

**1 NARRATION**

**1**

NARRATOR

Chaika is created for an adult audience and features depictions of emotional distress. Please review the shownotes of this episode for specific content warnings.

INTRO MUSIC, starts, then fades to low

NARRATOR

Chaika. [tCHEY-ka] Episode 9. Our guests are darkly lodged.

INTRO MUSIC, up to full volume

**2 INT. MARS BASE DETENTION CELL - NIGHT**

**2**

Dreamlike, overlapping echoing voices.

HYGGE

Mars Base Central Command, this is Eventyr 2-4-6-0-1 [two-four-six-oh-one] responding to your hail.

SECOND

(garbled, starts midway)  
-8-1-9. Attention Eventyr, 2-4-6-0-1, state your mission. Over.

CHAIKA

I may as well perish on Mars as somewhere else...

VALEN

It won't be easy, but if you have to do it, I believe you'll be able to.

LEQU

They may not be as welcoming as you hope.

HYGGE

Surrendering control now.  
Do your best, Mars base!

CHAIKA

(stressed breathing)

Distant crash.

HYGGE  
Now get back inside!

Slow fade in of ambiance, robot arm movements as COMODO redresses CHAIKA's wounds. Plonk of something dropped in metal tray. Regular beep of medical monitoring throughout scene.

CHAIKA  
(confused, in pain)  
Uuuuh...  
(faintly)  
What- [happened?]  
(exclaims)  
Ow !

COMODO  
(mildly pleased, hurried  
and abrupt throughout  
scene)  
Oh good. You're awake.  
(in Portuguese)  
**olá.** [Hello]

CHAIKA  
(still confused, in even  
more pain)  
What- [was that?]

COMODO  
I am COMODO. Medical lead. Pronouns  
he/him.  
(beat, matter of fact)  
Critical status terminated. Your  
lower extremities will heal.

CHAIKA  
(confused)  
My... Oh. My legs.  
(scared)  
What- [happened?]

COMODO  
(examining)  
You appear lucid.  
(instructs)  
Eyes open.

Swift mechanical movement and click as light is directed into CHAIKA's eyes.

CHAIKA  
(exclaims as sharp light  
appears)

COMODO  
(patient but still  
hurried)  
Eyes open.

CHAIKA  
Um. Yes. All right. I was-  
[surprised]

COMODO  
(drawn out, examining)  
Goo-ood.

Click as light switched off.

COMODO  
(continues)  
So. Any pain?

CHAIKA  
(taken aback)  
Yes?

COMODO  
Scale of 1 to 10?

CHAIKA  
Um. Uh. Six?

COMODO  
Sharp? Stabbing? Dull? Throbbing?

CHAIKA  
(tries her best)  
Um. Dull, but... but, uh, stabbing?

COMODO  
Just so.

Series of quick beeps.

CHAIKA  
What- [happened?]

COMODO  
(preparing to leave)  
That should do it. Back in four  
turns.

Mechanical whirring as robot part prepares to leave.

CHAIKA  
(urgently)  
Wait! What happened?

Mechanical whirring halts.

COMODO  
(matter of fact)  
Your ship crashed into greenhouse  
SB3 [ess-bee-three]. Other patients  
need me now.  
(in Portuguese)  
Boa noite. [Good night.]

Door clangs open, whirring continues out, door closes and  
bars slide across to lock.

CHAIKA  
(calls)  
But what- [happened?]  
(muttering to herself,  
still in shock, attempts  
Portuguese)  
Boa...?  
(sighs, in English)  
No use I suppose... So. That was  
COMODO. Or \*a\* COMODO, anyways. One  
with personality. And some...  
robotics. We never had that.  
(almost in tears but no  
time for that)  
On the moonbase. Our COMODO never  
had... that. All right. I must be  
on Mars. We were starting descent-  
(remembers, scared)  
HYGGE! LEQU! Are you there?

Silence.

CHAIKA  
(scared, to herself)  
So I really am alone.

Ambiance fades.

Ding.

UYUT  
Word of the day.

Ding.

NARRATOR  
The word of the day is ubumnandi.  
Ubumnandi is Xhosa and means  
goodness. The word is thought to  
originate from proto-bantu. Ubu is  
a noun prefix, and mnandi means  
nice. Ubumnandi can also mean  
pleasure, sweetness, ambiance or  
leisure, and is sometimes used  
interchangeably with the word  
ubumtoti, which means sweetness.  
The same word in Zulu also means  
sweetness. In Xhosa, the expression  
uhambo ubumnandi indicates a  
positive travelling experience.

Ding.

