# EARTH ECLIPSED

Season 1

Episode 3: Return

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## PREVIOUSLY ON

Atmospheric music plays behind the narrator, simple humming tones that gradually build in intensity.

NARRATOR

Previously on Earth Eclipsed.

MAX

We're broadcasting.

ALEX

This is Dr. Alexine Prometh. We've been taken prisoner aboard a hostile vessel, the Gungnir.

NICO

I'm not asking for a lot here. Help me retrieve a memory. Hell, I even know which memory you're looking for, and where to find it.

PLEASANT VOICE

Welcome, Citizens of the Concord, to the Museum of Galactic History.

ALEX

Ugh. Linus.

LINUS

Effective immediately, the board revokes Dr. Prometh's access to any and all test sites and-

ALEX

I can finish it in a month.

Sound of ship traveling and taking hits.

NICO

Nova, tie them up so they don't cause any more trouble.

NOVA

I will blindfold them as well.

ALEX

Without my equipment and a human subject, I'm useless to you.

NICO

I'm removing the intermediary.

MAX

You're hooking her up to the resource monitor directly? You'll kill her!

ALEX

Get away from me!

NICO

I think you're wrong, Doctor.

SAI

A Concord cruiser has docked.

NOVA

Come on!

NICO

Rip her away!

NOVA

There's no time! They're coming!

Sound of a latch, then silence.

INT. BENEFACTOR'S SHIP - DAY

A soft whirring of a ship's engine, with faint beeps throughout.

BENEFACTOR UNA

Are you ready?

Footsteps. ALEX takes a deep breath.

ALEX

Ready.

Metallic clanking sounds. A whirring sound grows as the hatch opens

That's when we hear it - a crowd, volume growing, excitedly chanting: "Alex! Alex! "

Opening music plays, with its strong drums and tense, dissonant melody taking us to the next scene as it fades out.

EXT. CAPITAL PLANET - CONTINUOUS

We blast immediately back to the cheering crowd, still chanting Alex's name as a band plays triumphant music.

The chanting turns into cheering and whooping as ALEX makes her way into the crowd. Over the ruckus, we hear fans calling out.

FAN #1

We love you Alex!

FAN #2

We're so glad you're okay!

ALEX

Thank you. Thank you so much for your concern. What's this? You've made me a card? How lovely! It's beautiful. I'll cherish it always.

INTERVIEWER

Dr. Prometh! Over here! Val Kayvana, Capital Daily News. Would you mind answering some questions?

The noise of the crowd lessens slightly as ALEX makes her way toward the interviewer.

MAX

Dr. Prometh has just been through a terrible ordeal. She'll be more than happy to schedule an interview once she's recovered.

ALEX

It's okay, Max.
 (to the Interviewer)
Please, go ahead.

The band stops playing and crowd quiets, shushing each other, eager to listen.

INTERVIEWER

As the first victim of a kidnapping in centuries, tell us: what was it like to experience violence at the hands of another person?

ALEX

Terrifying. No one should ever have to go through that. We're all blessed to live in an era where violence is virtually nonexistent.

Polite applause from the crowd.

## INTERVIEWER

But it isn't entirely nonexistent, as this has shown. What do you think was the cause? Are the citizens of the Concord in danger? Should we be worried?

Whispers from the crowd.

ALEX

Absolutely not. It's an isolated incident. The person responsible isn't even a Concord citizen.

Concerned murmurs from the crowd.

INTERVIEWER

An outer worlder? How did he even manage to make contact with you?

ALEX

He was a miner with limited Concord access. Access I have been assured has been revoked.

Polite applause.

INTERVIEWER

But based on this incident, shouldn't we restrict miners' access even further? Doesn't this prove that outer worlders are an inherently violent people who are a danger to the Concord?

ALEX

It does not.

Murmurs of surprise and disagreement from the crowd.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Every human deserves to live in peace, comfort, and security. But not everyone has the luxury of that upbringing. It is not our job to condemn them. Rather, it is our responsibility to help them. To provide them with the advantages we have. This incident has only strengthened my resolve to complete my work. I will find a way to save the outer worlds. To keep them in harmony with the Concord.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

We will give them lives of happiness and prosperity!

