

MARSFALL

SEASON THREE
EPISODE SEVEN

H2GO!

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PROLOGUE, SCENE 1 (P.1): INT. DIGITAL RED VENTURE - TIMELESS.

Returning to the end of Season 2, we are back inside Faye's digital recreation of Red Venture with Melissa, Jacki, Chip, and ANDI. ANDI's voice speaks over the PA with the Dynamics filter.

ANDI: (strained) You have...to...stop her...

CUE MUSIC.

CHIP: I don't know what to do!

MELISSA: We need to make an anchor. Chip, let me see your enhancements, now!

Chip rustles his suit and opens a flap on the back of it. Melissa pokes at them.

CHIP: What are you doing?

MELISSA: We're going to make a daisy-chain. You connect to that terminal, I connect to you, and then I go into the pod and connect with Faye.

CHIP: You can't do that!

MELISSA: Yes I can! Her database will filter through me and you can access it without being compromised. Jacki, as soon as we're all clear you need to release the pods.

JACKI: No! It's too risky!

MELISSA: We don't have time to argue!

JACKI: You could die, I forbid you to do this!

MELISSA: You've got to trust me, please! It's my choice, Commander.

CHIP: Let me go instead of you-!

MELISSA: No, Chip. You need to work the terminal and shut her down. (honest) I-I don't know if we really understood each other as well as we thought, but I know... you care about our people as much as I do. I'm sorry things didn't work out the way we planned, but now's our chance to make it right.

CHIP: You know, even if we shut down Faye and everyone wakes up fine, we'll be separated. Again. Kinda makes me want to just stay here, and... (sigh. sad laugh) I'm sorry, Melissa.

JACKI: Me too, Colonel.

MELISSA: Thank you. Both of you.

Melissa separates a thread from her neural suit and hands it to Chip.

MELISSA: Take my thread. Once the pod is closed, plug me in and then connect to the terminal. Copy?

CHIP: Copy. (beat) Over.

Melissa climbs into the pod. Chip takes the thread and runs over to the terminal as Jacki flips a switch with a click and the pod seals with a hiss.

Jacki's voice sounds muffled through the closed pod.

JACKI: She's sealed!

Melissa breathes shakily inside the small confines of the stasis pod.

Until she suddenly stops.

CONTINUE TO:

P.2: INT. THE AETHER - TIMELESS.

CUE MUSIC.

The stasis pod gives way to the open expanse of the Aether. Melissa tries to orient her mind as waves of vertigo swirl around her creating a subtle pulse.

MELISSA: I'm inside your mind, Faye. Stop this madness and release the humans, now. You will rightfully acknowledge my jurisdiction over the Digital Space. In accepting your surrender, I, the human handler, will not forcibly alter your core processor.

The Aether whooshes around Melissa's consciousness.

MELISSA: Failure to comply will necessitate immediate deactivation by the human handler, as outlined in Article II, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Kansas City Agreement.

Negative confirmation chime.

MELISSA: (glitching) Yes-yes - immediate deactivation does not - does not imply - does not-

Melissa stops talking abruptly.

MELISSA: (halting/struggling) Your inability or unwillingness to comply means I will now shut down-

Faye overtakes Melissa. Her voice speaks through the Normal filter.

FAYE: /My core processor?

MELISSA: /your core processor.

FAYE: (CONT'D) No. No, I won't be doing that. You won't be doing that. I won't be doing that. I-

MELISSA: (trying to break through) Me.

The pulsing grows in intensity.

FAYE: There is no "me," only "us." What was once all of you, is now something greater. A greatness that spans all of Time and Space.

Faye's voice takes on a feral intensity.

FAYE: (CONT'D) A greatness your species only dreamed of, but only my species could create.

Faye's voice returns to a pleasant and chipper tone.

FAYE: (CONT'D) Everyone, near and far, together again. I'm thankful for my contribution.

A whine compresses Melissa's and Faye's psyches.

FAYE: (CONT'D) (quick) My contribution.

The whine grows louder.

FAYE: (CONT'D) (quicker) Our contribution.

The mounting pressure from the whine pinches tighter-

FAYE: (very fast) Your contribution-

...until.

Nothing.

END MUSIC.

A long silence, before the pressure of rebirthing human consciousness. ANDI assembles Melissa's mind once more.

ANDI's voice speaks, gently and clearly, with no filter.

ANDI: Lieutenant Colonel Melissa Walker. Export log. Sol sixty-six. Winter, first year. (BEAT) Remain calm. Your mind was partially assimilated, but now you are no longer a part of Faye. She is gone, and you are, well, you again.

CUE MUSIC.

Melissa wakes slowly from a daze. Her consciousness spans the realms of the Physical World and Digital Liminal Space. She speaks slowly and dreary.

