

SOUND: STILL WITH CHAOTIC DISCORDANCE AND METAL GROANING FROM  
LAST EPISODE

GUY

(Shouting over the din?)  
What do you mean "they haven't  
fired a harpoon yet?" They're  
hunting this energy? How the hell  
do you hunt energy!?

FERN

If you pay attention, you'll  
probably get to see the answer to  
that question firsthand.

SENTIENT BEING

(Stressed and struggling)  
I...I cannot seem to calm them and  
the inertial forces are too random  
for me to predict. I therefore  
cannot construct counter inertial  
fields quickly enough to protect  
my hull. If we cannot free  
ourselves, my ship will be rent  
apart.

FERN

Okay, lemme update my last  
statement: if we're lucky and if  
you pay attention, Guy, then  
you'll get to see how whalers do  
their thing.

GUY

Do you think they can help us?

SENTIENT BEING

Any communication I attempt to  
send will be corrupted by the  
energy around us, to say nothing  
of it being entirely drowned out  
by this energy storm.

FERN

(Insistent)  
Whale pod.

GUY

Then let's do what you did that  
first time. Let's see if we can  
disperse the energy field--

FERN

--Whale pod--

GUY

--with the same frequency you used before.

FERN

But that only worked for a couple of seconds before they came back even more pissed off.

GUY

They're already pissed off. Now that they're threatened by whalers, maybe they'll, I dunno, eject us and run away?

FERN

Oh. Huh. That might work.

SENTIENT BEING

It might in theory. Unfortunately, those calculations were remarkably complex and nearly impossible to perform while the pod was relatively calm. Now? I believe I have mentioned just how chaotic our immediate environs are at the moment. Those calculations are now impossible for me to perform.

FERN

Aw, you called them a pod.

GUY

What else can we do, then?

SENTIENT BEING

It's a long shot, but maybe--

FERN

--Oh, crap, they're getting ready to fire. Hang on, Guy!

(Pause)

Wait, that's not a--

SOUND: METAL CLANGING AS ANCHOR HITS SHIP

GUY

(Shout of surprise)

FERN

(Shout of surprise)

GUY

(Dismayed)

Are they shooting us?!?

SENTIENT BEING  
It appears they've attached  
something to my hull.

FERN  
That was an anchor!  
(Pause)  
Oh shoot, this is gonna suck--

SOUND: INTENSE METAL GROANING

GUY FERN  
(Shout) (Shout)

SOUND: QUIET. AMBIENT SHIP BEEPING RESUMES

FERN  
(Groaning)  
Everyone still alive?

GUY SENTIENT BEING  
(Groaning) (Irritated)  
Yeah. No.

GUY  
What happened?  
(Pause)  
We're...out of the field?

FERN  
Pod.

SENTIENT BEING  
(Glitching)  
It appears that ship pulled us  
free.  
(Pause)  
Now, if you'll excuse me...I--  
(Glitches badly)

GUY  
Whoa, hey! Are you okay?

SOUND: SILENCE SAVE FOR SICKLY AMBIENT BEEPING

FERN  
(Softly; cautiously)  
Huh. I can still breathe and I'm  
not getting cold...I think we're  
alright.

GUY  
We're fine, but--

SOUND: COMMS CHIME

FERN  
 I think they want a word with us.  
 (Serious)  
 Let me do the talking, yeah?

GUY  
 Uh...sure.

SOUND: COMMS CHANNEL OPENING

WHALER  
 Ahoy, *Clam Before the Storm!* This  
 is Skipper Baha of the Baleen. Do  
 you copy?

GUY  
 (Softly)  
*Clam Before the Storm?!?*

FERN  
 It was typo, okay? It's not my  
 fault you were too busy sleeping  
 and weren't around to proofread my  
 work when I changed our ship's  
 name.

GUY  
 I was sleeping because you told me  
 to!

FERN  
 Potato, tomato. Now, shush, I'm  
 gonna answer this guy.

SOUND: COMMS CHANNEL OPENING

FERN (CONT'D)  
 Ahoy! This is the skipper of the  
*Clam*. Thanks for that assist back  
 there. I know podcasting an anchor  
 to save us cost y'all a pretty  
 good catch.