The crowd erupts in raucous cheers and applause.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Thank you. Thank you so much.

The cheering dies down.

INTERVIEWER

On the subject of your research - it's been confirmed that the four people missing from the memory project are dead.

A beat. Whispers from the crowd.

ALEX

(caught)

Oh. I...uh...

(clears throat)

With regards to that terrible incident-

## INTERVIEWER

The Capital Daily News has managed to obtain copies of the release forms the test subjects signed. It seems that the risk of death was so miniscule, it was almost entirely unpredictable. To have multiple deaths is an incredible bit of bad luck, wouldn't you say?

ALEX

(still struggling)

Er - yes...well...improbable does
not mean...impossible...

## INTERVIEWER

Of course. It must have been devastating for you. We've been informed that there will be a memorial erected on behalf of those unfortunate citizens, who willingly entered into your research, and gave their lives in pursuit of saving others. How do you feel about that?

ALEX takes a moment before answering.

The deaths of those test subjects was a great tragedy. There is nothing in the history of my career that I regret more. However, those citizens embodied the ideals of the Concord through their selflessness and bravery. I am proud and humbled that they will forever be remembered as the heroes they truly are.

The crowd erupts in cheers and applause. Triumphant music returns.

INTERVIEWER

(trying to yell over the crowd)

Thank you so much for your time. That was Dr. Alexine Prometh, and this is the Capital Daily News.

The crowd fades into the background as the group walks away. As it fades, we can finally hear the footsteps of the group walking. We can also hear the sounds of birds chirping, and a light breeze.

MAX

Stars, it's nice to hear the sounds of the Capital again. I never thought I'd miss that synthetic chirping so much.

ALEX

I never thought I'd miss the walk back to HoloCorp.

BENEFACTOR UNA

Dr. Prometh, I hope you'll forgive us for sharing the circumstances surrounding the test subjects and their deaths.

ALEX

It's quite all right, Benefactor Una.

BENEFACTOR UNA

After the Parais interview, the Council of Benefactors thought it only fair to share the reality of what happened. There was no reason your name should be tarnished.

I appreciate your concern. What's important now is to ensure those lives were not given in vain. The Abacus Project must be completed.

BENEFACTOR UNA

Yes, about that - HoloCorp notified the Council that you have put in notice to retire. We were very saddened to hear.

ALEX is unhappy about it, but withholds her feelings from the Benefactor.

ALEX

Yes. I too have...mixed feelings about it.

BENEFACTOR UNA

Given your stellar record of achievements, you've more than earned your rest; however, the timeline concerns me. A month from now? Especially given what's just happened, perhaps you'd like to take some time. Rest. There's no need for the project to be rushed.

ALEX

I'd...prefer to get back to work as soon as possible.

BENEFACTOR UNA

You're an example to us all, Dr. Prometh.

The sound of the birds chirping and wind gets louder as the group continues their journey.

EXT. HOLOCORP GROUNDS - MOMENTS LATER

A cheery tone sounds to signal an announcement.

ANNOUNCER

A reminder to all HoloCorp employees that breaks are mandatory. You deserve your rest. Thank you, and enjoy your day.

Another tone ends the announcement. The security pad beeps several times as they approach.

SECURITY PAD

Please hold up your palm so your Personal Identification Chip can be scanned.

A whirring scanning sound, following by a beep approving the match.

SECURITY PAD (CONT'D)

Chip scan complete. Identity: Dr. Alexine Prometh. Entry permitted.

Another scan.

SECURITY PAD (CONT'D)

Chip scan complete. Identity: Maximus Marxi. Entry permitted.

Another scan.

SECURITY PAD (CONT'D)

Chip scan complete. Identity: Benefactor Una. Entry permitted.

Whirring and hissing as a gate opens. A group approaches, their footsteps heavy and in strict unison.

BENEFACTOR UNA

Benefactor Una reporting, assuming command. Standard security protocol alpha two nine seven.

Sound of the group coming to a halting stop.

ALEX

What's this?

BENEFACTOR UNA

The rest of your security detail.

ALEX

I thought it was just you.

