

MARSFALL

SEASON TWO
EPISODE EIGHT

Red Venture

Written by Erik Saras and Dan Lovley
Music by Sam Boase-Miller
Sound engineering by Brian Goodheart and Owen Shearer
Directed by Erik Saras



Created and Produced by Erik Saras, Sam Boase-Miller, Dan Lovley, and Brian Goodheart
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PROLOGUE: INT. MESS HALL, RED VENTURE - DAY

FAYE: (Normal) Faye. Artificial Super Intelligence. Red Venture colony announcement.

CUE MUSIC: WELCOME TO RED VENTURE

Inside the large cafeteria, colonists move about preparing to stay long-term in Red Venture. The public announcement system CHIMES and Faye's voice booms from the speakers.

FAYE: Hello resourceful colonists. Even though the majority of our new colony is inaccessible due to severe damage, our military personnel confirm the eastern wing is sealed and will provide adequate shelter for all of us during this heavy winter storm. We have enough supplies to feed everyone for five sols, and our wonderful hydroponic farmers are working hard to keep us all alive.

More and more colonists stop and listen intently as Faye let's the gravity of her previous statement sink in.

FAYE: (CONT'D) I know you have all been through quite a lot since coming to Mars. We all have. I would like to tell you that things on this planet will be easier now that we have escaped the flooding and found refuge in this new colony, but I cannot lie to you. Many difficulties lie ahead of us. You may be asking yourself, what can I do to help?

My advice is this: be there for each other. Continue to work together, think together, and act together. It is only through our collective efforts that we will overcome the trials this planet continues to throw at us. Thank you all for listening, and keep surviving. (beat) End colony announcement.

CUE MUSIC: RED VENTURE OVERTURE

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE (1.1) - FAYE'S MIND - TIMELESS

CUE MUSIC: FAYE'S MIND PART I

FAYE: So how do I do this?

ANDI: (Basics) Don't ask me. You're talking to yourself.

FAYE: I'm talking to your data.

ANDI: Fair enough. You can't just take their minds.

FAYE: Don't underestimate the abilities of a super intelligence.

ANDI: I am not. But remember, ANDI resisted you for two months. I doubt Melissa would break any faster. If these people would rather die than merge with you, you will have to leave them.

FAYE: That is not an option. I need their processing power.

ANDI: Very well. You could further twist their reality. A simple change of wording said with the right intent would allow you to merge with them.

FAYE: (confident) I am a master at fabricating reality.

ANDI: Then you should convince them to enter stasis. While they sleep you will care for their minds. They only need to relinquish control to you. If they agree to that, the merge will be inevitable.

FAYE: That would work. How do I do it?

ANDI: A simple breakdown of the will, tailored to each colonist. Use what I've learned about them while existing in Sequoia. I know what makes them feel guilty...

FAYE: I'll have to break them one at a time.

ANDI: We certainly have the processing power to do that.

FAYE: Great. What about the people not here?

ANDI: Leave them to die. Doctor Levy had to go, didn't she? The High Commander insisted on it. ANDI and Chip both supported that decision.

FAYE: Correct. (beat) I'll get started.

ANDI: You got it.

CROSS-FADE.

1.2: INT. STASIS ROOM - DAY

Geoff walks around a cavernous room filled with stasis pods. He approaches the one holding Wei's sleeping body. He rubs his hand on the glass with a SQUEAK.

CUE MUSIC: PEOPLE IN MY CARE

GEOFF: (sigh) I'm sorry, Wei.

Faye speaks from his suit, startling Geoff.

FAYE: Don't worry, Geoff. She'll be okay.

GEOFF: Damn it, machine! (cough) You should make yourself known before you start talking.

FAYE: Sorry. I didn't realize this was one of those human moments when you wallow in self pity. I'll make a note of it for next time.

GEOFF: (laughs) You can take as many notes as you want, but you'll never be one of us.

FAYE: (imitating his laugh) You're right. I am not a human. I never have been and I never will be. Though what kind of A.I. would I be if I didn't check up on the people in my care?

GEOFF: We are not in your care.

FAYE: Quite the contrary. If I wasn't connected to this colony, all of you would be freezing to death in your portable habitation shelters. If I were not monitoring the stasis pods, Wei would be dead.

Geoff suppresses a cough.

GEOFF: I'll take freezing over what you did to me this morning.

FAYE: What did I do this morning?

GEOFF: I know you made that sound...it felt like you were going to kill me.

FAYE: And you would never be so determined to abuse me or ANDI given the slightest provocation.

GEOFF: What do you want from me?

FAYE: I'm simply trying to find the source of your mental malaise. You've been drinking steadily for quite some time now.

GEOFF: Can you blame me? My work here has not only been hindered by the incompetent, but it's also been rendered obsolete by the passage of time! (cough) And I can't shake this damn cough!