WHALER  
 No worries! Our drums are full; we  
 couldn't have harvested the pod  
 even if we wanted to. We just  
 looked over and saw an honest-to-  
 god Nantucket and, once we picked  
 our jaws off the floor, figured  
 we'd lend a hand. You're lucky we  
 saw you: I've been whaling out  
 here for three decades and I ain't  
 never seen a Nantucket. Is your  
 crew okay?

FERN  
Yeah, we're all fine.

WHALER  
How's your ship?

FERN  
Annoying.

WHALER  
What?

FERN  
(Quickly)  
Uh, Deploying. Our safety  
protocols, that is.

WHALER  
(A bit confused)  
Uh...huh.  
(More confidently)  
That was a pretty nasty pod you  
guys were trapped in. How'd your  
helm hold up?

FERN  
It's, uh...something we're looking  
into? I'm still waiting for one of  
our guys to get back to me with a  
status report.

WHALER  
You guys need a tow?

FERN  
Nah, we'll be okay; we can patch  
ourselves up out here just fine.

WHALER  
I insist. I don't think I can  
sleep good tonight knowing I left  
a small ship liked yours damaged  
and adrift in these waters.

SOUND: COMMS CUTS OFF

SENTIENT BEING  
(Glitching; tired)  
We need to get out of here.

FERN  
What? And, hey, did you cut the  
comms line?

SENTIENT BEING

I did. There's a faint signal within their communication frequency that appears to be an outbound SOS. From what I can tell, that ship is announcing that they've discovered a wanted vessel and are requesting reinforcements.

FERN

(Skeptical)

What? Backup from who?

SENTIENT BEING

I cannot tell.

FERN

(Snorts)

How sure are you?

SENTIENT BEING

That SOS is obscured by the comms channel between our two ships, but I am relatively certain that they are trying to communicate with another party.

FERN

"Relatively" means less than 100%, right?

SENTIENT BEING

Yes. Very good.

FERN

Okay smarty-pants, answer me this: how often do whalers associate with "another party"?

SENTIENT BEING

(Long pause)

I...am not certain I follow.

FERN

Duh, because you clearly don't know a lot about anything out here. As a rule, whalers are an independent lot. They're friendly enough, sure, and they'll sometimes help a ship in need, but they don't make friends--even with other whalers. They mind their own business and stay out of others'.

(MORE)

FERN (CONT'D)  
Now, be like a whaler and stay out  
of this.

SOUND: COMMS CLICKS BACK ON

FERN (CONT'D)  
Hello, sorry about that. Can you  
hear me?

WHALER  
Loud and clear. Your comms system  
get damaged, too?

FERN  
Yeah, but that was an easy fix.

WHALER  
I think you're going to be  
surprised by how much damage your  
ship took. It's probably best that  
you let us call ahead to the  
island we're headed to. They can  
get a crew out here in a jiffy to  
help tow you in.

FERN  
Oh? That easy, huh?

WHALER  
Just a quick message back to port  
and they'll be here soon as you  
know it.

FERN  
You guys can't tow us yourselves?

WHALER  
(Regretful)  
Our anchor works, but our towline  
snapped a couple of days ago.  
Don't you worry though: we're sure  
the Cerulean Island crew would be  
happy to help out.

FERN  
Hmmm...let me discuss it with my  
co-skippers.

SOUND: COMMS SWITCHES OFF

FERN  
Okay, all those things I said?  
Forget it. We need to get out of  
here.

## SENTIENT BEING

(Annoyed)

One day I hope you'll learn that my recommendations are sound and, by heeding them, you will save yourself time and not look like a moron.

FERN

Yeah well, saving time is stupid because there's a lot of it and it won't ever run out and I think I look good in moron. Now, c'mon, we need to get ourselves out of here.

GUY

What? Why did you change your mind?

FERN

Like I said: whalers don't play well with others. They definitely shouldn't have a marauder crew on speed dial. If a whaler gets into a bind, they get themselves out of it or they perish because pride is a poison like that.

GUY

They're calling marauders?

FERN

Who else would be on an Oort island? I don't know what's going on, but this is too weird for me. How long will it take to get us moving?

GUY

Moving where?

FERN

It doesn't matter, we just need to get out of this immediate area. Whalers are big but they're slow: as long as we take off at a pretty good clip, we'll lose them no matter which direction we head in. We just need to get going now before the marauders get here because they will be faster.

