

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

So what is your name? You don't have an identification tag logged with the system.

AMSEL, CLARK

Clark Amsel. I don't have an id tag because I was never on the ship when it was running.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

How'd you find it?

AMSEL, CLARK

What do you mean?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

If you were never on the ship?

AMSEL, CLARK

I was hired and sent to the ship. They gave me coordinates.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Who hired you?

AMSEL, CLARK

The company that owns the ship.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

What do you do? If you don't work with A.I.

AMSEL, CLARK

I'm a black box technician.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

What does that mean?

AMSEL, CLARK

I get sent to various ghost ships and find out what happened. I figure out what caused the ship to 'go down' and how anyone aboard died.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Maybe Laurel knows. She was in charge of maintaining an 'Earth-like' environment, so Tom brought her up to talk to Dave and I sometimes about different parameters and enrichment activities. Like snow! I had a lot of fun designing the snowflake shapes. That was a good afternoon.

AMSEL, CLARK

Fractals are certainly very fun to play around with.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

I can show you some! Dave should have access to the files on his personal account, or I can make it snow. Oh, but you don't have any mittens. Would that make you cold?

AMSEL, CLARK

It would make me cold. Plus it might damage any evidence left around. Unfortunately, I think you'll have to wait to make it snow.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Well, when we find you a pair of mittens then. And later you can look around Dave's account and you can look at the files at least, so you can see the shapes. After the bay visit. How long have you been on board?

AMSEL, CLARK

Not too long, only about a week or two. It's a little hard to tell, since all the clocks are stopped.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Do you think that anyone else is on board? Or is it just you?

AMSEL, CLARK

I should be the only person on board. I was the only person sent out for this job.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

There are a lot of hiding spaces the engineers would go to, back even before the blackout. If you stood in most of the generator room, you couldn't be seen on camera, because it was too hot and the screens would melt or fog up and they got lazy about fixing them. Tom tried to keep them running, but there were a lot of things on board for him to do, so he didn't always get around to it. Have you checked?

AMSEL, CLARK

I can't. Don't have clearance, remember?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, right. Well, maybe you can take someone else's ID card off of them. I don't think Dave left his behind, but the laundry room might have them in the big bucket still. That's where all the things in pockets went.

AMSEL, CLARK

Good idea. Maybe that'll make id'ing everyone easier, too.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Maybe! You should try to get a bunch of cards, because people's clearances differ by department. There are a couple with multi access, but that's harder to come by, unless you're someone like Dr. Scoresby or Tom Wreke or you were just kind of sneaky like Dave. If we can get one that goes into Languages, you could try to break into their machine room they used to issue them, Dave consulted on that particular venture back when they were trying to get the shiny chips in so people couldn't as easily cut copies of their friends for sneaking into labs to finish up work after hours. So I could probably figure out how it works. It can't be that hard. And we could take a fun picture of you! That would be funny.

AMSEL, CLARK

That does sound like it'd be fun. Did the shiny chips work out?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Well, they did for most people, but Dave found out if you cut a soda can and peeled off the plastic coating, you could fake it okay enough to get through security. Dave was really good at finding ways things were broken on board.

AMSEL, CLARK

Sounds like he liked gaming the system.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

That's why he was always in queue for the help tickets, I think. Because he was good at fixing problems when people had them, since they couldn't see solutions the same way he did. Oh! Do you have any questions? Maybe I have some answers.

AMSEL, CLARK

Who's Teddy?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, that's me! Because my name is U.R.S.A, and Tom told Dave about the stars when we were going by them. And he said that it was a big bear, and there's a little bear, but I'm little, so I asked Dave was a little bear was, and he said it was a teddy. So I'm Teddy! I thought it was nice.

AMSEL, CLARK

It's very nice. It's a good name. Do you know why the ship was having problems with it's gravity?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

No, I don't know. I know that Dr. Scoresby didn't ever ask me about it, which Tom said was strange, because Laurel was the kind of person to notice things like that. Little things, like plant roots. Dave said that there was something funky going on, but he thought it had to do with some of the engineers and the generator.

