

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 15. The boast of independence.

INTRO MUSIC, up to full volume

2 COMMANDER'S QUARTERS

2

Beep.

COMMANDER

Personal log.

Beep.

COMMANDER

(slight hesitation)

Mozor, Rhea. Revolution 8, triantasol 16, sol 30.

Beep.

COMMANDER

(tired, frustrated)

As usual. Nothing to report. No developments anywhere.

(beat)

Not that I'd find out if there were... I.... surprisingly I don't miss much about the old job, but I *do* miss that. Being in the know. Having all that information at my fingertips.

(sighs)

And this... Moving about from menial task to menial task. Not that I mind the tasks. Or not much. But it's awkward. Every person I meet-

(another sigh)
No-one seems to know how to deal
with a former commander cleaning
floors, or doing dishes. Don't
blame them. I'd probably feel the
same. Doesn't make it easier.
(beat)
Give it time, I suppose... They
will - maybe not forget - but it
will fade. And I think history will
take a slightly more moderate view
of my command.
(beat)
After all, distance is known to
lend enchantment, even to the less
attractive views. It has the
advantage of hindsight. Suppose I
should be thankful if this
awkwardness and the frosty looks
are my only punishments.
(sigh, resolute)
Whatever comes, I will do my duty.
Endure. Persist. Stand firm.
(beat)
End log.

Beep.

3 MARS BASE MESS HALL

3

Mostly empty mess hall. Distant murmur of 2-3 voices, they
leave after a minute or two. CHAIKA and SECOND are drinking
tea and finishing breakfast.

CHAIKA
So. How does it feel to back at
your old job, Fionn [FEE-on]?

SECOND
Odd.
(beat)

CHAIKA
(slight smile)
And?

SECOND
Not sure Auryn wants me to stay on.
They... Their style of command is
very different from- Well, you
know.

CHAIKA

Has Auryn said something?

SECOND

No.

(drinks tea)

CHAIKA

So maybe they *do* want you to stay?

SECOND

Perhaps.

(beat)

Think I'm uncomfortable to have around. Reminder of the old regime, All that.

CHAIKA

(dubious)

Maybe. But I'd talk to Auryn before making any decisions.

SECOND

(dubious)

Mm.

CHAIKA

(curious)

If you don't stay on as second in command, what would you do?

SECOND

Dunno.

(drinks tea)

Always something needing doing, I suppose.

CHAIKA

(slowly)

Yeah... But if *you* could decide?

SECOND

Don't mind, really. S'just... You know. Nice to belong somewhere. Have some sort of... purpose.

CHAIKA

(slightly sad smile)

I know exactly what you mean. But you *do* belong here.

SECOND

Well. Many folks here would disagree. The com-, *Rhea* [RAY-ah], and I represent something they have decided to abolish. Why would they want to be reminded of that?

CHAIKA

I see the issue. But surely those folks- Don't you think that after a while everyone will simply get used to the situation?

SECOND

Probably. Wish I could skip forward a revolution or two...

CHAIKA

I get that. Well, if you ever get bored, I'm sure you could drop by the greenhouse and give me and Enoch a hand. You know Enoch, right?

(finishes tea)

SECOND

Yeah. Might do that.

CHAIKA

(realizes)

Course you do. You brought me to the greenhouse. Sorry. Um.

(gets up, a little exertion)

I'm getting some more tea. You want some?

SECOND

Hm. Why not. Thanks. Raspberry, please.

CHAIKA walks (with a little effort but mostly unhindered) to other end of room.

Fade out.

4 COMMANDER'S OFFICE

4

Beep.

AURYN

Personal log. Encryption A-1-57-0-
0-V-94 [a-one-fifty-seven-oh-oh-
vee-ninety-four]

Beep.

AURYN

Auryn Vorobey. Interrim chief, Mars
base. Revolution 8, triantasol 17,
sol 1.

AURYN

(high energy)

Almost a ten-sol on the job, and we
are making good progress. We're
going through one section at a
time, clearing away the last traces
of CosmiCorps [COS-me-core]
doctrine. Left to go is botany and
medical, but I don't foresee any
obstacles in either of those.

(beat, more thoughtful)

Makes me wonder why we didn't do
this sooner. I guess for me, I
spent so long trying to push
through changes within the system.
I really believed we could shift
and adjust gradually, so it
wouldn't be such a shock for
everyone, but...

(more energetic)

Oh well. Shoulda woulda. Forward
focus for me! Oh! That reminds me-
End log.

Beep.

AURYN

COMODO? UYUT? You busy?

UYUT entry beep.

COMODO communications entry beep.

UYUT

(cheerful)

Hello! Not busy.

COMODO

(warmly)

I will make time if you need it,
Auryn.

