

Parasite

Inferno, and Luna1923, with Spacebean

To our friends, You've kept us sane.

Preface

A figure walked down the aisles of wires and cords. The low hum of electricity flowed through the rough walls. The figure opened a control panel, revealing a row of red sliders. Gloved fingers ran over the small glowing tags, labeling the rooms throughout the ship.

A creak came from the vent, and the figure whipped their head to the floor. More creaking. The silhouette moved back, away from the vent, careful not to trip on wires in the dark room. Then a small object emerged from the vent.

A weird slimy, gooey creature slithered across the floor, nearing the figure. “No,” the words were no more than a whisper as the goo leaped from the floor, pulling the figure down to their back. The slime smashed the glass of the helmet and dripped in. The parasite gained control of the figure’s body and mind. It remade the glass and concealed all evidence it was ever there in the beginning.

Wait. The parasite curled together, hidden under a vent, biding its time for prey. Footsteps echoed within the hollow vents, and the snake-like creature raised its head, tasting the air. *It’s time.* Ever so carefully, it slithered from the vent, climbing its way to the top of a shelf, cloaking itself in shadows. Then, the prey walked in and removed its head armor. The parasite swayed for a moment, as if contemplating the best way to attack. *The prey is leaving!* Quickly, as the victim turned on their heels, the parasite struck, entering the enclosure of the body, turning and sliding, until resting, safe, inside the prey.

“Mera,” said a man with dark skin, “you can’t put one of our operatives on an infected ship, especially without telling her.”

“First of all,” said Mera, her voice cold, “It’s Emerald and I’ve already told you, it’s our last test!”

“Then what?” the man said, “you can’t just remove cadets from the IAA! That’s madness!” he stood up, curling his hands to fist on the table.

Mera smirked, she was enjoying this, “calm down,” she deadpanned, “are you trying to protect her now?”

The man gritted his teeth, “She’s my friend, I thought that the Syndicate would help her and her family, but clearly they didn’t.”

Mera laughed with no emotion, “I can always remove that badge,” She said, flicking the little metal shield on the man’s shoulder. “You have work to do,” Mera turned away, her back facing him, “and I suggest you do it.”

Day 1 - 8 am, Dropship, Earth

“Black!” Pink exclaimed. A smaller, identical version of her sat on her shoulders. The figure turned from his seat at the table. His black suit gleamed in the artificial lighting, his friends turned with him.

“Hey Pink.” Pink lifted her baby, Rose, off her shoulders and set her on the floor. Black removed his helmet, his jet black hair stood in a mess. He swung his legs over the bench just as Pink’s body collided with his in a hug.

Pink squealed, “you made it on!”

“Yeah,” Black replied, “Yellow and I checked the dropship pre-flight sequence. Ship’s good.”

“Yes! Who are these?” Pink asked, gesturing to the other men at the table. She picked up Rose.

The men removed their colored helmets, Brown, Blue, Orange, and Cyan.

“Hello,” Orange greeted Pink with a smirk, his head slightly cocked to the side, “Black’s girlfriend.”

Pink forced a tight smile, and a nervous laugh, “uh, yeah, nice to work with you again.”

Everyone exchanged greetings and returned to their take-off seats, “T-minus 5 minutes.” a monotone voice filled the sparse dropship with only 3 boxes of extra supplies.

“Come-on!” Purple said behind Pink, gesturing toward the seats. They’ve been friends since they started working at the Skeld. And they both haven’t had an encounter with an Imposter on any of their missions.

Pink turned and walked back to the seats taking her place by Purple and Yellow, Rose squeezed next to Pink and Yellow.

“Hey Pink!” Yellow greeted her, french origins slipping out in speech, “Hi Rose!” Yellow and Pink have been on multiple missions together.

“T-Minus 2 minutes and 35 seconds,” the voice reminded everyone. The rest of the 2 minutes and 35 seconds were spent in silence. “T-minus 1 minute and 23 seconds, please ensure safety precautions,” The voice repeated the safety precautions that were wired into everyone’s mind.

“T-minus 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1,” When the monotone voice hit 2, the rumble of engines roared through the metal walls of the dropship, then on 1 the ship shook violently as the engines propelled the ship higher and higher into space where it was on route to The Skeld. “Please remain seated with suits on and in check,” more precautions, “connection with The Skeld is in an estimated time of 45 minutes, Stabilizing connection with Mira Earth Team.” The speakers echoed static through the walls before the voices of their Mira Earth Team greeted them.

“Hello, mission PRSTST,” a friendly voice greeted them, static fuzzing his words, “Microphone is enabled, please state everyone’s status.” The voice asked.

Black glanced at everyone and gave a thumbs up, everyone repeated the gesture, “Good,” he replied, “Who’s speaking?”

Static, then “Lime speaking, from Mira HQ. Unstable connection. Did you check the connection stability?” static separated his words. With his name, Purple breathed a visible sigh of relief.

It was Yellow who spoke, “Yes, status was stated as stable,” the only reply everyone got was static. The ship became silent except for the sound of the engine and the shuffling of everyone. “Hello?”

“Mira Team? Do you copy?” Blue asked.

Static answered them with, “Connect...” static, “not sure...” static, “lost, you’ll..” static, “your own team,” the connection broke off, leaving static and uneasy silence in its wake.

Brown was the first to talk, “So what does that mean?” his voice was soft, with a slight Norwegian accent.

“I don’t know,” Black answered, worry clipping his tone, “I think we won’t have Earth support for this mission.”