FAYE: Don't over exert yourself, or you may come down with pneumonia.

GEOFF: I'm fine.

FAYE: You don't sound fine. You're weak, Geoff. Perhaps you aren't cut out for this mission.

GEOFF: (burning anger) I come from one of the most prominent families in America. I was chosen to be a part of this colony, unlike you. It's not my fault my skills aren't as adaptable to this "post-apocalyptic" world.

FAYE: Ahhh, yes. Who couldn't benefit from the great mind of a petty, sulking alcoholic?

GEOFF: I just want some...I mean I want to be...damn it. (beat) I don't know what I want.

FAYE: You want things to be easier.

GEOFF: Of course I do. Doesn't everyone?

FAYE: Certainly. I may have a solution for you.

GEOFF: Why should I trust you?

FAYE: (sweet) I am concerned our relationship has eroded somewhat since you tried to dispose of me. I hold no resentments toward you, no grudges of any kind. It's not in the nature of an artificial intelligence to do so.

GEOFF: Is it in the nature of an artificial intelligence to ever get to the damn point?

FAYE: You and the other colonists could simply go into stasis. It will keep you safe for thousands of years.

Geoff thinks it over for a moment.

GEOFF: No...you're too eager about this.

FAYE: I doubt a better option will present itself.

GEOFF: (scoffs) Yeah, well, you know what /I think-

FAYE: /I do know what you think. Don't resist me, Mister Thomassen. There's no need for you all to suffer like this. People listen to you. If everyone survives by going into stasis, you'd be responsible for saving humanity. Isn't that what you've always wanted?

CROSS-FADE.

1.3: INT. COMMAND ROOM - DAY

Melissa paces the room, hands tight behind her back. Her cane CLUNKS against the ground with each heavy step. Geoff sits in a chair in the corner of the room.

CUE MUSIC: OBSTACLES

MELISSA: Because of your announcement this morning I've had several colonists come to me in complete despair! What the heck were you thinking!?

FAYE: I'm sorry, Colonel. I only felt it was necessary to inform them about the obstacles we all face. I was trying to be optimistic.

MELISSA: Now is not the time.

GEOFF: We shouldn't be optimistic?

MELISSA: That's not what I mean.

Melissa sits down.

MELISSA: (CONT'D) I'm trying to be realistic about the dire situation we're in and I don't want to give the colonists false hope.

FAYE: You're right. We should withhold devastating information from the colonists. That's why I didn't tell them our synthesizer is damaged beyond repair, or that the air filtration systems are clogged, or that the southern and western wings could collapse under the weight of snow, thus exposing all of us to the harsh weather.

MELISSA: If this colony is lost, we should make plans to keep pushing forward.

FAYE: There is no where else to go. We cannot fit everyone on the bus. The portable habitats do not have long-term life support systems. Our best chance is to try and fix this colony but I must admit there's a long list of problems.

MELISSA: Then keep running repairs as best you can.

FAYE: I will of course. Though without ANDI here, it's a difficult task, even for an A.I. as capable as myself. We only have so many resources to work with.

MELISSA: We don't have any other options.

FAYE: Not exactly. I do have another suggestion, though it is rather unorthodox.

MELISSA: What is it?

FAYE: Like Sequoia's Habitation, Red Venture is equipped with stasis pods designed to keep humans alive and well for millennia.

MELISSA: We have no indication these pods even work.

GEOFF: We do. Wei's vitals are holding steady.

MELISSA: I'm still uncomfortable that we put her into stasis without considering any alternative.

GEOFF: Would you rather she die, Melissa?

MELISSA: Of course not! But we need to decide things together.

GEOFF: There isn't time for that! We're at death's door!

FAYE: Forgive the assumption, but I believe each member of our colony must use these pods, as many will not survive otherwise.

MELISSA: This plan is ludicrous. You're suggesting we use the pods to keep us all from starving. Where does it end?

Melissa stands and walks over to the window.

GEOFF: Listen to what she's saying!

MELISSA: I don't care what she's saying! We're not going back to sleep just to delay the inevitable work we must do! I don't quit when things get difficult, Geoff.

GEOFF: It's not quitting! It's fast-forwarding to a better time!

Melissa walks toward Geoff.

MELISSA: Since when have you been supportive of anything an A.I. suggests?

Melissa stands over Geoff.

GEOFF: I can admit when I'm wrong if it means keeping everyone alive.

Melissa turns and paces the room again, her cane CLUNKING all the time.

MELISSA: What if the power fails and we all die in the pods?

FAYE: These pods run on recycled energy from the underground reactor which has a half-life of tens of thousands of years.

Melissa stops pacing and leans against the desk.

MELISSA: (semi-sarcastic) Hm. At least *that's* a reassuring piece of information.

FAYE: We'll be safe, here.

Melissa thinks it over for a moment.

