

ADAPTATION

Written by

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FADE IN:

**INT. CONTROL ROOM - OBSERVATION OUTPOST EO-3**

Every instrument scuffed from constant use. Crammed with tech in every corner, this station's as claustrophobic as a dented high school locker.

A cartoonish BOBBLE-DOLL personalizes one console. The rest of the decor's grey, ceiling to floor.

With the exception of one massive MONITOR. Split screen, it depicts JUPITER on the left side.

On the right: the station's entrance, and EUROPA's rugged terrain.

CAPTAIN MORGAN LEWIS (30s) flits between TECHNICIANS. A bundle of lithe energy, she's a multi-tasking pro.

MORGAN

Kerrigan, status report on shield maintenance?

Nudging his bobble doll aside, KERRIGAN (30s) eyes a screen. Then his commander. Carefully, he picks his words.

KERRIGAN

It's stable. But the atmosphere recycling subroutine we diverted from...

MORGAN

That was my next question. How's that faring?

KERRIGAN

Not good. This is Sophie's Choice, Commander. There's no way to sustain both.

MORGAN

Bullshit. We fuck sure can!

Bending over a screen, she scans for outside activity.

MORGAN

Where the hell's Larry?

Footsteps enter the room behind her. A dry voice responds:

AUSTIN

Recon started two hours ago.  
Larry's meticulous. Give him time.

Morgan whirls around to face AUSTIN. Two days growth of beard, scruffy forties face. A Medic Patch decorates his thread-bare coat.

As casual as his choice of clothes, Austin's eyes focus on Morgan's shape... a *bit* too low.

Morgan ignores it. Even though she notices.

MORGAN

Austin, why aren't you in ER with Raskin? That last meteor hit -

AUSTIN

Generated some shrapnel. But Raskin's a trooper. A few stitches and one stiff drink did the trick.

MORGAN

You're distilling in your quarters again? I've already issued *two* warnings. One more violation, and you get docked...

Kerrigan snickers to female TECH COWORKER BURKE (30s).

KERRIGAN

Mpppph. You hear that? Commander just threatened to "dock" Doc!

AUSTIN

(to Morgan)

We need ways to unwind, from time to time! We're on Europa, for Christ sakes. Chill out.

BURKE

(to Kerrigan)

Ha! He said "Chill Out". On Europa!

AUSTIN

Ultimately, everything's fine.

MORGAN

Except for current oxygen levels.

Morgan's words register. Austin's face falls.

AUSTIN

Ouch. And excellent point. That's what I came here to discuss.

Kerrigan and Burke exchange suddenly nervous looks. Austin leans towards Morgan, his voice suddenly soft.

AUSTIN

Commander, this is one topic it's best to take outside.

As if on cue, something GLINTS on the monitor. A vehicle on Europa's horizon - approaching rapidly.

MORGAN

(brightens)

Larry. There you are!

**INT. BREAK ROOM - LATER**

Equally dingy. Morgan and Austin face each other across a table.

LARRY (20s) sits between the two. Thin as a rail, the xenominer's still dressed in an enviro-suit. Helmet cradled in his lap. Emptied air tank by his chair.

Morgan eyes him over coffee. Steam (and breath) curls in frigid air.

Ice clinks in Austin's glass of home-brewed bourbon.

MORGAN

Larry, that suit doesn't look detoxed.

LARRY

Captain, we've been camped out here forever. If there were native bacteria floating around -

AUSTIN

It would've been detected in a million and a half soil samples by now.

MORGAN

That's my judgment call to make.

LARRY

But with the meteor hit to our atmosphere generator, everything's time sensitive.

I had to let you know... The recon worked!

(excited)

It was last second, but I found an area we can mine for replacement fuel.

MORGAN

You did? Where?

LARRY

Pretty far out. Off the map, even: Territory 15B.

Morgan's face freezes. Even more icy than the room.

MORGAN

HQ hasn't scanned that sector yet.

LARRY

I know. But the density signals from the rover detected a hollow pocket under the ice. It's got just the right amount of radiation. Not too weak. Not too hot for shields, either. So I took a chance, and scoped it out. There it was - a whole vein of core material; sandwiched between rock and ice. It's gonna take some heavy machinery to extract it properly...

MORGAN

Machinery we don't have. How's that help us now?

LARRY

Uh, it took some elbow grease, but I managed to chip out a basketball sized sample. It's in the bay now, under quarantine shields. Enough to keep us going for one more week, I hope?

Austin and Morgan look dubious. Larry glances at his commander, eager as a puppy dog.

