

VI: A podcast by the Intergalactic Improv Initiative.

KAYA: *Dangerous Dangers*, Minisode One: *Jesse's No Good, Very Bad Day*. Featuring the voices of Dan Spitaliere and Kaya Renwick.

First things first, but not necessarily in that order. *I Should Roll*.

VI: January 19th, 2189, Terran Universal Coordinated Calendar. The Citadel, Widow System, Serpent Nebula. Aroch-Shalta Ward, Outer Edge District. Systems Alliance Headquarters, Citadel Branch. Docking Bay C17, SSV *London*.

KAYA: Everything is dark.

It *shouldn't* be dark. There should be light and sound and people—*oh*, *oh*! There it is. Only it's gunfire and flashes of electricity and biotics and *you can't move*. You're at the wrong angle. Everything's askew.

It has all gone so, so wrong.

You wake up.

You are in your bunk on the *London*. It has been two months since you woke up in the medbay of a ship you didn't recognize to faces you didn't know. Most of that two months you've spent on Terra Nova in one of the Alliance's rehab centers for veterans of the Reaper War.

You still don't remember most of what happened before you woke up in that medbay, but you know that your name is Jesse Westcott and you are a Sergeant of the Systems Alliance Marines. Your service number is 6014-AC-7938, and your vocational code is B4-G4-N7. You left Terra Nova a week and a half ago after being reassigned to the *London*. You remember that your last assignment was on the SSV *Marathon*.

No one will tell you what happened to the *Marathon*.

Your omnitool is beeping at you.

JESSE: Ah... How do I? Right, right. Yeah.

DAN: I activate the omnitool.

KAYA: It flickers to life over your arm and informs you that you are to report to the Executive Officer of the *London*. XO Fisher is calling you.

DAN: Yeah. So I'll put—I'll put on my working clothes, my fatigues and... head to where I assume I know [chuckling] XO Fisher is.

KAYA: Okay. So yeah, you find—you find XO Fisher's office. It's got the familiar door panel on it. You press it, it slides open, and XO Fisher is sitting behind her desk. She is a short and broad-shouldered woman with tawny skin, hazel eyes, and a crew cut, which she keeps under a Navy cap at all times. In the time that you've known her, you think you've seen her smile maybe once, and she runs one hell of a tight ship. But she's not unkind. She's just... she's very much a taskmaster. I can't really imagine a better choice for the XO of a Navy cruiser, really. She, like literally every crew member of the *London*, is a veteran of the Reaper War... which you do *not* remember. Whatever you were working on on the *Marathon* was before the Reapers actually came.

Yeah, she sees you walk in and she nods and she says,

FISHER: Sergeant Westcott, please come in.

JESSE: Ma'am.

FISHER: The *London* is going to be undergoing a retrofit and resupply and everyone is going to be getting some time off. However, while the rest of the crew will be informed of this later today, you are going to receive official orders from... a little higher up the chain of command. And seeing as I know you've had some struggles to [carefully choosing her words] *acclimatise* to shipboard life, I decided it would be in our best interests if I informed you privately. Therefore,

KAYA: And she brings up her omnitool and taps on it a little bit and then yours chimes as well,

FISHER: These are the coordinates of Alliance HQ on the Citadel, where we've just docked, and you are to report to Admiral David Anderson. Posthaste would be ideal.

JESSE: Thank you, ma'am. I—I'll do that, right away.

FISHER: Thank you, Sergeant. Dismissed.

DAN: I think Jesse would walk out of the office and like as the door closes behind him, just like very quickly, like give himself a quick pinch be like,

JESSE: What's going on?

DAN: So I'll very quickly go back to my cabin, I guess and,

JESSE: I guess I'll change? I'll... Yeah, alright, I'll change.

KAYA: In the last two months, how much have you tried to figure out about your missing time?

DAN: Yeah, I feel like I'm... I'm doing whatever research I can while being also aware that like—because you said like no one's told me anything? Yeah. And so that does kind of feel like, oh man, I'm, maybe I'm...there's no one here that I can really ask, and so I'll keep this to myself and try and do whatever kind of research I can while being subtle about it.

KAYA: Okay. Do you want to... If you want, you can give me a roll for that. That would probably be, I guess either History or Academics depending on how you were going to approach it.

DAN: Oh yeah. I'll go with Academics. ...That's real bad. [chuckles] I got a five.

