



Awake

Chapter 2 *Transcript*

Listen to audio at
http://www.sparklermonthly.com/audio_episode/awake-chapter-2

Awake © Tory Woolcott, Barabara, and Rebecca Scoble,
2013

Illustrations by Angela Sham

Cast:

Hina: Rielle Braid
Janelle: Jae Jae Lopez
Robbie: Jesse Hodson
Rosa: Annemieke Wade
Travis: Alex O'Shea
Seb: Adam Ford

Special Thanks to Sharif E. and his daughter Aya

Note: Due to last-minute audio changes, transcript may not match final audio script exactly.



[Scene opens in medical bay. The soft, persistent white noise of the ship rumbles in the background.]

SEB: ...He could've been a stowaway.

JANELLE: What? No, he couldn't. [overlapping with Travis below]

TRAVIS: No, he couldn't. [overlapping with Janelle above]

SEB: Why not?

JANELLE: He had an I.D. chip under the skin of his scalp. That means he was *supposed* to be on this ship.

HINA: Well...*some* kind of chip was removed from his head. It could've been a chip from something back on Earth.

TRAVIS: Persephone couldn't read a chip that wasn't part of the ship's system, right? [pause] This body had a Persephone I.D., so the murderer had to cut it out!

ROSA: Easy, Travis. Don't jump to conclusions.

TRAVIS: What, that it was foul play? Half his head is caved in!

ROSA: I'm not denying that the death was unnatural. I just want us to walk through the possibilities.

[Travis growls]

ROSA: And you're wrong, Travis. Some of the passengers had chips before coming on Persephone, so they were reprogrammed for this trip. She can read almost anything. [pause] This man wasn't necessarily supposed to be here.

SEB: So he *could've* been a stowaway.

JANELLE: How could he survive here on his own? We control the food and water!

ROBBIE: He could have come onto Persephone before we left the Solar System. He could have survived on emergency rations and supplementing that with food and water from the hydroponics pods. If he's down here, he might have been trying to enter a pod when he died.

JANELLE: Even if the guy tried to break into a pod and got blown back by the defense system, we found his body wrapped in a closet. Somebody put it there.

ROBBIE: [quietly] Put *him* there.

HINA: I guess he could've been murdered back on earth...and someone dumped the body in the ship before we left.

SEB: Whoa. Dumping your murder victim in space? That would definitely get the cops off your back...

TRAVIS: There's no way that body's 600 years old!

HINA: It actually looks...pretty recent.

ROBBIE: [quietly] *He*.

ROSA: This is a sterile environment--he wouldn't decompose naturally. Who knows what would happen to a dead body under these conditions?

JANELLE: No. No, shit-for-brains is right.

TRAVIS: Oh, fuck you!

JANELLE: If this guy didn't get the pathogen wipe before going under the cryogenic freeze, he would've brought his own bacteria. He would be *way* more decomposed. Besides, I think he had a Persephone chip.

HINA: Why?

JANELLE: Do you remember getting your chip implanted, Hina?

HINA: No. I just have the scar.

ROSA: [a little stern] As would *anyone* with *any* implanted chip, like we already established. What's your point, Janelle?

JANELLE: Any crew member prepared for Persephone has more than just an I.D. chip in their head. We have those anti-aggression failsafes put directly into our brains, too. So the surgery itself leaves us with extra scars on our skulls. The *inside* of our skulls.

ROSA: Half of his head is totally crushed.

JANELLE: There are still fragments of his skull. And look here...

[cracking noises]

[Seb and Hina gag and protest as Janelle pulls out a piece of skull.]

JANELLE: That's obviously a surgical scar on the inside of his skull.

SEB: ...You really think he was one of us?

TRAVIS [almost triumphant]: Like I said--the murderer cut out that chip because Persephone could identify him! We'd know what pod he was supposed to be in--

ROSA [stern]: Travis, calm down.

HINA [sounding a little sick]: Don't get...so excited about this.

TRAVIS: I'm not *excited*. I'm just trying to figure out why there's a fucking *rotting body* on our ship!

ROBBIE: [quietly] Rotting *man*.

[Voices start to overlap as crew members get upset.]

JANELLE: If he was supposed to be here, and he hasn't decomposed much...then he must've been murdered here--by someone on the crew!

PERSEPHONE: [warning tone] Warning, Travis Williams. Your aggression levels are approaching maximum.

