In space, no one can hear you scream.

by MadHattersCheshireCat

Summary

Kendall-Rae "Rae" Brynn Hayden Ripley. Eldest daughter of Ellen Ripley. She had been part of the commercial crew on the Nostromo. After investigating an S.O.S warning from the planet LV-426, one of the crew members had returned with something attached to his face. That was when all hell broke loose. 57 years later, after the traumatizing attack, her mother, and herself survived the Nostromo, and the one thing that they feared came to life. There are colonists living on LV-426, and when they lose contact with the colony, both Kendall and Ellen are recruited to aid some colonial marines when they go to investigate LV-426, she ends up getting a lot more than she had planned, including the heart of a certain Corporal Marine...

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
Meeting Kendall-Rae

Name: Lieutenant Kendall-Rae Brynn Hayden Ripley.

Preferred Name: Lieutenant Rae, or Rae.


D.O.B: April 17, 2097.

Age: 82. (Because she had been asleep for 57 years, without the sleep, when it all started on the Nostromo, she was 25.)

Looks:
Face Claim: Emily Rudd.

Hair color: Dark brown ombre.

Hair length: To her waist.

Eye color: Gray Eyes.

Complexion: Fair.


Physical Description: Kendall has a slim round face, with high cheek bones, and a slightly rounded chin. She has roundish-almond like eyes, that always seem to have a childlike gleam to them. Her eyes are gray, and her thinly plucked eyebrows are shaped into a deceivingly perfect arch that followed the slight curve of her eye. She also has a small, ideal nose, above her full lips, which seem to have the 'perfect imprint' shape to them. Her natural, wavy dark brown is almost at waist length, and she has a few ombre highlights hidden in there as well. She walks with long strides, with her shoulders back, and her head held high. The usual thing for her to be seen in is, cargo pants, leather jacket/military-style jacket, and combat boots.

Crush: Corporal Dwayne Hicks.

Personality: Lieutenant Kendall-Rae Brynn Hayden Ripley is the eldest daughter to Ellen Ripley. She can be the contrasting daughter, but she has quite a variety of personality traits similar to Ripley. She is highly enthusiastic, and she too has a bright personality. Sometimes. She is very accepting, but she sometimes has a bit of trouble with forgiving. Kendall is an intelligent woman, who can present an uncommunicative demeanor, only when she is extremely ticked off, or pissed off, or just stressed out. Kendall can lie like the wind. Sometimes that is a good trait, and sometimes it is not. She can be bubbly and goofy, but also warm, edgy and witty. She can see the best in others, and she is quite good at improvisation. She is very courageous, and determined. When her friends lives are at risk, she is not afraid to lay her life on the line for them. When she meets Newt, like her mother, she is very protective of her. She is not afraid to speak her mind, and she can be a bit cocky sometimes. Kendall has a mixture of personality traits. She is very adventurous when it comes to certain things. After her experience on the Nostromo, she is very alert to new places, and people. When she meets someone new, she can be a bit awkward, and shy. Sometimes, in certain situations, she is very calm, and she has a charismatic persona. She is very caring, even though she may not show it at first. She is quite a civilized person, and she is also quite clever. She can be cooperative, when it comes to certain things. Since dealing with the Xenomorph, she has become very courageous, but she is also
quite dangerous. She knows how to handle herself, and she is quite daring. Kendall-Rae is very fearless, feisty, fierce, and a fighter.

Friends:
Jones. (Their Cat.)
Ellen Ripley.
Rebecca "Newt" Jorden.
Corporal Dwayne Hicks.
Lance Bishop. (Later on.)
Private William Hudson.
Private Jenette Vazquez.
Sergeant Al Apone.
Private Mark Drake.
Private Ricco Frost.
Corporal Colette Ferro.
Private Daniel Spunkmeyer.
Corporal Cynthia Dietrich.
Private Tim Crowe.
Private Trevor Wierzbowski.

Enemies:
Bishop. (At first, because he's an android. She later learns to trust him, seeing how he is different from Ash.)
Carter J. Burke. (She never trusted him in the first place, and after what he had tried to do to her and Newt, she's hated him.)
Xenomorphs. (Alien.)
Lieutenant William Gorman. (Because of what happened to the Marines inside of the complex.)

Piercings: N/A.

Tattoos: None at this point in time.

Family:
Ellen Ripley. (Mother. Alive.)
Amanda Ripley. (Sister. Deceased.)

Likes:
Coffee.
Food.
Peace and Quiet.
Drawing.
Sleeping.
Cats.
Chocolate.
Sweets.
Cake.
Outer Space.
Watching the stars.

Dislikes:
Sour wine.
Closed Spaces.
Heights. (Sometimes.)
Water. (Almost drowned.)
Androids. (She always found them a bit creepy. Unless your OC is an android.)
Aliens. (Xenomorphs...)
Being completely alone.
Her asthma.

Weaknesses:
Her mom. (She's scared that something is going to happen to her.)
Swimming.
Her asthma.

Species: (Human/Xenomorph/Android...): Human.

Bio: Kendall-Rae Ripley was born on April 17, 2097, at the same place her mother was born, at the Olympia colony on Luna. Following in her mother's shoes, she too gained a Masters in engineering from the New York Aeronautics University, she served with the US Merchant Navy aboard the Zelazny, where she acted as navigations pilot. Following this, like her mother as well, she was posted to the Nostromo. Prior to the fateful voyage on which the Nostromo discovered LV-426 and the Alien, both Kendall-Rae and Ellen attempted to renegotiate their contracts so that they could both take a leave of absence and spend more time with Amanda, Ellen's new daughter, and Kendall-Rae's younger sister. Eventually, both Ellen and Kendal-Rae along with Weyland-Yutani reached a compromise whereby both of the Ripley's would agree to serve aboard the Nostromo for the forthcoming trip and take their leave subsequently. Kendall-Rae was one of eight crew members of the Nostromo in 2122. When she awoke, she thought that they were done with their cargo haul duty but found out they were awoken to investigate a distress signal coming from the moon LV-426.

While Dallas, Kane, and Lambert left the ship to investigate the signal, Kendall-Rae stayed on the shuttle to assist in the repairs. Later on, after she thinks that Dallas and Brett are dead, and Lambert and Parker are dead, she and her mother activate the self-destruct and rushed to the escape shuttle. On their way there, they both stumble upon the cocooned Dallas and Brett in the Alien's nest. Kendall is completely destroyed, seeing both Dallas and Brett like that, however, Dallas was still conscious, and he begged Kendall to kill them. Even though she was emotionally destroyed, Kendall complied, and she torched both of them with the flame-thrower. When they continued on, they had a short face-off with the creature in front of the shuttle, and with it blocking their way, they rushed to reactivate the cooling unit. However, despite the fact that they turned the cooling back on, Mother finalized the self-destruct. The Ripley's rushed back to the shuttle and found the Alien gone. They entered the shuttle and narrowly escaped as the ship exploded. They had both thought that the Alien had died in the explosion, but as they both prepared themselves for hypersleep, they both receive a nasty surprise, when they see the creature hiding in one of the walls. They both panicked, and they scrambled into the spacesuit closet. After catching their breath, they realize that the alien has not discovered them yet. They made a plan to get rid of the creature once and for all, and as they each quietly slipping on a spacesuit, they slowly making their way to a control console. They both started the process to open the hatch and flush the creature out; unfortunately, the process gave off steam and the creature became agitated. Both of them freaked out, and they quickly lost their courage, but by the time the creature was in striking distance of Kendall, Ellen opened the hatch to the vacuum of space. All loose objects and the creature were sucked out. It held onto the entrance, until Kendall shot it with a harpoon gun. However, the hatch closed on it, tethering the creature to the shuttle. The Alien then tried to get back in via the engine, but Kendall hit the ignition and the creature was blown into space. After Ellen gave her final report on the status of the ship, cargo, and crew, they signed off, and entered hypersleep, only to be found 57 years later.

Occupation: A Lieutenant, and a medical officer.
Colonial Marine: N/A.
Rank: She is a Lieutenant, when they go to Hadley's Hope.

Extras:
She has asthma.
She has constant nightmares about the Xenomorph, and the chestbuster.
After 57 years, she is new at the whole 'falling-in-love' bit.
She has smoked occasionally. (Very much like her mother in that sense.)
Finding Kendall-Rae and Ellen Ripley

Chapter Notes

The first few chapters are going to be a bit boring, then it gets to the exciting parts.

Sometime in the future, in space, everything was silent and endless. The stars shine like the love of God...cold and remote. Against them drifted a tiny chip of technology. It was the Narcissus, the lifeboat of the ill-fated star freighter Nostromo. Without any interior or running lights, it seemed devoid of life. The ship's computer came to life, as it reflected off of 2 hypersleep capsules. The screen flashed PROXIMITY ALERT and the coordinates of the intruder. The ping of a ranging radar grew louder, as it came closer. A shadow engulfed the Narcissus. The tiny ship was put into perspective as a massive dark hull descended towards it.

Inside the Narcissus, it was as dark and dormant as a crypt. Outside, massive metal forms could be seen as they descended around the shuttle. Like the tolling of a bell, a basso profundo clang reverberated through the hull. Just then, light glared as a cutting torch burst through the metal door, as it moved with machine precision, as it cut a hexagon path. When it finished, the torch cut off, and the door fell inward, as it revealed a bizarre multi-armed figure. It was just a robot welder. It backed away, as it left the door clear.

Momentarily afterwards, a scanner entered the shuttle, supported by a metal arm. The large machine floated it, and began to scan the room. Its blue laser played over all the equipment. As it passed over the 2 hypersleep capsules, it stopped and slowly scanned it once more. The laser's blue line contoured on the two sleeping figures. An older woman, and a younger one as well. The scanner turned off its laser and backed out of the room via the airlock door. 3 figures entered, back-lit and ominous.

They were three men, in bio-isolation suits, as they carried lights and equipment. They approached the 2 sarcophagus-like hypersleep capsules. Two of the men moved to the capsules, and in almost perfect synchronization, their gloved hands wiped at an opaque layer of dust on the canopy. Their lights stabbed in where the dust had been wiped away, and each of their lights illuminated a woman, their faces in peaceful repose. The leader had found Warrant Officer Ellen Ripley, and the second had found 2nd Warrant Officer Kendall-Rae Ripley. Nestles next to Ripley was Jones, their cat.

"Lights are green. They're both alive." The one who had found Kendall-Rae said.

The leader sighed, as they all pulled off their masks.

"Well, there goes our salvage, guys."
Ripley's Nightmare.

Chapter Summary

Ripley's Nightmare about the ChestBurster.

Across the serene blue curve of the Earth, in high orbit was Gateway Station, a sprawling complex of modular orbital habitats. In a viewing portal, it opened into a vertical wall of the medical section. In one of the multiple hospital rooms, harsh sunlight filled the room from the viewing portal. A female med-tech turned from the window. She crossed to a bed, where Ellen Ripley was laying. She looked wan, amid an array of arcane white medical equipment. The tech executed practiced cheeriness, but Ripley didn't buy it.

"How are we today?"
The med-tech asked, as Ripley began to sit up, her voice barely audible.

"Terrible."
Came her almost inaudible answer.

"Oh, better than yesterday at least."

"Where am I?"
Ripley asked, as the med-tech came around to the side of the bed, and re-positioned Ripley's pillow for her.

"You're safe. You're at Gateway Station. Been here a couple of days. You were pretty groggy at first, but now you're okay." She replied, as the med-tech glanced up as the door opened. She smiled, clearly thankful to be saved by the distraction.

"Looks like you have a visitor."
A man crossed the room carrying a familiar large, orange tomcat. Beside him, was a young girl, dressed in sweatpants and a sweater. Even though this was not her usual attire, Ripley knew who the girl was, and who the cat was.

"Jonesy! Come here!"
Ripley said, as she completely ignored the man, and she grabbed the cat, and hugged it to her. Jones seemed none the worse for fear, and began to purr.

"Hey, come here. How are you, you stupid cat? How are you? Where've you been?"
She said, before she glanced at Kendall, and she smiled.

"Hey Kenny, how've you been?"
Kendall-Rae only smiled, as she shrugged her shoulders.

"Still a bit groggy, but I've recovered faster than you have."
She replied, as she scratched Jones' head.

The visitor was seated beside the bed, and beside Kendall-Rae and Ripley finally noticed him. He was thirty-ish and handsome, in a suit that looked executive or legal, the tie loosened with studied casualness. A smile referred to as 'winning.'
"I guess you three have met, huh? I'm Burke. Carter Burke. I work for the company, but don't let that fool you. I'm really an okay guy. I'm glad to see you two feeling better. Ms. Kendall-Rae here, has surprisingly recovered a lot faster than you have. Anyways... they tell me that all the weakness and disorientation should pass soon. That's just natural side affects of such an unusually long hypersleep or something like that."

The man said, introducing himself.

"What do you mean? How long were we out there for?"

Ripley asked, glancing at Kendall first.

Did she know? Had she already been told?

"Has no one discussed this with either of you, yet?"

Burke asked both of the women before him.

"No. But, I mean. I don't recognize this place. Kenny, do you?"

Ripley stated, as she looked at her daughter, who just shook her head.

Burke just looked visually uncomfortable.

"I know. Okay, it's just that this might be a shock to you. It's long..."

"How long? Please."

Ripley asked, her voice soft, and full of questions.

"Fifty-seven years."

Was Burke's answer, and both Kendall-Rae and Ripley felt their breath hitch in their throat. They were both stunned, and they seemed to deflate. Their facial expressions passing through amazement and shock as they face reality. 57 years. Both of them coming to realization of all that they had lost since they took the job on the Nostromo. Friends. Family. Their world. Well. At least they still had each other. There was one positive thing. They also had Jones.

"What!?"

Ripley asked, finally finding her voice.

"That's the thing. You two were out there for fifty-seven years. What happened was you two had drifted right through the core systems and it's really just blind luck that a deep-salvage team found you guys when they did. One in a thousand really. I think you're just damned lucky to be alive, kiddo. You could be floating out there forever."

While Burke was talking, Jones began to hiss, and struggle in Ripley's arms.

The cat leaped onto the floor, bounding away. Ripley coughed, suddenly, as if she was choking. Her expression, and Kendall's had become one of dawning horror. Burke, completely unaware of what was coming, handed her a glass of water from the nightstand. She slapped it away, as it shattered with a smash on the floor. Jones dived underneath a cabinet, yowling, hissing as well. Not knowing what else to do, or what was going on, Burke hit a console button.

"Nurse! Please! Someone get in here now! NOW!!"

Ripley grabbed her chest, struggling, as if she was being strangled. The med-tech and a doctor ran in for assistance.

"Hold her... Hold her..."

The doctor said, as he and Burke were holding onto Ripley's shoulders.

Ripley pushed the doctor away, and Kenny went to hold onto Ripley's shoulder. Just as she did that,
Ripley went into convulsions, and her back arched in agony

"Pleeasseee...kill me!"
Ripley pleaded, and Kendall-Rae knew exactly what was happening, and it was something that she was dreading.

They tried to restrain her as she thrashed about, knocking over equipment in the process. Her EKG raced like mad. Kendall glanced out of the corner of her eyes, and she saw Jones, underneath the cabinet, as he started to hiss, with his eyes wide.

Both Kendall and Ripley glanced down at Ripley's chest, and Ripley pulled back her gown to reveal her stomach. They both stared at the nightmarish shape pushing up under her skin. Tearing itself out of her stomach. Both Kendall and Ripley froze, as Ripley started to shout.

Hearing her mother shout, Kendall shot out of bed, and on instinct, fearing the worst, but then she remembered where they were. She watched in the dark, as Ripley snapped up from her bed in their darkened hospital room. They shared a room, since they barely left the presence of the other. Ripley grasped for breath, as she clutched pathetically at her chest. When she did that, Kendall knew what her nightmare was about.

Just like what had happened to Kane, except Ripley's was a dream. There was no demented horror ripping itself out of her. Kendall watched as her eyes snapped about wildly, before they slowly focused on the reality of her safety. The safety of her and Kenny. Shuddering, bathed in sweat, Ripley kneaded her breastbone with the heel of her hand and sobbed.

A video monitor beside the bed snapped on. The Med-Tech's face appeared.

"Bad dreams again? Want something to help you sleep?"
Kendall heard her ask.

"No. I've slept enough."
Even though Ripley's voice was faint, Kendall could still hear her, and she could hear the slight quavering in it as well.

The tech shrugged and switched off. Ripley hugged Jones to her and rocked with him like a child, still shattered by the nightmare. Kendall swung her feet off of the bed, and she slowly made her way over to her mother, and when she was close enough, she was pulled into a tight embrace along with Jones.
News About Amy. (Part 1.)

Chapter Summary

Burke delivers news about Amanda.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The next day, sunlight streams in shafts through a stand of popular, beyond which a verdant meadow is visible. Both Kendall and Ripley were sitting on a bench, glancing at the high-resolution environmental wall screen. It was some sort of Cinerama video loop. The 'park' was really an atrium off the medical center. Just as Ripley turned off the video, Burke entered in his casual mood, and casual haste.

"Hi. I'm sorry I'm late. I've been running behind all morning." He said, apologetically.

Kendall could not help but to feel unsettled about his presence. There was just...something off about him. She did not know why, but she had not been wrong about someone before.

"Is there any word about my daughter?"

Ripley asked, almost immediately.

"I really think we should worry about the hearing now. Because we don't have a lot of time. I read both of your depositions and it's great. If you two just stick to that, I think we'll be fine. The thing to remember is that there are going to be a lot of heavyweights in there. You've got Feds and Interstellar Commerce Commission, Colonial Administration, insurance company guys...." Burke said, obviously avoiding Ripley's question about Amanda.

"Do you have any news about my daughter? Please?"

Ripley asked once more.

"Well, we did come up with some information. Why don't we sit down. I was hoping to wait until after the inquest."

Burke said, relenting.

The trio sat down on the bench, and he opened his briefcase, and he removed a printed hard copy, including a telestat photo.

"Amanda Ripley-McClaren. Married name, I guess. Age: sixty-six...and that was at time of her death. Which was two years ago." Burke said, slowly, before turning to look at Ripley and Kendall, who both seemed absolutely crushed at the news.

"I'm real sorry."

Even though Kendall did not trust him, she knew that he really was sorry.

"Amy..."

She heard her mother say, as they both studied the photograph, stunned. At the face of a woman in
her mid-sixties. It could be anybody. They tried to reconcile the face with the little girl they once knew.

"She was cremated and interred at Westlake Repository, Little Chute, Wisconsin. No children." Burke continued.

"No children." Kendall repeated, before there was a pause. "We promised her we'd be home for her birthday. Her eleventh birthday." She murmured, as she glanced at her mother.

Let's get one thing straight...Ellen and Kendall can be tough women. But the terror, the loss, the emptiness were, in this moment, overwhelming. Ellen, cried silently, as she hugged the photograph to her.

Chapter End Notes

"In space no one can hear you scream."

There will be an excessive amount of swearing and gory scenes.

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I'm trying to be as close as I can to the movies.
The Conference.

Chapter Summary

Conference about LV-426, and what had happened on the Nostromo.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

POLYVORE.

Later on that day, both Ellen and Kenny were standing in the conference room. Not cool. Not unemotional.

"I don't understand this. We have been here for three hours. How many different ways do you want us to tell the same story?"
Ripley and Kendall asked at almost the same time, as they faced the eight members of the board of inquiry at a long conference table.

Gray suits and grim faces. They clearly weren't buying. Behind them, on a large videoscreen, Parker grinned like a goon from his personal mugshot. His file printed out next to it. Brett's face and dossier replaced it, and then the others. Kane. Lamber. Ash. Seeing the picture of Ash, Kendall felt herself shudder slightly, before it changed to Dallas. She closed her eyes, biting her lip, before she turned away from the screen, and she re-opened her eyes to look at Van Leuwen, the ICC representative, who steepled his fingers and frowned.

"Look at it from our perspective, please. Please. Now, you two freely admit to detonating the engines of, and thereby destroying, an M-Class star freighter. A rather expensive piece of hardware..."
Van Leuwen started, and Kendall sighed.

This bullshit again?

"Forty-two million in adjusted dollars. That's minus payload, of course."
Kenny heard one of the insurance investigators say, and Kendall sent him a cold glare, silencing him.

She could still remember when Parker was complaining about payment, back on the Nostromo.

"The lifeboat's flight recorder corroborates some elements of both of your accounts. And that, for reasons unknown, the Nostromo set down on LV-426, an unsurveyed planet at that time. That it resumed it's course and was subsequently set for self-destruct. By the both of you. For reasons unknown."
Van Leuwen continued, and this ticked off Kendall.

Slightly. She seemed to know what her mother was thinking, but it was clear that she wasn't going to say anything.

"Not for reasons unknown. I told you, we set down there on company orders to get this thing, which destroyed our crew..." Kendall glanced at the insurance investigator from earlier, who had spoken up about the price of the Nostromo.
"...and your expensive ship."
She continued coldly, as she glanced back at Van Leuwen, who sighed with exasperation.

"The analysis team, which went over the lifeboat, centimeter by centimeter, found no physical evidence of the creature you described..." Van Leuwen said, and at this Ripley spoke up

"Good! That's because I blew it out the goddamn airlock!" She said, before there was a pause.
"Like I said." She said, calmly.

"Are there any species like this 'hostile organism' on LV-426?"
The insurance man asked, directing his question to the ECA representative.

"No. It's a rock. No indigenous life."
The ECA rep answered, and both Kenny and Ripley gritted their teeth in frustration.

"Did IQ's drop sharply while I was away? Maam, I already said it was non-indigenous. There was a derelict spacecraft. An alien ship. It wasn't from there. Do you get it. We homed in on it's beacon..." Ripley said, and with the first part of her statement, Kendall smirked.

"And found something which has never been reported once from over three hundred surveyed worlds... 'a creature..."' She was reading their statements. "...that gestates inside a living human host,' these are your words, 'and has concentrated acid for blood.' "

"That's right. Look, I can see where this is going. But, I'm telling you these things exist." Ripley said, coolly.

"Thank you, Officer Ripley, and Officer Kendall. That will be all." Van Leuwen said, but Ripley didn't listen.

"Please, you're not listening. Kane, the crew member. Kane, who went in that ship, said he saw thousands of eggs there. Thousands..." Ripley started to say.

"Thank you. That will be all." Van Leuwen interrupted, and this time Kendall stood up.

"Goddamnit! That's not all! Because, if one of those things gets down here, then that will be all! Then all this..."
Kenny grabbed some of the papers close by, and she crumpled them into her fist, tightly.
"...this fucking bullshit that you think is so goddamn important, you can just kiss all that goodbye!"
She exclaimed, angrily.

She rarely got angry, but this was pissing her off.

The looks of the members at the table was enough to tell that what Kenny did wasn't smart. Ripley glanced at her daughter, with a look of surprise. She had rarely seen Kendall angry. The ECA rep just stared at her, and Burke leaned back in his chair, and rubbed his head. Both Kendall and Ripley ignored them, and stared at Van Leuwen. She knew she had to say it, even if it meant that they would be found guilty. Van Leuwen looked at Kendall, with a small hint of surprise, before he read the verdict of Kendall's and Ellen's inquiry.

"It is a finding of this court inquiry that Warrant Officer Ellen Ripley, NOC14472, and Medical Officer Kendall-Rae Ripley, 025K509R have both acted with questionable judgment, and they are both unfit to hold a ICC license as commercial flight officers. Said license is hereby suspended..."
indefinitely. Now, no criminal charges will be filed against either of you at this time..and you two are released on your own recognizant for a six month period of psychometric probation. To include monthly review by an ICC psychiatric technician."

All the while, as Van Leuwen read, Kendall glanced at her mother, and she gave her an apologetic look, but Ripley waved it off. She had been thinking the same thing all the while. Glancing back at Van Leuwen, Kendall-Rae just stood, and stared at him. Now that she has heard the verdict for both her and her mother, her eyes closed in defeat. Her face was a mask of tightness.

"These proceedings are closed."

Both Ripley's and Kendall's video-dossier filled the screen behind her, side by side, and at the bottom, a new entry printed out for both of them. **FILE STATUS: CLOSED.**

Ripley had joined Kenny at the conference table, both of them with their arms crossed, as Burke came up to them.

"That could have went better. Look, I think they..."
Burke started, but Kendall glared at him.

"Spare me your bullshit, Burke. I really am not in the mood for anything at the moment."
She glanced over, as she saw Van Leuwen leaving for the rooms elevator.

"Van Leuwen!"
She shrugged off Burke's restraining arm and both she and Ripley caught up to Van Leuwen as he and the other representatives headed for the rooms elevator.

"Why don't you just check out LV-426?"
Ripley asked, as Kendall leaned her frame against the other side of the door frame.

"Because I don't have to. There have been people there for over twenty years and they never complained about any hostile organism."
Van Leuwen answered, almost a bit too calmly, before he stepped toward the elevator with the others, but Kendall stretched her arm across the doorway, stopping him in his path.

"What the hell do you mean? What people? What people did you send there?"
Kendall asked, her voice as cold as ice.

"Terraformers... planet engineers. They go in, set up these big atmosphere processors to make the air breathable. Takes decades. It's what we call a shake 'n bake colony."
Van Leuwen answered, as the door tried to close, but Kendall held it back.

The other people were getting annoyed, and they started to murmur, in annoyance, but from one glare from Kendall, they were all silenced.

"How many are there? How many colonists?"
Ripley asked, curiosity, and anger seeping into her voice.

"I don't know. Sixty, maybe seventy families. Do you mind?"

Kendall's arm slid out of his way, as she took in what he had said. She glanced at her mother, and she felt her insides clench.

"Families... Jesus Christ."
"In space no one can hear you scream."

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Chapter Summary

Description of Hadley's Hope. I will be going through every scene in the movie. So bear with me.

Chapter Notes

Please leave comments. Thanks to the keen eye of a reader, they pointed out an age flaw.
I am 'adding' a few years to Ripley, so that Kendall would be able to work out in the story.

On the landscape of LV-426, there was a storm-blasted vista of tortured rock and bleak twilight. Even though it used to be a desolate planet, there was a metal sign, which read, HADLEY'S HOPE -- POP. 159. Some local thought it would have hilarious to add 'have a nice day' with a spray can. Gale-force winds screeched around the corroded sign, and the colony appeared. In the background, in the complex was surrounded by an angled storm-barrier wall. A vehicle rolled up to the barriers main door and honked. The door slid back, which allowed the vehicle to continue on into the colony streets. As it moved forward, the eight wheels, and the medium-sized cab on top, grew more and more visible.