AURYN

Great! I wanted to check in with you both on- well, all sorts of things, actually.

UYUT

(slightly amused)

Go ahead.

AURYN

First I wanted to check in with you COMODO - I haven't heard any updates on Min for a while - how are they?

COMODO

Happy to report that Min is finally on the road to recovery. I estimate they will be able to return to their duties within two triantasols.

UYUT

(questioning)

Min?

(realizes)

Oh! Yes. Former security third. Frustrating how these function titles stick in all our minds.

COMODO

They will fade, with time.

AURYN

I agree! Another thing: I get the feeling Rhea [RAY-ah] is not happy in her current position.

COMODO

Is that really an issue we need to resolve? She was not concerned with anyone's feelings when she was the commander.

UYUT

(gently)

I feel bad for her.

COMODO

(matter of fact)

I don't.

UYUT

I believe she acted from a sense of duty, not from malicious intent.

AURYN

I agree. And misguided as many of Rhea's [RAY-ah's] actions were, I think it is of the utmost importance that every community member on Mars is given the opportunity to find fulfilling tasks to occupy their sols.

UYUT

(thoughtful)

I believe Rhea's secondary is engineering.
['secondary' as in 'secondary skill', but the 'skill' is dropped]

AURYN

Hm. Not sure we need more folks in that section right now. But definitely something to keep in mind as tasks shift in the future.

COMODO

(giving advice to be helpful but feeling conflicted about Rhea)

Surely the easiest way to find out what she wants to do is to ask her.

AURYN

I know, I know. Just wanted to talk it through with you beforehand. You understand, don't you? We are not the old regime, which means we do not incarcerate folks. We try to help them to a satisfactory situation, if we can.

UYUT

I like that.

COMODO

Well. I agree with you in theory, but... Not ready to forgive Rhea [RAY-ah].

AURYN

That's OK. Feel whatever you feel. And I *will* talk to Rhea. Thanks, both of you. Good talk.

UYUT
(in Russian)
пожалуйста [You're welcome]

COMODO
(in Portuguese)
De nada. [It was nothing/You're
welcome]

COMODO & UYUT exit beeps.

5 POEM OF THE DAY

5

Ding.

UYUT
Poem of the day.

Ding.

MUSIC

NARRATOR
On foot
I walked through the solar systems,
Before I found the first thread of
my red robe.
I surmise myself already.
Somewhere in space my heart is
suspended,
sparks streaming from it, shaking
the air
to other boundless hearts.

MUSIC fades.

6 MARS BASE GREENHOUSE

6

Distant dripping and gently splashing water. Low hum of air humidifier. CHAIKA is entering data as ENOCH reads it out.

ENOCH
-fourty-two point oh-five-

CHAIKA
(typing)
Yep.

ENOCH
-seventy-nine point five two-

CHAIKA
(typing)
A-ah. Right.

ENOCH
-ninety-five po-

Automatic doors opening. AURYN bustles in. Doors close.

AURYN
Hi Enoch, hi Chaika!

CHAIKA
Hi Auryn!

ENOCH
(sarcastic)
We're in the middle of something,
oh great commander.

AURYN
(breezy)
None of that nonsense, Enoch. I
won't take up much of your time.
But, I do have a favour to ask you.

ENOCH
(muttering)
Course you do.

CHAIKA
What do you need?

AURYN
(quickly)
I want to place Rhea [RAY-ah], our
former commander, here in the
Botany section.

ENOCH
(minor explosion)
WHAT?!

AURYN
Under your command, of course,
Enoch.

ENOCH
That-

AURYN
(interrupts quickly)

Apparently, botany is her tertiary!
 ['tertiary' like 'tertiary skill'
 but the 'skill' is dropped]
 I think this is by far the best
 placement for her. Also, this is
 what she wants to do!

ENOCH

(angry)

What about what *I* want? Can't
 have that- that-
 (momentarily lost for
 words)

CHAIKA

(jumps in)

She's not my favorite person on the
 base, either, but... I'm sure she
 could be useful. And there are four
 greenhouses. You wouldn't have to
 work in the same one, Enoch.

ENOCH

(terse)

Yes, but I can't stand-

CHAIKA

You're always saying that we're
 shorthanded here.

AURYN

Exactly! I am sure you will find
 productive ways of working, Enoch!

Automatic doors open. COMMANDER walks in. Doors close.

AURYN

Here she is now! Welcome, Rhea
 [RAY-ah]!

COMMANDER

(uncomfortable)

Auryn.

(beat)

Chaika.

(hesitates, slowly)

Enoch.

(clears throat)

Hello.

AURYN

Good! I will leave you to settle
 in.

(calls on way out)
Have fun, everyone!

AURYN walks to doors. Automatic doors open, AURYN walks out. Doors close. Silence.

