

Station to Station Episode 3, “ANALYSIS PARALYSIS”

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1. MIRANDA'S CABIN

JONATHAN

God, it feels so heavy all of a sudden. This cause, this job we've dedicated ourselves to. We all knew that it wasn't going to be easy, we all knew the risks. But how do you prepare for something like that? It — it was — that one accident just shook us. I guess I know why we all tried not to acknowledge it for so long—

SOUND: THE TAPE CLICKS OFF ABRUPTLY. STEPPING ON THE END OF THE LINE

MIRANDA

Come on, think. Jonathan Costello — I know this — I know—

Tall. He was definitely taller than me. Maybe six feet? Yes. That's right. That sounds right. With brown — blond? No, brown hair. I know it was brown. Or, I think — I — maybe —

(FRUSTRATED SIGH)

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

2. THE LAB

MIRANDA

(CHEERFUL AND PROFESSIONAL IN THE MOST WOODEN WAY POSSIBLE)

Log 20. Ish. It's Saturday, 09:00 and I'm very excited to be resuming my research after three days of sitting in my cabin doing absolutely no work of scientific consequence whatsoever.

Today's first priority is to re-evaluate my findings from earlier this week related to element 720-a.

However, since I haven't been able to get out of my room without risking bodily harm for days, test sample D died unobserved. And samples A and C were, uh, compromised, post mortem.

MIRANDA

...which is a polite way of saying 'rotting at the bottom of my waste bin for days,' like the most overwrought metaphor for three years worth of work and research and grant writing and career aspirations and *wasted time*—

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

3. STORAGE ROOM

MIRANDA

(BREATHING VERY HARD AND SHAKY. WE HEAR HER BREATHE IN AND OUT LIKE THAT A FEW TIMES.)

This is stupid. This is so, so stupid—

SOUND: DOOR OPENING

NELLY

Oh! Dr. Quan! Sorry — you startled me. Did you, ah, need more supplies?

MIRANDA

(THAT FORCED SMILE AGAIN)

Hi — yes! I was looking for — I wanted some batteries. For my tape recorder. The charge is running low, I think. It's acting up. Do you have any in here?

NELLY

They keep those with the office supplies. You want the supply closet near the med room.

MIRANDA

Right — of course. I guess I forgot.

NELLY

You know, if you need anything, you can always ask me or one of the other lab techs. Fetch and carry's half the reason we're here. Unless... is everything...?

MIRANDA

Fine!

NELLY

(WEIRD, BUT SHE'S NOT TOUCHING IT)

Alright. What kind does it take?

MIRANDA

What?

NELLY

The recorder. Double A?

MIRANDA

Triple, I think. Thank you so much.

NELLY

Yeah... no problem.

MIRANDA

I guess I should get out of your way now.

NELLY

Wait — Dr. Quan?

MIRANDA

(SHIT)

Yes?

NELLY

You forgot your notebook.

MIRANDA

Oh! Right. Right, thank you.

(AWKWARD PAUSE)

You can bring the batteries to the lab.

NELLY

Sure...

MIRANDA

Great! I'll, um, I'll just...

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

4. MIRANDA'S CABIN, LATER

JONATHAN

Day, uh, fifty six. There's this weird patch of corridor right outside that lab — you know, the one that, uh. That one where the girl died. Laurel. I should say her name. Laurel...what was her last name again? It feels awful talking about it, even now, but it doesn't feel right not to. They cleaned the lab, of course. The floor, the machinery, the window, and now it's like nothing even happened. Maybe that's why I'm trying to so hard to remember her.

It's so weird walking past that bit of the building, like my brain doesn't even know what to do with that patch of space. Like — you know that apartment we shared, our second year of post-grad, Miranda? There was that hallway with that corner that was always freezing, always a little darker than the rest of the room. I kept meaning to try and get it checked out and you were like 'maybe it's just the architecture' and — anyway, it's. It's a bit like that hallway.

