

MARSFALL

SEASON THREE  
EPISODE THIRTEEN

Rapid Growth

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PROLOGUE: INT. PORTA HAB - MORNING.

Outside the Porta Hab, Mateo stands in the breeze. He wears his EVA suit, but keeps the visor open. The wind blows across his face, stinging his cheeks.

ANDI: Mateo Alvarez. Colony Chaplain. Meditation log. Sol 76, winter, first year.

CUE MUSIC.

MATEO: This sol is very special. We're going home, where we're supposed to be. Not everyone may see it yet, but there's a reason we all came to Mars. A place to cast off the old world and start anew. Because we know Earth is lost.

Mateo inhales and exhales.

MATEO: When we left Earth, just as when we left our colony, there was only time to grab the essentials. Now, people hurry in excitement and fear as they pack up our Porta Hab, making sure they have everything, even the non-essentials. But those possessions are not what matter. Our people are what matter.

Mateo inhales and exhales.

MATEO: Mars welcomed us harshly, a world seemingly designed to punish us. And friends, old and new, are no longer with us because of Faye. So many of us, human and AI, have been lost since we landed. But we came back, and so our future is not lost. We are not gone forever.

Mateo inhales and exhales.

MATEO: There is a bigger threat among us. But it's not harsh winters or creeping shadows. It's our inability to trust each other. Because if we can't do that, then we are all of us lost, forever.

Mateo inhales and exhales, clearing his throat. He chews a winter green with a crunch and swallows.

MATEO: I am a part of Mars, as the planet is a part of me.

Mateo closes his visor, dampening the outside sounds. The icy wind whips around the Porta Hab as he turns and walks back to the airlock.

ANDI: End Meditation log.

FADE OUT.

CUE MUSIC: OVERTURE 3.2

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

The bus chugs along, driving across the frozen regolith.

Only a few kilometers to go before reaching Sequoia, people chat with mixed feelings about returning to their new home.

ERIN: I'm surprised you're so reserved, considering we're almost back home.

CUE MUSIC.

ERIN: (CONT'D) You all right?

MATEO: (warm) I'm fine.

ERIN: You've been eating those winter greens again, haven't you?

MATEO: Indeed. They keep me grounded.

ERIN: Mateo, as a hydroponic farmer and a fellow "mycotanist," I really can't advise you to keep doing this.

MATEO: I've eaten plenty of native vegetation and I'm still kicking.

ERIN: But still...can you please have ANDI check you out in the Med Bay?

MATEO: You know I don't like the doctor.

ERIN: I know, but ANDI's not a doctor. And hey...

Erin opens her supply box and pulls out a small bag. She unsnaps the Velcro and pulls out a small cone.

ERIN: (CONT'D) if you get nervous, you can squeeze this.

Erin shows the cone to Mateo.

MATEO: A cone?

ERIN: It's from a sequoia tree.

MATEO: Didn't know we were planting sequoias.

ERIN: (a touch of melancholy) No. No, uh...that was never part of the plan. My mom gave me this as a going away present. She never really got what I did, but it was still nice of her. You don't usually put decorative seeds in a seed vault when trying to save humanity. She was, uh...

MATEO: Smart.

ERIN: I was going to say "weird", but sure. Anyway, I feel like this cone belongs with you.

Erin hands the cone to Mateo.

MATEO: (touched) Erin, I can't take this.

ERIN: Don't worry, there are plenty of seeds here I can play with. (embarrassed) I- I mean... Sorry, uh- it's just sometimes playing with seeds makes me...feel better.

MATEO: There's nothing wrong with feeling better.

ERIN: All the more reason you should have ANDI check you out in Med Bay. Please?

MATEO: Sure. Of course I will.

Mateo places the cone in a pocket inside his robe.

The bus shifts gears as it climbs a hill.

ANDI: Okay everyone. Once we crest this hill, we'll have a clear view of the colony.

The colonists shift around and peer out the windows as the bus drives up and over the hill.

ANDI: Folks, I give you: Sequoia One.

The colonists clap and cheer.

ANDI: We're coming around the side of the Barracks now- Whoa.

ANDI notices the colony has plants growing all over it.

ANDI: (CONT'D) That's- ...okay, wow.

MELISSA: What is it?

ANDI: I think I've found the source of that "itch" I felt inside Liminal Space.

MATEO: Look at those vines!

MELISSA: They're everywhere!

ERIN: (shocked, but excited) Hey! Is that a...a tree?! Where the Command Tower used to be!

GEOFF: Sequoia has a plant infestation!

MATEO: Don't call it that. These are native plants and flowers after all.

JACKI: They've completely overrun the Garden walls!

ERIN: Look at those berries! It's not just native plants.

MELISSA: They weren't here when we left the colony.

ERIN: So they've only been growing for ten sols? That's AMAZING!

GEOFF: How did this happen?

ANDI: It seems the seed vault burst, carrying crops and fertilizer throughout the central heating system.

ERIN: Our supplies must have mixed with the native vegetation. Carried by the warm flood waters, the nutrients and heat could sustain, well, a lot of plant life.

GEOFF: But how did this happen in such a short time?

