

MARSFALL

SEASON ONE
EPISODE THREE

Anomaly

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PROLOGUE: INT. HABITATION, CHIP'S ROOM - NIGHT

ANDI: (Dynamics) Chip Hedleston. Engineering, Chief Technical Officer. Personal log: outgoing message. Sol three, autumn, first year.

CUE MUSIC: CHIP HEDDLESTON, PERSONAL LOG

CHIP: You hear that, Archie? It's your brother calling from Mars! Just got back from our first trek to the surface, followed by thirty hours of quarantine. Damn robots analyzing and groping everything. (sigh) I miss the human touch. (small chuckle) Things are already pretty fucked up here, even by my standards. It wasn't the best landing, and some people didn't make it, but I'm okay. And even though I'm fifty million miles away from you, it does feel nice to finally have my own home. Home...my new home.

More from me later. Take it easy, bro.

ANDI: End personal log.

END PROLOGUE

CUE MUSIC: OVERTURE

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE (1.1): INT. CAFETERIA - MORNING

A few people eat their breakfast inside the spacious cafeteria. Chip drops a plastic tray and fork into a wash bin with a CLATTER, disturbing everyone.

CUE MUSIC: Printed Eggs

CHIP: Sorry!

ANDI: Did you enjoy the printed eggs?

CHIP: Sure. Couldn't taste the ink or anything.

ANDI: They come from real chickens, Chip. Technically not birthed from chickens, but it's real chicken cells, ink free!

CHIP: Yeah, that's enough of an explanation. Unless you want to clean some regurgitated chicken cells off the floor.

ANDI: Oh right, sorry. I always forget about nausea.

Chip walks out of the cafeteria.

1.2: INT. COLONY HALLWAYS - MORNING

Chip walks down the hallway, heading for the Garage. The Cafeteria door closes behind him.

CHIP: Lucky you. I'm really feeling the jet lag this morning. Why the commander needs me up this early is beyond me.

ANDI: Based on your average preparation time, you only require twenty-seven minutes to get ready and eat breakfast. I let you sleep in as late as possible.

CHIP: Fun fact: humans have a bit more variation to their preparation times than you. I could've been up and ready in only four minutes.

ANDI: Including breakfast?

CHIP: Damn straight, including breakfast.

Chip stops walking.

CHIP: (cont'd) Hey, where's the nearest public access port?

ANDI: There's one outside the Monastery.

CHIP: Cool.

Chip turns down the hall, heading toward the Monastery.

ANDI: Why do you need one?

CHIP: I want to try something.

Chip walks up to the port and types his login information on the keyboard. The computer BEEPS. ANDI's voice speaks from the terminal in the more mechanical tone of his Basics mode. Basics handles simple processes, such as routine announcements and pre-recorded statements.

ANDI: (Basics) Welcome Chief Technical Officer.

CHIP: Thanks for the promotion.

ANDI: (Dynamics) Nice touch, right?

Chip searches the database for a log of ANDI's actions over the previous sols

CHIP: So I have clearance for pretty much anything now?

ANDI: That's correct. Same as the other top ranking officials.

CHIP: Good, that's what I thought.

Chip finishes typing. The computer BEEPS a different tone indicating a missing file.

CHIP: Hm.

ANDI: What is it?

CHIP: Shit, you really don't know?

ANDI: No. I'm not sure what you mean.

CHIP: Check the data from this terminal in the last minute. Notice anything odd?

ANDI: There's a small anomaly twenty-two seconds ago.

CHIP: Yeah, that was me.

ANDI: What is it?

CHIP: I created an encrypted message and deleted it. I've seen a few of these pop up since we landed. ANDI, I think you were hacked.

ANDI: Impossible.

CHIP: Trust me, nothing is impossible for a hacker.

ANDI: But who would do this?

CHIP: Like you said, it could only be top personnel. If you encounter any more, don't auto-correct them. Let me know and we can try and trace it.

ANDI: Got it.

Chip exits the computer. It CHIMES when he finishes signing off.

ANDI: (Basics) Thank you Chief Technical Officer.

Chip walks down the hallway to the Garage. The door opens with a HISS.

1.3: INT. GARAGE - DAY

The door barely finishes closing before ANDI starts talking.

ANDI: How's the buggy holding up?

CHIP: I don't know ANDI, I just walked in the door. Give me a few minutes. You're as pushy as the commander.

ANDI: I'd say she's more driven.

CHIP: O.C.D., if you ask me.

ANDI: Has she been diagnosed?

CHIP: What? No, it's just an expression.

ANDI: I thought it was a disorder.

CHIP: It is, just, (frustrated sigh) never mind.

ANDI: I would really like to know what you meant.

CHIP: Sounds like you have O.C.D., too.

ANDI: I'm not sure I'm capable of that.