GUY

Got it.

(MORE)

GUY (CONT'D)  
I'll see about getting our engine  
back in working order.

SENTIENT BEING  
While you are doing that, I  
suspect I can restore some degree  
of functionality to our helm.

GUY  
Good. Fern?

FERN  
I'll stay here and see if I can  
stall for time while you guys do  
your thing.

GUY  
Okay.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS RUNNING OFF

GUY (CONT'D)  
I'll let you know when we're  
ready!

SOUND: COMMS CLICKS BACK ON

FERN  
Sorry about that. You can get a  
tow-team out here?

WHALER  
Lickety-split.

FERN  
Cool. We'll take you up on that  
offer.

WHALER  
Alright, I'll have my crew send  
out the message.  
(Pause)  
You talked to you co-skippers,  
huh? Your crew has more than one  
skipper?

FERN  
Eh, it's the only way to keep  
everyone onboard happy.

WHALER  
Uh...huh. That's a pretty small  
vessel you're sailing. How many  
crew you got?

FERN  
Two and a half.

WHALER  
Ha! There's always one, isn't there?

FERN  
Seems so. Hey, we got turned around during the sleigh ride. Which port did you say you hailed?

WHALER  
Cerulean. It's the port we're headed to.

FERN  
Cerulean, huh? How is the Culpeo crew doing these days?

WHALER  
(Long silence; forced laugh)  
Ha! Nice one.

FERN  
(Long pause; nervous)  
Yeah, couldn't resist that joke. I mean, obviously Cerulean isn't a Culpeo port anymore. Duh.

WHALER  
(Congenial)  
Yeah, and good riddance. But, word to the wise: you should be careful who you make that joke to. Some folk out here are still mighty raw about what happened to them.

FERN  
And you?

WHALER  
Like I said, good riddance to them. We're a lot happier with Captain Wren in charge.

FERN  
(Laughs)  
Old Captain Wren? Now that is a funny joke.  
(Long, awkward pause)  
Uh, I mean, it would be if it weren't true, of course.

WHALER

Where did you say you came from again?

FERN

Oh, a tiny island on the Boreas side of the Oort.

WHALER

(Suspicious)

I see. What brings you out this way?

FERN

Uh...a whale pod.

WHALER

You guys were stuck in that pod all the way from Boreas?

FERN

What can I say? Whales, huh?

(Quickly)

So, old man Wren is in charge of Cerulean Island, huh?

WHALER

Old man? Oh. No. His son is.

FERN

What?

WHALER

I'm surprised you didn't know that. I'm thought the entire Oort heard the news.

FERN

We...were in that pod for a really long time.

WHALER

....right.

FERN

So...what happened?

WHALER

(Trying to be nonchalant)

Oh, it's a long story. How about we wait until we're on dry land back at Cerulean and I'll get you caught up to speed over a mug. First round'll be on me.

FERN

Nah, you're helping us; I got the first and second round. But...I mean, we are sitting around twiddling our thumbs waiting for the Wren crew to get here. What better way to pass the time then doin' some good ol'-fashioned scuttlebutt?

WHALER

(Still nervously cautious)  
Ha, good point, but, stories like this need to be told eye-to-eye.  
(Laughs)  
Gotta make sure you're not a sunspot-riddled Helios spook, y'know!

FERN

(Pretends to laugh)  
Fair point, especially with the Kuiper Net all out of sorts.

WHALER

(Confused)  
Kuiper Net...oh! You mean the Sun Web. You heard about that, huh?

FERN

Heard about what?

WHALER

What happened to the...  
(Struggling with unfamiliar name)  
Kuiper Net.

FERN

(Innocent)  
What happened to the Kuiper Net?

WHALER

It's been damaged.

FERN

What? How? When?

WHALER

(Suspicious)  
A couple of days ago.

FERN

You're kidding. How did that happen?

WHALER  
You don't know?

FERN  
We were stuck in a whale pod,  
remember?

WHALER  
Then how'd you know that there was  
something wrong with it?

FERN  
We saw it flickering as we were  
Nantucket'd past.  
(Pause)  
It definitely freaked the whales  
out.

WHALER  
Uh...huh...

FERN  
So, how does something damage the  
Net like that?

WHALER  
(Faux ignorant)  
Haven't the foggiest.

