eileen before she changed her name)
Georg	(also Agent Orly, also Eileen's father)
The Sec Def	(The Secretary of Defense of the United States of America)
Agent Orly	(also Georg, Eileen's father)
Agent Gatwick	(coach)
Agent Candlestick	(Eileen's training officer)
Agent Sophie Fir	(Agent Orly's love, can be played by Ernesto in drag)
Jones	(the milkman, played by Eileen, plays the part of Leo Tolstoy)

Notes

If it's done as a radio play, stage directions or character names etc. can be indicated with a hushed, Wimbledon-style running commentary.

If necessary, some of the characters can be played by miniature porcelain figurines, or something of that nature. The Sec Def can be video-conferenced in.

The rare non-italicized, non-assigned text is intended to be spoken. You figure out by whom.

PART ONE

In a weedy, wet, overgrown front yard.

EILEEN: A long time ago I had a friend in Hungary who was driven crazy by bugs on the surface of her eyes. She was proud of her country, and took me places, although more than the beautiful castles I remember the very ugly part of the Danube that the Soviets tried to straighten.

Where I am, it's very buggy; the midges are literally swarming around my head. You notice how plainly I'm speaking.

I have a lot of hopes. I hope that. I was going to say I hope that I get out of my own mind. I don't mean go out of my mind. I mean get out of it. Get through it, vacation somewhere else.

A very long time when all the thoughts that come into my head are discarded as not worth either writing or saying aloud.

I think the bugs have gotten bored of me.

Ø

GEORG: "A landscape of crystalline life." Contrary to what we might think, we're not necessarily looking at something primordial. It was asked, if crystal life occurred so readily and easily in the earliest stages of life on earth, why don't we see it today. Well, the scientist says, maybe it is happening today. We don't see it because no one is looking. Where would we look says one of the graduate students and the scientist says, look for bizarre forms of crystals. It would look bizarre.

Ø

ERNESTO: Sophie is in Cairo. She is buying a sapphire necklace. When she returns home she will wear it to dinner parties. Many years later she will discover it is neither made of real sapphire nor real gold. At this point it won't matter. On the boat are many old people on a group trip. The boat was full of old people plus Sophie, plus a young girl named Cindy who dressed up as a mummy. I'm an Egyptian mummy, she said. Not to me, I wasn't there. The next day, the tour bus stopped to take pictures of a woman with a donkey, who was hit by a car as she crossed the street to get the tip money for the picture. The car was a black Buick. Sophie is in Cairo again. In Cairo it is raining.

Ø

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: Swimming is like the greatest thing ever. Swimming and making out.

Ø

EILEEN: Ambivalence is a normal part of storytelling. Ambivalence is a *normal* part of story telling. Urgency is also there. But I come from a culture that doesn't always dance at parties, so to speak, which is part of why I'm into finding a new culture. I have an unbelievable urge to find a new culture. Or to grow a new one. To start life over, I mean all of it, like a competing planet.

I got the joke immediately. Here's how it goes. A man rides into town on Friday. He stays three days, then leaves town on Friday. How does that happen? The horse is called Friday. He arrived on a Tuesday and left on a Friday. On both occasions probably, but necessarily on the first occasion, he rode a horse named Friday. The interesting thing is that he ate breakfast that Wednesday morning at a diner right next to the court where the quick divorces are granted, and in the booth next to him were three, I don't know how to put this, intergalactic agents. They were not there for any reason to do with the man or the horse. They were there following this woman Eileen who was getting a divorce. Later they all drove out to the desert.

When the men ordered they said things like, see if you can't find me some eggs. See if you

can't bring the ketchup. In the next booth the man with the horse is saying see if you can't see. And later that night when he's lying in his motel room he's still thinking, see if you can't see? If you can't see, try seeing. Or, only when you can't see, then see. See *when* you can't see. But this is the weird part of the story: the part about the horse and the days is the joke, but the joke is in the world. Eileen, who is real, really does eat breakfast right next to the man from the joke. I know because I am Eileen. See if you can't get my name right. One of the men, not the guy with the horse, one of the agent men, actually *can't* get my name right. He says it with the emphasis on the first syllable, Eye-lin. It sounds almost like "island." But he's from outer space, and English is so irregular.

Ø

There's a phone call from the Secretary of Defense

SEC DEF: Why were you in my hallway?

EILEEN: Because I wanted to see it.

SEC DEF: How did you get in?

EILEEN: My dad took me.

SEC DEF: Would you like to come work for me, Eileen?

EILEEN: Yes.

SEC DEF: Sing with me.

still on the phone

SEC DEF:

there are problems in Chechnya

there are problems in Grozny

there are problems in the Swat valley

there are problems in Kabul

EILEEN:

there are problems in Lockerbie

there are problems on Wall Street

there are problems in Tbilisi
there are problems in the Hague

BOTH:

there are problems in Pyongyang
there are problems in Baghdad
there are problems in Islamabad
there are problems in Gaza
there are problems in Bethlehem
there are problems in Dublin
there are problems with my eyes
but there are more problems in outer space
there are more problems in space
there are problems of galaxies
and problems of dynasties
and problems with eyes and with seeing with certainty

SEC DEF:

I dreamed that Arafat smiled at me

EILEEN:

I dreamed that Arafat smiled upon me

BOTH:

I dreamed that I was resistance

I dreamed that I found a bomb in the sea

Ø

GEORG (*almost AGENT ORLY*):

She hides the harpoon in the supply closet, behind the post-its.