KAYA: Okay, well, with the five, I will say that you—you have figured out that it is January 2189 and the Reaper War started in June 2186. You can reasonably safely presume that you were on the *Marathon* some time before that, and so you're missing two and a half to three years.

You know the basics of the Reaper War: the Reapers showed up, wrecked *everybody's* shit, and then Commander Shepard—which is a name that you kind of have, like, this vague recollection of, but you feel like you should know more about her than you do—she...did...*something!* Something happened at Earth in December of 2186, and then the galaxy has spent the last—the time since very slowly rebuilding.

DAN: Do I remember the arrival of the Reapers?

KAYA: You have a very vague memory of something absolutely catastrophic happening that everyone was really, really mad about, but also people were like... sort of... it was—it was sort—it was almost like this performative outrage. But you don't remember *what* it was.

DAN: Okay. Do I remember Admiral Anderson? Is that a name that's familiar to me?

[DAN & KAYA chuckling]

KAYA: Give me another d20 roll.

DAN: A three, unless there's a modifier?

KAYA: Ah hah, no, this is—this is a straight luck check. The name rings a bell. But beyond that? It's—it's like you have all of these memories that are... It's almost, it's—it's on the tip of your tongue...and you can't quite get them out.

DAN: Alright. Jesse grabs, like—changes his clothes, grabs his stuff, starts walking out of his cabin and starts recollecting on all of the information that he's been able to gather so far, which is along the lines of like,

JESSE: Okay, so I've been... I've been awake for like two months, I've been on this ship for a couple weeks, and now I'm getting sent to an admiral. ... That sounds bad.

[KAYA is tickled]

KAYA: Do you want to try looking up said admiral? You do have extranet access.

DAN: Yeah, sure. Sure, yeah. I go, I look up— [deeply amused muttering] Jesus Christ— [aloud] I Wikipedia David Anderson.

[DAN & KAYA amused]

KAYA: Pretty much. I'm not going to make you roll for this. You very quickly find about Admiral David Anderson's service history. He is the head of the Navy Special Operations Fleet. He was one of humanity's first N7 graduates. You know that—that *that* is a point of pride because you are *also* an N7 graduate. What exactly *that* means you don't one hundred percent remember... but you remember being proud of it. You know, as you look this up, that Admiral Anderson was the head of the resistance on Earth during the Reaper War and was at the Battle of London where Commander Shepard did whatever the hell Commander Shepard did to defeat the reapers and save the galaxy.

JESSE: Could they have sent me to someone less intimidating? This feels important. Like, did I do something? I—Yikes.

DAN: Try to like, smooth out my uniform.

KAYA: Straighten out those creases nice and crisp. Yeah.

So you find your way to the docking corridor to the airlock and you exit the *London*. Now you have—you have the dream memories of what you assume to be the *Marathon* or whatever it was that happened before you were out for two and a half years. You remember the ship that saved you, or the ship that you woke up on. You, again, making assumptions—you remember Terra Nova and you remember the *London*. So as you step out of the airlock after the decontamination rays wash over you and the panel slides up, the scope of the space station that you are greeted with... is pretty *spectacular*. You are docked on one of the arms of this immense space station which you remember to be called the Wards.

Welcome to the Citadel!

JESSE: Wow. Big place.

[that your professional opinion, Sarge?]

DAN: I'm going to start walking to—I mean, what, like, disembark? I guess, you know—is, is it the elevator down into C-Sec? Is that, like, kind of what I'm dealing with?

KAYA: That's, that's kind of what you're dealing with, yeah. So you have, you have arrived at—this is the Alliance—the Citadel branch of the Alliance headquarters. And so it's, it's a little bit, yeah, you're like, like the docking bay in the, in the first Mass Effect you disembark from the *London* onto a docking corridor and you will find an elevator at the end of, of whatever platforms are there.

DAN: What does it look like while I'm up there on the dock there? Like, are there a bunch of ships coming by? And, like, you said like I could see the other arms and stuff. But—

KAYA: It's pretty busy. Yeah. You see where—from here you only see Alliance ships docked because this is Alliance HQ. You see a fair few. They're reasonably spaced out. The *London* is the biggest one that you can see in your immediate vicinity. But as far as you can tell, Systems Alliance headquarters takes up a reasonably large chunk. You—you can't see beyond HQ from here. You see the Alliance ships mostly docked. It's reasonably busy.

