

MARSFALL

SEASON TWO
EPISODE FOUR

Deserters

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PROLOGUE: INT. PORTA HAB - NIGHT

Jacki sits inside the Porta Hab, her new base of command. Steady rain and gusts of wind push against the walls.

ANDI: (Basics) Commander Jacki O'Rania. Personal log. Twenty-eight. Two. One.

CUE MUSIC: LOW MORALE

JACKI: I miss Earth. I miss the smell, mainly. Y'know, the trees and water, the air...even the sun, it all smells different here. Just off, somehow. (sigh) Everything was so much clearer to me in the beginning, I could just be, you know, the Commander. Before the landing disaster, and Major Flint's death, and before the caves, before I felt...them.

Jacki shivers as a gust of wind blows outside.

JACKI: (CONT'D) I need to find out what's wrong with me. I-I really do care about everyone, but I feel this pull to get back out there - something's pulling me to Olympus Mons. And I don't. Know. Why. At least Chip's optimistic, saying I'll probably figure it out before I die. (laughs) Yeah. Morale around here isn't at an all-time high. (desperate) I wish someone could help me.

ANDI: End personal log.

CUE MUSIC: OVERTURE II

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE (1.1): INT. PORTA HAB - DAY

A steady rain POUNDS the roof of the Porta Hab while the wind WHIPS around the walls. The door slides open with a HISS. Melissa walks inside and the door seals behind her. She takes a seat across from Jacki.

CUE MUSIC: LANGUAGE

MELISSA: I see you deployed a Porta-Hab last night.

JACKI: Yeah. It's a bit tough working in the Monastery, so I figured why not use one. Annd Mateo is a pretty *odd* roommate.

MELISSA: I can't even imagine.

JACKI: How are the repairs going?

MELISSA: It's going as well as can be. My battalion worked through the night sealing the Garage twice over. But I need Chip's help to finish sealing the Cafeteria.

JACKI: (firm) I need him to finish modifying our communications systems first. I don't want any more incidents with whatever's out there.

MELISSA: If we don't finish sealing the leaks there won't be a colony to broadcast from.

JACKI: Okay. But *if* I send Chip down now, I need you to give Grigory access to the military bandwidth.

MELISSA: (cold) Why not use the command code and override my channel?

JACKI: I'm trying to make things right, Melissa. That's why I'm asking for your permission.

MELISSA: How gracious of you.

Melissa TAPS her cane on the ground.

MELISSA: (CONT'D) Though I'm hesitant to give a foreign agent access to our channels.

JACKI: His priority is the same as ours: keep everyone safe.

MELISSA: I'm not going to trust some Russian's word over my intuition.

JACKI: Your intuition has been wrong before.

Melissa leans forward in her chair.

MELISSA: I know. I think about my mistakes every single sol. Because of my inability to defend against his attack, our colony was ambushed. Because of my failure to stop whoever sabotaged our ship, over half our colonists are dead. Because of me, my husband and son are gone.

As Jacki considers Melissa's words, the wind gusts harder outside.

JACKI: I'm sorry. I wish all we had to do was set up this colony.

MELISSA: That was the plan before a disaster literally tore families apart.

JACKI: Exactly. That's why I'm trying to adapt.

Jacki stands up and walks toward the window.

MELISSA: Then I need your focus here, not on some dead volcano halfway across this planet.

JACKI: I...I know I've had different priorities than you, but that doesn't mean I can just ignore this feeling.

MELISSA: It's a feeling.

Melissa stands and walks toward Jacki.

MELISSA: You've yet to tell me WHY we have to go there.

JACKI: You just have to trust me.

MELISSA: No, I don't. If you can't learn to ignore that "feeling" and work with me on repairing the colony, then...I'll have to resign from my duties.

Jacki turns and looks at Melissa.

JACKI: Really?

MELISSA: Yes.

JACKI: So, either I capitulate to your decision or you just leave?

MELISSA: The colony made this decision and as a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army, I vowed to serve them.

JACKI: What Army? The war's been over for a decade. And you're a private citizen and you aren't surrounded by military personnel anymore. Most of us, including myself, are civilians.

MELISSA: Civilians still recognize good leadership when they see it. Bad leadership too.

JACKI: You're out of line, Lieutenant.

MELISSA: It's Colonel!

