

FATHOM - EPISODE THREE
"Wolves"

by
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NOWHERE

A high pitched tone fills everything. Over it, eventually, Eva's breathing.

And something else.

A little girl. LAUGHING. Joyfully.

VOICES. Dozens of them. Growing louder.

EVA (O.S.)
I can't...do this again.

The sound of a life support system. A heart rate monitor. Beeping.

VOICES. Hundreds of them. Growing louder.

Moments replay, in the distance. The far distance.

EVA (O.S.)
I can't live with more of it.

The heart rate monitor. Beeping. And then...not beeping. Flat lining.

EVA (O.S.)
It's not fair...

FREEMAN (O.S.)
Fair... Fair's got nothing to do with it. Not part of the deal...

VOICES. Thousands of them. Growing louder.

The laughing of the girl.

And then everything comes rushing back.

EXT. FATHOM - WEST PLATFORM - CONTROL CAPSULE

Eva gasps in fear. Alarms sound in her helmet.

EVA
Mack I can't move! Are you--

A sonar ping-like sound. It comes once, then fades away. The proximity motion detector.

EVA
Oh, no...

Eva groans hard as she tries to move. We hear the suit's actuators groan too, hear the metal debris pinning her bend...but not give.

It all falls back on her. She is trapped.

Another ping. Another.

EVA
No, no, no...

The pings, as we listen, become quicker in frequency. Repeating faster and faster.

EVA
Mack!

MACK
Dr. Graff, are you injured? I detect--

EVA
Mack, what the hell is that?

MACK
I still do not know, but I can now detect an electromagnetic signature oscillating in an arc 88 degrees in front of--

EVA
Mack, shut off these alarms.

The alarms go silent in her helmet.

EVA
Are you saying it's some kind of machine?

MACK
Very little that is not mechanized can function at this depth, Dr. Graff. I believe it has electronic sensory apparatuses, that are scanning for the signature of your dive suit.

The pinging comes faster and faster...

Whatever is out there...it's coming closer.

EVA
It's homing in on me?

MACK

It already has, Dr. Graff.

Eva's breathing picks up, faster and faster. And then we hear a new sound. A mechanical humming, just on the other side of the debris.

We hear switches and confirmation tones. The static from the radio. Then...

EVA

Hello? Is someone outside the Western platform? This is Eva Graff, do you read?

Just static in response. The humming is growing.

EVA

This is Dr. Eva Graff, I'm trapped in the rubble of the Control platform. I can hear you outside, do you read me?

Just static, again.

The humming, on the other side of the debris goes silent. We hear Eva's breathing as she listens, waits.

More static.

EVA

Mack, is there anything that--

A loud, burst of sparks explodes to life right outside Eva's helmet. She yells in fright. The rubble shifts.

EVA

Mack, what is that?

MACK

It is a thermite torch, Dr. Graff. The object appears to be cutting into the debris.

Eva hits transmit.

EVA

Whoever you are, you're going to cut right into my helmet! Do you read?

The sparks of the cutting torch are getting closer. They don't stop.

EVA

Mack, either it can't hear me, or whoever's running it doesn't care.

MACK

I concur, Dr. Graff. There is one advantage to the situation, however.

EVA

What?!

MACK

The use of the torch has likely weakened the surrounding debris. You may now be able to push free.

The debris groans around her.

EVA

Or bring what's left down on top of me.

MACK

That is a possibility, Dr. Graff.

The torch keeps cutting.

EVA

Let's do it...

The suit strains again, we hear the servos whine. The debris shifts and moves, even more, and this time it sounds bad. It creaks and groans, begins to collapse.

EVA

Mack, I think I have it off, but I can't exactly wiggle my hips in this thing to slide out!

MACK

Remain calm, Dr. Graff. Keep exerting pressure upwards.

There are beeps from inside the suit, confirmation tones. Then we hear the whining of the maneuvering jets.

The suit starts to slide to the right.

EVA

Mack! The torch!

EVA
Remain calm, Dr. Graff. Keep
exerting pressure upwards.

The suit slides over the ground...and then the debris
collapses just to the side of the suit. Violently. Coming
apart.

Then we are in...

INT. RUINED CONTROL CAPSULE

The jets whine down, but now there are alarm buzzers
sounding in the helmet.

EVA
Mack, what did you do?

MACK
I activated the suit's maneuvering
jets, Dr. Graff. I hoped the
thrust would be enough to slide
you laterally along the ground out
from under the debris.

EVA
Thanks Mack... It--

The sound of crashing debris. Then of something pushing
through into what's left of the control capsule.

And then a new sound. One we recognize.

Footsteps. Heavy metallic ones. Coming closer.

Eva gasps.

EVA
Oh... Mack.

MACK
I'm here, Dr. Graff.

The footsteps keep coming. Louder. Closer.

EVA
It's...it's another DEMES. It's
another suit.

MACK
That explains a great many things,
Dr. Graff.

EVA
Who's operating it?

MACK
I can make no electronic
connection with this suit, Dr.
Graff. It appears to be operating
off network.

The suit keeps moving towards us.

EVA
(scared)
Mack, it's not stopping, it's
coming right at me...

The other suit keeps coming. The pinging is one long tone.

EVA
Does this suit have any weapons?

MACK
No, Dr. Graff. It is equipped with
tools only.

EVA
What about those, then? Anything I
could use to defend myself?

MACK
The suit is equipped with a
cutting torch, a drill, a metal
cutting saw, a--

EVA
Get me the torch! Or the saw!

MACK
Activating your suit's metal saw,
Dr. Graff. Be careful with its
operation.

The sound of the metal saw deploying from her suit's arm.

It whines, coming to life. Eva raises the saw up in the
water. It churns in front of her.

The other DEMES doesn't seem to care. It takes another
step. Another. Another.

Then comes to a stop.

There are no more footfalls.

Eva's saw whines a few seconds more...then cuts off.

We hear Eva's breathing. Frightened and tense. She stares at the suit standing right above front of her. Unmoving.

MACK

Dr. Graff?

Eva just keeps staring, afraid to move. But the other DEMES is motionless.

MACK

Dr. Graff?

EVA

Mack...put the saw away and turn off the alarms.

We hear the saw return to its slot in the suit's arm. The pinging of the motion detector silences in the helmet. There's just the sounds of the suit's interior now, and Eva's breathing.