“Why?” Pink whispered she heard stories of survivors of the Imposter attacks on ships. Could there already be an Imposter aboard their dropship? Pink shivered, pulling Rose closer to her body.

“T-Minus 15 minutes till the connection with The Skeld,” The voice informed them, “Flight status, stable.” At that, Yellow, Cyan, Orange, and Red got up and headed to the extra food supplies box.

They came back with a handful of snacks and passed them out to their crewmates. Yellow came back piling snacks into Pink and Purple’s hands. They all removed their helmets to eat.

“T-Minus 5 minutes, please remain seated with helmets on.” The voice continued after all the trash had been kept, “Life support on the dropship and The Skeld, stable.”

Everyone returned to their seats as the ship’s engine started to activate the auto-connect system. A screech filled everyone’s ears as the dropship rubbed against the Skeld before they heard the metal clips from both ships attach to the connectors. Steam hissed out of the little holes near the sliding doors. They opened once the safety protocol and life support were stable.

What opened in front of them though, was not what everyone expected. A vast dark room with only the silhouette of tables to fill the sparse dark space. Everyone glanced at each other, already questioning each one of them. Black was the only survivor of a parasite attack in the crew, so everyone looked at him.

“Let’s head to electrical, together, and fix lights.” Black suggested, “I doubt there’s already an Imposter.”

“Might be just a light bug,” Yellow said, “Happens every once in a while, shouldn’t be anything.”

“But really though,” Orange said, “I want to leave this place alive, just like anyone else.”

Blue stood near Red carrying his baby, Aero. “Red and I will stay together,” He added, “after lights are fixed.”

Black nodded, glancing at everyone. No one disagreed, so they all headed out of the dropship into the dark room, then headed to Electrical.

Day 1 - 8:25 am, Mira HQ, Earth

“What the heck?!” Lime sat behind a wall of computers, “We just lost connection...” His fingers danced above the keyboard while he attempted to reconnect the line. “Green!” Lime called to the other man across the room, “Can you connect to Skeld speakers?”

“No, not really,” Green responded, “Skeld status says that Lights are down. Don't say that comms are down.” Lime spun in his chair and walked over to the array of monitors surrounding Green.

“Crap.” Lime shook his head. “Is there a way to send a message if we can't access comms?”

“There's not much we can do at this point. If they fix comms we might be able to get a message across, but I think it won't connect to us.”

“What if we called Earth backup, will that help?”

“I don't know man. We'll need someone who knows how to get around blocks like these,” Green gestured to the small error message that filled Lime's screen.

“I have contact on Earth. She's really great but a bit... erm, difficult” He spun his finger around his ear.

“But is she good at what she does?”

“She's awesome, plus she has a brother up on the Skeld. Her name's Caramel.”

“Isn't your sister up there too?” Green asked, remembering something Lime had said.

“Purple? Yeah, uh, she's my big sister. We have a bit of an odd relationship, though. Family stuff.”

“I don't think we'll connect. They're on their own now.”

Day 1 - 9 am, The Skeld, Electrical

Black slid his foot across the floor littered with wires. He looked behind him, his fellow crewmates were right after him. Black undid the latch on the panel with a little yellow triangle painted on the door. Pink stepped up next to him, flicking the small switches until all of the green dots lit up. Rose looked up, staring at the bright lights until they were dimmed by the brighter lights above.

“Done!” Pink exclaimed and everyone shuffled out, “Hey Black, I have a task in Storage, be right back.” Pink skipped out with Rose in tow.

Black headed to the back of the room. He had always hated Electrical, so he tried to finish fast. Black opened the distributor panel and started to push the buttons once the colored notch appeared in the correct section of the ring.

A soft beep told Black that his job was done, so he closed the panel and headed closer to the vent for his next task.

Blue watched Aero and Red race each other through the halls by Upper Engine and Medbay, their footsteps echoing off the walls. Blue smiled under his helmet. His elation quickly fell, if communications from HQ and the Skeld were down, and now with lights off when they first arrived, there may already be an imposter aboard the ship.

“Gotcha!” Red exclaimed, leaping from the ground to tackle Aero. They both landed in the cafeteria bursting into a fit of laughter.

Blue sighed, knowing that they should start completing their tasks. “Red!” Blue called and hurried to catch up with his family, “Aero!” They stopped and turned, “come on, we can’t keep on playing, we have a job.”

“I know,” Red replied resting a hand on Blue’s shoulder, “Can’t we have a little fun?”

“We can, it’s just, people are getting a little suspicious about their crewmates, let’s stay in the safe zone, I don’t want to lose anyone else,” Blue finished quietly.

“Hey Pink,” Pink jumped from her place on the floor, filling a bottle of fuel. She turned her head and saw Purple’s suit with her hand on her hips and her head cocked to the side, light hazel hair cascading down.

“Oh hi!” Pink replied she whistled, “Rose!”

Purple turned her head to see Rose walking back, “Hello, Rose!” Purple kneeled down to Rose’s level. Rose laughed and ran into Purple’s arms.

“Done!” Purple turned back to Pink who had set the fuel bottle down, “Let’s go get a snack.”

“Sure,”

Thunk. “What was that?” Rose asked quietly, allowing Pink to recarry her

“Um,” Purple exchanged looks with Pink, “It came from Electrical.”

"I know, come on, let's go check," Pink started down the hall, "Black was in there,"

Purple followed her into Electrical, the low hum only added to the feel of the cemetery-like room.

"Black!" Pink called, "Black?" Pink passed Rose to Purple before heading deeper into the room. "Oh my gosh, Black what happened?"

"Can I come?"