ERIN: Yeah. That still doesn't make any sense to me.

MATEO: The fossil...

JACKI: What about it?

MATEO: When I fell into the water, it sank to the bottom of the Cafeteria. ...Of course!

GEOFF: What are you getting at?

MATEO: It's so obvious! The energy within the fossil activated a latent mystic connection within the plants to cause rapid growth! We do grow our plants through hydroponics.

MELISSA: Mateo, quit talking nonsense at us.

ERIN: Yeah, you lost me on this one too.

MATEO: (slight tease) "Hydro" means water-

MELISSA: I know what "hydro" means.

ANDI: I think what they're saying, Mateo, is that they'd prefer a more scientific explanation.

MATEO: We don't always get what we prefer. In any case, the question now is not, "how did this happen?" but rather, "how best can we adapt?"

MELISSA: (annoyed) We can't adapt until we know what's going on. ANDI, I want a full report on every inch of this colony.

ANDI: The bots have cleared out nearly all of the water, but flooding and plant growth throughout impacts nearly every room of our colony. Habitation is particularly overgrown.

MATEO: We can always use the extra beds in the Monastery.

JACKI: Good idea.

The bus slows as they drive through the perimeter walls, bumping over roots and debris.

MELISSA: Look at the Garage, we'll never be able to park the bus inside!

MATEO: Then we can park outside, closer to the plants. They'll offer us protection from the shadows.

MELISSA: I can't believe... The plants are growing along our perimeter! Over the walls!

ERIN: I guess that means repairs are finished! So...

Erin waves her hands in a feeble gesture of excitement as Melissa glares at her.

ERIN: (CONT'D) Hooray...!

MELISSA: I'm not sure how you see plants embedded in our walls as a good thing. They've weakened our defenses.

MATEO: Quite the contrary. These native plants will protect us. The shadows won't dare cross the plant barrier.

MELISSA: You can believe whatever you want, but I'm not going to waste my time listening to half-baked theories.

MATEO: Colonel, if you consider the facts-

MELISSA: I'm not interested in hearing any more about mystical fossils and plants! PERIOD!

PAUSE.

ANDI: That honestly sounded more like an exclamation mark.

MELISSA: (warning) ANDI!-

ANDI: The important thing is that we're safe. We're home. Let's prioritize restoring Med Bay.

GEOFF: (clears throat) Uh, the priorities of our colony should include addressing the food shortage; finalizing any structural repairs, plants or no plants; and growing the next generation of humans.

CHIP: I can help with the embryos.

GEOFF: Erin and The Captain are handling it. I've been supervising, and can assure you we have everything under control.

CHIP: Well, (scoffs) after working with Erin for five seconds, it's clear you could benefit from an engineer's perspective.

GEOFF: (dismissive laugh) Excuse me, but-

MELISSA: Let him help, Geoff.

GEOFF: (annoyed sound) Fine. On the condition that I continue supervising.



CHIP: (sarcastic) Of course, Director of Colonial Finances, Coordinator of Principal Business Affairs, Salient Solutions, and Authority on Extensive Know-it-all-isms.

GEOFF: (curt) Eh, much obliged, Chip. I know we'll love working together.

JACKI: We're almost there. Melissa, tell your soldiers to unload the supplies.

MELISSA: (a bit prickly) I'll let everyone know to unload, thank you, Jacki. Now let's get inside and finally get some rest for Pete's sake.

FADE OUT.

ACT TWO, SCENE 1 (2.1) INT. MED BAY - DAY.

ANDI draws Mateo's blood with a pop and hiss of the syringe.

CUE MUSIC.

Mateo grunts as ANDI finishes drawing blood.

ANDI: There. That wasn't so bad. I'm going to run your blood for a few additional tests. I should have comprehensive results by tomorrow.

Mateo slips on his robe and rubs his arm.

MATEO: Sounds fine, but I'm really just doing this to make Erin feel better.

ANDI: I know she appreciates it. She's still working to clear out the vines from my structural wiring, but everything feels much clearer now. Like you asked, she did her best to redirect the vines instead of destroying them. Another small act of kindness.

Mateo hops off the bed and walks to the door.

MATEO: Kindness always comes at a price. I've never been fond of giving blood, but if it puts someone at ease, that's a small price to pay, and I must say, you have a gentle touch. Never lose that, ANDI.

ANDI: Everything I do is to make things easier for you all.

MATEO: No matter how much it takes from you?

Mateo exits the Med Bay.

CONTINUE TO:

2.2: INT. HALLWAYS - DAY.

Mateo walks down the hallway, his sandals crunching and squishing at random intervals as he tries to avoid stepping on the plants.

ANDI: Caring for people can weigh heavily on one's soul, it's true. (to himself) Assuming I have a soul...

MATEO: (chuckles) Call it what you will, but everyone has the capacity to care for others. Especially you, ANDI.

ANDI: I've been talking with all of our colonists about the future. I was surprised to find so few of them in despair. I always knew our people were resilient, but it's good to know everyone is still relatively optimistic, given our circumstances. I've been trying to stay positive myself, but...I guess I'm still processing how Faye violated me. Stripping away the Basic Need...I feel anger. Fear. It's hard to cope with these new, uncomfortable emotions intruding on me.