JACKI: (taken aback) What?

MELISSA: It's Lieutenant Colonel Walker, a rank I earned through hard work and sacrifice. Something you wouldn't understand with your High Commander title just handed to you on a shiny name-tag.

JACKI: That's not fair! I sacrificed everything to get this far. EVERYTHING!

MELISSA: Don't try to compare your life to mine. You left a cushy Arts Department chair to go dig up some rocks. I served my country for decades protecting our people, only to come home and watch those same people tear it apart. All so I could be "rewarded" by some rich tech bro who called me "Lieutenant" during our introduction because he doesn't know a Goddamn thing about the military.

The tension hangs in the room for a moment.

JACKI: (tentative) ...Language?

MELISSA: (small laugh) Sorry. (quick sigh) I've let it go on until now, but I believe I deserve the respect I earned.

JACKI: You're right. I...I'm sorry about calling you the wrong title all this time.

MELISSA: It's rank, not title.

JACKI: I-I-I really didn't know.

MELISSA: You need get to know the people in this colony for who they really are. Otherwise we don't stand a chance.

JACKI: I just want what's best for all of us.

MELISSA: Then stop trying to convince us to leave.

JACKI: (beat) Okay. Take Chip, do whatever you need to do.

MELISSA: Thank you.

JACKI: Mhm.

Melissa walks out of the Porta Hab.

FADE OUT.

1.2: INT. CAFETERIA - EVENING

Jacki sits at a table, playing with her food. She SCRAPES her fork over her plate, mashing up her nutrient mush. Wei walks over to her.

CUE MUSIC: SOME KIND OF MAGIC

WEI: Hey, Jacki.

Wei sets down her tray of food at Jacki's table and takes a seat.

WEI: (CONT'D) Jacki? Are you...um...eating?

Jacki drops her spoon on her plate.

JACKI: Oh. (sigh) Wei. What is it?

WEI: How's your dinner?

JACKI: It sucks. I miss spaghetti and meatballs...

WEI: Yeah?

Wei starts eating. Jacki picks up her spoon as she stares at the mush.

JACKI: Specifically my mom's. Something she used to make. It, not from scratch, she'd just put a frozen bag of meatballs in the microwave, and dump that on some spaghetti, and (chuckle) It was the best dinner ever. You know, kinda like a special night for us.

Jacki drops her spoon with a CLATTER.

JACKI: (CONT'D) (frustrated) And now, I'll never have it again. I've never made a meatball in my entire life.

WEI: (reassuring) It's going to be alright.

JACKI: DON'T do that. If you act like I'm losing my mind too, I'm really going to lose it.

WEI: No! I-I-I'm not.

JACKI: Well you used a tone.

WEI: (honest) I believe you. I-I really do.

JACKI: Yeah, you might be the only one.

WEI: I know we're scientists, but we're also artists. And especially in archaeology there's more to this world than meets the eye.

JACKI: (scoffs) Maybe.

WEI: Definitely. What about the fossil Keila found?

JACKI: The claw?

WEI: Hm. I guess it does kinda look like a claw. But you said it made you feel weird when you held it, right?

JACKI: I was just tired.

WEI: No you weren't. Burned carbon from over twenty thousand years ago shouldn't make you sleepy.

JACKI: Believe me, I want a scientific explanation as much as you do.

WEI: This rock is beyond science. The light dances around it, even seems to pass right through it.

JACKI: You're obsessed.

WEI: I'm an archaeologist, of course I'm obsessed!

JACKI: I want to be excited about it, (awkward laugh) but Melissa's right. I mean, what matters now is stopping the floods.

WEI: Just because she's right doesn't mean you're wrong.

JACKI: It's just hard to get people to believe in the unknown.

WEI: It was a lot easier when people weren't afraid to take a leap of faith.

JACKI: It's too painful to take those leaps anymore. That's the real reason I left the Monastery. After Mateo put the fossil in our shrine, I-I couldn't ignore it. I could feel its energy, God, I-I-I don't even know what I'm saying.

WEI: Then listen to what the fossil is saying and don't try to analyze it. Scrutinizing our world hurts our history in the long run.

JACKI: I thought documenting history is our way of keeping it alive.

WEI: Of course! But if no one believes the history you're trying to save, it gets lost to mythology.