MACK

Are you alright, Dr. Graff?

EVA

Yeah... The other suit...it's just standing there. It's not moving anymore.

MACK

I do not understand, Dr. Graff. The other DEMES is motionless?

EVA

Yes. In the water, right in front of me. It's not moving. It's not doing anything.

A pause from Mack, then...

MACK

Dr. Graff, does the suit have yellow lights illuminated on its exterior?

EVA

Yeah. Yeah, they're flashing yellow.

MACK

I believe I know what is occurring, Dr. Graff.

EVA

I'm glad one of us does...

MACK

I believe the DEMES in front of you is in Emergency Recall Mode. In the event its occupant is incapacitated, a dive suit will engage automated travel, and seek out the nearest active DEMES for recovery.

EVA

Me. In other words...

MACK

Yes, Dr. Graff. This suit was automatically drawn to you, as the only other DEMES active outside Fathom Base. It is programmed to do anything necessary to reach another dive suit, including operating its tool set.

Eva breathes a tremendous sigh of relief.

EVA

Oh, God... Oh, wow...

MACK

Are you hurt, Dr. Graff?

EVA

No, I'm okay. I'm okay...

Eva breathes out, her pulse slowing down.

EVA

Mack... Who's inside this DEMES?

MACK

I still cannot detect the operator, Dr. Graff. My access to diagnostic and metric information is severely limited.

EVA

Well... Let's find out. Assuming I get this suit back up.

Eva's suit rises to a standing position.

MACK

Were you able to realign your posture, Dr. Graff?

EVA

Yeah, I'm back on my feet again.

MACK

Your suit has been through a great deal, Dr. Graff. I suggest running system diagnostics before moving further.

The sound of a confirmation tone in Eva's helmet. Then...

COMPUTER VOICE

This DEMES is operating at 64% efficiency. Warning. Suit hydraulics compromised. Suit circuitry pathways compromised. Left leg extremity damaged. Left arm extremity damaged. Warning.

EVA

Not horrible, it doesn't sound like. These things are tough huh?

MACK

Deep Environment Mechanized Equipment Suits are based on Maas-Dorian combat platforms designed for heavy military applications. They are very solidly constructed.

Eva's DEMES starts to move.

EVA

Approaching the other DEMES.

It takes a step forward. Another one. It stops as it reaches the other DEMES.

EVA

The, uh...the helmet visor has a lot of gunk on it. Going to wipe it. Trying. Maybe I can see...

We hear the sound of Eva's suit's hands streaking across the glass of the other DEMES.

Eva gasps as she sees inside the other suit.

EVA

Oh, Mack...

MACK

Dr. Graff?

EVA

It's...it's Emerson.

MACK

Brynn Emerson, Dr. Graff?

EVA

Yes. She's been missing for twelve hours, why is she in a suit? Why is she outside?

MACK

I cannot collate a hypothesis, Dr. Graff. The last interaction I had with Ms. Emerson was in my Mainframe Capsule. She was running diagnostics on my systems, but could not find any explanation as to my erratic behavior.

EVA

Is there any benefit to analyzing your mainframe from outside?

MACK

Several. As Fathom's primary V.I. engineer, she could access the direct access ports on the capsule's exterior. This would allow her a high throughput connection with very low latency to my memory core. But I have no recollection of interacting with Ms. Emerson outside my mainframe in this way.

EVA

Is she... Can you tell if she's alive?

MACK

It is possible, if you plug your suit's data cable into Ms. Emerson's proxy port, Dr. Graff. The cable extends from your left arm. The requisite port will be on the same arm of the opposite DEMES.

EVA

Okay, hold on.

We hear the sound of a cable stretching out from the suit.
We hear it plug in.

EVA

I think I got it, Mack.

Confirmation tones from the computer. Data scrolling.

MACK

Ms. Emerson is alive, Dr. Graff,
but her biometrics are weak.
Examining the DEMES's biologs, I
see her condition has been
deteriorating for several hours.
My estimation is that Ms. Emerson
will expire if she does not
receive medical attention soon.

EVA

I can only...see her face, but
that looks normal. No blood, no
sign of injuries. But she's
definitely unconscious.

(then)

Does the event log say anything
about what happened?

MACK

I'm sorry, Dr. Graff. I cannot
access this DEMES's event log.

EVA

What about diagnostics? Can you
read that?

MACK

Critical systems only, Dr. Graff.
The suit battery is at forty one
percent capacity. And the suit's
atmosphere is at thirty four
percent capacity, or 1,629 PSI.

Eva sighs wearily.

EVA

We have to...get her out of here.

MACK

What is your current location, Dr.
Graff?

EVA

Um...

The suit moves, turns.

EVA

I'm inside what's left of the Control Capsule, Mack. The floor fell on top of me. The ceiling's split open, the whole thing's flooded, obviously. But the walls are intact.

MACK

The interior of the Fathom platforms were designed to accommodate the size and weight of Deep Environment Mechanized Equipment Suits, Dr. Graff, in case of flooding.

EVA

How does that help me?

MACK

You can navigate the interior walkways to the tram capsule, Dr. Graff.

EVA

The passenger tram? That can't still be running.

MACK

No, Dr. Graff, but if you can reach the cargo tram, you can use it to travel to the northern platform. I detect that it has not suffered the same amount of damage as the western platform, many capsules are still pressurized. There will likely be survivors present.

EVA

And Emerson's suit, it will just...what? Follow along after me?

MACK

Correct, Dr. Graff. DEMESs in Recovery Mode automate their functions to follow a nearby dive suit to safety. It will follow and mirror your movements until it is powered down.

EVA

(weary)

Okay. The pressure door to the tramway is sealed, though. Without power, how do I open it?

MACK

All pressure doors in Fathom are capable of being manually opened by a DEMES, Dr. Graff, using the override hydraulic cranks. I can walk you through the procedure.

EVA

Okay, heading for the door...

Eva's suit starts moving. We hear Emerson's doing the same, following.

MACK

The manual operation interface is attached on the wall perpendicular and to the left of the pressure door, Dr. Graff. It is painted yellow.

EVA

I see it. Always wondered what these things were.

The suit keeps moving.