There's people in uniform bustling about. Nobody's really paying you any mind. You're just one other Alliance serviceman hopping off his ship, doing whatever he's supposed to be doing, and no one is particularly bothered. In the air—or, the 'air' [amused at mistake]—in space above you do see traffic of other ships. It's very, very orderly queues. You can see the one—the largest queue is heading out, and you know that that queue goes to the mass relay that is in the system. And those ships, you see lots of skycars floating by, little X3M's, but you do see ships of other species' fleets. You see turian ships. You see that they're with their angular designs, and you see asari ships and lovely little sleek—all sorts. The Citadel is a busy place!

DAN: Seeing no one taking direct interest in me, I'm just going to kind of awkwardly shuffle off the deck to the elevator. Try and find my way to an admiral.

KAYA: So the message that Fisher sent you did have the directions to the Admiral's office. And so I imagine you remember that as you're in the elevator because they always take forever no matter what. And since you're bored you pull up the message and you go, "Oh, that's where—

DAN: [overlapping scating of Mass Effect elevator music]

KAYA: —I'm supposed to go." [KAYA joins in humming elevator music] Exactly. Exactly. And, you know, occasionally interspersed with the, you know, news flash or what have you. And you don't have anybody to to banter with so you just go sit there on your lonesome. So you—the elevator brings you down into the inside of

a...*building*, really. Like, it's nothing special. You get the sense that the Alliance threw this together pretty quickly. And as you—as you look around, that is sort of a flash of memory of some of the things that you read about the war, which is that Arcturus Station was absolutely *annihilated* in the first hours of the Reaper invasion into the Sol sys—or *through* the Sol System from the Arcturus Cluster—and so the seat of Alliance governance and the Systems Alliance High Command was just *gone*. And after Earth's infrastructure was similarly decimated, the Alliance needed—they needed somewhere to work from, and so that's why they built on Terra Nova, but also on the Citadel.

DAN: What are people talking about as I pass through?

KAYA: Uh, well, roll me I guess a Perception check. See what you hear.

DAN: Nothing. I need new dice. Jesus. I got a *nat one*.

[KAYA chuckling]

DAN: I'm... I'm too nervous.

KAYA: So sad! You hear whispers of this, that, and the other but nothing really catches your ear. You're pretty freaking nervous. You—you don't know why you've gotten to—you've been called to see Admiral Anderson, of all people. Like, there are *few* people in the chain of command who would be more intimidating than Admiral Anderson where you're standing. And so yeah, not surprised that you're a little bit 'tunnel vision'.

You find your way through the Command wing to the coordinates that Fisher gave you, and you are now standing outside of Admiral Anderson's office. You see the little name placard beside the door and the—this door panel is orange. You will have to request entry. It's not just going to immediately let you in.

DAN: So I'm gonna take a beat to like, take a deep breath, gonna straighten out my dress clothes again. Like, make sure I've got everything going. Double check my omnitool like,

JESSE: I'm in the right place right? This—this is the name? Yeah? O—okay.

DAN: And then I guess like, what, do I touch the door to like, announce myself?

KAYA: Yeah, I'm not going to make you hack Anderson's door. [giggling] There's a couple of beats and then it flashes from orange to green and slides open and you are welcomed into Admiral Anderson's office.

DAN: Yeah, so, I'll hesitantly walk in and I don't even know if Jesse would say anything in this moment. It's like—he's intimidated for sure. I think he would like, walk up to the desk, but like, not too close, and just be like, you know, like, a kid in the principal's office. I'm just gonna *be here* and wait for *you*.

KAYA: When you walk in, he—the Admiral is standing with his back to you, looking out over the Ward. And as he hears the door open, he turns around and watches to see what you will do.

DAN: I'll salute kind—like you know, do the kind of straighten out and salute thing. But, like, a little bit slow, just out of like, awkwardness.

JESSE: Sir.

KAYA: His lips twitch toward a smile, but he's keeping calm. He doesn't look—well, give me an Insight check.

DAN: Seventeen.

KAYA: Okay. He is not pissed off. He is like, mildly amused in that sort of like, affectionate way. And so he sees you salute and he nods and motions to the seat in front of his desk and says,

ANDERSON: Have a seat, son.

JESSE: Thank you, sir.

