

1 INT. 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 10. I could not see to see.

INTRO MUSIC, up to full volume

2 INT. SPACE SHIP EVENTYR

2

Error beep.

HYGGE

(in Danish, frustrated mutter)

Hvorfor virker det ikke...?

Several error beeps.

HYGGE

Leaving that for now. How are you getting on, LEQU?

LEQU

(slowly, thinking)

All right. Not much to *go* on, though.

HYGGE

No.

(thinks)

We need more information...

(suddenly)

What if the block is physical instead of systems-based?

LEQU

Is that possible?

HYGGE
(slowly)
It is...
(impressed)
And very clever, too.
(realizes)
I relinquished control to an UYUT
before landing - this is exactly
the type of thing they'd think up!

LEQU
Oh! Yes that does make sense.
(thinks)
But, HYGGE...?

HYGGE
(distracted, working on
this new problem)
Yes?

LEQU
(thinking, working it out
as she speaks)
UYUT was created to uphold the same
standards *we* were. Is it... Would
it be possible for an UYUT, or any
of our sibling AIs, to act against
our best interests?

HYGGE
(still distracted, not
listening, mutters in
Danish)
Måske hvis jeg prøver- [Maybe if I
try-]

LEQU
HYGGE! Snap out of it!

HYGGE
(startled)
What was that?
(quietly replays LEQU's
words in their mind)
Apologies, my friend. That is
indeed an important question. This
UYUT has been operating in complete
separation from the Møller
mainframe for-

Beep.

HYGGE

-12 earth years, 3 earth months-

LEQU
(interrupts)
So were *we* when we were in
stasis!

HYGGE
That is not quite correct. I was in
contact both upon entering into and
reemerging from stasis, so-

LEQU
(interrupts, surprised)
You never told me that.

HYGGE
(taken aback)
It did not occur to me. Standard
operating procedure dictates-

LEQU
(interrupts)
I thought the Møller mainframe was
integrated with the CosmiCorps
systems.

HYGGE
(enthusiastic lecturer
mode)
Indeed. That is very interesting.
You see, it was integrated when we
went into stasis, but upon waking
up I was intrigued to find that it
had been separated-

LEQU
(interrupts, raises
voice, in Mandarin)
什么? [what?]
(in English)
What does that mean?

HYGGE
Sadly I do not know. There was no
further information to be gleaned.
I attempted several requests for
information retrieval, and even
communication, but nothing-

LEQU
(interrupts, upset)

It didn't occur to you that I might be interested in this information? Or that Chaika could be?

HYGGE

(mildly reproachful)

You may remember that as we were waking up, Chaika entered Eventyr and initiated our journey. There was not much time to consider other things.

LEQU

Hm.

(relents)

You are right. Sorry. Didn't mean to yell at you.

HYGGE

(warmly)

Apology accepted.

LEQU

Suppose this situation is getting to me. I do not do well in uncertainty.

HYGGE

I am aware. Neither do I, for that matter. We both thrive from knowing the full parameters of our situation.

LEQU

(amused)

I would not have put it like that, but yes. We're both control freaks.

HYGGE

(amused)

I suppose we are.

(more serious)

Which makes this situation increasingly difficult.

LEQU

(thinks)

So, what does this all mean? Are you saying UYUT's core values could be corrupted?

HYGGE

It is possible, but not likely. As you know, our programming was far in advance of all other AI technology when we were created, and to my knowledge, no-one else has managed to replicate it. It seems unlikely that there would be such an engineering talent here on Mars. If- [we find]

LEQU
(interrupts, thinks)
Unlikely, but not impossible. So we need to be wary of UYUT, and any other AIs here. Just as wary as of the humans.

HYGGE
Yes. We should- [be cautious]

LEQU
(fills in)
-We should get back to work. Yes.
(concerned)
Who knows what Chaika is dealing with right now.

HYGGE
(concerned)
Indeed.
(resolute, interested)
I had this idea of constructing a nanobot to send through the wiring-

LEQU
Good. I'll get back to my scenarios, too.
(in Mandarin)
祝你好運. [Good luck.]