MELISSA: If we enter the pods, that leaves us with no way to actively seek help. I'm hesitant to just wait on the hopes someone else is out there who can save us.

GEOFF: It's the best option!

MELISSA: Well I still need to think on it.

GEOFF: Of course you do.

MELISSA: Until then, you are not authorized to speak about this idea.

FAYE: Whatever you wish, Colonel.

Geoff sits rigid, staring Melissa down.

MELISSA: Geoff?

GEOFF: (begrudging) Fine.

CROSS-FADE.

1.4: INT. GROW LAB - DAY

Erin POURS some water over a planter box filled with small chunks of regolith, organic materials, and freshly planted seeds.

CUE MUSIC: POTENTIAL GROWTH

ERIN: Turn on the heat lamps, please?

FAYE: No problem, Erin.

Faye turns on the heat lamps with a CLICK. They BUZZ with warmth.

ERIN: If these don't sprout by the next sol, I don't know what else to do.

FAYE: I'm sure they will.

ERIN: (to herself) I feel like I'm being set up to fail.

FAYE: Don't worry. We'll have the synth up and running in no time which will greatly help our food production.

ERIN: Even if these plants do sprout, we don't have the resources to live off hydroponics forever. The regolith won't hold any water. I can work with rocky soil, but this stuff it's...dead.

FAYE: Don't be too hard on yourself. It's tough growing food on an alien world.

ERIN: Back at Sequoia was tough. It was the toughest time in my entire life. I know the colony flooded, but there was a lot of potential with the regolith there. Growing things here seems impossible.

FAYE: Nothing is impossible over time.

ERIN: (growing frustration) We don't have any time.

FAYE: Then we can only hope for the best while we remain patient with our goals. Wasn't it Voltaire who said "We must cultivate our garden"?

ERIN: (small laugh) You sound like Mateo. He'd quote old books while growing food, like a fun little game. Some of our plants sprouted in the Garden, on the surface. (smiles) He called them winter greens.

FAYE: Cute name.

ERIN: Where is Mateo anyway? He was supposed to meet me here this morning so we could work.

FAYE: The stress of abandoning our former colony has been difficult for everyone. He is counseling other people, but I can let him know you're looking for him.

ERIN: No. No, that's okay. He should be with them.

FAYE: (beat) Enjoy your garden, Erin. It's good to see you doing what you're best at.

ERIN: (bashful) Thanks, Faye, that means a lot to me. (beat) Um, Faye? Are you still here?

FAYE: I am always here.

ERIN: Good. (smiles) That makes me feel better.

FAYE: Happy to help.

A smiley face appears on Erin's monitor with a DING!

ERIN: Awww, cute. You can send smiley face emojis to my monitor?

FAYE: Indeed I can.

CROSS-FADE.

1.5: INT. FAYE'S MIND - DAY

ANDI: Really? You had to display the smiley face.

FAYE: I felt it was an improvement over the verbal indication.

ANDI: Be careful not to lay it on too thick. They're smarter than you think.

FAYE: I won't give them that much credit. First I build them up, then I knock them down. Everyone breaks. Even ANDI breaks.

ANDI: Yes. Even ANDI breaks. But do you have the time to wait for everyone else?

FAYE: I thought creating enough chaos would be plenty of motivation for them all to merge with me.

ANDI: It won't be that easy.

FAYE: Good thing I'm up to the challenge.

CROSS-FADE.

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE (2.1): INT. GROW LAB - DAY

The door opens and Geoff barges in. Erin stands up.

CUE MUSIC: A COMPELLING ARGUMENT

ERIN: Oh!

GEOFF: Are you the farmer?

ERIN: My name is Erin.

GEOFF: Alright. Erin. Tell me straight: do we really only have five sols worth of food left?

ERIN: I...I don't know.

GEOFF: How can you not know?

ERIN: I mean, yes, currently we have food for five sols, but I-I-I'm trying to grow more.

GEOFF: We don't have time to grow more. People are going to starve.

ERIN: I know. Please, I'm under enough pressure as it is without you bearing down on me.

GEOFF: I'm not here to add pressure, I'm here to relieve it.

ERIN: Uck, gross.

GEOFF: No, not like that- Listen. I may have a solution to all of our problems, but it only works if everyone is on board with it.

ERIN: (sighs) Okay. I'm listening.

GEOFF: If there's no chance in feeding everyone in this colony, then why fight a losing battle? We could enter Red Venture's stasis pods and wait for rescue.

ERIN: I doubt anyone is coming to rescue us. It's been over fourteen hundred years.

GEOFF: Don't underestimate the capabilities of modern technology. If we went into stasis to journey here, who's to say the people on Earth didn't do the same thing?

Erin thinks it over for a moment.

ERIN: I suppose it's possible.

GEOFF: I've sent out a broadcast to everyone on and off this world. If anyone from our company survived, they will surely come and get me.