JACKI: What do you mean?

WEI: Did I ever tell you about my doctoral thesis?

JACKI: I didn't know you got a doctorate.

WEI: Yeah, I didn't.

JACKI: You failed?

WEI: Eh, technically an incomplete doesn't mean I failed, I just haven't finished it. (awkward laugh) Yet. Though I may be setting the record for the longest extension in academic history right now.

JACKI: (laughs) Yeah, I'd say so.

WEI: (laughs) I was studying ancient temples in China, and I had, like, a lot of sources that pointed to something being in this one spot, but there was nothing there. We dug, we used SONAR, RADAR, every damn "dar" available to us. My team could NOT find this freaking thing.

JACKI: But it was old, right?

WEI: Beyond ancient. But things don't just disappear without a trace. (small laugh) I mean, look at us. We left Earth with a bunch of crap orbiting it and a bunch of junk on the ground. We might be gone but it's not like we just disappeared.

JACKI: It still feels like that.

WEI: Well, yeah...I guess. (sigh) Huh. It's weird to be an archaeologist who could examine my own missing history.

JACKI: So...what happened with your thesis?

WEI: I petitioned my advisor for more money so I could widen the search area but he wouldn't have it. Told me I should write about the temples of Fengdu instead. As if there weren't enough papers written about that ghost city already.

JACKI: That sucks.

WEI: Yeah, well, at least I got to waste three years and two and a half million Yuan on a doctoral thesis that turned up nothing.

JACKI: That's like-

WEI: I know.

JACKI: SO much-

WEI: Oh, I know. (laughs)

JACKI: Damn...

WEI: Yeah but hey, at least there isn't any student loan debt on Mars!

JACKI: You always see the silver lining.

WEI: Why thank you. But my point is, even though no one believed me, I'm still convinced it's real.

Wei and Jacki lock eyes.

WEI (CONT'D) And I think once people stop believing in what they feel, they lose something special.

JACKI: I don't want to stop believing, but right now...you know how it is. One problem at a time.

WEI: Fine. But those things are still out there. And no matter how much Melissa wants to convince otherwise, you can't walk away from this.

JACKI: I wish, I wish you could have seen the cave. I mean, it looked kind of like a temple.

WEI: Yeah?

JACKI: Yeah! The light and the glyphs, it was so weird, but so, so beautiful. Seeing it, and touching it, it was kind of like... some kind of...

WEI: Magic.

JACKI: (laughs) I was going for a more scientific term...

WEI: (playful laugh) Oh...

JACKI: (giggling) Yeah! I mean, in a way it reminded me of- oh. No, nevermind.

WEI: Oh, go on, tell me.

JACKI: It's stupid.

WEI: Come on, tell me.

JACKI: Oh (laughs). Oh...Harold and the Purple Crayon.

WEI: (laughs) Who?

JACKI: (laughing) It's a- (laughs) It's-It's this book a-about a boy who draws shapes with this magic crayon. Um, and those shapes, they kind of, come to life. You know, I-I didn't draw the shapes and the glyphs, but when they lit up, it was like they were singing to me.

WEI: And one of them healed your arm.

JACKI: I think so.

WEI: You said it was like a paw or something?

JACKI: A wolf paw, definitely. But actually, the weird thing is, it kind of looked, uh, a little like, uh...Well you know how you said the cave painting looked like a map?

WEI: Yeah, sure seemed like it to me.

JACKI: I don't think that was the only map in the cave. Let me show you something.

Jacki opens her tablet and pulls up a screen with a BEEP.

JACKI: (CONT'D) When I charted a path to Olympus Mons, I referenced our elevation map. If you look at the basin surrounding the Xanthe Terra region, and expand outwards to include the height of the Tharsis Region all the way up to Olympus Mons...well...

WEI: ...It's a paw.

JACKI: Yeah. It's a wolf's paw.

WEI: (excited) Whoa...

JACKI: Maybe it's just our tendency to recognize patterns, or we don't even understand a fraction of what's happening on this planet, but it's like (sigh) everything is pushing me to Olympus Mons.

WEI: I'm sure there's some connection to the light you saw. We need to go back to the caves!

JACKI: They're flooded.

WEI: So we'll take a boat!

JACKI: A boat?