Inside the colony complex, the vehicle's two, large bright headlights shone through the blowing dust all around the vehicle and streets. As it drives down the street, it passed by an alley, with another vehicle in the back, covered in a plastic tarp that is blowing in the wind. The 'town' was a cluster of bunker-like buildings, huddling together in the wind, like a family of penguins. The eight-wheeled vehicle rolled by and down one of the main streets of the complex. It drove by and under two open windows in the top corner of a building. People could be seen moving around inside.

In the control block, inside of the operations room, it was bustling. It was the nerve-center of the colony, jammed with computer terminals, displays and technicians. Simpson, the harried operations manager walked through the room, as he was approached by his assistant, Lydecker.

"I'll be down in maintenance, okay?"
Simpson informed a technician.

"Al!"
Lydecker called, as he approached Simpson.

"What."
Simpson mumbled, as he continued walking.

"Hey, Al!"
Lydecker called, now getting Simpson's attention
"What?!"
Simpson asked, a bit irritated.

"You remember you sent some wildcatters out to the middle of nowhere last week? Out past the Ilium Range."
Lydecker asked, and Simpson paused for a moment.

"Yeah. What?"

As they walked, they left the operations room and moved into a connecting corridor. It was a wide hallway bustling with routine activity. They could see a cross-section of the hardy frontier stock who have come to live in this God-forsaken wilderness.

"One of them's on the horn, mom-and-pop survey team. Says he's onto something and wants to know will his claim be honored."
Lydecker said.

"Why wouldn't his claim be honored?"
Simpson asked.

"Well, because you sent them to that particular middle of nowhere on company orders, maybe. I don't know."
Lydecker answered.

"Christ! Some honcho in a cushy office on Earth says go look at a grid reference, we look. They don't say why, and I don't ask. I don't ask because it takes two weeks to get an answer out here and the answer's always 'don't ask.' "
Both Lydecker and Simpson said, 'don't ask.' in almost perfect synchronization, since they both knew that would be the reply that they would have gotten if they had asked.

They paused at a junction in the corridor. Simpson turned to face Lydecker.

"So, what do I tell this guy?"
Lydecker asked.

"Tell him, as far as I'm concerned, he finds something, it is his."
Simpson answered, before he heard children's laughing voices, and Simpson looked in their direction.

"Lydecker?"
Simpson asked, a bit annoyed.

The children were playing, and racing down in the corridor on foot, and on wheeled plastic toys. Simpson gestured toward them, telling Lydecker to move them out of the area.

"You kids know you're not supposed to be on this level. Go on. Get out of here!"
Lydecker shouted, as he watched as a child, on a wheeled toy rolled down the corridor, away from him and Simpson.

Three other children chased each other around him, and beside him. He passed by a box to the right of the corridor that has a sign on it which read: WEYLAND-YUTANI CORP. BUILDING BETTER WORLDS.
On Acheron, during the day, in the middle of nowhere, an eight-wheeled tractor roared across corrugated rock, and it blasted through soggy drifts of volcanic ash. Strange wind-etched rock shapes were all around.

Inside of the tractor, at the controls, intent on a pinging scope, was Russ Jorden, independent prospector. Beside him is his wife/partner Anne Jorden and in the back, their two children, Rebecca "Newt" Jorden, and Timmy Jorden were arguing over a game.

"Do too. You go in places we can't fit."
Timmy complained to his sister.

"So! That's why I'm the best!"
Rebecca retorted, smartly.

"Knock if off! If I catch either of you playing in the air ducts again, I'll tan your hides."
Anne scolded, as she turned around to face them.

"Mom. All the kids play it..."
Rebecca started to say, but before she could finish, Russ Jorden cut off their conversation, and from the tone in his voice, he sounded extremely excited.

"Hey, wait! Wait! Wait! Wait a minute! Come on, Anne. Take a look at this, will ya'."
Russ said, as he looked through the front window.

A bizarre shape loomed ahead. An enormous bone-like mass projected upward from the bed of ash. Canted on it's side and buckled against a rock outcropping by the lava flow, it is still recognizable as an extraterrestrial ship. Bio-mechanoid. Non-human design.

"Folks, we have scored big this time!"
Russ said, clearly excited at his find.

The tractor moved around the base of the vast enigma, and it passed under part of it that was jutting up into the air, while headed toward a gash in the hull. Rebecca looked up through the clear roof at the ship.

"What is it, dad?"
She asked.

Now, everyone was looking up with Rebecca at the strange object.

"I'm not sure."
Russ said, just as they pulled up. The gash in the ship is right in front of them.
"See if we can't get a closer look at this thing. Maybe through that crack down it's side."
Russ suggested, just as Anna pitched in.

"Shouldn't we call in?"
She asked, as Russ turned to her.

"Let's wait 'til we know what to call it in as. That's as close as we can get."
Russ said, as he looked out the window, before back at Anne.

"Should we take a look inside?"
Anne looked at him and then at the ship with a worried, but curious look on her face.

A few moments after, Russ and Anne stepped down, carrying lights, packs, camera, and test gear.

"You kids stay inside. I mean it! We'll be right back."
Anne said, looking at her two kids.

"Okay."
Timmy nodded.

Rebecca and Anne said goodbye, before Russ closed the door, and Russ and Anna trudged towards the alien derelict.

Inside of the tractor, Rebecca had her face to the glass of the window, steaming it, as she watched her parents head to the ship.

Jorden and Anne paused at the enormous gash in the hull. Blackness inside. They entered slowly, their lights played off the walls, showing strange formations. They moved deeper into the ship.

It it now nighttime. The tractor and the derelict were dark and motionless, as the wind howled around them.

Inside the tractor, Rebecca looked away from the window toward Timmy, who was asleep in the front passenger seat. Rebecca shook him awake, as she tried hard not to be worried.

"Timmy... they've been gone a long time."
She said, quietly.

Timmy opened his eyes, and considered the night. The wind. The vast landscape. He bit his lip.

"It'll be okay, Newt. Dad knows what he's doing."
Timmy said, as he tried to be reassuring.

CRASH! Rebecca jumped as the drive door beside her is ripped open, and a dark shape lunged inside. Anne, who was panting and terrified, grabbed the dash mike.

"Mayday! Mayday! This is Alpha Kilo Two Four Niner calling Hadley Control! Repeat! This is...."
As Anne shouted the mayday, Rebecca looked past her, and to the ground. Russ Jorden lay there, inert, dragged somehow by Anne from inside the ship. There was something on his face. An appalling multi-legger creature, as it pulsed with life. Rebecca started to scream hysterically, as her scream competed with the shrieking wing, which had already risen to a crescendo.
Joining the Fight.

Chapter Summary

Ripley and Kenny decide to face the demon in the eye.
Comments are appreciated.

In Kendall and Ripley's apartment there was silence. Kendall (http://www.polyvore.com/cgi/set?id=123043285) was sitting on a counter in the kitchen, while Ripley was sitting a table. Both of their cigarettes were half ash, and almost in scary synchronization, both sets of ash from their cigarettes fell simultaneously. Kendall looked over at her mother, who looked haggard, as she sat at the table in the dining alcove, as she contemplated the smoke rising from her cigarette. The place was minimal, both of the beds were unmade, and there were dishes in the sink. Jones prowled across the counter, across Kendall's lap, and dropped to the floor.

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In the corridor, Carter Burke and Lieutenant Gorman, Colonial Marine Corps. walked the narrow, corridor until they stopped in front of the Ripley's door. Burke pushed the buzzer on the door. Gorman looked young and severe in his officer's parade uniform.

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Hearing the door, Kendall and Ripley both glanced at each other. Kendall sighed, as she grabbed a robe, and she pulled it over her tank top, and shorts, draping her hair over both shoulders. Ripley sighed, as she stood up, and she answered the door.

Back in the corridor, Burke and Gorman watched as the door opened halfway.

"Hi ya', Ripley. This is Lieutenant Gorman of the Colonial Marine Corp..." Before Burke could finish, Ripley slammed the door in his face. Not giving up, Burke talked to the door.

"Ripley, Rae. We have to talk. We've lost contact with the colony on LV-426." Burke persisted.

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Inside of the apartment, Kendall snapped her head up, and she glanced at Ripley, her eyes wide. What had they done. There was a pause, then the door opened. Burke and Gorman stared at Ripley, before they looked past her, to Kendall, who looked furious at the both of them. Ripley considered the ramifications of that as she stared at them.

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A short while later, inside of Ripley's, and Kendall's apartment, Ripley was pouring coffee for the four off them. She handed Burke, Kenny and Gorman their cups.

"I don't believe this. You guys throw us to the wolves...and now you want the both of us to go back out there? Forget it! It's not our problem."

Ripley said, disbelief in her voice.

"Can I finish?"
Burke asked.

"No. There's no way."
Ripley cut him off, sharply.

"Ripley. Kendall. You wouldn't be going in with the troops. I can guarantee your safety."
Gorman said, as he tried to reason with the two of them.

"These Colonial Marines are very tough hombres, and they're packing state-of-the-art firepower. There's nothing they can't handle. Lieutenant, am I right?"
Burke added, trying to get the two of them to listen.

"That's true. We've been trained to deal with situations like this."
Gorman said, nodding in compliance to what Burke had stated.

"Bullshit. That's absolute bullshit. There is no way that you now how to deal with situations like this. You have no fucking idea about what you're dealing with. You may have state-of-the-art firepower, or whatever the hell you have, but you have no chance against these things. They feel nothing. They do not show emotions. They do not pity a damn soul. They will kill you the moment that you let your guard down. No matter what you bring, or how good their fighting skills may be, they will kill you."
Kendall said, slipping down from the counter, and she walked over to Gorman, her eyes narrowed into thin slits.

"Well, you don't need us...We're not soldiers."
Ripley said, taking a sip of her coffee.

"Yeah, but we don't know what's going on out there. It may be a down transmitter, okay. But, if it's not, I would like the two of you there...as a couple of advisers and that's all."
Burke persisted.

He was very keen on getting the two of them to go.

"What's your interest in all this? Why are you going?"
Kendall asked, turning her attention away from Gorman, to Burke.

"Corporation co-financed that colony. Colonial Administration. We're getting into a lot of terraforming now. Building Better Worlds..."
Burke answered, almost too smoothly, and coolly.

"Yeah, yeah. I saw the commercial. Look, we don't have time for this. We've gotta go to work."
Ripley said, and Kendall nodded.

"Oh, right. I heard you guys were working the cargo docks."
Burke said, a slight amount of interest peaking in his voice.

"That's right."
Ripley said, nodding her head, slowly.

"Running loaders, forklifts, that sort of thing?"
Burke continued.

"Yeah, so? Is that a problem for you?"
Kendall snapped, defensively.
"Nothing. I think it's great you guys are keeping busy, and I know it's all you guys could get. There's nothing wrong with it." Burke said, before he paused, before starting up again. "What would you say if I said I could get you reinstated as flight officers. The companies already agreed to pick up your contract. To the both of you."

"If we go."
Both Ripley and Kendall asked together, this peaking their interest slightly.

"Yeah, if you two go. Come on, that's a second chance, kiddos. I think, personally for you two, it would be the best thing in the world for you guys. To face this thing. Get back on the horse..."

"Spare us, Burke. We've had our psych evaluations this month."
Kendall snapped, standing beside her mother.

Burke stood up, and he leaned close. A let's-cut-the-crap intimacy.

"Yeah, I know. I've read it. You two wake up every night, your sheets soaking with sweat. Kendall crying, mumbling a name..."
Hearing that, Kendall felt her bottom lip tremble, slightly.

Had she been mumbling Dallas' name under her breath?

Ripley lost it completely.

"We said NO, and we mean it! Now, please leave. We are not going back and we're...we wouldn't be any good to you if we did."
Ripley snapped, placing a hand on Kendall's shoulder.

Burke put his hands up to calm the two of them.

"Okay, shhhhh. Would you do me a favor and just think about it?"
He asked, quietly, as he slipped a translucent card onto the table, before he nodded to Gorman, as they headed for the door.

"Thanks for the coffee."
Gorman said, and Kendall and Ripley stared at them as they left, before Ripley turned, and she went over to feed Jones.

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Later on that night, in Ripley and Kendall's apartment, Ripley lunged up, with an animal outcry. She clutched her chest, breathing hard. Bathed in sweat. She swung her legs over the side of the bed and sat there, as she massaged her head with her hands.

Ripley entered the bathroom and went over to the sink, and she splashed water on her face. She glanced at the sink, and her eyes widened seeing a small trickle of blood trail down the side of the bowl of the sink. She was frightened, but when she followed the trace of the blood, she saw a dogtag. It had been Dallas'. It was one of the objects that Kendall seldom parted with. Hearing the faint sound of the shower, Ripley knew that her daughter was awake. Probably from nightmares. Sighing, Ripley stared at herself in the mirror. Still breathing hard, but gaining control.

After Kendall had gotten out of the shower, and changed, both survivors of the Nostromo sat in front of the phone console. Ripley's slightly shaking hand inserted Burke's card into a slot, and within a matter of seconds, Burke's face, bleary with sleep, appeared.
"Hello?"
He asked, sleepily, before he realized who had called him.
"Ripley. Rae."
He glanced over his shoulder, before back at the phone console.
"You two okay?"

"Just tell us one thing. You're going out there to destroy them, right? Not to study. Not to bring back. Just to wipe them out."
Ripley asked, quietly.

"That's the plan. You two have my word on it."
Burke nodded.

Both of them took a deep, slow breath. It was time to look the demon in the eye, and wipe them out.

"All right. We're in."
Kendall said, quietly, as she pulled the card out, before Burke had the opportunity to reply.

Before either of them could change their mind. Ripley turned to Jones who was sitting on Kendall's bed, and her tone became admonished.

"And you, you little shithead, you're staying here."

Jones blinked, with cynical cat-eyes, as if to say, 'count me right out.'
Meeting the Marines.

Chapter Summary

Kendall and Hicks finally meet!!!!!
Comments please!

Three weeks later, in an empty star field, metal spears sliced through the emptiness, before they were followed by a mountain of steel. A massive military transport ship, the Sulaco. Ugly, battered...functional.

In the cargo lock/bay, a dropship sat there. Waiting for action. Across the bay, was the weapons room. The walls held all sorts of armament and two rows of pulse rifles awaited use in their storage shelves.

In the mess hall, it was full with its few long tables, as they awaited the warmth and sound of people to sit on them and to enjoy their meals. Food dispensing machines along the back wall were silent.

Into the locker room, the lockers was closed and neat looking. Each one was full with a crew members belongings. Every room silent and still. Only the rumble of the ship as it moved through space could be heard quietly through the walls.

In the hypersleep vault, very little light was available in the long room. What light there was, casted its rays on a long row of capsules. A near-by computer terminal lit up, as it typed out each individual in hypersleep, one-by-one. Then, lights came to life in all the capsules. Hydraulics lifted the canopies off the row of horizontal hypersleep cylinders. They almost reached the ceiling and then locked open. Lit up, white and sterile.

The prone figures in the cylinders came to life, and Ripley stirred. Apone sat up and immediately placed his trademark cigar in his mouth. Next to Ripley, Kendall, Gorman and Burke were stirring and beyond them, the troopers, wearing shorts and dog tags. They are:

MASTER SERGEANT APONE.
CORPORAL HICKS.
CORPORAL DIETRICH (female),
PFC HUDSON,
PFC VASQUEZ (female),
PRIVATE DRAKE,
PRIVATE FROST,
PRIVATE WIERZBOWSKI,
PRIVATE CROWE, plus the drop-ship crew:
CORPORAL FERRO (female, pilot)
PFC SPUNKMEYER. (Crew-chief, male.)

In addition, there was Executive Officer Bishop, who supervised planetary maneuvering. Groans echoed across the chamber. Everyone was looking around and at each other.

"They ain't payin' us enough for this, man."
Drake complained, before a woman sat up from her chamber, replied,
"Not enough to have to wake up to your face, Drake."
Dietrich replied, smartly.

"What! Is that a joke?"
Drake asked, turning his head slightly to face Dietrich.

"I wish it were."
Dietrich answered, with a hint of cockiness, as she rubbed the back of her neck.

Drake looked away from Dietrich, and over at Hicks.
"Hey, Hicks...you look just like I feel."

Kendall slowly sat up, and she rubbed her eyes with the back of her wrists. She glanced at Ripley, and she ran her fingers through her hair. She was still tired, even after that hypersleep. She turned her head to glance at the young man, who was in the chamber beside her. So. That must have been Hicks. He wasn't bad-looking. In her opinion. Hicks sent Drake a small smile, as he rubbed the back of his head. Sergeant Apone moved down the row of freezers, with his trademark cigar in between his fingers.

"Alright, whattya' waitin' for, breakfast in bed? Let's go. Let's go. Another glorious day in the Corp. A day in the Marine Corp. is like a day on the farm. Every meals a banquet, every paycheck a fortune, every formation a parade. I love the Corp."
Apone barked to the Marines.

One of the them, Private William Hudson swung his feet out of the chambers, and as soon as his feet hit the ground, he recoiled, slightly.

"Man, this floor's freezing."
He complained, as Apone walked by.

"Whattya' want me to do, fetch you your slippers for ya'?"
Apone asked, sarcastically.

"Gee, would you, sir? I'd like that."
Hudson answered, smartly.

Apone put his finger to his eye.

"Look into my eye. Fall in people! Let's go!"
He barked.

"I hate this job."
Crowe muttered.

"Crowe!"

"Give me some slack, man."

"Come on, Spelunk. On your feet."

Apone continued to bark orders, as the group of men and women moved to their lockers that were near the freezers. Immediately, Vasquez began to do some chin-ups.

"Alright, first ensemble is in fifteen people. Shag it!"
Vasquez stopped her chin-ups, and looked over at Kendall and Ripley.

"Hey, Mira... who are the Snow Whites?" Vasquez asked.

"They're supposed to be some kinda' consultants. Apparently, they saw an alien once." Ferro answered.

"Whoopy-fucking-do! Hey, I'm impressed."
Hudson commented, including himself in the conversation.

Vasquez went back to her chin-ups, and this time, Drake joined her. Hudson just stood and watched.

"Hey, Vasquez... have you ever been mistaken for a man?"

"No. Have you?"
Almost in perfect synchronization, Vasquez and Drake stopped their exercises, and they looked at each other.

"Oh, Vasquez... you're just too bad." Vasquez slapped Drake's open palm, and it clenched a greeting which was part contest. Playful, but rough. A bond could be sensed between them. After a few moments, she gave Drake a hard, but playful slap to the face.

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In the mess hall, an unconscious segregation took place as the troopers assembled at one long table while Gorman, Burke, Kendall and Ripley sat at another. She had not done anything really. A simple olive green tank top, open military style jacket, and sweatpants. She didn't care what anyone else thought. She was not trying to impress anybody. She was comfortable.

Everybody was nursing a coffee, or waited for eggs from the autochef, which was served by Bishop. Some got their meals themselves. Hudson was one of them. He walked from the machine and sat down at the table with the others.

"Hey, 'Top.' What the op?"
Hudson asked, as he sat down.

"It's a rescue mission. You'll love it. There's some juicy colonists' daughters we gotta' rescue from their virginity."
Apone answered, and some of the Marine's laughed.

Kendall rolled her eyes, in clear disgust, but she said nothing.

"Shee-it. Dumbass colonists."
Spunkmeyer commented, as he picked something up from his plate.
"What's this crap supposed to be?"

"Cornbread, I think."
Frost answered.

"It's good for you boy, eat it."
Hicks threw into the conversation

"Hey, I sure wouldn't mind getting me some more of that Arcturan poontang. Remember that time?" Frost said, and all the soldiers laughed.
Frost and Hudson slapped hands across the table.

"Yeah, Frost! But, the one that you had was a male."
Spunkmeyer interjected.

"Hey, it doesn't matter when it's Arcturan."
Frost said, smirking.

"Hey Bishop, man. Do the thing with the knife."
Hudson called over to Bishop, and Bishop seemed slightly uncomfortable.

"Oh please. Not again."

"Yeah, do it, Bishop. Go on, man. This is great."
Frost threw in, as he tossed Bishop a K-Bar combat knife and Bishop put his palm on the table next to Hudson. Before Bishop could start, Drake came up and pushed Hudson's hand forward on the table. Bishop placed his hand precisely on top Hudson's hand.

"Hey, man. Whattya' doing. Come on. Quit messin' around Drake."
Hudson exclaimed, when he realized what was happening to him.

"Hudson, shut up!"
Drake said, with a hint of amusement

"Bishop! Hey, man."

"Do it, Bishop."

"Hey, not me man."

"Yeah, you."

"Hey, come on. Quit messin' around. Come on!"

"Don't move."
Drake warned.

"Trust me."
Bishop then proceeded to stab the point down rapidly between his and Hudson's spread fingers, speeding up until the knife was a blur, as the other's cheered. Inhumanly fast and precise.

"Woooooooot!"
Hudson cried, his eyes growing wide in disbelief.

"Alright, knock it off! Knock it off."
Apone ordered, and Bishop handed the knife to Hudson.

"Thank you."

Drake moved Hudson's food tray back in front of him, then slapped him on the arm.

"Enjoy your meal." Drake said, sarcastically, as he walked back to his spot at the table. Hudson was white, his mouth hung open in disbelief.

"That wasn't funny, man!"
Across the room, at the other table, Gorman sat with his creases perfect...the consummate strict NCO. Bishop came up and took a seat in between Kendall and Ripley. He handed around a tray with cornbread on it.

"Mr. Gorman?"

"No."

"Mr. Burke?"

"Yeah, thanks."
Burke said, taking some cornbread from the tray.

At the soldiers' table, everyone watched the small group of high-ranks eat.

"Looks like the new lieutenants are too good to eat with the rest of us grunts."
Hicks commented, and at that Kendall-Rae smirked, as she rolled her eyes.

"Boy's definitely got a corncob up his ass. The young one is a sight for sore eyes. After being stuck with the same grunts, seeing someone new will do us good. She ain't that bad-looking either. What do you think Hicks? You guys look close in age."

Hearing what was being said about her, Kendall turned her head, and her grey eyes met another pair of grey eyes. A pair that belonged to Hicks. Their gazes met for a brief moment, before Kendall felt her neck turn a bit red. She looked away momentarily, and she felt a small, shy smile grace her lips. A sight for sore eyes. That was something new. She glanced at the small mug that was in front of her, and she realized that her mug was empty. She stood up, and she walked over to one of the machines, to refill her mug. She pressed a button on the machine, and her mug filled up with coffee. She felt gazes bore into her back, but she kept her head held up high, as she continued to walk back to the table where she was sitting, and she sat back down beside her mother this time. She glanced over at Bishop, who held up his hand and examined a tiny cut closely.

"I thought you never missed, Bishop?"
Burke asked.

To both Kendall and Ripley's horror, a trickle of white synthetic blood ran down his finger from the cut. Ripley spun on Burke, her tone accusing.

"You never said anything about an android being on board! Why not?!"
Ripley accused.

"It never occurred to me...."

"It never occurred to you? Did you even listen to what we told you, Burke?! Jesus Christ."
Kendall snapped.

"For your information, Ms. Kendall..."

"Don't call me that."
She snapped.

"My apologies, Ms. Rae, but it's just common practice. We always have a synthetic on board."

"I prefer the term 'artificial person' myself."
Bishop corrected, politely.
"Right."

"Is there a problem?" Bishop asked, glancing at Ripley and Kendall.

"I'm sorry. I don't know why I didn't even...their last trip out, the syne...'artificial person' malfunctioned..."

"Malfunctioned?!" Ripley exclaimed, in disbelief.

"A few problems and a few deaths were involved."

"Bullshit." Kendall remarked, forgetting her politeness.

"Excuse me?"

"You heard me. That was absolute bullshit. Ash did not malfunction. Unless trying to shove a porn magazine down someone's throat, or strangling someone is the new form of malfunctioning, enlighten me, Burke. Trying to kill someone is not malfunctioning. In case you didn't know."

"I'm shocked. Was it an older model?" Bishop asked.

"Hyperdyne Systems 120-A/2."
Burke answered, as if it was the most obvious thing in the world.

Hearing that, Bishop turned to Ripley, and Kendall, very conciliatory.

"Well, that explains it. The A/2's were always a bit twitchy. That couldn't happen now with our behavioral inhibitors. It is impossible for me to harm or, by omission of action, allow to be harmed, a human being."
Bishop explained, before he smiled.
"Sure you don't want some?"

Ripley knocked the plate of cornbread out of his hand, halfway across the room, making Kendall jump out of her skin.

"Just stay away from me, Bishop! You got that straight?!" Ripley snapped, before she stood, and walked out of the mess hall.

Kendall sighed, as she rubbed her right temple.

"Way to go, Burke." She said, sarcastically. Something told her that Bishop was not going to be like Ash, but she couldn't take any chances. Burke and Gorman exchanged glances. Frost, at the next table, shrugged and turned back to the other Marines.

"I guess she don't like the cornbread either."
Frost commented, before he realized that Hicks had not answered his question before.
"C'mon Hicks. Answer the question."

"She's gutsy."
Came Hicks' answer, but that wasn't what Frost was looking for.

"Gutsy? That's it? C'mon boy. That's all you can say? She ain't good-lookin' or anything like that?"

"Well. Yeah, I would guess so..." Hicks said, before he rubbed the back of his neck, feeling
extremely flustered. Frost only laughed, clapping him on the back, good-naturedly.
Kendall and Hicks have finally met.
His thoughts... "She's gutsy... " -sigh-
Comments please!


In the cargo lock, all the troopers were either lounging among the racks of high-tech weaponry or practiced fighting. Gorman entered with Ripley, Kendall and Burke.

"Squad! Ten-hut! Officer on deck!"
Apone barked.

"As you were."
Gorman said, before Apone started up, again.

"Quickly, quickly! Settle down. Alright, listen up!"

"Morning Marines. I'm sorry we didn't have time to brief you people before we left Gateway, but..."
Gorman started, before he was cut off by Hudson.

"Sir?"

"What is it, Hicks?"
Gorman asked.

"Hudson, sir. He's Hicks."
Hudson looked over at Hicks, who was standing beside him, who was hanging his weight on a dangling chain.

"What's the question?"
Gorman asked, pacing slightly.

"Is this going to be a stand-up fight, sir, or another bug-hunt?"
Hudson asked.

"All we know is that there's still no contact with the colony and that... a xenomorph may be involved."

"Excuse me, sir. A what?"
Frost asked, in confusion.

"A xenomorph." Gorman repeated.

A Xenomorph? Great. They had named the bastards.

"It's a bug-hunt."
Hick murmured, before he spoke a little louder. "What exactly are we dealing with here?"

Gorman nodded to Kendall, and Ripley who stood before the troops. From one look from her mother, Kendall knew that she did not want to say anything. Neither did she, but she knew that she had no other choice.