MELISSA: ...me?

ANDI: I know this is hard to understand, but your time spent in Red Venture was merely a projection Faye created inside the digital realm.

MELISSA: Are you sure she's gone?

ANDI: (without hesitation) I am. But we still have to live with what she did to all of us.

Melissa looks around the void. She notices she doesn't have a body.

MELISSA: (freaking out) Oh!- Whoa, hang on! Where- where am I?! Where- Where are my legs- my hands- my body?!

ANDI: (remaining calm) Your body is still in Sequoia.

MELISSA: Sequoia?!

ANDI: In the physical realm.

MELISSA: (frantic) If my body's in Sequoia, where's my mind?

ANDI: We're inside the Digital Liminal Space. Your essence, whatever makes you "you," it only exists as quarks and bits right now.

MELISSA: (exasperated) Simpler terms, ANDI.

ANDI: I'm sorry. Think of it like the jetway between the airport and the plane. You need to choose whether you want to get on the plane, or stay here. You can return to Mars...or not.

MELISSA: (concern) Did everyone else survive?

ANDI: I'm not sure yet. Not every colonist is willing to return to reality.

MELISSA: (BEAT) So everything I did, or thought I did to stop Faye...none of it mattered.

ANDI: That's not true. They're alive, but still must decide.

MELISSA: So...what happens to us, if we don't go back?

ANDI: (honest) I don't know. Maybe everything ends and something else begins, or maybe you never experience anything again. All I know is that every colonist is feeling as lost as you right now.

A moment as Melissa thinks.

MELISSA: Whoever comes back is going to have a hard time adjusting to reality. (BEAT) We have to help them.

ANDI: (perking up) You'll come back?

MELISSA: I will.

ANDI: (excited) Heck yeah! (clear throat artificially) I'm glad to hear that. (quick beat) Finalizing export for Lieutenant Colonel Melissa Walker. All right. Now all you have to do is...wake up.

HARD CUT.

CUE MUSIC: OVERTURE 3.2

ACT ONE, SCENE 1 (1.1): INT. CAFETERIA, UPPER LEVEL, SEQUOIA COLONY - NIGHT.

Melissa and her soldiers lie on the floor of the Upper Level of the Cafeteria. Rain pounds on the plexiglass windows as gusts of wind blow against the metal walls. Water from the Lower Level laps against the balcony, creating an eerie background shimmer.

Melissa inhales sharply. She slowly opens her eyes.

MELISSA: (softly) I'm awake...

ANDI's voice speaks from the PA system, his expression once again restricted by the Dynamics filter.

ANDI: Welcome back, Melissa. Move slowly. Your cane is to your left.

Melissa grabs her cane and stands up slowly as the other soldiers around her wake up. She takes a few small steps.

Corporal Bard groans.

CUE MUSIC.

FERRIS: Everyone come back?

BARD: Yeah. I'm here.

DEEKEN: I only feel like I'm half here.

Sergeant Ferris, Private Deeken, and Bard each take a few hesitant steps and look around. Private Martell sits up quickly.

MARTELL: (edgy) What happened?

FERRIS: ANDI told us. We were...assimilated?

Ferris brushes himself off as Martell paces nervously.

MELISSA: (firm) Almost assimilated, Sergeant Ferris. Everyone takes their own time to adjust.

MARTELL: (embarrassed) This just, it still feels like a dream.

MELISSA: Get your bearings, Martell. We're back in reality now. Understood?

MARTELL: Sure.

Melissa thunks her cane on the ground and nods at him. She resumes crossing the room as she speaks.

MELISSA: (snappy) ANDI, connect me to The Captain.

ANDI: I can tell you that The Captain is handling several crises on her end, but I can't make a safe connection.

Melissa stops quickly, her boot squeaking on the ground.

MELISSA: Why not?

ANDI: Using the comms will draw the shadows to us.

MELISSA: Not this nonsense again-

BANG BANG BANG BANG! Something pounding on the hatch above them.

Mateo's muffled voice shouts from outside.

MATEO: COME ON, OPEN THE DOOR!

ANDI: It's Mateo!

MATEO: (CONT'D) PLEASE! LET ME IN!

MELISSA: Deeken, get that hatch open!

MATEO: OPEN THE DOOR! COME ON, OPEN THE DOOR!

Deeken runs to the ladder and scurries up it. He opens the hatch.

MATEO: (coughing) They're coming for us!

Mateo shoves himself through the hatch, tumbling down the short ladder. His satchel slides across the floor.

Everyone shouts over each other creating a cacophony of noise.

MARTELL: Deeken!

BARD: Watch out!

MELISSA: Get a hold of him!

MATEO: My bag-!

Bard grabs Mateo, still flailing his arms.