TRAVIS: Why is there a fucking *murdered body* rotting away on our ship?!

ROBBIE: Murdered *man*.

JANELLE: And more importantly, who killed him?!

ROSA [yelling]: That's enough!

[Everyone goes silent.]

ROSA: Calm down, all of you! You're getting ahead of yourselves.

TRAVIS: But we can't just--

ROSA [stern]: We know this man didn't come to a natural end because of the injury, but that *doesn't* make it murder. Janelle, you were the one who brought up the anti-aggression failsafe node in our brains--if any crew member was violent enough to cause this kind of head wound, Persephone would knock her out *long* before she could lay a hand on this guy. The primary purpose of the failsafe is to stop something like this from happening.

JANELLE: But...what if something went wrong?

ROSA: Stopping violence between crew members is *literally* Persephone's top priority. We'd lose gravity in this ship before she'd let those failsafe mechanisms fall into disrepair. Do you know how many backup frequencies that brain node can translate? Persephone can release a sound that will knock each and every one of us unconscious if she needs to.

TRAVIS: Maybe Persephone couldn't stop the killer in time!

ROSA: Travis--

TRAVIS: No, listen! Maybe this wasn't a crime of passion. If someone calmly bashed this guy's head in while he was sleeping, how could Persephone stop that? She stops us when we get aggressive! But if this was pre-meditated, she wouldn't know violence was coming until the guy was dead!

ROSA: [pause] That still doesn't explain why no one would report him missing. And the chances that someone could get around Persephone's--

TRAVIS: [sarcastic] Right, like it's so hard to get around Persephone. [raises voice] Hey, Persephone! Who's the dead guy?!

[warning tone]

PERSEPHONE: I cannot identify a passenger without an identification chip.

TRAVIS: But he's *in* you, Persephone. Someone put him here under your watch.

[pause]

PERSEPHONE: Please rephrase the question.

JANELLE: Persephone...did you see who put this man in the closet?

[warning tone]

PERSEPHONE: ERROR.

SEB: Persephone, did this man die on the ship?

[warning tone]

PERSEPHONE: ERROR.

[chorus of angry sighs]

TRAVIS: Right. Because the fucking A.I. on this ship is *so* reliable.

ROBBIE: Persephone has some bugs now and then, but they're fixable. And it makes sense that she isn't reporting on what happened here--if there was a record of it, this man would be properly in the morgue.

ROSA: I'm not...saying it doesn't look bad. But even if you take the computer element out of this, we have a tiny crew in a small space. If something violent happened on the ship and someone disappeared, a person would have noticed.

[long pause]

ROSA: Persephone, are there any pods unaccounted for?

PERSEPHONE: All existing cryogenic pods have exactly one human assignation.

ROSA: [serious] The number of people and pods on this ship is an exact science. When someone dies, her pod is automatically powered down so no one can use it. Do you know why that is?

JANELLE: [a little darkly] So...no crew member will jump in there.

ROSA: Exactly. It seems cruel, but there aren't any free rides. This crew *must maintain* a crew of six at all times or we risk breaking down. The entire system of rewards and punishments--from our free tickets, to the way we can take years but not lose them, to the anti-violence failsafe literally carved into our brains--is to make sure we keep this ship on course. We could accidentally kill an *entire colony* of 40,000 people if we let our needs get in the way of us doing what we signed up for.

[long silence]

ROSA: [sighs] If there aren't any empty pods, then this man is unaccounted for. And that's unheard of.

TRAVIS: Yeah, but--

ROSA: Persephone bugs aside, that DOESN'T HAPPEN without fifty separate things going wrong in exactly the right way. The thought that this was a murder on the ship is just...it's by far the least likely thing that could happen.

ROBBIE: [quietly] So he *could* have been a stowaway.

JANELLE: Can we *please* drop that theory? I told you--a stowaway would've been rotting from his own bacteria!

ROSA: Or he was killed on earth, sterilized, and put in this ship to hide the evidence. Or this was an accident, his pod was properly powered down, and he was never put in the morgue for some reason. Maybe religious reasons...his wrapping was very deliberate. I could see the crew doing that on purpose, and finding a way around Persephone. [pause] I'm not sure how Persephone would process a dead body that wasn't disposed of properly. It would explain her bug.

TRAVIS: Unless the entire crew plotted to murder him and hide it together.

ROSA: There's no way something *that* elaborate would get past Persephone. She can initiate the thaw of the back-up lead crew *herself* in a real emergency.