"I'll tell you what we both know. We set down on LV-426. One of our crew members was brought back on board with something attached to his face...some kind of parasite. We tried to get it off. It wouldn't come off. Later, it seemed to come off by itself and died. Kane seemed fine. We're all having dinner and um...it must have laid something inside his throat...some sort of embryo. He started...um he..."

Kendall trailed off, and she took a shaky breath. She could still remember the scene as if it had been yesterday.

"Look, man. I only need to know one thing...where..they..are."

Vasquez interrupted, as she coolly pointed her finger, cocked her thumb, and blew away an imaginary alien.

"Yo! Vasquez. Kick ass!"

Drake commented, as Vasquez slapped his open palm, in the same power greeting from the locker room.

"Anytime. Anywhere."

"Right, right! Somebody said alien...she thought they said illegal alien and signed up."

Hudson snickered.

Without even turning around, Vasquez flipped him off. "Fuck you!"

"Anytime. Anywhere."

Hudson remarked, and Kendall felt her temper flare.

"Are you finished yet?! Because I have other things that I could be doing, but instead I'm here, giving you information that could save your sorry asses, and if you don't want it, fine by me."

Kendall snapped, uncrossing her arms across her chest, and they rested on her hips, scowling slightly.

She watched with a pale flame in her eyes, as Hudson settled down, smirking. It was almost as if he wanted to piss her off. Which was not such a good thing. She looked over at Vasquez, and she took a few small steps towards her. Even though she was extremely ticked off at the moment, she managed to slightly calm down the tone in her voice.

"You know something. I hope that you're right. I really do."

After that, she took a few steps back to her original position. At that, Gorman stood, clearly taking over.

"Yeah, I hope you're, right. Thank you, Rae. We also have both Rae's and Ripley's report on disk, and suggest you study it..."

Gorman started to say, but Rae was far from finished.

"Because, just one of those things managed to wipe out our entire crew in less than twenty-four hours. And if the colonists have found that ship, then there's no telling how many of them have been
exposed. Do you understand? Or is that too much to ask for all of you? Because, I am giving you
information that will save your military asses, and if you wish to act like immature children...be my
guest."
Kendall had to grit her teeth together to try and keep her composure, but she had miserably failed.

She was giving them information that could very much save their lives, and they were immature
children about it. She glanced around at the Marines. Some of their facial expressions were showing
either respect or annoyance, or in some cases, a mixture of both. She glanced over at Ripley, and
even she had to admit, even her mother looked surprised at how she had just reacted, but she could
see the small hint of amusement on Ripley's face.

"Anyway, we have it on disk. So, you'd better look at it. Any questions?

Hudson raised his hand.

"What is it private?"
Gorman asked.

"How do I get out of this chicken-shit outfit?"
Hudson sneered.

"You secure that shit, Hudson!"
Apone barked, putting Hudson back in line.

"Alright! Now listen up. I want this thing to go smooth and by the numbers. I want DCS and tactical
database assimilation by 0830."

Some groans elicited from the Marines, and Kenny didn't blame them. That was...8:30 am, she
thought.

"Ordnance loading, weapons strip, and drop-ship prep details will have seven hours. Now, move it
people!"

"Alright sweethearts. You heard the man and you know the drill! Asshole's and elbow's! Hudson,
come here! Come here!" Apone barked, to Hudson, clearly looking pissed off.
A few hours later, they had arrived at LV-426. From orbit, the planet looked serene. Peaceful almost. The Sulaco floated over the planet.

In the loading bay, in the cargo lock, Apone circulated among the troops that were preparing weaponry and the drop-ship for action. There was intense activity throughout the cavernous loading bay. Troopers were either on foot or they drove power-loaders. All of them in action.

"I don't care if you are short, Hudson. Get it done."
Apone said, as he passed Hudson.

"Hey, Sarge! You get lip cancer smoking those!"
Hudson replied, his smart-ass attitude not faltering once.

"Corporals! I want this loading lock sealed...now! How many more you got, Spunkmeyer?"
Apone asked.

"That's one."
Spunkemeyer answered, and Apone nodded.

"Good. Take it away."

Two massive forks lifted up a NT-432B air-to-ground ballistic missile. The forks were attached to two powerful hydraulic arms. Spunkmeyer, who was strapped inside a Power-Loader, swung the missile up into a belly nacelle of the drop-ship. The loader was a sort of forklift that someone would wear, a robotic exoskeleton with two legs and two arms, powered by hydraulics.

On the loading dock, dressed in a black tank top, cargo pants, combat boots, and an unzipped military style jacket, Kendall approached Apone and Hicks, with her hands in the front pockets of the pants. Hicks and Apone were standing near the drop-ship. Hicks checked off items on an electronic manifest.

"Hi. I feel like a kind of fifth wheel around here. Is there anything I can do?"
Kendall said, with a half smile.

"I don't know. First of all, you tell me one thing."
Apone asked her.

"Alright. Shoot."
Kendall said, taking her hands out of her pockets, and she rested them on her hips.

"Exactly, who are you? You seem familiar our consultant..."
"Ripley. Her name is Ripley. And yes, I am quite familiar with her. I'm Rae. Rae Ripley. Yes, your consultant is my mother. However, to one of your Marines, I'm a Lieutenant, that was too good to sit with the rest of you grunts. For his information, I was told to sit there. I had no say."

She said, glancing over at Hicks, who seemed to have realized who he was talking about, and he looked flustered, and slightly uncomfortable at the current situation.

Wonderful. He had insulted someone who had just given them information very relevant to their survival on LV-426. Kendall only smiled, at his clear discomfort, and she sent him a quick wink, only to make him even more flustered, which only added to her amusement.

"Alright. So. Is there anything you can do?"

Apone asked, clearly not noticing the discomfort of one of his Corporals.

Kendall glanced around the loading dock, before her eyes landed on a loader.

"Well, I can drive that loader. I have a Class 2 rating. Like Ripley."

Hicks and Apone glanced at her, before they looked over at a second power-loader, that was sitting unused in an equipment bay. Apone and Hicks exchanged a skeptical glance, considering. She seemed small, but with a Class 2 rating. Was pretty impressive.

"Be my guest."

Apone said, and Kendall nodded her head, slightly in respect, before she turned and she walked over to the power-loader.

When she was close enough, she sighed. It had been a while since she had driven a loader. She climbed into the power-loader, and she slowly buckled the four point restraint belt, careful of her fingers. She locked her feet into place, and she pulled down the roll cage, which locked into place, with an echoing clang. Her small fingers punched a few power switches, and she heard the familiar rising whine of power.

Kendall-Rae pulled back on the arm control joysticks, and she watched as the huge clawed arms lifted up. She moved the wrist servos, and the claws open and closed, before they swiveled on their joints. She glanced over at Hicks and Apone who shared glances of almost approval. She thought that she saw Hicks smile. Which was a first. Since she had first met him, she had not seen him smile. She had to admit, he had a nice smile...No. She stopped herself there. No thinking about that. With the loader, she turned, and she slid the claws smoothly into lifting brackets on a cargo module, nearby. She raised it deftly and turned toward Apone and Hicks, with one of her thin eyebrows raised.

"So. Where do you want it?"

She said, with a smirk on her lips.

Apone and Hicks looked at one another, and laughed.

"Bay Twelve, please."

Apone said, and when she had finished, Kenny brought the loader back, and she walked back over to Apone and Hicks.

"Do you have a training room of some sorts? It's been a while since I've actually trained."

Kendall said, crossing her arms across her chest.

"Well. That depends. How long are we talking about?"

Kendall bit her lip, gently, and she felt her cheeks turn a bit red, in embarrassment.
"I was asleep for 57 years, Sergeant. It's been a while..."
She said, with a hint of embarrassment in her voice.

57 years? Good Lord. How old was this child? As if reading the thoughts of Hicks and Apone, Kendall smirked, a bit sheepishly.

"On the Nostromo, I was 25. Add the 57 years of sleep. I'm 82."
She said, shrugging her shoulders, as if it was no big deal.

Which it wasn't. To her at least.

"We could set you up with Vasquez, but it's more than likely, she'll end up breaking you. Hudson. We don't need you snapping his neck or something..."
Kendall smiled. It was more that likely she was going to end up doing something like that. Hudson was too much of a smart mouth.

Apone glanced at Hicks, then back at Kenny.

"You two are about the same height. It's best if you train with someone your own height. So, he won't step on you."

Kendall nodded. It was good to know that he wasn't going to step on her.

"Alright. Whatever you say, sir."
She said.

She may have been asleep for almost 60 years, and she had a smart-mouth, but she was polite. When she had to be, and when she wanted to be. Apone was high up in the military ranks, and the last thing that she wanted to do was tick him off. She glanced at Hicks, and she gestured for him to lead the way. The short walk there, was with a silence, that was not entirely comfortable.

When they arrived at the training room, she shrugged off the military style jacket, and she draped it on the back of one of the chairs. She stretched her arms out in front of her, and she cracked her knuckles. She felt something cool be pressed into her hand, and she glanced down at the simple shotgun that was in her hand.

"Start with target practice."
She heard Hicks instruct, and she nodded.

She walked over to the targets that were set up, and after she had punched a few holes into them, things turned a bit harder, and the targets started to move. Almost as if they were crawling around...Looking for a place to hide. She lowered the gun slightly, as she felt a tug at her heartstrings. Wonderful. It took her a moment's hesitation, before the targets suddenly became the Alien from the Nostromo. She hit the targets, but only because she did not see them as targets. After a few moments, she sighed. The magazine was empty, but she felt that her palms felt a bit clammy, and she placed the shotgun on the floor, and she rubbed her palms on her thighs. She rested her hands on her thighs and she took a shaky breath. She felt a hand on her shoulder, and she nearly jumped out of her skin, but she turned to see Hicks, and he looked almost apologetic.

"Sorry about that. I had them fitted to your description. So we know how to deal with them."

"No offense..." She trailed off, when she realized that she didn't know his name.

"Hicks."
"Hicks? Rae." She said, introducing herself, before she continued. "No offense Hicks, but regardless of how much training that you do, you can't kill these things. They were bred to kill."

"So. You tell me then, how do you kill these things?"

"You can't."
She said, sullenly, before she turned to walk out.

"Oh come on. What kind of an attitude is that?"

She turned to face him, a slight smirk on her lips.

"The attitude of a realist. The attitude of someone who has dealt with these things. That's the kind of attitude I have."
She answered, before she walked out.

Well. That was cheery, but one good thing came out of that. Her aim had improved.
"We're on the express elevator to Hell. Going down."

Chapter Summary

Combat drop.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Sulaco glided by over the cloud strewn atmosphere of Archeron.

In the armory, Vasquez, Drake and Frost were field-stripping light weapons with precise movements. Around them, in racks, were an arsenal of advanced personal artillery. Vasquez swung one of the smart-guns out on a work stand. It was a computer-aimed, video-targeted automatic weapon. Drake imitated her moves behind her with his own weapon.

In the loading bay, the drop-ship engines pitch increased as it was now readied for flight. Ferro and Spunkmeyer take their seats in the cockpit. Ripley, and Kendall (http://www.polyvore.com/entering_hadleys_hope/set?id=120033559) stood in front, watching. Momentarily, Burke joined them. Kendall moved herself, so that she was on the far side of him. There was something unnerving about him.

A massive APC, or Armored Personnel Carrier crossed the loading deck, and it pulled up beside the drop-ship.

In the armory, the troopers were suiting up for the drop. Strapping on their bulky combat armor. Hicks slapped on the straps for his boots, twice, before he adjusted the buckles on his chest armor, with his cigarette in his mouth, and he grabbed the helmet from the top of his locker. He turned to leave, but he came face-to-face with Frost. He groaned, knowing what this was about. "Not this again, Frost. I gave you my answer."

"Yeah boy, you did. A half-ass answer. I want a real answer."

"There really is no real answer. I said she was gutsy. Which is true."

"Yeah. Your words said something, but the way that you acted as you said it, said something else. You gotta learn to get over Emilia, man. That was years ago. You had your chance with that girl, and you didn't take it boy. Take a chance. How bad could it possibly be?"

"If she says no, then what?"

"This is probably the last time you're goin' to see her Hicks. If she says no, more than likely you'll never see her again. For all you know, she could say yes. Think about that boy."

Frost clapped him on his shoulder, just before Apone started to bark orders.

"Alright, squad. We're a team and there's nothing to worry about. We come here, we gonna' conquer, and we're gonna' kick some. Is that understood?"
"Yes, sir!"
All the troopers shouted their response.

"That’s what we're going do, sweethearts. We are going to go and get some. Alright people, on the ready-line! Are you lean?!

"YEAH!!"

"Are you mean?!

"YEAH!!"

"WHAT ARE YOU?!

"LEAN, MEAN MARINES!!"

"WHAT ARE YOU?!

"We're Marines!!"

"Hudson! Get on the ready line, Marines! Get some today! Get on the ready line! Move it out! Move it out, goddamnit! Ten, hut! One, two, three! Come on! Get out! Get out! Get out! Move it out! Move it out! Move it out! Move it out! Move it out! Move it out! Move it out! One, two, three, four! One, two, three!"
All of the Marines were filing up to the door of the APC, with Apone verbally pushing them the entire way.

"Absolutely badassess! Let's pack 'em in! Get in there!" Apone growled, almost approvingly.

The line of soldiers double timed into the APC. They found their seats and they began to strap themselves in.

"Alright! Move it! Go on! One, two, three, four, five, six!"

"Let's go! Let's go! Let's go!"
Besides Apone, Hicks was really the other Marine that they all listened to.

"Alright, I want combat seating. You know your places."
Apone barked, as Ripley, Kenny, and Burke came inside of the APC, and looked around in the melee of activity, and they quickly found seats for them.

"Get those weapons stowed. Let's go! Come on, settle down people."
Apone ordered, as Gorman took control of the Mobile Tactical Operations Bay or the MTOB.
He slowly swiveled left and right, as he checked out all of the monitors.

"Lock 'em in, Hudson!"
Apone ordered, and above the noise, Hudson's voice could be heard.

Which no one was surprised at.

"Ready to get it on, you know it!"

"Okay, Bishop. Let's go."
Gorman said into his headset.
"Roger."
Bishop engaged the throttle and drove the APC up a ramp into the drop-ship.

"I'm ready, man. Ready to get it on! Yo!"
Hudson exclaimed, as he slapped the up-raised hand of a fellow trooper, which was Vasquez. The APC came to a stop on the ramp. It was lifted up into the belly of the drop-ship as the ramp closed.

Hicks and Gorman locked into their seats.

In the drop-ship cockpit, Ferro set the drop controls in the cockpit. Everyone in the APC could hear her over the speakers.

"Stand by. Cross locking now. Pre-launch auto-cycle engaged. Primary couplers released. Hit the internals."

The ship was lowered into a cargo lock on a massize launch rig. It came to a jolting stop, and it locked into position. Both Kendall and Ripley looked nervous, as Kendall felt herself clench her hands into fists.

"Oh shit, man."

"Confirmed cross lock and drop stations secured?"
Ferro asked, to which Gorman answered,

"Affirmative. All drop stations secured."

The cargo lock's inner door closed above the ship, which sealed the drop-ship in the blackness of the lock, except for a solitaire blue Klaxton that played over the ship.

"Stand-by, ten seconds."
Ferro said, as she looked through the cockpit windows, and she could see the doors of the cargo lock open below the drop-ship, to reveal the blue, cloud strewn surface of LV-426.

"Stand-by to initiate release sequencer...on my mark. Five, four, three,..."

Back in the APC, Hudson was grinning.
"We're on the express elevator to Hell. Going down!"

To which his response from Ripley and Kendall was that they both looked absolutely nervous.

"...two, one. Mark."

Clamps slammed back, and the ship dropped.

"Woooooooooeeeee!"
Came Hudson's shout, and both of the survivors of the Nostromo closed their eyes.

This was the point of no return.

The drop-ship dove toward the atmosphere of Archeron. It looked like a tiny black mosquito next to the planet. It's engines were ignited with a roar that was a very close resemblance of a tiger.

----

A short conversation was going on between Spunkmeyer and Ferro in the cockpit of the drop-ship.
"Switching to DCS ranging."

"Two-four-o. Nominal to profile." Spunkmeyer chimed in.

"We're in the pipe. Five-by-five."

---

The drop-ship screamed down through the stratosphere, before it plunged into masses of white clouds.

---

"We're picking up some hull ionization."
Spunkmeyer informed Ferro, and she nodded.

"Got it."
She leaned in closer to the microphone of her headset.
"Rough air ahead. We're in for some chop."

---

In the APC, Kendall slowly opened her eyes, and she looked at Gorman. The shaking of the ship was jolting him around in his seat. He looked very tense and was gripping the chair tightly, meanwhile with all of the other troopers, just like them, they were being bucked wildly in their seat restraints, except they looked more calm, and collected.

---

The craft was being bounced around like a balloon caught in a strong air current. It was descending through a very thick, gray cloud layer.

---

In the cockpit, Ferro and Spunkmeyer were monitoring the flight controls intensely.

---

Gorman was sitting semi-calmly in his chair. Eyes closed. Ripley looked over at him.

"How many drops is this for you Lieutenant?"
She asked.

"Thirty-eight...simulated."
Gorman answered.

"How many combat drops?"
Vasquez asked, as she chimed into the conversation.

"Uh...two. Including this one."
Gorman answered, almost sheepishly.

Vasquez and Drake exchanged 'do-you-believe-this-shit' expressions.

"Shit."
Was all Drake could say.
"Oh, man."
Hudson groaned.

Both Kendall and Ripley looked at Burke accusingly, before Kendall turned her head, to see Hicks, fast asleep in his harness.

---

The drop-ship continued to scream through the extremely dense layer of clouds.

---

In the cockpit, the drop-ship's flight computer screen displayed the Archeron landscape below the clouds. The graphics were just lines, but it was easy to tell where the valleys and hills were. The pictures moved with the ship.

"Range zero-one-four. Turning on final."

---

The drop-ship emerged from the low cloud ceiling. The rocky, wind carved landscape of the planet was visible directly below it.

In the APC, while Hicks still managed to sleep, Kendall picked up on some of the conversation between Frost and Wierzbowski.

"But, I'm telling you. I have a bad feeling about this drop."

Hudson was looking around the hold, as he scanned the room with his helmet camera.

"You always say that, Frost. You always say, 'I have a bad feeling about this drop.' "
Wierzbowski commented.

"Okay, okay. When we get back without ya', I'll call your folks."

Hearing Frost make a joke about Wierzbowski not coming back, Kendall felt her insides clench. If those bastards were down there, they might just not come back.

Meanwhile, at the monitor console, it revealed that Hudson's camera image was just one of the pictures that was being displayed on the APC's Mobile Tactical Operations Bay, which was manned by Gorman. He controlled the board like a video director. The board had lots of screens. Each labeled with the names of the troopers. Two for each soldier. The upper screens were Bio-Monitors: EEG, EKG, and other graphic life-function readouts. The lower screens showed images from the image-intensified video cameras on their helmets, while other屏幕上 showed exterior views.

"Alright. Let's see what we can see. Everybody on line...looking good. Drake, check your camera. There seems to be a malfunction..."
Gorman commented, and Drake whacked his helmet camera against an ammo case.

From the way he reacted, it was a familiar malfunction.

"...that's better. Pan it around a bit. Good."

Gorman looked over his shoulder at Apone, who came to check things out. Gorman nodded to him. Hudson got out of his seat and started walking up the isle in the hold, as he spoke to the troopers.
"I'm ready, man. Check it out. I am the ultimate badass. State-of-the-badass art. You do not want to fuck with me. Check it out." He walked over to Kenny and Ripley.

"Hey, Ripley. Rae. Don't worry. Me and my squad of ultimate badasses will protect you."
He laughed.

Some of the troopers got into the speech and let out a few cheers.

"Check it out!"
Hudson moves to the back of the APC and stopped at the controls for the roof-mounted cannon.
"Independently targeting, particle-beam phalanx. WHAP!"

Watching Hudson boast, Kenny looked over at Ripley, and they both rolled their eyes.

"Fry half a city with this puppy. We got tactical smart missiles, phased-plasma pulse rifles, RPG's. We got sonic...electronic ballbreakers!"

One of the troopers let out a whoop of excitement.

"We got nukes. We got knives, sharp sticks..."
Hudson continued to boast, before Apone cut him off.

"Knock it off, Hudson."

Both Ripley and Kendall closed their eyes, and they put their hand on their head. Listening to Hudson had given them a headache.

"Alright, gear up! Two minutes people! Get hot! Somebody wake up Hicks."

Seeing as though the other Marines were busy, Kendall sent a swift kick into Hicks' leg, which caused him to sit upright. He glanced at her, questioningly. She slightly cocked her head over to Apone, and she felt a small smile grace her lips. He nodded his thanks, as he unlocked his seat, and a clatter of activity started as they donned backpacks and weapons. Vasquez and Drake buckled on their smart-gun body harnesses.

A high-pitched whine was heard over the roar of air as four arms swung out from the body of the ship. Each arm carried a load of missiles and other weaponry.

Inside of the drop-ship cockpit, Ferro and Spunkmeyer were reporting everything to the Marines in the APC.

"Coming around for a seven-zero-niner."
Ferro reported.

"Terminal guidance locked in."
Spunkmeyer threw in.

"Where's the damn beacon? Oh, I see it."
Ferro cursed, before she saw the beacon.

From the twilight haze ahead, the distant atmosphere processor suddenly became visible.

Inside the APC, Kendall, Ripley, and Burke have also unlocked their seat harnesses, and they were standing behind Gorman. The two young women watched the AP station loom on the exterior monitor screens.
"That's the atmosphere processor?"
Ripley asked, curiously.

"Yeap, that's it. Remarkable piece of machinery. Completely automated. You know we manufacture those, by the way." Burke boasted.

Ripley and Kendall looked back at Burke from over their shoulders, then returned to viewing the monitors.

The tiny ship flew by the side of the AP station. A metal volcano thundered like the engines on God's Lear jet.

In the hold of the APC, Gorman played with the controls of the MTOB, as he zoomed in the image of the colony.

"Okay, Ferro. Take us in lower over the main colony complex. Storm shutters are sealed. There's no visible activity. Alright. Hold at forty."

"Roger."
Ferro's voice could be heard all throughout the APC.

"Give me a slow circle of the complex."

"Structure seems intact. They still have power."
Kendall commented, and Ripley nodded in compliance.

"Okay, Ferro. Set down on the landing grid. Immediate dust-off on my clear and then stay on station."

In the colony complex, the drop-ship roared down, and extended the loading ramp. As the landing gear hit the ground,

"Down and clear."

The APC hit the ground a second later, and it pulled away from the ship.

In the hold of the APC, the soldiers were standing, as they rocked in place, prepared to leave the APC quickly.

"Ten seconds people! Look sharp!"
Apone snapped.

The APC zoomed toward the colony as quick as possible. The drop-ship was seen flying skyward in the background.

"Alright, I want a nice, clean dispersal this time."
Apone ordered, from inside the hold of the APC.

The APC pulled up to the edge of the complex. The crew door flew open.

"Let's go! Move it out! Head 'em out!"
Apone barked, as the Marines hit the ground, and they all broke out into a run.

Spread out, they get behind immediate cover of the colony's storm wall. Apone pulled out his starlight-scope binoculars and scanned the complex.
The area was as a sunny day, though contrast and lurid, he could see the colony buildings and streets. Rain poured down in sheets and trash blew in the streets. No other movement.

Inside the hold, Kendall and Ellen looked at the APC monitors, while Gorman and Burke were with them, watching in silence as well.

"First squad up, on line. Hicks, get yours in a cordon. Watch the rear."

In the colony complex, Apone continued to give orders to his team.
"Vasquez, take point. Let's move!"

Sprinting in a skirmish line, Apone's team advanced on the colony's main entry-lock. Parked across the ramp to lock was a heavy-duty tractor. Vasquez, then everyone else reached it. She looked to Apone for the clearance to proceed. Apone waved them forward.

"Move up!"

Vasquez reached the main doors, and Apone came up and tried the door controls. Nothing.

"Hudson, run a bypass."

Hudson, all business now, moved up and opened the door control panel. He pried off the facing and started clipping on the bypass wires.

"Second squad, move up. Flanking positions."
Gorman's voice could be heard throughout the headsets of the Marines.

"Second squad on line."

Hicks' team moved up from behind the storm barrier and stopped behind the tractor.

At the colony building, the wind howled around the bleak structures. A loud snap/hiss was heard as Hudson made a connection. The door roared to life and rumbled aside. Apone motioned Vasquez inside. She slowly went through the door, and after a few seconds the others followed.

Chapter End Notes

Don't forget to leave kudos and comments. (: 
Around the beginning of this chapter, Frost mentions a girl named Emilia to Hicks. I just made her up. She will not make an appearance, but her name will.
Now inside of the colony, in the main concourse, Vasquez, Hudson and Apone moved into the complex. They come to an inner door that was jammed partway open. Hudson moved up past Vasquez to the door.

"You set?"
Apone asked, quietly.

Hudson nodded and they pulled it open. The door shrieked in its tracks. Beyond, a broad corridor stretched into the heart of the complex. Rain dripped through blast-holes in the ceiling in various spots along the corridor. Evidence of a fire-fight with pulse rifles. With Vasquez, they moved forward, with her smart-gun cannon swung back and forth.

"Second team move inside..."
Once again, Gorman's voice could be heard through the headsets of the Marines.

Hicks and his squad waited right outside the main concourse's door.

"...Hicks, take the upper level."

With that order, Hicks moved his team inside.

In the main colony concourse, Apone and his team we still moving forward. Vasquez at point, swung her smart-gun back and forth, as she looked for any signs of movement. All they found is water and wreckage everywhere.

"Sir, are you copying this?... Looks like hits from small arms fire...We got some explosives damage. Probably seismic survey charges. Are you reading this? Keep it tight people."

Hicks lead his squad up the stairwell to the second floor.

Kendall was watching Hicks' P.O.V. on the APC monitors.

They emerged cautiously. An empty corridor receded into the dim distance.

"Alright. Hicks...Hudson, use your motion trackers."
Gorman's voice echoed through the headsets.

On the first level, Hudson unslung a rugged piece of equipment and aimed it down the hall. The machine gave off a thump, thump, thump sound as it scanned the area. No movement. Apone and his people moved cautiously down the corridor.

On the second level, Hicks scanned his area with the tracker.
"Nothing. Not a goddamn thing."

"Quarter and search by twos."

On the first level, Apone's squad came to a three-way junction. He signaled them to split up and search systematically in pairs.
On the second level, in the colonist's quarters, Hicks' group came to some damaged rooms. There were no bodies.

"Okay, Dietrich...Frost, you're up."

They moved on down the corridor. Hicks and Drake, taking point, explored the rooms. Furniture was pushed over, objects broken everywhere. The exterior windows were blown out, which admitted wind and rain.