She walks from the A ring to the E ring.

She leaves by the river entrance.

No, they do not arrive on boats.

Sometimes my daughter is very literal minded.

I have given her very detailed instructions

So you should trust me

Because you should always trust anyone with a command of details.

Details are persuasive

Details make us feel good.

All over the universe, this is the case.

Fury comes from someone you hate destroying your details

Pretending they are something else

Misreading them

Maybe even forcefully

Usually forcefully

This is a story about Eileen, but it's also a story about space adventure, and so a story about fury, which means that it's a story about really persuasive, well loved, particular things, being abused.

How could you go to space without fury?

This is a CLASSIFIED hallway.

Do you want to know how I got here?

I walked here.

I can't tell you what I'm doing here

Not because it's CLASSIFIED, but because I don't know yet

I am a very beautiful

(leave that noun blank)

Ø

ERNESTO: *(stares at Cindy "Panda" Jones)*

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: *(staring back triumphantly)* primordial ooze.

ERNESTO: *(stares at Cindy "Panda" Jones)*

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: prehistoric vine

ERNESTO: *(stares at Cindy "Panda" Jones)*

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: *(stares at Ernesto)*

ERNESTO: *(stares at Cindy "Panda" Jones)*

CINDY “PANDA” JONES: anvil

ERNESTO: like an anvil

CINDY “PANDA” JONES: I love you like an anvil. Like primordial television operated by children with shovels. I love you that much.

ERNESTO: I love you more.

Ø [Sing a new song here.]

EILEEN: In outer space the main thing is to move around really really softly, quietly. Also to dive because you can. I met Agent Candlestick first. No one had done me the kindness of tipping me off to the whole softness thing, and I was making an ass of myself. Agent Candlestick took me aside. He was dressed very neatly like he was a naval officer, which of course he wasn't, but you know, to me, he looked like he might have been a naval officer, he was meticulous. And he came up to me and discreetly took me aside and let me know about the softness protocols.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: I found Eileen buzzing on the back tables. Everywhere I go I hear power – I mean this literally. I didn't know anything about it until someone made me sit on an A/C adapter, to teach me a lesson, they said. I complained it would wilt my lapel flower to be that near an active current but they said –
they said
I can't say what they said they said –

I had a buttercup in my lapel and it multiplied

They said you'll learn, that's what they said. They said you'll learn.

I guess about the multiplication.

Eileen buzzes. She didn't know how to control it so I took her in.

Do you smell that? That's the smell of kindness.

She was making a hell of a noise on the back table and I went out and told her about the softness protocols. Then I think I took her floating? Everything is leaning, she said, and I said, use your head like a rudder. Showed her how to dive. It was fun, like having a kid, or something.

Ø

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: I'm like half asleep already.

ERNESTO: Should I tell you about my day?

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: I'm on assignment.

ERNESTO: I don't know how you have so much energy.

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: I don't, I really want to sleep.

ERNESTO: I had a weird day.

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: I'm thinking of becoming a machinist.

ERNESTO: Do you know Eileen?

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: From karate?

ERNESTO: From work.

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: Where do you work?

ERNESTO: I can't tell you if you don't remember.

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: I'm too tired to remember. Give me a hint.

ERNESTO: I can't.

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: Oh I remember. It's shaped like a Pentagon. You work at the Pentagon.

ERNESTO: I work for the secretary of

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: No you don't.

ERNESTO: Defense.

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: I can't keep my eyes open.

Ø

AGENT GATWICK: A professional center surrounded by grass is not quite a business place. Unless the grass is mowed. It is maybe a future business place. If the announcements are made hourly, they should have some variation to keep people from doubting your ability. Teaching is not supposed to be customer oriented. Teaching is supposed to be a mystery. We can go through anything together unless we lack discipline. If we lack discipline, we'll eventually be asked to leave. Keep in mind that somewhere in this very town, someone's life is crumbling. Federal officers are a shocking wake up. Question: can you see the stars from

your bedroom window? If you answered no, you can either a) move or b) draw some. Sometimes absence is a helpful study aid. You decide how much you want to learn. Your concentration should always exceed the demands of the atmosphere. Patronizing sentence constructions do not work with adult learners. Tell yourself, "I am impressive." You are impressive. "I am super impressive." You are reasonably impressive. We have a job to do. It really doesn't matter if you like me or not.

Ø [Repeat some portion of the above, as song.]

EILEEN: I spent the week thinking about going tumbling. I thought through every detail, I thought through what I would look like in all the various positions of tumbling. I thought about everything that makes you tumble, in every sense, I even made lists. I didn't think of many but one was: if you go then I go. Then I thought about crumbling and I thought what is the difference between tumbling and crumbling. And I have been trying to figure out which word applies to me. Obviously we fall. Fall over, fall in, fall up?. I'm not sure. This is one of the seven items that generally occupy my mind.