TRAVIS: You've got a lot of fucking faith in Persephone, don't you?

ROSA: [sharp] I do. Because I've been with her longer than you've been *alive*, Travis, and you've been awake for four damn months. Do you honestly think you understand this place better than I do?

TRAVIS: Hmph.

ROSA: We don't know what happened or when. But it had to have happened before my time, so this body is at least a few decades old.

TRAVIS: Unless--

ROSA [sharply]: None of us want to hear any more conspiracy theories, Travis! [pause] Robbie's gone through the log and videos of my entire trip *many times* when we needed to pull something. He can confirm I'm not hiding anything and this *had* to have happened at least twenty-two years ago.

ROBBIE: I've gone through more years than that, but erratically. It'll be hard to determine his time of death.

[Rosa sighs.]

ROSA: The first thing to do is check earlier ship logs for any unusual injuries or accidents. If something more sinister happened, there should be at least be some clue that this man went missing or something. [quieter] I know this is upsetting, but it happened before our time. We don't need any more tension on this ship than we already have. We'll deal with this carefully and *rationaly*, all right?

[long pause]

TRAVIS: This guy was fucking murdered.

[Lines overlap in heated argument.]

SEB: Travis... [sighs]

ROSA: Travis, I am *absolutely through* explaining this to you. You're upsetting everyone!

TRAVIS: I'm *not* the only one who thinks that!

ROSA: We can't be rational if we let a pre-determined conclusion color our investigation!

HINA: All this is just speculation, right? All we know is we...we found a body! Let's all just...oh, God.

[Lines in background fade out a bit. Dialogue of Hina and Robbie is in foreground.]

ROBBIE: Hina?

HINA: Huh?

ROBBIE: Do you want to leave?

HINA: Uh...were *you* gonna go?

ROBBIE: Yes. I don't...I don't like it when they yell.

[Sound of footsteps as Hina and Robbie walk out of room. Door opens and closes behind them; arguing of the rest of the crew is cut off.]

[sound of Hina and Robbie's footsteps down hallway]

Robbie: ...Does it bother you, too?

HINA: Huh?

ROBBIE: The yelling.

HINA: Oh. I'm used to that, actually. [pause] I just don't like to be near the dead.

ROBBIE: Have you been near someone who died before?

HINA: Yeah. Too many times.

[Hina takes a long breath.]

HINA: Nn. I wish there were windows here...I'd love to look at some stars.

ROBBIE: Yeah.

HINA: This ship just feels...really cramped.

ROBBIE: Persephone's as large as some countries.

HINA: [sighs] Maybe the storage area. With all the supplies and 3D printers and passenger pods. Where the rich sleep. [a little bitter] It's not like *we* get to enjoy that space.

ROBBIE: No.

HINA: Those of us who have to actually work get stuck in this shitty corner with no windows. With ceilings so low we can all touch them.

ROBBIE: Rosa can't.

HINA: [small chuckle] True.

[pause]

HINA: This place sucks.

ROBBIE: You're not the first one to say that.

HINA: Look at me. I'm shaking...

ROBBIE: Persephone, would you please open the access hatch in 4001045?

PERSEPHONE: Of course, Robbie.

[noise of hatch opening]

ROBBIE: Persephone, where's Travis?

PERSEPHONE: Travis Williams is currently in the mess hall. Would you like to talk to him?

ROBBIE: No, thank you. Persephone, would you open hydroponics levels 5 through 9 and docking latch 8?

PERSEPHONE: Of course, Robbie.

[noise of hatch opening]

[sound of Hina and Robbie's footsteps]

HINA: Why are we going to hydroponics?

ROBBIE: When I'm upset, I go there. And now you're upset.

HINA: I've...been to hydroponics before. That long tube of greenery that Travis works in, right?

ROBBIE: You've been to *part* of hydroponics. I'm taking you to a different part of hydroponics. I think it'll help you to be somewhere different... It helps me.

[pause]

HINA: You just asked about Travis. Does that mean he wouldn't want us there?

ROBBIE: Travis doesn't have access to this area.

HINA: How do *you* have access?

ROBBIE: Persephone is very helpful if you ask the right questions.

HINA: [almost conspiratorial] Uh...hunh.

HINA: So...what part of hydroponics are you taking me to?

ROBBIE: The live storage bay. It's where the plant material is force evolved to be more useful when we arrive.