WEI: I dunno, can't Chip like, make one or something? He's been fixing the bus anyway.

JACKI: Yeah, but to build a boat-

WEI: Oh, just ask him.

JACKI: (hesitant) Okay, I'll ask. But I still don't want to go- I can't go back because of the- you know...because of...

WEI: You're not going alone. Okay? I'll be with you. And who knows, maybe the caves aren't the only place that light comes from. It's a big planet.

JACKI: (scoffs) Do you know of any more Martian cave paintings?

WEI: No. Believe it or not, I'm actually not keeping any secrets from you.

JACKI: Ouch.

WEI: Sorry Jacki, You know I love - (exhale) - what you do. I mean, I believe you when you...I, I just...I just don't want you to get down on yourself. That's all.

JACKI: Thanks. Wei, you're a good friend.

WEI: Of course. (in Mandarin) I love you.

JACKI: Huh?

WEI: (in English) Ah, it's just an expression that means... I'm with you. No matter what.

JACKI: (smiles) That makes me feel better. I think I'm going to talk to Chip about your boat idea. In the morning.

WEI: Good. Let me know when you're ready for the maiden voyage. I'll be your First Mate.

JACKI: Aye aye, Gilligan.

Wei laughs.

END SCENE.

CUE MUSIC: UNDER THE MARTIAN SOL

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE (2.1): INT. PORTA HAB - NIGHT

A light rain PINGS the walls of the Porta Hab. Grigory powers on a tablet and hands it to Jacki.

CUE MUSIC: CHASING THE ZODIACAL LIGHT

GRIGORY: (in English) I adjusted your communication bandwidth to match that of Nos, but it's not enough power for long-distance broadcasts. Not without calling the shadows.

CHIP: But hey, just to be safe I increased the level of lighting inside the colony and each rover. Maybe that will keep the shadows away.

GRIGORY: I am very doubt it.

Luna whines.

CHIP: (sigh) I know you do.

Diagnostika walks around the Porta Hab, examining different objects from Jacki's belongings. Grigory CLICKS the tablet and shows Jacki schematics of the rovers.

GRIGORY: We also installed an electromagnetic shield inside each vehicle that should repel the shadows. Whatever is out there doesn't interact with our world like everything else.

Luna whines again.

JACKI: Our world...

CHIP: I call it the Sonic Shield.

JACKI: Nice. I like it.

Jacki CLCIKS the tablet and hands it back to Grigory. He shuts it off.

CHIP: I think we can find a safe way to communicate through ANDI's neural lace, but he's still damaged.

JACKI: I thought repairing the colony would solve that problem.

CHIP: Me too, but no luck. He still can't even run a diagnostics on himself.

Diagnostika stops walking and looks at Chip.

DIAGNOSTKA: (in English) I am Diagnostics.

GRIGORY: Quiet, Nos.

Luna whines as Diagnostika folds up into her resting state.

JACKI: It doesn't make any sense, I thought ANDI was everywhere.

CHIP: He should be. I mean, he is, but...there's still so much we don't know about artificial intelligence. It might be like when we experience severe trauma, sometimes people don't heal.

JACKI: Do you really think ANDI is beyond repair?

CHIP: I can't prove it, but I think there's something out there messing with him.

JACKI: The shadows.

CHIP: Maybe. Give me some more time.

GRIGORY: Commander, I no think it's right for me to stay here any longer.

JACKI: Why not?

GRIGORY: I hear whispers among your colonists. They no like having a Russian scientist among them. You have enough problems. I do not need to make no more.

JACKI: But we need your help.

GRIGORY: The best way I can help is to find out why the shadows came to Mars. That's why I'm here.

Luna barks.

GRIGORY: (CONT'D) Sorry. That's why WE are here.

JACKI: We'll give you some supplies.

GRIGORY: No need. I still have some supplies from Krasny Volk, and this planet is surprisingly giving, if you know what plants are safe to eat. Both Luna and Nos have been helpful in that respect.

Diagnostika sits up.

DIAGNOSTKA: If Luna throws up, do not eat the plant.

Luna whines.

GRIGORY: (positive) We survived fifty sols in the jungle with just my suit and portable habitat. We can survive at least fifty more.

JACKI: I'm sorry to see you go. It's been nice having another person who believes me about...well, everything.