AGENT GATWICK (*to Eileen, suddenly*): I know some of you ladies might not like to think in terms of you know opponents, but I want you to try. We have enemies. You are wrong if you think we don't. I am letting you know that you need to practice your form. Embrace that you have enemies; even let yourself be energized by it. Because as you get better at thinking antagonistically, you're going to get better at everything. You are going to improve.

Ø [Sing a new song, something completely new, like a new setting, like time passing, maybe even just vowel sounds.]

EILEEN: I kind of miss my house. Definitely I miss cooking my own food. Space is weird.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Eileen, have you ever heard of the job Air Traffic Controller?

Ø

EILEEN: My stomach hurts.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Eileen! Watch out!

something violent narrowly misses them

EILEEN: How do I know you're not training me to be a terrorist?

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Everything is fine. I wouldn't worry. I am a responsible person.

Ø

There is a phone call from the Secretary of Defense

SEC DEF: Georg?

GEORG: Yes sir?

SEC DEF: I need an update.

GEORG: um

SEC DEF: yeah

GEORG: Implementation went smoothly.

SEC DEF: Great news Georg. Do you think you can have this thing working for me?

GEORG: It's 50/50 that it'll hold outside of lab conditions.

SEC DEF: Then god damn it get outside of the lab and find out.

GEORG: Yes sir.

SEC DEF: Georg?

GEORG: Yes sir?

SEC DEF: How's your kid?

GEORG: Peculiar sometimes, sir, but generally acceptable.

SEC DEF: Then bring her in. If she wants to see my hallway, let her see it.

GEORG: Thank you sir. Thank you so much.

SEC DEF: No need to thank me, Georg. No need to thank me.

Ø

EILEEN: I changed my name.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: No you didn't. When?

EILEEN: After I got divorced.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: To what?

EILEEN: Eileen.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Why?

EILEEN: I just couldn't keep it. I was embarrassed.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Why were you embarrassed?

EILEEN: Because I couldn't remember anything about myself that didn't have to do with him.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: We shouldn't talk about this. I'm supposed to be training you.

EILEEN: Oh. Yeah.

So what am I supposed to do with this thing?

AGENT CANDLESTICK: It's an energy pellet. It powers your escape pod.

EILEEN: Oh. Okay.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Do you want me to show you how?

EILEEN: Oh. No. I already know how.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Eileen, you've got to get your head out of the future.

EILEEN: I think I want to lie down for a while, Agent Candlestick.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Eileen?

EILEEN: Yes?

AGENT CANDLESTICK: You know I come from a culture where they don't dance at parties, so to speak.

EILEEN: I know, Agent Candlestick, I know.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: And I know how much you want to dance at parties.

EILEEN: I do. It's true.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: What was your name, before?

EILEEN: Cindy "Panda" Jones.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Oh. That's a nice name.

EILEEN: Too late now.

Ø [A song, the sad kind, goes here.]

AGENT ORLY: One thing about space is that you get confused. Things are so different from what you think is natural, that you can't ever really believe them. Like it changes from day to night very quickly, like maybe over the course of three minutes. The dark is even

more intense than regular light, polished and hyper reflective, except that you know there's no light to reflect. What *feels* like reflection is actually *emanation* and it isn't light. And you just kind of don't want to even know what it is that's emanating at you.

After I fell in love with Agent Fir, we started going to this very beautiful place out by one of the crater lakes, which had artificial lights, very small ones strung overhead, and it was always hushed and romantic and the dance floor was old time you know, very stylish. They used holograms to make everyone comfortable, set perpetually on a kind of elegant late 50's thing. Agent Fir finished her training and we were young, and we didn't know what it does to you to be on assignment. She left. And so I didn't go back to the place by the lake. [I would go to the New Pandatown Diner, which was bright yellow and had all these great covers for all the jars, table stuff, you know, it sounds weird now that I think about it, but they were basically these white cotton cozies shaped like pandas, with red and purple piping, and they were sitting, so there was an opening where the butt was, that fit over the tray of condiments, which were basically like chutneys. The food in New Pandatown is really Indian-inflected because they were the early adopters in terms of space emigration.

One night I stayed outside, which you're not supposed to do, because it gets very cold. We had some extreme climate training my second year, so I did all the stuff I knew, about trying to be more reptilian, that kind of thing: adapt to the temperature don't fight it. I'm walking around and in this really weird mood because I kind of feel like it's the first time I've ever actually been alone up here. And then this silver Buick shoots by, exactly the car I had on Earth, an '83 Skylark. So 1) this car is going really fast. And 2) there aren't any cars up here. I yell, even though I'm not supposed to, with so much force that I think I kind of lit up, and the car pulls instantly to a stop. No screeching, nothing, just stop. I get in but it's so dark inside I can't see anything. The car takes me to a house, out by the lake, across from the dancing place. And a voice says to get out, and I do, and then I'm looking at the house and realize a) that the car is gone and b) that this is the house I grew up in.