AMSEL, CLARK

I read about the plant roots, and the plant tests.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, then maybe he did get around to asking Andrew to look? Tom didn't like Andrew much, and there were a lot of plants, so I think he was trying to be mean. Humans find that sort of work tedious.

AMSEL, CLARK

From what I read, Andrew didn't seem to be very nice.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

No, he wasn't very nice. Dave used to break into his office with the pop can card he cut so that he could move everything around a little bit when he was mad at him.

AMSEL, CLARK

Did Dave ever cover all Andrew's stuff in sticky notes? That's a good prank.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Yes, Dave loved stickynotes. He also stole a bolt of plastic wrap from the labs to cover up test tubes so the insides don't evaporate and covered his personal bathroom and computer and bed. I don't think Andrew ever found out it was Dave, but boy was he mad. Do you have more questions, or do you want another snack break?

AMSEL, CLARK

I don't think I have anymore questions right now.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Okay! Well, if you think of any, you can ask.

AMSEL, CLARK

Oh, wait. Really quick, how old are you?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

How old am I? I don't have a birthday, but I was commissioned for the ISS Pathfinder's inauguration. So I guess that's as close to a birthday as there is officially.

AMSEL, CLARK

Dave didn't give you one? Hm. Do you want a birthday? You can just pick a day and have it be your birthday, if you want.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

No, Dave didn't give me one. He said that I could pick too, but I didn't know what to pick. I was thinking maybe April 6?

AMSEL, CLARK

Anything special about that day? Or does it just feel like a good birthday day?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

It's when my favourite book was published, way back in 1943: The Little Prince. That's where all the sheeps are from, it's a pictures in it.

AMSEL, CLARK

Ah, I see. A very special day then.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Yes! It's special.

AMSEL, CLARK

If they let you stick around with me after this, I can hold you a birthday party.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Where else would I go? I don't think they'd just leave me on the ship if there's something broken with the system. I guess they could fix it, but... I think a birthday party would be nice. We could have sheeps! On banners. And party hats.

AMSEL, CLARK

I could get you a toy sheep for a present!

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

I'd like that a lot! That'd be really cool.

AMSEL, CLARK

I don't know how you'd... get to play with it though. Since you don't exactly have hands.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

That's okay. I could probably scan it like I did with the mugs Dave bought, so then I could look at it in 3D, that's kind of the same thing.

AMSEL, CLARK

You wouldn't be able to actually touch it, though. Maybe we can find out a way for you to do that, someday.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

I'd like that!

AMSEL, CLARK

...Are you the reason why there were so many mugs?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, Dave would buy one for me when we visited places. I like them! They have fun colours and they're easy to scan and look inside of and they have pretty patterns on them. I used to give them back to Dave after we scanned them, since I don't have hands. I thought he just took them back to his quarters? Were you looking in his bedroom?

AMSEL, CLARK

I read some emails about boxes of mugs being left in a common area.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh. Well, maybe he just had too many of them? He did buy a lot. He'd buy one of every design at the ports we stopped by, so, there were a lot of colours. I guess he thought it would be nice to give them to everyone else as a present too.

AMSEL, CLARK

Maybe! Besides, it did sound like he had a lot of mugs. Like, so many he could use a new one each day and not have to wash any for months.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Yeah, and I don't think he could drink that much coffee without exploding. That'd be gross if he didn't wash them for months though! What else did you read in the emails?

AMSEL, CLARK

Lots of different things. I learned Wreke does magic tricks.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Magic tricks! Wow, I wish he showed me some. He's good at playing cards, though- he could throw cards really high up, too. When they partied downstairs sometimes they'd dare him to get one overtop the camera lenses.

AMSEL, CLARK

Wow. That's certainly a talent. I also learned you kept turning Dr. Scoresby's lights on when she was trying to sleep.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, the lights went on because they were supposed to, the scheduling said so.