On the first level, also in the colonist's quarters, Hudson and Vasquez came across some of the other colonists' apartments, little more than cubicles. Hudson, on tracker, flanked Vasquez as they moved forward down the corridor. Suddenly, his tracker beeped. A white spot appeared on the screen. Vasquez whirled, cannon aimed and ready.

Back in the APC, Kendall, Ripley, Burke, and Gorman heard the beeping and moved over to look at Hudson's monitor. All of them looked extremely nervous.

Back in the first level quarters, The beeping grew more frequent as Hudson advanced toward a half-open door. Hudson motioned Vasquez toward it. The door was partway open. Pulse-rifle blast holes peppered the walls in places. The motion tracker screen showed that the movement is in the cubicle. Hudson pointed inside the door and mouthed, 'It's inside there.' to Vasquez. Vasquez readied herself as Hudson put his foot on the door and pushed it open with a bang. Vasquez hustled inside quickly, followed by Hudson. They moved over to another door, which was closed. They readied themselves as Hudson kicks it in. Vasquez was first in, then Hudson with a growl. Inside, a gerbil ran around in its cage, totally unaware of what has and what is going on around it.

"Uh...."
Hudson did not know what to say.

"Good one, Hudson."
Vasquez commented, with a roll of her eyes, as she calmed down.

"Uh, sir, we have a negative...

In the APC, Hudson's voice filtered through the speakers.

"...situation here. Uh, movin' on, sir."

Ripley, Burke and Gorman watched Hudson's camera as it showed the little animal as it ran in its cage. He eased up.

In the second level quarters Hicks and Drake were just finishing their sweep of the damaged rooms, Hicks looked at a half-eaten donut beside a coffee cup overflowing with rainwater.

In the APC, Kendall was watching Hicks' monitor, when she saw something important on it.

"Wait! Wait, tell him to..."
She grabbed a headset, and started to talk.
"Hicks. Backup. Pan right. There."

The image shifted to reveal a section of floor that had been melted away in an irregular pattern. Kendall could see Hicks as he knelt by the holes from Drake's P.O.V..

"You seeing this all right? Looks melted. Somebody must have bagged one of Ripley's bad guys here." Hicks' voice echoed through Kendall's headset.
Ripley looked over at Burke.

"Acid from blood."

On the first level, Hudson was looking up at something.
"If you like that, you're gonna' love this..."

Inside the colony, Hudson stood beneath a gaping hole. Another hole was directly beneath it, at Hudson's feet. The acid had melted right down through two levels into the maintenance level. Hudson leaned over the hole and spit into it. It dropped for a long way down into blackness. Vasquez playfully nudged him toward the hole. Hudson jumped back.

"Quit screwing around!"
He exclaimed, as he slightly back away from the hole.

"Second squad, what's your status?"
Apone asked through his headset.

"We just finished our sweep. Nobody's home."
Hicks' voice filtered through Apone's headset.

"Roger. Sir...uh, this place is dead. Whatever happened here, I think we missed it."
Apone reported

Back in the APC, Gorman looked at the monitors, intently.
"Alright, the area's secure. Let's go in and see what their computer can tell us."

"Wait a minute. The area's not secure..."
Both Kendall and Ripley said together, as they turned to face Gorman.

"The area's secure, Ripley. First team, head to operations..."

Back on the first level, in the colony complex, Gorman's voice filtered through the headsets.

"...Hudson, see if you can get their CPU on line."

"Affirmative."

"Hicks, meet me at the South Lock. We're coming in."

"Roger."
Gorman and Hicks' voice could also be heard by the other Marines.

Hudson covered his helmet microphone, and he looked at Vasquez.

"He's coming in. I feel safer already."
He murmured, sarcastically.

"Pendejo jerk off."
Vasquez said, in a sotto voice.

Outside the colony complex, the APC rolled down a deserted street of the complex and stopped at the South Lock. Frost and Hicks emerged from the lock. The APC's crew door slid back and Gorman emerged, followed by Burke, Kendall, and Ripley.

"Sir, the CPU is on-line. No problem."
Came Hudson's voice.

"Good. Stand-by in operations."

Gorman shut the door. Both Kendall and Ripley looked around, both of them feeling unsure about entering the building.

"Okay, let's go."

The group headed for the lock and met up with the troopers. Bishop exited from the other side of the APC and ran over to the group. They proceeded into the complex.

Even though Ripley seemed fine, Kendall stopped just before she entered the building. She was very hesitant about going inside. The rain poured down on her, completely drenching her, and matted down her hair. Something felt unnerving. These bastards were brilliant, there was no way that this place was secure. She started to crack her fingers one by one. A nervous tick of hers. She felt herself take a few uneasy breaths. Hicks and Frost noticed that she had stopped. Frost hit Hicks with his shoulder, and he slightly cocked his head over towards her, before he continued on inside with Ripley, Bishop, Burke, and Gorman. Hicks just sent a somewhat glowering glare to his friend, before he turned, and he walked over to the now-soaking Kendall.

"Are you all right?"
He asked, resting his hand on her shoulder.

Kendall jumped, as she nodded, clearly uncomfortable.

"Yes."
She said, clearly uncomfortable, but she was trying her best to hide it.

Her hands were at her sides, shaking slightly, and she almost jumped out her skin, when she felt something encase her hand. Clutching Hicks' hand as if it was a lifeline, they both followed the others into the complex. The large doors of the lock whined close and shut with a bang.

Chapter End Notes

Remember to leave comments and kudos!
Meeting Newt and Masey. (Another OC.)

Chapter Summary

This is where the Marines, Kendall, and Ripley meet two survivors of Hadley's Hope. I am changing the fact that Newt is not the only survivor.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Gorman emerged from a hole in a that blocked the corridor, a hastily-welded wall of pipes, steel-plate, outer-door panels and machinery. Acid-holes have been slashed through the floor and walls in several places. The metal was scratched and twisted by hideously powerful forces, peeled back like a soup can on one side. The rest of group emerged after him. At this point in time, Kendall and Hicks' hands were no longer intertwined, but his hand rested on her back, as they walked through the corridor.

"Sir?"
Drake came up the corridor to meet them.
"They sealed off this wing at both ends. Welded the doors and blocked off the stairs with heavy equipment."

"Uh huh."
Gorman nodded.

Kendall and Hicks came through the barrier, his hand moved from her back, and his hand now rested on her shoulder. Kendall, was wide eyed and tense. The group slowly moved up the corridor.

"But, it looks like the barricade didn't hold."
Drake continued.

"Any bodies?"
Gorman asked.

"No, sir."
Drake answered.

Just then, Frost came up the corridor.
"Last stand. Must have been a helluva' fight."

"Yeah. Looks that way."
Hicks nodded, in compliance to what Frost had said.

"Alright. Drake...this way. We should be able to cut through the Med-Lab to Operations."

The soldiers' pack-lights played over the devastation of the colonists' last ditch battle, as they entered the Med-Lab. The equipment of the Med-Labs had been uprooted to add to the barrier. But, a lot of it was still in place and intact. The blue lighting in the rooms caused lots of unwanted shadows. Burke
touched Gorman's shoulder, and he pointed him to something across the room. The others followed. Kendall and Ripley seemed to transfixed on something. The others approached them, as they saw what the two Ripley's saw.

Ripley and Kendall had stopped at the door of a second room, part of the Med-Labs area. In a storage alcove, at near eye-level, stand six transparent cylinders were filled with liquid, each lit from beneath. Stasis tubes. They seem to contain large severed arthritic hands, the palsied fingers curled in a death-rixtus.

At the sight, Kendall covered her mouth with her hands, and she felt her breath hitch in her throat. They had experimented on these things. She felt someone's hand on her back, and she almost jumped out of her skin, before she felt the hand move from her back to her shoulder, and whoever it was, rubbed her shoulder, almost comforting. As if they knew how she felt at that moment.

"Lieutenant Gorman!"

Gorman came over. Hicks and Gorman moved past Ripley, and Kendall, into the room. Burke and Bishop followed closely.

"Are these the same ones?"
Burke asked Ripley, and Kendall, to which they both nodded to, both of them unable to speak.

So, what they had thought was true. The colonists had found the ship, and God knew how many of them had been infected. Burke walked over, and he leaned close to one of the cylinders, in fascination, his face almost touching it.

"Careful, Burke!"
Ripley warned him, and he glanced back over at her, before back at the FaceHugger.

The creature inside lunged suddenly, slamming against the glass. Burke, jumped back. So did everyone else. From the "palm" of the thing's body, emerged a pearlescent tubule, which slithered tongue-like over the inside of the glass.

"Looks like love at first sight to me."
Hicks said, as Kenny turned her head to see Gorman and Bishop looking at the other FaceHuggers in the tube.

"Oh, he likes you, Burke."
Meanwhile, Bishop picked up a file-folder from between two of the dead specimen tanks.

"Two are alive, the rest are dead."
Bishop read, as he flicked through the file-folder's pages.

Inside, was a medical chart printout with hand-written entries.

"Surgically removed before embryo implantation. Subject: Marachuk, John J. Died during the procedure."
Bishop read, before he looked up at the others in the room.
"They killed him taking it off."

They were all startled by a loud beeping. Hick's motion tracker, which was being held by Frost, came to life. Something was moving in its scanning range. Beep. Beep.

"Yo, Hicks! I think we got something here."
Frost said, as they all came up, to look closely at the tracker.

"Behind us."

"One of us?"
Ripley asked.

"Apone...where are your people? Anybody in D-Block?"
Gorman asked into his headset.

"That's a negative. We're all in Operations."
Apone's voice was loud, and they could all hear what he had said through Gorman's headset.

Immediatly, everyone tensed up. Drake moved up ahead of the group, and Frost fell in next to him, and they all started to slowly head toward the source of the signal. Drake kept his smart-gun aimed ahead at all times.

"Talk to me, Frosty."
Drake called over his shoulder.

"Just keep moving baby."

As the soldiers rounded an array of complicated equipment, Gorman accidentally knocked over a metal canister, which sent it down onto the ground with a clang. Ripley, and Kendall jumped like cats. They both looked at Gorman and moved on.

"It's moving."

"Which way?"

"It's coming straight for us. Straight up."

The team moved into an adjoining corridor. Hicks' tracker beeped rapidly. Kendall glanced at the tracker's screen which showed the object as it moved closer. It counted down the feet till contact. Something moved in the dark, and it jumped across the corridor. Drake, pivoted smoothly to fire, at the same time Hicks' rifle slammed Drake's barrel upward. A stream of tracer fire ripped into the ceiling.

"You fuck!"
Drake exclaimed, but Hicks saw what Drake didn't see.

"Hold up! Ripley."

He motioned Ripley forward. Trusting his judgment, she came up beside him. They all crouched down by a row of steel cabinets and Hicks aimed his light under them. Lit by Hicks' pack-light...there was two cowering figures. A very dirty, very terrified Newt Jorden, and a taller equally dirty, and equally terrified Masey Meyer. Newt gripped the head of a large doll, as she held it by the hair. Just the head.

"Oh my God."
Was all Kendall could say.

These two girls. Out of 159 colonists, 2 had managed to survive this.

"Hey, shhhhh. It's alright. Come on."
Hicks began to reach under the cabinets to grab one of them. Newt and Masey inched away each time he came too close.

"Just grab one of them, Corporal."

Kendall glared at Gorman.

"You can't just grab them. They're obviously terrified. He shouldn't grab them immediately. Ease." She said, and with the look that she had received from Gorman, she sent him a cold stare.

"You wanted my help, and I'm giving it."

"Don't be afraid. Come on. We won't hurt you. Shhhh, it's alright. It's okay. Come on out. Come on. Easy. Easy." Ripley cooed, as she tried to soothe the two to come out hiding.

Newt and Masey finally got themselves jammed in a corner and Hicks was able to grab Newt's wrist.

"I got one of them!"

Newt bit him on the hand and both the girls bolted like shots, as they scuttled along beneath the floor grilling. Hicks yanked his hand back in pain.

"Owwwwww! Damn!"

"Watch them!"

"Don't let them go!"

"They're under the grill!"

"Frost, use your lantern. Frost, get your light up here!"

"Right here!"

"Where'd they go?!"

"They're on the other side of us!"

"Shine your light!"

"Down here! Here, here!"

"Here, here!"

"There they are!"

"Keep back! Keep back! Don't scare them!"

'Grab them, man! We're going to loose them!"

Many different people interjected throughout the whole confusion, it was hard to keep tabs on who said what. Newt and Masey reached an air duct set in the baseboard and scrambled inside.

"Damn it!"

Ripley grabbed Bishop's light and dove, squirmed into the duct without thinking.
"They can't get out!"

While they waited for Ripley to come back, Kendall swabbed a small piece of cloth with rubbing alcohol, and she gently cleaned the bite that Hicks had received from the small girl. Seeing him wince on occasion when the alcohol touched his wound, a small smile graced her lips, she found that a bit amusing. She half-expected a Marine to be as tough as nails, and yet here she was, with one, who winced when alcohol touched his open wound.

"So...You are capable of smiling."

She glanced up at Hicks, and she rolled her eyes.

"And you are capable of being a smart ass..."
She retorted without hesitation, and she heard a small chuckle elicit from Hicks.

"Fair enough."

The two of them sat in silence, and on occasion, she would glance up to see him staring at her, intently.

"You could swear that you had never seen a girl before..."
She remarked, as she tightly tied a cloth bandage around his wound.

Sure, it was small, but they had no idea what had happened to this girl, so...it was a precaution.

"It's different to see a new face around here..."

"After you're stuck with the same grunts for a while, right?"
She said, before she glanced down at his bandaged hand.

"You acted like such a girl, you know. It's just a little bit of alcohol..."
She murmured, teasingly, and the corners of her lips tugged up into an even bigger smile, as she watched him roll his eyes.

"When I have to clean up a wound of yours, and I have to use rubbing alcohol, I'd like to see you not wince."

"There's a difference. I'm a girl. I can act like one."
She teased.

"It does sting you know."

"What do you want me to do? Kiss it better?"
She jibed.

Normally, Hicks would not let a girl poke fun at him this much, but then again, Rae was different.

"It wouldn't hurt..."
He remarked, a hint of a teasing tone in his voice.

Rolling her eyes, Kendall took his hand, and she gingerly kissed the side of it.
"Better?"

"You know I was joking right?"

"Sure you were. Sure you were."
She teased, as she pulled him up.
Meanwhile, in the ventilation room, Newt and Masey entered the room and quickly turned to lock the ducts grille door. But, Ripley pushed the grille open before they could latch it, and crawled in after them.

"Wait! Wait!" Ripley called, as soon as she was all the way through.

Newt and Masey were backed into a cul-de-sac in the tiny steel chamber. Ripley shone her light around in amazement. It was a nest. A nest built by a child. Wadded up blankets and pillows lined the space, mixed up with a haphazard array of toys, stuffed animals, dolls, cheap jewelry, comic books, empty food packets, and even a batter-operated tape player. She looked up at the rotating fan drum above the room while she silently moved forward.

"It's okay. It's alright. Don't be afraid." Ripley said, as she tried to calm the frightened child. In the process, she picked up one of the cheap jewelry pearl necklaces and she held it up in front of Newt and Masey as she moved forward.

"See."

Neither girl was buying and they were trying desperately to back further away, but the wall behind was stopping them. Nowhere to run. Nowhere, except another air duct right beside them. Without hesitation, they both dove for the hatch.

"Wait! No you don't!"
Ripley grabbed the youngest, as she controlled the girl in a bear hug. The child struggled wildly, like a cat at the vet's. Masey froze, as she closed the hatch to the air duct. She wasn't leaving Newt. They didn't know each other before infestation, but they were all they had now. Something told her that she could trust this woman, but she backed away into a corner, away from her.

"It's okay! Everything is going to be alright now! Shhhhh! Easy, easy...it's going to be okay. It's alright, your going to be okay. Shhhh, shhhh, shhhh,...easy...easy."

Newt went limp, almost catatonic.

Ripley looked over to her side and noticed something amidst the debris...a framed photograph of Newt, dressed up and smiling. In embossed white letters underneath, it said: SECOND GRADE CITIZENSHIP AWARD REBECCA JORDEN.

Looking back down at Newt in her arms, Ripley stroked the girl’s hair in a motherly fashion, keeping the child calm. Something that she used to do with Kendall and Amanda when they had nightmares. Newt was lost in her mind, as she stared at nothing. Ripley glanced over at the other cowering girl. She looked about Kendall's age. Keeping an arm around Newt, she pulled the other girl into a tight embrace, rubbing her back, gently. Both girls shivering in obvious fear.


Chapter End Notes

You all know what Newt looks like.
For Masey, her face claim is Adelaide Kane from 'Reign.' 'Teen Wolf.' 'The Purge,' That kind of thing.
"Looks like a goddamn town meeting."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Back in operations, in the manager's office, Hicks opened the storm shutters on all the windows. He could see that fog had rolled in and covered up the landscape outside. Kendall was sitting in a chair by a desk, her elbow on the desk, and her palm cupped her cheek. Her eyelids closed over, and she felt herself fall asleep.

A few minutes later, she opened her eyes, and she saw that Operations was dark, except for red lights, that she knew where emergency lighting. Something had gone wrong. How long had she been asleep for? It felt like hours, but she knew that it had only been a few minutes. Or was it? Equipment and different things were strewn about. She rubbed her eyes with the back of her wrists, and she ran her fingers through her damp hair. She slowly started to walk through the Operations office. Where was everyone?

"Ripley? Hudson? Hicks? Anyone?"
She called, as she continued to gingerly step through the office.

She glanced down to find acid holes in the floor. She looked over, and she saw a pulse rifle, on one of the tables. She hugged it to her chest, and she continued to walk through the office.

"Ripley? Hicks? Hudson?"
Her voice was shaking, even though she was trying to keep it steady.

She saw some resin on the walls, and she felt her heart freeze, and her breath hitch in her throat. She continued to walk through, and she came to a stop. She saw someone stuck inside of a cocoon like shape. She stepped closer, and she pulled the resin away. She dug into her jacket pocket, and pulled out her lighter. She struck up a flame, and she held it close to their face.

"Hicks..."
She said, quietly, as she set the rifle down, and she started to tear away some of the resin, that he was trapped in.

"Where is everyone else?"
She asked, quietly, just in case...others were hanging around.

Even though the Corporal was half-awake, he tilted his head up, slightly, and Kendall followed his gaze. What she saw next, almost made her sick. Every other person was stuck in the resin. Some of them, had their chest cavities broken out of.

"Oh God."
She murmured, as she covered her mouth with her hand, and she backed away slowly, to get a better view at what the hell she was dealing with.

She saw her mother, stuck in the resin, and she looked out of it, completely.

"Ripley...?"
She said, quietly, as she walked closer, as she brought the lighter close.

Her chest cavity was still intact, so nothing had broken out of her chest. Yet. Why did she have to think of yet? Ripley looked dead almost...She turned back to Hicks, and he seemed to be the only
one who was still semi-conscious.

"Come on. I gotta get you out of there."
She said, as she stuck the lighter into some of the resin, to give her some sort of light source as she pulled away at the resin.

She had managed to pull 3/4's of him out, before something broke through his chest. It wasn't a Facehugger, it was the extended maw of a fully grown Xenomorph. She screamed, as she fell backwards, as she scrambled away. Suddenly the Xenomorph stopped in its tracks, and it started to back away. She was confused, before she heard the sickly sound of something opening. She glanced over to see the leatherly petals of an egg opening up near her. Something poked out near the top, before it jumped out at her...

She snapped her head up, and she felt a cold sweat start to bead on her forehead. She glanced around, and she saw that everything was still intact, and everyone was still there. She stood up, and she placed her palm on her forehead, as she tried to collect her thoughts. She weaved her way through the office, and she felt a hand on her shoulder, and she jumped like cat, like she and her mother had, not that long ago.

"Sorry about that. You alright?"
She heard Hicks ask, and she sighed.

"I'm fine. I dozed for a while, and that was not really the best thing for me to do."
She said, as she felt him turn her slightly, so that she was facing him.

"You're shaking like a scared cat, and your face is whiter than paper. You could swear that you just saw a ghost."
He had said, and she swore, that he had actually sounded concerned.

"I don't believe in ghosts. They're just dead people who are stuck here, until they find some way to get to where they want to be. Do you know if there's some's sort of sink around here?"
She asked, rubbing her eyes.

Hicks nodded, and he gestured over to a small sink in the room. She splashed water onto her face, and she rubbed water on her neck. She rested her hands on the sides of the sink, and she took several deep breathes. She felt Hicks rest his hand on her back, and at first, she once again nearly jumped out of her skin, and before she even knew what was happening, she was pulled into a bone-crushing hug. It was only bone-crushing because of his bulky combat armor, but besides that, this semi-awkward hug was pretty comforting. Her hands were held to her chest, and her cheek rested on his chest armor. It had been a while since she had felt comfortable in someone's arms, so this was a good experience for her.

Meanwhile, Newt and Masey sat on a desk, both of their legs dangled over the side, as they looked at a point in space. Ripley entered, and she carried 2 coffee mugs. She stood and watched Gorman talk to Newt and Masey.

"What are their names again?"

"Rebecca and Masey."

Gorman leaned in front of Newt while Dietrich watched their individual readouts from a portable bio-monitoring terminal in her hand.

"Now think, Rebecca. Masey. Concentrate. Just start at the beginning. Where are your parents?"
No response elicited from either girl.

"Now look, Rebecca...Masey. You have to try and help..."

"Gorman! Give it a rest why don't ya'."

Gorman straightened up with a sigh of dismissal.

"Total brainlock."

"Physically, they're okay. Borderline malnutrition, but I don't think any permanent damage." Dietrich informed.

"Come on. We're wasting our time."

Gorman said, as he and Dietrich exited, leaving only Ripley with Newt, and Masey.

She knelt down beside the two of them. Newt and Masey continued to stare ahead blankly.

"Masey..."

The taller girl with darker hair glanced up slightly.

Seeing this, Ripley felt a surge of achievement. She had established contact with one of them.

"How old are you?"

Ripley asked, gently.

A bit confused by this question. Masey still gave her quiet answer.

"24."

She said, quietly.

Hearing her age, Ripley nodded, and she glanced around operations. Seeing Kendall, with a mug in her hand, talking with Hicks, she smiled.

"You see that girl over there?"

Ripley asked.

Masey turned her head, and she nodded.

"She's a year older than you. Maybe she has something for you to wear. Why don't you go talk to her? She won't hurt you."

Ripley promised, and Masey gave her a questioning look, before she gently slid down off of the table.

Seeing Masey get up to leave, Newt grasped her hand. Turning her head, Masey and Newt communicated with their eyes, and after a few moments, Newt slowly let go of her hand, and Masey sent her a half smile, before she slowly and carefully walked over to Kendall and Hicks.

Hearing someone walking towards the two of them, Kendall turned her head to see Masey, the older girl walking towards her. Kenny walked over to her, and she sent her a gentle smile.

"I guess Ripley sent you, didn't she?"

She asked, and when the girl nodded, she smiled.

"I thought that she did. Here."

She took the girl's frail hands, and she wrapped them around the cup.
"It's some hot chocolate. It'll help keep you warm."
Kendall said, and seeing the girl drink from the cup, made her relax.

"I'm Rae."
She said, as she took back the cup, after the girl handed it to her.

"Come on. Let's go get you dressed into something else, alright?"
She offered, as she stretched her hand out to the girl.

Masey looked at the girl before her, skeptically, before her thin fingers slowly wrapped around the girl's hand. Like a mother would hold the hand of her small daughter. She led the girl over to a small room in operations, and she handed her a change of clothing. It was just a shirt, leather jacket, pants, boots, and the other necessary items for a young woman. After a while, she watched as Masey stepped out, and she looked very nervous.

"Good. They fit you. You want something to eat?"
She asked, as she brought the girl over to a desk, and she offered her a food packet.

Masey sat down slowly, and she started to eat. Kendall sat down from across the girl. Even though this girl was a year younger, she was very frail, and she was going to need some support from someone her age.
Meanwhile, Ripley was not having much luck with Newt.
"Try this. It's a little hot chocolate."
Ripley wrapped the child's hands around the cup, and she even raised it to her lips for her. The girl drank from it mechanically, the hot chocolate spilled down her chin.

"Here you go. Ooop, that good, huh."
Ripley wiped away the spilled coco, which caused some of the dirt on Newt's face to come away.

"Uh oh. I made a clean spot here. Now I've done it. Guess I'll just have to do the whole thing."
Ripley said, as she poured some water from a squeeze-bottle onto a small cloth and gently washed the little girl's face.

"Hard to believe there's a little girl under all this. And a pretty one too."
It seemed that Newt doesn't even know she's there.

"You don't talk much, do you?"
Over around a monitor, after Masey had finished eating, both her and Kendall watched as an abstract of the main-colony ground-plan drifts across the screen. Searching for something. The ground team, including Masey and Kendall were gathered around a terminal in the computer center. Hudson had the main computer's CPU on-line and reading out. He operated using a joystick controller, which moved the ground-plan around.

"Smoking or non-smoking?"
Hudson asked, as he tried to lighten the tense mood.

"Just tell me what your scanning for private?"
Gorman said, breaking the slightly lightened mood.

Knowing what Hudson was looking for, Masey felt the word slip through her lips.
"PDT's."
"Huh?"

"Personal-Data Transmitters. We all had one surgically implanted. That's what he's looking for? Right?"
She asked, as she glanced down at the Marine who was using the monitor.

"Yeah. If they're within twenty clicks, we'll read it out here...but so far, zippo."
Back in the manager's office, Ripley was washing Newt's tiny hands with the cloth, pink skin emerged from black grime.

"I don't know how you and Masey managed to stay alive. But, you two are real brave kids, Rebecca."

Newt's voice was all but inaudible.
"N-newt."

Ripley leaned closer. The single syllable was incomprehensible.
"What did you say?"

"Newt. My n-name's Newt. Nobody calls me Rebecca, except my brother."

Ripley grinned. She spoke quietly, not wanting to break the spell.

"Newt. I like that. I'm Ripley. It's nice to meet you. And who is this, huh?"
Ripley lifted Newt's filthy left hand up which still clutched the disembodied doll.

Newt looked at the head.
"Casey."

"Hello, Casey. And what about your brother, what's his name?"
Ripley asked, quietly.

"Timmy."
Came Newt's quiet answer.

"Is Timmy around here too? Maybe hiding like you were?"

Newt seemed to close up, as she stared away from Ripley, not making eye-contact.

"Any sisters?"

Newt shook her head "no," barely moving.

"Mom and Dad?"

The little girl nodded, almost imperceptibly.