AGENT GATWICK:

Do you know what is non-non-belonging? It's when you reject the idea that you don't belong, without pretending that you do. It's an actual demon because it literally comes *into* you, and separates you from, I don't know, feeling solid. Like everything is still there but

there's a little gap. One of the effects is that you stop being able to believe that your life is real. Which means you can't love, and that means you really can't think. I told you before that you have enemies. This is their weapon. You thought demonology was strictly medieval, but in fact it's the most advanced contemporary weaponry out there. And this non-non-belonging demon is the worst. Because it feels good, it's peaceful.

AGENT ORLY:

Once you go into the field you are 99% sure to be attacked with non-non-belonging. So my job is to work on how to recover from it. Because when this demon gets into you, you're sort of not on the ground anymore. This is addictive and paralyzing. It has decimated regiments of agents. So my job is to try to bring people back. An agent doesn't need perspective, an agent needs to act. That's what agent means. Someone who does the action.

Cairo, by the way, is the name of a city on the moon.

Ø [A song, a moon howling song sung right before the demon non-non belonging gets fatally into you.]

INTER-PART:

a message to the American People from the Secretary of Defense

SEC DEF: (*demonstrating hand shadow puppets*) OK, Goose: left hand out, thumb down, index finger curled over middle finger which is pressed under ring finger. Move pinky to simulate quacking action.

To be honest, I purposefully didn't let you sit down next to me. I'm sick of you and your noise. Leave me alone, I'm *reading*.

Sec Def does some exercises, loosens up his shoulders then a bit of shadow boxing

There's no such thing as pacifism.

It's disingenuous to say there is.

Did you ever go to the Poconos? When I was a boy I went there. I went there to go fishing, I went there to go camping, I went there to go eat pizza.

I am a bear with a fish in its mouth. What am I?

A warning.

If you guessed warning,

then you have to give me twenty push-ups ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.

You have eight hours. You have to choose what to do with these eight remaining hours. It's up to you. I'm not a personal secretary. I'm the Secretary of Defense. Keep your own god damned schedule.

I am extremely intelligent.

And so are you, yes I know that.

When I was starting out one of my jobs was to write a survival guide for nuclear winter and I say to my boss I say Sir if you cannot survive nuclear winter what am I writing a survival manual for and he says, sometimes you find things before you understand them. Sometimes you propose things before you find them. Use your mind, he says, and I say my imagination and he says no. You have to make something out of what you don't know.

Do you smell basil? That smells amazing.

More shadow boxing

Elephant is complicated. You make your left hand kind of like the devil sign, middle and ring depressed (but not curled), index and pinky out horizontally, thumb just out of the way to the side. Then you put your right hand on top of the left, press your right thumb to the side of your left hand, and curve all the other fingers up to make a dome. What you're looking for is tusks, and a trunk, and depending on where your left thumb is you can also see the lower part of the mouth or body.

So my question is, is this an elephant? Is it a real elephant?

Your answer wants to be, no, but think about it. How much of the verb, to elephant, does this fulfill? Something, right? It is some amount of elephant.

Everything is real. Everything except verbs, which are more than real. Real plus.

Here's something really neat about the building I work in. My office is CLASSIFIED. But the hallway is not. So I would like to invite the American people to my hallway. I'm sorry I can't let you in the room. And you need an escort. But you are welcome to come walk down my hallway.

But you can't come in. I have work to do.

Also you're not allowed to use the river entrance, that's reserved for the President.

If you think I'm going to talk to you about what battle is, you're wrong.
What do you think I'm going to talk to you about?

Here's a joke. See if you can't make some sense out of it:

A man rides into town on Friday. He stays three days, and leaves on Friday. How does that happen?

Of course you'll have to answer some more complex questions before I invite you to come work for me.

I love America.

Not all the bullshit people say it is I mean I love America. I love the New Jersey Turnpike. I love motorboats in lakes. I love heirloom tomatoes and grizzly bears and rocks. I love the goddamn Poconos. I love knock off dvds of action movies and I love the action movies too. I love action.

ENTITY equals EVENT.

Ø

AGENT GATWICK: *Singing an Aria while floating by in a '78 Sea Green Citroen Wagon*

honk if you've been honest with yourself

honk if you didn't cheat

cry if no one washed your feet

steering wheels tell fortunes

time the windshield wipers

cry cry cry little Chevy driver

listen to the idle of my engine

experience my four cylinder pickup speed

flash your brights if you drive defensively

signal me

signal me

signal me

signal me

Continues as duet

GATWICK

honk if you've been honest with yourself

honk if you didn't cheat

cry if no one washed your feet

Steering wheels tell fortunes

time the windshield wipers

cry cry cry little Chevy driver

listen to the idle of my engine

experience my four cylinder pickup speed

flash your brights if you drive defensively

signal me

signal me

signal me

signal me

SEC DEF

I love the New Jersey Turnpike.

I love motorboats in lakes.

I love motorboats in lakes.