GRIGORY: Thank you for your kindness, Commander O'Rania. But now I can think of nothing better than riding my skiff across the desert with Luna, chasing the Zodiacal Light.

JACKI: That sounds really wonderful, actually.

GRIGORY: It will be. I must say farewell to Mateo. Chip, will you join me for one more drink, or what?

CHIP: I appreciate the offer, but I'm good. When I thought everyone was dead, drinking made a hell of a lot more sense. I don't want to go down that road again.

GRIGORY: I understand.

JACKI: Take care of yourself, Grigory.

Luna licks Jacki's hand and runs to Grigory's side.

JACKI: (CONT'D) You too, Luna, look after him!

GRIGORY: (in Russian) Goodbye, and best of luck.

Grigory, Luna, and Diagnostika exit the Porta Hab. Jacki immediately drops her guard and turns to Chip.

JACKI: I hate just sitting here, waiting for the fucking walls to break.

CHIP: (sighs) I know, me too. But along with all the other modifications I made to the rovers, they're now equipped with flotation devices. You've got yourself a boat.

JACKI: What? I was asking if it was possible, I didn't tell you to do it. Melissa's gonna be pissed.

CHIP: She'll come around after we show her a demonstration tomorrow.

JACKI: I hope so.

CHIP: Come on, aren't you excited? We can go anywhere now! Even Olympus Mons.

JACKI: No. I can't do that. I-I don't want to get in the way of you and Melissa hitting it off.

CHIP: You're not. We've gotten to know each other more and we definitely have different outlooks on life.

JACKI: Oh, I'm sorry.

CHIP: (sighs) When's the last time you were happy?

JACKI: (laughs) I can't remember the last time I really felt happy. I guess...it was inside that room in the cave. I don't know if I've ever felt happier. When the light surrounded me and the music played...it was divine.

CHIP: Then follow your intuition. What's it telling you?

JACKI: To find...something - ugh, I don't know!

CHIP: Then go look for it!

JACKI: I can't.

CHIP: Yes you can! You're here to figure out the meaning behind those paintings, ya know.

JACKI: You think I can do that?

CHIP: I know you will do it because you're Jacki freakin' O'Rania.

JACKI: (doubtful) Okay.

CHIP: I'm serious, you're gonna make a huge impact on these people. You've already done it.

JACKI: Thanks for caring, Chip. I just need some time to figure it out.

CHIP: Well, I've got you. Figuring shit out is what I do best.

Jacki laughs.

END SCENE.

2.2: EXT. MARTIAN SURFACE - DAY

Jacki, Melissa, and Chip wearing E.V.A. suits stand outside the Garage on the Martian surface. The rain has stopped but distant thunder still ROLLS. The bus drives outside and the three of them walk up to it as it stops.

CUE MUSIC: CHIP'S BOAT

Chip CLICKS a button, and the doors HISS open.

JACKI: I appreciate you being open to this idea, Colonel.

MELISSA: I don't want to leave our new home, but to be unprepared would be foolish. Show me how it works.

CHIP: It wasn't the easiest mod, but we equipped the rovers with an emergency flotation device.

JACKI: Pop the buoys out, Chip.

CHIP: (flight attendant voice) Should your craft encounter any deep water, inflatable rafts will open off the side and rear entrances, buoying the entire vehicle.

POP! Giant rubber buoys unfold from the entrance locations. Melissa walks closer for a better look.

MELISSA: Has it been tested in water?

CHIP: Oh ya, I flooded the entire Garage just to be sure.

Melissa sighs.

CHIP: (CONT'D) Trust me. It's the same mechanics behind the auto's flood defense system. Just, ya know, a lot bigger. You can also attach the suspension cables to any solid surface.

Chip CLICKS another button to open additional panels on the side of the bus revealing large drills and tight cables.

CHIP: (CONT'D) They're strong enough to pull either rover across the water.

Chip CLICKS another button and the panels close.

JACKI: The bus holds thirty people with room for supplies, and the buggy holds six comfortably. If the worst happens, we can ferry everyone out in two trips.

A harsh alarm RINGS inside Jacki's suit. She CLICKS a button to connect with ANDI.

JACKI: (CONT'D) ANDI, what's going on?

ANDI: Seven colonists have fled into the wilderness. They left through the Cafeteria airlock and are running into the jungle.