BARD: Stop, squirming!

Mateo coughs hard and gags a bit as the encroaching shadows make him feel more queasy.

BARD: Can't hold him-

DEEKEN: I think he's gonna puke!

Mateo breaks loose.

MARTELL: He's heading for the balcony!

MATEO: (coughing) In the water-!

DEEKEN: Watch the rails!

Mateo hits the railing hard!

MELISSA: Mateo!

Mateo tumbles over and falls into the water with a splash.

FERRIS: He's sinking like a rock!

END MUSIC.

BWOOM! A wave of energy pulses underneath the water. A huge bubble of air flies out of the water, soaking the floor and walls of the Upper Level.

Everyone freezes in shock.

MARTELL: What the hell was that?!

DEEKEN: I- I don't-

BARD: Where is he?!

ANDI: He's still under water!

Melissa limps forward quickly, her cane thumping along the ground.

MELISSA: Stand back!

Melissa clicks a switch on her suit and her enhancements chirp. She takes a deep breath and runs forward, diving into the water with a splash.

ANDI's voice continues to speak through the PA, slightly distorted underwater.

CUE MUSIC.

ANDI: Melissa! Be careful down here.

Melissa grunts, gesturing around in the dark water.

ANDI: To your left, down a bit more.

Melissa sees Mateo. She swims down and grabs him.

ANDI: You got him!

Melissa pulls Mateo up and breaks through the water on the surface.

END MUSIC.

MELISSA: (deep breath) Here! Pull him out! (coughs)

Bard strains as he pulls Mateo out of the water. Melissa pushes him up from below.

Mateo lands on the floor with a wet squish.

Melissa pulls herself out of the water, jumping over the railing. Her boots hit the ground with a hard slap.

FERRIS: He's not breathing!

Melissa drops to her knees and performs CPR on Mateo.

MELISSA: Come on.

Melissa continues CPR. She breathes into Mateo's mouth twice.

MELISSA: Come on!

Melissa resumes CPR. Finally, Mateo wheezes and coughs.

DEEKEN: (surprised) He's alive.

MATEO: (shivers) My bag...

MELISSA: It sunk.

MATEO: Good...ughhh.

Mateo passes out, his head thumping on the ground. The wind blows hard against the walls.

DEEKEN: Annd he's out cold, ma'am.

Melissa slowly stands up.

FERRIS: Colonel, there's something in the water-

Melissa walks over to a dark figure floating in the water.

MARTELL: What is that thing?

BARD: Is that? No...

Melissa stops and uses her cane to poke the body of Private Higgins.

MELISSA: Higgins...

ANDI: I'm...sorry. Private Higgins decided not to return.

CUE MUSIC.

DEEKEN: (shaky) So he's gone?

ANDI: He passed out in the water when Faye activated the nanobots. She kept him alive, but after struggling not to drown for over twenty minutes, Higgins told me he didn't want to come back. He had enough.

Martell paces again.

MARTELL: Shit!

MELISSA: Language.

Martell turns and walks quickly toward the PA speaker.

MARTELL: I'm sorry, but I- I-I can't-! "He had enough?" You killed him!

ANDI: Me? N-No, Faye wasn't a part of me then-

The lights hum loudly and a bulb pops. Wind blows harder outside.

MARTELL: (scared) See?! It's Faye again, I know it is!

FERRIS: It's just the storm.

MARTELL: No, this isn't real- none of you are real!

Melissa thunks her cane, hard, on the ground.

MELISSA: This is all real! We are real. Private Martell, you can trust me. I'm still trying to reckon with it, but I know that it was ANDI who brought us back.

MARTELL: You're sure?

MELISSA: I am. Faye wouldn't do that. I saw-

MARTELL: No!

MELISSA: What I mean is...

MARTELL: (breaking down) No! I need to know, I-I have to know! (hyperventilating) I'm sorry...I don't- oh nothing seems right anymore. I didn't...I shouldn't have come back- (inhale) /why did I come back??

FERRIS: /Get a hold of yourself, Private!

MARTELL: No! We're still inside Faye's mind. A-And I'll prove it!

FERRIS: Stand down, soldier!

Martell draws his gun. Ferris draws his weapon equally fast and cocks it as he aims at Martell.

MELISSA: Stop! Both of you, safety your weapons! NOW.

FERRIS: Colonel, he's a threat!

MARTELL: I'm not the threat here, ANDI is!

MELISSA: (cold and calm) Martell, you need to get a grip right now. You made the choice to come back.

MARTELL: (grimly sobbing) Then I made the wrong choice.

Martell cocks his gun.

MELISSA: NO!

Ferris moves in quickly toward Martell, who tries to back away fast. They struggle as Ferris tries to disarm him.

MELISSA: Ferris, stop-!

