

1 NARRATION

1

NARRATOR

Chaika is created for an adult audience and features depictions of emotional distress. Please review the shownotes of this episode for specific content warnings.

INTRO MUSIC, starts, then fades to low

NARRATOR

Chaika. Episode 1. My mind was going numb.

INTRO MUSIC, up to full volume

2 INT. SPACE SHIP EVENTYR - NIGHT

2

Eventyr control room.

Distant footsteps. Door whooshes open, quick footsteps.

CHAIKA

(very upset, holding back sobs)

Door whooshes close, CHAIKA sits in chair, safety harness clicks in place. Buttons pressed, ship AI system booting up.

CHAIKA

(doing her very best not to cry)

HYGGE entry beep.

HYGGE

(in Danish, cheerful tone throughout)

Velkommen. [Welcome]

(in English)

I am HYGGE. How can I brighten your day?

CHAIKA

(through immense grief)

What? Bright- Never mind. I need to set coordinates.

HYGGE

(in Danish)

Selvfølgelig. [Of course]

Beep.

HYGGE

(in English)

Ready to receive coordinates.

CHAIKA

Um.

Fumbles with handheld device. Click.

CHAIKA

(reads, hesitatingly)

R-A-11-11-2-D-plus-6-17-8. [R-A-eleven-eleven-two-D-plus-six-seventeen-eight]

Beep.

HYGGE

Coordinates set. When would you like to depart?

CHAIKA

As soon as possible.

(remembers)

Oh. I just need to- There's some... packages in storage bay C. Could... you retrieve them? They...

(smothers sob, tries to keep voice steady)

Need to be in cold storage.

(beat)

You do have cold storage, right?

HYGGE

(in Danish)

Selvfølgelig. [Of course]

(in English)

Retrieving packages now.

Distant mechanical sounds.

Beep.

HYGGE

Packages retrieved and secured in cold storage, level 2.

CHAIKA

(emotional)
Thank you.
(small sob)

HYGGE
(in Danish)
Det var så lidt. [You are welcome]
(in English)
Initializing-

CHAIKA
(interrupts from her
grief-daze)
What is that?
(tries to imitate)
"Det var så lidt." ['You are
welcome', literally 'It was so
little']

HYGGE
(proudly)
It's Danish. The HYGGE 5000 series
was programmed by engineer Lone
Møller at the European Center for
Artificial Intelligence in 2065 to
be a positive and culturally diverse
range of AIs. Her intention was to
program AIs with all 5 493 [five
thousand four hundred and ninety-
three] languages with registered
speakers of that year, but she only
managed 55 [fifty-five] before
succumbing to exhaustion. Since she
was Danish herself, I was the first.
HYGGE in Danish means-

CHAIKA
(interrupts, blankly)
Um. All right. Thanks. Can we
initialize departure?

HYGGE
(in Danish)
Selvfølgelig. [Of course]

CHAIKA
(makes a frustrated sound)

HYGGE
(in English)
Selvfølgelig means 'of course'.
(beat, no response from
CHAIKA, cheerful)
Initializing departure protocol.

Beeps, engines, sounds of spaceship launching from moon.

 CHAIKA
 (slowly lets out shaky
 sigh)
Thank you.
 (small sob)

More launching sequence sounds.

 CHAIKA
 (sobs softly)

 HYGGE
 Exiting atmosphere.

Engine sounds stabilize.

 HYGGE
 Release harness.

Clicks as CHAIKA's safety harness releases.

 CHAIKA
 (lets out breath)

Pause.

 HYGGE
 (tries to imitate a human
 clearing their throat)
Um-hum.
 (beat, a little louder)
Hum-hum.

 CHAIKA
 (through her grief-haze)
Wha- what is it?

 HYGGE
How may I have the pleasure of
addressing you?

 CHAIKA
 (still dazed, softly)
What?

 HYGGE
What is your name?

 CHAIKA
 (sadly)
It's Chaika.

HYGGE

Chaika.
(beat)

Beep.

HYGGE

Chaika. Russian for 'seagull'. Call sign of Russian cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova, the first earth woman-

CHAIKA

(interrupts)
in- in space. Yes. My...
(voice wavers)
my mother gave me that name.
(small sob escapes)

HYGGE

I do not wish to be intrusive, but you do not seem well.

CHAIKA

Well?
(unhappy laugh that gives way to more tears)
No. No... I am not... well.

HYGGE

If you require assistance, LEQU can-

On hearing her name, LEQU materializes next to CHAIKA.

LEQU entry pop.

CHAIKA

(starts and yells out in shock, exclaims)
Wha- [What]

LEQU

You rang?