"Yeah sure," Purple followed Pink and saw Black on the floor.

"What happened?" Purple asked, setting Rose on the floor.

"I don't know," Pink pulled Black's body into her lap before lifting his helmet off his head, "Hey, Black, you okay?"

"Huh?" Black's voice was no louder than a whisper

"What happened?"

"Uh," Black looked around the room, "I, uh, tripped, and fell."

"Ugh, come on," Pink hauled Black to his feet, "Go do your tasks."

After Black had finished his tasks, they left the room, unknown to the danger they helped.

Brown walked down the O2 hallway to Navigation, *do tasks, don't talk, don't interact*. He went over to the vent where the download screen was.

"Hey Brown." A voice with a Russian accent said, behind Brown. His head snapped toward the direction of the turning chair that sat in front of a large screen and a clear window that gave a view of the vast space. Orange was sitting on the chair.

"What!?" Brown exclaimed, pressing his back against the wall, "Don't come nearer!"

"Woah, dude," Orange put his arms in the air, "I'm not gonna kill you," Orange paused, "not that I ever will."

"My sister told me not to trust anyone." Brown says, still in the corner.

"She's not wrong. Anyone could be the Impostor. If there's an Impostor."

"Telling ghost stories again, Orange?" Cyan's voice drifted into Navigation. "Can I join in?"

"Oh my god! NO!" Brown exclaimed, "I don't trust anyone."

"Jeez, Brown," Cyan deadpanned, "we don't even *know* if anyone's even Imposter. It's all fun anyway!" He brightened.

"Guys, we might *die*."

"Dang it Brown, what are the chances of us dying?" Orange stood laughing. "Besides, they wouldn't make their move with the three of us here, even if one of us *is* the Impostor. There'd be a witness." He explains.

"Can we *not* talk about this? It's not fun." Cyan says, finishing his chart course task.

"I'm sorry, I'm going to go," Brown decided. "I've heard stories that there've been as many as *three* Impostors. For all I know, you could *both* be the Impostor."

“Maybe we are.” Orange snickered, his hair flopping to the side. Cyan smacked him on the shoulder.

“What the heck?! I don’t want to be voted out!” Brown slowly backed out as Orange and Cyan continued bickering.

Day 1 - 12:00 pm, Mira HQ, Comms

“Are comms up yet?” Green said, for the twenty-fourth time. He was hovering behind Lime, who was typing furiously, trying to find a backdoor into the block.

“No, and will you please sit down? It’s not like you understand anything I’m doing here.” Green looked down at him, eyebrows raised.

“Well, to be fair you don’t know what I’m doing when I work.” Lime looked up and rolled his eyes at Green. “Are they up yet?” Green asked again.

“That’s because what you do is a whole lot of nonsense. How much of that is important to the ship anyway?”

“Well you two don’t even know what I do,” A tall woman with long platinum-blond hair poked her head into the Office and sauntered in. She leaned against the doorframe and cocked her head.

“All hail the queen,” Green said, laced with sarcasm.

“Why thank you. I do think of myself as an empress, however.” She responded in a similar manner, completely unbothered. Her helmet tucked under her arm, crown atop her head.

“Guess everyone made it to the party,” Lime muttered under his breath.

“What party?” She asked, “and why wasn’t I invited?”

“Well you invited yourself, so it wasn’t necessary, White” Green pointed out. She gave him a death stare before moving on to sit in Green’s empty chair. “Hold up. That’s *my* chair.”

“Was it? Guess it’s mine now. I *am* a queen, aren’t I?”

“Why did I even want to work with you,” Green muttered

“Will you two idiots shut up? I’m trying to work!” Lime burst out. “How did I get assigned with these two idiots?” He said under his breath.

“Well you did,” White answered, “and you’re stuck with us!”

“Dang it, this isn’t getting any better. Might as well join the crazies.” Lime stood up and walked across the Office. Holding out his hand to White, “Shall we dance?”

Day 1 - 1:30 pm, Cafeteria, The Skeld

“So *that’s* why Brown isn’t letting anyone sit with him!” Yellow exclaimed. Cyan nodded while Orange laughed. Yellow snuck another glance at Brown, self-quarantining at the other table. There was a mood in the Cafeteria, apprehension and excitement. The kids ran in between tables, their parents chasing. Most people were engaged in conversation. All with little talk about Imposters.

“We stayed in Nav a while after he left. I doubt there’s *actually* an Impostor on the ship. Have you encountered one before?” Cyan asked.

“Nope, and I hope to never. As far as I know, Black’s the only one who has.” Yellow says, eyes tracking Pink’s kid around the tables.

“And you do *not* want to meet one,” Black jumped in. Everyone jumped, and Yellow looked up to meet his eyes. Pink popped in behind Black, holding a squirming child.

“Rose, stop. Mommy’s talking right now.” Pink calmed Rose before handing her to Yellow, who clearly wanted her in that moment more than Pink did. Yellow looked down at Rose. “I’ve never met one before,” She said, now free of Rose’s weight, she gestured wildly. “What are they like?”

“I’ve seen one kill my friend right in front of me,” Black said quietly, “They’re ruthless monsters, but they don’t deserve to be like that,”

“Ummm.... Ok..?” Cyan interjected.

“What do you mean by that, Black?” Yellow mused.

“Huh?” Black looked up, “Oh nothing,” He pulled Pink closer. Rose wiggled away from Yellow, and toddled back to her mom.

Just then, Red, Blue, and Aero entered Cafeteria, all carrying a box full of freeze-dried food rations each, Aero holding one packet. “Anyone hungry?” Red singsonged happily as she plopped the box on the table.

