



Act V  
Scene 1

# Syllable Lab

Author: Ivan Guo

A strange, brown needle... Echoing footsteps... An ornate necklace, clasped in someone's hand, the other reaching out to grip your forehead –

You snap awake, sweating. No time for nightmares today. Your journey is at its end.

One shower later, you emerge into the cockpit, where Tif is showing Faegan how she pilots the ship. The young girl has certainly made an impression on your crew.

“How far away are we?” you ask, still rubbing your hair with a towel.

“We came out of the galactic network two hours ago,” says Tif without looking up. “This place is fifteen parsecs away from its nearest wormhole. We barely have enough folding-fuel to make it there and back.”

“My dad told me never to go anywhere more than ten minutes from a wormhole,” says Faegan quietly.

Another hour later, your destination appears. Two scorched, lifeless rocks, one large and one small, locked in mutual orbit as they skate around their star.

“This bodes well,” says Wentworth, leaning with four hands on the back of your chair and Faegan's.

Tif lands the Freighter expertly, and the four of you file out. This time, even Wentworth has to don his unwieldy modular suit.

Black and brown rock stretches out in all directions, sharply illuminated by the star above and the smaller orbiting world. Faegan's wavering voice crackles through your suit communicator. “This place is definitely bad luck.”

“Agreed. Uncanny space here,” murmurs Wentworth.

You're about to reassure them, but suddenly, the star's yellow light flares blindingly. A list of words appears, burned into your retina, before blackness...



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**DISINFECT**  
**FRUSTRATED**  
**REDEMAND**  
**NIGHTINGALE**  
**UNEXCISED**  
**BILINGUAL**  
**DEFOREST**  
**DANGEROUS**  
**UNIMPRESSED**  
**ADVISER**  
**DEFACEMENT**  
**JELLYFISH**  
**RECONFIRM**  
**SPONSORSHIP**  
**ARRIVING**  
**FERRYBOAT**