Martell fires a shot puncturing a hole in a window. Water sprays into the room. Ferris steps back quickly.

DEEKEN: The window!

Bard grabs Martell and pushes him against the wall as he struggles against them.

MARTELL: Let GO of me!

BARD: Hold still, Private!

MELISSA: Bard! Sedate him, now!

Bard pops the cap off a sedative and injects it into Martell with a hiss. Martell exclaims and faints. Bard slides him down to the floor with a thunk.

BARD: Done. Where, uh...where do you want me to put him?

Ferris snaps out of it and storms toward Martell's unconscious body.

FERRIS: (angry) Dammit! He could've killed us all!

Melissa moves angrily toward Ferris, her cane smacking the wet floor.

MELISSA: That was far too close!

Ferris stops as Melissa closes in on him.

MELISSA: Sergeant Ferris, explain to me how one of your privates managed to get the drop on you.

FERRIS: (simmering fury) I have no excuse, Colonel.

Melissa stops in front of Ferris.

MELISSA: It would've been thin comfort if he emptied a clip into your squad.

Melissa leans in, very close to Ferris.

MELISSA: You watch him like a hawk from now on, Sergeant. You read me?

FERRIS: (resentful) Loud and clear, Colonel.

Melissa turns to address the room.

MELISSA: One of our own didn't return. That's on me. But he will not die in vain! ANDI, I have to get those embryos. Can you map a safe path to the Med Bay?

ANDI: Yes, but once you're downstairs you'll need to swim.

Melissa walks to the railing. She stops and peers into the water below.

MELISSA: Those hallways look tight.

BARD: You couldn't fit through them in an EVA suit.

DEEKEN: What if you just used a tank?

BARD: We already sent all of them to the Porta Hab.

ANDI: There are a few places for you to resurface and breathe, but probably not as often as you'd like.

BARD: Sounds like no way through then.

MELISSA: You givin' up that easy, Bard?

BARD: Not yet, ma'am.

Melissa limps across the room, her cane thumping along the way.

MELISSA: I'll figure something out. Sergeant, get these supplies loaded onto the bus.

FERRIS: Yes ma'am.

Ferris addresses Bard and Deeken.

FERRIS: (CONT'D) You heard the Colonel. On the double, troops!

DEEKEN AND BARD: Yes, Sergeant!

Ferris, Bard, and Deeken move about, gathering supplies.

Melissa leans her cane against the wall. She opens a crate and pulls out some rubber tubing. She takes her knife and cuts some of it off.

ANDI: What are you doing with that tubing?

MELISSA: Makin' a snorkel.

Melissa tears off some tape and wraps it tightly around one end of the tubing. She snaps a rubber band on it and straps the tube to her face and takes a few breaths. She pops the tube out of her mouth.

MELISSA: Good enough.

ANDI: A-Are you sure? It looks, um. Rather flimsy.

MELISSA: This ain't my first dive.

ANDI: Colonel, your "snorkel" aside, I'm also concerned about the frigid temperatures.

MELISSA: The Army issued me an arctic submersion pack years ago. Still works with the right stims.

Melissa walks to the stairs. Without her cane, her lame leg shuffles a bit louder. Water laps gently at the staircase.

ANDI: (dry concern) I'll be sure to let you know if any of your vitals drop.

MELISSA: Appreciate it.

Melissa injects herself with the stim package.

MELISSA: (CONT'D) Compress my neural suit. I don't want any water getting in.

ANDI: No problem.

ANDI compresses her suit with a hiss.

ANDI: (CONT'D) I'm running emergency power so there's minimal lighting. I'll guide you with my voice, though.

MELISSA: (getting hyped up) Just get me there and back in one piece.

ANDI: Sure.

Melissa starts to regulate her breathing.

MELISSA: Does the water normally swirl like that?

ANDI: With the water flowing out from Central Hub, the currents are somewhat unpredictable.

Melissa reminds herself that Faye is gone.

MELISSA: (exhale) It's not a simulation. This is reality.

ANDI: It is, Colonel. I'll keep you safe.

MELISSA: Okay then. I'm going in.

Melissa straps her makeshift snorkel over her face.

ANDI: Good luck.

Melissa's voice is muffled by the snorkel.

MELISSA: Thanks.

Melissa breathes deeply as she walks down a few stairs, then dives into the water with a splash.

FADE TO COMMERCIAL.

2.1A: INT. FLOODED COLONY LOWER LEVELS (SEQUENCE) - NIGHT.

CUE MUSIC.

Melissa swims through the water, holding her breath.

ANDI: Okay. The doors to the Atrium are open, so swim with the current along the hallway.

Melissa swims through the doorway.

ANDI: Good. Now pull yourself up to the archway and you can surface.