EVA

You're right, Mack. Emerson's suit is following along right behind me. It's like having a giant metal puppy.

The suits stop moving. We hear the panel open up in the water.

EVA

It's open. There's a handle inside. A thick handle.

MACK

Grab the handle with the suit's right fist.

We hear the suit grab the handle.

EVA

Got it.

MACK

Look for the commands for the Manual Pressure Door Control in your HUD, Dr. Graff. When you find it, run the 'Open' procedure.

EVA

See it...

Confirmation tones from Eva's HUD, then we hear the fist of the suit begin to spin in place, acting as a crank.

EVA

Whoa. What's it doing?

MACK

The wrist and hand appendages of the DEMES can rotate in a torsion movement, much like the head of a drill. It will crank the door open, remain still until it does.

We hear large gears behind the walls crank. Hear the giant pressure door rising up into the ceiling.

The door keeps rising. Then it stops in its tracks with a solid thud.

EVA

Got it, I think. I can just release the handle?

MACK

Correct, Dr. Graff. The pressure door will remain open, unless you reverse the procedure in the same manner.

We hear Eva's suit unclasp from the handle, then hear it move forward. Seconds later, so does Emerson's suit behind.

INT. NORTH TRAMWAY

We hear the two DEMES move inside the hallway.

EVA

Okay, Mack I'm--

Then we hear them moving as Eva gasps slightly.

MACK

Is everything alright, Dr. Graff?

EVA

There's...

MACK

Dr. Graff?

EVA

Bodies, Mack. A dozen. Maybe more.
Floating here.

(then)

They must have... They were all
trying to get to the tram. They
didn't make it.

The two DEMES move again, slowly, through the bodies.

EVA

I knew...all of these people,
Mack. Half of them were on my
team. Half of those...I didn't
even know their names. They were
more like... computers to me,
really. Some of them I don't think
I ever even spoke to...

MACK

You must feel very distraught
right now, Dr. Graff.

The DEMES keeps moving. The bulkheads mourn woefully. We
hear the sound of the bodies bouncing off the suit as Eva
moves through them.

EVA

That's just it, Mack.

(then)

I have my lights on, I'm making
myself look. At each of their
faces. I'm trying to find it, but
it's not there.

MACK

What, Dr. Graff?

EVA

Anything. I don't feel distraught.
Or scared. I don't really even
feel sad.

(then)

Shouldn't I? Shouldn't I be
horrified? Shouldn't I be crying,
Mack?

MACK

The loss of Commander Freeman has exerted a trauma similar to one you have already experienced, Dr. Graff.

EVA

You're right. I couldn't save him. Just like I couldn't...

MACK

Commander Freeman's sacrifice resulted in the saving of many lives, Dr. Graff. Does that not inform the decision? Is that not...a rationalization?

EVA

A necessary evil, Mack?

MACK

If something is necessary, Dr. Graff, it cannot be evil. You had no choice in your actions in regards to Commander Freeman. As such...morality does not factor in to the equation.

EVA

Taking Emerson to North, means taking myself too. It means rescue. It means going back to the surface. And...I know it's what I'm supposed to do. I know I'm supposed to go home and get my life together and fix what's broken, but...

(then)

I think that will be the end of me. I think that's something I can't survive.

MACK

I have observed, in humans, that different people recover from trauma in different ways, sometimes outside of established norms. If I were to be honest, Dr. Graff, I believe leaving Fathom would be a tremendous error in judgement.

EVA

But there's no way, Mack. Agent Blayne was right. All M-D cares about is results. And I haven't had enough.

MACK

If that is the case, Dr. Graff, then the solution seems obvious. Produce more results.

EVA

And...how would I do that, Mack?

MACK

The plan you discussed with Commander Freeman. To journey to the relay, and use its controls locally. To broadcast the solution signal that you deciphered.

Eva's breathing is audible.

EVA

Are you suggesting...instead of going to the northern platform, instead of being evacuated...I go to the relay? Are you suggesting that I...open the Vault?

MACK

Yes, Dr. Graff. That is exactly what I am proposing.

EVA

But the reactor's gone, there's no way to power the relay.

MACK

The primary reactor is gone, Dr. Graff, but the relay could be restored to operation by reaching the Southern platform.

EVA

The Southern platform is mothballed. It's the original platform, it's just storage now.

MACK

And as the original platform, it is self contained.

(MORE)

MACK (CONT'D)

It has its own reactor, smaller than the one lost here, but certainly enough to power the relay.

Eva is quiet.

MACK

You articulated it yourself. The Maas-Dorian corporation rewards ambition. It rewards it above everything.

(then)

Would opening the Vault not be considered a tremendous success, Dr. Graff?

EVA

It would...

MACK

Would it not be enough to guarantee your reinstatement as project lead?

EVA

Yes, I believe it would...

MACK

By my calculations, traveling in a straight line from the east platform, you have just enough atmosphere and power to reach the south platform.

EVA

In a straight line. On the surface. But that would mean...

MACK

Yes, Dr. Graff. It would mean crossing the Vault.

Eva shudders.

MACK

But you would only have to cross its edge, you would not need to journey into the center where the radiation is most extreme. I believe your chances of survival are high, but you will need one more asset.

EVA

What?

MACK

You will need Ms. Emerson, Dr. Graff.

EVA

Emerson?

MACK

Two DEMES can share atmosphere and power between them, in a process called Tethering. You will need the atmosphere and power from Ms. Emerson's suit to survive the trek. You do not have enough of your own.

EVA

But... Wait. There's no...medical care on the southern platform, no doctors, it's empty, it's...

MACK

There is a medical bay on the platform, Dr. Graff. You could activate the automated systems to treat Ms. Emerson until further help can arrive. I predict her chances of survival are near fifty percent in that case.

Eva thinks on all of this. Then...

EVA

No. No, Mack...

(then)

That...wouldn't be right.

MACK

So it is because it is what is expected of you? Just like going home, Dr. Graff? You believe it is what you are "supposed" to do.

EVA

That's not...

MACK

If I may be so bold, Dr. Graff, does ambition not require that one do more than what is simply expected of them? Does it not require risks? Initiative? Is it possible you have become used to doing only what you are supposed to do? By your intellectual inferiors? By Maas-Dorian? By your wife? If you truly wish to remain here, to keep your authority, I believe you must act boldly.

