

THE END'S BEGINNING

by

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For The Impact

(Mid Act One and late in Act Three)

© Lynn Robertson Hay, 31st December, 2015
2nd draft, 5th January, 2016
3rd draft, 15th July, 2016

INT. DON'S LIVING ROOM. ALICE SPRINGS, AUSTRALIA - NIGHT

Shabby old-timer DON watches TV grimly. Shy, geeky JIM is mid interview, captioned "James Anderson, amateur astronomer".

JIM (on TV)
Spotting a new heavenly object is every astronomer's dream, but I knew it didn't look good. There's a protocol. You have to inform NASA.

Don turns it off in disgust. Looks out onto THE STREET: Jim, surrounded by film crew and lights, giving the interview.

EXT. BACK STREET - NIGHT (MUCH LATER)

Background panic. Jim stands on a corner, numb, as drunken brawlers pass. Checks his watch; not long now. He sees a light on in a modest building. Puzzled, he crosses over to the

INT. ALICE SPRINGS ASTRO CLUB

Don stands alone nursing a bottle of whisky. Stares at pointless notices under jaunty heading "A.S.tro Blast": A.S.tro Geeks, a quiz evening that's out of this world; introductory talk on the Solar System for new members; Stargazey Pi, the schools outreach programme. A newspaper article with photo of Don and Jim, proud of a new telescope.

Jim approaches. Hesitates. No acknowledgement from Don.

JIM
Not seen you for a few days. How have you... Are you OK?

DON
How have I taken the news? Your asteroid. KT 1887.

JIM
I know. Catchy.

DON
Your bombshell.

JIM
Yeah, well. Don't shoot the messenger.

DON

This misery's all down to you.

JIM

Come on, I only spotted it.

DON

You didn't have to tell.

JIM

How could I not tell?

DON

Five people saw it. Billy-No-Mates, with nothing better to do of a night than stare at the sky. If you'd kept your gobs shut, people would have been none the wiser till the bloody thing was nearly on 'em.

JIM

They had a right to know.

DON

Let me put you straight, Jim. It was my spot. I was the first to see that asteroid, days ago.

Jim takes a deep breath, everything falling into place.

JIM

And then you disappeared.

DON

Because I wouldn't inflict all this terror for a quick burst of glory.

Don swigs from his bottle and goes to the door. Jim follows.

JIM

That's not why I reported it.

Don leaves, ignoring him. Jim sees a YOUNG BOY run from a house UP THE STREET, and hug his MOTHER, rushing to get home. The GRANDPARENTS also come from the house to meet her.

BOY

Mummy, you made it!

MOTHER

Nothing would have stopped me.

Jim watches the family embrace, expressing their love.

JIM

That's why I did it.

EXT. BACK STREET

Seconds to go; distant rumbling. Leaning against a wall alone, Jim checks his watch. Swallows nervously. He glances around:

A circle of FRIENDS stand in the street, arms round each other; makeshift candles stuck in beer bottles at the centre.

Through a window: an ELDERLY COUPLE waltz gently.

On their balcony/doorway: the family he saw reunite stand entwined looking at the sky, the little boy in their arms.

He did the right thing. Jim looks up; the stars are beautiful.