You hated that place. I remember because I did too, like there was something just screaming at you not to go down there. And it just, it reminded me of that because that's exactly what it's like, that's what some people say it feels like when they're walking past that lab. The corridor's just wrong somehow. Sometimes you can cross it in two strides, sometimes it

takes five minutes to get 30 feet and there's always this patch of freezing air when you go past the door. People have been freaking out over it. Management says it's just a ventilation problem, but like hell I'm ever trusting them again.

I'm... I'm thinking of taking up their advice and seeing someone. I don't know if it's gonna help, but it might lighten the burden a little.

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

MIRANDA

Log...

(SHE TRIES TO REMEMBER THE NUMBER)

Log continues. It's half two in the morning, so that makes it Sunday here. We've been let out of our cells and back into the labs. I think everyone's glad to be back to work — well, nearly everyone. Two of the other scientists started shouting at each other in the wet lab just before lunch break. Simmons and — McKinnley, I think? Fredricksen nearly had to pull them off each other. It was something about stealing research... maybe she got too close to his test samples again. I wasn't really listening.

Christ, that was stupid of me this afternoon. Mallux isn't going to be keeping a — a top-secret killing machine in with the extra microscope slides. Now I'm going to be that weird researcher who hides in closets by tomorrow lunch, all because I didn't think to check if the draft I was feeling every time I went by came from an overhead air vent.

(A VERY TIRED BREATH OUT)

I guess it wasn't nearly as creepy as that place in uni was. I remember, we had to pass it every time we wanted to get to the postbox, and it was always — oh — OH, I remember that! I had the room off the kitchen and Jon had the one — the one down the hall with the... there was something he had taped on the door. Right! A map or a poster or— Or...

(STOICALLY, VERY MUCH STILL IN THE 'DENIAL' PHASE OF GRIEF)

No. Never mind. It's gone.

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

5. THE LAB

MIRANDA

I've decided to dissect sample D. They rate of decay remains much slower than what I'd expect to see three days post-mortem and — it's not as much use without the other samples, but there could be some interesting—

(SHE YAWNS)

FREDRICKSEN
(CHEEFUL)
Night shift, huh?

MIRANDA
(STARTLED)
Ah — what?

FREDRICKSEN
I said, I didn't know you were doing night shifts. You owe Simmons a favour?

MIRANDA
Oh, no, I just — I had a thought and...

FREDRICKSEN
(LIKE, WAY TOO FRIENDLY/SYMPATHETIC)
Couldn't sleep, huh?

MIRANDA
Did you need something?

FREDRICKSEN
A lot of people didn't get a chance to do a proper disposal before that storm hit, and Management wants to free up space in the wet lab before the next dive. You got anything to toss?

MIRANDA
I already cleaned everything out.

FREDRICKSEN
Yeah, looks like you did. *Really* couldn't sleep huh?

(AWKWARD PAUSE IS AWKWARD)

FREDRICKSEN, CONT.
(LIKE THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN)
Wow, lucky you.

MIRANDA
What?

FREDRICKSEN
You've got a whole lab bench to yourself. They didn't try to stick you with anybody?

MIRANDA
There was supposed to be—

(SHE CATCHES HERSELF)

Me. Just me. I don't know why. Maybe there was... extra space?

FREDRICKSEN

Careful, all that elbow room might make somebody jealous.

MIRANDA

Do you think I need to talk to someone? If anyone's feeling cramped, I don't want to hog — [the bench].

FREDRICKSEN

No, no, it's fine. Luck of the draw, right? Enjoy that bureaucratic oversight. And try to get some sleep.

MIRANDA

...you too?

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS. A DOOR SHUTS.

MIRANDA

He doesn't remember either.

I, um — experiment paused. Again. I'll try to finish up in the morning. I think I need some coffee.

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

6. COSTELLO INTERLUDE

JONATHAN

It's been a rough week. Sam took a few days off for Lunar New Year's and when she came back she was acting weird. Like, paranoid, jittery, really really jumpy about what we were doing. She was having a lot of doubts about where all this was going, and then...she was gone, just a couple days later.