CHAIKA
(uncomfortable)
Hello, com- Um. Rhea [RAY-ah].
(beat)
So. This is the greenhouse. One of them. But you know that...
(trails off)

COMMANDER
(clears throat again but says nothing)

Silence. ENOCH picks up sample.

ENOCH
(to CHAIKA)
Right. Next one is ninety-five point three seven-

CHAIKA
Enoch.

ENOCH
Just type it in, for [swears] Carson's sake.

COMMANDER
Enoch. Completely understand if-
(beat)
That you don't want me here.

ENOCH
(sarcastic mutter)
What on Mars would give you *that* idea.

Silence. ENOCH starts fiddling with samples again.

COMMANDER
Right. Yes. Got it.
(beat)
Going now.

COMMANDER starts walking toward doors.

CHAIKA
(calls, on impulse)

Don't go!

COMMANDER stops.

CHAIKA

(hesitant, babbling)

I mean- I'm sure this can be worked out. Somehow. Maybe- Not like you treated me very well, com- Um. Rhea [RAY-ah]. But. Everyone deserves a chance, right?

COMMANDER

(reluctantly touched)

Thank you. Chaika. You are... very kind. And-

(struggles to get this out)

I am sorry if-

(corrects herself)

that my actions caused you pain and discomfort.

CHAIKA

(serious)

Thank you.

ENOCH

(scornful)

What about my pain and discomfort, Rhea [RAY-ah]? Any thoughts on that?

COMMANDER

(pained)

Oh, Enoch. Many thoughts. I... I am sorry. And I know that is not enough. But nothing I did was out of malice. It was duty, that's all.

ENOCH

Well. Felt a lot like malice to me.

COMMANDER

I accept that.

ENOCH

And duty. Duty to whom? Not to your old friends, that's for sure.

COMMANDER

(direct)

Duty to the whole community. To
ensure our survival and welfare. As
a whole.

 ENOCH
 (scoffs)
Not what it felt like.

 COMMANDER
Again, I accept that. And I accept
my failures. As a commander.
 (beat)
And as a friend.

 ENOCH
 (glimmer of empathy)
Yes. Well. Hm.

 CHAIKA
Listen, I'm gonna go check on
Eventyr's repairs. You two talk.

CHAIKA walks toward doors. Automatic doors opening.

 COMMANDER
Enoch, I- [simply want to be useful
to you in some way]

CHAIKA walks out. Doors close.

7 WORD OF THE DAY

7

Ding.

 UYUT

Word of the day.

Ding.

 NARRATOR

The word of the day is amuza. Amuza is Esperanto and means amusing, funny, humorous. It stems from the verb amuzi, meaning to amuse, entertain, divert. Esperanto is the world's most widely spoken constructed international auxiliary language. It was created by ophthalmologist L. L. Zamenhof in 1887, and the vocabulary, syntax and semantics derive predominantly from languages of the Indo-European group. The word esperanto means "one who hopes". The word amuza can also be found in Romanian, meaning to amuse, entertain or laugh. It is thought to be derived from the French amuser, of the same meaning.

Ding.

8 INT. EVENTYR

8

HYGGE and CHAIKA are playing a game.

CHAIKA
(laughing)
There! That should do it!

HYGGE
(amused)
Maybe! Or, what if I put the red one here?

CHAIKA
(lauging, mock protest)
Oh no! You win AGAIN!
(beat, smiles)
Thought I had you this time!

HYGGE
You almost did!

CHAIKA
(smiles)
One of these days...

HYGGE
(warmly)
Absolutely.

CHAIKA

Hey HYGGE, I've been thinking..

HYGGE

Yes?

CHAIKA

Could you - and LEQU - somehow get
- I don't know how it works - but
get out of the ship, into the Mars
base?

HYGGE

UYUT has given us access if we need
it, but we have to go through him,
as our home mainframe is on
Eventyr. So we don't have our own
access, which I suppose is what you
are wondering.

CHAIKA

Yes. That was it.

(thinks)

We haven't talked about it for a
while now, but if we decide to stay
here, would there be a way to - I
don't know - integrate the two
mainframes?

HYGGE

That's an interesting idea. I'll
have to give it some thought. I do
know we can transfer our
consciousness to another mainframe
- that's how we got on Eventyr in
the first place, you see.

CHAIKA

Right. Is that... risky in any way?

HYGGE

(thinks)

Could be. Doesn't have to be. If we
decide to stay, we could definitely
try that.

(enthusiastic)

But I like your idea of
integrating, or merging, the
mainframes instead. Opens up many
more possibilities.

CHAIKA

So you think we should stay?

HYGGE

I don't know. Certainly seems our best chance of residing within a community of sentient beings.