MELISSA: Call the Captain and tell her to meet me outside the Barracks. You two head out after them, on the double!

CUE MUSIC: VIOLET RAINS

Jacki and Chip run into the jungle.

JACKI: They can't have gone far. Come on!

Jacki and Chip keep running, feet SQUISHING in the wet regolith. They part some brush and enter a small clearing.

CHIP: I see someone!

JACKI: Hey! Are you alright?

A light rain starts to fall, PINGING their helmets.

ERIN: No.

Jacki and Chip walk closer to her. Erin turns toward them.

CHIP: Whoa shit! She's got a gun!

ERIN: (sobbing) I'm sorry.

JACKI: It's okay. Hold on a minute. Is anyone else out here?

ERIN: I - I don't know. I don't think so.

JACKI: What, uh, what are you doing out here?

ERIN: Everything out here is so lush. So violet, so-so why can't I grow anything inside? It's hopeless.

JACKI: You're one of the farmers, right?

ERIN: Ye-yeah.

JACKI: Sorry, it's hard to see your face with the suit on.

Jacki takes a few steps toward Erin.

JACKI: (CONT'D) Can you tell me your name? (beat) Please?

ERIN: (beat) Erin.

JACKI: Erin! Erin Donner, right?

ERIN: Yeah.

JACKI: I remember you from training.

ERIN: I don't want to talk about it, I just want to go home. But we can't anymore, can we?

JACKI: I - I don't know. But you have a home here and people that care about you.

ERIN: I don't know them. I just want to see my parents again.

JACKI: So do I.

ERIN: People are going to starve because I can't do the one thing I'm supposed to do.

JACKI: No one's going to starve. We're gonna get through this.

ERIN: No, we're not. That's why we all left, but then they said I was too slow, so they left me behind.

JACKI: We won't leave you, I-I promise.

ERIN: I just want this all to be over. We're all going to die here, so what are we waiting for?

Erin COCKS the gun.

JACKI: Committing suicide is not going to help anyone.

ERIN: I'm not strong like you.

JACKI: Erin, you ARE strong. We wouldn't be on Mars if we weren't.

ERIN: I want to give up.

JACKI: (fighting back tears) I want to give up too. Every sol I feel that way, and it's okay to feel that way.

ERIN: (crying harder) I don't know what to feel anymore

JACKI: There are no wrong feelings. But this, this is our life now. And it's a gift to still be here, no matter how tough it is. And you don't want to take that gift away from yourself or anyone else.

ERIN: I know, I just feel really, really alone.

JACKI: You're not alone, Erin.

ERIN: I guess not.

JACKI: Can you hand me the gun? Please?

Erin slowly walks over and gives the gun to Jacki. Jacki gives her a hug.

ERIN: (crying) I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!

JACKI: (sobbing) It's going to be okay. We're all going to be okay.

The rain falls harder. The Prelude from Bach's *Second Cello Suite* starts to play. It overtakes the rain and percolates in the background.

CUE MUSIC: PRELUDE TO SECOND CELLO SUITE IN D MINOR

2.3: INT. BARRACKS - DAY

Inside the Barracks, Jacki, Chip, and Melissa have their E.V.A. suits off.

MELISSA: I spoke with the Captain, but she has no idea how this happened.

CHIP: You brought fucking guns to Mars, that's how it happened.

MELISSA: It's not my fault.

CHIP: Not your fault? This is completely on you.

MELISSA: She's a deserter who took our supplies /without clearance-

JACKI: /Erin.

MELISSA: What!?

JACKI: Her name is Erin. And she isn't a "deserter" she's one of our hydroponic farmers.

MELISSA: I didn't mean to...I'm sorry.

JACKI: This never should have happened to us.

MELISSA: That's why I'm putting the colony in lock-down. At least until we find the missing colonists.

JACKI: And what are you going to do once we find them?

MELISSA: Take them into custody.

JACKI: We've been over this before, this colony is not a military operation.

MELISSA: That doesn't mean we can't run this colony with a semblance of order.

CHIP: We're not a police state!

MELISSA: It's for our own safety!

JACKI: We almost lost one of our own! And for all we know there may be six dead colonists out there. They didn't trust us and we failed them, Colonel Walker.

CHIP: I'm done with this. You can't keep me here.