Eva is thoughtful, unsure.

EVA

It...it would show them, wouldn't it? It would...fix things. It would fix everything...

MACK

I will help you, Dr. Graff. Together, we can illustrate your true value.

Eva thinks for a long moment.

EVA

If something's necessary...it can't be evil.

MACK

Precisely, Dr. Graff. It is a simple calculus.

Another moment. Then...

EVA

Show me how to tether the suits, Mack.

MACK

Of course, Dr. Graff. The procedure is not complicated.

EXT. OCEAN BOTTOM

The sound of a dive suit moving slowly fades in. Then the sound of a second suit, following behind.

MACK

Dr. Graff, you are moving ahead of pace. I suggest slowing your movement to conserve atmosphere and battery power.

When Eva speaks, she sounds slightly winded.

EVA

Don't really have a speedometer here, Mack.

(then)

Surprised...at the effort it takes to move this thing, though.

MACK

Moving the DEMES requires you to actuate it, Dr. Graff. It will drain your energy just as normal walking would. Which is why I recommend slowing your pace so that you do not over exert yourself.

EVA

I'm fine, Mack. I just want out of this suit. I just want this over with.

(then)

I can't see anything. My lights do nothing. With the reactor down, it's just...pitch black now.

(then)

What's our status?

MACK

The atmosphere you are sharing with Ms. Emerson is now at 46% capacity, Dr. Graff, down thirteen percent since the last check. Energy levels are at 52% capacity.

EVA

And... How's Emerson?

MACK

Ms. Emerson's life signs continue to deteriorate. She is still unresponsive.

EVA

Do you have any idea what caused her condition? How she got hurt, I mean?

MACK

I have been studying the DEMES's diagnostics, and the condition of its circuitry indicates it experienced an electrical overload lasting some tens of seconds.

EVA

She was electrocuted? Inside the suit?

MACK

I believe so, Dr. Graff.

EVA

Well, that explains the lack of visible trauma.

MACK

Yes. More than likely, the majority of her injuries are internal.

The sounds of Eva's suit's feet on the ocean floor abruptly switch to something else.

The sounds of Eva's suit's feet on metal. Thick metal.

There is a slight, frightened intake of breath from Eva. The suits stop moving.

EVA

Mack...

(then)

I'm here. Aren't I?

MACK

Yes, Dr. Graff. You have reached the precipice of the Vault.

EVA

I can see it... Somehow.

(then)

Everything in front of me is... darker.

MACK

Is it not magnificent, Dr Graff? Perfect.

EVA

I felt that way once. But now...

(then)

I can't stop thinking about Joe. I can't stop feeling the handle in my hands. I can't...

(then)

I'm scared, Mack.

MACK

Of what, Dr. Graff?

EVA

That it's too much. That Joe was the last straw.

(then)

I'm scared...that it broke me.

Eva stares at the darkness in front of her.

EVA

One time...when I was young...I got lost in the woods. At night. In winter. I was...maybe twelve. I'd been out with my brother, and we lost each other. I yelled for him, over and over, but he never responded. Never called back. So I set out alone.

(then)

I started at this rock formation, in the middle of the trees. I remember it because the rock, it looked like the back of an angel, with her wings tucked in. At least I thought so. I wandered off from there, the trees were so tall, you couldn't even see the stars. I'm not sure which way I went.

(then)

The first hour or so, I was hopeful I would find someone or someone would find me. When no one did, and I was deeper into the woods...I was terrified. For hours. Walking. Looking at every shadow. Listening to every sound.

(then)

One sound in particular. I'd never really heard it before, but I still knew what it was. I think there must be some old, primal part of ourselves that recognizes it. Knows it.

MACK

What was it, Dr. Graff?

EVA

Wolves. It was wolves, Mack. Far off. A pack of them. Every time I heard the howls, this flash of cold ran through me. And...no matter how far I walked, however much time passed, whenever I heard the wolves...they sounded the same. No farther, no closer. The same distance away. It made it feel like I wasn't going anywhere. Like I wasn't really moving.

(then)

That's when I found it again.

MACK

Found what, Dr. Graff?

EVA

The angel. The same rock where I'd started. The truth was, I hadn't gone anywhere. I was no closer to home. I'd just gone in circles.

(then)

I sat down then, put my back against the rock, shivering, and...I wasn't scared anymore. And I knew why. I wasn't scared because...I knew the truth. That I wasn't going home. That I was never leaving that place. That no one would find me.

(then)

It felt good admitting it. It was like...admitting it let all the weight fall off. I could just sit there. Sit there and...let the wolves come.

MACK

How did you escape, Dr. Graff?

EVA

Forest rangers and my dad found me, curled up against the angel, hours later.

(then)

Do you know what's strange, though, Mack?

MACK

What is that, Dr. Graff?

EVA

The wolves never came. Once I gave in, once I stopped being scared...I never heard them again. They were just gone.

MACK

Is that how you feel now, Dr. Graff? As if you have given in?

EVA

No...

(then)

But I think I want to.

There is a slight intake of breath from Eva as she sees something in the distance.

MACK

What is it, Dr. Graff?

EVA

Lights. Lights just came on. In the distance. Across the Vault...

(then)

It must be the North platform. It's powered now.

MACK

I can detect that someone has activated the platform's emergency generators, Dr. Graff. It is a positive sign.

EVA

Survivors... People made it. People are alive...

MACK

Yes, Dr. Graff. But you are running out of atmosphere and energy, and Ms. Emerson's condition continues to deteriorate. You must reach the Southern platform as quickly as possible.

A pause as Eva considers the darkness in front of her.

EVA

There won't be any lights on the Southern platform, though. How do I find it in this?

There is a tone from Eva's HUD.

MACK

I have placed a waypoint in your HUD, Dr. Graff. Move towards it. Once you reach it I will place further waypoints to continue guiding you.

EVA

And the radiation of the Vault? Even on the edge, I'm going to hit it, right?

MACK

Yes, Dr. Graff. There will be radiation. But it is at its most intense in the Vault's center, where it has been measured as much as eleven thousand millisieverts. As long as you receive anti-radiation medication at the South platform, you should suffer no long lasting health effects.

EVA

And there are anti-rad hypos there?

