

THE END'S BEGINNING

by

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For The Impact

(Mid Act One and late in Act Three)

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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, numb, as drunken brawlers pass. Puzzled, he spots a light on in a plain building.

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; a newspaper article with photo of Don and Jim, proud of a new telescope.

Jim approaches. Hesitates, concerned at Don's impassive face.

DON  
Congratulations.

JIM  
You taught me well, Obi Wan. Are you OK?

DON  
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 blokes 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

That's why you've not been around.

DON

Because I wouldn't inflict all this 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 LITTLE 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.

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; candles stuck in beer bottles at the centre.

Through a window: an ELDERLY COUPLE smooch 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.