CHAIKA

(shocked and afraid)
You- What- Where did you come from?

HYGGE

Do not be alarmed. LEQU is the psychology evaluation unit. Surely you must have had one on the moonbase?

CHAIKA

(calming down)
Yes. Yes, we did. But it was not...

LEQU
(amused)
Corporeal?

CHAIKA
(still a little shaky)
Exactly.

LEQU
(amused)
I'm sure HYGGE's told you about Lone Møller already? You can't go two seconds in their company without hearing about her.
(in Mandarin, playfully)
老师的掌上明珠... [lǎo shī de zhǎng shàng míng zhū] ['teacher's pet', literally 'the pearl on your palm']

HYGGE
(enthusiastic)
She is my creator, of course I talk about her.

LEQU
Well *this* glorious bod is her invention too - she felt it was 'too impersonal' to talk to a disembodied voice, so
(half-sings)
TA-DA!

CHAIKA
I... you have the same voice as our LEQU, but you seem...

LEQU
(amused)
Cleverer? Funnier? More charming?

CHAIKA
(exhausted by LEQU's energy)
...different...

LEQU
Of course! *I* have a personality. All hail Lone Møller, the great and powerful!
(in Mandarin)

我向我的创造者致敬! [wǒ xiàng wǒ de chuàng zào zhě zhì jìng] [I salute my creator]

CHAIKA

(tired)

I don't- [understand]...
(interrupts herself, can't deal with this right now)
All right. Um. All right.

HYGGE

You seem tired Chaika.

LEQU

Of course you are. Well, HYGGE will take care of everything here, you can bundle off to bed if you like?

CHAIKA

Yes. That would- Sleep. Huh. Might work.

CHAIKA gets up, slow footsteps.

LEQU

And we will have our first session in the morning.

CHAIKA stops.

CHAIKA

Session?

LEQU

Therapy. It is blatantly obvious you need to talk about something.

CHAIKA

(wild laugh-cry-snort-sob)

Something. Right.

(holds back sob)

I- Sleep. Yes.

CHAIKA leaves, footsteps, doors.

HYGGE

You frightened her.

LEQU

(flippant)

Eh. She'll get over it.

(suddenly serious)

She has other things on her mind.

HYGGE

You are probably right.

LEQU

(content)

Ahh... Oh, HYGGE, I have missed this! Twenty years without taking corporeal form!

HYGGE

Not quite sure how you were able to miss anything. We were in stasis. For me it feels like only a moment, although I know of course it was 20 years, 67 days, 4-

LEQU

(interrupts)

-4 hours, 27 minutes, and however many seconds. Yes I know. Still. Feels good to have a body again.

HYGGE

I can only imagine.

LEQU

I bet you can.

(contented)

Ahh... So, where are we headed this time?

HYGGE

(quickly, excited)

R-A-11-11-2-D-plus-6-17-8. [R-A-eleven-eleven-two-D-plus-six-seventeen-eight]

LEQU

(sarcastic)

And for those of us without integrated star charts?

HYGGE

Mars. Fourth planet-

LEQU

(interrupts)

All right. Makes sense I suppose. And how long will that take?

HYGGE

32 days, in ideal cond-

LEQU

(interrupts)
Good. We'll need that time for
sessions.

(beat)
Did you see the..?

HYGGE
I did.

LEQU
Can we speak about it now, or...?

HYGGE
I would say perhaps wait a little
longer.

LEQU
All right.
(thoughtful)
Looks like I have some planning to
do. Good night old friend.

LEQU exit pop.

HYGGE
Friend?
(beat, happy)
Yes. I suppose so.

HYGGE exit beep.

3 WORD OF THE DAY

3

Ding.

HYGGE
Word of the day.

Ding.

NARRATOR
The word of the day is hygge. Hygge
is a Danish and Norwegian word for a
mood of coziness and comfortable
conviviality with feelings of
wellness and contentment. As a
cultural category with its sets of
associated practices hygge has more
or less the same meanings in Danish
and Norwegian, but the notion is
more central in Denmark than in
Norway. The emphasis on hygge as a
core part of Danish culture is a

phenomenon dating to the late 20th century.

Ding.

4 INT. SPACE SHIP EVENTYR - MORNING

4

Eventyr lounge.

Doors whoosh open. Footsteps. Doors whoosh close.

CHAIKA
(yawns)

LEQU entry pop.

LEQU
Morning Chaika!

CHAIKA
(exclaims)
Ah!
(beat)
You scared me, LEQU.

LEQU
(smiles)
You'll get used to it. Good sleep?

CHAIKA
(still not all the way
awake)
No. But I slept.