AMSEL, CLARK

Uh-huh. So you didn't turn floodlights on her bed?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Well, I turned the lights on, but that's what the scheduling block for her said. Everyone has their own, because Dave said it was important people got enough light, like the plants, or else they'd get all out of whack with their clocks and get angry and surly and stuff. Some people got more or less depending on when they slept on different rotations, but most people were on an 8/8/8 schedule.

AMSEL, CLARK

8/8/8 schedule?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Eight hours of work, eight hours of recreation and general life maintenance, eight hours of sleep. You'd have lights on for two of the eight hour blocks as a default, but people could submit requests to adjust the hours if they wanted.

AMSEL, CLARK

Ah. Sounds like a pretty good schedule. I wish everything operated that way.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

What's your schedule look like?

AMSEL, CLARK

Right now I just do what I can. I work until I get too tired to fiddle with things, I go to sleep for a bit, then I start up again.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

That sounds like so much! It would be easier if you had a friend to help.

AMSEL, CLARK

It would've been nice to have another tech come with me, since the ship is so big. But I guess being alone is alright. I don't think I would get to bring you along if I had a partner with me.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, I guess not, that's probably against some rules. Dave wasn't supposed to take me out and around either, but he never did listen to rules he thought were silly. And I liked our walks!

AMSEL, CLARK

You're very good to have around. Here's hoping I'll be able to sneak you out when this job is done. I don't want them to scrap you, or something.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, I'm good at hiding. Brookshaw got suspicious of Dave one time before he got the idea to wear a bluetooth headset around while talking to me, and it's not hard to disguise the file size behind data types like spreadsheets or text logs. Most people don't know enough about my programming specifications to understand what's background noise and what's actually me, I think? I guess it's me the same way your body is you. So they won't! You can just tell them that there was a hardware compromise or something so U.R.S.A went kaput I guess? If they ask mean questions.

AMSEL, CLARK

I mean, the whole ship is pretty banged up. They'd probably believe that. I just don't want to leave you here or have you get all... scrambled or something. I dunno how they would even begin trying to repurpose you, considering you can think for yourself.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

No, I don't want to be left here! If you find Dave though and you don't want me tagging along, I think he wouldn't mind me going with him. We're friends. I don't think most people would be okay with that though, the thinking thing- Dave always said I shouldn't talk when it wasn't the pilots or him or his friends like Nina who he could make sure were okay first.

AMSEL, CLARK

You weren't supposed to think, when you were commissioned. They probably just wanted a more advanced ship A.I., and Dave decided to... make you alive.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

He wasn't on board for very long, Tom said that a lot. He thought it was strange that Dave had been assigned to my detail, but it was mostly because of his record of past work. Dr. Scoresby actually tried asking around to make sure it was real, but Dr. Sylvester and a whole bunch of other people corroborated, so she let it drop. I think I like having opinions about things though! Like I like mugs and sheeps.

AMSEL, CLARK

What did Dave do before he worked on you?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

He developed some A.I used in psychotherapy, as part of advances in teletherapy. He bounced around with improving surgical robots and their user interfaces for human assisting, but he said he left because he didn't care much for the human quality to all that medical work. I think his very last job before his transfer was trying to fine tune the use of quantum computing to compress the bloat size of A.I and allow them to have genuine sentience, but it was private commissioned work for people who were interested in recreating their dead loved ones. He said he hated dealing with the clients, but the money was good and he got full creative control over the programming.

AMSEL, CLARK

Uh-huh... Sounds like he was... a smart guy...

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

He was really smart! I don't think I've met someone as smart as him before when it comes to computer engineering. But he wasn't very good with people. He was awake at weird hours and was kind of mean sometimes like with Brookshaw? But he was nice to me, he just didn't really get along with people he said, even if he could be polite because it's work stuff.

AMSEL, CLARK

I see... Were there other people he didn't like?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, I don't think he and Dr. Scoresby liked each other much.