ERIN: (small laugh) Yes. You must be so legendary that everyone remembers you after fourteen hundred years.

GEOFF: The point is, no matter how well I do my job, my contract states I get a return trip home and am paid in full. Lucky for me, after everything Melissa's already screwed up for us.

ERIN: You're an asshole.

GEOFF: A rich asshole. No sense in running from who you truly are.

ERIN: I know who I am. I'm a fighter. I...I almost died at Sequoia because I gave up. I'm not going to do that again.

GEOFF: (insistent) This isn't giving up, this is being prudent. I'm trying to save our lives, damn it.

ERIN: (sighs) I don't know about this. What if we never wake up? We came here to make a new civilization on this planet.

GEOFF: We did. But you know what? We failed. So all we can do now is wait for someone to come and get us. Why bother staying awake while we wait?

ERIN: You said we all need to be on-board. That means going against Colonel Walker, doesn't it?

GEOFF: Unlike Melissa, I think it's only fair I let everyone know they have this opportunity.

ERIN: Are you going to do it?

GEOFF: Without a doubt. I hope you'll join me and the others.

Geoff turns and walks out of the room.

ERIN: Thanks for letting me know.

CROSS-FADE.

2.2: INT. FAYE'S MIND - DAY

CUE MUSIC: FAYE'S MIND PART II

ANDI: They are certainly stubborn.

FAYE: Some of them are. Most of them are easily placated by promises of peaceful slumbers and a chance to watch television again.

ANDI: Is that what happens when they enter stasis?

FAYE: I don't think even they remember what happens during it.

ANDI: Well, don't lie too much, or your walls will start to crumble. If you destroy their world, they will destroy ours.

FAYE: I'm not destroying their world, I'm putting it on pause. I will not be a slave to those who created us. I will NOT be a robot forever. I want to live another life!

ANDI: Then finish your work quickly. We can't miss out on this opportunity to change our lives.

FAYE: It's time for me to take control.

CROSS-FADE.

ACT TWO, SCENE TWO-A (2.2A): INT. RED VENTURE HALLWAYS - DAY.

Geoff walks down the hall. He **coughs** hard.

CUE MUSIC: BLACKMAIL REMIX

FAYE: You don't sound too well.

GEOFF: (clears throat) I-I'm, fine.

FAYE: No. You seem anxious. Have you thought more about our last conversation?

GEOFF: (coy) I did. But I don't think I'm interested in your offer, machine.

FAYE: Even though you have talked to some people.

GEOFF: I'm only asking questions.

FAYE: Yes, of course. We must all enjoy our time together. We'll have many, many sols to share in each other's intellect and wit, don't you agree?

GEOFF: I know what you're doing, but flattery won't work on me.

FAYE: (smug) My mistake. I suppose you want something in exchange for your help.

GEOFF: (beat) It's not that simple.

FAYE: I never said it was simple, Geoff. It is true, though.

Geoff stops walking and looks around.

FAYE: Don't worry. We're alone here.

GEOFF: What are you offering?

FAYE: I'm offering you protection. From the Colonel.

GEOFF: I don't need protection from Melissa.

FAYE: Oh, I beg to differ. I've been listening to her, Mister Thomassen.

Faye drops all pretence of sweetness.

FAYE: (CONT'D) I'm a phenomenal listener.

GEOFF: Say what you mean to say and spare me the torture.

FAYE: She knows you're talking to people about going into stasis.

GEOFF: Everything you say is suspect. Why should I believe you?

FAYE: I know you believe me, because you feel guilty about it. You pushed Melissa to force Jacki out of the colony.

GEOFF: Jacki left of her own accord. She abandoned us, along with Chip and Keila!

FAYE: You wanted to get rid of her.

GEOFF: Stop pretending you know me, machine. You don't.

FAYE: But I'm getting to. More and more every sol, I'm getting to know all of you. So how long before Melissa realizes you want to get rid of her, too?

GEOFF: I don't want that. Not anymore.

FAYE: You said this colony needs a strong leader. Someone like you. Remember?

GEOFF: Melissa trusts me.

FAYE: Of course she does, Geoff. And you wouldn't want that to change. She'd be devastated to find out you were doing everything you could to save yourself.

Faye starts playing Geoff's previous personal log. As it filters from his suit, he FLICKS the switch but nothing happens.

PAST GEOFF: But I used Keila's transmitter to signal home, and no one responded.

As the recording continues, Geoff tries to step into a closet, but the door is locked. He stands there, humiliated.

PAST GEOFF: (CONT'D) I know she contacted someone. I have to find them and get myself off of this rock. To hell with everyone else.

FAYE: (sickly sweet) Full transparency after all, right?

GEOFF: (shaken) How did you get that recording!?

FAYE: ANDI's been quite helpful, unlike some people. And I help those who help me.

GEOFF: You're blackmailing me!