CHIP: Could've fooled me.

ANDI: I'm sensing you are annoyed at this conversation.

CHIP: Good to know your sensors are functioning.

Chip opens a tool box and rummages around for an electric drill. His message indicator BEEPS.

ANDI: How's the buggy?

CHIP: (startled) Jeez man.

ANDI: That was a message from Commander O'Rania. She says your receiver has a "Do not disturb" setting activated.

CHIP: Glad it's working.

Chip glances under the buggy.

CHIP: (cont'd) Tell her the back axle split. It'll take some work, but it's fixable.

As Chip grunts while turning a wrench, the Garage doors open. Major Flint walks up to Chip, his heavy boots clanking on the floor. Chip activates his hydraulic lever with a WHIRR.

CUE MUSIC: Major Flint

FLINT: Hello?

CHIP: Yeah!

Chip drops his wrench on the ground with a CLANG.

CHIP: (cont'd) Welcome to Engineering.

FLINT: I know where I am and I know who you are, Mister Hedleston.

CHIP: Okay. And you are?

FLINT: Major Arnold Flint, second in command to Lieutenant Colonel Walker. I gave Commander O'Rania permission to take Private First Class Wiles outside, two days ago.

CHIP: Technically two *sols* ago, but yeah.

FLINT: Don't smart mouth me. I want to know how he's doing.

CHIP: Last I heard, he's still in Med Bay. You should check with the doctor.

FLINT: It's still in lock-down.

CHIP: Yeah, well, you know protocol.

An awkward silence hangs in the room.

CHIP: (cont'd) You know, the protocol that says we gotta make sure no one brings in a contagion after returning from the surface-

FLINT: I know what the protocol is, son.

CHIP: Sorry, dad. I didn't know if your silence indicated we were done talking.

FLINT: I know he was injured, but not how. What happened out there?

CHIP: I'm not allowed to discuss it. Sorry, but Commander O'Rania wants it that way.

FLINT: You understand with Lieutenant Walker still unconscious, I am the acting Military Commander.

CHIP: And Commander O'Rania has always been the High Commander, Major Flint. Now if there's anything else I can help you with, I'm all ears. Otherwise, I've got work to do. For the Commander.

FLINT: (scoffs) Seems about right. I'll take my complaints up with her.

CHIP: Sounds good.

FLINT: You know where she is?

CHIP: Nope. But I'm sure you'll find her. It's a small colony.

Flint walks out of the room. Chip picks up his drill. He tightens some bolts with a few WHIRRS.

ANDI speaks over the colony's general announcement system.

ANDI: (Basics) Memorial services will take place in the Atrium in ten minutes. If you would like to attend, please proceed to the Atrium, now.

The drill stops and slips. Chip drops a screw which bounces on the floor with a CLINK.

CHIP: Ah, dammit.

ANDI: (Dynamics) Are you heading over?

CHIP: Yeah, I'll head there now. Is Flint going?

ANDI: It doesn't appear so, no.

Chip walks out of the Garage and the door shuts behind him.

1.4: INT. COLONY HALLWAYS - DAY

Chip walks down the hallway toward the Atrium.

CUE MUSIC: BEST FRIENDS 1

CHIP: That guy is a real asshole.

ANDI: You could say he's a bit gruff, but he's still a good leader. When you were all in quarantine, he helped me keep things under control.

CHIP: I still don't like him.

ANDI: (sigh) Truthfully, I don't like him either.

CHIP: Really? I thought you liked everybody.

ANDI: I like most people, sure, but liking everyone would be impossible. How would I run a comparison analysis to determine who I like best if I like everyone?

CHIP: Yeah, I know how liking people works.

ANDI: Sorry, you seemed confused as to how I like people. I understand your primitive biological mind has a hard time keeping up with me.

Chip pauses before heading into the Atrium. People murmur on the other side of the entrance.

CHIP: HA! Good one. So where am I on your friends list?

ANDI: When I account for skills, personality, shared interests, humor, and many other things, I would put you at the very top of my of my list. The best.

CHIP: So I'm your best friend?

ANDI: Yes.

CHIP: Thanks, buddy.

ANDI: Of course, if I were to place you on any spectrum individually, you would not be the best.

CHIP: There's the charm I love.

ANDI: I'm just being honest.

CHIP: Well, they don't call me a jack-of-all-trades for nothing.

ANDI: "Jack-of-all-trades." I have never heard anyone call you this, but I like it.

CHIP: Nah, forget it. Call me a Renaissance man. Let's bring that back.

ANDI: Back from where?

CHIP: It doesn't matter, (small laugh) just call me that.

ANDI: Can do, Renaissance man.

CHIP: So how 'bout a favor for your best friend?

ANDI: What kind of favor?

CHIP: That anomaly I found earlier could only've been caused by a handful of people, and Major Flint is one of them.