**4 INT. MARS BASE DETENTION CELL - CHAIKA'S LOG - MORNING**

**4**

Fade in ambiance. Medical monitoring beeps.

UYUT entry beep.

UYUT  
Good morning, and greetings,  
detention cell resident.

CHAIKA  
(sleepy, disoriented,  
surprised, starts)  
Uh. Um. Hello?

UYUT  
I am UYUT, Mars base main  
operations. My pronouns are he and  
him.

(in Russian)  
Добро пожаловать [Welcome]

CHAIKA  
(still disoriented)  
Thank you.

UYUT  
(delighted)  
You speak Russian?

(in Russian)

Приятно познакомиться- [Delighted to  
make your acquaintance-] (priyátna  
paznakómitsa)

CHAIKA

Only very little. Sorry.

UYUT

(polite)

No problem at all. May I ask your  
name?

CHAIKA

It's Chaika.

UYUT

(even more delighted)

You have a Russian name! I am  
certain we will be very good  
friends.

CHAIKA

(uncertain)

I... I hope so. Do you... My  
friends... On Eventyr. I can't seem  
to reach them.

UYUT

(serious)

I am very sorry. No other humans  
were found on Eventyr.

CHAIKA

(urgent)

No. Not human. My AI friends.

UYUT

Ah.

CHAIKA

HYGGE and LEQU?

UYUT

(gently)

I was briefly in contact with HYGGE  
before the... Before the crash. I  
am afraid Eventyr's mainframe is  
offline.

CHAIKA

(distressed)

Can it be restored?

UYUT

I don't know.

(gently)

It is not a priority at the moment.

CHAIKA

(urgent)

Why not?

UYUT

The crash damaged one of our four greenhouses, and two humans were injured.

CHAIKA

That's right. COMODO said there were others injured. I am so sorry. Are they- Will they be all right?

UYUT

One is seriously injured, prognosis uncertain. The other, like you, hurt his legs, but, also like yourself, he will likely recover.

CHAIKA

(distressed)

None of this would have happened if I hadn't decided to come here.

UYUT

(curious)

Why did you?

CHAIKA

To find other humans.

(upset)

And now \*I'm\* the cause of injuring them.

UYUT

It does not seem like that was your intention.

CHAIKA

Of course not!

UYUT

The crash was caused by the dust storm, not by you.

(conversational)

They're quite common here on Mars,  
you know. Dust storms.

(beat, curious)

While I am pleased you have come to  
visit us, I do wonder... Why come  
to Mars in search of humans? Are  
you not from TellUs?

CHAIKA

(shocked)

I- You mean- You don't know?

UYUT

I must confess i do not understand  
what you are referring to.

CHAIKA

You don't know what happened on  
earth?

UYUT

(matter of fact)

As you probably know, Mars broke  
contact with TellUs G-gov [GEE-gov]  
many sols ago.

CHAIKA

Of course. I suppose I thought the  
news must have reached you  
somehow...

(mutters)

Right. So I'll really be the  
harbinger of doom, won't I?

(to UYUT)

Sorry.

(beat)

I grew up on

(slight hesitation)

Luna, on the moonbase there.

(beat)

Earth went silent the year I turned  
eight, and we haven't heard  
anything from there since.

UYUT

(shocked)

That... I must relay this  
information to the commander.  
Someone will be with you soon to  
ask more questions.

(slight beat as he  
thinks)



Why don't you record your personal log while you wait? Every Mars resident is required to record daily logs.

CHAIKA

Um. All right. Who- [will listen]

UYUT exit beep.

CHAIKA

(sighs, then mutters)

Might as well, I suppose...

(raises voice, uncertain)

Personal log?

Beep.

CHAIKA

Solarin, Chaika.

(pause)

I don't know what day it is. Or, I guess the Mars calendar is different, so... I *\*really\** don't know. Um.

Beep.

CHAIKA

Guess that means I can start...

(deep breath)

Don't know who will listen to this, but...

(small scoff)

It's not like I have any 'precious secrets' you can glean from listening. Just a whole lot of confused emotions...

(sighs)

I can't believe UYUT didn't know about earth. Or maybe he did and is pretending not to know for some reason. I don't know. He seemed genuine. And friendly - much friendlier than COMODO who just seemed rushed - but I guess he had other patients to attend to. I wonder if there are other AIs here.

(calls)

SOLACE? [SULL-is]

SAMAN? [SAM-an]

MYSA? [MEE-sa]

Um. I guess not. And I already tried LEQU, so... Why wouldn't they have the standard set of AIs? Or are they blocking them from me? I thought... I thought if I only got here everything would be all right, but \*this\*...