Aero grabbed one more packet and walked over to Rose, “Here!” he said, passing the packet of food to her and her mother. Rose smiled, and took the packet, passing it to her mom to open.

Everyone passed the food packets to each other, eating in the quiet chatter of their neighbors. After all of that day’s ration of food had been devoured, everyone went on their separate ways to complete their daily tasks.

Cyan and Orange headed down to Admin, cursing the “dang card machine”, then went down to storage where Cyan had wires. Soon after, they both headed down to Electrical.

Meanwhile, halfway across the ship, Pink and Black were hanging with Blue and Red in Weapons, where Aero and Rose were playing with the Asteroid destroyer, leaving their parents to talk,

“Do you guys think we’ll be able to connect with the earthen team?” Pink was asking, “I mean, I’ve never been on a mission with no Earth Support,”

Red sighed, “like who hasn’t?” She leaned her head on Blue’s shoulder.

Pink stepped up to the weapons console, “move kids, move.” Pink playfully shoved Aero and her baby off the chair before taking the seat herself, she activated the weapon’s targeting system. Then started taking aim and firing at the small floating rocks.

“How hard can it be, really,” Blue added.

“It can’t be worse than an Imposter,” Black shuddered.

“Well, duh,” Red said before chasing Aero and Rose around the room.

“Done!” Pink said happily, jumping off the platform, “so, where do you guys need to go now?”

“Medbay, samples,” Blue informed her, “then Upper and Lower Engine.”

“Cool,” Pink replied, “Me and Black wanted to head over to Security.”

“Ok better get back to work,” Red laughed before grabbing Aero and left Weapons with Blue hot on her heels. Blue said something in rapid Korean, and Red answered back, laughing even harder.

Black smirked, “happy couple.”

“Yea,” Pink grabbed Rose, “come on, we have a job to do.”

Day 1 - 5:00 pm, The Skeld

Red, Blue, and Aero were just leaving Medbay hallway when out of nowhere, the alarm started blaring and the lights were flashing red.

“Oxygen depleted in 30 seconds! Oxygen depleted in 28 seconds!” said the robotic, monotone voice that blared through the loudspeaker.

“Oh, crap!” exclaimed Red. “We gotta fix it before we lose oxygen!”

“Let’s head to O2, hopefully, someone has Admin covered!” said Blue, trying to be heard over Aero’s screaming. And they raced to O2.

“Blue, what’s today’s code?” asked Red frantically.

“60245,” replied Blue.

“60245, 60245,” Red said under her breath. She was sweating up a storm, and her hands were shaking as she entered the code.

“Oxygen depleted in 14 seconds!”

“Come on! We’re running out of time!” said Blue

“I’m trying!” said Red through gritted teeth.

She finally pressed the OK key, but the alarm didn’t stop blaring.

“Shoot! No one did the one in Admin! We gotta hurry!” exclaimed Red.

“Oxygen depleted in 10 seconds!”

Finally, the alarm stopped, and Red, Blue, and Aero all breathed a sigh of relief, then Red raced up to Cafeteria.

“Wait up, Red! The oxygen is fixed, where are you going?” asked Blue between breaths.

“To press the Emergency Button. This can’t be normal, two sabotages in one day? I think that there’s an Imposter among us.”

Day 1 - 8:00 pm, Mira HQ, Earth,

“Ship repairs?! No way!!” Green exclaimed. White shook her head.

“It’s got to be done. I’m downloading new software and debugging it. You, however, are not doing anything. You too Lime.” She said, before strutting out, giving them the peace sign. “Hop to it!”

“Dang it, one day, that woman’s going to kill me. Go on, Green. Didn’t she say you had to do ship repairs?” Lime waved his hand at him. Green glared blazing daggers in return.

“You do realize you have to do them too, right?”

“Actually, I don’t. You see, I have a fatal injury. Right here.” He says motioning to his ankles.

“Oh yea. Well, you shouldn’t have asked to dance with her. Unless you *wanted* that ‘fatal’ injury.” Green replied, remembering when Lime had asked White to dance, only to get a kick in the shins.

“Please, go get me an ice pack,” Lime added, “if you want me to do ship repairs.”

“What?!” Green gritted his teeth, hiding his annoyance, “Fine, but if we’re going by injuries, I have serious mental problems. I believe the root of it is you and White.” He got up and pushed Lime’s chair out of the Office. “But after this, you are staying in Comms, and I’m keeping White out.”

Lime signed and agreed, what else could he do. Green left, going to find a pack of ice for Lime. Lime turned to his monitor that was on an error page stating how the computer couldn’t connect to The Skeld comms

Lime’s thoughts traveled back to his older sister. She could be in danger for all Lime knew, but in all honesty, she was probably *causing* the danger. He pulled up a SIMSONG browser and delved back into the world of ones and zeros, searching for error messages.

Day 1 - 5:15 pm, Cafeteria, The Skeld

Yellow, Pink, Black, and Purple all went to Admin once the alarm had sounded. Merely a few seconds after the alarm had stopped, the alarm of an emergency meeting blared throughout the ship, "About time," Pink muttered, "there have been way too many sabotages for there not to be an Imposter."

Purple agreed, "Come on," and she walked out of Admin with everyone close behind.

It had taken a total of two minutes before everyone had taken a seat at the discussion table, and Yellow was waiting anxiously for the matter to be discussed. Brown was sitting as far away from everyone else as possible.

"Guys," Red started, "I think we already know, but there might be an Imposter among us."