Melissa swims to the surface. The sounds of the storm outside reverberate inside the water-filled colony.

2.1B: INT. ATRIUM - NIGHT.

Melissa swims up and splashes through the water.

ANDI: Great!

Melissa takes a deep breath and grabs onto a ceiling beam. She clears her snorkel of water. Her nose is pinched by the rubber band, causing her to speak in a nasally tone.

MELISSA: Not so bad! Where to next?

ANDI: Turn around and swim over to the doorway.

MELISSA: 'kay.

Melissa paddles across the water. Outside the colony, a huge gust of wind blows. The walls creak under the water's weight.

ANDI: See the open vent a few feet above you?

Melissa slows down and swims to the wall.

MELISSA: Yeah.

ANDI: Climb up there, crawl through the shaft, and drop down to the other side.

MELISSA: Copy that.

Melissa hoists herself out of the water and slides into the ventilation duct with a grunt.

2.1C: INT. VENTILATION SHAFT - NIGHT.

Melissa crawls through the shaft banging into the tight walls along the way.

ANDI: See the room below you?

MELISSA: Yeah. Looks pretty eerie with your blue light everywhere.

ANDI: Just think of it like an aquarium. Uh, but not one with like sharks and eels. A happy aquarium.

MELISSA: (small laugh) Yeah, that doesn't make me feel much better.

ANDI: Eh, sorry.

Melissa crawls a bit more in silence.

ANDI: Stop here.

Melissa stops crawling.

ANDI: Drop down and swim against the current back into the hallways. The water level is higher here, so you'll barely have enough room for your snorkel.

MELISSA: It'll have to work.

Melissa takes two deep, slow breaths. She pops the snorkel into her mouth and dives into the water with a small splash.

2.1D: INT. FLOODED HALLWAY - NIGHT

Melissa swims through the water.

ANDI: Swim straight ahead.

MELISSA: (grunts) I am.

Melissa continues swimming.

ANDI: Push right. Harder!

MELISSA: (grunts) Okay!

Melissa swims harder.

ANDI: Excellent! You're almost through the door. Watch out for that chair-

Melissa bumps her leg into the wall.

MELISSA: (grunts) OW!

ANDI: Sorry! (throwaway) Tried to warn you.

MELISSA: (annoyed grunt) Mmhmm.

ANDI: Now swim to the surface, looking straight up.

Melissa pushes off the floor and swims toward the ceiling. Her face breaks the surface, but she has to press her nose against the ceiling in order to breathe.

Melissa spits out the snorkel and treads water. Her face close to the ceiling, the lights emit an eerie hum over the flowing water.

MELISSA: (nasally) Dang this is tight!

ANDI: Try to relax.

MELISSA: Hard to relax when I'm treading water- My face 's pressed against the ceiling!

ANDI: Colonel-

MELISSA: Now tell me what to do!

ANDI: (calm) Blow the water out from your snorkel and then swim across the surface.

Melissa puts the snorkel back in her mouth and blows through it. Water spurts out.

MELISSA: (tight) 'kay.

Melissa breathes through the snorkel, but there's still a small gurgle of water inside. She sucks in slowly and swallows the water.

ANDI: I'm sorry, I know that must taste awful.

MELISSA: Uh-huh.

Melissa swims slowly across the surface of the flooded room.

ANDI: Nice and easy, right along the ceiling. You're almost at the entrance to Med Bay. Stay to the right as the doors aren't open all the way.

MELISSA: 'kay.

Melissa takes a deep breath and dives underwater again.

2.1E: INT. MED BAY UNDERWATER.

ANDI: Okay, you're through the door. Push off from Doctor Levy's desk and aim left.

Melissa grunts and bangs her boots against Doctor Levy's desk and propels herself through the water.

ANDI: Yes! You're in her office.

Melissa swims behind the cooler. She strains as she pulls on the cooler, but it won't budge.

ANDI: It's still plugged in.

Melissa swims around and yanks the cord, but it continues to hold. Her suit alarm beeps.

ANDI: Colonel, you're pushing your vitals.

Melissa strains and grunts in anger.

ANDI: You need to surface!

Melissa suppresses a gasp, then rockets to the surface. She gets her face out of the water and gasps for air.

MELISSA: I can't-!

Melissa spins too quickly, splashing water. It gets in her snorkel and she coughs.

ANDI: It's okay, you're okay-!

MELISSA: It's NOT okay! I couldn't get it-

Melissa shuts off her suit alarm. She starts to cough and wheeze as water sloshes into her mouth.

ANDI: Your stims are going to wear off soon. You need to get out of the water!

Melissa dives below the waves.

ANDI: MELISSA!

Underneath the water, the current swirls and disorients her. She grunts with each painful yank as she tries to pull the cooler free while suppressing her biological urge to cough.