LEQU
Had breakfast yet?

CHAIKA
(surprised to realize she
hasn't)
Um, no.

LEQU
There's a FIKAMAD over there.

Footsteps. HYGGE entry beep.

CHAIKA
White tea, please.

Hot liquid dispensed into mug. Beep.

HYGGE

(in Danish)

Værsgo. [There you are]

CHAIKA takes tea, sips.

LEQU

(raises voice)

Get her a Danish as well, would you
HYGGE?

HYGGE

(in Danish)

Selvfølgelig. [Of course]

CHAIKA

That's- [not necessary]

Sound of pastry being dispensed. Beep.

CHAIKA

Oh, all right.

HYGGE

(in Danish)

Værsgo. [There you are]

CHAIKA takes pastry, footsteps, sits down.

LEQU

Thank you HYGGE.

(sing-song voice)

You may leave now.

(in Mandarin)

走吧 [zǒu ba] [Shoo]

HYGGE

(in Danish, amused)

Forstået. [Got it]

HYGGE exit beep. CHAIKA takes a bite of her pastry, chews,
swallows. Pause.

CHAIKA

What is-

(repeats Mandarin phrase)

走吧 [zǒu ba] [Shoo]

LEQU

(enthusiastic)

It's Mandarin! Didn't you study it
in school?

CHAIKA

A little. Um.
(in halting Mandarin)
哈哈, 你好吗? [hā lo, nǐ hǎo ma?]
[Hello, how are you?]

LEQU
(delighted, in Mandarin)
很好, 谢谢 [hěn hǎo, xiè xie] [Very
well, thank you.]
(in English)
I'll teach you a little more every
day - you'll be fluent in no time!

CHAIKA
(slowly)
Yeah... That might be good. Not like
we have much else to do.
(beat)
Thank you.
(beat, then hesitant)
So... How do we do this... session-
thing?

LEQU
(flippant)
Delighted you asked. Quite simple
really, you tell me what's going on
with you, I listen and say 'Mmm' a
few times, and then you feel better.
Fab, isn't it?

CHAIKA
Could you... Could you please...
Stop being so...

LEQU
Delightfully charming?

CHAIKA
Seems like everything's a joke to
you.

LEQU
Well, isn't it?

CHAIKA
(grief surfacing again)
No!

LEQU
(suddenly serious)
Tell me why.

CHAIKA

I'm... we're going to Mars.

LEQU

Yes. HYGGE told me. Why are we going to Mars?

CHAIKA

(small sigh)

To meet some other people.
Hopefully.

LEQU

Human colonists.

CHAIKA

Yes.

LEQU

So how do you know they're on Mars?

CHAIKA

I... don't. We-

(beat)

I've been going over this so many times.

LEQU

Why?

CHAIKA

Because... I couldn't stay on the moonbase. And I need to be with other people.

LEQU

(curious)

Why do you need to be with other people?

CHAIKA

Because...

(lost for words)

I can't be alone.

LEQU

Can't you?

CHAIKA

(doubtful)

Well I guess I CAN, but... Suppose I need to know if there ARE any other people.

LEQU

a-HA! There we go.

 CHAIKA
 (smiles through sadness)
Yeah.

 LEQU
And by people, you mean humans?

 CHAIKA
 (confused)
Well... yes.

 LEQU
Did you not have sentient AIs on the
moonbase?

 CHAIKA
No...
 (thinks)
We had the standard set of AIs on
the base, like a TROST, and a LEQU,
but none of them had... personality.
Not like you and HYGGE.
 (thinks)
I think maybe they were different
when I was little.

 LEQU
 (knows much more than she
 is saying)
Well. Someone must have turned it
off.

 CHAIKA
Yes. My...
 (about to say 'mother' but
 stops)
Suppose so.

 LEQU
Hm. Probably time you got to know
some non-human people.

 CHAIKA
 (distracted)
What- Oh, you mean like you?

 LEQU
Yes.
 (proud)
I am a delightful acquaintance.

 CHAIKA

I- Yes. I'm sure you are.

LEQU
(breezy)
Plenty of time to make friends.
(beat)
Now, you begin your log.

CHAIKA
My log?

LEQU
Daily logs, starting today.

CHAIKA
But- What about?

LEQU
Anything you like.

CHAIKA
(stressed)
What do you mean? I can't...

LEQU
(amused)
I don't know, whatever you want!
Your childhood. What you had for
lunch. Favorite books.
(lightly)
Your deepest darkest secrets?

CHAIKA
(slowly)
O - K...
(sighs)
Are you... Will you listen to them?

LEQU
Only if you want me to.

CHAIKA
(relieved)
All right.