Management said she transferred to another department, you know, typical conspiracy cover, but I wish I knew why. All she said was — she said she had other plans with her science degree than this, and then she's whisked away by the men in black. Priyanka stepped up to defend her and... she was gone too. End of day. They brought in someone from another lab and now everyone's keeping their heads down. I kept my mouth shut after that — had to, just so I could finish my own work. I mean, I just — I wish — She shouldn't have- she must have known what they would do, if she pushed them like that! I didn't want anything to — I didn't want to see them leave, they were so good at their jobs.

Reis has been acting weird as well. He's sort of just stopped talking to people as much as before, doesn't show up at lunch any more. Someone said it could be PTSD, because he was close to Laurel. I heard he's been at the bar a lot, too. It's... like I said, it's been a rough week for all of us. There's been a sea change and no one knows how to deal with it. One day we're on top of the world, the next, this.

7. A LITTLE LATER

SOUND: A COFFEE MAKER PERCOLATES.

MIRANDA

Even in the middle of the ocean, it turns out people put the pot back in the coffee machine with only a quarter-cup left.

It's nearly 4 a.m. now, I think. I'm going through the notes again. They're even worse than I remembered. I don't know how anyone was supposed to read this. There are parts of notebook three that are just scribbles... this one's covered in nested shapes with lines running all through them. God, he's ruined a whole page of notes. I hope I took the mickey out of Costello if he doodled on our lab work like this.

MIRANDA, CONT.

It feels so empty in here at this time of night. Everything echoes. At least there's no one around to hear me talking to myself.

MIRANDA

And if anyone did come in, I guess they'd find it crazier that I'm raving about an experiment that's scrubbing people out of everyone else's memories. You couldn't just give me directions, could you Costello? Dear Miranda, your life's work kills people. I'll be conducting my mad science in room 11, if you want to come visit. You couldn't do that.

MIRANDA, CONT.

(A SLOWLY DAWNING REALIZATION)

Unless...

8. LATER STILL, MIRANDA'S CABIN

MIRANDA

I think I've got it now. It took me three cups of coffee to find all the right pages — some of them really are just covered in scribbles, I think — but some of them —

I thought all those little lines were just doodles, but if you lay everything out together they're more like channels... he was drawing a route.

He must have drawn this right before mobilization.

It's not the best map — it looks like he changed his mind and wrote over what he'd done before a few times on some of the pages. But with everything laid out properly you can see the shapes of the Astrid underneath the chaos. and there's one spot, near the front of the ship — he's gone over it and over it. The pen's almost gone through the paper. That's it, that's the place.

MIRANDA

It's in the engine room.

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

9.COSTELLO INTERLUDE II

JONATHAN

The lab isn't safe. They're — they have eyes on everyone. Anyone who steps out of line, or mouths off, or asks the wrong questions gets "marked for discipline". No one knows what it means- we're all just waiting for the other shoe to drop, I guess. It's been seventy days. A bit more, maybe. I think. I'm losing count, anyway. I don't think I'll be getting out of this, not in one piece. The atmosphere in the lab has been...has not been pretty, to put it mildly

(HE LAUGHS MIRTHLESSLY TO HIMSELF)

We've been observed — we were being observed the whole time, from even before — before the accident with Laurel. Something about adverse reactions to trauma — they wanted to know how we'd behave in reaction to "unconventional environmental stress." You know, I don't even know if it was real, if she was real, or if she was a another spy or — I just want this to be over.

10. HALLWAYS OF THE ASTRID

MIRANDA

(AND UNDER HER BREATH PEP TALK)

It's going to be fine. I'll be in and out. No one's going to notice. It's going to be fine.

11. HALLWAYS OF THE ASTRID 2

SOUND: QUICK FOOTSTEPS, MAYBE GOING DOWN A SET OF METAL STAIRS.

MIRANDA

(CLEARLY RUNNING LINES)

Me? I'm looking for engineering. The sink's backing up in the wet lab and — no. An engineer, say *an engineer*. I wouldn't need the whole maintenance crew for a blocked pipe.

(PAUSE)

God, that made me sound even more suspicious. Maybe I won't see anyone down there.

12. HALLWAYS OF THE ASTRID 3

SOUND: SOME FAINT RUMBLES OF THE ENGINE ROOM.

MIRANDA
Is anyone...