BENEFACTOR UNA

We didn't want to alarm the public. From now on, your movement will be limited to facilities where the entire detail can accompany you, out of sight.

ALEX

It seems rather excessive.

BENEFACTOR UNA

We still haven't managed to track down Nico, or his ship, nor have we identified the ex-security officer who was with him. Nova, I believe you said it was? Unfortunately, without a last name...Well, it's a very popular name.

ALEX

I understand that, but ten people?

MAX

Alex, we have no idea what that madman is capable of. Frankly, Benefactor, I think we should double it.

Announcement tone sounds.

ANNOUNCER

Dr. Alexine Prometh, please report to the office of Linus Merwell. Dr. Alexine Prometh.

Announcement tone sounds.

ALEX

Looks like I'm being summoned.

INT. LINUS'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Sound of an electric door sliding open. Footsteps as ALEX enters. Door closes behind her.

ALEX

You wanted to see me?

LINUS

Dr. Prometh, I am so glad you're all right. I can't tell you how relieved I was to hear of your safe return.

ALEX sits.

ALEX

Thank you Linus.

## LINUS

I want you to know - the board was prepared to pay your ransom demands, whatever the price. The vote was unanimous.

## ALEX

How generous. Especially given my upcoming exit date.

## LINUS

It's nothing, truly. It's the least we could do.

# ALEX

Please, Linus. Don't act so benevolent. You were willing to pay whatever it took to complete the Abacus Project. My life didn't factor into it.

#### LINUS

Oh the irony that <u>you</u> would accuse <u>us</u> of being self-centered. I heard your interview. You spouted some wonderful ideals and lofty goals, but in all of that, do you know what you didn't mention? Not even once? HoloCorp.

## ALEX

(with a scoff)

It was an impromptu interview. I didn't have prepared remarks or thoughts from the board-

### LINUS

Frankly, you're lucky the Council of Benefactors bought the lie that the risk of those deaths was minimal. Not only did they buy it, they shared it with the public! What do you think your reception would have been if they knew the truth?

LINUS pours tea. ALEX lets out a breath.

## LINUS (CONT'D)

They would still have been cheering your name, all right. Calling for your head. No more interviews. Impromptu or otherwise.

(MORE)

LINUS (CONT'D)

You stay out of the public eye, lest someone starts asking difficult questions.

ALEX

(with a sarcastic laugh)
My kidnapping is the biggest news
on the Concord in centuries. Surely
refusing interviews now might
arouse suspicion.

LINUS sets down the tea.

LINUS

This isn't the Doctor Alexine
Prometh show. Without HoloCorp,
you'd still be at PromethTech,
publishing papers in obscure holo
journals. We provided you with the
resources to get this far. This is
our project. And, when you're gone,
and we give it to whatever capable
scientist we find to fill your
shoes, it will remain a HoloCorp
project.

A beat.

ALEX

Is that all?

LINUS

One last thing. The Council has suggested to the Board that we urge you to delay your 'retirement' to give you some time to recuperate. The Board's position hasn't changed. You have one month. Not a day more.

A beat.

ALEX

I'd better get to work, then.

Footsteps as she leaves. We hear the door slide open and then close behind her.

INT. HOLOCORP HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

MAX

What did Linus want?

Nothing. Let's get to the lab.

Footsteps - a lot of them, as the security detail follows. ALEX stops, and so does her security detail.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Must you all follow so closely?

BENEFACTOR UNA

I'm sorry, Dr. Prometh, but the security detail is to remain with you at all times.

ALEX

Right.

Beep of the security pad activating.

SECURITY PAD

Please hold up your palm so your Personal Identification Chip can be scanned.

Scanning sound.

SECURITY PAD (CONT'D)

Chip scan complete. Identity: Dr. Alexine Prometh. Entry permitted.

Scanning sound.

SECURITY PAD (CONT'D)

Chip scan complete. Identity: Maximus Marxi. Entry permitted.

Scanning sound.

SECURITY PAD (CONT'D)

Chip scan complete: Benefactor Una. Entry denied.

ALEX

(falsely apologetic)
Oh, Benefactor. I'm so sorry.
Different parts of HoloCorp require
different clearance levels. My lab
is a highly secured area. You must
not have gotten the proper
permissions.

