

---

The camera opens with a wide pan across one of the ballrooms on board the ISS Pathfinder. Bright silvered ribbons festoon the walls, with gold and silver balloons bobbing around the ceiling. Pristine tablecloths sit ovetop tables decorated with glittering loops of pearls and fresh flowers. People are chatting indistinctly, mingling before the speaker podium is manned. Laurel strides into the room. She is in a sumptuous yellow silk dress, with a matching rose tucked into her dark red hair.

**TOM WREKE**

Laurel!

Tom looks dazzled, oddly out of character in his deep blue suit. He's holding a small white plate in his hand, a silver fork wrapped neatly in a cream napkin. There's a slice of white and pink frosted cake on it.

**TOM WREKE**

I saved you some cake. I thought you'd like it- it's strawberry.

Laurel chuckles, as she makes her way towards Tom. She takes the plate, nodding a little in acknowledgement.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

How thoughtful, Tom.

Tom fidgets a little with his pearl cufflinks. His shoulders are rolled forwards. His cheeks are touched with something that might be blush, underneath the low, intimate lighting of the venue. He smiles crookedly at Laurel.

**TOM WREKE**

You look beautiful, tonight.

Laurel swipes her finger through a white frosted flower, leaving a bare track on the cake. She pops her finger into her mouth, smiling around the digit coyly.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

Don't I always?

---

---

Tom Wreke is shifting his weight from side to side, as he stands outside of the botany lab's main entrance. In his arms is an indistinct lump, covered in a burlap sack. He bites his lower lip- and raises his fist to knock again, when Laurel Scoresby opens the door.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

Tom! What a surprise. I wasn't expecting you.

Tom smiles shyly, one hand rubbing the back of his neck in a self soothing gesture.

**TOM WREKE**

No- I didn't give any advance notice. My apologies. I hope I haven't come at an inopportune moment- but I have a present for you.

Laurel raises an eyebrow.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

A present?

Tom nods enthusiastically. A lock of dark brown hair falls into his face.

**TOM WREKE**

May I come in?

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

Of course.

Inside, Laurel is clearing off one of the many lab benches sectioning off the room for the two to sit at. She pulls out one of the lab stools for him to have a seat, and Tom flashes her a smile- before putting the gift onto the table. Laurel curiously pulls at a corner of the burlap.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

What is it?

**TOM WREKE**

Go ahead, find out.

Laurel unwraps it. She frowns a little, eyebrows knitting together as she has to pick away at some twine, before stopping abruptly. She looks up at Tom, laughing in disbelief.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

You didn't!

**TOM WREKE**

I did.

Tom moves to hold onto Laurel's hand. He runs his thumb over the back of her knuckles, squeezing her hand gently.

**TOM WREKE**

They're heirloom roses.

Laurel's lower lip trembles, as she wipes at her eyes with the edge of her white sweater pulled over her hand.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

Tom-

**TOM WREKE**

They're the Mellow Yellow ones- they're perfect for keeping in pots and cuttings. I thought it would be better than the Tangerine Skies- there's no room in here for climbers, and this way- you can always keep one near your personal desk.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

You wonderful, wonderful man.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

How did you ever manage to pull this off?

**TOM WREKE**

When there's a will, there's a way.

Laurel is crying openly now. Tom hops over the lab bench, rather than walking the long way around, to pull her in for a hug. He cradles the back of Laurel's head with one broad, calloused palm, smoothing gently over her red hair.

---

---

The camera pans out from a tight shot of Laurel Scoresby's face. She's resting her head on her arms, slumped over at her personal desk. A flurry of lab sheets and half completed to do lists are crumpled up around her. Her left hand is lax around a pen, grip loose.

**TOM WREKE**

Laurel?

Tom steps into the shot. He sighs, when he sees her flopped over the desk. He shrugs off his thick navy blue sweater, before draping it over her shoulders like a throw blanket. The cold, recirculating air in the lab has goosebumps prickling over his shoulders. Tom shivers.

**TOM WREKE**

Oh, Laurel.

Tom bends down to drop a kiss on the crown of Laurel's head. He spends the next few minutes tidying up the mess on her desk. After collecting the half filled out writeups and evaluation sheets, he taps the bottom of the sheaf against a lab bench to straighten out the corners, before pulling a clipboard from a nearby shelf. A pen is fished out from behind his ear- and Tom settles onto a stool, long legs crossed at the ankle as he begins filling out the forms.

**TOM WREKE**

You really do work yourself to the bone.

Laurel does not stir. Tom yawns, rubs at one of his eyes. He flips over to the next page. The clock comes into focus- several hours have passed. It isn't until he's gotten through all of the leftover work, that he clips it all tidily to the clipboard's front and puts it close to Laurel's loosely relaxed hand.

**TOM WREKE**

I'll let you rest, now. I'll come by later.