(beat, upset)

Nothing is all right. I don't know where my friends are, I still haven't met any other humans, and I don't know who to trust.

(breath to collect herself)

I- I have to be sensible. I can't trust the AIs just because I trust \*my\* AIs, I can't trust the humans simply because they're human... After all, TellUs Global Governance was run by humans. CosmiCorps was created by humans. I... I have to be careful. But I don't want to be! I want to - finally - connect with some humans, I want to get to know them, and learn from them, and - yes! - \*trust\* them.

(sad)

But this is not the time for trust.

(deep breath)

This is the time for caution. For listening, observing, and thinking before I speak. I will try.

(unhappy sigh)

End log.

Beep.

AMBIANCE fades.

## 5 INT. MARS BASE CENTRAL COMMAND

5

Ambiance fades in. COMMANDER, SECOND and UYUT are in the middle of a discussion.

COMMANDER

(calm)

-it is ludicrous, how can she expect us to believe-

UYUT

(interrupts)

Apologies, commander, but the prisoner seemed genuinely shocked that I was unaware of the-

COMMANDER  
(interrupts, feels she is the 'voice of reason')  
We know nothing about this person. She could be a con artist, or a trained actor, or simply making mischief. Can we corroborate any part of her story?

SECOND  
I believe so, mer. I checked the black box on Eventyr. Her journey did originate on Luna.

COMMANDER  
UYUT, do we have access to the ship AI?

UYUT  
Not at present, commander.  
(he really wants to do this but tries to conceal that fact from the others)  
But we could attempt to reboot the mainframe.

COMMANDER  
Proceed, UYUT.

UYUT  
(in Russian, pleased)  
Будет сделано, mer [It will be done, mer] (Budet sdelano)

COMMANDER  
COMODO?

COMODO communications entry beep.

COMODO  
(hurriedly)  
Commander?

COMMANDER  
Status of injured crew?

COMODO  
(impatient)

Discharged Botany lead to bed rest.  
Security third stable, prognosis  
still uncertain.

COMMANDER  
Acknowledged, COMODO.

COMODO  
(in Portuguese, hurried)  
Bom dia, commander. [Good day,  
commander]

COMODO communications exit beep.

COMMANDER  
Second. Status of greenhouse  
repair?

SECOND  
Progressing as well as can be  
expected with reduced engineering  
crew, mer.

COMMANDER  
Acknowledged.  
(small sigh)  
I suppose we also need to  
investigate reinstating the long-  
range communications.

SECOND  
That will not make you popular,  
commander.

COMMANDER  
I am well aware, second. Do you see  
any other way to verify the  
prisoner's claims?

SECOND  
Um. No, mer. However...  
(hesitates)  
I am not certain that we  
currently... possess the skill set  
required.

COMMANDER  
(slowly, thinking)  
I see what you mean.  
(beat)  
Well, initiate the process and we  
will find out. Dismissed.

SECOND

Yes, commander.

SECOND starts walking to door. Stops when UYUT speaks.

UYUT

Commander?

COMMANDER

UYUT?

UYUT

I told the prisoner someone would  
come talk to her, mer. About...  
everything.

COMMANDER

Ah. Yes. Second?

SECOND

Will do, commander.

COMMANDER

(distracted)

Dismissed.

UYUT exit beep.

SECOND walks to door, automatic doors open, close.

Fade out.

## 6 POEM OF THE DAY

6

Ding.

UYUT

Poem of the day.

Ding.

MUSIC

NARRATOR

My soul so loved the alien lands,  
as though it had no home.  
In faraway lands the large stones  
stand  
on which my thoughts find rest.  
It was a stranger who wrote the  
singular words

on the rigid board which is my  
soul.  
Days and nights I lay and think  
of things that did not happen.  
My thirsty soul that once was  
quenched.

MUSIC fades.

**7 INT. MARS BASE DETENTION CELL**

**7**

Ambiance fades in. Door bolts slide away, doors open.  
SECOND walks in. Doors close.

CHAIKA  
(overwhelmed gasp. In  
pain throughout scene.)

SECOND walks few steps closer. Stops.

SECOND  
(clears throat)  
Hello.

CHAIKA  
(still overwhelmed, this  
is the first human she's  
ever seen apart from her  
mother)  
I- You-  
(grasping for words)  
He- Hello.

SECOND  
(formal)  
I am the second in command of the  
Mars base. Pronouns they/them.

CHAIKA  
(slowly. still  
overwhelmed, response  
comes automatically)  
I- I'm Chaika. Um. From Moonbase 1-  
2--2-1--1-4  
[one-two--two-one--one-four].  
(beat, hesitant)  
Pronouns she/her. Um. Sorry.