I love heirloom tomatoes

And grizzly bears and rocks

Tomatoes and grizzly bears and rocks

I love the goddamn Poconos

I love dvds of action movies

I love action movies.

I love speed

I love speed

I love speed

I love speed

Long planetarium type overhead movie of the stars and planets, as music plays out.

Ø

PART TWO

EILEEN: A long time ago, when I was still called Cindy “Panda” Jones, I bought a book in a used bookstore, an Air Force survival manual for four different emergency landing contexts. Ocean, jungle, desert, and something else. Arctic, probably. I remember the appealing poppy-orange cover. I happened to be on a romantic getaway weekend in the Poconos with my ex-husband Ernesto. I bring this up for two reasons. One, when I was still on Earth, I was sent to a preliminary training camp and out of complete coincidence, the route between where we stayed and where we trained brought me past the exact location of the bookstore where I found that book. We were in silent training, so I didn't tell anyone. The place had turned into some kind of flower shop. Two, at that training camp I was given a survival manual for four different contexts. Rocky planet, Gaseous planet, Outer space, and Holographic planet. This manual also had a bright poppy orange cover. Other poppy-colored things were: my Level Two training uniform, my standard-issue towel, the small metallic disc we were supposed to wear on our foreheads, the planet I saw almost every night in my dreams, and the string of lights that decorated the otherwise humble oil rig work boat where I learned, finally, how to dance at parties.

The first time I was on a holographic planet was probably a test. I had a nominal mission to recover a particular flower, but I happen to know that they grow those hydroponically, because I have been in the greenhouses in Fartown, which I happen to know serve The Orly Demonology Combat Research Laboratories. One thing I remember from the Holographic Planet survival guide is that when you're going through the hologram, everything is a sign, which means that by reading it very carefully, you can figure out all the false assumptions whoever made the hologram was working with, and that's the only clue you have to their real identity. When you're in a hologram the project isn't to decode it. What you're actually trying to do is to recover something real; there is always something real that can be recovered even though technically there's nothing there but light. In this hologram I remember I had to cross a small river to get the place where these flowers, they were some kind of foxglove, were growing. And as I'm wading through this small river, I see a bear come at me, holding a fish in his mouth. Now I understand immediately that the fish is Agent Gatwick, who has gotten the bear to hold him as if he's going to eat him, but in fact the bear is Agent Candlestick and no one's going to harm the fish, and they're just checking to see how I'm

doing. So I wave the bear over to me, and climb on his back, and let him walk me to the other side of the river, get the flowers, go back to my ship, and leave.

Ø

There's a conference call from the Secretary of Defense.

EILEEN: Hello?

AGENT GATWICK: Hello?

SEC DEF: Eileen, Agent Gatwick, thanks for taking the time to speak with me.

EILEEN: Of course sir.

AGENT GATWICK: Sir.

SEC DEF: Eileen, how has your training been going?

EILEEN: Very smooth sir.

SEC DEF: Agent Gatwick thinks that you're ready to go out on assignment.

AGENT GATWICK: Sir.

EILEEN: Thank you Sir.

SEC DEF: Agent Gatwick, has Eileen been trained in Dark Planet Operation Protocols?

AGENT GATWICK: She has sir, that's covered in year three.

SEC DEF: Eileen, how do you feel about your dark planet operation skills?

EILEEN: Well I've only been in the simulator. But I felt good about it.

SEC DEF: As you should, Eileen: you're the only one who has ever successfully completed a task in the Dark Planet Simulator. Isn't that right, Agent Gatwick.

AGENT GATWICK: Correct, sir.

EILEEN: I believe I'm the only one who has ever used the Dark Planet Simulator, Mr. Secretary.

AGENT GATWICK: That's correct, Eileen, we built it for you.

SEC DEF: Eileen. Now you understand that no one has been to a dark planet before, right? The simulator is our best guess, though our guesses tend to be very good.

EILEEN: No sir I didn't know that.

SEC DEF: Well no one has been to a dark planet, because we don't think there have been any of them until now. Do you know what a dark planet is, Eileen?

EILEEN: "A theoretical instance of a competing planet in which life on Earth is restarted,

with significant revisions with reference to the possibilities and consequences of reproduction. Dark planets theoretically begin formation in the crystalline stage, and so as they involve no Big Bang-like origin, can be created without notice to star-gazing, as opposed to star-traveling, cultures. Dark Planets are believed to be intended to theoretically render the Earth an obsolete planet, and were invented by unknown assailants on all that is good and natural.”

SEC.DEF: Textbook, Eileen. Excellent.

EILEEN: Thank you sir.

SEC DEF: Now Eileen, as you may have inferred, we believe there is one such planet being formed. It is your assignment to destroy it by means of the decomposition ray, code-name Harpoon, that Agent Orly has invented for this purpose.

EILEEN: Understood, sir.

SEC DEF: Eileen, we want to be *alone* in the universe. Do you understand? There can't be another one of us out there.

EILEEN: Understood, sir.

SEC.DEF: Very good, Eileen. Now I'll let you and Agent Gatwick discuss your Harpoon training and deployment timetable. Good luck, Eileen.

EILEEN: Thank you, sir.