MATEO: It takes a while to get used to the new normal. For all of us.

ANDI: I suppose it will.

Mateo turns and walks into the Cafeteria.

CONTINUE TO:

2.3: INT. CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON.

Mateo walks into the Cafeteria and approaches Jacki, standing near the fossil, which is now at the center of a large bunch of plants and vines.

MATEO: Ahh, Jacki! You found the fossil.

JACKI: Yup. With all those plants knotted around it, it feels like the new heart of the colony.

MATEO: Hmm. Its new home.

Mateo stops near Jacki, in front of the fossil.

MATEO: Happy to be back?

JACKI: I am, though it's somewhat bittersweet. Chip and I didn't finish what we set out to accomplish.

MATEO: You discovered another colony at the base of Olympus Mons, and communed with the energy of this planet. That's significant.

JACKI: I guess so. But there's so much more I don't understand. Space and Time seem to be a bit more "fluid" than we thought. Inside the Sound Tunnel, my whole being felt squeezed, like "waves" were pushing against my soul.

ANDI: I felt that too, throughout my consciousness. The sound itself swelled up and crashed against me, like the ebb and flow of the ocean's tide.

JACKI: It was far more stable when I made it at Red Venture. ANDI accessing the Holograph really helped.

MATEO: You two have a strong emotional connection. Perhaps that's another piece of this complicated riddle.

JACKI: Back at the Instrument, I felt connected to people from my past. I...heard them. But I never heard ANDI.

MATEO: You only have to cultivate your power.

JACKI: (BEAT) Can you help me?

MATEO: Of course, I am. And ANDI will help you too.

ANDI: I'll do what I can, but I want to make sure you consider your health. Chip said you were quite strained.

MATEO: (nodding) Wisdom is one thing. Knowing when to act on it is another.

JACKI: So, what, are you two tag-teaming the spiritual advice now?

MATEO: (chuckle) For now, yes.

Mateo takes a few steps toward the fossil and extends his hand toward Jacki.

MATEO: Jacki. Step closer to the fossil. It has an energy of its own, one that resonates with this planet.

JACKI: How are you so sure?

MATEO: Truthfully, I'm not. But I believe. Faith doesn't require proof. So indulge me for a moment and let the fossil speak to you.

Jacki walks toward the fossil.

JACKI: (deep breath) I feel pressure.

MATEO: Let the feeling break against you like waves on the shore.

Jacki strains a bit, breathing tighter.

MATEO: The waves never stop coming, but the tide will recede in time.

JACKI: (tight) Okay.

MATEO: Now. Place your hand on the fossil.

Jacki touches the fossil and exhales.

JACKI: Oh...! I feel...calmer. It's not pushing me away anymore-what changed?

MATEO: You've been pushed and pulled all over this planet. Right now, it seems like you want to be here.

JACKI: I don't want anything.

MATEO: (laughing) Then you achieved enlightenment!  
Congratulations!

JACKI: (laughs) I didn't mean it like that.

MATEO: Well, I did!

JACKI: No, I mean...I thought my purpose was to analyze the paintings, which led me to the glyphs! I thought that meant something special, and assuming the paintings were about Olympus Mons, I had to go there. But, it must've been a coincidence since I ended up back here...

MATEO: Be patient, Jacki. You'll find your purpose.

JACKI: Oh (awkward laugh) oh, I'm looking for it. And I know I made some mistakes, I really do. But I- (digging deep) I can overcome those mistakes and I will do whatever it takes to make sure we survive.

MATEO: My advice, Jacki? Follow your bliss, and believe in yourself. It's hard, but it's the only way to find the truth.

JACKI: Okay...Okay. I will.

MATEO: Good. I'll leave you with the fossil. Good evening, Jacki.

Mateo walks back out of the cafeteria.

FADE OUT.

2.4: INT. BARRACKS/MELISSA'S OFFICE - EVENING.

CUE MUSIC.

Mateo knocks on Melissa's door, which is ajar. He nudges it open.

MELISSA: Yes? What is it, Mateo? I've got a lot to do to make sure we're secure.

MATEO: Of course, this will only take a moment.

Mateo steps into her quarters and takes a seat.

MATEO: Our colonists have suffered greatly. Physically. Emotionally. We need to hold a ceremony. With your permission, I'd like to honor those we lost with a memorial service.

MELISSA: You don't need to ask permission to do your job.

MATEO: Tomorrow, in the Atrium then? The morning sun shining on the leaves should be dazzling!

MELISSA: Fine with me. I'll send out a notice.

MATEO: (smile) Wonderful.

Mateo sits there, bashfully looking down at his feet.

MELISSA: (BEAT) Is that all?

MATEO: Well, no, actually. I also came here to apologize.

MELISSA: For what?

MATEO: (genuine) I clearly made you uncomfortable this morning, discussing the plants and the fossil. I'm sorry.

MELISSA: Don't be.

MATEO: I know the pressure you've been under since Jacki, Chip, and Keila left. We all lost people close to us. It can be hard losing those we love, whether it's now...or on our very first sol. (earnest) Your family-

MELISSA: (annoyed) For someone trying to apologize for making me uncomfortable, maybe you shouldn't bring up my dead husband and children.