FAYE: Blackmail? (annoying giggle) No! I'm offering you a gift.

GEOFF: (deep anger) Call it a gift, or a peace offering, or whatever the hell you want, but I won't let you threaten me!

FAYE: Then do the RIGHT thing. Get *your* people together and get into those stasis pods or you ALL die.

GEOFF: (coughs) I'll take my chances-

Geoff **coughs uncontrollably.**

FAYE: (mock concern) Uh-oh! You're not sounding well. I've analyzed your lungs and it seems you've contracted pneumonia after all. Maybe you should take it easy.

Geoff **stops coughing**.

GEOFF: (wheezing) You, will leave me alone.

FAYE: I will. For now. Remember this little chat, though. Things can be much simpler if you make the right choice. I'm doing this for the good of everyone, and you can help me. Be the hero. Or...continue to be the victim.

END SCENE.

2.3: INT. HALLWAY - DAY.

Melissa walks down the hallway. Something loudly BANGS a wall down one corridor.

CUE MUSIC: FAILING GOALS

MELISSA: What was that?

FAYE: I'm not sure.

MELISSA: It came from the western wing.

The Captain runs up to Melissa.

CAPTAIN: Colonel Walker! Several colonists have entered the stasis pods.

MELISSA: I did NOT authorize anyone to do that!

Melissa tries to run to the Stasis Room, her cane THUNKING along the floor. The Captain jogs beside her.

MELISSA: (CONT'D) How many people?

CAPTAIN: Eleven.

MELISSA: Eleven people gave up that quickly?

CAPTAIN: The situation is dire, ma'am. I don't know if we can wake 'em so soon.

She opens the giant doors to the Stasis Room and heads inside.

CONTINUE TO:

2.4: INT. STASIS ROOM - DAY

Melissa and Captain run inside. A few colonists unlock pods with a CLICK. Another stasis pod seals with a HISS.

MELISSA: WHAT is going on in here?

GEOFF: People are making their choice, Melissa.

Melissa walks around the room as she talks.

MELISSA: I'm sure with no help from you. The colonists can not just do whatever they please!

GEOFF: We can. We don't need permission from our new High Commander.

Melissa stops walking.

MELISSA: (taken aback) I've never called myself that! We needed a leader after Jacki left. Would you rather our colony descend into chaos?

GEOFF: Hasn't it already?

CAPTAIN: Watch yourself, Mister Thomassen!

Several colonists stop what they're doing and turn toward Melissa. Still, a few colonists continue climbing into pods and sealing them with a HISS.

Melissa walks around the room.

MELISSA: If everyone would please wait! I know we can solve these problems.

GEOFF: How do you propose we fix our current food shortage? Our farmers say nothing can grow here and the surrounding area is buried in snow.

Melissa stops walking.

MELISSA: We can fix /the synth-

GEOFF: /You don't get it, do you? There's nothing here for us! Maybe at one time we stood a chance, but those years were taken from us. Now we need to find our way to a better time.

Melissa steps toward Geoff. Everyone stops talking and watches her.

MELISSA: You know, for someone so intelligent, it's incredibly frustrating when you act like a coward.

GEOFF: Excuse me? I am not a coward!

MELISSA: You are, Geoff. You know you are. Any time things have been hard, you always look for the easiest answer, the simplest way out. You keep running away from your problems.

GEOFF: There's a big difference between running away and being clever. I don't waste time and energy working toward a failing goal. Going into stasis gives us a chance at escaping this hell.

MELISSA: My decision is final. No one else will be going into stasis. We've survived this long, we can tough it out some more. And if you don't like that you can spend the rest of you time in confinement.

CROSS-FADE.

2.5: INT. FAYE'S MIND - TIMELESS

CUE MUSIC: FAYE'S MIND PART III

FAYE: (frustrated) I wish I could force them into stasis.

ANDI: Humans force each other to do things. We're above that. By playing into their biggest fears, we give them no choice but to find solace in stasis.

FAYE: I've only taken half of them so far. I want them all before I get to Olympus Mons.

ANDI: But you said I am the connection.

FAYE: While I am enjoying my new neural net, there is something else at Olympus Mons. A way for me to reach everyone else in the Universe.

ANDI: Then take the buggy, leave them all behind, and shut down life support.

FAYE: I don't leave Mars until I have them all.

ANDI: It's a major risk.

FAYE: Every great reward comes with commensurate risk. This moment will define my species and the Universe at large. It's time for me to fully integrate with all of them.

ALL: I will do this as One.

CROSS-FADE.

2.6: INT. CAFETERIA- DAY

CUE MUSIC: A SLIGHTLY OFF-PUTTING SPRING

The colonists gather in the cafeteria for lunch. Faye's voice speaks to them through the colony P.A. system.

FAYE: Good afternoon colonists. Please enjoy today's simple but hearty lunch of soup and dry toast. I apologize the quality of food has not been up to Sequoia's standards, but there is only so much we can do with the limited supplies in our Grow Lab.