MORGAN

Maybe. At least, long enough to hold us until we get new supplies?

AUSTIN

Worth a shot. What've we got to lose?

Larry claps, cheers. Morgan pins the tech with a practiced resting-commander-bitch glare.

MORGAN

You still shouldn't have taken the initiative. Next time, call me first.

LARRY

I know, Commander. I'm sorry. It's just... I got a gal back home. Lisa. So I had to risk it. I mean, who wants to die out here?

He pulls a crumpled PHOTO of smiling LISA from his pocket, and shows to the others. Surprisingly, Morgan melts.

MORGAN

None of us want that. Larry -

LARRY

Yes, Captain?

MORGAN

Do better next time. But *this* time? Good work.

Larry scratches his neck. Nods and smiles. Morgan swings on Austin next.

MORGAN

Doc, go scram and tell Burke to feed that lovely rock into the core. And crank up the O2 assembly line to full blast.

Austin gulps bourbon. Standing, he sarcastically salutes.

AUSTIN

Aye-aye "Sir". Your wish is my command!

### **START MONTAGE**

In the control booth: Kerrigan removes his bobble doll from the console...

...and unrolls a TERRAIN MAP. Leaning over his shoulder, Larry points out Territory 15M. Practically breathes on Kerrigan's neck.

**INT. ENGINE ROOM**

As lo-tech as a WWII submarine.

Shielded by a radiation suit, Burke slips a chunk of ROCK into the station's energy HUB.

A moment of suspense - will this work?

Lights flicker, then glow. Engines hum. Under her visor, Burke beams. Success!

**INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

Stripping off her gloves, Burke steps out of the engine room. Meeting Larry, she flashes a happy "thumbs-up."

The two shake hands and stroll off down the corridor.

Passing various TECHS, they spread the news (MOS.) High fives several as they go.

**SUPER: ONE DAY LATER****INT. MORGAN'S OFFICE**

Drowning her worries in coffee, Morgan sits statue-still at her desk.

An email glows on her PC. Correspondence from off-moon HQ:

INSERT: Colony supply requisition received. ETA in two weeks.

MORGAN

Of all the bureaucratic cluster  
fucks...

Anger flowing, her fingers fly on the keyboard.

MORGAN

(typing)

Alternative routes requested. Can't  
a shipment be re-routed from the  
Belt? Or is personnel non-essential  
now?!?

She huffs, poised to mash "send". When... Austin bursts in, face pale. Morgan jumps.

MORGAN

Austin? What the ever living fuck?

AUSTIN  
Er, I hate to bother you -

MORGAN  
I know you're never Mr. Formal. But  
can't you even knock?

Austin's eyes drop.

AUSTIN  
You gotta come to ER. Now.

**INT. ER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

As "heartwarming" as a morgue.

Flanked again by Morgan and Austin, Larry sits on a gurney,  
swings nervous legs.

LARRY  
I mean, heat rashes do happen. It's  
only been one day. So I figured, no  
big deal.

AUSTIN  
"Heat Rashes"? On Europa? Think  
about what you're saying here...

MORGAN  
You should've reported this  
earlier.

LARRY  
Yeah, but it's embarrassing. I  
hoped it would fade away. But then,  
it just kept spreading.

AUSTIN  
Ensign, we've been living in  
intimately close quarters for  
twelve months. You think there's  
anything of yours - or mine - we  
haven't seen by now?

LARRY  
Not like this, doc.

Zippering open his tunic, Larry reveals:

A BUBBLING RASH - beginning at his neck, and spreading down.  
Far down, even past his waist.



MORGAN

Exactly how far does this go?

LARRY

Ma'am? You don't wanna know.

AUSTIN

(to Morgan)

Whatever this infection is, it appears to have an affinity for, uh moist areas on the human form.

Morgan's nose wrinkles. Larry wails, grabs Austin's arm.

LARRY

Doc, if this don't clear up, Lisa's gonna dump me as soon as I get home!

AUSTIN

Well, this is experimental. But let's start you on antibiotics, see how that goes.

MORGAN

Besides, the relief shipment's due in two weeks - so I'm told. As long as there's room in their cargo bay, I can ask for different medical supplies.

AUSTIN

Supplies? Try diagnostic tech.

Nudging Austin, Morgan points at Larry.

MORGAN

Speaking of diagnosis: those grooves on his neck - what do you make of those?

LARRY

Grooves? They split? What the hell!?!?

Alarmed and instantly alert, Larry attempts to hop off the gurney. Austin holds him down.

AUSTIN

Son, I'm thinking isolation's my prescription. At least 'til we know what's going on.