HINA: I thought most of that was genetic engineering finished on earth.

ROBBIE: The engineering was done on earth, but the process continues on the ship. Persephone breeds blends and experiments to keep a sustainable, dynamic ecosystem.

HINA: [mutters] Then what the hell does Travis do all day?

ROBBIE: He monitors the oxygen and supplements our food supply. He is in no way qualified to engender organic life.

HINA: None of us are qualified for our jobs. I used to fix engines, but I only ever took a one-year certificate course. Then six months training and a hell of a lot of physical and mental tests to get on Persephone. I shouldn't be the engineer on a damn spaceship.

ROBBIE: You're a technician in a job that was purposely simplified. You haven't had any problems yet, have you?

HINA: I've only been here a month, Robbie.

[long pause]

HINA: No.

ROBBIE: Good.

[pause]

ROBBIE: Are you afraid of heights?

HINA: No...

[door noise]

[Open to new setting, sound of water dripping and spraying in all directions.]

HINA: [hushed awe] Wow...

HINA: Oh my God, it's so *green*. [getting excited] And...big! How is it so big? I can't see the end of it!

ROBBIE: It's 35 miles by 9 miles.

HINA: Why aren't we allowed to come in here?

ROBBIE: The samples are too important. None of the experimental plants can be disturbed.

HINA: Then the plants are more important than us.

ROBBIE: In a matter of speaking.

HINA: [pause] Can we go down there?

ROBBIE: No, but these catwalks go on for miles. I've been coming here for years and haven't walked half of them. Mostly I just sit here, though. I like it here.

[pause]

[Hina sighs deeply.]

HINA: I...signed up for this thing to keep my family safe.

ROBBIE: They are safe.

HINA: Are you kidding? Someone got his head bashed in in the safest place in the universe. No one is ever safe. [pause] I've always looked out for Bassel...but first it turns out the thaw is dangerous...and now there might have been a murder here!

ROBBIE: Your family's sleeping. They're safe.

HINA: NO! They *aren't* safe! [starts to freak out] Aya's *ten years old*. I thought we were making the right choice for her--that we'd give her a chance at a real life. But this isn't better than earth...this trip is already falling apart.

ROBBIE: What's Aya like?

HINA: What?

ROBBIE: I haven't ever spent much time with kids.

HINA: [pause] Are you an only child?

ROBBIE: Yes.

HINA: [sigh] She's a good kid. Really funny, loves to draw. She went through this knock knock joke phase when she was younger, but I think she's past that.

ROBBIE: Can you tell me one?

HINA: They weren't...*good* knock knock jokes.

ROBBIE: I like jokes.

HINA: Okay, well...knock knock?

ROBBIE: Who's there?

HINA: Blue.

ROBBIE: Blue who?

HINA: Don't cry, it's just a joke!

[pause]

[Robbie starts laughing. Hina chuckles awkwardly.]

HINA: It's not that funny.

[Robbie laughs again.]

ROBBIE: [a little happy] No, it's a pun. On "boo hoo." I like that.

HINA: Then you like bad puns.

ROBBIE: It's a *good* pun.

HINA: I have to spend years trapped in space with you, and you're the kind of person who thinks that's a **good pun?**

ROBBIE: Yes.

[Hina chuckles. Things grow quiet.]

HINA: [lets out a breath] How long have you been awake again, Robbie?

ROBBIE: Eight years.

HINA: Everyone says you know the ship better than anyone.

ROBBIE: [pause] I think that's true.

HINA: Do you think Rosa's right about Persephone stopping a murder?

ROBBIE: It's...very unlikely Persephone would allow a murder, or even the cover-up if the murder was unpredictable. There are *many* safeguards to keep that from happening.

HINA: So...you think that guy's death was an accident?

ROBBIE: That's more likely than a murder.

HINA: I'm not asking you what's more likely. I'm asking what you *think*.

ROBBIE: Oh. Um... [gets uncomfortable]

[pause]

HINA: [sighs] Never mind. [voice muffled for a second as she rubs face] We should probably check the logs better before we start speculating again.

ROBBIE: ...N-no, um...

HINA: Huh? [pause] Why shouldn't we check the logs?

ROBBIE: No, I mean... [uncomfortable] ...nnn. We should check the logs. We *will* check the logs. But...I was answering your other question.

[long pause]

ROBBIE: [quietly] I don't think his death was an accident.

End of Chapter 2