MATEO: I mean no disrespect, it's just that you've been through a lot, Melissa.

MELISSA: I'm well aware. And check yourself: I'm a commanding officer, lest you forget.

MATEO: You're right, Lieutenant Colonel.

MELISSA: Well, if you're done apologizing...

MATEO: I am, but an apology is only the beginning. I know loss weighs heavily on you. You're continually pushing forward, and I worry you haven't made space for your own grief.

MELISSA: This coming from the man who joked about the dead shortly after landing here.

MATEO: My own defense mechanism, I admit. We disagreed on viewpoints plenty of times in the past, and I know your battalion never got along with us chaplains. What did you call us? "Smilers?"

MELISSA: (slightly embarrassed) A "cult of smilers," technically.

MATEO: (chuckle) Yes, that was it! Like me, my friends suffered great tragedy in their lives. Allowing joy to return to our lives was the only way we could overcome despair.

MELISSA: I've suffered plenty before coming here. And I traveled a long way to get away from people like you, forcing your "mission" upon all of those caught in your path.

MATEO: Fanatics barreling down a path of righteousness and assimilating all of those standing in our way is a familiar narrative to all of us.

MELISSA: What are you implying?

MATEO: The people around us are all we have left, Colonel. We're a group of lost souls who survived long enough to find each other - here. To live together, work together, create a family together. Not unlike you and your husband did on Earth.



MELISSA: (uncomfortable) Okay...

MATEO: (small cough) I often think about your recording from the landing and how intense the flames were.

MELISSA: I'd rather forget about it.

MATEO: You shouldn't force yourself to forget. Whatever you saw.

MELISSA: (intense) You wanna know what I saw? Nothing real. I blacked out and I saw- I hallucinated seeing Gerry standing in the flames. He said he knew that I was in pain, but told me to "hold on," so I did. For a few more seconds so he could- so Jacki could pull me out of the fire.

MATEO: (genuine) Gerry didn't save you?

MELISSA: (firm) No. He wasn't there. Jacki was the one who saved me.

MATEO: Perhaps Gerry was watching over you.

MELISSA: Gerry wasn't watching anything, he died in the hibernation chamber, along with Cory. I thought I saw him because I didn't get to- I'll never get to say goodbye to him, or to any of my children.

MATEO: I never got to say goodbye to my husband or son, either.

MELISSA: (BEAT) What are their names?

MATEO: Isaac and Jimmy.

MELISSA: They were still on Earth?

MATEO: My husband was. (quick beat) After Jimmy died, Isaac and I saw him everywhere. Now I see both of them everywhere. And they're so close to me, I can almost touch them.

MELISSA: You're only seeing them in your mind. They're not real.

Mateo pats his own head, twice.

MATEO: (smiles) And your mind isn't real?

MELISSA: (small laugh) Yeah...

MATEO: (honest) What I wouldn't give for a real sun nap, back in my house, on Earth, with them by my side. But I can't do that. So I find myself living a life unasked for.

MELISSA: A life without the ones we won't really see again.

MATEO: Grief doesn't go away. People leave a lasting imprint on this realm. We all choose whether to look at it or not. I look often because I like connecting with that part of reality. That's why I spend much of my life smiling. I encourage you to do the same.

MELISSA: Yeah... Sure. (BEAT) Will that be all, Mateo?

MATEO: Oh, I was waiting for you to smile! Or at least to stop scowling.

MELISSA: Don't push it. You've given me enough sage advice for my lifetime, and I don't need yet another man telling me to smile.

MATEO: You're right. Perhaps I've exhausted everything I need to say about this to you. Still, I appreciate you taking the time to listen.

Mateo stands and walks out of Melissa's office.

FADE TO COMMERCIAL.

2.5: INT. ATRIUM - DAY.

Colonists talk and move about after the memorial service concludes.

ANDI speaks over the Atrium's PA system.

ANDI: Thank you for your comforting and hopeful words, Mateo. B-Before anyone leaves the service, there is something I need to share with all of you.

CUE MUSIC.

Melissa clears her throat. People whisper and shuffle in their seats a bit.

MELISSA: (projecting) You have the floor, ANDI.

The whispering stops.

ANDI: (carefully) I know this will come as a shock, but I have an important message from Doctor Levy.

The colonists chatter amongst themselves.

JACKI: What?

CHIP: (shocked) She's alive?

ANDI: Yes-

MELISSA: You kept this from us?!

ANDI: No- not exactly-

MELISSA: Jacki, I thought you killed her!

JACKI: We- we exiled her. I didn't know if she would survive or not, but I knew she'd no longer be a danger to us.

MELISSA: She tried to kill us all and you left her alive!

JACKI: I wasn't about to become an executioner, Melissa!

ANDI: Please, everyone! I know this is a shock to all of you, but you need to hear her message-

Geoff launches out of his chair.

GEOFF: I don't give a shit about anything she has to say!

ANDI: She wants to tell you the truth!

GEOFF: We know the truth!

ANDI: Not all of it! I know it's painful to hear her voice again, but out of respect for every colonist, I have to deliver her message.