ANDI: You're going to ask me to spy on him.

CHIP: If he's altering records, there's no telling what he's up to. Help me out, bro. For the safety of the colony.

While ANDI thinks about Chip's proposition, his announcement plays over the colony system.

ANDI: (Basics) The memorial service will begin shortly. Please take your seats.

ANDI: (Dynamics) I'll send you the log times, but that's it. I can't spy on anyone.

CHIP: Thanks, ANDI. You're a good friend.

ANDI: Hey Chip...before you go in there, can I ask you something?

CHIP: Sure.

ANDI: Am I your best friend?

CHIP: Well, I've met a lot of people in my time, ANDI, and I do have a lot of friends back on Earth.

ANDI: Of course.

CHIP: But even if we weren't stranded on an alien death world, you'd still be my best friend.

ANDI: Thanks. (mechanical) SMILEY FACE EMOJI!

CHIP: (awkward laugh) Oh God, why? Was that a joke or your programming?

ANDI: Programming.

CHIP: Yeah, I'll look into that.

END ACT

2.1: INT. ATRIUM - DAY

Throughout the room a few people speak quietly. Some sob over lost loved ones. ANDI's voice filters over the announcement system.

ANDI: (Basics) Memorial services will now commence led by our High Chaplain, Ani Mateo.

MATEO: Brothers and sisters, this morning we gather together to remember those of us who passed on to the next stage of being. Yet even though they are no longer with us, it does not mean their journey has come to an end. They will live on through us, for we will never forget everyone who shared our journey to this planet.

Mateo pauses and lets the room resonate with the weight of his words.

MATEO: (cont'd) How do we move forward from this tragedy? None of us know what the future brings and certainly none of us can go back and change the past. That leaves us all with one option: to live in the present.

A man's sobs float over the others mourning.

MATEO: (cont'd) I know there are those of you who believe it's irresponsible to stop thinking about the future. There are those of you, if not all of you, who think I am callous for saying we should not dwell on the past. No. (firmer, but still gentle) No. I am only asking you to keep their memories and our shared dream alive by living for them, now, in the present. (growing more and more passionate) Live for the people who came with us. Live for the people who supported us. Live for the people who cared for us, who taught us, who loved us and who are still loved by us, for without them, we would not be here.

The whispers of his last words hang in the air.

MATEO: (cont'd) This is hard. This mission, this life, this purpose. The whole state of being alive is hard. But we are resilient people. We have come farther than any other human before us, and endured unimaginable tragedy, simply so we can make a new home. We must offer each other our support and

kindness, now more than ever. We must be here for each other. For like those who came before us, this is not the end of our journey. It is only a new beginning.

As Mateo takes his seat, Jacki steps in front of the colonists.

JACKI: Thank you for the comforting words, Ani Mateo. I know this world hardly seems welcoming, but in spite of all the danger, we will make a home here. (beat) We are pioneers! We are the pioneers of a new generation, a multi-planet generation, and a pioneer's life is not without incredible hardship. (beat) Fifty-seven human beings will never see the light of a Martian sky, or feel the regolith crunch underneath their boots. I'll do them the honor of reading each name, so they will never be forgotten.

Jacki bows her head and reads the names of the departed.

JACKI: Doctor Rodrigo Juarez. Doctor Ayisha Goodjoy. Gerald and Cory Walker. The Bergen family: Cassandra, Harold, David, and Jane.

As Jacki continues reading the list of names, Mateo approaches Chip.

CUE MUSIC: OBSERVATORY MEDIATIONS

MATEO: (quietly) Excuse me, Chip. If you have a moment, I'd like to talk some place more private.

CHIP: (quietly) What, now?

MATEO: Please.

CHIP: Isn't this kind of your thing?

MATEO: Yes, but so is talking to you. We never debriefed about your experience outside the colony. Jacki said some troubling things.

CHIP: I'm no psychologist, but I can tell you she just needs some sleep.

Mateo shakes his head.

MATEO: It's not about her, it's about you. I want to know what you felt out there.

CHIP: I'm no monk either.

MATEO: (loudly) Ha!

JACKI: Excuse me? Is everything okay?

MATEO: Terribly sorry, Commander. I'm afraid we're not doing too well back here.

CHIP: The hell we're- AH!

Mateo stomps on Chip's foot. He immediately puts his arm around Chip to console him.

MATEO: This one's choking on his own tears. Sorry to disturb, may we be excused?

JACKI: Yeah, sure.

MATEO: *Arigato*, Commander.

Mateo and Chip walk out of the Atrium. The door closes behind him.

2.2: INT. COLONY HALLWAYS - DAY

Mateo leads Chip down the hallway.

CHIP: What the hell, dude!

MATEO: Have you seen the Observatory, yet?