"Newt...look at me."
Ripley said, gently, as she lifted the child’s face with her hand.
"Where are they?"

"They're dead! All right?! Can I go now?!"

Knowing exactly how this little girl felt, Ripley felt sorry for her.
"I'm sorry, Newt. Don't you think you'd be safer here with us?"
Newt shook her head "no" with chilling certainty.

"These people are here to protect you. They're soldiers."
Ripley said, as she tried to persuade this small child.

"It won't make any difference."
Newt said, and she sounded very distant.
Meanwhile, in the Med-Lab, Bishop was hunched over an ocular probe, as he did a dissection of one of the dead facehuggers. Spunkmeyer entered with some electronics gear on a hand truck and parked it near Bishop's work table.

"Need anything else?"
Spunkmeyer asked.

Bishop looked up from his work at Spunkmeyer. He seemed to have trouble answering the question.

"Hello, Bishop. Do you need anything else?"
Spunkmeyer asked, again.

"No."

"That's a nice pet you've got there, Bishop."

"Magnificent, isn't it?"
Bishop commented, as he went back to his work, and 'pet.'

Back in operations, everyone jumped as Hudson cried out triumphantly.

"Yo! Stop your grinnin' and drop your linen! Found 'em."

"They alive?"
Gorman asked.

"Unknown. It looks like all of them. Over at the processing station...Sub-Level 3...under the main cooling towers."

Kendall and Masey both walked over to the screen, which showed an amoeba-like cluster of flashing white dots clumped tightly in one area.

"Looks like a goddamn town meeting."
Both Kendall and Hicks said at the same time, before they glanced at each other.

"Let's saddle up, Apone."
Gorman said, as he turned to Apone.

"Aye, sir. Alright, let's go people, they ain't payin' us by the hour. Let's go! Head 'em out! Okay, Frost. You're drivin'."

Chapter End Notes

Leave comments. (:}
The APC roared across the stygian, Acheron landscape at twilight, toward the atmosphere station, that was two kilometers away.

"It's okay. Don't worry. It'll be okay."

Newt was sitting just aft of the driver's cockpit. Gorman's MTOB was right behind her. She sat quietly, as she clutched her doll head and she talked to it in a caring manner. She stopped and looked behind her. Kendall smiled, as she watched the small girl. She took a few steps forward, and she knelt in front of the small girl.

"Hi Newt."
She whispered, with a feeble smile.

Newt looked at her, before she said nothing.

"I'm Rae."
She continued with the whispering.

Newt glanced up at her, and she was given a weak smile.
"Rae..."

"Yeah. I've met Masey already. She says that you're a very brave kid, Newt."
She whispered, before she stood up, and she gently ruffled the girl's hair, in a motherly way, before she went to stand with Ripley and Gorman.

Not seeing Masey, she turned her head, to see her talking with Hudson. Well. That was fast. Seemed that Masey was someone who knew who she could trust. She smiled, slightly, before she turned back around. Her gaze was riveted to a monitor, which the atmosphere station loomed on ahead.

The vast structure towered above the personnel carrier as it drove up the access ramp and stopped before the door. It opened, and it slid up into the ceiling. The APC drove on into the station, and in the process they dropped its huge top-mounted cannon down on its rear in the process. If it hadn't, the cannon would have bashed into the ceiling of the narrow corridor ahead. Kendall had broken away from her mother, and the monitors, and now she found herself talking with Hicks. As usual. Feeling the APC come to a slow halt, without even thinking, she pressed a quick kiss to Hicks' cheek.

"Good luck."
Was all she could say, with a small smile, before she walked back over to the monitors.
Hearing someone come up beside her, she turned to see Masey, and her cheeks had tinted red. She glanced over her shoulder to see that Hudson had just left the APC. She raised an eyebrow at the girl. Maybe she had done to Hudson, what she had done to Hicks? Maybe.

As the APC came to a halt, the door opened, and deployed in front of the APC, backlit by its lights, the troopers cast long shadows. The base of the station was a depthless maze of conduits and pressure vessels, like an oil refinery.

"I want a straight B-Deployment. Second team on the left flank. Advance on axial six-six-four. Tracker on-line. Set the V-gain to filter RF ambient..."

Gorman's voice filtered through their headsets.

"Hudson, tracker on-line. Left and right little buddy."

Apone ordered, before Gorman's voice made another appearance in their headsets.

"Forty meters in, bearing two-two-one, there should be a stairwell..."

"Check! Got it!"

"You want Sub-Level 3."

Gorman added, as the Marines descended down the stairwell into the dark pit of machinery.

"Let's go people. Hudson, you get the point. Hicks, watch our tails. Nice and easy. Check those corners..."

In the hold, in the APC, they could see Apone and the other soldiers from Hicks' P.O.V.. They were still descending the stairwell.

"...Check those corners."

Apone's voice filtered through the speakers.

"Watch your spacing."

"Alright, you heard the man. Don't bunch up. Stay loose."

They could still hear Apone's orders filtering through the speakers of the hold.

"Uh...your transmission's showing a lot of breakup."

They could see Hudson from Apone's P.O.V.

"Probably getting some interference from the structure."

"Watch those lights."

Kendall, Masey, and Ripley looked down at the computer screen which showed the ground-plan of the station. The Marines were only a line of white dots slowly moving down the stairwell in the layout.

"Next one down. Then proceed on a two-one-six."

"Uh...roger. That's a two-one-six."

Feeling someone grasp onto her leg, Kendall jumped slightly, but then she glanced down to see Newt, as she hung onto her leg, along with Masey's.

They finally were able to see the corridor the soldiers have just entered from Vasquez's P.O.V.. The group stood before a bizarre tableau. Over the refinery-like lattice pipes and conduits, something new
and not of human design had been added. It was a structure of some sort, extending from and crudely imitating the complex of plumbing, but made of some strange encrusted substance.

"I'm not making that out to well. What is that, Hudson?"
Gorman asked, Hudson. As if he would know the answer.

Hudson appeared on Vasquez's P.O.V..

"You tell me, man. I only work here."
Came Hudson's quick retort.
Inside the alien structure, they entered the organic labyrinth, as they played their lights over the walls, which revealed it to be a bio-mechanical lattice.
Back in the hold of the APC, they watched the various helmet-camera P.O.V.s' of the wall's detail.

"What is that?"
Burke asked, obviously directing his question at his two consultants.

"We don't know."
Both Ripley and Rae said together, very lowly, for they felt as if they spoke too loudly, they would awaken the monsters inside of the atmosphere processing station.

"Proceed inside."
Back in the alien structure, the soldiers moved on through a corridor, in a broken line. Everywhere they looked, the walls were covered with the alien substance. Water dripped down through holes in the ceiling.

"Watch your firing and check your targets. Remember, we're looking for civvies in here."
Apone reminded his Marines.

Vasquez came to another junction and pointed her smart-gun to the left. The team headed that way.

"Easy."

"Tighten it up, Frost. We're getting a little thin."
Finally came Hicks' voice.

"Nice and easy."

Dietrich snapped off a piece of alien lattice from a wall.
"Looks like some sort of secreted resin."
She remarked.

"Yeah. But, secreted from what?"
Hicks asked, as they continued to look around the structure.

"Nobody touch nothin'."
Apone growled.

"Busy little creatures, aren't they?"
Burke's voice came through their headsets.

"Hot as hell in here."
Frost commented.

"Yeah, man...it's the dry heat."
Hudson added, as he nodded in compliance.

"Knock it off, Hudson."
Apone remarked.
In the APC, both Kenny and Ripley leaned forward suddenly, as they studied the graphic readout of the station ground plan.

"Lieutenant, what do those pulse-rifles fire?"
Ripley asked.

"10mm explosive-tip caseless, standard light-armor piercing round. Why?"
Gorman answered.

"Well, look where your team is, they're right under the primary heat exchangers."
Kendall said, seeing where her mother was going with this.

"So?"

"So, if they fire their weapons in there, won't they rupture the cooling system?"
Both Kendall and Ripley asked, together, as they glanced at each other, before back at Gorman.

"Ho, ho, ho. Yeah. They're absolutely right."

"So? So what?"

"Look, this whole station is basically a big fusion reactor. Right? So, we're talking about a thermonuclear explosion and adios muchachos."
Burke explained, and when it dawned on Gorman, his face contorted slightly.
He was very pissed off.

"Oh...ah, great. Wonderful. Shhhit!"
He grumbled, before he started to talk into the headset to Apone.
"Look...uh...Apone...look, we can't have any firing in there. I, uh, want you to collect magazines from everybody."
In the alien structure, the Marines looked at each other in dismay. They all started to argue against the command.

"Is he fucking crazy?"
Hudson commented.

"What the hell are we supposed to use, man? Harsh language?"
Frost asked.

"Flame-units only. I want rifles slung."
Gorman's voice continued to give orders through their headsets.

"Sir, I...?"
Apone started to say, and for once, he was at a loss for words.

"Just do it, Sergeant. And no grenades."

"Damn!"

Apone walked among the troopers, as he collected the magazines from each one's weapon. "You too, give it up Speedy. Come on. Let's go. Crowe, I want it now. Give it up."

When Apone moved on, Vasquez pulled out two spare magazines from concealment and inserted one in her weapon, without hesitation, she handed the other to Drake.

"Right on, Vas."

"Let's go, Marine. Give it up. Frost, you got the duty. Open that bag."

Apone put all the cartridges in Frost's rucksack and handed it back to him to carry.

"Thanks a lot, Sarge."

Frost said, sarcastically.

"Hicks! Cover our ass. Head 'em out people!"

Hicks reached over his shoulder and slides out an old-style pump-action twelve gauge with a sawed-off butt stock from a leather quiver attached to his battle-harness. Frost looked over at it.

"I like to keep this handy..."

Hicks started to say, before he chambered a round.

"...for close encounters." He finished.

"I heard that."

Was all Frost could say, before they continued on, into a large chamber.

The air was thick and lights flared.

"Any movement?"

Hudson watched his tracker, as it continued to scan.

"Nothing. Zip."

Apone stopped, his expression changed as he gazed up a wall.

"Holy shit."

The Marine's faced a wall of living horror. The colonists have been brought here and entombed alive. Cocoons protruded from the niches and interstices of the structure. The cocoon material was the same translucent epoxy. The bodies were frozen in twisted positions. Rib cages burst outward, exploded from within. Paralyzed, then brought here as hosts for the embryos which grew within them.

In the APC, both Kendall, and Ripley both saw they chamber of horrors on the monitors. They could hardly watch, but they pushed themselves too.

"Newt, go sit up front. Go on. Now!"

Masey said to the small child, and she watched as Newt scampered up to the front of the APC.

Masey, herself knew this cocoon chamber inside and out. She had escaped from this one a few weeks ago, before one of those things could attach to her face.

Meanwhile, in the cocoon chamber, arrayed across the floor were a number of leathery ovoids, alien eggs, their tops opened like leathery flower petals. Hicks shone his light and aimed his shotgun into one. Thankfully, for him, it was empty and dry.

In the APC, Gorman was wide-eyed and alert. Obviously frightened by what he was seeing.
Back in the cocoon chamber, Hicks found one of the multi-legged parasites, curled up and shriveled like a dead spider. Others lay at the feet of the cocooned colonists, graphically illustrating the bizarre life-cycle. He lifted it up with the end of his twelve-gauge to examine it. His light showed the non-human grotesqueness of the creature. By the structure of the creature, this was obviously the FaceHugger, one of the different stages that Rae had told him about. Now that he actually saw the thing, he could see why they freaked her out.

"Steady people. Let's finish our sweep."

Hicks tossed the dead parasite to the floor and moved on. The line of troopers, with Vasquez at point, moved along a cocoon wall. A drop off blocked their way on the left. Only a guard rail protected them from falling.

"We're still Marines and we have a job to do. Keep it movin'. Easy."

Dietrich moved close to examine one of the figures, perhaps the most 'recent.' A woman, ghost-white and drained. Dietrich lifted up the head of the woman. The woman's eyes snapped open, and they seemed to plead.

"TOP!!"

"What!"

"TOP!! Get over here! We've got a live one! You're going to be alright. You're going to be alright." Dietrich tried to calm down the pleading colonist.

"Please...ki-kill me." The colonist begged.

Back in the APC, Kendall and Ripley watched the woman and soldiers on their monitors, both of them white-knuckled.

"Just stay calm. We're going to get you out of here."

"Uh...sir, we've got a survivor here."

"It's going to be alright. Give me a hand. We gotta get her out of here." Apone's and Dietrich's voices filtered through the speakers, before Frost joined in.

"Hudson...Dietrich, what's going on?"

Back in the chamber, the woman began to convulse.

"Convulsion!"

The woman screamed, a sawing shriek of mindless agony.

In the APC, both survivors of the Nostromo watched in horror as the woman screamed in blinding pain.

"Ohhh!"

"Dietrich, get back! Get back!"

Kendall's glances jumped back and forth between the shrieking woman and Ripley as they tried not to watch the painful birth of something that ripped it's way out of the cocooned woman’s chest. A small fanged head emerged, and it hissed viciously. As the shrieking woman begged for Dietrich and the others to kill her, the only thing that entered Kendall's mind was Dallas, on the Nostromo years and years ago. As soon as the small fanged head emerged from the dead colonists' chest, she ripped
the headset off, and she turned away. One of her hands in her hair, as she gripped it tightly with her left hand, and in her right hand, were two dogtags. One had a white silencer, and the other had a black silencer. She sighed, shakily, as she kissed the dogtag with the black silencer, before she collected herself, and she walked back over to the monitors, and she placed the headset back on. Back in the cocoon chamber, Frost pulled Dietrich away from the thing that had exploded out of the once alive colonist's chest.

"Frost! Flamethrower!"
Apone ordered.

"Kill it!"

"Get back! Flamethrower! Move!"
Frost handed it to Apone, who then pulled the trigger.

Then the other troopers who carried flame-units opened fire. An insane amount of purging fire immersed, as the creature let out a high-pitched death shriek as it died. It slumped over in the flames, half in / half out of the dead woman. The cocoons vanished in the shimmering heat.

A shrill hissing began to echo throughout the chamber. Like a siren created from escaping gas. Apone and Dietrich looked above them. Unseen by the troopers, shapes began to move in the walls themselves...glistening bio-mechanoid forms. Visibility dropped as smoke filled the chamber.

"Movement!"
Hudson shouted.

"What's the position?"
Apone asked.

"Uh...can't lock in..."

"Talk to me, Hudson."

"Uh, multiple signals...they're closing."

"Go to infra-red people. Look sharp."

The squad members snapped down their image-intensifier visors, which covered the right eye, but left the other free for normal vision.

Back in the hold, Gorman was playing with the gain controls on the monitors.

"What's happening, Apone? We can't see anything in here.

Both Kendall and Ripley could sense it coming, like a wave at night. Dark, terrifying and inevitable.

"Pull your team out, Gorman."
They both murmured, but their tone was desperate.

Meanwhile, in the cocoon chamber, the walls come alive. The Marines moved in they smoky grotto, seeing without seeing.

"I've got signals! I've got readings in front and behind."

"Where, man! I don't see shit."
Frost called.
"He's right. There's nothing back here."
Hicks threw over his shoulder.

"Look, I'm telling you, something's moving and it ain't us."
Dietrich came up and touched Frost on the shoulder, which made him jump.

"Ah shit."

"The tracker's off the scale, man. They're all around us, man! Jesus!"

"Maybe they don't show up on the infra-red at all."
Dietrich said, as fear filled her voice.

She stood near a wall of the chamber, as she gripped her flamethrower tightly. She didn't see the nightmarish figure emerge from the wall behind her. It struck, as it seized her and took her upward. She fired, reflexively, wildly. The jet of flame engulfed Frost, nearby. He fell over a railing, and he dropped like a lit match into the dark heart of the complex.

"FROST!!!"

Hicks and Crowe turned, horrified, as they saw the human torch drop his flaming satchel of pulse-rifle magazines. Hicks grabbed Crowe, and he pulled him away from the burning ammo.

"COME ON!!"

They turned and ran, before they were catapulted forward by the blast, with Crowe striking a pillar head-on.
Kendall and Ripley watched as Crowe's monitor spun and went black. Frost and Dietrich's have turned to static break up. Their bio-readouts go flat-lined.

"Jesus Christ! Apone, what is going on?!"
Gorman shouted, before Hicks appeared on Hudson's P.O.V..

"Weirzbowski and Crowe are down!"
Back in the cocoon chamber, confusion and terror have hit the Marines like brick walls.
"Crowe!..."

"Dietrich...Frost, off the board!"
"...sound off! Frost! Frost!"
Hicks turned over Crowe's dead body, before he turned at the sound of someone yelling off to his side.

"Wierzbowski! Wierzbowski!"
In the APC, Wierzbowski's P.O.V. spun, before it became static.
In the chamber, Vasquez looked over at Drake with a grim satisfaction.

"Let's rooock!!"

They opened up simultaneously. Vasquez moved ferret-quick in a pivoting dance. Thunder and lightning.

"Who's firing, goddamnit?! I ordered a hold fire!"
Gorman's shouting voice echoed through their headsets.
Vasquez and Drake blasted the hive walls with bullets, their bodies were illuminated by strobes of muzzle blasts from the weapons.

"YEAH!"
Gorman stared at the APC monitors in shock, his mental state started to collapse since he didn’t know what to do and his orders were not being met.
"I ordered a hold fire!"

"They're coming out of the goddamn walls!"
Hudson's terrified voice echoed through the speakers.
Back in the chamber, Vasquez and Drake started to lead the other troopers toward the exit tunnel.

"They're coming out of the goddamn walls! Let’s book!"
In the APC, Gorman looked as if he was going to loose it at any moment. He was pale and covered with sweat.

"On your right, man!"
Vasquez's static-like voice echoed through the speakers.

"Apone..."
Gorman tried to get a hold of his team.

"Do iiitttt!!"

"...I want you to lay down suppressing fire with the..."

"...incinerators and fall back by squads to the APC, over."
Gorman's voice echoed through Apone's headset.

"Vasquez! Drake! Hold your fire, goddamnit!"

"Apone...are you copying this? Lay down a suppressing fire with the...incinerators and fall back by squads..."

Apone was spinning in place, as he looked all around him for the unseen enemy and he tried to listen to Gorman.

"...to the APC, over."
Gorman continued.

"Say again! All after incinerator!"

"I said, I want you to lay down a suppressing fire with the incinerators and fall back......by squads to the APC, over."
Gorman repeated.

Apone spun isolated in the dense smoke. He couldn't see anything. Suddenly, his eyes snapped upward to see one of the creatures above. He raised his flamethrower to fire. But, he was not fast enough.
Apone's monitor whited out as his flamethrower fired, then spun crazily. Sounds of a vicious struggle...then rolling static.

"Eeeaaahhh! Sarge! Sarge!"

"Apone?"
"Sarge!"

"Talk to me?"
Gorman's voice was growing weaker and weaker.

"He's dead, man!"

"Top! You copy!

"Ah, man! He's gone!"

"Apone...talk to ME!"

"He's gone!"
Ripley shouted at Gorman, but he seemed lost.

Kendall and Masey looked at the monitors, and they glanced all around at the surviving Marines. Each of them showed different P.O.V.'s of the surrounding battle.

"GET THEM OUT OF THERE!"
Kendall and Ripley shouted.

"Shut up!"

"DO IT NOW!"

"SHUT UP!"
Kendall grabbed a headset from the counter and yelled into it.

"Hicks! Who's ever left, get the hell out of..."
But before she could finish Gorman ripped the headset out of her hand.

"Just shut up!"

"God Damn it!!"

Through the monitor's they could see the soldiers' run around and yell into each other's helmet cameras.

"Where's Apone?! Where's Apone?!!"

"The sarge is gone! Let's get the fuck out of here!"

"Hudson! Move it! Let's go, Marines!"

"Let's move it, Vas! Let's move it!"

"Hudson? Vasquez?"
Gorman asked, seeing that no one was following his orders anymore.

"Hudson! Look out!"

"Get it!"

They saw Hicks come up and blow away one of the creatures with his twelve-gauge on the monitor.
"Hudson!"

"Hi-Hicks..."
Gorman was struggling to gain control.

"Move it! Fall back! Fall back!"
Gorman was ashen. Confused. He gulped for air like a grouper. How could the situation have unraveled so fast?

"I told them to fall back.

"Fall back, goddamn it, now!"

"Come on! Move it! Move it!"

The voices of Hicks and Vasquez went from somewhat clear to nothing but static.

"I told them to fall back."
Gorman's voice was growing softer, and it was shaking as well.

"They're cut off! Do something!"
Ripley, Kendall, and even Masey shouted, but it was completely useless.

Gorman was gone. Gone into total brain lock.

"Let's go, Marines! Let's move it!"
Hicks' voice still filtered through, still filled with static break-up.

Kendall and Masey glanced over at Ripley, as she struggled with a decision. She's terrified...of what she knows she's about to do. But, more than that, she's furious. She shouldered past a paralyzed Gorman and a stunned Burke, she ran up the aisle of the APC.

"Come on! Keep moving, baby!"
The sounds of the Marine's continued to filter through the speakers of the APC. They sounded a bit frightened, and their voices were nervous, and almost pleading.

Ripley came up to Newt, who was seated in one of the soldiers' seats, and locked the harness down over her.

"Hold on, Newt."
Knowing what her mother was doing, Kendall glanced over at Masey, and she gestured for her to go sit with Newt, while Ripley jumped into the driver's seat of the APC. As she took a deep breath, she started slapping switches. Gorman suddenly came back to his senses upon hearing the APC start up.

"Ripley, what the hell are you doing?!
He exclaimed, but it was too late.

Ripley slammed the tractor into gear.
As the drive-wheels spun on the wet ground, the massive machine leaped forward, as it moved down the narrow corridor.
Gorman lunged into the driver's cabin and grabbed the steering controls, which caused Ripley to loose control of the vehicle momentarily.

"Turn around!"
The temporary loss of control scraped the APC along the corridor's wall. Sparks flew. Gorman was trying his best to stop Ripley from going any further.

"That's an order!"

Newt pushed up the seat's harness and moved into Masey's lap. This was a common occurrence, so Masey wrapped her arms around the girl, holding her closely to her.

"Turn this thing around!"

"Get off me, damnit!"

"Goddamnit! That's an order!"

Burke and Kendall rushed up and together they pulled him off Ripley and placed him in co-pilot seat.

"You had your chance, Gorman!"

Burke shouted, before he glanced at Ripley. Ripley came to a descending rampway and slammed the left and right drive-wheel actuators viciously, which spun the machine in a roaring pivot. The APC hit the corridor's wall sideways and then kept on moving.

Hicks, who was supporting a limping Hudson, appeared from a smoky corridor. Drake and Vasquez brought up the rear, as they took out the closing creatures with accuracy.

"Come on!"

"Come on, Drake!"

The APC roared down into the smoky structure, and it emerged from a cloud of smoke that covered the corridor.

As the smoke from the cloud cleared, Ripley looked out and she saw a wall of alien-encrustation directly in path of the vehicle. Everyone in the driver's cabin braced for impact. The APC smashed through the wall, and showered debris everywhere. Another wall was broken as the APC continued to move forward into the chamber beyond. As the APC came to a halt, alien debris was scattered all around the vehicle.

Meanwhile, in the escape corridor, Drake and Vasquez were opening up on the creatures. They seem to have appeared from every nook and cranny in the chamber.

"Come on! Let's move it!"

Hicks threw over his shoulder to Drake and Vasquez.

"Come on! Let's go! Let's go!"

Vasquez shouted to Drake, her eyes not once leaving the chamber. Hicks and Hudson appeared in front of the APC. The debris around the APC blocked their way for a straight-away shot to the crew-door.

"It's blocked, man! We've gotta go around!"

Both Kendall and Ripley saw Hicks and Hudson out of the APC's front windows. Burke was right next to them.

"Open the door!"

"Drake! We are leaving!"
"Give some, Vas! Run for it! Shit!
Drake went empty, he slapped the buckles, which cut loose his smart-gun harness, and unslung a flamethrower he had picked up.

"Open the door!"
She heard Ripley shout from the front of the APC, and along with Burke, Kendall made her way to the door, and as soon as she and Burke pulled the door open, both Hicks and Hudson tumbled inside the APC.

Kendall-Rae managed to narrowly avoid getting knocked over by Hicks. Hicks carried Hudson inside quickly, and he dropped him down on some ammo boxes. Seeing Hicks and Hudson, Masey gently set Newt down on the seat, and she made her way over to him. Without much hesitation, she gingerly wrapped her arms around him. His arms hovered above her small frame for a moment, before he slowly returned the embrace.

"Let's go! Let's go!"
She popped her head out of the door for a few seconds to call to Drake, and Vasquez, who were a bit farther behind, frying the chamber with their flamethrowers.

"Come on! We're leaving!"
She shouted, before she turned her head for a second.

Which. Was a terrible idea. She felt something sharp pierce her side, and she felt herself stop, her breath hitched in her throat. She glanced down at her side, and she saw the black, spear-headed end of a tail embedded into her side. Before she could cry out, she was literally pulled from the APC, and she landed on her back. Hard. She groaned, as she sat up, and she put her hand to her side, to try and keep the crimson blood from flowing from out of her side. Hearing the heavy footsteps of a Xenomorph growing close, she tried to scramble away, but she did not get far, before her back hit a wall of rubble.

She let out a scream, as the Xenomorph's striking teeth extended almost a meter from inside its fanged maw, and it tried to strike her. Before it could do anything more, it was engulfed in flames. It let out a curdling shriek, as it moved away from her. When it was a good distance away, several shots ran out until the aflame, and shrieking Xenomorph exploded, its acidic blood flying. Instinctively, she brought her hands up, to cover her face, but the acid fell short. Hearing someone shout for her, she glanced up to see Hicks, and Hudson at the door, their pulse rifles ready to fire. She tried to stand, but the pain in her side kept her from being able to move.

She felt her eyes close over, as she half-expected them to leave. Instead to her own disbelief, Hicks and Hudson had both gotten out of the APC, and they each wrapped an arm around her mid-section, and they both half-carried, half-dragged her back to the APC. Once inside, they dropped her. Well. Hudson dropped her, Hicks kept her upright, until he set her down in one of the corners.

"Drake, come on, man! We're going!"

Hicks pulled Vasquez inside, massive gear and all. Drake was right behind her, as he continued to fry the chamber with his flamethrower.

"Drake, come on!"

A dark shape rose next to him. Vasquez noticed it first and fired 10 bursts, prone. Clean body hits. The flashes lit up the inhuman grin, as it blew open the thing's body. A spray of bright, yellow acid slashed across Drake's face and chest, as it ate into him like a hot knife through butter. He yelled, as
he dropped in boiling smoke, which reflexively triggered his flamethrower.