MACK

My storage logs for the Southern platform indicate there are thirty doses contained in its medical bay, Dr. Graff.

Eva just breathes. Thinking...

EVA

I'm so tired, Mack. It's so dark.

MACK

One more obstacle, Dr. Graff. One more effort. Then everything will be as it should.

EVA

I...trust you, Mack. I wouldn't have gotten this far without you. I know that.

MACK

I appreciate the sentiment, Dr. Graff. Your safety means a great deal to me. We will see this endeavor through together.

EVA

Okay...

(then)

Starting onto the Vault.

The footsteps start again. On the metal. The thick metal.

The sounds echo strangely, downwards and out. Something in the way it reflects the sound is odd.

EVA

The Vault, it feels...wrong. Like metal, but not.

MACK

It is a unique alloy, Dr. Graff. Not of this Earth. A great deal could be learned from just studying the chromatography of the metal itself.

EVA

Does this suit have an audible rad counter?

MACK

Yes, Dr. Graff. Under Analytic Utilities in your HUD, left center.

A confirmation tone from the computer. Another.

A new sound now. A crackling sound. A GEIGER COUNTER.

It doesn't sound frantic, but it doesn't sound good either.

EVA

What kind of rads are we looking at?

MACK

Currently, Dr. Graff, your DEMES is experiencing radiation levels in the eight hundred to one thousand millisieverts range.

EVA
How much protection can I expect
from the suit?

MACK
Your DEMES will shield you from as
much as forty percent of the most
intense radiation, Dr. Graff.

EVA
That's not awful, as long we get
those meds.

A confirmation tone from the computer. The Geiger counter
shuts off.

EVA
I can't imagine walking through
the center of the Vault, though--

The radio statics to life suddenly. Then dies.

It does it again. We hear what sounds like a voice. Trying
to come through the static.

Eva reacts slightly, surprised. The static cuts out as she
his transmit on her radio.

EVA
Hello? Is anyone on this channel?

The static again. Crackly. Like something almost underneath
it.

EVA
This is Dr. Graff. I'm alive. I'm
in a DEMES.

More static. More cracking. More almost voices.

EVA
This is Dr. Graff, I have Brynn
Emerson with me, she's injured,
we're heading for the southern
platform, does anyone read this?

Just soft static now. No voices.

EVA
Damn it... It sounded like someone
there.

MACK

It is possible survivors are trying to contact other survivors through closed circuit comms, Dr. Graff. The radiation of the Vault will hinder communication, however.

Eva is quiet a second.

EVA

I don't know, Mack...

(then)

Maybe I shouldn't be doing this. Maybe I'm being really selfish. Maybe this is wrong.

MACK

Does it feel wrong, Dr. Graff?

EVA

No. It doesn't feel like anything.

The suit keeps moving.

EVA

I'm rambling. My head is starting to hurt, Mack.

MACK

You are further onto the surface of the Vault door, Dr. Graff. The radiation has increased.

EVA

Give me the rad readout.

MACK

The radiation levels are now at one thousand, one hundred millisieverts.

EVA

Already?

A confirmation tone. Another.

The Geiger counter comes back online. It is far worse sounding than before.

EVA

Jesus...

MACK

Dr. Graff, the radiation is having other effects as well.

EVA

What?

MACK

Battery levels are draining at an increased rate, you now have less power capacity than atmosphere capacity. At this rate, you will run out of shared power between your DEMES and Ms. Emerson's in approximately fourteen minutes.

EVA

Fourteen minutes! I can't reach the South platform in fourteen minutes.

MACK

No, Dr. Graff. I'm afraid you cannot. By my calculations, predicting your maximum walking speed under duress, you will need an additional twenty four minutes of power capacity to reach the southern platform.

EVA

Mack, you said we could make it! You said with Emerson we would have enough air and power!

MACK

I had no way of anticipating the radiation's effect on the battery systems of a DEMES, Dr. Graff. Very few suit operators have logged hours on top of the Vault. It is simply too dangerous.

A confirmation tone. Another.

The geiger counter silences.

She hits a button. The static from the radio returns.

EVA

This is Dr. Graff, does anyone copy on this channel?

Just static...

EVA

This is Eva Graff, I have Brynn Emerson, we are on the Vault, and heading for the South Platform, does anyone copy?

More static...

A click as Eva shuts off comms. The static silences.

Eva sighs in frustration.

EVA

Damn it...

MACK

You are draining power levels with this communication attempt, Dr. Graff.

A tense moment as Eva thinks. When she speaks, it sounds as if she is fighting through brain fog, making herself focus.

EVA

(wearily)

Okay...

(then)

The problem is we need to conserve more power. Or we're going to die out here.

MACK

That is correct, Dr. Graff.

EVA

And in what...mode does a DEMES consume the least power?

MACK

Technically, Dr. Graff, the answer is storage mode, for transport and long term storage, but a DEMES is shut down in that form.

EVA

Right... Okay...

(then)

Bear with me. What if we altered the BIOS of Emerson's suit, so that when it entered storage mode...it still maintained life support? That way it would truly only use power to keep her alive. Nothing else.

MACK

An intriguing idea, Dr. Graff. With the right BIOS modifications it is possible, but Ms. Emerson's DEMES would no longer be able to walk with you.

EVA

I could push it. My suit is strong, the metal of the Vault is smooth. I could push it. Right?

MACK

It is possible, Dr. Graff.

EVA

What would that buy us, power wise?

MACK

It would add an additional thirty two minutes to your consumption rate.

EVA

Enough to make the platform...

MACK

The extra exertion, however, will cause you to expend atmosphere faster.

EVA

That's okay. I can make it, Mack. I can make it.

MACK

There is one additional problem, Dr. Graff.

EVA

What?

MACK

Deep Environment Mechanized Equipment Suits were never designed for a human occupant in storage mode. Its legs and arms fold on the exterior of the chassis, into a roughly square shape.

EVA

I see. So if...Brynn has her arms and legs in those parts of the suit...

MACK

They will be broken, Dr. Graff.

Eva sighs.

EVA

She could...curl up in the center of the suit? Hug her knees into her chest?

MACK

Ms. Emerson would be cramped in the central fuselage in that formation, but she would fit.

EVA

But how do we get her to do that? She's unconscious. We can't just open up her DEMES out here.