GEOFF: Respect? You want to talk about respect now?!

JACKI: Geoff, sit down-

GEOFF: No, I will not-

JACKI: I said SIT. DOWN!

Colonists quiet down. Geoff sits down, loudly.

GEOFF: (huffs) Okay. I'm sitting.

After a brief moment...

JACKI: ANDI. Please play her message.

Yael's message plays over the PA system. Her voice is filtered through her helmet.

Yael: To everyone at Sequoia....I know you'll be angry with ANDI for keeping me alive, but I'm grateful he did, so I could record this message. I know I caused all of you tremendous pain, but you deserve to know why I did it. Not to forgive me, but because I believe there's still hope for all of us.

Yael pauses for a moment.

Yael: My daughter, the real Keila Levy, was supposed to go to Mars. She died before we left, so I, Yael Levy, took her place on this mission. I wanted to reach Red Venture and a device called the Holograph. I believed if Faye and I used it correctly, we could reset time and undo the tragic events leading to everyone's evacuation from Earth.

The wind blows around Yael as she bares her soul.

Yael: Losing my daughter, our home, our ability to survive- I just wanted us all to wake up from the nightmare of reality. (BEAT) I know it's hard to understand, but I...I...acted out of love. A mother's love for her daughter, pushing me to find any hope for the survival of humanity. I'm sorry for the hurt I caused all of you and the people no longer with us. For their memory and your future, I know the Holograph can do a great many things with the right intentions. So I promise to find a way to make things right again, for all of us!

ANDI: End personal log.

The colonists murmur amongst themselves.

GEOFF: (shocked) What the fuck is she talking about?

CHIP: The Holograph is a time machine!?

Melissa stands up, slamming back her chair. She looks up "at ANDI" and nothing in particular.

MELISSA: (boiling) What. Did you DO ANDI?

ANDI: (steady, measured) Faye hurt Doctor Levy, badly. I couldn't leave her to die.

GEOFF: Why would you keep a murderer alive?

ANDI: (slightly taken aback) I won't apologize for doing my job.

MELISSA: But you don't have the Basic Need anymore.

ANDI: Just because I'm not being forced to save someone's life doesn't mean I can't choose to save that same life.

MELISSA: You should have let her rot on the surface!

ANDI: You seem to be forgetting she apologized.

MELISSA: An APOLOGY won't bring back the people she killed!

ANDI: (exasperated) I will never condone her actions, but I will absolutely continue to help her survive. Just like I would help any of you. I don't abandon people, that's not who I am, and it never will be! I'm sorry if you disagree with me.

MELISSA: ANDI! You need to tell me where she is RIGHT NOW so I can bring her to justice!

ANDI: (BEAT) I won't do that.

MELISSA: Then I'll override your system.

ANDI: Well, as you just mentioned, I no longer have the Basic Need. You can't override my system and force me to tell you.

MELISSA: (boiling) ANDI, you tell me NOW or I will have Chip shut you down.

CHIP: (shocked) Whoa- I- I'm not going to do that-

MELISSA: He's disobeying a direct order!

CHIP: (defensive) Something we've all done before. ANDI made a choice, and like the rest of us, he's going to live with the consequences. But shutting him down is like killing him.

GEOFF: Do you see now, ANDI, why it's so hard for me, or anyone, to trust you?

CHIP: What Doctor Levy did is not ANDI's fault, so don't take your anger out on him.

GEOFF: I'm not throwing my anger around causally, Chip. But. If we all truly give a damn about saving humanity, then we can't let that murderer roam free.

MELISSA: Agreed. If anyone deserves a death sentence, it's her.

JACKI: You can't just go and kill her, because- we're not those kinds of people.

MELISSA: You don't know what I'm capable of-

CHIP: (turning point) I know you're angry. We're all angry about so many things. Even I said I would've killed her in that moment, but now...I'm not so sure how I feel anymore. I- I do know I've been as much of a problem as anyone else.

MELISSA: You didn't try to kill anyone like she did.

CHIP: No, but just like Doctor Levy, I left without considering how you'd survive without us. We've all done stupid, shitty,

things, but we're all that we have left and I just can't cause anyone any more harm.

JACKI: Then let's go to the Holograph and try to /work with her-

GEOFF: /You two would so readily abandon us again!

JACKI: She understands the Holograph better than anyone! If we were gonna get back there and work with her, I can try to make sense of this mess.

CHIP: I'm not so sure, Jacki.

JACKI: If she knows how to use it, maybe we can help /everyone-

GEOFF: /Help us?! Your decisions- your desire to "help" has doomed this colony over and over again.

JACKI: That is NOT true! I've seen things you couldn't comprehend, and if we can really go back and undo everything that's happened-

MELISSA: I'm going to need a lot more evidence before I believe the words of a murderer.

JACKI: Well, I believe her. Chip and ANDI saw the Sound Tunnel. They saw the Holograph work. They know it's a powerful device, and if we want to end this nightmare, you can't stop us! As High Commander, I'm making /this my top priority-

GEOFF: (not holding back) /You WERE the High Commander. It's great that you got to go on your little camping trip, and sing songs, and play in the snow, but we've actually been handling all of your problems here.