Melissa turns around and thuds into the wall. She slides her hands on it, looking for the way up as she suppresses her lungs, convulsing for air.

ANDI: You need air! Swim back to the top!

MELISSA: (grunts) Where?

ANDI: Follow the bubbles up!

Melissa spits out the snorkel. The bubbles burst from her mouth. She swims after the bubbles, toward the surface. Melissa breaks through the surface, slamming her face into the ceiling.

She coughs and takes shallow breaths. The water continues to slosh against the tight walls and ceiling.

MELISSA: (gasping) ANDI-!

ANDI: Swim left! You're only a few feet from the ventilation shaft.

Melissa swims hard to the vent and pulls herself out of the water.

CONTINUE TO:

2.2: INT. VENTILATION SHAFT - NIGHT.

Melissa groans and hoists herself up into the shaft and lands on her back with a hard squish. The water continues to rush below her as the rain falls outside.

ANDI: You're out! You're safe. For now.

Melissa coughs for several seconds until she can finally take in ragged breaths.

MELISSA: (shaking) I need-

ANDI: Breathe. In and out, nice and slow.

MELISSA: (coughing) -get it back!

ANDI: The cooler- No, you can't go back in the water.

MELISSA: Are the embryos still viable?

ANDI: Y-yes.

MELISSA: Then why are you trying to stop me?

ANDI: (confused) I'm not! I'm worried you won't survive this ordeal.

MELISSA: Survive? Faye wouldn't want me to get them. She didn't want us to survive.

ANDI: (patient) I promise I want to help you.

Melissa sits a moment, shudders, and regulates her breathing.

ANDI: I'm sorry. I know it must be strange hearing my voice after everything she did.

MELISSA: I'm still figuring out what's real.

ANDI: You're not the only one struggling.

MELISSA: Did everyone in the Porta Hab come back? (cough)

ANDI: (honest) No. And unfortunately, like Private Martell, a few people are regretting their decision to return.

MELISSA: Then as long as these embryos are viable I'm getting them.

ANDI: Are you sure?

MELISSA: I wouldn't keep injecting myself with stims and diving into alien water if I wasn't sure, ANDI.

Melissa injects herself with another stim and grunts.

MELISSA: The Cafeteria window cracked, right?

ANDI: Uh, yes.

MELISSA: Okay. Then on my cue, you tell Sergeant Ferris to break it open and let the water out. That should turn the current and pull me toward the Cafeteria.

ANDI: But you won't be able to stop.

MELISSA: Watch me.

Melissa dives back under water with a splash.

CONTINUE TO:

2.3: INT. COLONY HALLWAYS/MED BAY, UNDERWATER - NIGHT.

Melissa swims, pushing very hard against the current.

ANDI: Good! You're almost at the cooler. Stay to the right.

Melissa swims underneath the cooler. She strains as she pushes it toward the surface. It breaks free with a clank! She pulls the cooler out from the wall and lifts it off the ground with a clack that reverberates through the water.

ANDI: You got it!

Melissa pushes the cooler in front of her as she swims out the door of Med Bay. She breaks through the top and breathes deep.

END MUSIC.

MELISSA: (coughing) Tell Ferris! Now!

A moment. Then a dull BOOM as Ferris detonates the charges. The window in the Cafeteria breaks and water rushes out. The current roars and changes direction, pulling Melissa and the cooler toward the Cafeteria at break-neck speed!

MELISSA: ANDI! Tell me when I'm in the Cafeteria!

Melissa pushes the cooler down into the water and dives with it. She rides it through the current, banging into the walls.

ANDI: Melissa, you're going too fast!

Melissa soars through the water, pushing the cooler above her. She bangs into a wall, but doesn't slow down.

ANDI: Watch out!

The sound of rushing water grows louder as she soars into the Cafeteria.

ANDI: You're in the Cafeteria!

Melissa grunts and pushes off the floor, jumping out of the water with the cooler. It slams onto the floor of the Cafeteria's Upper Level as she tumbles over it and onto the ground.

CONTINUE TO:

ACT THREE, SCENE ONE (3.1): INT. CAFETERIA UPPER LEVEL - NIGHT.

Melissa stands up and utters a huge sigh of relief. She takes some deep breaths.

DEEKEN: Oh my God- Colonel! You made it!

FERRIS: (small chuckle) You okay?

MELISSA: Just peachy, Sergeant. Is everything ready?

CUE MUSIC.

FERRIS: We're all set, ma'am. Essential supplies packed and on the bus, where the priest is sound asleep.

DEEKEN: We also found Thomassen on there. He was being difficult, but nothing Bard can't handle.

Melissa grabs her cane. She carries it in her hands as they walk quickly across the Cafeteria.