BENEFACTOR UNA

So it seems. We did have to work quite fast to arrange everything.

The security office is on the first floor.

BENEFACTOR UNA

Wonderful.

Footsteps as BENEFACTOR UNA walks away. BENEFACTOR UNA pauses.

BENEFACTOR UNA (CONT'D)

Dr. Prometh, are you coming?

ALEX

I'm sorry, but I do need to begin my work. You understand.

BENEFACTOR UNA

But our orders are incredibly strict, and we-

ALEX

Benefactor Una, that man can't even get onto the Capital planet, let alone HoloCorp grounds, let alone my lab. Let's not let fear drive us to irrationality.

BENEFACTOR UNA

But this is highly irregular-

ALEX

I really must insist. Max? Shall we?

MAX

Right behind you, Dr. Prometh.

Sound of a door opening. MAX and ALEX walk through. Door slides closed behind them.

INT. ALEX'S LAB - CONTINUOUS

ALEX

Quickly, Max. Now's our chance. I'll pack up. You go back out there and distract them.

MAX

I don't...I don't understand.

HoloCorp grounds aren't safe. That Nico knew far too much about our research. We need to evade the leaker.

ALEX begins to gather up her equipment. Music fades in under the dialogue, a pulsing electronic melody.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'll get the equipment. You go to the first floor. When Benefactor Una and her team are done, show them back to the lab, but take the longest route possible. That should give me enough time to get everything and get out.

MAX

No. Absolutely not. That lunatic is still out there. It's too dangerous.

ALEX

Don't be ridiculous. He can't even get onto the planet. And isn't that a shame? To become an outcast, just because your world descends into civil war and gets kicked out of the Concord. It's not his fault. I feel sorry for him. A person like Nico only exists because my research isn't complete.

MAX

Would you put that down?

ALEX stops packing.

ALEX

Max, think of it. Once we're able to access the memories from former citizens, we will find the cause for civil unrest, we will find the roots of strife, and we will take preventative measures to ensure that no planet ever gets ejected from the Concord again. No more outer worlds. Every person in the whole of humanity will live under the protection of the Charter. Everyone will live in peace, comfort, and safety. Don't you want that?

A beat as MAX considers her words. He sighs.

MAX

All right. I'll distract them.

ALEX

Wonderful. I'll meet you at the calming station by the promenade. I'll be in a private room at the back.

ALEX grabs her things and heads out. The music ends.

INT. CALMING STATION - LATER

The hiss and slide of a door opening. Gentle, meditative music plays in the background, just audible under the sound of a water feature.

Cautious footsteps as MAX enters.

MAX

Alex? Are you in here?

ALEX

Max! Don't turn on the lights!

MAX

Why not?

**ALEX** 

Because I don't want you to be upset.

MAX

(suspicious)

Why would I be upset?

ALEX

I'm turning on the lights, but I need you to know that everything's fine. Do not be alarmed.

MAX

Okay?

ALEX

Lights.

A sound as the lights go on.

MAX screams.

MAX

(shouting)

Is that blood?

ALEX

Yes.

MAX

(still shouting)

It's everywhere!

ALEX

I took an anticoagulant, but it took slightly longer to work than I expected.

MAX

What did you do?

ALEX

(calmly)

I blinded myself. With a laser scalpel.

MAX

You what? I should never have agreed to distract Benefactor Una! We are getting your eyes repaired right now! Come on, we're going to a stem vat.

MAX grabs ALEX to guide her.

ALEX

No. Stop! Let me go!

MAX

Here I thought I was protecting you, and you end up hurting yourself!

ALEX

Max. Listen to me! Max! I shut down the resource monitor!

(beat)

When Nico hooked me up to it. It didn't shut down on its own. I was controlling it. From the inside.

MAX

How is that possible?

It seems that lunatic wasn't completely mad. By hooking me up to the data vault directly, it gave me unprecedented control. I was able to overload the circuit and shut it down.

#### MAX

That explains it, then. Something happened to your mind when you were hooked up. I'm taking you for a neurological assessment.