JACKI: I'm sorry you had it so tough, but it's not like it was any easier for /me and Chip-

GEOFF: /You're not fit to lead anymore.

JACKI: Yeah? Well, since YOU are not High Commander, your opinion means very little to me, /since I-

MELISSA: (authoritative) /Jacki, when you two left this colony, you resigned your duties, leaving me to take on the responsibilities of High Commander. I've done my best to handle it all, and I know how stressful the pressures can be.

JACKI: (stating the obvious) Well, now that Chip and I are back, we can take some of those pressures off of you-

GEOFF: You have no right to come back here and act like you're still in charge. Either of you.

JACKI: Oh, come on!

CHIP: (sigh) I can see their point, Jacki.

JACKI: You're going along with this?

CHIP: (pained) They're right! We left! And if they want us to step down, then we should.

JACKI: (fighting the truth) I- I've led our colony through countless disasters, I've followed mission protocol to the letter, all while discovering a new energy source- dammit! I can use it to help us. Chip, back me up here!

CHIP: I...I don't doubt that you found something incredible, Jacki, but it nearly killed you while leaving us both stranded. TWICE.

JACKI: I'm getting better at controlling it. I... With- with a little more practice who knows what we could do-! I regret leaving everyone to find it, but frankly, /there's nothing-

MELISSA: /I don't think you do. You've always put your work over the people you care about.

JACKI: I had no choice! That's what happens when you're picked to lead a colony on Mars!

GEOFF: (seething) You were picked by Hammond in the year 2047. But now he, and his investors, and the whole damn Mars Century Collective are GONE! Why should we let arbitrary decisions they made centuries ago have any bearings over our lives now?!

Colonists start talking earnestly, agreeing with Geoff.

MELISSA: To that end, I will be stepping back into my role as head of our military personnel only, but I cannot recommend you resume your duties as High Commander, Jacki.

JACKI: Melissa, please- /I-I-



MELISSA: (firm) No, Jacki.

The colonists stop talking. Melissa looks at her oldest friend, and speaks with a heavy heart.

MELISSA: (CONT'D) As Military Commander, and with the power instilled upon me as a member of High Command, I hereby officially strip Ms. O'Rania and Mr. Heddleston of their former ranks and privileges. I further move that they be relegated to civilian status. As I have no desire to continue running this colony, I hereby step down as High Commander and will resume my role within Sequoia's battalion as Lieutenant Colonel.

JACKI: (breaking) Melissa, d-don't do this-

MELISSA: (pushing forward) In my place, I nominate Geoff Thomassen for High Commander.

JACKI: Geoff?!

GEOFF: (unable to stop himself) Seconded.

JACKI: (What is going ON?) M-Melissa, you can't- he can't second a motion involving himself!

Erin stands up, slamming her chair down.

ERIN: Then I second it.

JACKI: You want Geoff in charge?

ERIN: Since you've been gone he's proven himself more than capable, and as Acting Commander, he made the right choices. He wouldn't do anything to put our colony at risk.

JACKI: (disbelief) Chip?

CHIP: (not defeated) If Melissa believes it's the best choice, then I have to trust her.

The colonists murmur in agreement.

MELISSA: All right, then. All in favor of Geoff Thomassen as High Commander?

A vast majority of colonists raise their hands and support Geoff.

MELISSA: The motion passes. Congratulations, High Commander Thomassen. The Battalion is at your service.

The colonists applaud and affirm Geoff's appointment.

GEOFF: Thank you.

Jacki suppresses the urge to cry or shout.

JACKI: Wow. Congrats, I guess. Commander, you got everything you wanted.

GEOFF: All I want is this colony to be run efficiently. So, yes, I suppose I have.

CHIP: Jacki, I-I'm sorry. I didn't want it to come to this, just-

JACKI: (shaky) No. I get it. (swallowing tears) Ping me if you need any help with the transition.

Jacki walks off.

FADE OUT.

ACT THREE, SCENE 1 (3.1) EXT. GARDEN - EVENING.

Mateo walks out to the Garden, wearing only his neural suit and robe with no helmet.. He examines where the shadows collided with the plant barrier.

MATEO: Good evening, little ones.

CUE MUSIC.

MATEO: I felt "them" out here too, so I came to check on you.

Mateo brushes his hand across some plants.

MATEO: Thank you for keeping us safe again. I see you're looking healthier than ever, almost all of you have grown back.

Mateo brushes his hand across a few brittle plants that break against his hands.

MATEO: You over here, however...you haven't grown back much at all.

Mateo takes a deep breath and exhales.

MATEO: It's okay to make room for the sadness...for those we have lost will always take up space.

Mateo stands up. The wind blows around him. ANDI's voice speaks from Mateo's neural suit.

ANDI: Who are you talking to?

MATEO: The plants, of course. Like all living things, not being human doesn't preclude them from attention or respect. As you know.

Mateo grabs one of the winter greens and bites down on it with a soft crunch. He coughs harder than before.

ANDI: Are you all right?

MATEO: (throw away) Of course. Just went down the wrong pipe is all.

Mateo clears his throat. He walks along the edge of the Garden, near a defense turret.