The Secretary of Defense hangs up the phone.

AGENT GATWICK: Eileen?

EILEEN: Yes Sir?

AGENT GATWICK: Why don't you stop by my office after lunch, shall we say 1?

EILEEN: I had hoped to go swimming, Sir.

AGENT GATWICK: Then 1:30. I'll let Agent Orly know.

EILEEN: 1:30, thank you Sir.

Agent Gatwick hangs up the phone.

Eileen hangs up the phone.

Ø

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: (*sings*)

there are problems with Jupiter
there are problems with Mars
there are problems with Saturn's rings
there are problems with Dwarf stars
there are problems with hurricanes
there are problems with fires
there are problems with flood warnings
there are problems with my car

ERNESTO: (*singing*)

there are problems with constancy
there are problems with gladness
there are problems with humility
there are problems with sadness

Ø

AGENT ORLY: When I was first working on the Harpoon, I had a fairly limited idea of how to think about energy. It's built to undermine a theoretical crystalline formation by limiting the connecting and inflecting tendencies of the chemical compound of the crystal, so in effect breaking apart linear surfaces, and inflicting on this otherwise articulated complex shape a series of small gaps which in turn destroy its cohesion, leading to a decomposition, or breakdown, of the entire thing. So in order to do this, the harpoon requires a particular energy, you want the impact to pierce the crystal form not in depth but in energetic charge, okay, just enough current to hook underneath and then as the crystal pulls against the shock, that little penetration of energy comes from *underneath*, and achieves the tear. You see you can't break this kind of crystalline field from above, it can only break *itself* down. So you see this harpoon instigates the life-form to use its own energy to destroy itself, which is of course very much like how a harpoon works against a whale, thus the name. A very sophisticated Harpoon works imperceptibly. The decay needs to have a very subtle slope, and that slope can't accelerate until the thing is weakened enough to be effectively unable to resist.

So I'm working on the thing and getting seriously stuck. I have the theory but I can't make it work, and the Sec Def is really upset about this because he thinks privately that this dark planet we suspect is forming is the number one threat, and even had me stop working on my anti non-non-belonging demon counter altogether, and prioritize the Harpoon. He keeps taking the moon shuttle up and visiting the lab, he's really breathing down my neck. But the guy's super smart, you know, and I'm thinking, maybe he's not being a jerk. Maybe he misses solving problems. It must be kind of a drag, in a way, to be so high up in politics that you don't get to do any of the actual engineering anymore.

So one of these times he's up, and after I show him where I'm stuck, we go to the New Pandatown Diner, which is still just as great as ever, and I can tell he's a little bit charmed by it you know, this is like an extra good business trip. We're eating and he mentions the panda cozy on the table and I show him that it's got five different kinds of chutney under it, some of them really hot, some mild, some sweet, you know the drill. And he takes the chutneys, and rearranges them, and says,

SEC DEF: Which is the hot one now?

And I point to the jar which was always the hot one, which is now moved toward the front of the cluster, and he says,

SEC DEF: Are you sure? Try it.

And I try it and it's not hot at all, but the one two jars behind it is. Then he rearranges the jars again and asks me

SEC DEF: Okay now which one is the hot one?

And I point to the new hot jar and he says

SEC DEF: Okay try it

and this chutney which I swear was just burning my tongue off isn't hot anymore it's like the most serene, calming taste ever, like you eat this and you don't want to eat any more, you know, like the meal is *done*. The Sec Def puts the cozy back on the chutneys and says

SEC DEF: Energy isn't essential. Right? It's relational.

That night I drop the Sec Def off at that dancing place by the lake, and go back into the lab. I rearrange the build order of elements and voila. The Harpoon works.

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AGENT FIR: Sitting in the house. Floating. Floating through the house. Saying the word nice. Saying tree car nose seat object. Saying shredder. Blinking a lot. Waiting. Let me make you some tea, Leo Tolstoy. How very glad I am you're here. Sitting in the house with me. Floating in it. Do you remember, says Leo Tolstoy, you were swimming. Saying nose car ear waterplants on your feet. On a wave in space under clouds. And sound and houses stripped bare you old Leo Tolstoy. You are laughing at him because he is lovely. Leo Tolstoy is lovely lovely. He makes me happy. Musty old Leo Tolstoy in a bright wakeful moon sings about its wakefulness and this is the yes I think this is the house I grew up in. A hologram moon you are lovely lovely. I'll leave the key in the drainpipe. Oh do come in pet come in out of the green green clearing.

Ø

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Have you ever had that experience where you arrive at an idea and it feels like so fresh and such a breakthrough and then you realize you already were there earlier, but you didn't notice it then, but you've been preparing a set of thing, thinking you're moving forward when really you're slowly closing in on a small, particular constellation of details?

AGENT GATWICK: I never know what's going to come out of my mouth. Sometimes I do like it.

AGENT ORLY: Have you tried the chutney here Candlestick?

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Not that I can remember.

AGENT ORLY: You should try it. You like energy right? You should try it.