The camera closes in on Tom twirling spaghetti around on a fork, pushing around some mushrooms on his plate. He looks up as Laurel's torso comes into frame.

**TOM WREKE**

Laurel!

Laurel smiles tiredly at Tom. Her hair is tied into a messy bun.

**TOM WREKE**

Did you sleep well?

She nods, hands tucked into her slacks' pockets.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

Thank you, Tom. I saw the paperwork. You didn't have to.

Tom flashes her a boyish smile.

**TOM WREKE**

Think nothing of it. Besides, I *wanted* to.

Laurel slides down her plate to sit down beside Tom, leaning companionably against his shoulder. He smiles, kissing her on the cheek briefly, before they go back to their respective meals.

**TOM WREKE**

I see that you're wearing my sweater.

He laughs playfully, as Laurel rolls her eyes, jabbing him gently in the ribs with her elbow.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

It's as good as mine now, Tom. Good luck getting it back.

Tom laughs loudly, a little splatter of tomato sauce vividly red at the corner of his mouth.

**TOM WREKE**

I can't think of a better person to have custody of it. Feel free.

---

---

Tom is sitting on Laurel's bed, back against the backboard. Laurel is seated in front of a vanity mirror, rubbing a night cream over her face in gentle, circular motions. Tom has on his reading glasses, slipping down the bridge of his crooked nose. He places one hand over his stomach, palm pressed down gently.

**TOM WREKE**

It's been a blur, hasn't it?

Laurel hums in assent, not looking over her shoulder. Her hair is wound up in a towel to dry, shoulders bare and still damp from a recent shower. Another towel is wrapped snugly around herself.

**TOM WREKE**

Hard to believe it's been nearly three decades since we first met.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

We have our anniversary dinner coming up soon, I wouldn't forget it for the world. I hope you've written that down into your calendar.

**TOM WREKE**

Of course! Of course.

Tom looks moodily down at his magazine, crumpled up and folded back over itself, held in one hand.

**TOM WREKE**

We've certainly changed over the years, haven't we?

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

I think that that's to be expected. It's part and parcel of aging. We aren't young co-eds anymore.

Tom chuckles softly.

**TOM WREKE**

No, that we are not. Thank god. I remember back in your keg standing days-

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

And you with the insatiable need to wear aviator glasses-

They both laugh. Tom falls quiet soon, though, and Laurel looks into the mirror to examine him over her shoulder.

**LAUREL**

Is everything alright?

Tom pauses, scrunching up the newspaper some more in his tight grip. His tone is joking, but stilted- a little tender in its awkwardness.

**TOM WREKE**

You don't think that I need to lay off the carbonara, or anything, do you? We don't have the metabolisms we used to.

Laurel turns around then, firmly tucking the corner of her towel so that it stays in place. She kneels onto the bed, and holds both of Tom's hands in her own, gaze intense.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

You are a magnificent bastard of a man, and anyone who has ever made you feel different, can answer to me. Do you understand me?

Tom is looking off to the side, but at Laurel's insistence- one of her hands pressed to his cheek, he does look at her through his lashes.

**TOM WREKE**

Suppose you're right.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

We know I'm right. I've always been the one with the plan, remember?

Laurel leans in to touch their foreheads together, noses bumping up against one another.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

I love you. I have loved you as you were, I love you as you are- I will love you as you become. Don't forget that.

Tom reaches up to brush some of her hair out of her face, nodding. He's biting back tears.

**TOM WREKE**

And I, you.

---

---

The camera swivels around a room, showing off a glittering array of costumes. There are angel feathers shedding fluffy down, crooked devil's horns puncturing through the whirlwind of confetti and party poppers. Several of the engineers have painted their hardhats into makeshift firefighter helmets. At least a few of them are doing jello shots out of their hats. A young woman staggers towards the camera, a crooked halo set at a rakish angle on her head.

**NINA DALLAS**

You two look so cute! Matching costumes, wow! That's goals!

Nina is talking to Tom and Laurel, who are both grinning ear to ear. Laurel's body language is uncharacteristically loose, relaxed. She's draped over Tom, one of his burly arms wrapped around her waist to prop her upright. They're both heavily inebriated.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

Thank you, Dr. Dallas.

Tom wipes a smear of glitter off of Laurel's cheekbone. She's dressed up in the bright orange uniform of the engineers, a too big belt cinched around her waist- holding some of Tom's lighter tools, their handles wrapped in bright pink to avoid people from purloining them on the job. Her dark red hair is stuffed up inside of a cap, the few strands visible sprayed with temporary dye to a deep brown, her eyebrows pencilled in thickly and square across.

**TOM WREKE**

Thank you, Nina. That's very kind.