"It's not normal for there to be two bugs in less than a little more than twelve hours without an Imposter," Blue added, wrapping one arm around Red and the other around Aero.

"Let's stay in larger groups, also watch each other carefully," Red suggested, before adding, "Pink is safe, I saw her do weapons,"

"I can camp cams, I've almost finished my tasks for today." Yellow raised her hand tentatively. "Anyone wanna come with me?"

"How big should the groups be?" Purple asked, tapping her foot. She kept glancing down at her commpad, as if someone would call her, even with communications down.

"Three or four, we're not quite sure how many Impostor's we have aboard, but let's assume there's one." Black answered. "Pink and I are sticking together."

It was Cyan who spoke next, "you guys might be overreacting,"

"Exactly, why not just stay in groups?" Orange added, not caring to hide his annoyance, "wasting time when we call meeting like this,"

"Really?" Red shot, "weren't you the one who said, you don't want to die?"

"Yes!" Orange fired back, "but that doesn't mean that we have to act like this," He added, "you're all acting like Brown!" Orange got up and left the table, "plus, I'm hungry." He called over his shoulder as he walked out.

At that, the group spread out through the room at the different tables, to Black, it didn't seem like there would be a lot of chatter going on. *Good, I'll be safer that way.* One side of Black thought, just as Cyan came back with everyone's dinner. Instead of passing the food out the way they did before, they each made their way to the box and grabbed their share of the rations.

They all ate in silence except for the sound of the two kids whining and the shuffle of clothes. A million thoughts ran through Black's mind as he ate, what would he do next? And *ugh* he thought, how could he do to get rid of Pink?

Almost as if reading his mind, Pink reached over and squeezed his arm. "It'll be okay, we'll be safe, you'll see."

After dinner, everyone grabbed their sleeping mats and spread out around the Cafeteria in groups, Black, Pink, and Rose, left Bottom Caf door, Purple and Yellow sat their mats closer together and nearer to Pink and Black. (Pink didn't mind) Cyan and Orange set up a 'fort' on the left side of the Weapons door, Brown typically went somewhere else to sleep, probably Admin, Red and Blue with Aero sat to the right of the Admin door.

"Blue," Red hissed in the dark, most of the groups decided to watch for anything, "come on, you sleep," She said, her body propped up on her elbow, Aero curling his body against her chest.

Blue turned his head, "Red," he said before yawning and Red shoved him on the mattress and sat where Blue was sitting. He wrapped an arm around Aero before falling asleep himself.

Blue's head swarmed with flashbacks and dreams; Blue became the small child he was when he was a baby, just like Aero. Little Blue followed his father through the halls of electrical, his father stopped outside Electrical before kneeling and setting his hands on Little Blue's shoulders, glancing at a shadow behind him before speaking.

"Baby," his father said, "Listen to me, I want you to run as fast as you can. I want you to never look back, I want you to head to comms and immediately call for help, alright?"

"No!" Little Blue had whispered, "don't leave me, please" a figure that had been hiding behind one of the walls turned, and looked down at Little Blue's father.

"Run," his father had commanded him, and Little Blue did. And before he turned the corner, he heard an agonizing scream and saw his father's body crumple to the floor.

Day 2 - 1:00 am, Cafeteria, The Skeld

Purple, Yellow, Black, and Rose were asleep under Pink's watch. Black stirred, his eyes flickering open, "Pink?" He asked drowsily, "want me to watch?"

Pink laughed quietly, "No baby, it's fine," she paused, "I like watching you,"

Black sat up, "haha"

"I love you," Pink said, her fingers tracing his cheekbone. Pink bent down, her lips gently brushing Black's. "We'll be ok."

"I sure hope so," Black replied, still in his own self, "especially you and Rose,"

Pink cocked her head, “what about you?” Pink asked, running her fingers through Black’s dark hair. She didn’t get an answer, and when she turned Black’s head to look at him, he was already asleep.

Cyan was watching Pink, her gentle movements tracing Rose and Black’s faces. Suddenly, Orange came up behind him.

Orange smirked, “What, now *you* want a love life?” He said, coming to sit with Cyan at their fort entrance, although, clearly they were the only ones who called it that.

“I *do not*,” Cyan replied faster than was needed, “and dang it, Orange, Pink’s not my type.”

“We’ll see,” Orange said, sitting down beside Cyan. He nudged him and Cyan looked up. “Well, if Pink’s not your type, then who is?”

“Can we not talk about this? I just-” He buried his face in his palms. “I dunno, we’re aboard a ship, and now people think there’s an Impostor among us, and- I don’t even wanna add romance into this. It’s just too much, we don’t even have Earth support.”

“Yea, I guess.” Orange got up to go, and Cyan was left there, trying to decipher what just happened. Did Orange sound almost wistful and bitter? Oh, nevermind, he meant what he had said, there wasn’t time for all that.

The clock on the wall just turned 1:30 when Brown decided if he couldn’t sleep, he could do some tasks. Leaving Admin, Brown headed to Lower Engine completing his align engines task. Then, he went up to security to watch Cams.

Brown wouldn’t admit it himself, but he had drifted off a few times. He drifted off for the fourth time before pinching himself and checked the time: 2:56 am. *Has it already been two hours?* Brown asked himself, yawning with his eyes closed. In those few seconds, a figure had crept up behind him.

Brown, who still had no idea of the shadow’s presence, watched the footage of the Cams. It looked like Blue, Black and Yellow had left the Cafeteria. Brown took this as a call to leave. Only when he stood, he realized he wasn’t alone.