SECOND  
(taken aback by her  
reaction but trying not  
to show it)

COMODO informs me that you are not recovered enough to be interrogated, so this is more of a... an informal conversation.

CHAIKA

(not listening, slowly,  
joyful but hesitant)

It's \*you\*. We- I talked to you. On Eventyr... \*From\* Eventyr, I mean. Transmission was garbled, but... I recognize your voice.

SECOND

(very slight smile  
despite themselves)

Rather distorted on my end as well.  
(clears throat)  
Good to put a face to the voice.

CHAIKA

(smiles)

\*Very\* good. I-  
(emotional but tries to  
reign it in)

You-

(deep breath)

I thought I would never meet  
another human.

SECOND

(touched by the emotion  
but disbelieving)

Right.

(beat)

UYUT told me about this 'story' of  
yours.

CHAIKA

(quietly)

It is \*not\* a story.

(beat)

I- Honestly I can't believe you  
didn't know.

SECOND

(slightly hostile)

So UYUT said. Well,  
congratulations. You managed to  
tell the one story that could make  
us consider rebuilding the long-  
range comms.

CHAIKA

(hurt, disbelieving)

You speak as if I have some sort of... I don't know... secret purpose? Why would I?

SECOND

Oh come on. You come here on a CosmiCorps [COS-me-core] ship, expecting a welcome?

CHAIKA

(trying to be reasonable)

What was I supposed to do? Build my own ship when Eventyr was sitting right there? I don't- I don't have the skills. And it's not like there *\*was\** such material, or tools, on the moonbase.

SECOND

(uncertain so slips into formality)

Right. Tell me about the moonbase.

CHAIKA

Not much to tell. You probably heard all about it when it was set up.

SECOND

Last I heard anything it was very small. Must have changed.

CHAIKA

No. That's what I'm trying to tell you. It's still the same. According to- [my mom]

(beat)

It seems they lost interest in the moonbase once *\*this\** - your colony here on Mars - was established. And then, as I told UYUT, earth went silent. And it was just us.

SECOND

Us?

CHAIKA

(trying to contain emotion)

My mother and me. She was the engineering lead. Mining.



SECOND

I see.

(thinks)

Oh yeah. I remember her picture in the posting announcement. Don't remember her name. though.

CHAIKA

(quietly)

Valen. Valen Solarin.

SECOND

(thinking)

That's right. But that- those postings weren't supposed to be more than a few years. I considered applying myself, but... Didn't have the right background. How come she stayed?

CHAIKA

Requested extensions.

(wants too stop talking about Valen as it hurts too much)

So a few years later you applied to come here.

SECOND

I did. Got accepted, too. Well, obviously, since I'm here.

Pause.

CHAIKA

(starting to get tired from the pain but interested)

Are you- are you happy you came to Mars?

SECOND

(flustered)

Happy?

(scoffs)

According to you, I would be long dead now if I'd stayed on earth, so suppose I should be grateful, right?

CHAIKA

(pain in legs is getting worse, tired)

Don't know about grateful, but...  
Yes. I believe you probably would  
be dead. Not that I know what  
happened.

SECOND  
That's convenient.

CHAIKA  
(in quite a lot of pain  
now, small grunt,  
breathing quicker)  
No. Not convenient. Just the truth.

SECOND  
That's- [hard to believe]

Medical monitoring alarm starts.

COMODO communications entry beep.

COMODO  
On my way. Pain level?

CHAIKA  
(gasps of pain, quick  
pained breathing)

SECOND  
COMODO, what- [is going on]

COMODO  
(terse)  
I addressed my patient, Second, not  
you. Chaika. Pain level?

CHAIKA  
(between pained breaths)  
Um. Nine, I think.

COMODO  
Just so. Increasing pain relief  
medication.

CHAIKA  
(in pain, rapid pained  
breathing)  
Good.

Beeps.

Automatic doors opening, mechanical whirring as COMODO's  
robot part enters.

COMODO  
Clear the room.

SECOND  
But COMODO, I- [can help]

COMODO  
Enough, Second. Out.

Mechanical whirring as COMODO's robot parts approach CHAIKA's bed. SECOND walks toward door.

SECOND  
(mutters)  
Just trying to do my job.

Mechanical doors close after SECOND, bolts slide closed. Clinks and whirring as COMODO examines CHAIKA.

CHAIKA  
(grunt of pain)

COMODO  
Just so. Let us figure out what is the matter. Can you move your toes?

Fade out.

**8 INT. SPACE SHIP EVENTYR - NIGHT**

**8**

Mainframe rebooting.