KAYA: Okay, once you have sat, he sits across from you, behind his desk. Then leans forward, puts his elbows on the desk and looks you straight in the eye.

ANDERSON: Thank you for coming, Sergeant. I have read your file and I've no doubt that this was, shall we say... unexpected. Am I right?

JESSE: Yeah. Is everything all right?

ANDERSON: I feel like I should be the one asking *you* that, son. You are certainly not the first case we've had of servicemen and -women who don't remember everything that's happened to them for one reason or another. We understand that this can be *difficult* to deal with. I trust that Lieutenant Commander Fisher told you that the *London* will be undergoing a retrofit and resupply, is that correct?

JESSE: Y—yes, sir.

ANDERSON: What she may not have told you is that after that resupply and retrofit, the *London* will be joining the First Exploratory Fleet. Have you come across that reference in the couple of months that you've been back with us?

JESSE: I—I don't think so.

ANDERSON: That's not surprising. It's been kept fairly quiet so far.

The First Exploratory Fleet is a subfleet of my fleet, of the Sixth Fleet, part of the Special Operations, and it is being headed by Rear Admiral Shepard. The First Exploratory will be exploring uncharted worlds: worlds beyond dormant relays,

worlds in systems as yet undiscovered.

Everyone in—on the *London* will be getting two weeks of shore leave, after which they will be returned to Terra Nova for further training in order to ready them for their duties in the First Exploratory.

You are an exception. You will be getting a month with which you can do what you please.

KAYA: He meets your eyes very levelly and he says,

ANDERSON: Is there anything you want to ask me?

JESSE: As... as you can imagine, this is a little intimidating. I apologise ahead if I speak out of turn or ask a question I'm not supposed to. But I am curious about what happened to me... my squadmates... and the ship.

ANDERSON: Have you attempted to find out about your previous posting from anyone else yet, son?

JESSE: You know, my head is telling me one thing and the people around me didn't really seem to know... what I was talking about.

KAYA: He nods. And again gets that little sort of half smile.

ANDERSON: Well, that's what happens when things get *classified*.

Now, I'm the head of the Navy Special Operations, which you may or may not remember... *However*, I am not in charge of the Office of Naval Intelligence. For information classified by ONI, you will need to speak to that particular chain of command. Usually requests like that take a long time to answer, *but*...

KAYA: He kind of shrugs and you get this little glint in his eye,

ANDERSON: Never hurts to try.

KAYA: You get the feeling that he's telling you that he is not at liberty to say more, but you are on the right track and if you were to push in the right places... he's on your side.

JESSE: Thank you, Sir. ...Why—why are you helping me like this?

KAYA: He thinks about it for a moment.

ANDERSON: To put it simply, son: because I can. I've seen too many good soldiers lose too much to this goddamn war, that when I have the opportunity to put something right, I do my best.

JESSE: Thank you. Are the—are the ONI offices here as well, or?

ANDERSON: Look for the black corridors.

JESSE: Alright. Thank you for your time, sir.

KAYA: He nods, and... I assume you leave.

DAN: Yeah.

JESSE: Okay.... Black corridors....

DAN: I'm gonna start like, looking in the hallway.

KAYA: [chuckling] Okay, so they don't—you don't immediately see any. They're all sort of that, you know, slightly beige-tinted silvery grey like *every other* corridor on the Citadel like... You spot that there are stripes running along the walls. And in this particular corridor, the stripes are red. But when you come to the next one, you see a red going one direction, a blue going another direction, and a black going another direction.

DAN: I'm, I'm gonna, I'm just gonna like, keep looking around the hallway as well and I do—if I don't see anybody I'm just going to walk towards the like, follow the black lines.

KAYA: Okay, so, as you continue down the corridors you notice that the preponderance of uniform colours begins to shift. So most of the people in the wings that you were in to begin with were wearing your standard blue Alliance fatigues as you approach, as you head down these black corridors, they start—they're black now. And you notice that the insignia are shifting from the standard Systems Alliance insignia to one that you don't immediately recognise, but based on your context clues, you assume that these are naval intelligence officers.

DAN: Are they looking at me?

KAYA: You are starting to get *curious* looks. Nobody's like, "What the hell are you doing here?" But they're kind of like... First they look at you, like, "Why is a *Sergeant* in the *Marines* wandering"—and *then* they notice the N7 patch on your uniform and they go, "Oh," and they walk on.