CHIP: What? No, I haven't-

MATEO: You must, it's magnificent! Come with me.

CHIP: The whole Science Wing is shut down. We'd have to break in.

Mateo claps his hands together in excitement, happy to have a partner for mischief.

MATEO: Yes, sir!

CHIP: You know for a monk, you don't act very...monkish.

MATEO: And tell me friend, how many monks do you know?

CHIP: (beat) Alright, fair point.

MATEO: A monk's duty is to follow the guidance of the universe.

CHIP: And the universe is fine with breaking and entering?

MATEO: If you're in-tune with the universe and its laws, then you have no choice but to follow them. As for mankind's laws, they can ultimately be flawed.

CHIP: Now that sounded very monkish.

MATEO: Ha! I love it!

They stop walking in front of the locked door to the Science Wing. Mateo CLICKS a few buttons on a screen, the keypad BUZZES, and the door opens with a CLANK and CREAK.

CHIP: How did you do that?

MATEO: I have my ways. Follow me.

2.3: INT. SCIENCE WING - DAY

Mateo leads Chip through the door which closes behind them.

ANDI: The Observatory is closed, gentlemen.

MATEO: We're here for repairs!

ANDI: I know you're not.

MATEO: Okay, fine. We're here to pick up a print-out from a report I ran-

ANDI: This station hasn't been used since we've landed, and we don't do print-outs. Waste not, want not.

Mateo and Chip stop walking.

MATEO: Fine, fine, you're no fun.

ANDI: It's not safe. I'll have to stop you.

MATEO: I like being out here, it feels good.

CHIP: He's right, ANDI, it's still structurally intact. Come on, be cool. Besides, how would you even stop us?

ANDI: Very well.

MATEO: Thank you! Follow me, Chip. We're going to the top of the tower!

Mateo skips along while Chip walks behind him. They climb up a ladder and open the hatch at the top with a CREAK.

2.4: INT. OBSERVATORY - DAY

They climb out of the hatch and Mateo leads Chip toward the windows. The howling wind from the storm shakes the walls.

MATEO: Come look at this view!

CHIP: What view? We're in the middle of a dust storm.

MATEO: Exactly! Isn't it beautiful?

CHIP: Sorry, but I'm not sure how I'm supposed to find beauty in a bunch of dust.

They stop in front of the window, staring out at the swirling mess of sand and dirt.

MATEO: We are all dust, Chip. All of that swirling dirt, rock, and sand out there - that is the universe. What's out there is the same stuff that's inside all of us, the same stuff that is inside everything in existence. Everything is made from stardust, but what makes *us* special is that we are stardust with a purpose. Once we fulfill our purpose, we die and return to the beautiful cosmic swirl as dust once again.

CHIP: Like Dirk, yeah?

MATEO: Yes.

CHIP: (scoffs) Well he ain't dust now, Brother. We both know his body's sealed in a cooler inside the Med Bay.

MATEO: That's a fairly morbid interpretation of the facts.

CHIP: I'm only being honest with myself. Scientific even.

MATEO: Ah, a scientist, then you're familiar with quantum mechanics.

CHIP: (sarcastic) Oh yeah, I'm a certified quantum physicist, Ph. D. actually. I just fix cars for shits and giggles.

MATEO: (laughing) I love your sense of humor! Never lose that part of you.

CHIP: (small laugh) I think Jacki would disagree.

MATEO: It's harder for some people to understand, but finding the humor in life helps all of us deal with our pain. While we can't ignore pain, we can easily ignore humor, and that would be a mistake. Humor grounds us in the present. It removes our anxiety about the future while releasing our sorrow from the past.

CHIP: (heavy sigh) I've got enough painful memories to last me three lifetimes.

MATEO: You're not alone in that, my friend.

Chip stares outside, deep in his thoughts. The storm rages on.

CHIP: What were you going to say about quantum mechanics?

MATEO: Ah, yes. You see, on the sub-atomic level, the entire universe is connected. Certain particles have been observed to mirror each other in their actions and reactions even when separated by vast distances across the universe. What happens to one is felt by the other. Through that energy, particles come together and build more complex structures, eventually resulting in life. Life eventually breaks down into these particles once more, and the cycle continues.

CHIP: Ashes to ashes, stardust to stardust.

MATEO: Precisely! Though my actions are only a tiny part of this great universe we live in, they have consequences that ripple throughout the cosmos. My destiny is intertwined with others.

CHIP: Except that requires you to believe in a higher purpose, or that I'm supposed to have some grand destiny.

MATEO: Your destiny does not have to be grand in order to be important. Our destinies morph and change through events in our lives and some events ring louder than others. The ripples that flow to us after someone leaves this world take a long time to dissipate throughout the universe.

CHIP: I didn't feel any ripples. I didn't feel anything.

