

FEELING ALONE

By Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

GLENN A lonely, insecure, idealistic space scientist.
ANDREA A kind, patient, but hungry ground engineer.

SETTING

A video call between ground control and the International Space Station.

Note: You can contact Jeff Dunne for images and a short video clip created to support this play.

SCENE

(The setting is a video conference call between Glenn on the International Space Station and Andrea at ground control. The screen switches between faces unless otherwise noted.)

GLENN

Ground control? Are you there?

ANDREA

Yeah, Glenn. I'm here.

GLENN

Oh. Hey, Andi. You're there.

ANDREA

Yeah. Always here. It's my job.

GLENN

Right. Right. And I appreciate it. I mean that. I hope you realize how much I appreciate it.

ANDREA

Yeah. Sure. I do.

GLENN

So...

ANDREA

So...?

GLENN

How are things going down there?

ANDREA

Well, you know. It's weird. Things are a little tense these days.

GLENN

Oh, right. The whole virus thing. That sucks. Family doing okay?

(Andrea resigns herself to another call from "Bored Glenn".)

ANDREA

As good as can be expected with all the social distancing and all.

GLENN

Oh, right. Yeah. Everyone's supposed to keep isolated.

(Glenn looks around, then back to the camera.)

I imagine that's gotta be pretty hard.

ANDREA

I... *(Suddenly realizes who she's talking to, and his situation.)* Sorry. That was insensitive.

GLENN

Nah, no worries. Funny you should mention isolation, though. That's kind of why I rang.

ANDREA

It's okay, Glenn. I can only imagine how lonely it gets up there. Is Yuri still putting peanut butter in your socks?

GLENN

No, we're past that.

ANDREA

I can ask Dennis to have a word—

GLENN

No, no. It's all good.

ANDREA

Okaaay....

GLENN

Do you remember that last time we talked? Last week, about the emptiness of space... and just *how much* emptiness is out here.

ANDREA

Sure.

GLENN

And you asked me if I thought we were alone in the universe.

Right. ANDREA

And I said I don't know. GLENN

Yeah. How could I forget? It was a riveting conversation. ANDREA

And I said that even if there was life, space is so vast that we'd probably never find each other. GLENN

Right. ANDREA

And then *you* said that if there was life out there, then there had to be at least some life that would be really, really advanced. GLENN

Glenn... ANDREA

And that if that life was *so* advanced, it would surely be able to find us. GLENN

I was there, Glenn. I remember the conversation. ANDREA

Well, I gave that a lot of thought after we talked. GLENN

Great. ANDREA

It made a lot of sense. GLENN

Glad I could help. ANDREA

And it got me to thinking that it was kind of a proof that there *isn't* any other life out there. GLENN

ANDREA

Glenn, I've got mac and cheese in the microwave.

GLENN

That we're just totally alone in the universe.

ANDREA

Uh huh.

GLENN

I mean except for each other here on Earth, right?

ANDREA

Can we put this on hold for a sec? Let me just run and get—

GLENN

No, no! Wait, Andi. This'll just take a minute.

(Andrea takes a Herculean sigh, then...)

ANDREA

Sure. Go ahead.

GLENN

Where was I?

ANDREA

Alone in the universe.

GLENN

Right. So you kind of convinced me that we had to be alone in the universe, you know? And that kind of got me down. Because, you know, the whole reason I went into space science in the first place was this dream I had about finding alien life.

ANDREA

Look, Glenn. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to—

GLENN

No, no. No. It's fine. Really. I mean it. I mean, it got me down a bit, but I think that's actually a good thing.

ANDREA

Are you okay?

GLENN

Yeah. Really. But back to the point. So I was feeling a little low, you know? And it made me a little homesick, and so I started spending a lot more time looking out the windows.

ANDREA

Glenn...

GLENN

It's so beautiful.

ANDREA

Yeah.

GLENN

But here's the thing. While I was looking out there, I noticed something.

ANDREA

Noticed something.

GLENN

Right.

ANDREA

Like something on the station?

GLENN

Yeah.

(Glenn notices something out of the corner of his eye, and turns to study it.)

ANDREA (O.S.)

Is it a malfunction or some kind of damage? There's a reporting system for that, Glenn. We've been through this.

GLENN

What? No. No. Say, is Dan there?

ANDREA

What?

GLENN

It's just... It's something I think you guys should see, and if Dan's there—

ANDREA

Honestly, Glenn, Dan's not too fond of you at the moment. It'd be better—

GLENN

Wait, what? Why's Dan upset?

ANDREA

Let's just say... look, I'd rather not say.

GLENN

Andrea, come on. What's going on?

ANDREA

(Clearly uncomfortable...)

I'd really rather...

GLENN

Andi...

ANDREA

(Steeling herself, then...)

You know that we monitor your internet use down here, right?

GLENN

You do!?!

ANDREA

Uh huh.

GLENN

I thought that was just... You do?!

ANDREA

Anyway, my mac and cheese is getting cold, and it doesn't taste the same when—

GLENN

Right right right. Okay, forget Dan. We probably shouldn't wait if he's not there anyway.

ANDREA

Is this a malfunction? Is it something dangerous?

GLENN

Can you activate the camera for window seven?

ANDREA

Is it a malfunction? Is it life threatening?

GLENN

What? No! Nothing like that. It's... it's amazing!

(Andrea takes a sigh of relief, and then activates the camera. We see a window, beyond which the Earth is seen in all its glory.)

GLENN (O.S.)

Can you see it?

ANDREA (O.S.)

Yes, Glenn. I see it. It's beautiful.

GLENN (O.S.)

Beautiful? I mean, it's incredible, but I don't know that I'd call it... beautiful, exactly...

ANDREA

Glenn, I'm really hungry. My dinner is now just macaroni in cheese-scented concrete, and as beautiful as the Earth is, I see that feed like a million times a week.

GLENN

The Earth... Did I say seven. Sorry. I meant seven A. Activate seven A.

ANDREA

Can you just tell me what your great epiphany was so I can—

GLENN

Okay. I guess. So you know how I said that you had convinced me that we're really all just alone, isolated.

ANDREA

Actually, I think I had said—

GLENN

But I think your argument may be flawed.

ANDREA

It wasn't my argument.

GLENN

I think even though the logic's sound, I've found an even greater reason to hold on to my childhood hopes.

ANDREA

Good for you.

GLENN

And I really want to share this with you.

ANDREA

(Muttering)

Oh, god. *(Clearer.)* Okay, Glenn. Share it with me. What did you realize?

GLENN

Just activate seven A.

ANDREA

Glenn...

(Andrea shakes her head, but then reaches out and switches the screen. Suddenly we see a little green alien standing in front of the stars, waving, i.e. the MP3 associated with this script.)

GLENN (O.S.)

Andrea?

ANDREA

Holy shit!

GLENN

So you see what I mean about hope?

ANDREA

I think I better get Dan.

(Lights out)