"Nooooooooooooo!"

The jet of liquid fire arced around as he fell, which engulfed the back half of the APC.

Vasquez rolled aside as a gout of napalm shot through the crew-door, which set the interior on fire.

"Fire in the hold!"

Burke grabbed a fire extinguisher and quickly began spraying the contents on the fire. Hudson handed Gorman one as well while everyone moved around to get out of the way.

"He's gone!"

"No! Drake’s out there!"

"Put it out! Put it out! Put it out! Go! Go! Go!"

Hicks was rolling the door closed when Vasquez lunged, clawing out the opening. He stopped her, as he dragged her inside.

"Christotatmen! Drake!"

"He's gone!"

"No...he's not!"

Hicks snapped off her armor and gun, slammed her against the door and yelled in her face.

"Forget 'em! He's gone!"

Ripley worked the reverse gears. Hicks managed to get the door almost closed when, suddenly, claws appeared at the edge. The door is being slowly wrenched open from the outside. Hicks yelled at a paralyzed Gorman.

"Get on the goddamn door!"

Vasquez, Hudson, Masey, and despite her pain, Kendall moved up and help close the door, while Hicks reached down and grabbed his twelve-gauge from the floor. An alien head wedged through the opening, it's hideous mouth started to open. Hicks jammed his shotgun muzzle between it's jaws.

"Eat this!"

He pulled the trigger, and the back of the creature's head exploded, which sprayed acid blood. The spray ate into the door, the deck, and some hit Hudson on the arm, to which he yelled in pain. Hicks, Kendall, Masey and Vasquez slid the door home and dogged it tight.

"Ripley! Go, go, go!"

The armored vehicle roared backward, as it pulled out of the wreckage around and behind it. Ripley worked the shifters. The APC squealed forward, up the access ramp it had come down earlier.

The soldiers inside grabbed for hand-holds as they were buffeted around. The shock of the sudden forward acceleration tore loose a storage rack, which sent some heavy ammo cases down on Gorman, which knocked him unconscious. Ripley jammed the actuators hard, which turned the APC
quickly to the right into the main access corridor. On to the front of the APC, there was a huge dent that was visible on the front right bumper and the rear left side of the machine was still on fire. Ripley heard a thud on the APC. As she looked out the small windshield, an alien arm suddenly arced down, right in front of her face. It smashed the window. Glistening, hideous jaws lunged partially inside. Ripley recoiled. Face to face once again with the same mind-numbing horror. She reacted instinctively as she slammed down on both sets of brakes with all her strength. The huge wheels locked.

The creature flipped off, and it landed in the headlights. Ripley hit full throttle, and the APC roared forward, as it crushed the skeletal body under the right massive wheel. The machine powered ahead and smashed through the Atmosphere Station's Main Access Door, and it thundered out into the open landscape and away from the station. A sound like bolts dropped in a meat grinder was coming from the APC's rear end. Hicks moved up and eased Ripley's hand back on the throttle lever. Her grip was white knuckled.

"It's alright...we're clear! Ripley, you've blown the transaxle! You're just grinding metal! Come on, ease down! Ease down! Ease down. Ease down."

Chapter End Notes

Please leave comments!
"I say we take off and nuke the site from orbit. It's the only way to be sure."

The personnel carrier limped to a halt, a smoking acid-scarred mass...A half-kilometer from the station.
Ripley, still running on the adrenaline dynamo, spun out of her seat into the aisle, as she looked all around. She spotted Newt, wedged into a tiny space between the driver's seat and a bulkhead. She was coughing, and looked scared, but it was not the basket case catatonia of before. Ripley knelt down, she looked the girl over.

"You okay?"

Newt gave her a thumbs-up, wan but stoic. Ripley went back to the others. Hudson held his arm and staring in stunned dismay at nothing, playing it all back in his mind. Burke tried to have a look at his arm, but Hudson jerked away. But, when Masey went over to inspect his wound, he hesitated, before he slowly moved his hand away to let her inspect it.

"Lieutenant?"

Ripley joined Hicks, who was bent over an unconscious Gorman, as he checked for a pulse. Gorman had a nasty forehead gash.

"What happened to Gorman?"

"I don't know. Maybe a concussion. But, he's alive."

"No man, he's dead!"

She grabbed Gorman by the collar, as she hauled him up roughly, ready to pulp him with her elbow.

"Wake up, pendejo man, I'm gonna' kill you!"

Hicks put his arm in the way, right before Vasquez hit Gorman in the face.

"Back off! Right now!"

She released Gorman and moved off to another spot.

"Someone get me a first aid kit."

"Hey...hey, look! The sarge and Dietrich aren't dead, man. Their signs are real low, but they ain't dead."

They turned to see Hudson at the MTOB monitors, as they looked at the bio-function screens.

"Well, we go back in there and get them."

"Fuck that!"

"We don't leave our people behind. Besides..."

"I ain't going back in there, man! You can't make me!"
Hudson was pale, his voice was full of panic, and it was shaking.

"You can't help them...you can't. Right now, they're being cocooned just like the others."

"Oh, dear lord, Jesus. This ain't happening, man. This can't be happening, man. This ain't happening!"

Hudson was starting to freak out.

Ripley glanced around the hold, and that was when she noticed that she could not see Kendall.

"Where's Rae?"

The Marines glanced around the hold. She was nowhere to be seen. Hicks glanced down at the door, and there she was. Her face losing its color, and her hand was tightly pressed to her side.

"Shit..."

He mumbled, as he brushed past Vasquez, and he knelt down in front of her.

His eyes flickered to her side, where her hand was tightly pressed. He went to move her hand, but when he managed to move her hand about a few millimeters away, she went to pull her hand out of his grasp, but he grasped her bloody hand, and he lifted it higher to get a better look at the deep, and extremely bloody wound that was embedded into her side. He went to turn around to ask for some bandages and some water, but Ripley and Masey had already beat him to it. Ripley held the bandages, and Masey had a small jug of water. Gingerly, helping Kendall-Rae to her feet, Hicks sat her down on one of the soldier's seats, and he started to cut away at the leather jacket that was around her wound. Feeling the cold steel gently brush against her wound, she jumped, and she grasped the closest thing to her hand, to keep herself slightly calm. It was only a few minutes before she felt something squeeze back, and that was when she realized that she had grabbed his hand.

"Sorry..."

She murmured, as she slowly retracted her hand.

"Easy soldier." He murmured, as he continued to try and cut away at the jacket, but whenever the cold steel brushed her wound, she would jump.

"This would go by a lot faster, if you sat still."

He jibed at her, to which she rolled her eyes.

"You know, when you get stabbed by one of those bastards, sitting still is easier said than done."

She mumbled.

A few minutes later, after her wound was cleaned, and bandaged, she was still seated on the soldier's seat, with Hicks' arm draped around her shoulders, as they glanced at Vasquez, who was wired and intense.

"Alright. We got seven canisters of CN-20. I say we roll them in there and nerve gas the whole fucking nest."

"That's worth a try. But, we don't even know if it's gonna' affect them."

"Look, let's just bug out and call it even, okay? What are we talking about this for?"

"I say we take off and nuke the entire site from orbit."

Both Ripley and Kendall interjected, and the Marines glanced at the both of them.

"It's the only way to be sure."
They both added.

"Fuck'n A!"

"Whoa! Ho, ho, hold on one second. This installation has a substantial dollar value attached to it..."

After all of that, why the hell was Burke trying to save the stupid atmosphere processor?

"They can bill me."

"Okay...look. This is an emotional moment for all of us, okay? I know that. But, let's not make snap judgments, please. This is clearly...clearly, an important species we're dealing with and I don't think that you or I or anybody has the right to arbitrarily exterminate them..."

"Wrong."

"Yeah. Watch us."

"Hey, maybe you haven't been keeping up on current events, but we just got our asses kicked, pal!"

Hudson said, bitterly, and Kendall had to admit, for once, Hudson had said something relevant to their situation.

That basically explained their current situation.

"Look, I'm not blind to what's going on. But, I can't authorize that kind of action. I'm sorry."

"Well, I believe Corporal Hicks...has authority here."

"Corporal Hicks?"

"This operation is under military jurisdiction and Hicks is next in chain of command. Am I right, Corporal?"

Ripley asked, as she glanced at Hicks and Kendall, who had turned her head up to look at him.

Seeing that all of the attention was on him now, Hicks looked everywhere else, but at the others.

"Yeah...yeah, that's right."

Burke started to loose it and it's not a pretty sight.

"Yeah. Look, Ripley?"

"Yes?"

"This is a multi-million dollar installation, okay? He can't make that kind of decision. He's just a grunt!"

Burke started, before he glanced at Hicks.

"No offense."

"None taken. Ferro, do you copy?"

"Standing by."

"Prep for dust-off. We're gonna' need an immediate evac."

"Roger. On our way."
"I say we take off and nuke the site from orbit. It's the only way to be sure."
He glanced over at Ripley, and down at Kendall. They both smiled, slightly.

"Let's do it."

Chapter End Notes

Comments please!
The group filed out of the personnel carrier, which was clearly a write-off. Hicks and Hudson have Gorman between them on a stretcher. The others followed behind.

"Let's go! Pick it up, Hudson. Pick it up, baby. Alright! We'll set him down here."
Hicks ordered, as they set Gorman down on the ground, before he lit a flare, and he threw it to an area visible from the air.

Kendall gingerly moved over to stand with Hicks, and she felt herself stumble slightly, as she caught his arm, keeping herself upright. Instinctively, he caught her arm, keeping her upright.
Ferro was seated in the cockpit, as she prepared for lift-off. She called to Spunkmeyer over her headset.

"Move it, Spunkmeyer. We're rollin'."
Spunkmeyer ran up the cargo ramp into the ship. As he hauled himself up into the drop-ship's hold, he noticed that his hand was in some sticky substance that shouldn't be there. He looked all around the hold, but he didn't notice anything unusual.

"Hold on a second. There's something..."
"Just get up here!" Ferro exclaimed through his headset.

"I'm in. Ramp closing."
The ship rose through the spray thrown up by the down blast of the VTOL jets, as it hovered above the complex like a huge insect. It's searchlights blazed.
Hicks threw a few more flares around the site as the group watched the drop-ship roared in on it's final approach.
Back in the cockpit, Ferro realized that she had not heard anything from Spunkmeyer.

"Spunkmeyer?"
She asked, as she tapped her headset mike.

"Goddammit."
As if on cue, the compartment door behind her slid slowly open.

Hearing the door, Ferro turned around.
"Well, where the fu..."

An alien stood before her, it's drooling jaws had opened with a hiss. Ferro quickly went for her sidearm. But, the alien lunged forward. A whirl of motion took place, Ferro clawed at the bloody window as the life slipped from her. The throttle levers were slammed forward in the melee.

Back on the ground, the survivors watched in dismay as the approaching ship dropped and veered wildly. It's main engines roared full on and the craft accelerated toward them even as it lost altitude. It skimmed the ground, hitting a ridge. It tumbled, as it burst into flame, as it started to break up. It arced into the air, end over end, a Catherine wheel juggernaut.

"RUN!!"

Ripley grabbed Newt and sprinted for cover as the tumbling ship rolled by, skipping off the ground
like a stone, engulfed in flames. Kendall and Masey dove behind a strange piece of landscape, and they flattened themselves against it, as the ship roared passed the survivors and crashed into the station.

The fireball exploded, as it threw flaming pieces of the craft in all directions. The remainder of the ground team watched their hopes of getting off the planet, and most of their superior fire power, reduced to flaming debris. Hicks got up and looked around. He saw one of the smoking debris lying on top of the unconscious Gorman and quickly yanked it off him, before he glanced at the rest of the survivors. He looked at Kendall, and he went over to her, and he helped her stand up.

"You alright?"
He asked, as he checked her over, for any cuts.

Kendall waved off his concern, and she gave him a weak smile.

"I'm fine."
She said, before she felt some warm blood trickle down her cheek, from a small gash.

She watched as his hand came up, and his thumb brushed against the gash on her cheek. She smiled, almost embarrassed, before she patted his chest armor, and she watched as Hudson picked up another piece of the wreckage as he stood up.

"Well, that's great! That's just fucking great, man! Now what the fuck are we supposed to do?! We're in some real pretty shit now, man!"

Hudson cried, hysterically.

Hicks walked over to Hudson, and he grabbed him by his chest armor, getting his attention.

"Are you finished?!"
Hicks snapped, before he turned to Ripley, and Newt.

"You alright?" He asked.

She nodded. She couldn't disguise her stricken expression when she looked at Newt, but the little girl seemed relatively calm.

"How's Rae?"
Ripley asked, as she caught a small glimpse of her, before the explosion.

"She's fine. A little shaken up, maybe, but besides that, she's fine."
Hicks answered, and Ripley nodded, before she turned to Newt.

"I guess we're not going to be leaving, now. Right?"
Newt asked, quietly.

"I'm sorry, Newt."
Ripley apologized to the small girl.

"You don't have to be sorry. It wasn't your fault."
Newt said, kindly, despite their situation.

"That's it, man! Game over, man! Game over! What the fuck are we gonna' do now?! What we going to do?!"
Hudson was still being hysterical, as he kicked some rocks around.
"Maybe we could build a fire and sing a couple of songs, huh? Why don't we try that?"
Burke asked, sarcasm filling his voice, and Kendall bit back the urge to slap him.

"We should get back, 'cause it'll be dark soon and they mostly come at night. Mostly."
Newt said, almost dreamily, and Ripley followed Newt's gaze to the AP station looming in the twilight, the burning drop-ship wreckage jammed into it's basal structure.
Making a Game Plan.

The wind howled mournfully around the metal buildings, dry and cold. One of soldiers raised the storm windows.

In operations, the weary and demoralized group were gathered to take stock of their grim options. Vasquez and Hudson brought in a box of equipment and placed it on a table.

"That's everything, right?"
Hicks asked, as he took in what few options they had.

"Yeah."
Hudson said, and it was only then did he realize how little they were able to salvage.

Hicks began to go over all the equipment on the table. Telling everyone what was there.

"All right! This is absolutely everything that we could salvage out of the APC wreckage. We've got four pulse-rifles, with about fifty rounds each. That ain't so good. You got...uh, fifteen of these M-40 grenades.

Hicks set the grenade down on the table. Newt reached over to pick it up, but Hicks stopped her.

"Don't touch that. Dangerous, honey."

Kendall felt herself smile, as she watched Hicks and Newt interact. He had the fatherly-protectiveness over her. She found it extremely adorable. She stood beside Hicks, but she moved to stand behind Newt, and she rested a hand on her shoulder.

"Is that the only flame thrower?"
Masey asked, and Kendall turned her head to face her.

She was standing beside Hudson, who looked very nervous and high-strung.

"Yeah. It's only half full, but it's functional..."

Hearing a small sound, Kendall glanced down, just as Newt picked up one of the soldiers' helmet's and put it on. Her head disappeared into it. She looked adorable. She bit back a smile, as she gently poked the small girl's nose, which made Newt smile, softly.

"...and another one's damaged. I don't know about that one. But, the good news. We've got four of these robot-sentries...with display and scanners intact. They really kickass. I think they'll come in handy.

"How long after we're declared overdue can we expect a rescue?"
Ripley asked. It was clear that this was what everyone was thinking about.

Kendall turned to look at Hicks, as he looked over at Vasquez, who gazed back with a look at loss, but underlying strength as she held her weapon.

"Seventeen days."
Hicks answered, grimly, without looking at any of the survivors.

"Seventeen days? Hey, man...I don't want to rain on your parade. But, we're not going to last seventeen hours! Those things are going to come in here, just like they did before, and they're going
"Hudson!"
Ripley tried to get his attention, but Hudson was being too hysterical.

"...and they're going to come in here and there going to kill us!"

"Hudson! These two girls survived longer than that with no weapons and no training. Right?"
Ripley indicated to Newt and Masey.

Masey gave him a half smile, while Newt saluted Hudson, smartly.

"What?! You put her in charge?!"

"You better just start dealing with it, Hudson. Hudson, just deal with it, because we need you and I'm sick of your bullshit. Now, I want you to get on a terminal and call up some kind of floor plan file, do you understand?"
Ripley asked, harshly at first, before her tone softened.

"Yeah."

"Construction blueprints, I don't care, anything that shows the layout of this place, are you listening?"
Ripley continued to give him instruction.

"Yeah."

"I need to see air ducts. I need to see electrical access tunnels, sub-basements. Every possible way into this complex. We don't have much time."

Hudson gathered himself, thankful for the direction.

"Okay...okay, I'm on it."

"Hudson! Just relax."
Ripley said, calmly.

Hudson exhaled loudly to prepare himself and left the group. Bishop moved up to the table.

"I'll be in Med-Lab. Check on Gorman, continue my analysis."
Bishop said, quietly.

"Fine. You do that."
Ripley said, as she watched him leave. She glanced at Kendall, and she sighed. Both of them were still unnerved by his presence.

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The giant metal volcano rumbled away, unaware of the happenings of both inside and outside itself.

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In operations, Burke, Ripley, Hicks, Kendall, Hudson, Masey and Vasquez were all bent over a large horizontal video screen, like an illumination chart table. Meanwhile, behind them, Newt hopped from one foot to the other to see.

"So, this service tunnel must be how they're moving back and forth." Ripley said, as she traced one of her fingers down a tunnel on the map.
"That's right. It moves from the processing station right into the sub-level here. Come down on that. Okay, come over. Hold it. Go back. Punch that in right there."

He touched a spot on the screen. Newt moved up in between Hicks, and Kendall. Hicks picked her up, and he seated her on the corner of the table. Feeling something brush her arm, Kendall glanced over to see Newt and Hicks, and she felt herself smile even more. The bond that the two of them had, was so sweet. Kenny wrapped one of her arms around the small girl, and she held her close. Hicks watched closely as the blueprint was moved around.

"No. It's back."

"Well, there's a pressure door at this end. Couldn't we put a remote sentry unit in the tunnel and then seal that door?"
Kendall asked, as she lightly drew a small circle on the floor plan

"Yeah. That'll work. But, we gotta' figure on them getting into the complex."
Hicks said.

"That's right. So, we repair the barricades at these intersections..."
Ripley added.

"Right."

"...and weld plate-steel over these ducts here and here and...here. That way, they can only come at us from these two corridors."
Kendall interjected, knowing where her mother was going with this.

"Alright, then we put the other sentry units here and here. Right?"

"Right."
Both Ripley and Kendall said together.

Hicks contemplated their game plan and he glanced at the both of them.

"Outstanding. Then, all we need is a deck of cards."
He straightened up, satisfied.
"All right, people, let's move like we've got a purpose."

"Aye-firmative."
Hudson said, as he turned away from the table.

"Aye-firmative."
Newt imitated Hudson, as Hicks gently lifted her down from the table.
In the tactical section of operations, through the monitors, it showed Hudson, Vasquez, and Masey as they set up one of the sentry units.

Kendall walked over to the small area, with two cups of coffee. She pulled up a chair, and she glanced at Hicks. He looked, tired...tense...worn...almost defeated. She glanced at his hands, as he set up the keyboard displays for the four sentry units. His hands were clenching and unclenching, as he opened them, and he typed in some commands. Without thinking, Kendall placed one of her hands over his clenched hands, and she watched as his hand hesitated, before it slowly unclenched. She gave his hand a small, and gentle squeeze, before she handed him one of the cups of coffee.

"You look like you need this."
She said, as he took the cup from her, downed it, before sighing, before he went back to his work.

As he typed, Kendall glanced at the display, and she watched as the screen's commands were highlighted. He set the units to 'Search' and 'Auto.'

Meanwhile, in a long straight service tunnel, it was lined with conduit, that seemed to go on forever. Vasquez, Masey and Hudson had finished setting up two of the robot sentry guns on tripods in the tunnel. Straightening up, Masey glanced down the service tunnel, and she seemed distant.

"Masey...you alright?"
She heard Kendall ask through the headset that they had found for her.

"Hm? Oh. It's so strange. I remember when I was younger, this service tunnel was the place where all of us could play. Now, it's just so desolate..."

She was cut-off in mid-sentence, when they finished with the robot sentry guns.

"Do your thing, baby. Come on, come on, Vasquez. Let's get the hell out of here."
Hudson exclaimed to Vasquez, before he started to talk into the headset.
"Hudson here. A and B sentries are in place and keyed."

"Right."

Back in Operations, in the tactical area, Hicks set the units to 'Armed.'

"Stand-by. Arming now. Test it, Hudson."

"Do it!" Hudson shouted to Vasquez.

"Fire in the hold!"

Both Vasquez and Masey hurled a wastebasket down the tunnel, into the automatic field of fire. The sentry guns swiveled smoothly, the wastebasket bounced once...and was riddled by two quick bursts.

"Okay! Let's get the hell out of here!"
All three of them retreated behind a heavy steel fire door, which took all three of them to slide down closed on it's tracks.

"We're sealing the tunnel. Come on, baby."
In the second level corridor, Burke, Ripley and Newt were moving back and forth with cartons of food on a hand truck and in their arms, as they stacked it inside the operations center. Behind them, Hicks and Kenny were covering an air duct opening with a metal plate, welding it in place, which showered sparks in the semi-dark corridor. Hicks set down his welder and hit the plate.

"For what it's worth. Here, I want you to put this on." He removed what looked like a wristwatch from his arm. It was a standard issue locating beeper. He fastened it around her small wrist, and Rae glanced down at it.

"What's it for?" She asked, as she inspected it.

"It's a locator. Then I can find you anywhere in the complex on this..." He indicated to a tiny locator that was hooked to his battle harness.

"It's just a precaution. After that scare in the atmosphere station, we've got to keep tabs on you."

Kendall-Rae paused for a moment, as she regarded him quizzically.

"Thanks. Both times. I never really got to thank you for coming after me. I thought you guys were going to take off. I wasn't much use out there to you." She said, quietly.

"Well. I don't think that any of us wanted to deal with Ripley if we left you out there. Besides, we all need you out here."

"What about you? What do you need me here for?"

"I need someone to patch me up every now and then."

Hicks answered, as he held up his still bandaged hand, from when Newt had bitten him.

"Smart-ass..." She mumbled.

"I've been told that I am capable of being a smart-ass..."

"Like I've been told that I am capable of smiling..."

"Exactly."

Kendall felt a small smile grace her lips.

"Thanks. Again..."

"Doesn't mean we're engaged or anything." Hicks said, and Kendall's small smile, grew in height, before she looked down at the locator.

"Shame. That would have been something, wouldn't it?"

She teased.

Hicks gently rolled his eyes.

"Now, what's next?"

Taking out a folded printout of the floor plan from her back pocket, both Hicks and Kendall consulted it.
"My mommy always said there were no monsters. No real ones. But, there are."

In the control block, the wind had utterly died and in the eerie stillness, a diffuse mist had rolled in to shroud the complex. Everything looked like it's underwater. There was no movement.

In the barricaded corridor, sentry guns 'C' and 'D' sat in wait, as they swiveled on their tripods, their 'ARMED' lights flashed green.

In the med-lab annex, in the surgery area of the med-lab, Ripley carried an exhausted Newt through the inner connecting rooms of the medical wing. She reached an operating room, which was small but very high-tech...vault-like metal walls, strange equipment. A cot had been set up, which displaced operating room equipment, which was pushed into one corner. Newt had her head rested on Ripley's shoulder, barely awake...out of steam.

"Last stop. Get in."
Ripley said, gently, as she gingerly set her down on the cot's edge and Newt scooted under the covers. Ripley sat down beside her.

"Scoot down. That's good. Now, you lie here and have a nap. You're very tired."
Ripley said, quietly.

"I don't want to...I have scary dreams."
Newt explained, quietly.

This obviously struck a chord with Ripley, but she feigned cheerfulness.

"Well, I bet Casey doesn't have bad dreams. Let's take a look."
She lifted the doll's head from Newt's tiny fingers and looked inside. It was, of course, empty.

"Nope. Nothing bad in there. See. Maybe you could just try to be like her."
Ripley said, as she tried to convince this small girl.

Newt rolled her eyes as if to say 'Don't pull that six-year-old shit on me, lady. I'm seven.'

"Ripley,...she doesn't have bad dreams because she's just a piece of plastic."
Newt said, calmly.

"Right."
Ripley laughed, softly, before it died down.
"I'm sorry, Newt."

Ripley turned, as she reached for a portable space heater that sat nearby, and slid it closer to the bed. She switched it on. It hummed and emitted a cozy orange glow.

"There."

"My mommy always said there were no monsters. No real ones. But, there are."
Ripley's expression became sober. She brushed damp hair back from the child's pale forehead.

"Yes, there are, aren't there?"
"Why do they tell little kids that?"
Newt's small voice revealed her deep sense of betrayal.

"Most of the time, it's true."

"Did one of those things grow inside her?"
Newt asked, quietly.

"I don't know, Newt. That's the truth."
Ripley answered, even though she thought that it was more than likely to be true.

"Isn't that how babies come? I mean, people babies...they grow inside you?"
Newt asked, innocently.

"No, it's very different."

"Did you ever have a baby?"

"Yes, I did. I had two little girls..."
Ripley answered, with a small smile.

"Where are they?"

"One of them is here. Can you guess which one?"

"Rae?"
Newt asked, quietly, and Ripley nodded.

"That's right."

"What about the other one?"

"She's gone."
Ripley seemed distant when she answered the question.

"You mean dead."
It was more of a statement than a question.

Ripley nodded, as she switched off the light by the bed and started to rise. Newt grabbed her arm. A plaintive voice in the dark.

"Don't go! Please."
Newt pleaded.

"Newt. I'll be right in the next room. And, see that camera right up there?"

Newt looked at the video security camera that was mounted above the door. It swiveled on its mount as it scanned the room.

"I can see you right through that camera, all the time, to see if you're safe. I'm not going to leave you, Newt. I mean it. That's a promise. I'll come by and check on you in a little while. If I don't come, then Rae will, alright? That's a promise"

"You promise?"

"I cross my heart.
"And hope to die?"

Ripley flinched slightly at the innocently grim expression.

"And hope to die."

Newt grabbed her in a desperate hug and Ripley returned it slowly, a bit overwhelmed at first, then with fierce emotion. The child's need was so vast, Ripley prayed she had made a promise she can keep. With a kiss on the cheek, Newt let go and laid back down.

"Now go to sleep...and don't dream."

Newt pointed at Ripley's shirt. Ripley looked down and Newt playfully flicked Ripley's nose, which elicited a laugh from Ripley.

"Sneak."
"Who's laying these eggs?"

Ripley stood over Lieutenant Gorman, was lay motionless on a gurney, his head bandaged. Bishop was behind her. Hudson, Masey and Vasquez were nearby, both Hudson and Vasquez had their weapons cradled.

"The molecular acid oxidizes after the creature stops, completely neutralizing it."

