“Are you ready?”

He spoke into the phone fervently, knowing that this was a hard question to answer.

After a few seconds of silence, she whispered a sigh.

“As ready as I’ll ever be, I guess.”

“Do you miss home?”

“Well, yes and no. I’ve been away for so long, it’s almost like this place is like a home to me now.”

He thought this was kind of a loaded question, and he wondered if she really truly did miss home. The past started replaying through his mind as if it all happened yesterday. The happiest parts were raising their beautiful children who they were both dearly in love with, purchasing their apartment together that they thought for sure would be temporary, living on their own and being so happy together. The saddest parts were the beginnings of losing the spark they once had, the screaming matches they had over money and time spent with the children, the fact that one parent worked long hours while the other stayed home all day to take care of the kids; it all seemed to pile up. Then she left to go train for the Andromeda II Mission in California, and he was almost relieved to see her go. No more fights, no more arguing, nothing.

“Everyone back here misses you a lot, especially the children.”

“Oh I can’t even imagine, how are the two little angels?”

“You know. The happiest nightmares on the face of the planet.”

“Yeah….Tell them mom loves them.”

There was a long pause on the phone, which was amplified in his sleepy New York apartment. He looked at the wallpaper with peels sagging, depressingly drooped among the bland color to reveal a beautiful wood layer buried underneath. The floor was a disaster, exploding with toys and dirty clothes all around. He thought about Charlene and Max and how incredibly silent they were for a couple of six year olds, although he did remember they had a big day at the park today. His body ached from lack of sleep and the surplus of work he picked up to cover for not having her around, and he was exhausted. He glanced at his watch, which read 2:30 am.

Suddenly, the other end sparked back to life.

“Cheer me up.”

Startled, he stuttered. “W-What?”

“I’m nervous.”

“What for?”

“Well, it’s the first trip somewhere outside the galaxy. I understand everything will be okay, but I think that might make anybody a bit nervous, wouldn’t you?”

“Well, yes, of course.”

“*And* I’m sad. So, cheer me up, or at least try. It’ll be at least 5 years before I talk to you again. Please?” She sounded disgruntled to him on the phone, almost annoyed. They both knew he was not very good at being uplifting or helpful when it comes to this sort of thing, but he thought he should give it a shot anyway.

“Well.” He said, daringly and enticingly.

“Well, what?”

He took a deep breath. “I haven’t the slightest idea.”

“Oh, come on. Just try.”