FERN  
Right...  
(Pause)  
So, how long have y'all been  
working with the Wren crew?

WHALER  
We're not.

FERN  
Sorry, let me rephrase: how long  
have y'all been ratting out other  
ships to them?

WHALER  
...What?

FERN  
C'mon now: you've been at this for  
three decades, you said? How long  
ago did you lose your spine and  
your pride and start to roll over  
for a marauder crew?

WHALER

What? Rattin' you out? What do you mean?

FERN

Wow, a word of advice: just because you're spineless and dumb doesn't mean the rest of us are. We're onto you and you're a bigger moron than I'd first thought if you thought you'd be able to trick us.

WHALER

Trick? Whoa, calm down, I'm just trying to help--

FERN

You're also a fool if you think we'll go with anyone quietly.

WHALER

(Dead serious)

Okay. It's not like you can run far in your damaged ship anyway, so I'll bite: you called the Sun Web the Kuiper Net and with that style of ship...you are a Helios spy, aren't you?

FERN

Not even in the slightest.

WHALER

Then...who are you?

FERN

Oh, us? We're the *Clam before the Storm*, jackass.

SOUND: COMMS CLICKS OFF

FERN (CONT'D)

Hey! Computer!

SENTIENT BEING

I'm not a computer--

FERN

Yeah, yeah, are y'all ready to go yet?

SENTIENT BEING

(Irritated)

No, but I had assumed that I would have had more time to work before you completely failed at the one job you had been assigned.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS RUNNING CLOSER

FERN

I dropped the ruse on purpose: their back-up is here.

GUY

Fern? Engines are good to go!

FERN

(Under her breath)

Oh thank god.

(Louder)

I knew you'd come through in the nick of time, Guy!

GUY

What happened?

SENTIENT BEING

That whaling ship is even more suspicious of us now than they were before we left this moron unsupervised.

FERN

Yes, and see those specks? Those are marauder ships headed our way, so let's get moving.

GUY

Right. The helm?

SENTIENT BEING

The helm should be moderately functional in about three minutes.

GUY

Okay, you keep working. We don't need to steer to get out of here.

FERN

What about the anchor?

GUY  
 (Distracted with typing)  
 With the force of our launch,  
 it'll snap right off.  
 (No longer distracted)  
 Okay, hang on, Fern.

FERN  
 Way ahead of--

SOUND: TYPING; ENGINES ROAR

FERN  
 --ah!

GUY  
 Let me know when the helm is  
 operational.

SENTIENT BEING  
 Copy.

GUY  
 How fast do you think those  
 marauder ships are, Fern?

FERN  
 Hmmmm, depends I think. We got a  
 pretty good head start; as long as  
 our engines don't blow, I think  
 we'll be able to outrun them.

GUY  
 Anywhere we can hide?

FERN  
 Not really. The only things big  
 enough to moor a ship in out here  
 are man-made islands; and, if  
 whalers are tattling on us, then I  
 don't think any of those ports are  
 safe for us. It looks like we're a  
 wanted ship in these waters.

GUY  
 What? Why?

FERN  
 If I had to guess, I'd guess that  
 they think we're a Helios scouting  
 party or something. It's probably  
 why some crew stuck that tracker  
 on us when we first got here.

GUY  
 (Grimly)  
 So we can't hide?

FERN  
 Nope.

GUY  
 Then I guess we'll see how far  
 they're willing to chase us.

SOUND: ENGINES FAILING

GUY  
 Oh, shi--

FERN  
 That doesn't sound good. Don't  
 tell me: we lost engines again.

GUY  
 It's the adiabatic (a-DEE-a-bat-  
 ic) servo, the system that ensures  
 thermodynamic--

FERN  
 Guy. Dumb it down.

GUY  
 (Frustrated)  
 The system that keeps the engine  
 from getting too hot or too cold  
 keeps corrupting. I haven't been  
 able to fix it because I can't fix  
 it while we're in flight.

FERN  
 Crap. Well, we've got enough  
 momentum, maybe they'll get tired  
 of the chase before they realize  
 that they're going faster than us?

GUY  
 I don't think so. Look.