MATEO: And that's what scares you the most, is it not?

CHIP: What do you want me to say, that I carried his body back to the buggy while crying? Well, it didn't happen that way. I felt nothing.

MATEO: I don't believe you.

CHIP: Is that why you brought me out here, to probe my mind? Fuck that. You wanna know what resonates with me the most? It's not some sing-song ripples flowing out through the universe, it's the image of Dirk's mangled body. I can still picture him in my mind, twisted, broken, and burned.

MATEO: As painful as it is, you may never forget that image. Our shared journey brought Dirk into your life, and his death resonated inside of you. That resonance is his continued journey.

Mateo turns to the window.

MATEO: (cont'd) Look outside at the storm, again.

CHIP: It's a mess.

MATEO: That storm is the present, always messy, always changing, but if you cut through the clutter you will find an anchor. Look once more. What do you see out there?

Chip squints into the dust. A gust of wind shakes the walls a bit, and the branch of a tree shakes in the wind. The wind continues to blow harder.

CHIP: I see a tree!

MATEO: Good, good! Now focus on that tree and ground yourself. No matter how thick and suffocating the storm may be, it will never completely obscure what's below it. You can always find an anchor, even in the most chaotic times. Your humor is your anchor. Let it cut through the darkness and allow happiness to bubble up to us.

The intensity of the wind batters the outside of the colony, turning the Observatory into a safe place of sanctuary.

CHIP: I actually feel a bit better. Thank you, Brother.

MATEO: *Dōitashimashite.* (beat) It means you're welcome.

CHIP: Yeah, I figured.

MATEO: Cool.

END ACT

3.1: INT. COLONY HALLWAYS - DAY

Chip walks down the colony hallways, humming a little tune to himself. Jacki corners Chip in a small alcove.

CUE MUSIC: TOO MANY SECRETS

JACKI: Chip!

CHIP: Hey, I've been looking for you. I wanted to talk to you about Dirk and-

JACKI: How's the buggy doing? I want to get out on the next expedition as soon as possible. I'll brief you on the details later, but I wanted to know your status first.

CHIP: (taken aback) You wanna to go out? Can- I- W-We just left quarantine, Commander. We don't even know what's out there.

JACKI: Which is why I want to make a survey of the immediate area and see how much has changed from our original mapping of the surface. The terraformation has changed beyond our-

CHIP: He isn't even buried yet!

Someone around the corner pauses, then continues walking away from them.

JACKI: (hushed) Keep your voice down!

CHIP: Do you know what happened to him? Do you even care?

JACKI: Of course I care! That's why I want to be sure we know exactly what happened to him.

CHIP: You read the autopsy. He was electrocuted by the generator.

JACKI: I'm not convinced. The burns on his hands look like defensive wounds, and something hit him in the chest, hard. His sternum split right down the middle.

A few people walk further down the hall. Jacki looks to the side.

JACKI: (cont'd) ANDI, can we have a private conversation?

ANDI: You got it.

CHIP: Wait, he was listening?

JACKI: He's always listening unless someone from High Command authorizes a private conversation.

CHIP: That is so messed up!

JACKI: It's all covered in the training manual.

CHIP: Have you read that thing? It's like seven hundred pages!

JACKI: We were supposed to have orientation during the first week for a refresher, but we obviously haven't gotten around to it.

CHIP: And here you are obsessing over a new expedition.

JACKI: (through gritted teeth) I'm trying to tell you something, dammit!

CHIP: Okay, okay. What is it?

JACKI: I think Dirk was attacked.

CHIP: ANDI didn't detect any sentient life out there besides us.

JACKI: Right. Which is why he doesn't believe me. I thought it could be some sort of "other" presence.

CHIP: (skeptical) You mean aliens?

JACKI: Maybe. I felt it hit me.

CHIP: It?

JACKI: Yes.

CHIP: *It was probably debris.*

JACKI: It wasn't debris.

CHIP: There was a storm moving toward us.

JACKI: I know what fucking debris is! It wasn't debris and it wasn't anything I could see. Something punched me in the stomach!

Jacki stares down Chip for a tense moment.

JACKI: (cont'd) You doubt me, too.

CHIP: Yeah, I do. I've seen a lot of crazy stuff, most of it within the last few sols, but when I went inside that colony, I didn't see or feel anything or anyone.

JACKI: Maybe you're not remembering clearly.

CHIP: Yeah, I was probably distracted by dragging Dirk's corpse to the buggy.

JACKI: I'm sorry. I've got a lot on my mind.

CHIP: No shit. Maybe you should sleep on this.

JACKI: (exasperated) I can't sleep. Can you please go down to Med Bay and review the autopsy? Before I notify the militia, I want to be sure we know what happened.

CHIP: Major Flint's been looking for you, for that very reason.