## ALEX

I don't - listen! I realized I've been going about this all wrong. I shouldn't use test subjects. It's much more efficient if I'm hooked up to the vault directly.

#### MAX

# (sarcastic)

Great idea. Connect directly. Try to watch a memory. And your amygdala, brain stem, pituitary gland, thalamus, cortex, and neo cortex will all fire neurotransmitters at an unprecedented rate. And your brain will swell. And you'll die.

## ALEX

Except I had another idea, while I was blindfolded. If sensory overload is the problem, why don't I just...eliminate a sense?

#### MAX

Blindness isn't a magical power, Alex. You wouldn't know, because it hasn't been around for ages, but it isn't like it is in stories and myths. It does not grant people special abilities!

#### ALEX

Max, I'm not looking for blindness to give me something extra. I'm looking for it to take something away. After the onset of blindness, there is a reduced density of some of the proteins in the neuron membrane. Don't you see?

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

It won't matter what rate the neurotransmitters fire at. Part of the membrane that receives them will be dulled. It will prevent the overstimulation that leads to death.

MAX

Maybe. It's only a theory.

ALEX

(with a scoff)

A damned good one, though.

MAX

So let's recruit new subjects. Test it out. You saw how that crowd reacted to the news of the memorial. We'll have people tripping over themselves to sign up, risk of death be damned.

ALEX

It will take months to get it approved. You remember how much red tape we had to go through to get the Board to sign off on test subjects in the first place.

MAX

And? So?

ALEX

We only have a month.

MAX

I'm sure the Board will grant an extension, given the circumstances.

ALEX scoffs again.

ALEX

(determined)

No, no, Max. They'll take my research and pass it on to someone less capable who will fumble their way through it, delaying this discovery. And that risks lives. I won't do it. I'm hooking myself up to this data vault. I'm retrieving a memory.

MAX

Well, you can try. But you can't do it yourself in this condition. And I'm not helping.

ALEX

Fine. I'll do it myself.

ALEX attempts to get hooked up, but she fumbles several times. Something falls with a rattling thud.

MAX

Stop. Stop! You're going to destroy everything.

ALEX doesn't stop. More thunking, rattling, clanking. A crash as something heavy falls.

MAX (CONT'D)

All right, all right, all right!

Enough.

(muttering to himself)

Concord forgive me.

ALEX

(pleasantly)

Thank you, Max.

MAX

Sit down. Sit still.

ALEX sits. MAX gets everything hooked up. After a beat...

MAX (CONT'D)

(quieter now, concerned)

Alex?

**ALEX** 

Yes, Max?

MAX

If this doesn't work...

ALEX

It will.

MAX

But if it doesn't, I - I want you to know-

He hesitates.

MAX (CONT'D)

I...I, um...

Another slight hesitation as he changes his mind about what to say.

MAX (CONT'D)

I've always had faith in you.

ALEX

I know, Max.

 $\mathsf{MAX}$ 

It's...I just wanted to say it, in...just in case.

ALEX

Don't be morbid. If I feel it's going awry, I'll do what I did last time and shut it down.

MAX

I'm helping you under protest. I want to make that clear.

Sounds as the machine starts up.

ALEX

(with a soft laugh)
Objection noted.

MAX sniffles a bit and takes a breath to cover it.

MAX

Here we go.

The machine turns on, the whirring and clicking building higher and higher. Music plays under, tense and dramatic.

Suddenly, with a buzz and a chirp, the data vault powers down. A moment as MAX's shuddering, scared breaths are heard.

MAX (CONT'D)

(a shout)

Alex!!!! What have I done?

ALEX

It's - it's all right, Max. I'm
fine.

MAX

Thank the Concord. You shut it off.

ALEX

No.

(a beat)

It worked.

MAX

(in disbelief)

It worked?

**ALEX** 

It worked!

ALEX laughs excitedly. She and MAX talk excitedly.

MAX

You did it?!

ALEX

It's the most incredible feeling!

MAX

You accessed a memory! I - I knew you could! You're brilliant!

ALEX

It's almost as if I were watching something real!

MAX

You're the greatest scientist in Concord history!

ALEX

Think of the lives we'll save!