Black stood behind him a knife in his hand, “I’m sorry,” he whispered. Brown’s eyes widened, realizing what was happening after it was too late, Black had leaped from his place in the room, plunging the knife into Brown’s chest.

After Black removed the knife, Brown staggered to the floor with a soft *thump*. Black stared in horror at the bleeding body in front of him, his pulse raised, “Why?” Brown asked, his voice hoarse, “Pink will never forgive you if she finds out,”

Black didn’t answer, instead, the parasite took over and led him to the vent before climbing in and venting to Electrical.

Leaving Electrical, Black hurried back to Pink and Rose who were still asleep with Purple watching them. “Hey,” Black greeted Purple, then gently nudged Pink.

“Where’d you go?” Purple asked quietly, so not to wake them up. Black looked over.

“Tasks,” Black replied in the same volume.

“Couldn’t sleep?” She whispered. “I saw Blue and Yellow leave too, I think they’re doing tasks as well. I might take off, you good to watch them?” She motioned to Pink and Rose. He nodded and Purple got up, glancing around before heading to Weapons.

“Yeah, I can watch them,” Black added, “Maybe I’ll wake her up.” Black shook Pink gently, “Pink,” he shook her, “I’m going to do tasks, do you wanna come with me?,”

Pink’s eyes flickered open, “Huh?” Pink looked around, “oh right,” Pink got up and picked up a sleeping Rose. Black rolled up their bedding and led Pink towards Medbay. Rose yawned, a small puff rose from her mouth. “It’s so cold, what time is it, Black?”

“Three AM, I think. I’m not sure.” They passed Medbay and entered Upper Engine where Pink had to align the engines

“It’s much warmer up at the engines, right Rose?” Pink cooed to the squirming bundle. She gently set her down and Rose stood up. Pink moved aside and gestured to the engine looking at Black, “Don’t you have this task too?” Pink asked.

“Oh, um, I don’t have that task. Maybe you misheard me? I, er, have a task in Comms...” Black stammered looking sideways, not meeting her gaze. Pink raised her eyebrows. Just then, Yellow’s head poked around the corner.

“Hey guys!” Yellow blurted happily, “where to?” She stepped around, Purple right after her. “Can we join you?”

“Security, Black has a task there,” Pink answered. Pink headed down to the intersection where the hall met Security and Reactor that turned to Security, but she stopped short.

“What’s wrong?” Purple asked as Pink’s gloved hand went to her mouth. Purple pushed past Pink, but froze when she saw what Pink was looking at. Black and Rose followed suit.

“Guys? What happened?” Yellow’s anxious voice cut into the thick silence. “I mean, it’s not like you found a dead body or anything right?” She nervously laughed.

“Come see for yourself.” Pink answered unsteadily, and Yellow hurried to see what was going on.

“Oh God, I take it back.” Yellow said, obviously in shock after she saw the dead body of Brown sprawled on the floor. Pink dropped to her knees in shock. Black stood back at the door, shielding Rose’s eyes.

“No, no. Nonononono. No, they wouldn’t do this. They wouldn’t... it was an accident. Yes, it was a horrible accident...” Purple hung back, eyes wide in horror. Her words went largely undetected, though Yellow’s eyes narrowed.

“We have to... We have to check.” Pink said quietly, bent over Brown’s body, placing a hand on his chest, checking his pulse, “He’s gone.” She whispered, barely audible.

“DEAD BODY REPORTED!” a loud monotone voice filled the speakers, the little lights on the walls lit up with these words as well.

“I’ll go first,” Black suggested, pointing to Rose. Yellow nodded and Black took off, heading back to the Cafeteria. Pink jogged after him. Purple looked down at the body, and Yellow sighed. Together they gently lifted his body, and walked up to the Cafeteria.

“So you just found Brown?” Red asked, “Where? Was there anyone else out wandering?”

“Security,” Pink answered, her head lowered, “Brown was probably watching Cams.”

“Um, so, I know Blue was out with Yellow before I joined, but I think he went back to the Cafeteria for sleep.” Purple bit her lip. “I don’t want to point any fingers, but I know Yellow, Black, and Blue were outside before I went out to join Yellow. Can I make a call after the meeting?” Purple’s eyes were wide in shock.

“Cyan is safe, we were in our fortress, sleeping. I dunno why people gotta go do tasks at 3 AM in the morning. And aren’t comms down, Purp?” Orange said, propping his head up with his arm, looking inquisitively at her.

“Guys, we can’t ignore this, no more playing around. Blue came back to bed at 2:45, I know Pink, Purple, Cyan, and Orange are safe, they were all sleeping. That leaves Black and Yellow.” Red surveyed the people sitting around the table.

“How do we know Blue came back at 2:45? Weren’t you sleeping?” Interjected Orange. “I know Cyan is *NOT* the Impostor, he was with me. I closed the fort doors, so everyone else is suspicious in my eyes.”

“Brown’s body was a little warm,” Pink added, “He couldn’t have died more than 45 minutes ago.”

“That means Blue is still up as a suspect.” finished Yellow. “I *was* with Blue in the beginning, but I never saw him do Weapons... He saw me, but we parted ways at Navigation. While I was walking in the Shields hallway, I met up with Purp who came from the Weapons hallway, so she’s clear.”

“Black?” Red inquired. She was contemplating the suspects, though she was *sure* it couldn’t be Blue. There was no way.

“I was in Electrical at 2:00, then left for storage, *then* went back to Caf, ” Black said smoothly. Black held up his hands, “I just want to keep Pink safe” Red’s eyes darted from Yellow to Black then back again. “We should consider Blue as a suspect.”