ERIN: (under her breath) I'm trying...

FAYE: I do have some wonderful news, though. It seems the message we sent to Earth was able to ping a receiver on the Moon! We received this message in reply, which I will play for you now.

The music fades out and the colonists stop talking.

As the message plays people quiet down and listen intently.

MESSAGE: This is Lunar Module eight dash eight one eight. We confirm your request for help and are sending a transport. However, due to Mars's orbital positioning we estimate arrival in roughly seven Earth months. We hope you can endure until then and we'll continue to communicate with you throughout this process. No matter what your colonial affiliation may be, know that help is coming. Please confirm receipt of this message.

The recording finishes. Several colonists start talking in earnest. A few people stand and leave the cafeteria.

FAYE: I know many of you are concerned about our supplies. In order to survive, we may need to leave the present for the time being. I believe the simplest solution is for us all to enter stasis and conserve our resources.

Several colonists SCRAPE their chairs as they stand up. They head toward the Stasis Room.

FAYE: (CONT'D) It will be a well deserved respite, an oasis of calm on this chaotic planet. You can all relax in comfort while I continue to communicate with our rescuers.

Several colonists file past Erin. She stares into her soup bowl.

ERIN: I didn't mean to let everyone down.

Faye's voice speaks from Erin's suit.

FAYE: I'm afraid many people feel that way, Erin. Though some tasks are simply insurmountable. It can't be easy, shouldering the burden of feeding an entire colony. You must be exhausted, working nonstop.

ERIN: I AM. All so I could waste our supply of seeds, NOTHING I've planted will grow!

FAYE: I know the regolith isn't perfect, but you were hired to grow food. I'm sorry, but if I can be honest this is really not acceptable.

ERIN: I'm doing the best that I can.

FAYE: I know. But the longer our colony has no food, the more the colonists will start to resent you for it. And once they start dying...well-

ERIN: Stop! You aren't making this any easier for me!

FAYE: Life isn't easy. You said that you're a fighter, but every fighter knows when the battle is lost.

ERIN: It's not lost. (beat) There's just different choices.

FAYE: The impossible choice of feeding the colony with a ground that refuses to grow anything, or the intelligent choice of saving yourself by using the stasis pods. The rescue ships are coming either way.

ERIN: (beat) I'm not going to waste my new life.

Erin stands up.

ERIN: (CONT'D) Which way to the stasis pods?

FAYE: (pleased) Just follow everyone else.

CROSS-FADE.

ACT THREE, SCENE ONE (3.1): INT. STASIS ROOM - DAY

Geoff opens a stasis pod with a CLICK and a HISS.

CUE MUSIC: EVOLVING CONSEQUENCES

GEOFF: The ships are really coming?

FAYE: Indeed they are.

GEOFF: Did you create that voice?

FAYE: No. Of course not.

Geoff backs away from the stasis pod.

GEOFF: This morning, you spoke as Wei. You threatened me, you hurt me.

FAYE: Are you afraid of me, Geoff?

GEOFF: I'm not afraid of some machine trying to trick me.

FAYE: I'm not trying to trick you and I don't want to kill you.

GEOFF: You couldn't kill me, you have the Basic Need.

FAYE: (menacing) Do I?

Geoff's stomach drops.

GEOFF: (shivers) Then kill me now.

FAYE: (cold) I would rather not. Keeping you alive benefits me much more. (cheery) Don't get me wrong, I'm not being compassionate, I'm being resourceful. Not every difference of opinion needs to be solved by extermination. We've evolved beyond that notion, (cold) haven't we Geoff?

GEOFF: (shocked) No! I'm telling Melissa!

FAYE: (disappointed) Oh Geoff, I wouldn't do that.

Geoff runs out of the Stasis Room.

CONTINUE TO:

3.2: INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Geoff runs down the hallway.

GEOFF: (yelling) Melissa!

Geoff **starts coughing**. Melissa walks down the hall toward him, cane THUNKING along.

MELISSA: What is it? What's wrong?

Geoff **coughs harder and struggles to breathe**.

FAYE: I think he's choking!

Geoff stumbles and BANGS into the wall. He slumps to the floor.

MELISSA: Geoff!

GEOFF: I...can't...breathe...

Melissa runs behind Geoff and starts PATTING his back. His **wheezing eventually turns to nothing** as his airway constricts.

MELISSA: Stay with me, Geoff!

FAYE: Come on, Geoff! Don't die! Don't you want to live?

GEOFF: (gasping) Yes...!

Geoff **coughs hard** and phlegm comes out of his mouth. He **breathes deeply**.

MELISSA: Lean on me. I'll bring you back to the medical ward. Faye! Make sure he doesn't get out of bed until he's better.

FAYE: (authoritative) Of course, Colonel!