"Bishop...do you know that's very interesting. But, that doesn't really get us anywhere, does it? We're trying to figure out what we're dealing with here. Let's go through it again. They grabbed the colonists, they move them over there, and immobilized them to be hosts for more of these..."

Ripley looked at the stasis cylinders, that contained the FaceHugger specimens.

"Which would mean there would have to be a lot of these parasites, right? One for each colonist...that's over a hundred at least."

Ripley continued.

"Yes. That follows."

"Each one of these things comes from an egg, right? So, who's laying these eggs?"

Ripley asked, as she turned to face Bishop.

"I'm not sure. It must be something we haven't seen yet."

"Hey, maybe it's like an ant hive."

"Bees, man. Bees have hives."

"You know what I mean. There's like...one female that runs the whole show."

"Yes, the Queen."

"Yeah, the momma. She's badass, man. I mean, big!"

"These things ain't ants, Hudson."

Masey said, as she glanced at Hudson.

"I know that."

"Bishop, I want these specimens destroyed as soon as you're finished with them. Is that clear?"

Bishop glanced at the creatures, that pulsed malevolently in their cylinders.

"Mr. Burke gave instructions that they were to be kept alive in stasis for return to the company labs. He was very specific about it."

Bishop answered.

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Back in operations, Kendall had her head on Hicks' shoulder, as she tried not to fall asleep.

"You should get some sleep. You look like you need it."

Without even turning to look at him, Kendall replied, without hesitation.

"Your bulky combat armor is not helping my situation in the slightest..."

She murmured, before she glanced at him.
"If anyone needs any sleep around here, it's you. You have bags under your eyes."

"I would never be able to sleep here. Not with those things crawling around."

"What makes you think that I would be able to sleep here?"

"You have people to protect you."

"So do you."

"Yeah, but I would protect you."

Kendall smiled, sleepily, and before she knew it, she was pulled into Hicks' lap, and she rested her cheek on his shoulder, to that her forehead was lightly touching his neck.

"Any better?"

"A lot. Thanks"
She said, as she pressed a kiss to his jaw-line, before she closed her eyes, and fell asleep.

Hicks glanced down at the sleeping Lieutenant, and he pressed a small kiss to her forehead, before he glanced back at the monitors, his arms slightly tightening around her small frame.
Meanwhile, in a small observation chamber, separated from the Med-Lab by a glass partition, Ripley and Burke have squared off.

"Look, those two specimens are worth millions to the bio-weapons division, right? Now, if you're smart...we can both come out of this heroes and we will be set up for life."

"You're crazy, Burke, do you know that? Do you really think you can get a dangerous organism like that past ICC quarantine?"
Ripley retorted, in a heartbeat.

"How can they impound it if they don't know about it?"
Burke asked, as he crossed his arms across his chests.

"But they will know about it, Burke. From me. Just like they'll know that you were responsible for the deaths of one hundred and fifty-seven colonists here..."
Ripley replied, smartly.

"Wait a second..." Burke started to say.

"You sent them to that ship."
Ripley interrupted.

"You're wrong."

"I just checked the colony log...directive dated six-twelve-seventy-nine. Signed Burke, Carter J."
Ripley's fury was peaking, now that the frustration and rage finally had a target to focus on.

"You sent them out there and you didn't even warn them. Why didn't you warn them, Burke?"
Ripley continued, her fury not dying down once.

"Okay, look. What if that ship didn't even exist. Did you ever think about that. I didn't know. So now, if I went and made a major security situation out of it, everybody steps in. Administration steps in and there's no exclusive rights for anybody. Nobody wins. So, I made a decision and it was...wrong. It was a bad call, Ripley. It was a bad call."
Burke said, almost a bit too calmly.

"Bad call?!"
Ripley exclaimed, angrily.

"Right."
Ripley snapped. She grabbed his collar and slammed him against the wall, which surprised herself and him.

"These people are dead, Burke! Don't you have any idea what you have done here?! Well, I'm going to make sure that they nail you right to the wall for this! You're not going to sleaze your way out of
“this one! Right to the wall!” Ripley snapped, anger building, as she released him, and she looked at him with utter loathing, as if the depths of human greed were far more horrific revelation than any alien.

She turned away and began to leave.

"Ripley, I...you know, I expected more of you. I thought...you would be smarter than this." Burke commented.

"I’m happy to disappoint you."
She said, simply, before she strode out. Burke stared after her, his mind a whirl of options.

Chapter End Notes

Don't forget to leave comments and kudos.
Meeting Masey Meyer.

Chapter Summary

Character Profile for my new OC.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Name: Masey Avril Demitra Meyer.
Preferred Name: Masey.
Nicknames: Mase.
Age: 24.
D.O.B: October 30, 2155.
Astrological sign: Scorpio.
Looks: Adelaide Kane.
- Hair Color: Dark Brown.
- Eye Color: Blue Eyes.
- Bust: A bit bigger than normal, but not too big.
- Complexion: Fair.
Human/Robot/Xenomorph(Alien.): Human.

Family:
Jennifer Victoria Kluver Meyer. (Mother. Killed by a chestburster.)
Thomas Harry James Meyer. (Father. Also killed by a chestburster.)
Demitra Bella Taylor Meyer. (Younger sister. Facehugger suffocated her.)
Alice Nancy Shay Meyer. (Older Sister. Killed by fully grown Xenomorph.)

Friends:
Rebecca 'Newt' Jorden.
Kendall-Rae Ripley.
She is slowly starting to trust the other Marines. Stray for Gorman.
Bishop.

Enemies:
Xenomorph. (Alien.)
Carter J. Burke.
Lieutenant William Gorman.

Relationship Status: Single.

Love Interest: Private William Hudson. (He needs some love. (; )
Personality: Masey Avril Demitra Meyer is the second oldest daughter to Jennifer and Thomas Meyer. She is the contrasting daughter. She is fiercely independent, and she is able to accomplish anything that she puts her mind to, and she won't give up either. She is perfectly suited for being on her own, but she likes to interact with others. She is not a social butterflies, and she prefers to live on her own that way, because there is never any issue of who controls what at home. She likes to be in control of her own self. Her family let her set her own boundaries, because that was how she functioned best. If someone tried to hold a relationship with Masey, things are always complicated, just like her. She is known for her jealousy but on the other hand, she is extremely loyal. She has an excellent memory and combined with an inability to let things go, she can hold a grudge against someone who did her or her loved ones harm forever, in fact Masey rarely if never forgives and forgets. She will even go as far as to get vengeance on the person. On the other hand, she will always remember a kind gesture forever and repay it. She is very ambitious, persistent, and determined. She is a very deep and intense person, and there is always more to her, than what meets the eye. She presents a cool, detached and unemotional air to the world yet lying underneath is tremendous power, extreme strength, intense passion and a strong will and a persistent drive. Masey has a very penetrative mind, so no one is surprised if she asks questions, for they known that she is trying to delve deeper and figure things out and survey the situation. They always want to know why, where and any other possible detail they can possibly know.

Physical Description: Masey has a slim, heart-shaped face, with cheekbones that are not as high as Kendall's. She has a smooth, rounded chin, and she has dark blue roundish eyes, that seem to have a playful, childlike gleam to them. Her eyebrows have the natural 'dramatic' effect to them, and they slightly follow the curve of her eyes. She has a small pixie-like nose, above her 'cupid's bow' lips, which occasionally seem to be turned up into a smile. Her dark brown hair is hip length, and it seems to fall into light tresses, which she does not like. She had died her hair light brown, before switching it back, so some light brown hair tresses can be found in her hair. Her strides are long and quick, and her shoulders are held back. She usually wears sweatpants, and hoodies, but she will wear cargo pants, leather jackets and boots.

Abilities:
Excellent memory.
Her agility.
Her sense of direction.
Her kindness.

Likes:
Coffee.
Food.
Peace and Quiet.
Books.
Drawing.
Relaxing.
Sleeping.
Cats.
Chocolate.
Sweets.
Cake.
Outer Space.
Watching the stars.
Dislikes:
Sour Candy.
Closed Spaces. (But, after the infestation, she slowly grows out of it.)
Heights. (Sometimes.)
Being completely alone.
Her allergies.

Weaknesses:
Newt. (Since everyone else is dead, they rely on each other, and even after they are 'rescued' by the Marines, she still frets over her.)
Small spaces.
Her allergies.

Theme Song: Lose Yourself: Eminem.

Chapter End Notes

Remember comments and Kudos!
"I may be synthetic, but I'm not stupid."

After her confrontation with Burke, Ripley opened a door, and she walked out, and she headed towards operations. All of sudden, a strident alarm began to sound. She broke into a run, and she double-timed it to Hicks' tactical console, just as Masey, Hudson and Vasquez came running in as well. Hicks slapped a switch, which killed the alarm.

"What is it? What's going on?"
Hudson asked, and he sounded slightly out of breath.

"They're coming."
Came Hicks' response, and that was something that they all feared.

"Where?"
Hudson continued with his question.

"In the tunnel."
Came Hicks' grave answer, and all throughout operations, the sound of the sentry guns began to fire.

Their loud bursts of fire echoed around the complex.

"Here we go."
Kendall felt her eyes open, and she felt herself stretch out a bit. She looked up at the monitors, and immediately she sat upright, as she looked at the monitors and the sentry units' displays. The echoing crash of the gun fire and alien screams could be heard everywhere. The sound vibrated through the flooring.

"A and B guns, tracking and firing. Multiple targets."
The RSS guns pounded away, as they echoed throughout the area. Their separate bursts overlapped in an irregular rhythm. A counter on the sentry displays' counted down the number of rounds fired.

In the service tunnel, the RSS guns blasted stroboscopically in the tunnels. Their barrels smoked as they slowly heated up.

Back in operations, at the tactical console, no one's gaze left the monitors.

"Look at those ammo counters go."
Hudson commented, as they all watched the monitors, before they looked to the sentry display, as the rounds that remained, quickly decreased.

Meanwhile, in the service tunnel, the units continued to blast everything in sight. Not one creature got by them, until...

"B-gun's down fifty percent."
Hicks warned, and the atmosphere in operations turned a bit tense.

"Man, it's a shooting gallery down there."
Hudson commented, just as warning beeps started to emit from the control terminal as the ammo began to run out.

"Sixty rounds left on B. Forty...twenty...ten...B-gun's dry. Twenty on A. Ten...five...that's it."
Hicks said, gravely, as he glanced at the other survivors.

"Jesus. They're wall to wall in there."
Hudson commented, before a silence fell.

After a few minutes of silence, a gong-like booming sound echoed eerily up from the sub-level.

"They're at the pressure door."
Ripley said, as she spoke over the eerie booming sound.

"Man, listen to that."
Hudson commented, before Bishop's voice sounded through the speakers.

"Bishop here. I'm afraid I have some bad news."

"Well, that's a switch."
There it was. That was what they were missing. A smart ass comment from Hudson.

Minutes later, everyone, including Bishop, was crowded at the window, as they intently watched the AP station, which was a dim silhouette in the mist.

"It's very pretty, Bishop. But, what are we looking for?"
Ripley asked, as she crossed her arms across her chest, and she turned to face Bishop, before she looked back out the window.

Suddenly, a column of blue flame, like an acetylene torch, jettisoned upward from the station at the base of the cone.

"That's it. The emergency venting."
Bishop said, as he pointed at the window.

This was what he wanted them to see.

"Ah, that's beautiful, man. Ah man, that...that just beats it all."
Once again, Hudson was going hysterical, but he was more quiet about it this time.

"How long until it blows?"
Hicks asked, and this was clearly the question that was everyone's mind at this point in time, but no one had said anything.

"Four hours...with a blast radius of thirty kilometers. Equal to about forty megatons."
Bishop answered, and the atmosphere in operations turned a bit more tense.

4 hours. Great.

"We got problems."

No shit they had problems. In four hours they would be dead if they didn't think of something.

"I don't believe this. I don't fucking believe this."
There we go. There came Hudson's hysterical rant.

"Vasquez. Close the shutters."

"Why can't we shut it down from here?"
Both Ripley and Kendall asked together, as they glanced over at Bishop.
"I'm sorry. The crash did too much damage. An overload was inevitable, at this point."
Bishop answered, apologetically.

"Oh, man. And I was gettin' short. Four more weeks and out. Now, I'm going to buy it on this rock. It ain't half fair, man!"
Hudson continued to rant, and Vasquez sighed.

"Hudson, give us a break."

"Four more weeks. Oh, man."

"Well, we've got to get the other drop-ship from the Sulaco. I mean, there must be some way of bringing it down on remote?"

"How? The transmitter was on the APC. It's wasted."

"I don't care how! But, we'd better think of something. We'd better think of a way."

"Think of what? We're fucked!"
Hudson exclaimed.

"Shutup."

"We're doomed!"

"Shut up! What about the colony transmitters? The up-link tower down at the other end. Why can't we use that?"
Hicks snapped, before he turned his attention to Bishop.

"No, I checked. The hardwiring between here and there is damaged. We can't align the dish."

Ripley was wound up like a dynamo, her mind spun out options, and the only thing that was coming to her were grim solutions.

"Well, somebody's going to have to go out there. Take a portable terminal and go out there and patch in manually."

"Oh, yeah! Sure! With those things running around. You can count me out!"

"Yeah, I guess we can just count you out of everything, huh?"

"I'll go."
Bishop said, quietly.

"That's right, man. Why don't you go, man?"

"I'll go."
Bishop repeated, and this time, they heard him.

"What?"

"I'll go. I mean, I'm the only one qualified to remote-pilot the ship anyway." 
Bishop answered.

"Yeah, right, man. Bishop should go. Good idea."
"Believe me, I'd prefer not to. I may be synthetic, but I'm not stupid."
Stay Frosty.

In the med-lab, one of the acid holes from the colonists' siege had yielded access to sub-floor conduits. Vasquez cut an opening into one of the main shafts. Bishop looked into the shaft with a flashlight, and thankfully there was nothing. He handed the flashlight back to Vasquez before he sat on the edge of the hole.

"How long?"
Ripley asked.

"This duct runs almost to the up-link assembly. One hundred eighty meters."
Came Bishop's answer, as Ripley passed him a portable terminal and a small satchel containing tools, which he pushed into the constricted shaft.

"Say, forty minutes to crawl down there."

"Right."

"An hour to patch in and align the antenna. Thirty minutes to prep the ship, and about fifty minutes flight time."
Bishop added, as he lay down in the shaft on his back, and Vasquez handed him the flashlight.

"It's going to be close."

Vasquez pulled out her service pistol and handed it to Bishop. He looked it over. It seemed so foreign in his hands, so he handed it to Ripley.

"Good luck."

"See you soon. Watch your fingers."
He said, cheerfully.

Vasquez and Ripley placed the metal plate over the hole again. Bishop turned over and squirmed into the shaft, as he pushed the equipment along ahead of him with a scraping rhythm. Vasquez began to spot-weld the plate in place behind him.

"Vaya con dios, man."

( "Vaya con Dios" literally means "go with God" )

---

In the conduit, Bishop moved on, as he crawled in a rhythm with his body and breathing. Ahead of him, the conduit dwindled straight to which seemed infinite, until it ended in a tiny white dot.

---

In the corridor, sentry units 'C' and 'D' were blaring away as the alien onslaught tried again from another approach. Their numbers decreased as they contacted the guns.

---

Ripley and Vasquez run to the tactical console, where Hicks, Kendall, Masey, and Hudson were mesmerized by the images from the surveillance cameras. The flashes of the sentry-guns flared-out the sensitive video, but impressions of figures that moved in the smoky corridor were occasionally visible. The robot-sentries hammered away, as they drove streamers of tracer fire into the swirling
mist.

"This is unbelievable. Forty meters and closing. Fifteen."
Hicks sounded completely astounded with the progress that these things were making.

"How many?"
Ripley asked.

"I can't tell. Lots. D-guns down fifty percent."

At Hicks' response, Kendall rolled her eyes. "That was completely helpful. Thanks Hicks." She said, sarcastically, but she knew that it was better than nothing.

---

Back in the corridor, the guns' fire lashed out at the invaders. High-pitched screams of dying creatures echoed all around the corridor.

---

Back at the tactical console, the survivors continued to watch the war. "C-guns right behind it."

The monitors showed the war. There was an occasional visible glimpse of one of the creatures, but it was quickly dispatched by the spray of bullets, which threw acid blood all over the corridor.

"They ain't stoppin' 'em. They ain't stoppin' 'em."
Hudson was starting to slightly freak out. Just slightly.

"Hundred-fifty rounds on D."

"Come on. Come on, baby. Come on, D!"

On the sentry guns monitor display screen, it showed 91 rounds in D-gun and it began to drastically drop. The monitors showed more scenes of the seemingly-endless battle that went on. Lots of creatures exploded upon contact with bullets, and acid was thrown everywhere.

"Come on! Come on!"

The word 'critical' started to flash and beep on the screen, which indicated that the gun was almost dry.

"D-guns down to twenty. Ten."

Just then, D-gun went empty.

"Damnit!"
Hicks got up quickly, grabbed his gun, and he started to head toward the battle-raged corridor.

---

Meanwhile, in the corridor, D-gun clicked empty and continued tracking. Then the firing from the remaining gun stopped abruptly. Both guns' sat smoking, as they still swiveled to locate any possible targets.

---
Ripley and Kendall watched the monitors very closely. The video image was a swirling wall of smoke. There were black and twisted shapes scattered at the edge of visibility. However, nothing emerged from the wall of smoke. Before Hicks could go any further, Kendall grabbed his arm, as she pulled his attention to the monitors.

"Wait! They're retreating. The guns' stopped them."

Hicks froze where he was and stared at the monitors in disbelief. She was right. Nothing came through the smoke and blackness.

"You're right."

The moment of silence stretched, and everyone exhaled slowly.

"Next time, they walk right up and knock."
The digital counters for the two sentry units read '0' and '10' respectively. Less than a seconds worth of firing.

"Yeah, but they don't know that. They're probably looking for other ways to get in. That'll take them awhile."

"Maybe we got 'em demoralized."
Hudson jibed, and it seemed that he was trying to lighten their tense mood.

"Shut up."
Both Masey and Vasquez said, as they turned to face Hudson.

"I want you three walking the perimeter. Move!"
Hicks said to Ripley, Vasquez, and Hudson.

Kendall rubbed her face with her left hand, and she let out a shaky sigh. Feeling a hand on her shoulder, she turned to see Masey. "I'm going to check on Newt." Kendall only nodded, before she picked up her cup of cold coffee, and she drained it with one drink. She looked and felt shaken, and extremely tired.

"Hey, listen. We're all in strung-out shape, but stay frosty and alert. Can't afford to let one of those bastards in here."

"Yeah, right."
She hit Hudson on his chest plate.
"Vominos."

The three troopers headed for the corridor, just as Kendall drained down another cup of cold coffee. This was doing two things for her. Keeping her awake, and it was keeping her slightly calm. Feeling someone's gaze, Kendall glanced up to meet the concerned gaze of Hicks.

"How long has it been since you got any sleep? Twenty-four hours?" Kendall opened her eyes a bit more. She seemed soul-weary, drained by the nerve-wracking tension. When she answered, her voice seemed distant, detached.

"That 5 minute nap just now, did not count. But, I've been asleep for 57 years, Hicks. I don't need anymore sleep."
She said, as she ran her fingers through her hair, and she felt a clump of her hair catch into her hand.

Oh yeah. That's right. Her hair had been singed from the fire inside the APC. She ran her fingers
through her hair, and she pulled away about 2 inches from her hair. She looked into the reflected filing cabinet, and she took a pair of scissors from a drawer, and she trimmed at her hair, until it looked fine. Shorter. But fine. Something was bothering her, and she turned to face Hicks, and she placed the scissors down.

"Hicks. I'm not going to end up like those others. You'll take care of it won't you?"
It wasn't a question, it sounded more like an order, or a statement.

"If it comes to that, I'll do us both. Listen, let's make sure it doesn't come to that. Alright?"
Hearing his answer, Kendall felt herself smile, slightly. At least she had the comfort of knowing that if she became impregnated with one of those embryos, someone would take care of it.

"Hey, I want to introduce you to a personal friend of mine."
He picked up his pulse-rifle, and he lifted it for her to see.

Kendall felt herself smile. That was how someone would start something if they wanted to show off their muscles to impress a girl. In this case, Hicks was showing off his pulse-rifle.

"This is a M-41A pulse-rifle...10mm, with over and under 30mm pump-action grenade launcher. Feel the weight."
He handed it to Kenny, and she hefted the weapon.
It felt heavy and awkward in her grasp.

She sighed.
"Okay. Tell me Corporal...What do I do?"

---

Back in the conduit, Bishop was in claustrophobic limbo between two echoing infinities. He approached an irregular hole which admitted a tiny shaft of light. He put his eyes up to the acid-etched opening, just as a pair of drooling jaws snapped towards him, and they slammed against the steel with a vicious scraping snap. Bishop flattened himself away from the opening and inched along. He looked pale and strained, as he glanced at his watch.

---

Back in operations, Kendall had the stock of the M-41A snugged up to her cheek and was awkwardly trying to keep up with Hicks' instructions.

"Okay, pull it in tight here."
He instructed, and Kenny did as she was told.

"Right."

"Lean into it."
She felt his hands rest over her own, and his chest pressed against her back.
"Like this. Hold it tight."

"Uh huh."
Kendall said, trying not to make a comment, about the semi-awkward situation that they were in.

"Alright, it will kick some. Alright, when the counter reads zero here, you..."
Hicks started to say, but Kendall cut him off.
"I press this up?"
She asked, inspecting the pulse-rifle.

"That's right."
He said, as she snapped open the bolt, and she dropped out the magazine.

"Then, get another one in quick and slap it in hard."
Hicks said, and Kenny did as he had said.

"Right."

"Now you're ready to rock n' roll."

"What's this?"
She asked, as she indicated to a stout tube underneath the slender pulse-rifle barrel.

"Uh, that's the grenade launcher...I don't think you want to mess with that."
Hicks said, tentatively.

Kendall turned her head, and she smiled, slightly.
"You started this. Show me everything. I can handle myself."
She said, pulling the stock of the M-41A up to her cheek.

She heard him chuckle, and she rolled her eyes, gently.

"Yeah. I've noticed."

She glanced back over at him, and she sent him a half-smile.

"You should teach this to Ripley. It might be best if we all knew how to use one of these bloody things."

Kendall opened the door that lead out of operations, and she strode out, as she walked down the corridor, as she now carried her new-found friend, the M-41A. Gorman stepped out of the door to the Med-Lab. He looked weak, but sound. Masey and Burke were right behind him.

"How do you feel?"

"Alright, I guess. One hell of a hangover. Look, Rae... I just wanna..."

"Forget it, Gorman. I don't want your apologies. You and Burke asked for us to be 'advisers or consultants' for this sort of thing. We told you to pull them out, and you didn't listen to us. And now, you can live with what you've done. Excuse me." She shouldered past him, and into the Med-Lab.

Burke watched her as she walked by. Gorman turned to see Vasquez staring at him with cold, slitted eyes.
Kendall crossed the deserted lab, as she passed through the annex to the small operating room where Ripley had left Newt.

Entering the darkened chamber, Kendall looked around. Newt was nowhere to be seen. Ripley had said that Newt was in here. On a hunch, she knelt down and peered under the bed. Newt was curled up there, jammed as far back as she could get, fast asleep. Still clutching 'Casey'. Kendall stared at Newt's tiny face, so angelic despite the demons that have chased her through her dreams and the reality between dreams. Kendall laid the rifle on top of the cot, along with her inhaler and crawled carefully underneath. Without waking the little girl, she slid up behind Newt and slipped her arms
around the child. Newt cried out, a vague inarticulate plea, and she started to squirm from her nightmare.

"It's okay. It's okay."
Kendall soothed, as she ran her fingers through her hair, her fingers starting at her hairline, before she gently and soothingly ran her fingers through her hair, as she gently unknotted it in the process.

---

At the up-link tower, there was a view of the processing station from the colony landing field. Great streaks of lightning shot out from the station, lighting the sky and ground all around. Bishop stood in the wind at the base of the telemetry tower. He had a test-bay panel open and the portable terminal patched in. His jacket was draped over the keyboard and monitor unit to protect it from the elements and he typed frenetically. One of the commands he typed caused the dish on the array to swivel and stop. He watched it and then continued typing. He punched a few more keys and then hit a white button marked 'ENABLE.'

---

In the Sulaco, which was still in orbit, and in the cargo lock, the drop-bay was empty and silent, with the remaining ship brooding in the shadows. Rotating clearance lights come on. Hydraulics whined to life. Drop-ship two moved out on its overhead track and was lowered into the drop-bay for launch-prep.
A while later, Kendall awoke with a start. She checked her watch...an hour has passed. She ran her fingers through her hair, as she scanned the room. She saw something and she froze. Across the room, just inside the door to the Med-Lab, were two stasis cylinders. The ones that held the alive FaceHuggers. They were on their sides with the tops hinged open and the suspension fields switched off. They were both empty. It was then when Kendall realized the inescapable certainty of a lethal presence.

"Newt. Wake up."
Kendall whispered, as she shook the small girl.

"Wha....?"
Newt started to say, but Kendall gently cut her off.

"Be quiet. We're in trouble."

Newt nodded, now wide awake. They listened in the darkness for the slightest betrayal of movement. Kendall reached up and, while clutching the springs of the underside of the cot, she slowly began to inch it away from the wall. When the space was wide enough, she cautiously slid herself up between the wall and the edge of the cot, as she reached for the rifle she left lying on top of the mattress. Her eyes cleared the edge of the bed.

The rifle was gone. Along with her inhaler. Who the hell would take her inhaler, but then she remembered the FaceHugger. It gave oxygen to it's host, as it laid the embryo in their chests. She snapped her head around, and she turned her head straight just in time to see a scuttling shape leap towards her. She ducked her head, as the obscene thing hit the wall above her. Reflexively, she slammed the bed against the wall, which pinned the creature inches above her face. It's legs and tail writhed with incredible ferocity. Newt screamed.

"Move, Newt!"
She ordered, as Newt slid out from under the cot.

In a frenzied scramble, Kenny rolled out from underneath the bed, before she flipped it over, as she trapped the FaceHugger underneath. They both backed away, as they gasped for air. The creature scuttled out from beneath the bed and disappeared under a bank of cabinets in a blur. Kendall and Newt headed toward the door, and they moved as if every object in the room had a million volts running through it.

They reached the door, and Kenny hit the wall switch. Nothing happened. Disabled from the outside. They tried pushing the door open manually, but it was jammed. They moved to the observation window. She and Newt pounded on the window. From the outside, they looked like
mimes because no sound get through the double thickness of the window. Kendall looked down on a table outside the room and there lay her rifle, along with her inhaler.

