

RESET

SCI-FI WEB SERIES/FEATURE

PILOT: THE EARTH SPEAKS

V.7

Written by

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FADE IN

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

A school science fair is set up, with colourful displays and posters. Eager young science students stand proudly beside their collections of rocks, volcanoes, frogs and butterfly life cycles.

Parents and students mill through the room, taking in the varied displays.

MRS JENKINS, a teacher with a clipboard, busily judges the displays. She nods at PEARL (11), a quiet bespectacled girl with a sci-fi t-shirt, who has a futuristic model on her table display.

MRS JENKINS

Nice... excellent work, Pearl.

A confident boy, Xander (12), has an iPad countdown on an easel beside him. Colourful images of endangered species line his poster. His display is entitled, 'EXTINCTION CLOCK'.

The alarm rings. Xander shuts it off, then dramatically pulls four pictures from his display.

An intrigued parent, GRANT, approaches Xander's display. The teacher joins him.

GRANT

What's an extinction clock?

XANDER

(importantly presents)

Everyone knows that the world has endangered species that are becoming extinct... they estimate that we lose almost 200 species every 24 hours. That's 4 every 30 minutes.

(soberly)

We just lost another four, forever.

The parents listening are impressed.

GRANT

That's a pretty scary statistic.

Mrs Jenkins smiles and makes notes on the clipboard proudly. Xander is obviously a top flyer pupil.

LYDIA (10), a girl with a wildness to her, joins Xander at his table. She takes an interest in his extinction clock.

Mrs Jenkins moves towards the next display.

Grant glances over at the next display also. It is forlorn in a corner.

The kid, JUSTIN (11), presiding over the corner display is Maori and shy. His display is messy, with a long trace graph with many sellotaped-together pieces of paper. On the desk is a small monitor screen. Static noises, buzzes and clicks are emitted from its speakers. On the table is a layer of sand with some metallic stones scattered around and lines and circles drawn like crop circles in the sand.

OVER by Xander's table.

GRANT (CONT'D)
(to Xander)
What's that all about?

A couple of other kids from the nearby displays crowd over to Xander's table, including Pearl.

LYDIA
That's Justin.

PEARL
He reckons the Earth is talking to him.

XANDER
(thoughtfully, mostly to himself)
Theoretically, I suppose you could record the noises made by the Earth's tectonic plates, but language would imply sentience...

Grant starts to grin as if the kids are pulling his leg, but then he notices that none of the kids are laughing.

They are all deadly serious as they turn and watch Justin tracing the spirals and lines of his sand picture and busily recording notes in a small notebook.

The seriousness of Justin and the other children rubs off on Grant. He watches with fascination, and the same hushed awe as the children.

PEARL pipes up.

PEARL
He says the planet speaks in code... but he's cracked it.

LYDIA
It took him all of last year!

GRANT
(hushed)
Does he know what it is saying?

Justin has given no indication of listening, up until this point, but he raises his head and looks directly at Grant.

JUSTIN

It says the same word, over and over.

Grant draws closer, fascinated by this strange boy. As he draws closer, curiously, there should be a heightened prickly feeling of portent to the shots. Drawn out and alert.

GRANT

(curiously)
What's the word?

JUSTIN

Help.

Grant is stunned, yet tries to joke it off. He regains his composure, smiles as he turns away.

GRANT

You had me going there, kid.

One of the stones in the sand twitches slightly. Grant is not sure he has seen what he thinks he has seen.

He peers under the table.

GRANT (CONT'D)

That must be a trick.

Grant and the other milling students and parents in the science fair seem to subdue almost to silence.

Justin's quiet voice speaks matter-of-factly, without drama or fear.

JUSTIN

They answered today.

Grant turns back slowly. The kids watch solemnly. The atmosphere is again tense and palpable.

GRANT

What do you mean? Who answered?

JUSTIN

The aliens.

Grant snorts. The kids do not treat it as a joke.

GRANT

The Earth talks and the aliens answer. What did they say? "Phone home?"

JUSTIN

No. They said, "They're coming."

Grant doesn't know how to react.

NOTE: PLEASE ADD TO SHOT LIST: On a nearby table, some rocks on display start to vibrate as if the table is shaking to a minor tremor.

Suddenly a shrieking loud noise like tearing metal is heard. The building shakes and judders. Eerie music.

Science displays topple and people dive for cover under desks.

Lydia, Pearl and Xander grip the desk legs and hang on for dear life as the ground seems to shake. Mrs Jenkins tries to help others take cover.

Justin is the only one who seems unfazed.

EXT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Children and parents rush outside the library and stop... shocked, seeing something on the concrete playground that makes them rush away in all directions.

Xander, Pearl and Lydia exit as three and move towards the playground. They gaze out at the concrete, uncertainly.

An unhurried and unworried Justin emerges and stares out across the courtyard.

JUSTIN

We're too late. It's started.

FADE TO BLACK