SOUND: IT'S SUBTLE AND SOFT AT FIRST, BUT THERE'S A DISCORDANT  
 TONE THAT STARTS TO GAIN IN VOLUME AND INTENSITY DURING THIS  
 EXCHANGE

FERN  
 Huh. They're getting a lot  
 closer...Goddammit, this is  
 getting old.

GUY

Maybe we wouldn't be in this predicament again if you weren't such an idiot.

FERN

(Taken aback)

What?

GUY

All I'm saying is that, so far, you haven't done a single thing to help us not die.

FERN

No, I made you take a nap, and, going by your tone, I think you need another one.

GUY

I think it's time that I stop listening to you; your advice has only ever made things go from bad to worse.

FERN

It's not my fault that you haven't realized by now that listening to me is a bad life choice in general.

GUY

(Sarcastic)

Ha, ha, so funny. Look at you dodging the issue again. Maybe if you focused on being helpful rather than being glib, we'd stop getting ourselves into messes like this.

FERN

I'm certain that this "mess" we're in was a group effort.

SENTIENT BEING

If you two are quite finished--

GUY

(Flat)

We're not.

(MORE)

GUY (CONT'D)

(Angry)

Had it not been for you, I would have been able to enact my plan back on Alectrona-Delta, which would have kept all of this from happening in the first place.

FERN

(Serious, losing her cool)

Yeah, at the expense of blowing yourself--and me!--up! Call me stupid, but I can say with 100% certainty that that's a horrible plan no matter which way you look at it.

GUY

No, it was the best plan available.

(Scathingly mean)

Oh wait, I forget that I'm talking to a person who is so self-involved that they'd rather watch the Heliosphere fall into chaos than do whatever it takes to keep it safe.

FERN

What? You don't know the first thing about me.

GUY

(Laughing; mean)

Oh, I do. I've been following your work for years, Robin Hood.

SENTIENT BEING

We don't have time for--

GUY

--Shut up.

(To Fern)

So, tell me, what was it like, flying around the Heliosphere, getting your kicks by playing hero and helping precisely no one in the long run? I bet you slept like a baby at night, fooling yourself into believing that you were making the Heliosphere a better, more equitable place, didn't you?

FERN

(Aghast)

What...? I'm not--

GUY

Don't you dare try to lie to me. It's obvious who you are. So, please, tell me why blowing myself up to foil an HIA plot is a bad idea, but blowing up an entire globe is just a-okay hero-ing?

FERN

I...I...didn't blow up....

GUY

Oh, cat got your tongue? I was wondering what it would take to make you shut up. I guess something good came of this debacle we're in after all--

SENTIENT BEING

That is enough. I'm sensing unusual energy--

GUY

No, I've had enough of you, too. You're "sensing something"? Well, let me stop what I'm doing and listen to another one of your completely inaccurate assessments.

(Sound of disgust)

I'm surprised you still have the gall to act as if you're better than us because, from where I'm standing, you're the one who's screwed up the most.

SOUND: LONG, LONG MOMENT OF SILENCE

SENTIENT BEING

(Quietly)

Are you done?

GUY

(Laughs harshly; meanly)

Am I done?!? Not in this lifetime and, going by the sheer number of messes that you two keep leaving for me to clean up, it'll take a lifetime before I am!

SENTIENT BEING

Then perhaps a small break is needed. I suggest you look out the window.

GUY

Why? You don't have any external sensors, remember, so how the hell do you know that there's anything worth looking at out there?

(Pause; snarling)

Unless you've fixed that system and lied to me about it, too.

SENTIENT BEING

(Still quiet; serious)

I have not.

GUY

Then why the hell should I--

(Pause)

Oh.

SENTIENT BEING

Was my speculation correct? Have the ships that were pursuing us turned back?

FERN

(Small; scared)

Oh my god, they've...turned around? What the hell is going on?

SENTIENT BEING

An excellent question to which the answer is at least partially obvious.

FERN

I...I can't think...

SENTIENT BEING

Something is causing an acute encephalopathy (en-SEH-fa-lo-PATH-y) in you two. I'm sensing an energy signal within the hull that I cannot interpret, but which I suspect is the etiology of this sudden lunacy.

FERN

(Woozy; fuzzy)

What?

GUY  
We're being poisoned?