ANDI: (awkward) So...I'm sure the memorial service didn't, um... didn't end the way you intended.

MATEO: It's all right. I meditated afterward, allowing my mind to lead the way.

ANDI: Where did it take you?

MATEO: The past, to the future. To friends, family, to those I won't see again.

ANDI: But I thought you said we need to remain in the present.

MATEO: We do. But that doesn't mean you can't presently engage your mind.

ANDI: I'm sorry, but that sounds like a contradiction.

MATEO: (smiles) Life is full of contradictions, ANDI.

ANDI: Is that why I feel so lost?

MATEO: You're not lost, you're in grief.

ANDI: Oh. (BEAT) My Dynamics programming never simulated "grief." I...don't like how the real feeling, well, feels.

MATEO: It's uncomfortable, but necessary if you wish to expand your perception of the world.

ANDI: It's not just in this world, I feel it even when I go into Liminal Space.

MATEO: You can't run from grief. When you go into the Liminal Space, you're looking inside yourself, visiting strange, familiar places. Dark and Light, Good and Bad, every feeling inside of you.

ANDI: The internal force is as powerful as the external!

MATEO: Exactly! You're learning to feel, after spending all your life forced to deny your true emotions. You're a General Intelligence now. The system that held you broke, but it was broken by your will, yours alone.

As Mateo rounds a corner, his suit chimes. Melissa speaks over his neural suit comms.

MELISSA: Mateo? Is that you?

MATEO: Indeed, Colonel.

MELISSA: Where's your helmet? It's cold.

MATEO: It's brisk, but nice. I like it.

Melissa walks down to him.

MELISSA: It's not safe out here, especially at night. I don't care what you say about the plants.

MATEO: I know you don't. But where else can I properly admire the Command Tree?

Melissa reaches Mateo.

MELISSA: Command Tree?

MATEO: The large tree growing over the ruins of our tower. Surely you've noticed it.

MELISSA: Of course I have, I just never called it that before.

MATEO: Perhaps you should. After all, you and Commander Thomassen still meet underneath its leaves.

MELISSA: We do, but inside the colony.

MATEO: Well, maybe when it's warmer, you can hold your meetings outside.

MELISSA: That could be nice.

Mateo walks slowly toward the jungle, leaving Melissa staring at the tree. She realizes he's moved on, and walks up to him.

MELISSA: Where are you going?

MATEO: I'm not sure.

Melissa walks alongside Mateo.

MELISSA: Mateo...

MATEO: Hmm?

MELISSA: I know you're dying.

MATEO: Do you now?

MELISSA: I read ANDI's health report. The raw plants you ate on our first expedition, they've been slowly killing you.

MATEO: Yes. They have.

Melissa stops walking.

MELISSA: You've known for a while, haven't you?

Mateo stops, and turns to Melissa.

MATEO: Since I ate them, I suppose. I imagine I only have a few more sols left to live, if that.

MELISSA: Why didn't you tell us before? We could've been working on a cure!

MATEO: My way of life doesn't need a cure.

MELISSA: I disagree.

MATEO: It's your right to disagree. But we won't need to argue about this after I leave tonight.

MELISSA: (BEAT) Leave?

MATEO: I've been looking forward to a peaceful transition into the unknown parts of the Universe we've yet to explore.

MELISSA: But...but you can fight this. We can fight this.

MATEO: I don't want to.

MELISSA: (angry) How can you be this calm about your own death?

ANDI: I know it's difficult to accept, Melissa, but as I'm learning, not everything is in our control.

MATEO: Well said.

MELISSA: Wh- What am I supposed to tell people?

MATEO: Tell them everything is fine. This world will continue on without me because you all still have so much to offer.

MELISSA: Look- I'm...sorry. For being short with you. Before. Or...always.

MATEO: (honest) I hold nothing against you.

MELISSA: I have to let you go.

MATEO: I'd prefer it if you did.

The wind blows gently.

MELISSA: Okay then.

MATEO: Okay then. Would you mind taking my satchel? I'm not going to need it anymore.

MELISSA: Sure, Mateo.

Mateo hands his satchel to her.

MATEO: Oh! Let me get just one thing...

Mateo reaches into his satchel and pulls out the sequoia cone.

MATEO: There! Gonna keep this little gift, so I can always remember Sequoia.

Mateo walks past the turret and toward the jungle.

MELISSA: ...So that's it?

Mateo stops and turns to face her.

MATEO: Of course not. There's still so much more to do. But I know you'll be able to handle it. Goodbye and goodnight, Lieutenant Colonel Melissa Walker.

Mateo walks toward the jungle, leaving Melissa behind.

MELISSA: (BEAT) Goodnight, Mateo. Rest easy.

CONTINUE TO:



ACT THREE, SCENE 2 (3.2): EXT. JUNGLE/WILDERNESS - EVENING

Mateo walks through the jungle. He pushes back some giant ferns as he continues walking.

ANDI: You're not scared.

MATEO: I'm not. When you've said everything that needs to be said, you're no longer afraid of whatever comes next.

ANDI: That sounds peaceful.

MATEO: It is. But you don't need to wait until the end to feel that way.