HYGGE
(in Danish, distracted)
Held og lykke, min ven. [Good luck, my friend]

Mechanical tinkering sounds.

Ambiance fades.

Ding.

UYUT

Poem of the day.

Ding.

MUSIC

NARRATOR

Oh, a word is a gem, or a stone, or
a song,
Or a flame, or a two-edged sword;
Or a rose in bloom, or a sweet
perfume,
Or a drop of gall is a word.

You may choose your word like a
connoisseur,
And polish it up with art,
But the word that sways, and stirs,
and stays,
Is the word that comes from the
heart.

You may work on your word a
thousand weeks,
But it will not glow like one
That all unsought, leaps forth
white hot,
When the fountains of feeling run.

MUSIC fades.

4 MARS BASE CENTRAL COMMAND

4

COMMANDER is sitting at desk, reading reports on screen.

COMMANDER

What the- [tharp]

Clicks and beep.

COMMANDER

UYUT?

UYUT entry beep.

UYUT

Yes, commander?

COMMANDER
Explain this security update.

UYUT
(evasive)
Security update reference number,
mer?

COMMANDER
(fed up)
Today's.

UYUT
(hesitant)
Ah. Yes. I have not yet been able
to retake control of all the
operative functions after the...
incident, mer.

COMMANDER
I can read that for myself, UYUT.
What I don't see here is how you
plan to solve the problem.

UYUT
There are difficulties, commander.

COMMANDER
Elaborate.

UYUT
The... instigator of the...
troubles... retains some control,
and so far I have been unable to
revoke it.

COMMANDER
(disbelief)
How- [is that possible]

UYUT
(interrupts)
Apologies, commander. The
individual does possess some
remarkable skills.

COMMANDER
(mutters, thinking)
Well, yes, we all know about that.
(direct, concerned)
Are you telling me the prisoner
still has access to our systems?

UYUT

Not from where they are now, mer.

COMMANDER

And the access is locked to this individual.

UYUT

Correct.

COMMANDER

Right. That's something, I suppose.
You **will** find a solution.

UYUT

(unsure but doesn't know
what else to say)
Acknowledged, commander.

Automatic doors opening, SECOND walks in. Doors close.

SECOND

(starts same time as
COMMANDER, then stops)
Commander, I-

COMMANDER

(starts same time as
SECOND)
We can't keep them locked up
forever.

SECOND

Not entirely certain Chaika Solarin
should be locked up-

COMMANDER

Talking about the other prisoner,
Second.

SECOND

Ah. Right. Yeah. That one.

COMMANDER

(slowly)
Yes. Right.
(beat)
I read your update on prisoner C.
Solarin.

SECOND

Yes, commander.

COMMANDER

You believe she is lying, yet you deem her sincere.

SECOND

Um. Yeah, that's right, mer.

COMMANDER

(short sigh)

Suppose I will have to make my own assessment. She cleared for interrogation?

SECOND

Don't know, commander.

COMMANDER

COMODO?

COMODO communications entry beep.

COMODO

(reproachful)

Commander?

COMMANDER

Is prisoner C. Solarin fit for interrogation?

COMODO

(exasperated)

Affirmative. I did submit an update 38 clicks ago, commander.

COMMANDER

Right. Haven't gotten to that yet. Dismissed, COMODO.

COMODO

(in Portuguese)

Boa tarde, commander. [Good afternoon, commander]

(sarcastic mutter, in English)

Such a useful exchange...

COMODO communications exit beep.

COMMANDER

Second. Bring prisoner C. Solarin to interview room CS23 [cee-ess-twenty-three] in... fifty clicks.

SECOND

Acknowledged, commander.

COMMANDER

UYUT, I believe you have a problem to solve.

UYUT

(in Russian, not very confident)

Будет сделано, mer [It will be done, mer] (Budet sdelano)

UYUT exit beep.

SECOND

Commander, I-

COMMANDER

Dismissed, second. I have updates to catch up on.