SOUND: A FEW SLOW FOOTSTEPS

MIRANDA
(RELIEF. ISH.)
No one here either.

13. HALLWAYS OF THE ASTRID 4

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS. OVERLAID WITH RUMBLING MECHANICAL NOISES IN THE NEAR DISTANCE

MIRANDA
(WHISPERS)
If the Astrid's laid out like other ships I've been on I'm nearly at the engine room.
I, um. I was thinking I should say something here, in case someone's listening to this later because I'm — no. That's — that's really melodramatic, isn't it? I'm just going to keep moving.

14. HALLWAYS OF THE ASTRID 5

SOUND: A FAIRLY BIG ROOM, COMPARED TO NORMAL. RUMBLING MECHANICAL NOISES, CLOSE UP. FOOTSTEPS CROSS A ROOM. THE RUMBLING DROPS OUT ABRUPTLY. THE FOOTSTEPS KEEP GOING.

MIRANDA
(WITH RELISH)
Oh.

15. LAST COSTELLO TAPE

JONATHAN
Day... I don't know. I don't—They're all gone. Anja, Samson, Rhody, Reis. They're — they're gone and I can't even remember them beyond the lab. I only know they were here because there used to be more people and now... now all I can see is where they're not. It's not fair to them, it's not. They were good people, they don't deserve to be remembered like this.

I've done everything I can, and it's not enough, so I need to fix this. I need to fix it. I don't care what it takes, but it's not gonna take another person. I'm running out of tape, so I'll have to go back and record over. A lot of it's pretty much irrelevant anyway, the old stuff. But I'm out. I used Montague's name to get a research spot on the Astrid. I'm out. This might be my only chance to make things right. I have a few weeks — I'll need to go to ground for a bit.

And, one more thing. I — uh. I've always. You were like family to me, Miranda. I'm sorry about all this, I'm sorry for the mess and the — the — weird crap I'm about to get you involved in. I don't even completely understand it myself, but I figured maybe you would. I think maybe I'm okay with not coming out of this in one piece, because then I won't have to look you in the eye. Goodbye, Miranda. I love you. And trust—.

16. WELCOME TO HELL (BASEMENT)

SOUND: COMPLETELY FLAT SOUND PROFILE. NO AMBIANCE. TENTATIVE FOOTSTEPS. A RUSTLING OF PAPER

MIRANDA

I, um, I think I'm close now. There was a corridor off the the engine room and when I got close everything felt — just really wrong, somehow. I can still feel all the hairs on my head standing up.

There's so many twists and turns down here. I hope Costello's map is right.

17. BASEMENT 2

MIRANDA

Um... I think I need to go left... or, hm... straight on? God, I wish he'd used a clean piece of paper to draw this.

18. BASEMENT 3

MIRANDA

(RUSHED)

I found the lab. It's right where the map says it should be, but I don't see any locks or keypads or — I'm going to take a look.

SOUND: HANDLING NOISES ON THE RECORDER, A DOOR OPENS

MIRANDA, cont.

It's really dark in there. Um.... let me see if I can...

SOUND: MORE HANDLING. A DOOR CLOSES, SOFTLY.

MIRANDA, cont.

Yeah, that's b— [etter]
...what?

19. MIRANDA LOST

SOUND: PACING

MIRANDA
It was here — it was just here — I don't understand — I don't—

20. LOST 2

SOUND: A DOOR. SLAMMED

MIRANDA
This doesn't scare me, you hear? Whatever you did to Costello, you won't do it to me.

21. LOST 3

MIRANDA
Oh please let this work. Please, please—

22. LOST 4

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS FOR 5 - 10 SECONDS BEFORE THE TAPE CLICKS OFF.

23. LOST 5

MIRANDA
Left and then right and then right and then straight... That's all. Left and then right and then right and then straight and then... then...

24. LOST 6

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS. BREATHING

MIRANDA
(BREATHING SHAKY, BUT TRYING TO KEEP THE PANIC DOWN)

25. ENTER COCHRANE

MIRANDA
—and then right and then straight and then left and — *Christ.*

SOUND: A FEW SECONDS OF RAGGED BREATHING. SHE'S AT THE END OF HER ROPE.

