

Theodore Sylvester is lying on his back in bed, with Dave Fenne sitting at an office chair. The two are inside of Theodore's personal quarters, which has not changed much from the basic furnishings offered to all ISS Pathfinder personnel upon boarding. The only major difference in decoration is the wall covered in faded photographs, people smiling ear to ear, their arms thrown around one another.

THEODORE SYLVESTER

Remember back in undergrad?

Theodore is throwing a tennis ball against the ceiling, bouncing it between various glow in the dark stars he's arranged into accurately scaled down constellations. A few of them have been scribbled over with markers and clear tape to tint the soft light different colours.

DAVE FENNE

What about it? Or are you just being nostalgic in general?

Dave doesn't look up from the desk. He seems to be making minor adjustments to a blueprint. The edges are curling up on the desk, and he smooths it down with the flat of his palm, smearing white ink against it.

THEODORE SYLVESTER

Oh, I was going to bring up the summer we all got those wicked internships.

Dave freezes. His pen slows, then stops, being put down onto the desk. Theodore doesn't look away from his throwing of the tennis ball.

DAVE FENNE

At different locations, with different companies.

THEODORE SYLVESTER

Sure, sure. I know you were really disappointed you and Nina couldn't end up at the same place- but when you think about it, it makes sense that they'd have taken her.

Dave narrows his eyes, though the back of his head is still facing Theodore. His fingers twitch on the desk.

DAVE FENNE

And why is that?

THEODORE SYLVESTER

Well, women, you know- they're smaller. So they take up less resources, and I suppose that's sort of important when they're flying everything in.

Dave relaxes, a little, his shoulders lowering. His fingers toy with an edge of the blueprint, flicking the paper between his fingers, like he's trying to crease in a dog ear in an old book.

DAVE FENNE

Or going by the ice roads.

THEODORE SYLVESTER

Sure, but those are temporary. They melt away in the summers. Besides, you had a lot of fun in the robotics camp, didn't you? It must've been nice running the show- top dog.

Dave looks off and away to the side for a moment. He doesn't sound particularly enthused.

DAVE FENNE

Ah, yeah. It was great.

THEODORE SYLVESTER

And now we're all here- at the same place, at the end of the day. Guess internships really don't matter so much, huh? You were so sore about it.

Dave frowns, eyebrows furrowing as he sneaks a look at Theodore out of the corner of his eye.

DAVE FENNE

Understandably, I think. I would have been an asset to the team, and it would have proved an important stepping stone in my career. Practicing for the isolation of deep space.

Theodore has caught the ball, resting his palms on his stomach for a moment, folded over the ball. He rolls it over his stomach, digging it in like he's attempting to give himself a massage.

THEODORE SYLVESTER

Hard to feel isolated. This place is thrumming with people.

Dave rolls his eyes, mouth curling back into a sneer. He picks up his white pen again, and goes back to making tiny adjustments to the paper- sliding a small, metal ruler he pulls out of a drawer on the desk around, as he etches in new lines and labels overtop the pre-existing ones. His handwriting does not match that beneath the next text.

DAVE FENNE

Entirely too many, if you ask me.

THEODORE SYLVESTER

Of course you'd say something like that.

Theodore sighs dramatically- freeing one hand to throw it across his face dramatically, like a Victorian waif on a swooning couch.

DAVE FENNE

You know me. Never was too fond of people.

Theodore looks tiredly over at Dave- who is busy, head down, buried in his work. His voice is soft, worn through and exhausted. The glow-in-the-dark stars overhead soften the edges of his face as the light cascades down.

THEODORE SYLVESTER

Sure do, bud.