Tom has on a white lab coat, tight around the shoulders. It's overtop a black turtleneck, black slacks, and his hair is sprayed similarly red. He's shaved- though an inkling of a five o' clock shadow is already edging it's way onto his face. He's got a little briefcase with a clear front- showing off some plant stickers and a mess of random papers. It's hanging off of his pinky- but the strain doesn't seem to bother him at all.

**NINA DALLAS**

I hope that when I get married, I'm just as in love with my partner after so many years together. You guys are great!



Nina walks off with a loud cheers into the air- narrowly avoiding sloshing some of her bubbly champagne on Laurel. Tom takes the brunt of the splash on his shoulder- but some splatters against his cheek. He pats ineffectively at the wet splotch on the linen. He and Laurel exchange looks for a moment- before bursting into laughter.

**TOM WREKE**

Were you going to tell me we were married, or was I supposed to find out when they mailed the papers to my quarters for my signature?

Laurel swipes at Tom's face with her hand, smearing the champagne around. She chuckles, as it smudges against the blush bright across his cheeks and dusted heavily over his nose.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

It's news to me darling- but you're absolutely on hedge trimming duty. Make sure to repaint the fences too, right? And change- change the car's gas. Oil? Change the car.

The both of them dissolve into another fit of giggles, Tom wiping a tear of mirth out of his eye, as they stumble loose legged over to the punch bowl. Somehow, between four wobbly legs, they make it there intact.

**TOM WREKE**

To thirty years- may there be many more.

His hand is trembling from his laughter, and Laurel nearly chokes on her own glass of fruit punch- but clanks their glasses together, indifferent of anyone unfortunate enough to be caught in the splash zone.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

To a lifetime together, dearest.

In the background, Nina smiles tearily, vision hazed over, as she places one hand over her heart at the sight.

---

---

Tom is lying on his side in bed, breathing rasping. Laurel is rubbing his back, hand slipped up against his skin, his blue jersey knit pushed upwards.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

You're an idiot.

Tom laughs, voice rasping a little.

**TOM WREKE**

Your bedside manner is just as impeccable as it was when you were young.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

And you clearly haven't learned anything about self preservation since.

She pats him on the back once or twice, and Tom just smiles. His hair is damp with sweat, sticking to his forehead a little. The whir of a humidifier running in the room steams up the camera lens.

**TOM WREKE**

Well, I can't say that you don't have a point there. Did I smell soup?

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

You did. Sit up, it's veg. I cut the broccoli florets up, so you wouldn't choke.

**TOM WREKE**

My hero.

Tom awkwardly shifts, leaning against the headboard and pillows. Laurel scans his forehead with a thermometer, frowning in displeasure.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

You're hot.

**TOM WREKE**

Certainly don't feel it at the moment.

Laurel swats him, provoking laughter from Tom. He holds the bowl of soul in his lap obediently though, as Laurel spoon feeds it to him,

swiping at the edges of his mouth with a little napkin to blot off any mess. She's surprisingly gentle with the gesture.

**TOM WREKE**

It's good.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

It certainly ought to be. I grew all the vegetation involved myself.

**TOM WREKE**

I feel so special.

Tom grins lopsidedly. Laurel boops him gently on the nose. She pulls the edge of the blanket up higher, to tuck him cozily in against the soft pillows.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

You should. You are. I don't get my hands dirty for just anyone, you know.

Laurel leans forward to kiss Tom on the forehead. He smiles, blinking sleepily at her.

**TOM WREKE**

I know. I know that I love you, too.

**LAUREL SCORESBY**

I love you.

---

---

Tom is looking directly into the camera, eyes wide. His pupils have blown wide, the black devouring the edges of his brown irises. His ocular implant has been fried- the pupil not dilating correctly, even as bright light from overhead washes over him. There's a very small red light blinking deep inside of the implant- notifying him that it's in need of repair.

**TOM WREKE**

No-

Tom is hyperventilating, one hand gripping the front of his uniform's shirt. He's sweating, limbs shaking a little with the excess adrenaline flooding him. His voice is ragged.

**TOM WREKE**

You can't make me choose- I can't choose between the both of them- please just let me see to both of them. Please.

**DAVE FENNE (INTERCOM)**

I'm afraid I can't let you do that, Tom.

Tom is balling a fist up to his mouth, eyes darting between the two elevator cars presented in front of him. The doors are both open, a few snippets of stripped down pop music floating in over the speakers.

**DAVE FENNE (INTERCOM)**

Make your choice before you can't.

Tom sobs, before staggering into the elevator that leads to, as the floor number and labels flash on the LED display: Research and Development, heading towards the Botany and Cryogenics labs. The doors to the opposite elevator car connecting to the library snap shut. His voice cracks.

**TOM WREKE**

I'm so sorry. I'm so, so sorry-

**TOM WREKE**

I love you.

Tom's final gaze to the camera is despaired- tears streaking down his face, before the scene fades to black.