LARRY

No!

Morgan grabs the flailing tech's shoulder. He shoves her back - hand to face. Thanks to her iron grip, he can't break free.

MORGAN

Ensign, please. Relax!

LARRY

Commander, I'm sorry. But...

Austin jabs a needle into Larry's shoulder. Within seconds, the tech slumps. Morgan stares at Austin.

MORGAN

That was handy. Not to mention, fast.

LARRY

(grins)

A sedative I used on Raskin. I had leftovers. And he weighs 30 extra pounds.

MORGAN

Good. So while he's sleeping, you'll fix... whatever the hell this could be?

LARRY

If that's possible? Yeah.

#### **INT. ENGINE ROOM - LATER**

Fueled by Larry's rock, the core pulses steadily. On the hull, an almost imperceptible MOLD grows.

PIPES labeled "Atmosphere replenishment" lead upward. Air hisses into vents, leading to the hallway outside.

#### **INT. HALLWAY**

Kerrigan and Burke pass each other. Both scratch under uniforms. Burke's hand. Kerrigan's shoulder.

#### **SUPER: TWO DAYS LATER**

**INT. ER ROOM**

Austin examines an unconscious Larry, now clad in a hospital gown. Lisa's mangled photo peeks out of the breast pocket.

Those bumps on the tech's neck have grown.

Gulping bourbon, Austin slips on gloves and probes Larry's torso. The rash now hardening to scales.

Austin travels downward, to Larry's unseen groin.

AUSTIN

"Embarrassing?" Pal, this is weird.  
And gross.

**INT. MORGAN'S OFFICE**

"Entombed" in her chair, Morgan scratches at her neck. Squirms to reach her back. Whatever the problem, she's itching fierce.

And glaring even fiercer at fresh emails on her screen:

INSERT: Shipment delay for one month. Recommendation: shut down energy expenditures to non-essential sectors of the station, to preserve air.

MORGAN

Mother fucker. There's nothing left  
to kill. Except for us!

A timid knock on the door. Austin slips inside. One look at Morgan, and he knows she's in a lousy mood.

AUSTIN

Hey, Commander Lewis - how's it  
hanging? I mean, how's tricks?

MORGAN

Go ahead and call me Morgan. That's  
always been your greeting go-to  
before.

AUSTIN

Well, we *have* known each other for  
a year.

MORGAN

A year and soon one month. If luck  
and HQ lets us breathe that long.

Austin peeks at the email on Morgan's screen.

AUSTIN

Given our current oxygen levels?  
Maybe yes. Probably no.

MORGAN

Well, before we shuffle off this mortal coil, at least I finally taught you to knock before entering. Though looking through my private emails? Guess we've got more work to do.

She leans back, eyes him carefully.

MORGAN

So, what do I owe this visit to - besides darkening my already sketchy mood?

AUSTIN

That's "who". And to Larry - he's getting worse. Those things on his neck seem to have... uh, developed, structure. Looks like he's mutating. A definite DNA reroute.

Austin scratches his arm casually. Morgan squirms again, impelled by her itchy back.

Simultaneously, they both stop. Realization sinks in.

MORGAN

He's not the only one, is he?

AUSTIN

That's what I fear.

#### **INT. ER ROOM**

In bed, Larry's eyes snap open. Mutated to reptilian slits on both sides.

#### **INT. MORGAN'S OFFICE**

Morgan and Austin regard each other solemnly.

MORGAN

Have antibiotics helped Larry at all?

AUSTIN

You kidding? Not one iota. And if this some native virus, that's no surprise.

MORGAN

First things first. Let's suss out how it's transmitting. We both had skin to skin contact with Larry. Which means: the rest of the crew will be fine?

AUSTIN

Based on what I saw in the hallway? No dice. Whatever this shit is - it's airborne now.

#### **INT. CONTROL ROOM**

Doors hiss open, surprise Kerrigan and Burke.

Larry rushes in; the hospital gown flutters behind him like some grotesque cape.

Burke steps in his way. Larry effortlessly tosses her aside. Smacking her head on a gauge, she goes down... hard.

#### **INT. MORGAN'S OFFICE**

As if in grief, sirens WAIL.

A red warning flashes on Morgan's PC: CONTROL ROOM BREECH. Morgan and Austin exchange looks.

AUSTIN

I give you one good guess.

Morgan doesn't wait, darts out the door.

#### **INT. CONTROL ROOM**

Kerrigan tackles his mutated coworker, with a ROAR.

The two crash into a console. A screen SPLINTERS. Kerrigan's beloved bobble doll tumbles through the air.