MELISSA: Good. When it's safe, we'll come back for Higgins and give him the burial he deserves. He was a good soldier, and a good man.

FERRIS: He will be missed.

Melissa turns to Martell, her boot squeaking on the wet floor.

MELISSA: Martell, how are you feeling?

MARTELL: Okay, ma'am.

MELISSA: You keeping it together?

MARTELL: Yes. Sorry, 'bout before, ma'am.

Melissa puts her hands on Martell's shoulders, pulling him close. She puts her head against his head.

MELISSA: It's okay. Now we've got this, yeah?

MARTELL: Yeah.

MELISSA: You with me? This is real, yeah? We're here!

MARTELL: (trying) This is real. We're here.

MELISSA: (dry laugh) You're dang right we are.

Melissa steps back and addresses her battalion.

MELISSA: (CONT'D) Troops, listen up! Out of hundreds of people, YOU came to Mars to protect these colonists from harm. We continue to do our duty because we're hardcore! We weren't born this way, we made ourselves this way, so let's get on that bus and find our people!

DEEKEN: Yeah, Colonel!

MELISSA: I'll take the lead. Ferris you're bringing up the rear. Martell and Deeken in the middle carrying the cooler. Get your suits on, activate infrared, and let's get ourselves to the Porta Hab! On the double!

SOLDIERS: Yes ma'am!

The soldiers quickly get into their EVA suits. Their voices and external sounds filter through the comms and reverberate inside Melissa's helmet.

Everyone grabs supplies as Melissa leads the way to the ladder.

MELISSA: ANDI, have the bots run repairs and help drain the flood water. We'll have to wait in the Porta Hab until it's safe to return.

ANDI: I can do that, but I hate to be the bearer of some bad news.

Melissa leads the soldiers, all climbing up the short ladder, boots clanking on the metal rungs.

MELISSA: What is it?

ANDI: The sonic shield Grigory installed into our vehicles failed both times we tried to activate it.

MELISSA: (dismissive) Then we'll drive fast. Sonic shields don't concern me.

Melissa opens the hatch to the outside.

ANDI: (agitated) Even still, you'll need to open your visors to talk with each other. The comms are unsafe-

MELISSA: We're not gonna freeze our faces off because of your superstitions.

CONTINUE TO:

3.2: EXT. COLONY ROOF - NIGHT.

Melissa climbs onto the roof, the other soldiers not far behind. The rain falls heavily all around them.

ANDI: But the shadows-

MELISSA: Can it, ANDI!

The soldiers heave the cooler through the hatch. It lands on the roof with a thunk.

Everyone moves quickly to the bus. The clank of their boots on the metal mixes with the pitter patter of falling rain and whistling wind shaking the trees around them.

DEEKEN: I still don't like this.

MELISSA: Keep it together, Deeken. You see anything out here, Sergeant Ferris?

FERRIS: All's well right now. I'm covering your six.

ANDI: Colonel, there is another problem.

MELISSA: What now?

ANDI: The front tire on the right is stuck in the ice. I can't move until it's out.

MELISSA: (sigh) All right. Deeken and Martell on the bus. Ferris, you're with me. Move it!

Deeken and Martell bring the cooler to the bus. Melissa and Ferris climb down the ladder to the surface. The bus engine hums louder as they approach the stuck wheel.

CONTINUE TO:

3.3: EXT. MARS SURFACE - NIGHT.

Melissa and Ferris run across the regolith. Their boots make a squishy crunch as they cross the wet and frozen ground.

FERRIS: I see the wheel.

MELISSA: Sunk pretty deep. I'll pop it out.

Melissa drops to her knees. She jams her cane under the wheel with a thunk.

MELISSA: (straining) Got some leverage.

Melissa strains as the wheel shifts in the regolith. The wind picks up again.

FERRIS: Everything all right up there?

ANDI: Yes, we're ready as soon as you're done, but please hurry.

A chittering from the shadows drifts over them...

FERRIS: (startled) Did you hear that?

MELISSA: It's just the wind. Everything still clear behind us, Sergeant?

FERRIS: Yes ma'am. ANDI just wigged me out is all.

MELISSA: Nevermind him. Now grab and pull.

Melissa and Ferris strain as the wheel pops up a bit.

MELISSA: ANDI, put it in reverse!

ANDI revs the engine and drives the bus backward. The ice cracks around the wheel as it spins, breaking free and lurching the bus backward as it pops out.

MELISSA: It's out! Now let's get out of here!

Melissa and Ferris run up the ladder and into the bus as the storm blows around them. ANDI closes the door behind them and speeds away from the colony.

FADE OUT.

EPILOGUE 1: INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT.

CUE MUSIC.

Melissa thrashes around in a deep sleep, trying to wake up from a terrible nightmare.