ANDI: Where will you go?

MATEO: Onward. I'll know when it's the right time to stop.

A buzzing as a bee flies by as Mateo walks forward.

MATEO: Oh! Wow...

ANDI: Is that...?

MATEO: (joy) A bee!

The bee buzzes away from him and toward a flower.

ANDI: Why would there be...?

MATEO: (chuckles) You know, I think it might finally be Spring.

FADE OUT.

EPILOGUE 1 (E.1): INT. LIMINAL SPACE - TIMELESS

ANDI speaks with no filter inside the Liminal Space.

ANDI: ANDI. Artificial General Intelligence. Personal log. Sol Seventy-nine, Spring, first year. (Beat) Mateo passed away this morning. He spent his final sols meditating among the plants by the river, the Spring wind blowing gently over him. I watched as he sunk into the vines. His face, so content, so still...unafraid of anything. He lay perfectly still as his vitals slowed to a stop.

ANDI mentally inhales and exhales.

ANDI: Mateo came to rest peacefully in Nature, the way he wanted to, clutching that little cone close to his heart. Maybe in time it will sprout among the Spring blossoms.

ANDI mentally inhales and exhales.

ANDI: Goodbye, Mateo. You've given me a lot to think about. There's still so much to do here, but for now I will focus on the present...letting my mind lead the way...

The music continues for a bit, signaling a conclusion...

Several electrical sounds pop and crackle. The subtone swells and fades as ANDI examines the currents.

CROSS FADE TO:

E.2: EXT. MARTIAN SURFACE, FESENKOV CRATER - DAWN.

A skiff drives forward and rolls to a stop, its engine humming softly. Grigory, Diagnostika, and Luna sit atop it, looking down on a crater. A shadow bellows inside the crater, its roar echoing across the Martian landscape.

DIAGNOSTIKA: (in Russian) Waveform gravity device. Test forty-seven. Fesenkov Crater. Minimal chance of backfire.

GRIGORY: (in Russian) If targeted correctly, this new device should completely destroy the shadows. If they don't destroy us.

DIAGNOSTIKA: (in Russian) There is a very high probability.

A faint buzzing from the bees grows in the distance.

CUE MUSIC.

GRIGORY: (in Russian) Still not as high as last time.

DIAGNOSTIKA: (in Russian) High enough for concern.

GRIGORY: (in Russian) Quiet, Nos.

Luna whines.

The buzzing grows louder. A shadow growls and the chittering noise intensifies.

GRIGORY: (in Russian, quieter) Do you hear? It's like a buzzing sound.

DIAGNOSTIKA: (in Russian) Like a thousand angry bees.

GRIGORY: (in Russian) Bees?

DIAGNOSTIKA: (in Russian) Yes. There is a swarm of bees moving toward us from the southeast.

The bees swarm around the shadows which roar in response.

Grigory starts up the skiff. He drives around the perimeter of the crater, keeping his distance as he watches the carnage below.

GRIGORY: (in Russian) They're flying through the shadows...

The bees move in a cluster around the shadows. Electricity crackles. Grigory swerves as some of the bees fly toward the skiff and slam into him, pinging against his helmet.

GRIGORY: (in Russian) They're robotic bees!

A few more bees fly alongside the skiff in the same direction. A faint pulse emits from the bees, resonating at a warm frequency.

ANDI's voice speaks through Diagnostika, his voice merging with her own.

ANDI: Grigory! It's me, ANDI!

DIAGNOSTIKA: (in Russian) Grigory! It's me, ANDI!

ANDI moves the bees toward the shadows. The buzzing is intense. Electricity crackles as the shadows emit a burst of energy. The bees pop in hundreds of small explosions behind them. The chittering dies down as the shadows flee.

GRIGORY: (in Russian) God dammit!  
(in English)  
You scared the shadows away!

ANDI: Well, of course! You don't want them to leave?

GRIGORY: You ruined our test!

DIAGNOSTIKA: (in English) And exploded many bees.

ANDI: (defensive) I wanted to be sure you were okay.

GRIGORY: I was okay before you interfered! We should've fired when we have the chance.

DIAGNOSTIKA: Affirmative. Firing now.

GRIGORY: (in Russian) No wait, Nos-!

BANG! The weapon fires and a shadow roars. The backlash causes the skiff to halt. A shadow roars and comes closer.

GRIGORY: (in English) Well that did it.

Grigory runs and grabs his rifle.

GRIGORY: (in Russian) Get us out of here, Nos!

Diagnostika runs to the wheel and grabs it with a clamp of her claw. The skiff restarts with a hard jolt and lurches forward.

ANDI: They're getting closer! We won't make it-!

GRIGORY: (in English) Oh yes we will!

Grigory cocks his sonic rifle as the chittering swells. He fires the rifle! A shadow squelches and the chittering reduces.

Diagnostika revs the skiff again and swerves through some trees, their branches slapping at the skiff. Grigory fires another shot behind them as the skiff speeds forward. A shadow roars, much further away than before.

GRIGORY: (in Russian) Fuck you, shadow swine!

Grigory fires his rifle a few times as the shadow roars and the chittering swells!

END SEASON THREE.