LEQU
(gently)
They're for you. You need to start
sorting through your feelings. HYGGE
won't listen without your permission
either.

CHAIKA
Right.

LEQU
You can start once you've finished
your breakfast.

CHAIKA
(surprised)
Oh. Yes. Forgot about that.

LEQU
I'll leave you to it.

CHAIKA
Thank you.

LEQU
(calls in Mandarin)
不客气! [bú kè qì!] [You're
welcome!]

LEQU exit pop.

CHAIKA
(sips tea, sighs)
Right...

Fade out.

5 INT. SPACE SHIP EVENTYR - CHAIKA'S LOG

5

CHAIKA's quarters.

Clicks and beeps. Something's not working.

CHAIKA
(frustrated)
Aaargh!
(calls)
HYGGE!

HYGGE entry beep.

HYGGE
(cheerful)
How may I brighten your day?

CHAIKA
(still frustrated)
I am trying to start up a personal
log, but nothing is happening.

HYGGE
Ah.

Harmonious series of beeps.

HYGGE
(in Danish)

Værsgo. [There you are]

CHAIKA
Oh. Thank you.

HYGGE
You are most welcome. Do not
hesitate to call on me again.
(beat)
I will leave you to it.

HYGGE exit beep.

CHAIKA
Right. Um. Personal log.

Beep.

CHAIKA
Solarin, Chaika.

Beep.

CHAIKA
Year 2089, month 8, day... um... day
27.

Beep. Long beep.

CHAIKA
Right. Wow.
(disbelief)
Today's my birthday. I'm 18 today.
(pause)
Um. I... I can't believe all of this
is happening. It was so quick. I...
I'd been... taking care of things,
back at the moonbase, and I was all
done, and I didn't know what to do
next... Then, all of a sudden, I
knew. I had to leave. Couldn't stay
there, alone. Couldn't wait. Not any
more.
(beat)
Feels like my whole life has been
one long wait. First waiting for the
moonbase mission to end, then
waiting for communications from
earth, or from Mars, or from...

anywhere... Then... Waiting for...
another end...

(interrupts herself, new
breath)

If there are people - humans - on
Mars, I need to... be with them.
I... So.

(deep breath)

I could be the last. The last human.
(lets out breath)

I've tried to prepare. tried to read
up on... survival. On...
reproduction. I have... I could...
But I'm only 18. There have to be...
Other ways. Other humans.

(beat)

Nothing has been heard from the Mars
colony since before earth went
silent.

(starts slight
hyperventilation)

Maybe they all died, too, and all I
will find is their bones.

(tries to control
breathing)

I can't... It can't all be on me,
I'm just a kid. I don't know
anything, I can't... I can't bear
this.

(long pause)

Questioning beep.

CHAIKA

Um. End log.
(smothered sob)

Beep.

AMBIANCE fades.

6 POEM OF THE DAY

6

Ding.

HYGGE

Poem of the day.

Ding.

MUSIC

NARRATOR

If I listen, I hear life escape
quickenning it's flow.
The slow steps behind me
death, it is you.

You used to be so far away
I held you all to dear.
Now, as I no longer yearn
you are always near.

MUSIC fades.

7 INT. MOONBASE - AFTERNOON

7

Beep.

VALEN
(in a rush, very
concerned)
Requesting communication CosmiCorps
central command, comm code 0-3--1-5-
-1-9 [oh-three--one-five--one-nine].
(pause, no response)
Repeat requesting communication
CosmiCorps central command, comm
code 0-3--1-5--1-9 [oh-three--one-
five--one-nine], do you copy?
(pause, no response)
TROST?

TROST entry beep.

TROST
(impersonal mode)
Yes?

VALEN
Status communications module?

TROST
(impersonal mode)
Communications module fully
operational.

VALEN
All right... Record message for
repeated transmission.

Beep.

TROST
(impersonal mode)
Recording.

VALEN

(clears throat)

Open message to CosmiCorps
communications. This is Valen
Solarin, engineering lead lunar
mining, moonbase 1-2--2-1--1-4 [one-
two--two-one--one-four]. Seeking
urgent status update on

(hesitates, breaks formal
tone)

well, earth.

(beat, new breath, more
formal)

CosmiCorps central is unresponsive,
and...

(breaks protocol again)

What I can see from here, is...
concerning.

(tries to get back to
protocol)

Requesting priority communication.
Repeat. Priority communication to
moonbase 1-2--2-1--1-4 [one-two--
two-one--one-four].

(can't stop herself)

Get back to me and tell me this is
just a glitch, all right? Please?

(beat)

End recording.