DAN: Just going to, like, absentmindedly tap it and keep walking.

KAYA: [chuckles of approval] Also, the number of people you are seeing has dropped. So in the initial wing, you know, when you saw the most people, and in the docks. Obviously that's where most of the business is going on. In the Command Wing, you saw fewer people, but still, like, pretty hustle and bustle. And now here in the ONI Wing, it's *quiet*. And there's a desk that looks like it should be a reception desk but nobody's there...

DAN: [laughs] Suddenly having this feeling like, “Oh man, I should have made, like, an appointment or something. I just walked down the hallway. I—what am I going to do? Tell him that I’m—I’m here to see Naval Intelligence? What?” I think like, Jesse is kind of looking at the desk and he looks around and he’s going to like... I like put my omnitool forward like, is it like, a—

[KAYA amused at Jesse’s confusion]

DAN: —motion sen—is there a VI here?

KAYA: [talks through amusement] As you come up and you move to wave your, yes, a hologram pops up behind the desk. And it’s—it is a human woman. She is in an officer’s uniform. She is—she’s very clearly holographic and not like her facial and bodily features are very, very synthetic. Like you wouldn’t be able to place—this is not an avatar of any particular person. It’s essentially like a mannequin in a uniform.

DAN: Mm.

KAYA: And so, as you approach and you—she pops up and says,

AMI: Welcome to the Office of Naval Intelligence. My name is AMI. How may I help you?

JESSE: I was referred here by Admiral Anderson?

AMI: I see. And did the Admiral recommend that you speak to anyone in particular?

JESSE: [pauses] No, I, I don’t think... No, he did not give me a name...

AMI: For what purpose do you seek assistance?

JESSE: I’m sorry, I’m—I’m a little bit... I’m a little bit nervous. My—the reason I’m here is to get some information based off of my... injuries prior to the war. I was in a coma and there are things that I remember from the incident that the people in the hospital weren’t able to confirm, and I was referred to come here.

AMI: I see. Where were you posted prior to the war?

JESSE: Do you mean *location* or *ship*?

KAYA: She tilts her head. And I would like you to give me an Insight check.

DAN: Yeah. Ten.

KAYA: Okay. It strikes you as a little bit odd that a VI would do that... but you’re a little too nervous to really dig into that right now. But it does strike you as an odd affectation. She tilts her head and she looks at you for a second and she says,

AMI: Pardon me, I did not mean to confuse you. Do you recall the ship on which you were previously posted?

JESSE: Yes.

AMI: What was its designation?

JESSE: The SSV *Marathon*.

KAYA: She tilts her head in the *other* direction and says,

AMI: Processing.

KAYA: Then she straightens up and points toward the hall behind her.

AMI: Admiral Hackett wishes to speak with you.

JESSE: Thank you.

AMI: Have a pleasant day.

KAYA: And she disappears.

JESSE: You too. ...O—*kay*... Little rude...

[DAN & KAYA burst out laughing]

DAN: Is the door like, to an office or is it to, like, another section?

KAYA: [overlapping] No, it is to a corridor. It's to another section, yeah.

DAN: Just going to, like, really kind of subtly bring up my omnitool and Wikipedia Admiral... Admiral Hackett.

JESSE: Two Admirals in one day, oh shit.

KAYA: [fighting a smile] Yeah, so you very quickly find out that Admiral Hackett is the head of the Fifth Fleet *and* Commander in Chief of the Office of Naval Intelligence. He was Fleet Admiral Hackett during the Reaper War and is kind of like the... *big kahuna* of the Alliance. *Yeahhh*.

DAN: Yeah. I like that. Big kahuna. Just like... scribbling that down digitally: "Don't say 'big kahuna'."

[KAYA cacklin']

JESSE: Why are people letting me talk to these people?

KAYA: Good question!

DAN: I'm just like, in my head, thinking, like, "Do they not have secretaries?"

KAYA: [gleeful giggling] They don't have the personnel for that anymore. They probably used to.

JESSE: All right, yeah. This day is weird. Let's... let's keep going.

KAYA: "What else am I going to do?" Right? Okay, so you make your way down the hallway and again, you see, like, there's the nameplates on the doors. These are some real high-ranking folks down this corridor and you eventually come to the end of the corridor where you see 'Admiral Steven Hackett' on the placard beside the door.