MAX

We have to get back to HoloCorp! Tell everyone you've made the greatest discovery of our lifetime!

A beat. ALEX sobers.

ALEX

No.

MAX

No? What do you mean, no?

ALEX

This is only the first step. There's so much to be done. HoloCorp will demand we hand everything over, and leave.

MAX

As they should, Alex. You're a brilliant neuroscientist. Without a doubt, the greatest in Concord history.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

Your name will be remembered for generations. But...taking memories and studying them to figure out why planets descend into chaos? It's an entirely different field. It's history. It's sociology. It's anthropology.

ALEX

I'm not suggesting that I be responsible for that portion. Merely that I train the proper personnel to retrieve memories. Hundreds of people will be required.

MAX

And? Someone else can do it. When Hime Toutatis invented hyperflight, do you think she personally installed the engines on every ship? Come on, Alex. Let's go back to HoloCorp. Let everyone know you're the greatest scientific mind of generations. And reunite you with your security detail. Every second we're hiding from them we're in danger of losing the most momentous discovery of our time.

A beat.

ALEX

(firmly, steadily)
It's my life's work, Max. I'm not
giving it up.

Music ends.

INT. LINUS'S OFFICE - LATER

BENEFACTOR UNA and LINUS wait in the office.

BENEFACTOR UNA

Yes. Yes. Thank you.

A beeping as she turns off her communicator.

BENEFACTOR UNA (CONT'D) She's on her way to your office right now.

LINUS

And? Where has she been?

BENEFACTOR UNA

Unclear. Apparently, she showed up at the HoloCorp gate, and asked for me.

LINUS

Benefactor Una, I think you can agree that Dr. Prometh's actions are highly unusual. Lying to you? Stealing HoloCorp equipment? This unfortunate incident seems to be affecting her more than she's letting on. Maybe we shouldn't wait the month. Maybe it would be best, for her sake, if we took the pressure off. Have her exit the project immediately. I'm concerned about her well-being.

BENEFACTOR UNA

You raise a lot of good points, Mr. Merwell.

They're interrupted by the door opening.

LINUS

Dr. Prometh! Thank the Concord. (beat)

Dr. Prometh?

A beat.

ALEX

I've completed the Abacus Project.

A stunned silence for half a beat.

LINUS

(forcing it out)

What...fantastic news!

BENEFACTOR UNA

Dr. Prometh, you are a true visionary.

MAX

(quietly, to Alex) Benefactor Una is bowing.

(to Benefactor Una)

Please, there's no need for that.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Max, bring me to the Benefactor.

Footsteps as MAX leads ALEX.

BENEFACTOR UNA

Why is Max leading you?

ALEX

(calmly)

I'm blind.

LINUS

You're what?

BENEFACTOR UNA presses a button on a communicator.

BENEFACTOR UNA

Medic required. Urgent.

ALEX

No, no. Don't make a fuss. I'll get my eyes repaired as soon as we're done here.

BENEFACTOR UNA

Doctor, are you certain?

ALEX

Yes, yes. I want to finish talking about the project.

BENEFACTOR UNA speaks into the communicator.

BENEFACTOR UNA

Disregard.

BENEFACTOR UNA turns the communicator off.

ALEX

Benefactor Una, I've made a decision: I'm not retiring.

BENEFACTOR UNA

The Council will be overjoyed!

LINUS

But Dr. Prometh, you seemed so eager to take-

(interrupting)

I want to lead the rollout. I do, however, have one condition, and I do hope the Council will be able to arrange it.

BENEFACTOR UNA

I'm sure they will do whatever is in their power.

LINUS

Dr. Prometh, I know you're eager to discuss, but I'm worried about you. Perhaps you should get some rest before we take this-

ALEX

I want HoloCorp gone.

A beat of silence before the ending credits music plays.

CREDITS

Earth Eclipsed: Episode Three, Return. Starring Allegra Rodriguez Shivers, Reginald West, Christian T. Chan, Amy Lyndon, Michael Malconian, and Tali de Assis.

With Daniel Dauphin and Elizabeth Ashby.

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Earth Eclipsed is a production of The Lunar Company.

Music ends.