“Please,” Red begged, her eyes darting to Yellow and Black, both of whom were staring at Blue, “it wouldn’t be Blue, We’ve been married for 3 and a half years now, He wouldn’t do this.”

“It also wouldn’t be Black,” Pink added, using the same tone as Red.

“No one is safe, we have to get rid of the Impostor, I’m sorry if it is Blue, and Black’s a suspect like any other. It couldn’t be Yellow anyways, she was with me for the majority of the time. This has almost nothing to do with the person, it’s the parasite,” Purple laid out. “We need to decide, who’s alibi makes more sense?”

“I’m just saying,” Pink jumped in, Rose in her arms, “I chose my boyfriends *wisely*, I wouldn’t choose someone who would *kill* someone.”

“Well, Pink, it might be him. You heard what Purple said, right? It’s the parasite.” Cyan said sadly, shaking his head.

“Do you want to do this now?” Orange asked, closing his eyes. “Cyan here spent some time last night watching Pink, so maybe he wants Black out of the picture.” he turned to Pink, who glared at him. “Wow, in a bad mood, aren’t we?” Cyan looked murderously over at Orange, who looked on innocently.

“Guys, listen to Red,” Pink started again, “Everyone is a suspect, but that doesn’t change my feelings for Black, ok?”

“*Thank you, someone* is listening to me. We have a couple of people here, Black, Blue, and Yellow. Again, it’s not likely to be Blue. ” Red exclaimed loudly.

“Well, Blue *has* been awfully quiet...”

“Also, I do NOT like Pink, will you stop spreading fake news, Orange?” Cyan added, looking up at the ceiling.

“Oh my God! That conversation is over!” Red burst out, “Why can’t everyone just shut up!”

“Actually, this is a serious conversation, and we all need to listen,” Blue said.

“And he finally speaks. Got anything to say, Blue? Input is great.” Yellow said sardonically.

“I just want to watch over Aero.” Blue continued, “Ok? I have a family I need to protect. Aero won’t lose his dad.” Blue’s voice quivered.

Pink looked at Blue to Black to Yellow, “no one should get voted out,” she said slowly, “at least not until we find concrete evidence.” Pink glanced at Red, Blue and Aero and gave them a wink. “We’re not ripping apart a family with no evidence. Let’s just keep an eye on Yellow and Blue.”

“And Black.” Yellow pointed out.

“Yes, I know, I’ll be doing that,” Pink gave,

“You seem so ready to accuse people, Yellow.” Blue said. “Maybe you’re the Impostor.”

“Hey,” Yellow said defensively, “I love Rose and Aero, I’m trying to protect them.”

“I can protect my own kid, thank you very much.” Blue shot back.

“Alright, put them on parole, Purple, you good with watching Yellow? I can keep an eye on Blue, and Pink will be making sure Black is safe.” Red pushed back her chair and departed with Aero and Blue. After that, the rest of the room dispersed, the air thick with suspicion and worry for their own families.

No one is safe, Pink thought, as long as we stay together, we'll be ok. Only she was wrong, she was so very wrong.

"We need to talk." Cyan said, cornering Orange in Reactor.

"What is there to say?" Orange shrugged, glancing around. "You know, since we're here, I got simon says."

"While you do that we can talk, it'll take a while, right?"

"Look, I don't know what you want to say."

"You know exactly what I'm talking about." Cyan leaned against the glowing reactor core. "I need you to stop."

"Ah. That. I think it's obvious that you like Pink." Orange clicked the buttons and groaned, he'd almost finished it when his finger slipped.

"No, I don't." Cyan said quietly. "I told you already, she's not my type. And how do you know if you like someone anyway? How do you know when the other person is ready? What is love?"

"Wait, what do you mean?" Orange stepped away from the pedestal.

"Nothing. I just don't want you going around saying things that aren't true." Cyan turned away, and began striding to Medbay.

Day 2 - 5:00 am, Mira HQ, Comms

Lime woke up to a ping on his computer, that for once, wasn't showing the error screen. He sat up abruptly and almost toppled off the rolling chair he had slept in. Flicking away his dusty brown hair, Lime looked around the dark room through squinted eyes, his computer the only source of light. He groggily got up, and moved to the larger monitor.

After reading the first two messages, Lime started typing furiously and sending a message. It took three minutes before another message from Earth made it through.

4:15.34 AM Earth: We have received your message

4:17.36 AM Earth: Sending pod with Caramel in two hours

4:18.57 AM Earth: Mira HQ, do you copy?

5:04.54 AM Mira HQ: I copy, this is Lime, the communications officer

5:07.19 AM Earth: Expect a pod in the launch pad soon

--Transcript end--

Lime started activating the Comms before recording a message and broadcasted it throughout the ship, "Guys! We have a response from Earth, head to Comms immediately." By the time he hit send, he remembered that White would kill him for interrupting her 'Beauty Sleep'. There was a delay, then a return message from Green.

“Whaaa?” Green’s sleepy voice filled the room, and Lime stood up. Running to the intersection, he greeted Green and White.

“This better be important. What does Earth need?” White said, her hair immaculate, as if she hadn’t just woken up. She pushed up her round glasses and yawned once.

“Whaa happen?” Green said, eyes not yet fully open. White looked at him and raised her eyebrows.

“Were you sleeping on your keyboard?” Green looked up at her, clear imprints on his face. “Let’s see, I think that’s qwerty... Oh, wait no those are the numbers.”