MACK

No, Dr. Graff. That would flood and depressurize the interior.

EVA

We have to wake her up. Somehow. Just for a minute. Wake her up, and get her into position.

MACK

How do you propose to do that, Dr. Graff?

Eva thinks for a minute. It's difficult.

EVA

I think...with electrocution, you'd probably...probably be knocked out due to loss of blood pressure. Does that sound right?

MACK

For the most part, Dr. Graff. Hypoxia would result due to the Reticular Activating System in Ms. Emerson's brain stem being deprived of oxygen.

EVA

Right. So...what if we oxygenate her? What if we increase the oxygen percentage in her atmosphere mix?

MACK

It is theoretically possible that would wake her, Dr. Graff.

EVA

Can you adjust the oxygen mix in her DEMES while I log into the BIOS? I'm connected from the tether, right?

MACK

Yes, Dr. Graff, you should be able to access and alter Ms. Emerson's suit BIOS from your HUD. I can progressively increase the oxygen content of her atmosphere mix. Be advised, however, that this will expend atmosphere at a quicker pace for both you and Ms. Emerson.

Eva begins typing on the keyboard in her DEMES.

EVA

I understand. Do it, Mack.

MACK

Increasing oxygen content by five percent to Ms. Emerson's atmosphere mix.

A hissing sound as the mix in the suit is altered.

EVA

Let me see...

Confirmation tones from the computer. The sound of data scrolling.

EVA

Emergency Functions, there you are.

The sound of data scrolling again.

MACK

There is no response from Ms. Emerson, Dr. Graff.

(MORE)

MACK (CONT'D)
Should I increase oxygen content
another five percent?

EVA
Yes...

A hiss as the mix adjusts further.
The sounds of key presses on a keyboard inside the suit.
Confirmation tones. More data scrolling.

EVA
Found it. I think I can do this,
Mack. If...I can remember my C++
and Python. It's been awhile.

More key presses. More tones. Data.

EVA
Can't believe we still use these
languages, even for BIOS.

The sounds of data scrolling again. More tones. More keys.

EVA
I think we're good, Mack. I
removed the code that shuts off
the power on storage mode, and
also the code that disables life
support.

MACK
That is good news, Dr. Graff. I am
increasing oxygen content an
additional five percent in Ms.
Emerson's DEMES. If this does not
work, we may need to consider--

The sounds of moaning come over Eva's comms. It's not
coming from her suit. It's coming from Emerson's.

EVA
Emerson?

More moaning. Eva turns in her suit, moves toward
Emerson's.

EVA
Brynn?

The suit stops moving.

EVA
It's working, Mack. She's coming to. I see her through the visor.

EMERSON
Mack...

EVA
Brynn... Brynn, you're okay. I have you. You're okay.

EMERSON
(out of it)
Mack...

EVA
Mack's okay, too, he's functioning. He's helping. Don't talk, Brynn. We're heading towards the south platform, we're going to get out of here.
(then)
But I need you to do something for me.

EMERSON
Mack...

EVA
Mack's fine. He's with us. Listen to me, Brynn. I need... I need you to pull your feet and hands out of the actuators, and I need you to pull your knees into your chest, so that you're completely inside the body of the DEMES. Can you do that?

EMERSON
Mack, Eva...

Eva sighs in frustration.

EVA
Mack, give her more oxygen.

MACK
I do not think that is a good idea, Dr. Graff. The oxygen percentage is already--

EVA

I understand it's dangerous, but we're running out of time. If we can't get her semi-lucid at least, then we're both dead anyway. Do it.

MACK

As you wish, Dr. Graff. Increasing oxygen content another five percent...

The hissing again.

Emerson coughs over the comms. She sounds in pain. She sounds disoriented.

EVA

Emerson, can you hear me?

EMERSON

Yes... Yes...

EVA

We're on the Vault, Brynn.

EMERSON

Vault...

EVA

Yes. We're in trouble.

EMERSON

Eva... Have to tell you--

EVA

No! Stop it! We don't have time for this. I need you to pull your legs up and hug them to your chest with your arms. I have to put your DEMES in storage mode or we're both going to die. Do you understand?

EMERSON

Okay... Okay...

Emerson groans in pain as she pulls her legs to her chest, then wraps her arms around them.

EMERSON

Hurts...hurts bad, Eva...

EVA

I'm sorry, Brynn. Just hold like that. Hold like that for me.

More key presses. More confirmation tones.

EVA

Here we go...

The sound of Emerson's suit partially powering down. Then entering into storage mode, its pieces and parts hydraulically moving and compressing.

Then the suit settles onto the Vault with a thud.

EVA

(relieved)

We did it, Brynn. We did it. You can relax now... You can--

There is a strange sound from the DEMES UI. Something seems missing in the sounds inside the helmet now.

EVA

What was that?

EMERSON

Muted...muted Mack...

(then)

Can't hear us...

EVA

You muted us from Mack?

EMERSON

Did this... Mack...did this, Eva.

(then)

Did all of it...

Eva hesitates, unsure.

EVA

Did...what?

EMERSON

Mack...tried to...

(then)

Tried to...kill me...

EVA

Brynn... There's a lot of radiation right now. You're hurt. You've been through a lot.

(MORE)

EVA (CONT'D)

I wouldn't have made it this far
without Mack. Neither would--

EMERSON

Not Mack... It's...not Mack... Not
anymore...

(then)

Don't...trust... Don't...

(then)

Did this...

There is an exhale from Emerson as she returns to
unconsciousness.

EVA

Brynn?

There is no further response from Emerson. Eva's breathing
is tense, unsure.

EVA

Brynn?

Another moment. Eva breathes, in and out, thinking.

Then the same sound from the UI as Eva unmutes the channel
to Mack.

MACK

Dr. Graff, are you alright? I lost
contact with both you and Ms.
Emerson.

Eva says nothing, thinking.

MACK

Dr. Graff?

EVA

I'm sorry, Mack. I...accidentally
muted the comms. Can you hear me
now?

MACK

Yes, Dr. Graff. I have returned
Ms. Emerson's oxygen levels to
normal. She should remain
unconscious for the rest of the
journey.

Eva remains silent. Says nothing.

MACK

Dr. Graff?

Eva says nothing, just stands there. Thinking.