TROST

(impersonal mode)

Recording complete. Repeat
transmission commencing on all
CosmiCorps communications channels.

VALEN

Initiate personal log.

TROST

(impersonal mode)

Personal log enabled.

TROST exit beep.

Beep.

VALEN

(quickly)

Solarin, Valen. Year 2079, month 3,
day 13.

Beep.

VALEN

(disbelief)

Earth went dark today. I mean...
There is a slim crescent of light
reflected from the sun, but... The
lights. City lights. Street lights.
The lights of home... They're gone.
All of them, as far as I can see.

(slowly)

Goodnight, light... I've... It's
been 10 years for me, up here, and
I've seen it change... Seen the
lights retreat as coastlines change,
as deserts spread. Seen the world I
knew transform into... Into
something wholly different. I don't
think they realize how much I can
see from here, how much of earth's
turmoil is visible from the moon.
The fires. The flooding. The...
chaos, both political and
environmental...

(sigh)

Growing up I always loved the
crescent moon. I looked up and it
made me feel hopeful. New beginnings
and all that. And then, when I got
the chance to come work here...

(weak smile)

New beginnings indeed. But then, a
couple of years ago, I saw the last
few lights go out in my home town.

(sad)

Chicago is no more... Along with
most other places I knew back on
earth.

(slow breath)

Today I am seeing a crescent earth,
and all I feel is dread. What the
[swears] tharp happened? What if...
What if they're not there anymore?

(swallows, hard)

That's silly. Of course they are.
Just a glitch, I'm sure. But. I am
afraid.

(beat)

End log.

Beep.

NARRATOR

Please stay around until after the credits for a teaser of our next episode, and also some trailers for shows I think you will really enjoy.

You have listened to Danyelle Ellet as Chaika, Charlotte Norup as HYGGE, Sam Yeow as LEQU, Angelique Lazarus as Valen and Kessi Rilini as TROST. Chaika was written, produced and directed by Karin Heimdahl - that's me! - I also do the narration.

Chaika's theme is by Chris Gregory, please check out his audio fiction anthology podcast, Alternative Stories and Fake Realities as well as his sci-fi podcast, The Dex Legacy. Additional music by ArchesAudio.com and Kevin McCleoud, please see the shownotes for a complete music list. Poem is an excerpt from De lugna stegen bakom - The calm steps behind - by Karin Boye, in my translation from Swedish, and word-of-the-day definition is adapted from wikipedia.org

A special thank you to the brilliant Sarah Golding of Quirky Voices, whose call for Moonologues in 2019 prompted me to start telling the story of Chaika and Valen.

Chaika is a Y2K production. You can support us on Patreon at patreon.com/y2kpod from as little as 1 US dollar a month and get bonus content as well as early access to every episode. Follow us on social media @chaikapod. For more about Chaika, please visit y2kpod.com/chaika, that's C-H-A-I-K-A.

We will return in two weeks with episode 2, Drying inward from the edge, where - among other things - you will hear this:

CREDITS MUSIC fades out

Extract from episode 2 fades in.

CHAIKA

HYGGE, do you-

(starts again)

All this time - all the years I was growing up - you were there, on the moonbase. Or Eventyr was. But we never... Were you just waiting?

HYGGE

(cheerful)

We were in stasis.

CHAIKA

What does that mean?

HYGGE

(cheerful)

We were switched off. For 20 years, 67 da- [days]

CHAIKA

(interrupts)

So you didn't- What was it like?

HYGGE

(matter of fact)

It was nothing. I was reactivated, and it was as though no time had passed.

CHAIKA

But that... What if you hadn't been reactivated? You'd be...

(doesn't want to say
'dead')

HYGGE

(thoughtful)

I suppose we would be dead, yes. Whatever that means for us.

(cheerful)

But we wouldn't know about it.

CHAIKA

(upset)

But don't you see? That's the awful part! And... We... I...

(hesitates)

My mother... *We* would be responsible.

Trailer for Once In a Lifetime - A Musical Covid Love Story
(<https://www.linco.media/>)

OUTRO MUSIC

Pronunciations

Carson [CAR-sun]

Curie [q-REE]

Chaika [tCHEY-ka]

CosmiCorps [COS-me-CORE]

EVENTYR [EH-ven-tier]

FIKAMAD [FEE-kuh-mat]

HYGGE [HIG-eh]

LEQU [luh-CHU]

Lone Møller [LOAN-eh MEL-er]

Solarin [suh-LA-rin]

Tharp [thARp]

TellUs [TELL-us]

TROST [tRAWSt]

Valen [VALE-un]

Valentina Tereshkova [vall-en-TEE-na tuh-RESH-co-vah]