JESSE: Smooth out the uniform one more time. I'm doing these hand motions and remembering, I'm not recording my film, I'm only recording my audio! So yeah, smooth out—smooth out the uniform, straighten out, make sure the omnitool is *off*, like, you know, put it on silent.

KAYA: [laughs loudly before imitating vibration] Bzzt, bzzt! Bzzt, bzzt! Crap!—

DAN: [overlapping] Sorry!

KAYA: [overlapping] —Sorry! Shit!

DAN: Yeah, I guess I'll, like, put my hand, my omnitool back up to the door and I'm like, seriously looking around like:

JESSE: No one is going to stop me? Okay?

KAYA: [composes self] Okay, so the door panel—which is also orange, as was Anderson's—it takes a second, then flashes green and opens up, and if this isn't Admiral Steven Hackett's secretary, then Admiral Steven Hackett looks a *lot* different than his Wikipedia page! [KAYA & DAN chuckling] This is—there's a—an older woman, probably like older, middle-aged, sitting behind a desk and honestly she looks even *more* intimidating than Hackett's photo did? Like, this is the kind of—this is the kind of lady that you do not piss off! And it's no surprise that she's *Hackett's* secretary.

And when the door opens and she looks at you, that—that if looks could, like... she's *skewering you to the wall* with her eyes. And it's not anger. It's just, it's this immediate, piercing—like she's laid your soul *bare*. This woman is clearly very, very good at her job. She looks at you and you can read the, "Why the hell are you here?" before she even opens her mouth. But when she does, she says,

ANITA: May I help you?

DAN: I feel like there's a brief moment where Jesse just starts to, like, turn around and walk away.

[KAYA overlapping amusement]

DAN: He's just like,

JESSE: Uh, no,

DAN: And like, steels himself and approaches to answer the question. But there's like, a real feeling of like, "I don't belong here." He'll walk up to her and,

JESSE: I just had a—a—a meeting with Admiral Anderson and he referred me to this office.

KAYA: She tilts her head very slightly and then, without moving, her eyes flick down to the console in front of her. And there's just this moment of: you know that she has a list, and *you ain't on it!*

But before she can say anything there, the door behind her slides open and the man that you were *expecting* to see when you walked in is standing there and he looks at you and he says,

HACKETT: It's alright, Anita. I knew he was coming. Come on in, son.

JESSE: [hallelujah I'm saved] Thank you. Thank you. [please don't kill me] Sorry.

KAYA: Anita just watches you the whole way by as you follow Hackett in.

Hackett's office is similar to Anderson's. It is a little bigger, and there are definitely—there are filing cabinets in this room which are very definitely locked. And like you—this is a working office, Anderson's office was a receiving office. Anderson spends most of his time on the ships out and about. Hackett spends more time doing the onerous paperwork of running a *goddamn fleet*, and you can tell that this is—this is a place where he actually works. There are datapads out on the desk and on the table, all of which are very carefully blank-faced, and the window? While it is technically open, it does seem to be dimmed somehow. So you kind of get, like, the feeling like it's sort of like a one-way thing. Hackett can see out, but other folks wouldn't be able to see in.

As you walk in, Hackett comes to a stop about in the center of the room, puts his hands behind his back, and he's not facing you. He's facing away from you, facing the window. And he says,

HACKETT: I understand David sent you my way. I'm not certain I can help you, son, but we'll see.

JESSE: Thank you for... Thank you for receiving me. I appreciate your time.

I've—I've only been, it feels like, awake for a couple months now and... Again, Sir, sorry if I speak out of line a little bit, but the galaxy has changed a lot since whatever happened to me happened and... Well, I—I've just been on, been put

on shore leave, apparently? And I—I wanted to use that time to straighten myself out trying to figure out what exactly happened to me and *everything*, apparently.

I understand that you're busy and have so many more important things to do than talk to me, but well, I—I was lucky enough to catch the attention of someone who cared about me and sent me in your direction, and I hope that there are some answers that you feel you *can* give me, and I'm willing to work for them if... you need me to.

KAYA: Hackett does not immediately respond. So he just—he listens, and then he pivots slightly and kind of looks at you out of the corner of his eye. And then he turns all the way around and faces you.

HACKETT: You were on the *Marathon*, weren't you, son?