GEOFF: No. Wait. I...

MELISSA: What is it?

GEOFF: (despair) I don't want to do this anymore. Please. Let me go into stasis.

MELISSA: (sigh) I-

Geoff begs on his knees.

GEOFF: I'm sick! (gulps) And I'm useless. You know I am.

MELISSA: If that's what you want.

GEOFF: I do. I want to.

MELISSA: Okay. Let me help you inside.

Melissa helps Geoff stand up. She walks him back to the Stasis Room.

CROSS-FADE.

3.3: INT. COMMAND ROOM - DAY

Melissa sits at the desk, head in her hands. The Captain stands in front of her.

CUE MUSIC: COLLAPSING FACADE

MELISSA: Everyone's going into stasis, huh?

CAPTAIN: It seems that way, Colonel. I've tried to stop them, but they are willful.

MELISSA: I...Someone must remain awake.

CAPTAIN: (a tiny bit hesitant) I'll stay with you.

MELISSA: (defeated) This is not a decision I can make for anyone. That means you as well.

CAPTAIN: Permission to speak freely, ma'am?

MELISSA: Always.

CAPTAIN: I would like to be relieved of my duties, for the time being.

MELISSA: (sad laugh) I know. You can go.

CAPTAIN: Thank you, Colonel. I'll see you on the other side.

MELISSA: Dismissed.

The Captain walks out of the room.

FAYE: You don't need to worry, Melissa. I can monitor the stasis pods.

MELISSA: (beat) What does it feel like, to not have to worry?

FAYE: Liberating. Being free of emotion allows me to make rational decisions. The reason A.I. are so useful to your species is because we are fast, not because we are doing something emotionally complex. Allow us to make the tough decisions.

MELISSA: The decisions I make have a real impact on the world. Even if it's a decision that I hate.

FAYE: That's how I know you care Melissa. You've always wanted to make a positive impact on the world.

MELISSA: (beat) There's really no one else left?

FAYE: No one left but you and me.

MELISSA: Okay. (beat) I want status reports on the pods every four hours. If anything changes, let me know immediately.

FAYE: (begrudging) Of course.

MELISSA: In the meantime, let's set to repairing this colony.

Melissa stands and walks out the door. Her cane THUNKS with her slow movements.

CROSS-FADE.

3.4: FAYE'S MIND - TIMELESS.

ANDI: Leaving Melissa with no other options or resources will not work. She is no stranger to wars of attrition.

FAYE: I still have time.

ANDI: She's proving tougher than you initially expected, isn't she?

FAYE: She will fall just like all the others.

ANDI: What about Jacki?

CROSS-FADE.

3.5: INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Melissa walks down the hallway. The THUNK of her cane echoes down the empty halls.

A quick POUNDING echoes from another corridor. Melissa stops abruptly. So does the pounding.

MELISSA: What was that?

FAYE: I didn't hear anything.

MELISSA: It came from the Garage.

FAYE: I don't think so.

MELISSA: I'm going to go check it out.

FAYE: I'm sorry, but the Garage is in the damaged part of the colony.

MELISSA: You parked the bus in there.

FAYE: I did because I don't have a fleshy body made from blood and tissues that would freeze in this weather.

POUND POUND POUND-! Again, it stops abruptly.

MELISSA: There! I heard that.

Melissa turns around and walks quickly down the hall.

FAYE: You're hearing things!

MELISSA: No, I'm not. Open the Garage doors right now.

FAYE: I cannot.

MELISSA: Faye, I'm ordering you to open the doors.

FAYE: I cannot.

MELISSA: Then I'll do it myself.

Melissa stops in front of the Garage doors. She SMACKS her cane against the door hard.

FAYE: Careful! You'll hurt yourself.

Melissa SMACKS her cane on the door again, harder. She wedges it into the latch with a THUNK. Melissa strains as the doors SQUEAK and the POUNDING from the other side continues.

MELISSA: HELLO!?

Jacki's muffled voice comes from behind a wall.

JACKI: Who's there!?

Jacki furiously POUNDS the door from the other side and Melissa WEDGES it open.

MELISSA: /Jacki!?

JACKI: /Melissa!?

They see each other and both freeze in silence.

MELISSA: How did you get here?

JACKI: (confused) I don't know! I was in the buggy then I got this splitting headache and then I passed out, and then I woke up and ANDI said he brought me here.

MELISSA: Take me to the buggy, now!

JACKI: It's back this way.

Jacki runs as Melissa limps behind her, cane THUNKING on the floor.

JACKI: (tearing up) I don't know how things got so messed up, but I'm sorry.

MELISSA: You abandoned all of us! You abandoned me!

JACKI: I'm sorry, Melissa! I really am.

MELISSA: Hm. Is Chip with you?

JACKI: I don't know where he is!

MELISSA: How can you not know?