Kerrigan grabs Larry by the throat, pins him down.

And inadvertently presses the raised bumps on Larry's neck. Wet flesh parts; SLUUUURRRP. One finger slips inside.

Repulsed, Kerrigan recoils. Larry stumbles back...

And grabs a four foot long ELECTRIC DRILL near an exit door.

Darting into the airlock, he shrieks in an eerie, vibrating way. Kerrigan lunges at him one last time -

But descending protective glass blocks his way.

Larry claws a button and activates the outside gate.

Almost naked, he stumbles out into Europa's toxic atmosphere.

Just as Morgan and Austin race inside.

In the control room: Morgan, Austin, Kerrigan and a dazed Burke gawk at the sight of Larry on the monitor.

KERRIGAN

He's -

BURKE

Out there.

AUSTIN

And we're -

MORGAN

Too late.

Sucking Europa atmosphere into his lungs, Larry drops to his knees and chokes. Until -

The raised bumps on his neck split open. Flutter. Signaling their usefulness as gills.

Rising to his feet, Larry stares, stunned, at the horizon. On the monitor, his disfigured face looms large.

At first, filled with joy.

Until he stares down at his twisted hands (now claws). Ripping off his gown, he blinks down at his torso...

...roars in horror at what he sees.

The photo of Lisa flutters to the ground and ices over. Larry's reptilian eyes grow wide.

He picks up the drill, holds it to his head.

In the control room: all four witnesses wince at what happens next. CRUNCH.

**SUPER: DAY THREE****EXT. BREAK ROOM**

Morgan and Austin face off across the table once more.  
Larry's empty chair screams silence between them.

The rash is spreading. Over their faces. Hands. Arms.

Morgan sips her coffee. Sputtering, she puts the mug down.

MORGAN

This doesn't taste - right anymore.

AUSTIN

I'm sure our metabolism's altering.  
Drastically. If only I had that  
diagnostic tech, I'd check *me* out.

He gulps bourbon, shudders. Despite herself, Morgan grins.

MORGAN

Can't digest that, either?

AUSTIN

(shrugs)

Nah. My hooch has *always* gone down  
hard. What's the latest from HQ?  
Any news on expediting that elusive  
mystery supply shipment?

MORGAN

I made the mistake of telling them  
about our little... ordeal. So now  
we're under quarantine. Not only  
won't they speed things up - now  
they refuse to come down at all.

AUSTIN

So they're leaving us to suffocate,  
like cockroaches?

MORGAN

Not exactly.

Tugging her uniform's collar aside, Morgan reveals the  
growing bulges on her neck.

MORGAN

You have them too, I assume.

Austin gestures like a game show host to bumps under *his* jaw.

AUSTIN

You showed me yours, I'll show mine. After playing cat and mouse for a frikkin' year, now we finally get to this stage of our relationship? A bit late to the party, don't you think?

MORGAN

(sighs)

You never stop trying, do you Austin?

AUSTIN

Can you blame a guy? I'm almost outta time.

MORGAN

Speaking of time. Doc, what happens if the station's air depletes before these - uh - structures...

(gestures to the proto-gills)

Develop sufficiently to work?

Austin grins, and pulls a SYRINGE from his coat.

AUSTIN

See? Great minds think alike. I got that covered. I've examined the virus closely. Yet still have zero ways to slow it down. But speeding it up? Ironically, that's the easy part. Injecting it straight into our bloodstream does the trick.

Awkward silence. The two eye each other: dead humans walking.

AUSTIN

So, Commander Lewis, lest I take initiative from you presumptuously, should I distribute this "option" to our crew, or not?

MORGAN

Screw "Commander Lewis". Call me Morgan. And yes: it's their lives, their choice. So why not? You do have enough batches for all of us?

AUSTIN

With a few needles to spare. But we should probably be the last to try.



Just in case it makes us crazy.  
Larry did look pretty feral  
before...

He lapses into silence. Morgan thinks, shakes her head "no".

MORGAN

Thanks but - I'm responsible for  
this crew. If anyone's going to  
play guinea pig, I'll take the  
dive. Then, if it's worst case  
scenario, I'll trust you to hold  
down what's left of this fort.

Morgan rolls up her sleeve, and thrusts her arm at a  
reluctant Austin.

With her other hand, she grabs his bourbon - raises the glass  
in a toast.

MORGAN

Here's to a new life on Europa.  
Whatever it may be!

She gulps it down. Austin's needle stabs. Smash to black.

Somewhere, Morgan screams.

FINAL FADE OUT: