

# SPACE IS THE PLACE

We could never agree. It didn't matter the topic, from coffee brands to child-rearing we stayed on opposite sides of the spectrum.

There was no reason for this to be any different.

"Aren't you sick of struggling?! Every month, trying to hustle up enough to eat, have lights, keep a roof over your head and find some way to enjoy yourself while you're still breathing- "

"But that's it - I LIKE BREATHING! Oxygen, specifically... what the hell DO you breathe out there?!"

My sister is a physicist so I knew she knew the answer to that silly ass question...but her emotions sometime got in the way of her logic.

"We'll still breathe oxygen sissy! In fact, the rooms are enhanced so you can adjust the levels to help you sleep, focus, even add scents. We got the executive option, remember?"

"See, that's EXACTLY how they get you! As soon as you let your guard down they're sneaking something in your

air...next thing you know, you're being sex-trafficked on Mars!"

"Sissy, you're a 49 year old who works in a lab most of her days. You'll always be a beauty, but I don't think you're the trafficker's main demographic of targets."

"Fuck off, Sissy."

Then there was a little bit of silence. Somehow we still communicated.

After a while, she asked, "What's the stipend for going again?"

"It depends on how long you stay - but if it's at least 3 years, all of your expenses are paid for the rest of your life"

"Like the military, eh'?"

"Who do think is making the offer?"

More silence.

"And what about our babies?"

"If they come too, same deal"

Sissy started cracking her knuckles furiously - a sign I've always known to be of her resolve also cracking.

“So my children will have their entire education and housing taken care of?”

“Till they croak.”

Sissy rose from the coach, poured herself a shot of my BEST bourbon (dammit, Sissy!), and let out a deep, weary, shaky sigh.

“OK...I'm in.”