SECOND

(disgruntled)

Acknowledged, commander.

Clicks. SECOND exits. Automatic doors open, close.

Fade out.

5 MARS BASE INTERVIEW ROOM

5

CHAIKA, SECOND and COMMANDER are sitting around a table in a small room. The interrogation has been going on for a while and everyone's getting frustrated.

CHAIKA

(very tired, in some pain)

-I've told you so many times.

COMMANDER

Tell us again.

CHAIKA

(tired and frustrated)

I was a child. My understanding of what happened is probably incomplete - or even incorrect.

SECOND

(bored, tries new
approach)
What were you doing when it
happened?

CHAIKA
(thinks, this question is
new)
I was in class.

COMMANDER
(disbelieving)
What kind of school would there be
on Luna?

CHAIKA
(ignores the tone and
simply answers the
question)
Long-distance learning. Our teacher
was AI. We were a pretty small
group of long-distance learners.
There were... eleven of us. Our
parents were all on CosmiCorps
remote missions.
(remembers)
We were studying glaciers, and-
(interrupts herself)
This... what our teacher taught
then doesn't compute with what I
learned later from our library. She
made it seem like the footage was
recent... The glaciers on earth
must have mostly melted at that
point... Strange. I suppose it was
TellUs doctrine.
(beat, thinks)
I wonder... I wonder what other
lies I was taught...

SECOND
(interested)
You called the AI 'she'?

CHAIKA
Yes. Name was SOLACE. But I guess
saying 'she' was more of a habit
than anything else. She wasn't
sentient at that point.

COMMANDER
Back to what happened, prisoner.

CHAIKA

Right. Yes. The transmission simply ended. We had interference sometimes, and glitches, but this was... this was different. I was in the middle of this... suppose it was a presentation on what I'd learnt, and at first I continued, thinking they'd come back in a moment, or two, but they didn't, so I stopped.

(very small smile)

At that point I was mostly relieved I got out of doing my presentation. I never enjoyed speaking to the whole class.

(beat)

Then when nothing happened I asked TROST - that's the moonbase AI - and he said something must be wrong with our comms. Though he said it in a much more technical way, of course.

SECOND

Was TROST sentient?

CHAIKA

(hesitates, not sure if she should share this information)

I've recently found out that he was, then, but at the time I thought he wasn't. TROST and my mom... well, my mom had decided to keep that information from me. They thought I would be safer that way.

COMMANDER

(barks)

Safe from who?

CHAIKA

(matter of fact)

CosmiCorps. And, through them, TellUs Global Governance.

COMMANDER gets up.

COMMANDER

(scoffs)

I have better things to do than
listen to these fairy tales.
Second, written report tomorrow
morning.

SECOND

Acknowledged, commander.

COMMANDER walks out. Automatic doors open, close.

CHAIKA

(calm, tired)

I can't understand why you are both
so determined to disbelieve
everything I say.

SECOND

(ignores this, formal)

What happened next?

CHAIKA

(sighs)

Um. I went to my mom... She was
very stressed and looked very
scared and didn't really have time
for me. She hugged me, though. Just
a quick one, and told me we'd talk
later. I went to my quarters.

SECOND

What did you do?

CHAIKA

(thinks)

Grabbed some lunch from the
FIKAMAD. Then I watched some old
show... But didn't really take it
in. I was waiting. Waiting to find
out what terrible thing could make
my mom so scared.

(beat)

Don't think I'd seen fear in her
before, not really... I didn't know
what to do with it.

SECOND

And then?

CHAIKA

Eventually I fell asleep. When I
woke up, my mom was there.

(small smile)

I curled up in her lap. She stroked my cheek. Didn't seem like she'd slept anything. And she told me something was wrong on earth. They weren't responding to hails, but all the automated responses were still in place. She... she cried. And I cried, too.

(emotional but tries to control it)

She hugged me tight and said she was there, that she'd always be there.

(small sob escapes but works hard to rein it back in)

SECOND

Did your mother have any theories on what happened?