JESSE: Yes.

KAYA: He nods.

HACKETT: I'm very sorry, son, but that is strictly classified.

JESSE: Sir, with all due respect... and you're due *a lot*... I don't remember everything, but I remember I was on that ship, and I remember that there was a distress call. And... I remember who I found when I got there.

KAYA: His eyebrow twitches as you say that.

HACKETT: Go on.

JESSE: I have questions. I... We received a distress call, but there weren't organics on the ship when we landed. There... was...

DAN: Do I get a sense that he would like, get pissed if I say the name of the people who were attacking?

KAYA: Uh, you would have to do—that would be another Insight check.

DAN: A sixteen.

KAYA: [yes, the DC really was higher than that] Alas and alack, Hackett's *really fuckin' hard to read*.

DAN: [overlapping] Yeah. Yeah.

KAYA: But that goes both ways. So as you're talking, as you're kind of working this out, his face is *not shifting*. So neither is he pleased, nor is he angry. He is placid and neutral, and, like, you *understand* on a very sort of gut level, why *this man* was able to bring humanity *through the war*. Like if anybody was going to be able to do that from, like, a logistical and 'keep everybody from running around like

chickens with their head cut off' standpoint, this is the guy.

So you don't think that he's the sort to blow his top. If he gets mad at you, he's going to be very considerate about what he does with that. But you can't tell if he's mad at you.

DAN: Okay.

JESSE: Sir, very respectfully, a lot of people gave everything to save my life. *I shouldn't be here*. I—and I can't even say that I got lucky. I got... I mean, I guess I don't know how lucky I am because I can't remember what happened once I went down. But I know that there were people who I was with who are not here anymore and... I... Whatever was on that ship—whatever *Cerberus* was there for—I want to help track it down. Whatever it is, I don't think they should have it. And I just... Look, I—I don't expect you to know me or know anything about me but...

DAN: I would say that there's, like, some struggle here with Jesse, because he's, like, pulling on these memories that are *there but not there*—

KAYA: [interjecting] Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

DAN: —and things that are like coming to him in the moment. He's trying to process at the *same time*. And so he like, pulls on this one thread about like, how people like, referred to him and he *thinks* it's like a friendly thing because he like, has these images of like, almost like palling around with people? But like, can't really put faces to any of those people. And so he's like,

JESSE: I used to, like, charge into battle. I used to be the person at the front lines and I... I don't think I'm that person anymore. I think I want to be... I think I want to be the *wall* that protects the people behind me. And I don't think I could do that from, like, a hospital or a rehab facility or two months of shore leave or—or whatever it—whatever it is... like, I want to be out there. I think I could be an asset to you, and I think it could help me get the answers that I'm looking for.

KAYA: You just scored yourself five Paragon points.

DAN: Oh dang.

KAYA: I *knew* I would love playing this game with people! That is exactly the moment that's like, "Oh, you picked the Charm option on the wheel!"

[DAN & KAYA pleased, acknowledging giggling]

KAYA: So Hackett—Hackett listens to this and again doesn't react beyond like, this little twitch of his eyebrow. But it's a good twitch, like you get the feeling it's a *good* twitch and he—he listens to you very carefully. And he says,

HACKETT: I can respect that.

Since you are on shore leave for the time being, I cannot officially sanction any operations in this arena. However, I can tell you—and I trust that you will understand this information is strictly classified—I *can* tell you that the *Marathon* is currently in possession of a group called Minos. We do not yet know where they are keeping her. We do not yet know when they came into possession of her. And that is all I can tell you with reasonable certainty at this time.

I believe you when you say that you wish to be a wall between the innocent and those who would harm them. And again, I can respect that. Therefore: I will, for the time being, turn a blind eye to your activities in this investigation. I cannot promise you resources, but I can promise that any communiqués that cross my desk, I will give the attention they deserve. And should anything come my way that would be advantageous for you to know, I will endeavor to forward it to you.

JESSE: ... Thank you so much.

HACKETT: Is there anything else?

JESSE: [hesitantly] Did anybody else make it off?

HACKETT: Not that we are currently aware of, Sergeant.

JESSE: Thank you.

HACKETT: Dismissed.

JESSE: Sir.

VI: You have been listening to *I Should Roll, Dangerous Dangers*, Minisode One: *Jesse's No Good, Very Bad Day*.

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