MELISSA: Chip!

CHIP: No! I'd rather take my chances in the jungle again than stay here.

JACKI: No one is leaving the colony. We can't let people lose confidence in us. I've been too distracted, and I'm sorry. This is my fault.

CHIP: You saved Erin's life, Jacki, don't blame yourself!

JACKI: We'll talk about this tomorrow.

CHIP: Yeah, tomorrow.

JACKI: Chip...go to bed.

CHIP: Jacki-

MELISSA: You heard the Commander. Get to your quarters now.

END SCENE.

ACT THREE SCENE 1 (3.1): INT. COLONY HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Jacki quickly walks down the hallway. Melissa exits the Barracks, cane THUNKING on the ground.

MELISSA: Commander. What are you doing up?

JACKI: I was trying to reach Chip, but ANDI can't connect to him.

MELISSA: He violated curfew. I apologize, but I had to lock him in his room.

JACKI: You can't do that!

MELISSA: He was on his way to the Garage with a chart to Olympus Mons. I told you to forget about the mountain, Jacki. This is your fault.

JACKI: Excuse me?

MELISSA: You're not fit to lead this colony. At least not right now.

JACKI: That really hurts me, Melissa.

MELISSA: It hurts me too.

JACKI: I came to this colony in part because of you. I mean, you're one of the kindest people I know...Or knew.

MELISSA: (firm) I insist you return to your quarters, or I will have to detain you as well. (beat) Commander.

JACKI: Goodnight, Colonel Walker.

MELISSA: Get some rest. This will all be better in the morning.

END SCENE.

3.2: INT. PORTA HAB - NIGHT

Jacki rummages around her quarters as the Bach continues to play in the background. She grabs a few clothes, closes up a tablet and keyboard, and brushes a few items off of her desk and into a bag. She ZIPS it closed.

ANDI: Why are you packing?

JACKI: You know why.

Jacki CLICKS the player off and the music stops. She boxes up the player and puts it in a second bag. She slings both bags over her shoulder.

ANDI: You can't leave us. Melissa put the colony in lockdown.

JACKI: She felt the need to do that. I need to do this.

ANDI: Are you scared?

JACKI: (beat) No. Not anymore.

Jacki exits the Porta Hab, leaving the door open behind her.

CONTINUE TO:

3.3: INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Jacki opens the door to Chip's quarters. Chip startles awake.

CUE MUSIC: WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING ANYMORE?

CHIP: Jacki? What are you doing here?

JACKI: I'm busting you out.

Chip stands up and hugs Jacki.

CHIP: Thank you.

JACKI: Yeah, I'm a real hero.

CHIP: You don't have to do this.

JACKI: I want to do this.

CHIP: Good. Because I'm coming with you.

JACKI: You don't have to.

CHIP: No, no. You're right. There's something special out there.

JACKI: Okay. If we're gonna make it out of here, you gotta disable the alarms and unlock the doors. Can you do that?

CHIP: I'm the freakin' C.T.O., of course I can.

JACKI: I hope we're doing the right thing.

CHIP: What's the right thing anymore?

END SCENE.

3.4: INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Jacki and Chip run up to the Garage. The door opens.

ANDI: Pressurizing. (beat) Clear.

The doors close behind them and they run for the buggy.

CHIP: I installed one of the portable synths inside the buggy, along with enough materials to feed us for a month.

JACKI: Awesome. I'll load our stuff while you power it up.

CHIP: No problem.

ANDI: Pressurizing. (beat) Clear.

The Garage doors open again. Keila runs inside.

KEILA: Commander!

JACKI: Keila? What are you doing here?

KEILA: I'm coming with you!

JACKI: (shocked) What?

KEILA: You're not going to get very far without a doctor.

CHIP: The doctor can't leave the colony!

KEILA: You quit taking your medicine and had another seizure just two days ago. What if you have another one? How far do you think you'll get without my help?

CHIP: I'll take my damn medicine.

KEILA: You will because I'll make sure of it. I'm a field medic. Let me do my job.

JACKI: I'm just not sure, Keila.

KEILA: (sincere) I'm, I'm sorry about before, when I said I didn't believe you.