NELLY

(MUFFLED TO THE POINT OF TOTAL INDISTINGUISHABILITY)

So. There it is. Forty minutes of walking and I finally found a door. I think I would have missed it if there were literally anything else to look at — it's the same colour as everything else down here.

I was going to back just now, you know. I was thinking, 'Nelly, give up, go take a seasick pill and a nap.' I was thinking 'come back later.'

MIRANDA

(HER DIALOGUE COMES IN ON TOP OF NELLY'S)

Who's there? Can you hear me? I'm down here. I'm down here...

NELLY

(A LITTLE MORE INTELLIGIBLE)

So that's how we're playing this, huh? Fine. One look inside, and then I'm—

SOUND: MIRANDA HITS THE DOOR. METALLIC THUMPS.

MIRANDA

Let me out!

NELLY

(MUFFLED BUT FULLY UNDERSTANDABLE NOW)

Hello?

SOUND: STILL POUNDING ON THE DOOR

MIRANDA

For the love of — Hey! Hey! Down here!

NELLY

Who's in there? Are you alright?

MIRANDA

The door's stuck. Let me out!

NELLY

Dr. Quan? is — is that you?

MIRANDA

Get me out of here!

SOUND: RATTLING OF A DOORKNOB. THEN THE DOOR OPENS. SMOOTHLY.

NELLY

What are you doing— [down here?]

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF

26. DECK OF THE ASTRID

SOUND: WAVES, WIND. WE'RE BACK TO NORMAL... WELL, FOR A SECOND, BEFORE THE TRANQUILITY IS BROKEN BY THE SOUND OF NELLY RETCHING

MIRANDA

(ONCE THAT'S SUBSIDED)

How did you do that?

NELLY

Get meals I ate last week to come up, you mean?

MIRANDA

You got us up here so fast — there's no way — I wandered around down there for twenty minutes.

NELLY

Guess I was highly motivated. (HER STOMACH TURNS) ...hold please.

(MORE RETCHING)

MIRANDA

That corridor... Costello said it distorted time. Maybe there's some sort of... quantum effect... or...

NELLY

Seriously, this isn't hitting you?

MIRANDA

What were you doing down there?

NELLY

What were **you** doing down there?

MIRANDA

Do you work for them?

NELLY

Do **you** work for them?

MIRANDA

Is that really your plan? Repeating everything I say?

NELLY

Hey, you can't knock a girl for trying...

That sunshine feels good right about now, doesn't it?

MIRANDA

(SOFTENING)

Yeah. I recognize you from the lab. It's Janelle, right?

NELLY

Nelly's fine.

MIRANDA

Miranda. What were you doing down there?

NELLY

Depends. Do you work for Mallux?

MIRANDA

(CAUGHT OFF GUARD, BUT VERY FIRM)

No. I don't.

NELLY

Sure about that?

MIRANDA

Very.

NELLY

(SHE TAKES A SECOND, ASSESSING HER)

Then I was snooping, same as you.

I got an anonymous tip a while back that Mallux's latest development project was going sideways. Lots of ethical violations. Safety issues too. Guess I found what I was looking for.

MIRANDA

I don't understand. Who would tell you? I thought the project was top secret.

NELLY

Nah, I gave you something already. Your turn. What's got you so interested in the neverending hallway?

MIRANDA

I had a friend who was working on whatever they've done down there. And it killed him.

I — I know that for certain now.

NELLY

Jesus. Alright, um, we need to get out of earshot. You can come to — no, maybe we should go to yours. Do you think — would you go on the record about your friend?

MIRANDA

The — what?

NELLY

I could keep your name out of it, probably. My editor would need to know, but you must've signed the same non-disclosure forms I did — we could argue you'd fear retaliation...

MIRANDA

No, stop. Slow down. I thought you were a lab tech.

NELLY

("TECH-NICALLY" GEDDIT?)

Well, technically I — sorry. That was bad. Adrenaline.

(SHE LOWERS HER VOICE)

I'm a journalist. I'm here undercover. And I think you might be able to help me.

SOUND: THE TAPE CUTS OFF