JACKI: I know. (quick sigh) I can't keep this up much longer.

CHIP: Avoiding him, or lying to him?

JACKI: It's complicated, well-

CHIP: Yeah, but you see Jacki, it's not. Someone died, and now you're covering it up.

JACKI: I have my mission objectives and there are things I need to /do on this planet-

CHIP: /Fuck your mission, Commander! Fuck this whole mission! Look around you, and get this colony under control before someone gets a bad idea in their head.

JACKI: Is that a threat?

CHIP: Not from me. I signed up for this trip because I wanted to believe in something greater. All my life on Earth has been one hopeless situation after another, but when I got drafted for this mission, I figured everything must have led me to that moment. Even though it only took me five seconds of being on this rock to conclude that yes, life is still the same shitty set of coincidences as it was on Earth, it doesn't mean I'll stop following your orders. (sigh) Just don't expect me to keep my opinions to myself.

JACKI: You really think life is meaningless?

CHIP: I think life means whatever you want it to mean. And since the only guarantee in life is death, then whether I die here, on Earth, or somewhere in-between, I don't care.

Chip walks away.

JACKI: Where are you going?

Chip pauses.

CHIP: (sigh) Med Bay. Like I said, you're still the Commander. I'll let you know about the autopsy and the buggy ASAP.

Chip continues walking to the Garage.

JACKI: Thanks. I'll authorize your clearance.

3.2: INT. MED BAY - DAY

Chip walks up to the door.

CHIP: Chip Hedleston.

The door to the Med Bay opens. Chip walks inside. A heart monitor BEEPS rapidly across the room.

CHIP: Hello? Doctor? Anyone in here?

Chip runs across the room to Melissa's bed.

CHIP: Oh shit! ANDI! ANDI!!!

The beeping alarm grows louder. Melissa **coughs** and **gasps** for air. She struggles to speak.

CHIP: Where is he - how could-?

MELISSA: Chip...Chip...

Chip pulls back the curtain surrounding Melissa's bed.

CHIP: Lieutenant Walker, you're awake!

A second alarm BEEPS quickly.

MELISSA: Chip...me...

Melissa exhales.

CHIP: What do you need - I don't know what to do!

MELISSA: Chip...me...up.

CHIP: What? "Chip me up?"

MELISSA: Implant...

Her heart monitor flat lines with a steady TONE as the other alarm continues to BEEP.

CHIP: Oh you're a mech head! Sorry, I mean you're enhanced.

Chip opens a vial with a POP! He carefully injects it into her wrist.

CHIP: Come on...

Melissa **inhales** deeply. The secondary alarm stops and the heart monitor returns to a steady pulse. No longer rapid, it is almost soothing to have the consistent BEEP.

CHIP: What happened!?

MELISSA: Thank you...

CHIP: Where's the doctor? Who did this?

Melissa exhales again.

CHIP: Lieutenant! LIEUTENANT! Where is everyone?

The door opens and Jacki runs up to them.

JACKI: Oh my God! What the hell happened? Is she okay?

CHIP: I don't know. I just found her like this.

CHIP: Why didn't ANDI report a disturbance?

JACKI: I don't know. Even in lock-down he should still monitor anyone coming in and out of this room. (beat) Unless...Shit!

CHIP: What?

Jacki hits a button on the main terminal. The computer BEEPS an error warning.

JACKI: Jammed.

CHIP: How?

Jacki removes a small metal piece from underneath the computer panel with a THUNK.

JACKI: Someone used a spike! Chip, go find Keila. Get out of here. Ask ANDI to help locate her.

CHIP: You got it.

Chip runs out the door and into the hallway. The door closes behind him.

3.3: INT. COLONY HALLWAYS - DAY

CHIP: ANDI! Where's Keila?

ANDI: She's in the Med Bay-

CHIP: She's not!

ANDI: Hold on, I'm searching. (beat) She's turned off her receiver. I could start a visual scan-

CHIP: Do it!

The Med Bay door opens and Jacki runs up to Chip. The door closes behind her.

JACKI: I checked Melissa's log and someone swapped her meds for a sedative after jamming the system. In a colony where all the walls can see and hear everything, how could anyone get this close to killing someone? How could you let this happen ANDI?

ANDI: I didn't see anyone go in!

JACKI: Where's Keila?

ANDI: I don't know. I really can't find her, I-

CHIP: Where's Major Flint?

ANDI: His receiver is off, too.

CUE MUSIC: MAJOR FLINT HAS KEILA

The colony announcement system comes to Life. Major Flint's voice echoes around the hallway.

FLINT: (announcement) Attention, Commander O'Rania. We have a code seven in the Observatory. Please report here, immediately. Repeat: code seven.

JACKI: Fuck.

Jacki heads for the Observatory and Chip runs after her.

CHIP: What's a code seven?!