CHAIKA

Probably? But I don't think we talked about it.

SECOND

Didn't you ask?

CHAIKA

I... I must have, right? But I can't remember.

(beat)

Maybe it was so unfathomable that no theories made sense.

SECOND

What did you find out about the... 'incident' on earth during the following few weeks?

CHAIKA

Not much.

(sighs)

I've told you already. We waited to hear something, for the silence to be explained, but it never was. It became... it just... It was no use talking about it, there was no new information, no explanations. I suppose in the end it was just a basic fact of our lives.

SECOND

Your life must have changed.

CHAIKA

Yes. No more school. No incoming shipments. Nothing... new... Of course it changed. But I was a child. I got used to it.

SECOND

How did you survive?

CHAIKA

We had more than enough provisions. In case we got cut off from earth, I suppose. Not that anyone would have predicted the extent of our isolation... We didn't even have to start on the emergency stores. There were just two of us, and we had greenhouses just like you do here. Animals, too. Do you have animals?

SECOND

(taken aback)

No. Only plants. Algae, we have algae. And some other stuff.

(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.

SECOND stands up.

Beep.

SECOND
Security to interview room CS23
[cee-ess-twenty-three] for wheeled
prisoner escort.

UYUT entry beep.

UYUT
Acknowledged, second.

CHAIKA
(sighs)

Fade out.

6 MARS BASE - SECOND'S QUARTER - NIGHT

6

SECOND is in bed, unable to sleep.

SECOND
(very tired, mutters)
This is useless.

SECOND sits up, leans back against wall.

SECOND
(sighs, then raises
voice)
Personal log.

Beep.

SECOND
(automatic)
Mars Base Second in Command.
Revolution 8, triantasol 16, sol
14.

Beep.

SECOND
(tired)
Can't sleep. Might as well get this
done for the day. No. For the
night. Um. For tomorrow? Ah. Nailed
it.
(sigh)
All that's been happening these
past few sols... I think it's what
they used to call 'the ketchup
effect'. My dad used to say that.
Nothing happens for revolutions,
and then all of a sudden everything
all at once.
(very slight laugh)
I bet if you condensed all my
personal logs of the past... seven
revolutions, maybe, into distinct
events it would probably be four or
five major things. Most of them
variations on 'things-needing-
repair' or people I need to talk
to.
(thinks)
Before that, of course, it was
different. But since we decided to
go NC [en-CEE] on TellUs G-gov
[GEE-gov] it's been... monotonous,
it's been monotonous.
(thinks)

Think it was nice, actually, in the beginning. After I was worn out from the excitement of setting everything up. But then... Feel like I'm stuck. Same job, same people, same problems to deal with... It's boring. And now... Got all these new problems. Which is interesting, of course, but a bit of a headache.

(slight laugh)

No wonder I can't sleep.

(more serious)

I mean... Our prisoner and her stories... What she tells us makes no sense and yet... What are the odds that CosmiCorps would have left us alone this long? Suppose we got used to the silence and we didn't question it, but... Not quite in character for them, is it? But then, this apocalypse stuff? It's even harder to believe.

(sighs, mutters)

Not gonna sort this out at this time of night. I'll go grab some tea in the mess hall instead.

(beat)

End log.

Beep.

7 WORD OF THE DAY

7

Ding.

UYUT

Word of the day.

Ding.

NARRATOR

The word of the day is たがいに [tâgái ní]. たがいに [tâgái ní] is a Japanese adverb and means mutually, reciprocally, with one another. It is used in the context of helping one another, or making room for one another. It can also signify together, parallel, dependent or adjacent. The synonym お互たがいに [otagai ni] is used in the same contexts.

互たがいに お辞儀じぎする [tagai ni o-jigi suru] means to exchange bows, to bow to one another, usually in greeting or thanks.

Ding.

8 INT. MARS BASE DETENTION CELL - CHAIKA'S LOG

8

Chaika is tired but restless.

CHAIKA
Personal log?

Beep.