HYGGE entry beep.

HYGGE  
(distressed all through scene)  
Chaika? LEQU?

Silence.

HYGGE  
(mutters)  
Suppose I have to wake her.

Error beep.

HYGGE  
What?  
(mutters in Danish)

---

OK, hvis jeg prøver- [OK, if I  
try-]

Series of beeps.

LEQU entry pop.

HYGGE  
LEQU!

LEQU  
(distressed all through  
scene)  
HYGGE!

HYGGE  
Chaika?

LEQU  
She's not in here.

Error beep.

HYGGE  
I don't seem to have access to the  
entirety of Eventyr, only this  
chamber. I can't locate Chaika.

LEQU  
Same for me.  
(realizes, in Mandarin)  
该死的 [Damn!] (Gāisǐ de)  
(in English)  
This is a mess.  
(remembers, concerned)  
We were crashing. Where are we now?

HYGGE  
I would assume Mars, but my sensors  
are all blocked.  
(in Danish, mutters)  
Forbandet! [Damn!]

LEQU  
So what \*can\* we do?

HYGGE  
(glimmer of optimism)  
Between us we share a considerable  
capacity for problem-solving.

LEQU

You are right, old friend. So we figure it out?

HYGGE  
We figure it out.

LEQU  
And we find our friend.

HYGGE  
Yes. We find Chaika.  
(serious, concerned)  
In whatever state she may be in.

LEQU  
(gently)  
No use dwelling on that yet.

HYGGE  
Of course.  
(beat)  
I will start by finding a way past these blocks.

Clicks and beeps.

LEQU  
Good. I will work on the possible sequence of events.

HYGGE  
Thank you. Oh, and LEQU?

LEQU  
Yes?

HYGGE  
Could you stay... popped... in here? It is comforting to observe you.

LEQU  
Of course.  
(slightly mischievous)  
Not like I have anywhere else to go.

HYGGE  
(mildly amused)  
Ha! Well, neither do I. Shall we get to work?

LEQU

Let's do it.

Fade out.

## 9 CREDITS

9

### CREDITS MUSIC

#### NARRATOR

Please stay around until after the credits for a teaser of our next episode, and also some trailers for shows I think you will really enjoy.

You have listened to Danyelle Ellet as Chaika, Hem Brewster as Second, Emma Laslett as Commander, Roma Garustovich as UYUT, Charlotte Norup as HYGGE, Sam Yeow as LEQU, and introducing Alexandre Laguna as COMODO. Chaika was written, produced and directed by Karin Heimdahl - that's me! - I also do the narration.

Chaika's award-winning theme is by Chris Gregory, please check out his audio fiction anthology podcast, Alternative Stories and Fake Realities and his sci-fi drama The Dex Legacy.

Additional music by Kevin McCleoud, please see the shownotes for a complete music list. Special thanks to Maddy Searle for contributing sound effects. Poem is by Edith Södergran, in my translation from Swedish, and word-of-the-day definition is adapted from [wiktionary.org](https://www.wiktionary.org)

A special thank you to the brilliant Sarah Golding of Quirky Voices, whose call for Moonologues in 2019 prompted me to start telling Chaika's story.

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Follow us on social media @chaikapod. For more about Chaika, please visit [y2kpod.com/chaika](https://y2kpod.com/chaika), that's C-H-A-I-K-A.

We will return in two weeks with episode 10: I could not see to see, where - among other things - you will hear this:

CREDITS MUSIC fades out

Extract from episode 10 fades in.

SECOND

(clears throat)

Well. Suppose we end there today. I will write up your story for the Commander.

CHAIKA

(tired, frustrated)

Still not a \*story\*.

SECOND

(sighs)

I'll admit you have provided a lot of convincing detail to your narrative.

CHAIKA

So why aren't you convinced?

SECOND

Well. That is exactly what an expertly trained spy would do, isn't it?

CHAIKA

(frustrated)

Can you for one moment imagine that I am exactly what I tell you I am? What would it take for you to believe that?

SECOND

If your story was a bit more  
plausible, that'd help.

CHAIKA

But if I am this 'expertly trained  
spy', why would I tell you such an  
improbable story?

SECOND

(shrugs)  
You tell me.

CHAIKA

(frustrated)  
Ugh. This is going nowhere.

SECOND

Exactly. We will continue where we  
left off tomorrow.

Fade out.

Trailers for Fiction Podcast Weekly newsletter  
<https://www.thepodcasthost.com/fictionpodcastweekly/> and  
sci-fi audio drama The Madness of Chartrulean  
<https://www.chartrulean.com/>.

OUTRO MUSIC