Love and relativity

Family connections.

Dearest Adhi,
The psychiatrist assigned by Headquarters suggested I start a diary to help me cope with your ship's disappearance. Instead, I'm going to write you a bibliography.

I won't write every day, and maybe you'll never read this anyway, but it helps me to think that someday I'll be able to show you what I've written here. To think that somehow, someday, we will bring you home.

Can't write any more today.

I miss you. I love you.

Indira

Source: *Special Relativity, The Universe, and You* (New Beginnings Press, London, 2028)

Date read: 3 December 2036

Summary: Time is not an absolute, but depends on your location in the 'hypersurface of the present' — a map of all physical space. The speed of visible light limits observations to events already past, so the past is all there is.

Notes: While reading, I discovered I was pregnant. It's strange to think that once she's born, I'll only ever be able to see what she was — even if it's only a few nanoseconds difference. I wonder, if someone is inside you, can you still connect at the speed of 'now'?

Ravi from mission control keeps calling, but they are no closer to learning what became of your ship.

Be safe. I love you.

Indira

Source: *Finding Life*

Elsewhere: An Introduction to the Fermi Paradox (New Beginnings Press, London, 2017)

Date read: 21 June 2037

Summary: The Fermi paradox questions the apparent lack of extra-terrestrial life. Explanations range from the pessimistic (there is no extra-terrestrial life) to the fanciful (we are a world-sized zoo kept for alien amusement). Realistic possibilities include technological limitations and delays

caused by the speed of light. Even if someone is trying to reach us, we may never be able to see it.

Notes: If it is so hard

to find an entire civilization, how can we hope to find a single experimental ship, adrift in interstellar space? How can I ever find you, how can I help bring you home?

I am choking. I am drowning. I can barely breathe.

Ravi tells me I should stop worrying so much and wait for them to bring you home, but he is not the one who has lost a husband. He is not the one who is alone.

Our daughter kicks and turns inside me. Please, please, come home.

Indira

Source: *Is There Anyone Out There? Qubit-Enabled Sky Searching in Your Back Yard* (Disruptive Technologies, Mountain View, California, 2039)

Date Read: 3 August 2039

Summary: Describes a method for building a simple quantum computer and software to use in finding astronomical anomalies. I took out a loan against our house and built an array of antennas in our garden where the mandara tree we planted once stood.

Notes: Chandri turned two yesterday. She runs and giggles through the garden, knocking over the antennas, and bursts into tears when I shout at her. She loves the way the quantum computer clicks and squeals through its analysis of long-vanished stars. *Do'phin!* she laughs, over and over. *Do'phin!*

For a moment, I dared to dream that I would see you again. But

Ravi now says the ship never jumped through space at all. In time? I ask.

No, Ravi says. The ship stayed where and when it was. Or, rather, it jumped to another set of 'wheres' and 'whens' altogether. We will never find a trace of you here in our own universe.

Ravi says that there is still hope. That they are developing a new understanding of the multiverse from data they received in the moments before the jump. He says they will send someone else one day, when they are ready. You will come home then, perhaps.

I cannot do this any longer.

I love you, Adhi. Goodbye.

Indira

Source: *Saptapadi*

Date read: 1 June 2050

Excerpt: *Now let us make a vow together. We shall share love, share the same food, share our strengths, share the same tastes. We shall be of one mind, we shall observe the vows together.*

Notes: It's been more than ten years since I looked at these letters, and yet today I find myself returning, pen in hand.

Tomorrow Ravi and I are getting married. He is the closest thing to a father Chandri ever knew, and still she has not forgiven me for betraying you. She spends all her time locked up in her room, reading the research logs you left behind, writing out equation after equation. I tell her you would want her to be happy, but she does not listen.

Ravi smiles sadly whenever she shouts at him. Give her time, he tells me. It will be okay.

I'm sorry, Adhi. I hope you'll understand. I have never stopped loving you.

Indira

Source: *Towards a Working Model of Inter-Universal Transjunction* (PRL Press, Ahmedabad, 2067)

Date read: 23 June 2067

Summary: Our daughter's dissertation. It is amazing how much she has grown.

Notes: Chandri stopped by yesterday with a mandara sapling and a copy of her book. After we planted the tree in our garden, she told us she was certain she can follow the trail your ship left all those years ago. That she loves us both, but is determined to make the jump herself, and soon.

Ravi and I are worried, but we did not try to stop her — we both know how important this is to her. To all of us. To everyone.

I have given her these pages to pass on to you. Even though it's been so long, there are still times I miss you so intensely it is hard to breathe.

With warmth and hopes of seeing you again,

Indira

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