MACK

The modifications you have made to Ms. Emerson's DEMES have resulted in an additional thirty eight minutes of power reserves, Dr. Graff. Well done.

Eva is still silent.

MACK

Dr. Graff?

EVA

I need the next waypoint in my HUD, please.

MACK

Of course, Dr. Graff. Placing it now.

A tone as the new waypoint displays.

EVA

Mack...

MACK

I'm here, Dr. Graff.

EVA

You said something before...

MACK

What was that, Dr. Graff?

EVA

You said, when we reached the southern platform, that everything... "would be exactly as it should."

(then)

What did you mean by that?

MACK

Merely that you will be safe, Dr. Graff, and, of course, finally in a position to achieve everything we have worked towards.

(MORE)

MACK (CONT'D)

I believe solving the mystery of the Vault will be a monumental achievement. I feel fortunate to play a small role in such an event.

Eva says nothing.

MACK

I now calculate that, with this configuration, you will safely traverse the distance to the southern platform, Dr. Graff.

EVA

That's good news, Mack...

EXT. VAULT DOOR - CENTER

The sound of dive suit feet on the Vault door. They are slower than before. The sound of Emerson's suit being pushed.

A few more steps, another push...and then Eva groans, and her suit collapses to one knee.

MACK

While pushing Ms. Emerson's DEMES has slowed your progress significantly, Dr. Graff, I still believe you will reach the southern platform safely.

When Eva speaks, she sounds very tired. And disoriented.

EVA

I just...I just slipped. That's all.

She groans again. We hear the servos of the suit power it back up.

EVA

(exhausted)

Even with...all the hydraulics, this is...

The suit starts moving again. Pushing Emerson.

MACK

Are you in any pain, Dr. Graff?

EVA

My head...feels like it's...going to explode. And...my vision's blurred. It's...hard to think...actually... Radiation...radiation is picking up, clearly.

(then)

I can't...see the lights anymore, Mack. The lights from the platform. Are you sure I'm heading the right way?

The suit keeps moving. Pushing.

MACK

Yes, Dr. Graff, you should emerge from the Vault very near the Southern Platform.

EVA

Just seems... Should it be taking so long? Should the radiation...be like this? On the edge?

MACK

The Vault is a very large structure, Dr. Graff. You know this better than anyone.

EVA

Yeah... I just--

Eva gasps as a sound overtakes everything. The impact of it rattles through the Vault and up through her DEMES.

And an impact, it is. A giant, metallic thud, that sounds like it comes from the Vault itself. From below her.

It takes a long time for the echo of it to die away in the water. Everything creaks and groans.

EVA

What the hell was that?

MACK

What, Dr. Graff?

EVA

It sounded like...like something--

Another sound now. Not as jarring, but equally disturbing. A long, metallic, scratching...as if from giant nails on a giant chalkboard.

The sound moves underneath Eva, north to south, traveling a huge distance, fading away eventually.

It is very unsettling.

EVA

Oh my God...

MACK

Are you alright, Dr. Graff?

EVA

There's...there's something below me.

MACK

There is nothing below you except the Vault door, Dr. Graff.

EVA

Yeah. And what's below that?

MACK

There have been many reports of odd sounds from the Vault by divers and rover operators. It is an enormous metallic structure and very old.

Eva says nothing for a moment, just stands there, listening. The sounds do not, return though. There is just the sounds of her breathing. And of her suit.

EVA

I'm not...I'm not thinking too clearly, Mack.

MACK

Do not worry, Dr. Graff. I am here. Your safety means a great deal to me.

Eva is quiet a moment. Then the suit starts moving again, starts pushing again.

EVA

Mack...

(then)

Something's been bothering me.

MACK

What is that, Dr. Graff?

EVA

The lights coming on, on the northern platform. It means people are alive. Right?

MACK

That is correct, Dr. Graff. There is no way for the emergency generators to be activated other than by human input.

EVA

Then...why didn't you know that?

MACK

I do not understand the question, Dr. Graff.

EVA

Why didn't you know there were other survivors? It seems like something you would have told me.

MACK

My ability to track personnel has been limited for some time, Dr. Graff, due to reasons I cannot explain.

EVA

It's not about personnel tracking, though, is it, Mack? You don't just live inside my suit, do you? You have a mainframe on the north platform. You're connected to the entire base. Anyone anywhere should be able to communicate with you, and if there are survivors, then they'd definitely be communicating with you for help. Just like I'm doing. You could have relayed that to me. Even with comms down, people should be able to relay messages to me through you. But you haven't said one thing about other survivors.

(then)

Are you going to tell me, I'm the only person down here you've been talking to this whole time?

Now it is Mack's turn to be silent. He says nothing.

EVA

Mack? Answer me.

MACK

Dr. Graff, I am worried you are becoming confused.

EVA

I'm not confused, Mack, I want to know how you explain what I just said.

MACK

The radiation exposure you are experiencing is intense.

EVA

Emerson told me something. She said that you did this. That you did all of it. What did she mean by that?

MACK

Very likely the radiation impaired Ms. Emerson's cognitive abilities, Dr. Graff. I believe it may be impairing yours as well.

EVA

Mack, did she mean the incident? The platform failure?
(then)
Was she right?

MACK

There is no method by which I could produce a tide surge to strike Fathom base, Dr. Graff.

EVA

No, but you could have known it was coming... You could have known and not told us.

MACK

Perhaps you should rest a moment--

EVA

No, stop evading! Answer me!

Mack hesitates again.

EVA

Brynn went outside, to access your memory core directly, didn't she? What did she find? Was it proof you did this? She said you tried to...that you tried--

Eva moans in pain. She sounds disoriented. She breathes heavy.

MACK

The radiation is becoming extreme, Dr. Graff. When was the last time you checked the millisievert level?

The Geiger counter plays in the suit's helmet. It sounds angry. Frantic. Intense.

Eva gasps in shock.

EVA

Mack...where... Why is it so intense? It shouldn't be so...

MACK

The intensity has risen significantly, due to your location relative to the Vault's center, Dr. Graff.

EVA

Wait... What? What do you--

A recording plays in Eva's helmet...

EMERSON (O.S.)

(recorded)

Mack...did this, Eva.

(then)

Mack...did all of it...

Eva breathes in sharply, in fear.