AGENT GATWICK: My wife loves the chutney here. We come here at least once a week. She likes to mix two of them together, whatever is in front with whatever is third back. She does it by position, not label. My wife is weird.

AGENT ORLY: She should apply for a government job.

AGENT GATWICK: Nah, she's not into that stuff.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: I want to take Eileen floating.

AGENT GATWICK: Who's Eileen?

AGENT CANDLESTICK: I don't know yet.

AGENT ORLY: I love chutney.

At the next booth

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: I want a divorce.

ERNESTO: I know.

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: I need to be free.

ERNESTO: I know.

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: You have that other wife.

ERNESTO: I know.

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: I'm thinking of doing something radical.

ERNESTO: I figured.

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: I'm going to become a fighter.

ERNESTO: Really?

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: I talked to my Dad about a job.

ERNESTO: Really?

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: Don't worry I won't be on site at the Pentagon.

ERNESTO: It's okay if you are.

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: No Ernesto. It's not.

ERNESTO: Can we still be friends?

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: No.

ERNESTO: But we have all the same memories.

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: I'll send you a letter when I get settled. But I don't think I can see you again.

ERNESTO: Oh.

CINDY "PANDA" JONES: Yeah. I know.

They're both tremendously sad

from the next booth

AGENT GATWICK: See if you can't bring me some more of this chutney.

Ø

Eileen and Agent Candlestick are out floating. It's a windy environment so they have to yell to be heard.

EILEEN: Everything is leaning.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Try using your head as a rudder.

Eileen does

EILEEN: That's amazing.

EILEEN: Agent Candlestick?

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Yes?

EILEEN: Do you ever like, dance, at parties?

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Not really.

EILEEN: Do you ever think about trying?

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Not really.

EILEEN: Are you sure, Agent Candlestick?

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Uh, not really.

EILEEN: I had a dream you were dancing at a party.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Eileen, watch out!

Something violent narrowly misses them; they fall. On the ground it's not as windy/ noisy.

EILEEN: Have you ever thought about the link between the word terror and the word terra meaning earth?

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Yes. Have you ever thought about currents?

EILEEN: You mean ocean or electrical?

AGENT CANDLESTICK: Same thing.

EILEEN: Yeah. I think about that all the time.

They start floating again.

AGENT CANDLESTICK: I know how to multiply things. To make them multiply.

EILEEN: I know how to swim.

Ø

GEORG: Wow. I remember this window. My arms feel strange. Heavy. I really want to talk to someone. A dog would do. Once I had magnificent style. Alpine sweaters, mustache, pipe, the whole thing. My daughter learned to play logic games in this room, right when computers came out.

Sounds from the other room. Georg peeks in and comes back.

Jesus Christ everyone got old.

My friends know I work for the U.S. Government but they think I'm in Space Weaponry when in fact I'm pioneering a new field called Demonology. OK just kidding it's not new at all. Do you know that the more power you have, the more capacity you have to be invaded? Think about it. I'm assigned to Fractional Slope Insidious Invasion. My team works on things you can't perceive. The missiles and stuff are just to throw our enemies off the scent.

Do you hear that?

Checks the window

It looks like the milkman from the farm across the street, his name is Jones, uh, Farmer Jones. My daughter likes to pretend she lives on that farm. Sometimes she goes to help milk the cows but generally I think Jones just lets her hang out and draw the rooks in the trees, and pick up peacock feathers.

Jones comes in dressed as Leo Tolstoy

GEORG: Who are you supposed to be?

JONES: Tolstoy

GEORG: Did you bring the milk?

JONES: It's on the front step.

GEORG: Can you bring it in?

JONES: No, I'm here as Tolstoy.

GEORG: Wait, you look like my daughter.

JONES: Well I'm here as Farmer Jones who is here as Tolstoy

GEORG: Ok pandabear, whatever you say.

JONES: Eileen. It's Eileen now. And anyway you should think of me as Tolstoy. I'd like a drink.

GEORG: What can I get you?

JONES: Hot chocolate. With milk, not water.

GEORG: Yeah, I know.

Georg gets the drink. They sit on the couch.

GEORG: Uh, so Tolstoy. You uh, read what I gave you, right?

JONES: Yes.

GEORG: Any thoughts?

JONES: I have a gift to give you. It's a vast expanse. You have to travel through it. If it helps, you can think of it as being like "a train journey in Russia."

GEORG: I think I'll save that for my daughter.

JONES: She already has a lot of traveling to do.

GEORG: She needs more.

JONES: Can I use your bathroom?

GEORG: Sure. But watch out for the pihranas, they come up through the pipes.

JONES: I'll keep the door open. If I scream, come pull me out of there.

Jones leaves for the bathroom. Jones screams, but Georg doesn't move to help. Instead, Georg is looking at the items on the mantelpiece. He picks up one of those glass jars that should have a ship in it, but instead has a plane inside.

GEORG: I don't remember this.

He reads the craftsman's name on the bottom of the jar.

GEORG: Orly.

