

Spoilers and spoil heaps for "Castaway"

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 07 Feb 2003

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Nigel Price — 07 Feb 2003, 20:37

In answer to my question about the shorter *day* on the planet in the story

"Castaway", Charles Reed wrote:
So the answer to the question is that the
Earth in the story (assuming that it is Earth)
is spiraling into the sun along with Mercury
and Venus, therefore speeding up its rotation.

I didn't follow this explanation at all until I went back and reread the story today while I was still awake and discovered it was the planet's
year that was half an hour shorter. Duh! Through not paying attention, I thought that it was the *day* that was shortened, hence my question.

OK, now I've got that bit clear in my head, can I test my understanding of Charles' explanation by asking whether the reason why the planet is getting colder rather than hotter, even though it is getting closer to its star, is because the star is cooling and expanding and therefore, at the risk of tautology, not giving out as much heat?

When does the increase in temperature produced by the reducing orbital radius and the closer proximity to the sun outweigh the decrease in temperature produced by the star's cooling?

Not that it matters - just curious.

Nigel