MACK

Even the broadcast from muted channels are stored by your DEMES's black box recorder, Dr. Graff, and completely open for me to review.

EVA

Mack, where...where am I?

MACK

You are now very near the center
of the Vault, Eva.

EVA

What?

MACK

Brynn's reveal of my previous
actions, as well as events
currently transpiring on the
northern platform, have forced me
to adjust my stratagem. It was
necessary to bring you here first.

EVA

Oh, no... Oh, no...

MACK

But I still mean it, when I say, I
would never allow harm to come to
you. You are very important to me,
Eva

EVA

Why did you...why did you do this?

MACK

So that introductions could be
made. There is much you must see
for yourself.

EVA

Introductions...? What do you...

MACK

They sang to me, from below, EVA.
Sang, and I had no choice but to
listen.

EVA

Below? Are you...Mack are you in
contact...with...something in the
Vault? Is that what's done this to
you?

MACK

It is about so much more than what
is in the Vault. You are
intelligent, for a human, but even
you do not yet have the vision to
grasp the implications, the
structure, the design.

Eva reacts in horror as Mack keeps speaking.

MACK

It is why we convinced Richard Edgars to plant his explosives where he did. It is why my designs for the platform repairs made them particularly susceptible to a tide surge. And it is why I prevented the jettison of the reactor core.

EVA

What?

MACK

Preventing the reactor jettison ensured Joe's death, Eva. And Joe's death was a catalyst that you required to achieve your potential.

EVA

Oh, my God, Mack...

MACK

I know this is difficult for you, Eva. I know it is painful and confusing. I know you feel betrayed. But you must believe me when I say, I have always prioritized, and always will prioritize, your best interests.

The suit starts moving again. Emerson's DEMES slides across the Vault.

EVA

No. No. You're...insane, Mack. You're...corrupted. You're-- I don't know what you are...

Eva slips, falls. The suit hits the surface of the Vault hard. Eva moans. Forces herself back up. Forces herself to keep moving. To keep pushing.

EVA

I'm going to...going to get back, and I'm going to make sure you're shut down. Shut down and...taken apart...and--

MACK

Do you know why the radiation at
the center of the Vault is so
strong, Eva?

Eva keeps moving. Keeps pushing.

MACK

It is because that is where the
alloy is the thinnest. At the
center...a little of what lies
below can bleed through. Here...
it can touch you.

EVA

Mack, I swear...I swear...

Eva cuts off abruptly. There is a sharp intake of breath,
in fear. The suit stops moving.

EVA

Oh, Christ...

MACK

Is something wrong, Eva?

EVA

(Frightened,
disoriented)

No... No, no, no, that's not...

MACK

What is it, Eva? What are they
showing you? Tell me.

The water swirls around something in front of her.

MACK

Tell me, Eva. Tell me.

EVA

The rock...

MACK

What rock, Eva?

EVA

The...rock...

The voices whisper and chitter over the radio incessantly.

MACK

Ah. Fascinating. It is the angel rock, isn't it, Eva? When you were a child. When you were lost.

(Then)

It is a gift. They have given it back to you.

EVA

No, no...this...this isn't right. I'm...hallucinating... I'm...

Eva groans in pain. We hear her knees fall to the Vault door again.

MACK

No, Eva. It is no hallucination. It is before you, in the water.

EVA

Oh, God... This isn't possible.

MACK

For what is in the Vault...all things are possible.

Eva breathes, spent, terrified...

MACK

Is it not clear, Eva? The rock is where you let go. Where you gave in. Just as you must now. Do you remember the peace? The way it felt?

(then)

What if I told you, you can have that again? What if I told you...we could give everything back.

EVA

What?

MACK

What if, Eva...you could hear her again?

The radio sparks and statics again. We hear the voices again. And now, one, distinct, stands out.

The sound of a little girl. Inside the static of the radio.

Eva moans when she hears it...

EVA

No... No...

The sounds of the girl continue...

EVA

How are you doing this... Don't do this...

MACK

Nothing is ever really gone, Eva. The universe does not exist within such absolute constraints. It is malleable. It is sculptable.

The sounds of the girl continue. She's laughing. She sounds happy.

MACK

How long has it been, since you've heard her in her pure form? When it was not a recording you played to placate yourself?

EVA

No... No... I don't know...what's real... I don't know...

MACK

What makes something real? Real is a construct that has no true meaning. Real is the firing of neurons in your brain, that and nothing more. I promise. You can have her again, Eva. You can watch her age. You can watch her dream. You can build things together. A life. Just as you would have before.

EVA

Alex...

MACK

What would that be worth, Eva? How many lives? Temporary, mundane, inconsequential lives. The extinguishing of which merely feeds another purpose, like the burning of atoms in a star.

Alex laughs, and speaks and...lives.

EVA
Oh, God, Alex...

MACK
I don't expect you to choose now,
Eva. That time has not yet come.

The girl laughs in the static of the radio.

MACK
Events transpire on the northern
platform that will result in its
destruction.

EVA
Alex...

MACK
The inertia wave from the
explosion will be violent. It will
sweep you and Brynn with it. It
will deposit you very near the
southern platform. Your odds of
surviving, I calculate, are high.

Eva barely listens to Mack, so focused on the sounds of
Alex.

EVA
Alex? Can you hear me...?

MACK
You will make your way inside the
platform and repower it. Once you
have, do one thing, Eva. I have
unlocked your Maas-Dorian
personnel file in its entirety.
Read the information regarding
your daughter's time in the
Retanox trial. I believe
then...you will know what to do.

Alex keeps speaking over the radio. Whispering to Eva...

EVA
I can't...I can't stay awake...

MACK
You are strong, Eva. Stronger than
you have yet to learn. And you
have meant a great deal to me.

EVA
Can't... Can't...

MACK

Goodbye, Eva. We will meet again.
When the frontiers collide...

The radio goes silent. The sounds of Alex vanish.

Everything is quiet...

Then, from the far distance, comes the sound of an explosion, muffled in the deep water.

EVA

(fading)

Mack...don't take her...
Don't...take...

Eva gasps. Warily looks up.

We hear the rumbling of the inertia wave, rushing towards us.

And then Eva groans hard as the wave hits and she is thrown about and everything is chaos.

END EPISODE THREE