Ø

ERNESTO: Sophie is in the kitchen of a diner, sewing cozies for condiments in the shape of panda bears. The diner is in New Pandatown, which is a city on the moon, if you haven't figured that out. Sophie is, among other things, pregnant. She is also very happy. You see, Sophie is not really here at all. This is Agent Orly's memory, which Georg has just accidentally stumbled across. Sophie's full name is Agent Sophie Fir. This is before she goes out into the field and is fatally assaulted by non-non-belonging.

Ø

EILEEN *tumble-floating in space*

I kept feeling this coming.

Something like dreaming past it.

I was announcing it to myself.

I'm afraid I interrupted my own sleep.

I was immediately responsive, which is so unusual for me. Must mean I have been prepared for this.

By myself but maybe more by others.

If I don't say anything it's more beautiful.

But I think I need to talk myself through it. Going to talk myself through it.

Enormous longing to touch something or to talk to someone.

I half-dreamed I woke up in a motel room. I thought I woke up in a motel room in the middle of the night, feeling patient. Longing but patiently. Can't see but I can see, only because I can't see, I can see.

What's in my hand?

Or-ly Har-poon De-vice.

Oh right.

Do you think about tumbling? No I don't. Not ever. You don't? Oh not ever. But you're tumbling now. I know. But I'm not thinking about it. But you're talking about it. No, I'm not. I'm just doing it. You're talking about it.

Tumble-floating in longer, slower, more graceful arcs now. She falls asleep and wakes up again. Tumble-spinning then floating.

And I looked around me and saw all the light that had been obscured when I was on the dark planet working its crystalline landscape with the Harpoon. I saw all the planetary light and all the moons. In space, light travels from other things, but on the dark planet light only comes out of your own eyes. Rays coming out of your own eyes. So it's not dark if you have rays coming out of your own eyes. And it's neat to be responsible for your own seeing.

What I saw was what I always saw. What I already knew but I didn't know was a dark planet. A kind of dusty looking red globe. Covered with life, at the crystal stage. Very bizarre looking crystalline forms, still fluid, flowing. Slowly, but flowing. Not rock crystal. Not rock at all. Neither rocky nor gaseous, more like a slightly fluid lightless planet putting all its energy into its own flowing. Coming out of my own eyes the light I see red and then violet. Amethyst. Coronas. Slightly distinct coronas, layers of color coming out of my own eyes. There is life on this planet dust life color life life of crystalline shaped life.

I killed a planet and now I'm out tumbling. I am the tumbleweed coming out of my own

eyes. Lay your head back and you'll hear buzzing. Everything moving even very very far communicates in a hum. Buzz comes at your ears and through your brain and then comes out of your own eyes. So I am seeing and hearing and tumbling through space. And I have electricity coming out of my own body. It is a lot like floating but nothing is lighter than anything else, so it's tumbling. If I get upset then it's crumbling. I prefer to travel by the tumbling. Not crumbling.

This is the feeling called non-non-belonging. When you don't feel that you *don't* belong, without necessarily feeling that you *do*. To not belong is to crumble. To not not belong is to tumble. Maybe I didn't know how nice it is. It's not a demon at all. I think it comes out of your own body. A demon comes into you but this is something coming out of you.

It's very very very very beautiful when light comes out of your own eyes. All your edges split apart ever so. It's very gentle and then maybe you're not even there anymore.

Ø

AGENT CANDLESTICK: (*yelling over the wind*) When you get closer to earth, I'll send you signals. I don't know why am I on earth now? I'm on earth now Eileen. I hope you know to come here instead of the moon. I'm in the Poconos Eileen. I hope you'll be able to find me. Everything's gotten very overgrown. It's weedy and buggy can you hear that? We can go swimming together Eileen. It will be just us and the bugs.

EILEEN: (*yelling from space*) Agent Candlestick! I don't know how to stop! I don't know where I'm going to stop!

A NEW VOICE:

Agent Candlestick gets in his car and drives out onto the dilapidated overgrown elevated highway system. He thinks he sees a tumbling speck in the sky and he moves toward it. He drives under it. He has to leave the Poconos. He has to drive West across the grasslands. He's driving under the slowly tumbling speck he thinks is Eileen. There are no people are left in America, there is only weather. Or there seems to be because she changes directions now and then. Agent Candlestick drives across the country. He drives through the desert. He

drives over the mountains. He drives to the ocean. In the distance is a ship. It's an oil rig work boat. He finds a row boat and begins rowing. Eileen is tumbling. She is getting closer. Lower, and so bigger. It is definitely Eileen. She is going to land on the boat. He is rowing to the boat. She lands on the boat. He gets to the boat and climbs up the side. This is Eileen and Agent Candlestick. She has light coming out of her own eyes and when she looks at the ceiling at the lights strung up across the ceiling, little round lights, they turn on, she puts her own light into them. The ship is buzzing with electrical currents. The ship is on the ocean. Here are Eileen and Agent Candlestick on the ocean surrounded by currents. The lights overhead are orange red the color of poppies. I know how to swim says Eileen. I know how to make things multiply says Agent Candlestick. I know you were not not belonging says Agent Candlestick. I was but I wanted to come back says Eileen.

This is when they finally learn to dance. Don't watch.

end of play