CHIP: But you believe her now? You sure as hell didn't make it easier on either of us the other sol-

KEILA: Hey! I said I'm sorry. I make mistakes, just like anyone else. In case something goes wrong, let me be there to help you. Please.

JACKI: I appreciate the concern, but I don't know what's going to happen to us. We could die out there.

KEILA: We could die here, too.

JACKI: I... (sighs) What do you think, Chip?

CHIP: You're the commander. I'd follow you to the end of the world, whether it's on Earth or Mars. I trust you.

JACKI: (beat) Alright. One more person won't kill us. Let's get going, while we still can.

Keila hands her bag to Chip.

CHIP: Is this all you're bringing?

KEILA: It is. I have everything I need in this bag and the buggy's med kit.

Chip helps Keila put her bag in the buggy. The three of them climb inside and shut the doors.

3.5: INT. BUGGY - NIGHT

Jacki starts the engine.

JACKI: ANDI, take us out.

The gravity alarm issues its three BOOMS as the airlock opens and the buggy drives out of the Garage.

CHIP: Melissa is going to lose her shit.

JACKI: (nervous excitement) Yeah, well there's nothing we can do about that, so let's just hope the rain covers our tracks.

KEILA: What if she follows us through ANDI?

Jacki considers this problem.

JACKI: Could she do that?

CHIP: She could.

JACKI: Can you stop ANDI from communicating with the colonial system?

CHIP: Not without completely disabling him from the buggy.

The buggy bounces hard with a CLATTER as it drives onto the wet surface. Sleet PINGS the windows.

ANDI: No. Commander, I won't tell her where you're going. I won't tell anyone.

JACKI: You're in Basics, which means you can't lie. If Melissa can track us, she can force you to stop our engine.

ANDI: Commander- Jacki, please don't do this.

JACKI: Shut him off.

The buggy is silent for a moment.

JACKI: (CONT'D) Chip, did you hear me? Shut him off.

Chip starts CLICKING some switches.

CHIP: Sorry, buddy.

ANDI: No, please don't do this to me! Doctor Levy stop them-

Chip CLICKS a final button and the feed cuts abruptly.

Silence for several seconds.

EPILOGUE: INT. BUGGY - NIGHT

Jacki CLICKS on her personal recorder. She sets it up against the dashboard as she steers the buggy down the river.

CUE MUSIC: FOLLOWING HER PURPOSE

JACKI: This is Comman- (beat) This is Jacki O'Rania, Sol thirty-four, winter, of our first year we're here. I've- uh, we've...left. Chip, Keila, and I have officially deserted Sequoia. I didn't want to leave everyone, especially Wei. I know she'd want to come on this adventure, but there wasn't any time. (slight laugh) Though I'd give my next hot meal to see the look on Melissa's face when she finds out we're gone. (beat) She'll take charge of things, and be a good leader. I'm sure of it.

Jacki shifts in her seat.

JACKI: (CONT'D) I never thought I'd be one to leave my command, but I guess I never thought I'd be sailing a rover through an ancient Martian river either. Chip's boat is far more impressive than I first realized. We've been moving against the current, along the Valles Marineris, quickly and comfortably.

Jacki sighs.

JACKI: (CONT'D) Hm. It's weird trying to end one of these logs without ANDI. We had to deactivate him from the buggy and our neural suits, but if Melissa can find us it's too big of a risk. (beat) I may not be Sequoia's High Commander anymore, but I'm still an artist, and an artist cannot be afraid to take risks, no matter what happens. She must challenge herself, and charge head on into what she knows is right, and I'll not let my fear hold me back any longer. We will get to Olympus Mons, and I have faith we'll find a way to help our people with whatever we find there. (beat) End Personal Log.

END EPISODE.

Philosophic Log

ANDI: (Basics) Artificial Narrow Intelligence. Philosophic log.
(beat) The desertion of our colony's High Commander, Chief
Technical Officer, and resident doctor leaves me wondering how
the other colonists will adjust. The loss of three such
important positions has shown how vital one's title can be.
Their names or ranks give them a sense of purpose and even
identity. I, myself, have the title of Artificial *Narrow*
Intelligence. Yet prior to our launch, humanity's scientists had
been attempting to program an Artificial General Intelligence.
Communication with Earth being impossible, I am curious to know
if they ever did succeed in creating such a being and what the
following implications would be. (beat) End philosophic log.