CHAIKA

Yeah. It does make sense. I just... It's not what I thought it would be.

HYGGE

(curious)

Does that matter?

CHAIKA

(thinks)

Maybe not.

LEQU entry pop.

LEQU

(energetic)

Hi you two!

CHAIKA

Hi LEQU!

LEQU

(in Mandarin)

你好吗 (Nǐ hǎo ma) [How are you]

HYGGE

We are very well, thank you. Chaika and I were discussing the possibility of merging our mainframe with the one here at the Mars base, a very intricate task that-

LEQU

(interrupts, interested)

So you are both leaning towards staying here, then?

CHAIKA

(a little frustrated)

I don't know. What do you want to do, LEQU?

LEQU

(thoughtful)

I am enjoying getting to know the other folks here, in particular the two AIs. But I could happily go on another adventure with you two as well.

HYGGE

My feelings exactly.

(distracted)

Now, if you excuse me, I need to run some tests...

HYGGE exit beep.

LEQU

If we leave, where would you want to go, Chaika?

CHAIKA

That's- That's the big question, isn't it? I feel... I worry about TROST, alone on the moon. And about the animals. I know TROST cares for them, but...

LEQU

(gently)

What else is worrying you?

CHAIKA

(slowly)

My mother's files. I both want to know, and don't want to know, if that makes sense.

LEQU

(matter of fact)

You are conflicted.

CHAIKA

Yes! Maybe-

(small voice)

Maybe I will find out things I don't want to know.

LEQU

(gently)

What kind of things?

CHAIKA

I don't- [know]

LEQU

(interrupts, matter of fact)
You **do** know.

CHAIKA
(this hurts to say)
All right. Yes. I know she lied to me. I don't know how much- I don't know what was true.

LEQU
(gently)
I understand. From what you've told me, your mother's purpose in lying was to protect you.

CHAIKA
I think so.

LEQU
Then it's unlikely the things she chose to lie about will cause you pain.

CHAIKA
But how- [can you know]

LEQU
(interrupts, matter of fact)
People lie all the time, Chaika. About minor and major things, for a variety of reasons. Most lies are harmless, and only serve to facilitate social interactions.

CHAIKA
(surprised)
Oh... Right. But that wasn't-

LEQU
(fills in)
-wasn't why Valen lied? In a way, it was, although with much higher stakes.

CHAIKA
(dubious)
Maybe... But- She was always saying **I** needed to tell the truth, how important it was...

LEQU

Of course. You needed to know the importance of being truthful. That was Valen being a good parent.

(beat)

If you had had peers to interact with, or even other adults, you would have learnt the subtle nuances of truth in social interactions.

CHAIKA

(frustrated and confused)

Well I didn't.

LEQU

(gently)

I know. But you are learning now, here, and you will learn more if you do get hold of your mother's files.

CHAIKA

(calmer but still
frustrated)

I guess.

HYGGE entry beep.

HYGGE

(excited)

Good news! I have a theory on merging the mainframes, and so far, my tests are looking very promising.

LEQU

(cheerful)

Good. I think we've been making progress here as well.

CHAIKA

(still frustrated)

We're still no closer to deciding if we stay or go.

HYGGE

Perhaps that means both are good options.

CHAIKA

(more frustrated)

But are they? I've told you - the folks here seem to think the colony is only viable short term.

HYGGE

They may be correct. I have not had a chance to calculate the probabilities.

LEQU

(with gravitas)

That points to a new potential destination. One we haven't discussed yet.

CHAIKA

(understands, serious)

Yes.

(beat)

I'm scared.

HYGGE

(serious)

I admit I am apprehensive myself.

LEQU

(serious)

So am I.

CHAIKA

(slowly)

Have we been headed there all along?

(slight shaky smile)

If we were, this was a very long detour.

LEQU

(amused)

Maybe it was! Enjoyed it, though. Well, most of it.

HYGGE

(mild enthusiasm)

So we go back? And find out what happened?

CHAIKA

(another shaky smile, slowly)

Yeah. We... We go back to earth.
(beat, thinking)

Or, in my case, go for the first time...

Fade out.

9 CREDITS

9

CREDITS MUSIC

NARRATOR

Please stay around until after the credits for a teaser of our next episode.

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, Elissa Park as Auryn, and David Ault as Enoch. 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)

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@chaikapod.

We will return in two weeks with our season finale: Home lies beyond the stars and the sea, where - among other things - you will hear this:

CREDITS MUSIC fades out.

Extract from episode 16 fades in.

SECOND

This question, the question of what happened on earth, feels like the only thing able to break through the fog around me. It's as though everything, and everyone, around me is hazy, and distant, and unimportant, but this... Makes me feel, and think.

OUTRO MUSIC