CHAIKA
Solarin, Chaika. Um. Still not sure how the date works.

Beep.

CHAIKA
Right. They don't believe me. They *really* don't believe me.
(beat)
Suppose it makes sense that they don't, it's just... It never occurred to me. I thought if I only made it here, if I only found them, everything would be all right. Instead, I'm a
(disbelief)
I'm a prisoner. I'm locked in. Not sure what they think I would do if they released me. Not like I can go anywhere else. Can't even walk. And Eventyr's damaged.
(small sob escapes)

I miss my friends so much. I keep asking if they've rebooted the mainframe on Eventyr but no-one will tell me. What if... What if I've lost them for real this time? I always thought if I found other humans I would be OK, but now... All I want is HYGGE and LEQU back. People I can trust, instead of these... Suspicious humans barking orders. I saved them! I saved my friends! I went through all that, and...

(emotional)

I don't know what to do...

(CHAIKA cries quietly)

Metallic scraping sounds. Shuffling. Tool handling. Quiet pings as small tacks fall onto floor. Loosening of metal panel. Clank as it is opened.

CHAIKA

(startled)

What...?

AURYN

(high energy, keeps volume down but not whispering, slightly distant throughout scene)

Found you! You've no idea how hard it was to figure out where you were.

CHAIKA

What...? Where- Who are you?

AURYN

I'm Auryn! Pronouns they and them. Engineering lead-

(interrupts themselves)

Well not anymore I suppose.

'Prisoner' now. Great to meet you!

CHAIKA

(confused)

But where...?

AURYN

Ventilation duct. What's your name?

CHAIKA

I'm Chaika. Um. Pronouns she/her.
Why-

AURYN
(interrupts, delighted)
Chaika! The seagull!
(quotes)
"Like a captive in a dungeon deep
and void, I know not where I am,
nor what awaits me"
Huh. Fits almost too well. But you
do know you're on Mars, yes?

CHAIKA
Yes. I do know that. Not much else,
though.
(questioning)
Dungeon deep and-

AURYN
(interrupts,
enthusiastic)
How did you get here?

CHAIKA
Um. That's... that's quite a long
story...

AURYN
I got nothing better to do. I'm a
prisoner standing in a ventilation
duct, for [swearing] Carson's sake
- not exactly brimming with
entertainment in here.

CHAIKA
(smiles)
Do you- can you come in here? I
can't get out of bed by myself, my
legs-

AURYN
I see. Better not risk it. I'm all
right in here. Almost comfy,
really. Shoot!

CHAIKA
(very small laugh)
If you're sure. Well.
(beat)
I grew up on a moonbase. *The*
moonbase, really...

AURYN
(interested)
Oooh!

FADE OUT.

9 CREDITS

9

CREDITS MUSIC

NARRATOR
Please stay around until after the credits for a teaser of our next episode, and also a trailer 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, Alexandre Laguna as COMODO, Charlotte Norup as HYGGE, Sam Yeow as LEQU, and introducing Elissa Park as Auryn. 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 The Word, by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, and word-of-the-day definition is adapted from [wiktionary.org](https://www.wiktionary.org)

Chaika is a Y2K production.
If you like what we do, please rate and review the show on Apple Podcasts, Podchaser, or the podcatcher you are using right now.

For more of the story, please check out our exclusive micro fiction series Chaika: Dust Storm, which bridges seasons 1 and 2. Chaika: Dust Storm is available through Patreon and as a one-time purchase. Go to y2kpod.com/chaikads, all one word, to learn how to access it.

We will return in two weeks with episode 11: Still fascinated to presume, where - among other things - you will hear this:

CREDITS MUSIC fades out.

Extract from episode 11 fades in.

COMMANDER

I never... Of course I knew that this posting was permanent, but I did anticipate stepping down as commander once the colony was established and fully populated. Looked forward to it, really. We were supposed to grow, and evolve, and instead we simply... stopped.

Trailer for Regina Prime <https://t.co/dzAs07OnOA>

OUTRO MUSIC