SENTIENT BEING  
(Growing more impatient)  
You're focusing on the wrong issue. The cause is irrelevant. Those marauders clearly knew that we were heading into danger and have themselves turned back. I have restored some functionality to the helm. Now, quickly, before you become even more unhinged: I need you to take the helm and steer us 180 degrees from our current course.

FERN  
What? You want us to follow the marauders?  
(Pause; scared)  
You're...you're working with them! You've been working with them all along!

SENTIENT BEING  
(Disdainful)  
Don't be preposterous--

GUY  
Wait a minute...if you can sense it...the poison is within the hull?

SENTIENT BEING  
It is not a poison as you know it. It appears to be a noxious energy frequency that I suspect is interfering with your amygdalas--

GUY  
(Dizzy; woozy)  
Shut it. Goddammit, I knew we couldn't trust you, that it was a matter of time before--

SOUND: RAPID TYPING

GUY (CONT'D)  
(Physically struggling with Fern)  
Hey! Get away from there!

FERN

No! Gerroff me! We need to get away from the marauders--

GUY

What the hell is wrong with you! We need to destroy the thing controlling this ship, which is what we should have done when we had the chance--

FERN

--No, because then we'll die--

GUY

(Angry, snarling)

It's been sheer luck that you've lived this long. If you weren't so goddamn stupid, you'd realize that we need to kill the ship or it'll kill us--

FERN

(Terrified)

Oh my god, you're the bad guy--

GUY

(Scoffs)

"Bad guy"?

FERN

You're trying to kill me and the ship!

GUY

Oh, trust me, if I wanted you dead, you'd be dead on the ground before you even knew what hit--

SOUND: BODY HITTING THE GROUND

GUY (CONT'D)

Huh, that was easy.

SENTIENT BEING

(Quickly)

It looks like she fainted. I suspect the signal finally overwhelmed her. You'll follow soon, Santee. I have no idea what is happening and, despite my repairs, I have very, very limited control of the helm, so I need you to--

GUY  
 (Breathless in wonder)  
 Oh my god.

SENTIENT BEING  
 I need you to focus and man the  
 helm to redirect our course out of  
 whatever it is that we've sailed  
 into.

GUY  
 (In wonder)  
 It's...it's beautiful.

SENTIENT BEING  
 What?

GUY  
 Look at it, it's...like a jewel in  
 the night sky...

SENTIENT BEING  
 (Snapping)  
 Santee! Stop mooning out the  
 window and get to the helm.

GUY  
 (Dreamlike)  
 No, I think we're heading exactly  
 where we need to go.

SENTIENT BEING  
 What?

GUY  
 Look for yourself. It's just  
 outside.

SENTIENT BEING  
 (Tightly)  
 I can't see anything.

GUY  
 (Still distracted)  
 Oh, that's right. It looks...like  
 a snow globe. Green and blue  
 encased in crystal, just hanging  
 in space.  
 (Pause)  
 I think we're off course slightly.  
 Hang on.

SOUND: BOOTSTEPS TO THE CONSOLE; RAPID TYPING

SENTIENT BEING  
(Alarmed)  
What're you doing?

GUY  
Bringing us to that globe. It's  
calling to me and I must go.

SENTIENT BEING  
Stop! It's a trap!

GUY  
Maybe, but oh what a marvelous  
end.

SENTIENT BEING  
Santee!

SOUND: TYPING FINISHES

GUY  
(Exhausted; slightly slurred  
speech)  
There. We'll impact with paradise  
soon.  
(Very faintly)  
My work is done.

SOUND: BODY COLLAPSING TO THE GROUND

SENTIENT BEING  
Santee! Santee, get up!  
(Long pause; softly)  
Dammit.  
(More loudly)  
Finch! Finch, wake up!

SOUND: ALARMS BLARING

SENTIENT BEING (CONT'D)  
(To themself)  
Oh, goddammit.

You're listening to Erraticus, Episode 11: A Marvelous End.

Thank you for listening to Erraticus. This episode was written by Sarah Newton and featured the voices of Sarah Newton, Jacob Zarick, and with special thanks to Jacob Zarick for safeguarding relativistic mechanics. Please visit our website at [erraticuspod.com](http://erraticuspod.com) for details regarding sound effect and music attributions.

If you enjoyed this part of our story, please share with others and tune in next time for Erraticus, Episode 12: Argemone (AR-gehm-MO-nee)//Underestimated Ignorance.