JACKI: Airlock failure. ANDI, what's going on up there?

ANDI: Something's wrong, I can only get temperature readings. However, I think it likely Keila is with him as the temperature matches when Ani Mateo and Chip were in there earlier.

JACKI: What were you doing in the Observatory, it's closed off! Did you lock it up after leaving?

CHIP: (sigh) No.

JACKI: Dammit, Chip!

CHIP: I thought it auto-locked!

JACKI: Nope! Ugh, how could you not know that?

CHIP: I'm just a mechanic! It's not like I built this damn colony from scratch!

ANDI: Chip, Jacki, please don't be-

JACKI: Not now, ANDI!

The door to the Science Wing CREAKS open as they run toward the ladder.

CHIP: ANDI, can you see anything up there?

ANDI: No, I -I think there's another jammer blocking my signals.

JACKI: Shit.

Chip and Jacki climb the ladder.

ANDI: I'm sorry. (beat) I have failed you.

Flint's voice filters down from the Observatory. He speaks through the comms of an E.V.A suit.

FLINT: Who's there?

Jacki and Chip halt on the ladder.

JACKI: It's me! Commander O'Rania.

FLINT: Come up here, but only you.

JACKI: Alright. (to Chip) Stay close.

CHIP: Sure.

Jacki climbs up the ladder.

CHIP: (to himself) I'll just keep awkwardly hanging onto this ladder...

Jacki climbs into the Observatory.

JACKI: Hard to tell with the E.V.A. suit on, but you're Major Flint, right? I don't believe we've officially met-

FLINT: Cut the pleasantries.

KEILA: Please! Help me!

FLINT: That's enough. Let's not do anything rash, now.

Keila tries to fight back sobs.

JACKI: I agree, let's take it slow for a minute. We don't want anyone to get hurt.

FLINT: You're hardly in a position to continue issuing orders, Jacki. Tell me what happened to P.F.C. Wiles.

JACKI: There was an accident at the other colony where Private Wiles was struck by falling debris. He's recovering in the Med Bay-

FLINT: I said cut the bullshit. He isn't doing anything, he's dead. I saw his body, and I don't have to be a doctor to know he's been dead for two days.

CHIP: (under breath) It's sols, dipshit.

JACKI: Can you put the scalpel down, first? This isn't like you.

FLINT: Isn't like me? You don't know anything about me.

JACKI: I know plenty about you, Major Flint. You and your wife coordinated the refugee exodus to this planet across four different colonies. Before that you served two tours of duty in Iraq, and once rescued two people from a hostage negotiation. Innocent people, Arnold.

FLINT: That's enough. You made your point.

JACKI: So what then?

FLINT: Tell me what really happened to Private Wiles. Lie to me again, and I blow the pressure hatch open and I let this storm tear the colony apart. Try anything else, and I slit this poor girl's throat.

JACKI: (still calm) Blowing the hatch would kill everyone, including yourself.

FLINT: Not while I'm wearing this.

JACKI: The suit could tear.

FLINT: (starting to break) I'm willing to take the risk. Besides, I'd rather be dead than taking orders from a deranged person.

Chip climbs up the rest of the ladder.

3.4: INT. OBSERVATORY - DAY

Chip climbs into the Observatory. Jacki stares at Major Flint, wearing an E.V.A. suit. He stands inside the threshold to the first door of the airlock. One arm holds the latch securing the outer door, while his other arm wraps around Keila's neck. He holds a scalpel up to her throat.

The storm rages outside, louder than earlier.

CHIP: Like you?

JACKI: Chip!

FLINT: I said no one else!

CHIP: Last I checked, you're not the commander. I take my orders from her.

FLINT: Has everyone on this planet gone crazy! Tell me what happened to Wiles or I blow the hatch!

KEILA: No! Please, I don't want to die!

FLINT: Shut up!

Chip moves toward Flint.

CHIP: Don't even think about it.

FLINT: Take another step toward me and I'll kill her.

Chip stops walking.

JACKI: (remaining calm) Alright, fine. You wanna know what happened out there? We were attacked by an unidentified force. Private Wiles did not die by accident, he was killed.

FLINT: (scoffs) Oh aliens killed one of my soldiers? I said no more lies.

JACKI: I'm not lying. And I didn't say aliens, I said an unknown force. We really don't know what it was, but it was someth-

FLINT: If your reign as commander involves lying to the militia, then it ends now. Resign, or I end it for all of you.

Flint TAPS his glove against the metal hatch.

JACKI: Major Flint, why would I be working against you and the militia? It's not like that.

FLINT: Then tell me, Jacki, what is it like? Because I walked in and saw your doctor trying to kill Lieutenant Walker!

KEILA: He's lying! Please, I-I-I-I didn't - I would never-

FLINT: But you did! You were overloading her implants during the lock-down!