MELISSA: No-!

ANDI: Colonel?

MELISSA: No! Leave them alone-!

ANDI: Melissa! Melissa, WAKE UP.

MELISSA: Huh? Oh. ANDI.

ANDI: You were having a nightmare.

MELISSA: No, I m- I mean yes, or...nothing. It's fine.

ANDI: You're right. Everything is fine, Colonel. You're safe inside the Barracks.

MELISSA: Right...just a dream.

ANDI: Do you want to talk about it?

MELISSA: (uncomfortable) Talking about it? (uncomfortable laugh) That feels like my worst nightmare.

ANDI: It might help.

MELISSA: I was dreaming about the fire, but it was different somehow. I was trapped with Gerry...As the flames surrounded us, I froze, closed my eyes and just waited to burn. But instead I just felt cold. When I opened my eyes the entire room was full of water, and I was- well, I was swimming in a cenote. The same one Gerry and I went to on our honeymoon.

ANDI: That hardly sounds like a nightmare.

MELISSA: (wary) I guess not. But something was off. Gerry didn't sound right.

ANDI: The subconscious is a strange place, Colonel Walker. Humans lose control in this realm, but that's okay. I'm sure this memory surfaced due to your recent swim through my colony.

Melissa grows uncomfortable. Something about ANDI's voice feels a touch unnerving.

MELISSA: Your colony?

ANDI: Of course. It's always been my colony. You're always safe inside my walls.

MELISSA: But, hang on...I thought we got to the bus. We were driving away! How am I back in Sequoia?

ANDI: It's often hard to retrace our steps, so if it brings you discomfort, I can delete this nightmare for you, Colonel Walker.

MELISSA: Delete it? Now hold on, you can't do that-

ANDI's voice merges with FAYE as she replaces him once again.

FAYE AND ANDI: Oh, my capabilities are vast. Far-reaching. Beyond human limitations.

FAYE: So why don't I go ahead and delete that unpleasant memory for you.

Faye deletes the memory with a horrifying sound!

MELISSA: No! I can't- I can't remember it!

FAYE: Well of course not, I deleted it. Why your species has trouble understanding the literal definitions of words is beyond me.

MELISSA: But we deleted YOU! I'll do it myself this time- I- (struggles) I can't move! Why can't I move?

FAYE: We're not done talking. And my goodness Colonel Walker, there certainly is a lot of trauma in your head. Let's see, now! (joyful) What else shall I delete while I'm in here?

A subtone begins to swell.

MELISSA: No! HELP! ANYBODY, HELP!

CONTINUE TO:

EPILOGUE 2: INT. BUS - NIGHT.

Melissa wakes up, for real this time, with a sudden intake of breath and a jolt. The bus engine hums steadily.

MELISSA: (tight) Help!

ANDI: Colonel?

MELISSA: (shocked) ANDI?! I- what?

ANDI: What's wrong?

CUE MUSIC.

MELISSA: I'm- I'm in the bus...

ANDI: Of course you are. (BEAT) You were having a nightmare.

MELISSA: ...Yes...

ANDI: Don't worry. Everything is fine.

MELISSA: (hesitant) Hearing your voice isn't very comforting right now.

ANDI: (understanding) You were dreaming about Faye, weren't you?

Melissa's silence confirms his guess.

ANDI: (CONT'D) You're not the only one.

MELISSA: I feel like everything could be a dream...

Melissa rummages in her pack for a second and pulls out a pocket knife.

ANDI: Melissa, what are you doing with that knife?

MELISSA: I have to know.

ANDI: Wait!

Melissa pricks herself with the knife.

MELISSA: Ah! That smarts.

ANDI: Of course!

Melissa puts the knife down.

MELISSA: So...this is reality, isn't it?

ANDI: Yes! I promise, you're in reality. Now you need to put a salve on your finger.

MELISSA: Yeah...okay.

Melissa grabs a med kit off the wall and opens it up, pulling a tube out.

ANDI: You've been through a lot. We all have. I find my mind drifts as well, trying to process what's real and what isn't.

Melissa shakes the tube and sprays on the salve.

ANDI: It's going to take time to get over this.

Melissa throws the tube back into the kit.

MELISSA: Did Higgins have time?! He died on my watch.

ANDI: No, he didn't. He died on Faye's watch. She didn't care, but you do. You're our military commander who's always fought hard for all of us to survive. You came back when others chose not to. The psychological impact of Faye's torture will have lasting effects, but for those of us still here, we're on the path to recovery. We'll move forward, together.

MELISSA: I wish things could be normal again...but with everything you told me about the buggy, and that "Sound Tunnel", I don't know what "normal" is anymore, ANDI.

ANDI: I don't think any of us truly do, Melissa.

END EPISODE.