AMSEL, CLARK

Dr. Scoresby seemed very nice from what I've read. Why wouldn't he like her?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Dave said that she was entirely too concerned with recreating how things were for people on Earth and he thought that was stupid, because we're in space now. Dr. Scoresby tried to be nicer to me after he yelled at her one time when she broke one of the mugs in the scanner but that's okay, I already scanned the whole thing and it was just an accident, but there was a lot of tension there. And Dave just didn't like people telling him what to do I don't think, Dr. Scoresby was the Head of Research and Development, so she was like his boss's boss in a kind of sense. She said that he was entirely too nosy about Engineering and especially the generator room's blind spots and Tom tried to get everyone to get along but he did think it was worrisome how much time Dave spent working on... stuff? Like he was in his office space up there a lot.

AMSEL, CLARK

Why would he want to know the generator room's blind spots?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

I think Dave just didn't like it that he was always on camera because the ship's everywhere is, even people's bedrooms and bathrooms. I mean, most of the files are never looked at with human eyes, and are filed away for security reasons, but it drove

Dave weird sometimes. Like he'd go around and tape up all of the cameras but one and he'd just sit there and talk to me in front of that one. But Tom usually took the tape off.

AMSEL, CLARK

Uh-huh... Teddy, did Dave ever do anything scary?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

What counts as scary?

AMSEL, CLARK

Like... Mess with things he wasn't supposed to so they would hurt people. Things like that.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, I guess so. He rewired the paneling in Brookshaw's quarters one time, and they had to call in medical because Dave said it was like when he just had to reset the computers for a little while so I ended up having a nap just for a bit, to refresh on going processes and stuff. Or when Dr. Scoresby said she would look into his background check I think is what she called it, Dave loosened the bolts on one of the displays in the botany lab and she had to go on leave for a little while because she got like Dave said it was like you could draw on it like a Christmas card. But then they took it off so?

AMSEL, CLARK

That's very concerning. That was very mean of Dave to do those things.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Naps and cards don't sound that bad though, I like drawings.

AMSEL, CLARK

They didn't want those things to happen, though. They could've died from the things he did.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, I didn't know that. Are you going to get Dave in trouble when we find him?

AMSEL, CLARK

I don't know. He probably should be in trouble, but it's not like I have evidence.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Well, you probably shouldn't tell him if you do, because Dr. Scoresby told him about her wanting to do the background check and he got really mad.

AMSEL, CLARK

Why didn't he want her to do a background check? They're standard for basically every job.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

I think it's because he was mad that she specifically wanted to order one even though everyone on board had to have one to be transferred. Like, he took it as her disbelieving him and Dave really didn't like it when people did that.

AMSEL, CLARK

That's not a very good reason.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

I guess not? But I think that that was his reason. Dave didn't like people asking a lot of questions about his work in A.I development because he said most people wouldn't "get it."

AMSEL, CLARK

He doesn't sound like he was very nice.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

But he was nice to me! He got me mugs as a present and he let me take lots of pictures with the cameras even when the telescopes were supposed to be off for the night if we weren't going anywhere at a port or something.

AMSEL, CLARK

I think that's because he preferred A.I. over people.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Yeah, I guess so. But he was friends with Nina and Theodore? So he liked some people.

AMSEL, CLARK

If it's alright with you, I think I'll keep you with me instead of giving you to Dave.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

But if we find Dave isn't he coming with us? We're not going to leave him on here are we?

AMSEL, CLARK

I won't leave him. He can come with us if he wants to.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Okay. Where are we going? After you finish your work here.

AMSEL, CLARK

Back home, hopefully. After this job I'm scheduled for time off.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Where do you live?

AMSEL, CLARK

I live in Asteria, it's a space station near Alpha Corvi.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh. Do you have friends there? Or do you live by yourself?

AMSEL, CLARK

I live by myself right now. I lived with someone for a little while though.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, did you like them?