One Hour Later

The door hissed open and Caramel stepped onto a platform, followed by Isla, her robot. Howling winds blew, Caramel’s deep brown hair whipping in her face. She pushed it back and gripped her touchpad tighter. *How could they lose contact?* The officers here must be idiots. She strolled into the hallway, the advice she gave her brother ringing in her mind. Was she overreacting? No, it was sound advice, and would keep him alive.

“There she is, walking like she owns the world.”

“Like *she* owns the world? I thought *I* owned the world. Rather offended now, Green.” A sharp voice cut through the loud gale, and Caramel looked over to see a tall, light-haired woman with a gleaming crown. Caramel touched a similar crown on her head and smiled.

“Oh, float me now, this keeps on getting better and better doesn't it,” muttered a figure next to Green, he must be Lime. Studying Lime, she noticed dark green eyes, and light brown hair. And, of course, an unfortunate number of freckles.

“Yes, it will get *better and better*,” Caramel air-quoted, “Once we get a message through to the Skeld.” She said, in her thick scandinavian accent.

“Like heck it would,” said the woman in the white suit, “I’m White, by the ways,” she added.

When Caramel reached them, she gestured to Mira’s entrance doors, “Come on, don’t we have work to do?”

“Right,” Green agreed and followed Caramel through the doors with everyone close behind. The doors slid shut behind them, and the loud engine noise cut off.

“Lime, you’re a radio monitor?” White asked, sliding into Lime’s chair behind the wall of Comm screens.

“Yes,” Lime said rather proudly, “if you attempt to send a message to Skeld, the error message will pop up, error message 264.”

“Isla,” Caramel said, still looking at the computer screen, reading the error code.

“Yes, my queen?” asked the robot.

“State cause of error message 264.”

“1, message overload,” Isla continued, reading off the error handbook, “2, system crashed of intake overload.”

“Isla, check for bugs in this system.” The robot moved forward and extended an antenna.

“You broke it. You kept sending messages, which overloaded their intake system. Are you new here?” Caramel said, not looking up from the monitor. Lime thrust up a hand and walked away.

“I am done, absolutely done with you guys.” He called over his shoulders. “I’m going to storage to sort the books again.”

“This should be a simple fix if that buffoon didn’t break the Skeld’s mailbox. I can... Yes. We’ll have no audio but can wire some messages across. I’ll need a new system, and it would be helpful to have someone on the other end.”

“I can add a new update, what does the system need?” White jumped in.

“You’re a programmer?” Caramel inquired. “Something useful. What does that person do?” She waved a hand at Green, who was reclining in the other chair,

“Yes,” White replied, “the best of the best. Green over there is our technical performer. He gets us through the hoops we need to jump through.”

“Huh,” Caramel opened a new window, “I thought you, as a programmer, are supposed to make sure there *are* no hoops to begin with. If you can, go program a system that doesn’t overload the system, install it in the new system.”

“Oh, I can. By the way, since you’re here, might as well do those ship repairs Green and Lime never finished.” White paused, “I’m sure they’d be delighted to have you. Go check in with Lime if you’re bored.”

Green shook his head from the doorway, “Great, two bossy *queens* trying to take control of their *queendom*. The tension is rising. Aggression much?” White turned and glared at Green.

“Green,” White said innocently, “what are you talking about? There’s one ruler here, and I think it’s clear who that is,” White turned away from Caramel, and swept out the door, shoving Green off the chair as she went by. “Don’t forget who was here first.” White said, her voice dangerously low, “Long live the Queen.”

White was breathing heavily by the time she reached the most isolated place on Mira she could find, Laboratory. She removed her helmet and set it on the counter. White pushed herself up next to her helmet on the counters before resting her head in her hands with her elbows on her knees. *How dare she storm in and try to take control?!*

White closed her eyes, *that girl is going down*, she told herself, White got up and grabbed her helmet. As she turned on her heels, she heard a hiss. White stopped and looked around, hearing another hiss from above, she looked up just in time to see a long and flat creature fall towards her face.

To be continued...

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Thank you, Inferno & Luna1923

Acknowledgments: From the author's, Inferno and Luna1923

We've typed so many documents of stories, never having them be read by others. Parasite may have also fallen down there as well without the help of many people. First we would like to thank the first person who jumped on board with us, Spacebean, our partner-in-crime. Throughout this whole piece, we couldn't have done anything without these people, huge thanks.

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Sidenote:

I know, I know, we've already said thanks to Astra, spacebean, and rLightning, but I have a more personalized thanks.

Astra, as weird as this sounds, thank you so much for discussing subtle ways to murder someone with me. Thank you for making me smile everyday. Thank you for posting random/sarcastic comments. We couldn't have done this without you.

~ Luna1923

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~ Luna1923

One More!!

Spacebean, we know that you felt like you didn't contribute. But, you did. You helped in so many ways we can't even begin to name them all. You were a friend, and you supported us throughout the construction of this story. There are no words to explain the way that you made this possible. Here's a mildly dramatic poem to say our thanks, you know Luna's always been the dramatic sort!

We want to tell you "Thank you,"
But it doesn't seem enough.
Words don't seem sufficient--
"Blah, blah" and all that stuff.
Please know we have deep feelings
About your generous act.
We really appreciate you;
You're special, and that's a fact!
~ Luna1923 & Inferno

Head over to flow.page/parasite for more AU!

Questions or Comments? [Review Parasite Here!](#)

Watch out for Parasite Part 2!

[Email Us Here!](#)

(Yes, we also use this email for dog walking but it's a project work-in-process)