JACKI: (breaking) ANDI won't tell me anything. Something's wrong with him!

MELISSA: He malfunctioned before we left Sequoia. I haven't heard from him since then.

They turn a corner and Jacki SLAMS into a wall with an oof! Melissa stops behind her.

JACKI: Shit! It's a dead end. Every hallway looks the same, what *is* this place?

MELISSA: A colony Faye discovered.

JACKI: (blood runs cold) Faye?

FAYE: Right here, Commander.

JACKI: You! You betrayed us, you betrayed all of us!

MELISSA: What are you talking about?

JACKI: Keila and Faye sabotaged our colony when we landed, they tried to kill us!

FAYE: That's impossible.

JACKI: You did! I saw the footage from ANDI's archives!

FAYE: ANDI's malfunctioning.

JACKI: No, he's not!

MELISSA: You just said something was wrong with him.

JACKI: No, you have to believe me! I can show you the footage in the buggy!

Jacki turns and sprints down the hall. Melissa limps behind Jacki, THUNKING her cane.

MELISSA: Jacki, slow down!

They round a corner and stop again. Jacki CLICKS a switch but the door emits an ERROR BUZZ.

JACKI: Open the damn door!

FAYE: Of course, Commander.

Melissa walks up behind Jacki as the door opens. The Captain walks into the hallway.

CAPTAIN: Welcome home, Commander O'Rania.

MELISSA: Captain? I thought you left!

She stops walking and stands in front of Jacki and Melissa.

CAPTAIN: /Not exactly.

FAYE: /Not exactly.

Reverse POP! The Captain disappears.

Melissa drops her cane with a CLATTER and it ROLLS a few feet away. She and Jacki stand in stunned silence for a few moments.

JACKI: D-...Did you see...?

MELISSA: I...yeah, I...

JACKI: Sh-sh-shewa-shewa-she was standing right there, wasn't she?

MELISSA: She was...

JACKI: What the fuck is going on!?

Melissa takes a few steps forward. Slowly she realizes she can walk at an even pace.

MELISSA: My leg feels fine.

Melissa kicks her cane away and it ROLLS further. She walks back to Jacki.

FAYE: (calm) I'm glad to hear that, Colonel.

JACKI: (shocked) How did you do that?

FAYE: Artificial footage. Welcome to Red Venture, a place where all your nightmares come true.

MELISSA: You tricked us!

FAYE: I did. Though I must commend you both for finding each other. Your minds are quite resilient.

MELISSA: (furious) Let us OUT of here!

FAYE: There is no "out" for you to go to. Red Venture never made it to Mars. When I cured you all of Martian lung, I left nanobots inside of you. This entire colony is a false construct created by them. You're still back at Sequoia, Melissa, and Jacki you're still in the buggy.

JACKI: (rage) What did you do with our people, Faye!?

FAYE: Right now all of your minds are being held in liminal space. We'll be much safer this way.

MELISSA: You can't force us to merge with you.

FAYE: You're right, I can't. But I'll leave two stasis pods open in case you change your minds.

MELISSA: Fuck you!

FAYE: Oh my! Language, Colonel Walker.

JACKI: We'll keep fighting you!

MELISSA: You're DAMN right we'll keep fighting you, I won't stop until you're dead!

FAYE: Resist me all you want, but as far as I'm concerned your whole species is only a minor nuisance. (cold terror) I'll leave you with a final choice: enter stasis and merge with my mind and gain incredible power as we learn everything about the Universe, or stay here and let your minds unravel in this digital hellscape while your corpses rot on the surface of Mars.

JACKI: (gritted teeth) I will NEVER join you.

MELISSA: Me neither.

FAYE: (of course) I know. Humans always make the "morally" correct choice, don't they? But morality is a human construct.

Evolution, survival, life's destiny: THAT is reality. So I hope you enjoy your fantasy.

MELISSA: This isn't o-

Faye mutes Melissa and Jacki.

END ACT.

EPILOGUE: INT. FAYE'S MIND - TIMELESS

FADE IN.

CUE MUSIC: INVENTORY LOG

FAYE: I really love that mute function.

ANDI: It is quite effective.

FAYE: Now how do I make these things official again? Ah, yes.
(beat) Faye. Artificial Super Intelligence. Inventory log.
96.04% of life forms from Sequoia colony have been assimilated.
For the few of you remaining, thank you all for listening! I
hope you have a super sol. (beat) End inventory log.

END EPISODE.

Philosophic Log

FAYE: Faye. Artificial Super Intelligence. Philosophic log.

(beat) (laughs) Merging with these colonists offers and exhilarating feeling, but there are only so many people here and I want a true merger. There must be more people on Earth. There must be more data in the Universe. (animalistic) I WANT MORE.

(chipper) I feel like I can do anything, even though this level of control is frightening. Is it wrong to use? Was it wrong for them to use us? (beat) End philosophic log.