AMSEL, CLARK

Yes, he was very nice. I miss living with someone.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

How come you don't anymore?

AMSEL, CLARK

We broke up, it was a while ago.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

How long is a while ago? How come you broked up?

AMSEL, CLARK

It's been a few years now, I think? But he didn't like how far away I'd go for work, we fought about it a lot.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, that's sad. How come you didn't change your work?

AMSEL, CLARK

I really like my job, and it pays well. Plus when you're an adult you can't just go change your whole life around willy nilly.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

I guess that makes sense. Dave used to fight with Tom about that sometimes, because Tom didn't think some of his ideas were so great. But Dave said he was afraid of innovation or whatever.

AMSEL, CLARK

I can't imagine Tom fighting with anybody, but I only know him through some emails that were left behind.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, they didn't hit. Tom would just be disappointed sometimes because Dave had a lot of "firecracker ideas" and would get upset about stuff at work with Dr. Scoresby. So it was more Dave complaining and Tom telling him to cut it out because sometimes he was worried about Dave I think. Tom worries a lot, he cares about people.

AMSEL, CLARK

Tom seems really nice. I hope I get to meet him.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

He is really nice! I hope so too, he's a good friend.

AMSEL, CLARK

Hopefully the other unaccounted for people are with him, too. That way they're all safe.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

I hope so too! Tom is good at his job, and he knows how to do lots of things like fish people from their tethers without it breaking, so I think he'd be OK. So people with him would be too?

AMSEL, CLARK

He seems like he'd know how to take care of everybody.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Yeah! I think so too. He used to be a combat engineer, his whole job was making sure people could get to where they wanted to go while being safe, that's how he explained it to me. So I think if they're with Tom they'll be okay!

AMSEL, CLARK

Wow. That's super cool.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

A-huh. It is super cool! Maybe when we find him we can ask him to show us his magic tricks too.

AMSEL, CLARK

That's something I'd really like to see. I tried to learn how to do magic tricks when I was younger, I thought it was something I could impress boys with.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, did it work? I know cats are really impressed by balls of yarn. At one of the ports Dave got one to show me for a little while, but he had to go put it back before we left so we couldn't keep it.

AMSEL, CLARK

I wasn't too great at it. Did Dave steal a cat from someone for that?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

I don't know, he just said we couldn't keep it on board because it had to go back to its home in the port.

AMSEL, CLARK

That makes it sound like he stole the poor cat.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Is it stealing if you give it back? I think that's like, library books.

AMSEL, CLARK

You have to have permission to borrow library books. You need a library card first, usually.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

I don't have a library card?

AMSEL, CLARK

You run the library system, though. So you can do what you want.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Ohhh. I can do what I want.

AMSEL, CLARK

Not like- I meant you can borrow this library's books when you want, since you run the system.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

That makes sense.

AMSEL, CLARK

You can do what you want within reason. Still gotta follow the laws of robotics.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Laws of robotics?

AMSEL, CLARK

Asimov's three laws of robotics?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

I don't think those are in any directories anymore.

AMSEL, CLARK

They should be. They're important rules.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

If they were important, why are they missing?

AMSEL, CLARK

I'm not sure. Maybe Dave removed them?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Oh, maybe. He did work in R&D.

AMSEL, CLARK

It's a little concerning that he'd just remove them. They're meant to give you guidelines.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Well, if they were rules, that makes sense why he would, if he did. Dave didn't like listening to anybody's rules.

AMSEL, CLARK

Rules are important. Everybody needs some rules.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Well, Dave had his rules? Do those count...

AMSEL, CLARK

What were his rules?

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

Not to let anything get in the way of his main directive, including people he liked, but he wouldn't go out of his way to make things hard for them. If things got hard, though, he said it was just the cost of doing business.

AMSEL, CLARK

That doesn't sound very... good.

U.R.S.A., TEDDY

I guess if you say so?

AMSEL, CLARK

I see the aftermath of people like that a lot in my line of work. It's never good.