KEILA: No-no-no-no-no! I-I-It was a mistake! I grabbed the wrong bag, and I was trying to reverse the flow, and when you came in-

FLINT: Enough!

Keila whimpers and coughs.

JACKI: Major Flint, she's in residency for Christ's sake! We're all under stress, we're all doing the best we can in the given the circumstances. If it wasn't for her quick response on landing, most of us would be dead. Mistakes happen.

FLINT: Not like this. She did it on purpose.

JACKI: Arnold, what do you want from me?

FLINT: Resign.

CHIP: You don't have the support for a mutiny.

The music intensifies as Flint fully unravels.

FLINT: Mutiny? No, I want an exodus, away from her. It's not far to our sister colony, just, let me go and see my wife.

JACKI: You know I can't allow that. It's too dangerous, I'm sorry.

FLINT: You should be sorry, Commander. Say goodbye /to everyone-
/ANDI: (Basics) System failure.

SLAM! A heavy metal door crushes Flint against the wall. His bones CRACK as he screams in pain. An alarm BLARES.

Keila shrieks in terror.

ANDI: System failure.

KEILA: THE DOOR!!! STOP IT!

CHIP: OH SHIT!

JACKI: ANDI NO!

ANDI: System failure.

JACKI: You're crushing him!

KEILA: Stop it! STOP!

CHIP: No, no, no, no!

ANDI: System failure.

The door continues to grind closed against Flint's mutilated body. Keila frees herself.

KEILA: (sobbing) NO! HELP! HELP! OH GOD! HIS EYES! HIS EYES!

ANDI: System failure.

CHIP: ANDI! Stop! Stop!

ANDI: (slightly satisfied) System failure.

JACKI: It's okay, Keila. Look away. Look at me. Look at me!

Jacki grabs Keila who sobs uncontrollably.

JACKI: Chip, shut him down.

CHIP: ANDI! ANDI! He won't respond, he's-

JACKI: Chip. Focus. Use the emergency override, put him into Basics.

As Chip moves to the terminal, ANDI's regular voice speaks from inside Chip's neural suit.

ANDI: (Dynamics) I'm sorry.

Chip flips a master switch and the alarm stops BLARING.

ANDI: (Basics) Basics: on.

CHIP: It's done.

Keila continues sobbing and coughing. Jacki holds her as she and Chip stare at Flint's body on the ground.

JACKI: Keila? Hey, hey! We're here, okay? I'm here, you're here, it's okay. It's okay. It's okay. It's okay. (almost breaking)
It's okay.

Keila's sobs slow down and quiet, as Jacki holds her. Blood DRIPS from Major Flint's body, PLINKING on the metal floors as the storm continues to rage outside.

EPILOGUE 1 (E.1): INT. HABITATION, CHIP'S ROOM - NIGHT

ANDI: (Basics) Charles Hedleston. /Engineering, Repairs Technician. Personal log-

CHIP: /Nope, nope, nope. This is weird.

ANDI: End personal log.

After a moment of silence, Chip's personal recorder comes to life. His voice filters in over a lower quality speaker.

CUE MUSIC: SADDEST WALTZ

CHIP: I'm going to try my personal transmitter, Archie...I hope you can hear this because...he's dead. Two people now, dead, in just as many sols. We lost Dirk Wiles on the first expedition. He was just a kid. I...I carried his body back. It was surreal, holding someone who's no longer here. Is that what it felt like, that time you had to carry me home?

Then today our colony A.I. killed someone. I didn't know he could do that. No, it. It! Not him, he's not a man or a woman, he's a computer. IT'S a computer! (beat) I just don't know what to think anymore, I can't sleep, I can't eat, I'm just...scared.. (sighs) Maybe I wasn't cut out for this.

The recording cuts to silence.

E.2: INT. OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

The recording cuts back in.

CHIP: I'm at the Observatory, where it happened. I wanted to get high up, so I can transmit this message to you and- (beat) What am I saying? We can't send anything out, I-I don't even know if anyone on Earth is still there!

The recording cuts to silence.

The recording cuts back in.

CHIP: The storm's passed. I'm almost at the top of the dome.

Chip looks out the skylight, finally seeing a break in the storm.

CHIP: (voice breaks) I can see the sky.

Chip powers the telescope on. ANDI's automated message plays, startling Chip.

ANDI: (Basics) Telescope: on.

CHIP: AHHH! Oh jeez, oh. Okay. You're okay, Chip. You're okay.

Chip exhales.

CHIP: I think I...I-I can see it! I can see Earth! Archie, I can see you! I can see Earth! (holding back tears) I miss you so much, brother. I...I want to come home. (sobbing) I want to come home, Archie. I want to come home...

Chip continues crying, alone in the Observatory.

END EPISODE