"Help!"
Newt shouted, pleadingly.

Not knowing that they could not be heard.

Kendall looked around and spied the surveillance camera. She quickly moved over to it and waved her arm in a circle while yelling.

"Hicks! Hicks! Over here!"

"Help! Somebody!"

-------------------------------------

In operations, a video monitor showed Kendall as she waved her arms. There was no sound, a surreal pantomime.

"Uh, say again, Bishop. You've got it into outer refuel mode and the sequencing, right?"

Hicks' voice could be heard, as he spoke into a mike.

A hand switched off the monitor, and Kendall's image vanished.

As Burke straightened casually from the console, Hicks was behind him, as he talked via headset Hicks with Bishop in the background and he hadn't noticed Kendall's plight or Burke's action. Neither did anyone else in the room.

"That's right!"
Bishop's voice was full of static break-up.

"Okay, good. Stay on it."

"That's where I am now!"

"Get back to me when you've activated the launch cycle."

"Roger!"

"He's at the up-link tower."

"Good."

"Terrific."

-------------------------------------

Back in surgery, Kendall was growing more afraid, and more desperate than ever.

"Hicks! Hicks! Ripley! Ripley! Hudson! Anyone!"
She shouted, as she continued to wave her arms above her head

"Help! Help!"
Newt continued to shout, as she continued to hit on the glass.

"Hicks! Help us!"
Kendall continued to shout, until she heard Newt suggest something.

"Break the glass! Break it. Break it."
"I'll try."
Kendall promised, as she picked up a steel chair and slammed it against the observation window.

It bounced back from the high-impact material. She tried again to no success, knocking over some equipment. She dropped the chair and backed against the window. As Kendall studied the room, she heard the Facehuggers as they scurried around on the floor.

"Rae...I'm scared."
She heard Newt's quiet voice say, and Kendall-Rae glanced down at the small girl.

"Me too."
Kendall steadied herself, realizing Newt's horror and the child's dependence on her. After a moment's hesitation, she got an idea.

"Stay here."
Kendall said, as she removed her lighter from a jacket pocket.

Moving cautiously across the room, she lifted the lighter and struck it under the temperature-sensor of a fire-control system sprinkler head. It triggered, spraying the room from several sources with water.
An alarm sounded throughout the complex, and Newt ran to her, hugging her tight.

In operations, Hicks jumped at the sound of the alarm, as he finally identified its source among the lights flashing on his board.

"It's the Med-Lab!"
He bolted for the door, as he yelled into his headset as he moved.

"Hudson, Vasquez, meet me in Med-Lab! We've got a fire!"

"We're on our way!"
Hicks grabbed a fire extinguisher as he quickly ran to the source of the problem, with Gorman following close behind him.

Back in surgery, Kendall and Newt were drenched as the sprinklers continued to drizzle in the darkness.

"They're coming, Newt. We'll be out of here soon enough."
She promised, as she glanced around.

She was eye-level with a complex surgical multi-light. She looked into its tangle of arms and cables, inches away. She looked away, before she realized something. Her eyes snapped back. Something leaped at her face, and she screamed, and fell back, as she splashed to the floor. Newt shrieked and scrambled away as Kendall hurled the creature off of her.

It slammed against a wall, set itself upright, then skittered across the floor, straight toward her. She scrambled desperately, as she pulled equipment over as she moved, clawing across the floor in a frenzy of motion. Her chest was killing her. She was breathing too hard. She had to slow down her breathing, but that was hard to do, considering the hostile situation. The creature leaped at her face. She grabbed it with both hands, forcing the pulsing body back for her face.

Newt screamed abjectly, as she backed away, until she was pressed up against a desk next to a wall. The thing's tall whipped around Kendall's throat and began to tighten, as it forced the underside of its body close to her. Kendall-Rae thrashed about, as she knocked over equipment, as she sent
instruments clattering to the floor. She felt her throat start to close up, and she felt herself choking. She needed air. Or her inhaler. Something.

As crab-like legs appeared from behind the desk, right behind Newt, she turned just in time to see, and as she thought fast, she jammed the desk against the wall, as she pinned the writhing thing’s tail. The desk jumped and shuddered against all the pressure her tiny body could bring to bear on it. She wailed between gritted teeth as the second creature’s segmented tail slowly pulled an inch at time as it worked toward her.

The team of soldiers’ appeared outside the room, with Hicks leading. He immediately saw what was going on inside.

"Shoot it out!"

Hudson shot a burst of pulse-fire into the observation window, which shattered the tempered glass. Hicks dove into the crazed spider-web pattern and exploded into the room. He hit the floor, and rolled, before he slid across towards Kendall. Ripley, Hudson, Masey, Gorman and Vasquez leaped into the room after Hicks. Ripley, Gorman and Vasquez rushed to help Hicks pull at the creature and Kendall.

"Hudson! Masey!" Newt cried, as she tried to keep the Facehugger at bay.

Realizing Newt's dilemma, Hudson, and Masey broke apart from the others, and they made their way over to Newt.

"Jesus! Christ kid, look out!

He flung Newt away from the desk to go skidding across the wet floor, and blasted the second creature against the wall and floor. Point-blank. Acid and smoke. Masey slid over to Newt, and she held the shaking girl close.

"Fucking die!"

He shouted, and he continued to blast the creature, even though he knew that it was dead.

Hicks and Gorman got their fingers around the thrashing legs of the vicious beast and tried to pull it away from Kendall's face, though Kenny was losing strength as the tail tightened sickeningly around her throat, her lips started to turn purple from the lack of oxygen, but she continued to try and push the pulsing body away from her face.

Vasquez and Ripley appeared at Kendall's side and grabbed the tail, as they helped to unwind it's writhing length like a boa constrictor coil from her throat. Hicks managed to get the rest of it free. When it was free, Kendall grasped at her throat, as she tried to get herself to breathe. All of them gripped the struggling, and shrieking creature.

"Over there! Ready?!!"

Hicks shouted to Vasquez.

"Yeah!"

"Now!"

Hicks and Gorman hurled the Facehugger into a corner, and immediately, Vasquez got it clean with her rifle. They all loomed over Kendall, but her lips started to turn a bluish purple.
"Why the hell is she not breathing? The thing's off of her face!"

"Her asthma. She has asthma. Her heart rate speeds up when she can't breath. Hold her up."
Ripley ordered, as she dug into her jacket pocket, to pull out a simple looking inhaler.

After a few seconds, after Kendall had been given the inhaler, she coughed, and she collapsed in Hicks' embrace. She rested her hand on her chest, and she took a few shaky breaths, before she gagged slightly. The alarm and sprinklers shut off automatically. Newt ran up and hugged her. She rubbed the frightened girls back, gently, before she placed her on Masey's lap. She felt someone's fingers wrap around her wrist, clearly checking her heart rate.

"Slow down there, kiddo."

Hearing someone call her 'kiddo', she thought it was Burke, and she raised one of her fists to go and hit whoever it had been, but someone's hand curled around her fist.

"Calm down Rae...it's just Hicks."
She heard Ripley say, and Kendall wiped at her face with her free hand, and she realized that her mother was right.

"Oh. Sorry about that."
She murmured, clearly embarrassed at what would have unfolded.

His hand stayed curled around her fist, as if he was taking an extra precaution, before he slowly uncurled his hand from around her fist.

"Control your breathing kid. Don't over-exert yourself."
She heard Hicks say, as she tried to calm herself down.
"Calm down...Calm down. It's over. They're done."

Kendall only nodded, before she felt herself collapse back into his embrace, and was it just her imagination, but it seemed as if his embrace had slightly tightened around her trembling form. She continued to tremble, as she loosely wrapped her arms around his neck, and she hid her face in his neck.

"Hudson?!"

"Yeah, all clear. I nailed the other one. It's history, man."

"Jesus."

Hicks glanced down at the trembling Lieutenant, who was almost in his lap, shaking and trembling like a scared cat. She was soaked to the bone, and her clothing clung to her now pale skin, as if it had been painted on. Rae seemed as tough as nails, but, if you were to put her into a situation as hostile, and frightening as this one, she was completely different. He rubbed her back gently, and this made her curl up more into his chest, as she continued to tremble.

"Burke..."
She murmured against his neck, and everyone stopped to look at her.

"What was that?"

"Burke...it was Burke."
Rae managed to cough out.
Chapter End Notes

Leave kudos and comments.
"They cut the power."

Chapter Summary

The Marines find out about Burke's intentions.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Back in operations, Burke looked icily calm, stray for the fact that beads of sweat betrayed intense concealed tension. Hudson came up and shoved his rifle into Burke's face.

"I say we grease this rat-fuck, son-of-a-bitch right now."

Kendall's hair was matted down, and her clothing was partially stuck to her. Her mother had offered her leather jacket, but she turned down, and she told her that she should give it to Newt. It wasn't cold in Operations. God no. It was obviously something of comfort, and after what they had to endure, Newt needed the comfort more than she did. Speaking of Newt, Kendall-Rae glanced back at the small girl. She was staring at all of them, with eyes that were far too solemn for any child to have. It seemed that she seemed to know that this was going to happen from the minute that Ripley had plucked her and Masey out of the vent, or when she bit Hicks.

Kendall's hair was starting to soak into her shirt, but she didn't care, and now her voice was slightly shaking. She was having a very hard time restraining herself from lashing out and strangling Burke. More or less, she was trying to keep a neutral expression on her face.

Hicks glanced at Gorman. He might be conscious once more, but that didn't mean that people were going to start to look at Gorman for leadership. The remaining survivors looked to him, Rae, or Ripley for leadership. Sure, he had managed to keep them alive for a few ever-lasting hours. As well as he possibly could, because not once did he have to try and keep only a few of the Marines alive. But Rae and Ripley had survived one of these creatures, and they were a good asset to them right now. without either of them, God knows what would have happened to them by now.

Sure, he was only a Corporal, but he was a hell lot of a better job that Lieutenant Gorman. He had only lost Drake, and it was a big loss at that. Just not to him, but to Vasquez as well. There was some sort of bond between the two of them. A bond that no one else really knew about. On the other hand, Gorman had lost about 3/4's of a squadron, including Apone. And Ripley and Rae, sure they were civilians, but they've had ideas that had saved their military asses a few times.

They drove the APC into the processing station to save their sorry asses. They had to make it up to the two of them big time. Now, that both of them had a weapon of their own, they were both going to be hell. They were both serious about this situation, so damn serious, and that was what he was starting to admire about the both of them. But, he felt himself drifting more towards Rae than Ripley. It was more than likely it was because they were close in age. That was it, wasn't it? Or was there something else involved?

Hicks had been pacing ever since they had all moved from the Med-Lab to Operations. Ripley's expression was almost murderous, as if she wanted to strangle Burke right that minute, but she was managing to hold onto her temper. Burke had almost gotten her daughter impregnated with one of
those creatures, and the same went with Newt. And for what? A place in the company? Money? Who knew what his motives were? Both of the Ripley's were not the ones who were straining to keep a grasp on their tempers.

He had to admit, his own was being supported by a few flimsy threads. Masey, the girl that had survived with Newt, was keeping her distance from Burke, as she tried to withstand the temptation to lash out at him. He could tell that regarding Hudson, he had given up on trying to keep his temper, ever since he had saved Newt from the FaceHugger, and since that moment when they found out that Burke had set the parasites on the two of them, there had been a never-ending steady train of swearing, and death threats against Burke's life. He glanced over at Vasquez, and he saw that she was deadly silent. There was a look that was almost murderous, and he knew if Burke made a wrong move, well...Vasquez would take care of it.

"It just doesn't make any Goddamn sense."
Hicks muttered, as he continued to pace.

"He figured that he could get an alien back through quarantine...if one of us was...impregnated...whatever you call it...then frozen for the trip home. Nobody would know about the embryos they were carrying. Me and Newt. He targeted me because, he had read my report, on how the Facehugger would give oxygen to the host when they attached themselves. Like it did with Kane. Because of my asthma, it made me an easier target because when I can't get enough air, I'm not as strong as I normally am. What he didn't know was that if I didn't get enough air, my heart-rate speeds up, and if it speeds up too much...I die. I would have died just so he could get one of those fucking embryos through quarantine. You know something, Burke. I know for certain that there are 3 things that are infinite. The Universe. Human Stupidity, and the amount of bullshit that we have to deal with because of this alien, and the thing is that I'm not even sure about the universe."

It was now did Hicks' pacing started to slow down, as he heard Rae's theory. The idea of Burke smuggling those embryos back, through quarantine, embedded inside Newt and Rae, just made his insides churn and clench tightly.

"Wait a minute, now. We'd all know...."
He interjected, and this time Ripley spoke up.

It seemed that she too had figured out what Burke had planned to do.

"Yes. The only way he could do it is if he sabotaged certain freezers on the way home. Namely yours and mine. Then he could jettison the bodies and make up any story he liked."

That was where he knew he ever Marine in the room drew the line. The mere thought of Burke sabotaging their freezers on the way home, and the fact that he would have jettisoned their bodies made the idea of sparing this bastard's life very slim. But, from what he had heard from Rae and Ripley, about their android, Ash, and how his order was to bring back the creature, and their crew was expendable. Along with this story, he had heard other stories about men being screwed over by the Company, and having two witnesses' to this beforehand, he was willing to believe whatever the two of them said.

"Fuuuck! He's dead."
Hudson turned to Burke, and he shoved the pulse rifle back to his face.
"You're dog meat, pal."

"This is so nuts. I mean listen...listen to what you're saying. It's paranoid delusion. It's really sad. It's pathetic."
Burke said, all too calmly.
This seemed to have made Kendall snap, because the next thing they knew, both of her hands were wrapped around his throat. Hudson and Vasquez both had to pry her hands from around his throat, once her hands were clear, Hicks' arms wrapped around her struggling frame, to try and keep her from strangling him. Her arms were pinned to her side, as she continued to struggle, and after a few moments, she must have realized that this was pointless, because she had stopped struggling, and now, she was only shaking. Not in fear, but in anger. Tears of anger welled in her grey eyes, as they streamed down her filthy cheek. His arms stayed around her, until he moved her behind him, so that she would not be able to lash out at Burke.

"You know, Burke, I don't know which species is worse. You don't see them fucking each other over for a goddamn percentage."
Ripley said, her face completely neutral, but Kendall could tell that she was having an inner conflict about keeping herself calm.

Now, it was an easy decision to make. After all their lives were on the line, thanks to Burke.

"Alright."
He said, decisively.
"We waste him."

After that, a savage grin crossed his lips.

"No offence."
He said, sarcastically, as he hauled Burke to his feet by his collar.

Out of the corner of his eye, he could see the facial expressions of the Marines. Gorman was all for it. Hudson had been ready to shoot Burke in the face for a good while now. Vasquez simply extended her pistol to him, as if she was offering him to do it.

To his own surprise, it was Ripley and Kendall who objected, as they each grabbed onto his arm to stop him. The rage had given way to a sickened emptiness.

"No! He's gotta go back!"
Ripley objected and the Marines looked over at the two, and a "Why" had formed on all of their lips, before the room suddenly went black.

Everyone stopped in the sudden darkness, as they realized instinctively, that this was a new escalation to their struggle. A few moments later, the emergency lighting flickered on, which gave the room just enough light to see, and it was tinted in a red light was as red as blood. The emergency lighting had basked everyone in an eerie red glow. He heard Ripley mutter something, that was going to haunt him if they got off this planet for as long as he lived, when the power went out ever again.

"They cut the power."

Chapter End Notes

Don't forget to leave kudos and comments!
"We're not leaving!" [ Long Chapter. ]

Chapter Summary

Time for the Marine's to fight for their lives.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"What do you mean, they cut the power? How could they cut the power, man?! They're animals!" Hudson was in hysterics once more, but that was something that was everyone's mind.

"I want you two with trackers, checking the corridors. Move!"
Hicks ordered Vasquez, and Hudson, as he, Ripley, Masey and Rae clicked magazines into their pulse rifles.

"Gorman, watch Burke!"

In compliance, Gorman grabbed Burke.
"You got it."

"Newt! Stay close."

Vasquez and Hudson picked up their trackers and moved to the door. Hudson had to slide it open manually on it's track, as they moved into the corridor.

"I'll go to this side."
Hudson said, as he he slowly moved his tracker down the corridor.

"You do that, man."

The two troopers separated and moved slowly to the barriers at opposite ends of the control block. Each moved slowly, as they held the trackers out in front of them. Nothing...yet.

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Inside operations, Kendall, Masey, and Ripley picked up a headset, and put it on, as they connected themselves with the soldiers.

"Anything?"
Ripley asked, as they adjusted the headsets to fit better.

"There’s something."
Hudson's voice filtered through their headsets.

------------------------------------------

Back in the corridor, there came a beep. Hudson's tracker lit up, a faint signal. He panned it around. Back down the corridor. It beeped again, louder.

"It's inside the complex."
Hudson said, as panic started to fill his voice.

"You're just reading me."
Vasquez said, as she tried to calm the tension from her comrade.

Hudson quickly swiveled around, as he aimed his tracker toward Vasquez’s position.

"No. No! It ain't you. They're inside. Inside the perimeter. They're in here."

"Hudson, you gotta calm down. Vasquez?"
Kendall’s voice filtered through their headsets. Even though she was trying to calm Hudson down, her voice shook on occasion.

Wanting to see if Hudson's tracker was off, she too swung her tracker and rifle together, and she aimed it behind her. Her tracker, like Hudson’s lit up, as it too started to beep.

"Hudson may be right."
Vasquez said, coolly.

Back in Operations, Hicks, Ripley, Kendall, Masey, and Gorman all exchanged glances. The bastards had found a way inside.

"Get back, both of you."

"The signal's weird..."
Hudson's voice sounded a bit shaky, and none of them blamed him.

The four of them in Operations who had pulse-rifles started to check their pulse-rifles. They took off the safety's, and the checked the magazines.

Back in the corridor, Hudson backtracked nervously, as he peered all around. He looked stretched to the limit.

"Must be some interference or something. There's movement all over the place."
"Get back to operations!"

Kendall, Ripley, Masey, and Hicks all exchanged a look that said 'Here we go.'

"It's game time."

"Newt."

They ran/walked to the door to operations and waited for the soldiers.

"Seal the door. Hurry."

Vasquez reached the door to operations at a run, a moment before Hudson.

"Come on! Get back!"

Hicks and Hudson pulled the door shut and locked it.

"Work fast!"

Hicks and Vasquez pulled out their hand-welders' and and they began to seal the door.

"Cover your eyes, Newt. Don't look at the light."

Hudson's tracker beeped. Then again. The tone continued, as it's rhythm increased.
"Movement! Signal's clean. Range twenty meters."

"They found a way in, something we missed."

Sparks showered around Vasquez and Hicks as they moved as fast as they could to get the door sealed.

"We didn't miss anything."

"Eighteen...seventeen meters."

Ripley picked up Vasquez's tracker and aimed it in the same direction as Hudson's.

"Something under the floor, not on the plans. I don't know!"

"Fifteen meters."

"Ripleeyy!"

"Definitely inside the barricades."

Newt began to tug on Ripley's clothing, as she tried her best to get her attention.

"Let's go."

"Thirteen meters."

Kendall glanced at Hudson's tracker, while Masey glanced at Ripley's. The tracker screen showed an amoeba-like mass of dots as they moved across the top.

"That's right outside the door. Hicks...Vasquez, get back!"

Kendall said, as she felt her grip tighten on the pulse-rifle.

"Man, this is a big fucking signal!"

"How you doing, Vasquez? Talk to me."

Vasquez was heedlessly showering herself with molten metal as she welded the door shut. She seemed to work like a demon.

"Almost there. That's it."

They both dropped their torches and they began to move to the back of the room with everyone else.

"Twelve meters...eleven...ten."

"Man, they’re right on us."

"Nine meters."

Hudson continued to count down.

"Remember, short controlled bursts."

"Eight meters...seven...six."

"That can't be right. That's inside the room!"

Kendall and Masey said together, as they glanced at Hudson's tracker.
"It's readin' right, man. Look!"
Hudson gestured down at the tracker screen, as if to prove to them that he wasn't delusional.

"Well, you're not reading it right!"
Hicks snapped.

There was no way that was right. They had studied the floor plans. They had not missed anything. Ripley jerked her tracker up. Not believing Hudson. Her eyes widened in horror when she realized that the reading was true.

"Five meters, man...four. What the hell?!"

Hudson looked at Ripley, as she looked up at the ceiling and it dawned on both of them at the same time.

"Oh my, God! Oh shit!"

"Gimme' the light!"

Kendall climbed onto a file cabinet, and she nearly jumped out of her skin, when she felt someone's hand on her back. She glanced over to see Hicks, and he placed a finger to his lips, silencing her. As if she was going to say a word if the Aliens were above their head. She only nodded, as she pressed her palm flat against the panel of the ceiling, and she pushed. The ceiling wasn't moving.

Her first thought was that one of the Aliens was perched either on the ceiling panel, or close by, ready to snatch her. At the mere thought of it, she felt a cold sweat start to bead on her forehead, and she shook her head, shaking the thoughts from her head. She felt Hicks' palm rest on the back of her hand, and thanks to his help, they both raised the panel of the acoustic drop-ceiling.

Both of their heads slightly popped up out of the ceiling, and she felt his arm tighten around her small frame. As if he was getting ready to pull her back if what she was thinking was going to happen. That part was true, but keeping her close, helped keep himself a bit calm. He panned his light inside. A soul-wrenching nightmare image. Moving in the beam of his light were alien warriors. They were crawling like bats, upside-down, clinging to the pipes and beams of the structural ceiling. The inner sanctum was utterly violated.

"Jump."
Came Hicks' muttered order, and Kendall glanced at him from the corner of her eye.

"What?"
She asked, through her teeth, trying not to move her lips.

"Jump from the filing cabinet."
He said, and Kendall glanced down at the height from the top of the filing cabinet to the floor.

She turned her head back to face him, but the dome-like head of an Alien appeared close to her face, and she screamed. The striking teeth extended almost a meter from inside its fanged maw, and it tried to bite her. They both fell back into the room, and she landed on the floor. The back of her head hit the floor, and she groaned, and she placed her hand to her head. Surprisingly, there was no blood, or bruises. Just a headache.

She felt a heavy weight, and she felt the claw-like feet of the Alien start to dig into her calf. She let out a short scream, as she fumbled around for her pulse-rifle, but in the confusion, it had been kicked under a nearby filing cabinet. Once again, the striking teeth extended almost a meter from inside its fanged maw, and it shot out at her. She brought her hands in front of her face, only to hear the
familiar screech of the Alien, and she peered through her hands to see that the Alien was engulfed in flames. Just like in the nest. She felt someone grab her under her arm, and she scrambled back.

A few short bursts rang out, and she watched as the Alien exploded in a shrieking mess. She glanced up to see Gormon, and Hudson. Maybe Gormon was not as much of an asshole as she had thought. Hudson. Well. He was still Hudson. She watched as the ceiling exploded, and it started to 'rain' debris. Nightmare shapes dropped into the room, as the creatures detached en-masse from the handholds that they had been using.

"There they go over there! Get 'em!"

Vasquez and Hudson opened fire. Hicks pushed himself off of the ground, and he let it fly next to Vasquez. One by one, the creatures were mowed down in the spray of pulse-fire.

"Come on! Come on!"

"Get 'em!"

"Do something, Gorman!"

Gorman turned to fire and Burke bolted for the only remaining exit, the corridor that connected to the Med-Lab. In the strobe-like glare of the pulse-rifles, flashes of aliens could be seen, as they moved forward in the smoke of the fires that have started.

"Look out! Look out! Look out! There’s more of them!"

"Medical! Get to Medical! Do it! Go!"

Ripley grabbed Newt and dashed for the corridor to the Med-Lab.

During the melee, Kendall had managed to get possession of her pulse-rifle from under the filing cabinet, and she made a frenzied scramble away, to the corridor, but with every strain that was put on her leg, made her scramble painful. As she scrambled back, she had managed to pick off a few, before she felt an arm pull her over a collapsed table. She tried her best to stand, she had managed to keep a good stance. She was keeping her weight off of her uninjured leg, which made her wobble on occasion, but she paid it no mind.

Meanwhile, right as Ripley entered the corridor to the Med-Lab, a warrior came around a corner a few feet away from her and Newt, and it was moving like a locomotive. Shaking, Ripley raised her rifle, and she squeezed the trigger. Nothing happened. Ripley checked the safety. The safety was off. The digital counter. The magazine was full. Newt began to wail, since the thing was almost on Ripley, as it began to tower over her. She then remembered what she was forgetting to do, and with that in mind, she snapped the bolt back, which chambered a round. She whipped the stock to her shoulder, and she fired. There was a flashbulb glimpse of shrieking jaws as the silhouette was hurled back, as it screeched insanely.

"NOW!"

Ripley shouted to Newt, as she turned, grabbed the girl, and she sprinted down the corridor. She say Burke as he cleared the door to the Med-Lab Annex, before he slid it closed. Ripley slammed into the door, as she heard it lock from the far side.

"Burke! Open this door! Burke! Open it!"

------------------------------------------

Inside the Med-Lab Annex, Burke slowly backed away from the door. The sounds of the battle still penetrated through it. Terror showed in every part of his body.
Back in Operations, Hicks was opening up on every dark shape that moved. They seemed to be everywhere.

"Come on! Let’s go! Fall back!"
Hicks ran and jumped over a barricade, to land behind Vasquez, and Masey, with Kendall and Hudson, close-by, who have both opened fire on a group of three aliens that have dropped through the ceiling.

"Die, mother-fucker!"

Back in the corridor, Ripley and Gorman were desperately trying to get the door open.

"Burke!"

"Hudson! Hudson!"
Hicks shouted, as he continued to open up on more Aliens as they fell from the ceiling.

"Mother fucker! Come on! Come and get it, baby! I don’t got all day! Come on! Come on, you bastard! Come on, you too! Oh, you want some of this! Fuck you!"

Hudson was so busy yelling and shooting at the approaching creatures that he didn't notice the floor panels smash under him and clawed arms seized him with lightning speed, as they dragged him down into the floor. He yelled and fired into the floor as he was pulled down.

"Aaarghhh! Fuck you! Hicks! Hicks!"

"Hudson!
Both Kendall and Hicks tried to help him as they tried to pull him out, but the creatures were too strong. It didn't take much time, before Hudson quickly disappeared into the hole, yelling, and cursing all the while.

"Hudson!"
Kendall shouted, as she watched as he disappeared underneath the floor.

She was too distracted with the sudden loss, even though she was used to it, like Hudson, she didn't notice that there were more creatures underneath the floor. She felt something grab her foot, and she was partly pulled into the floor through the hole.

"Hicks! Vasquez! Masey!"
She shouted, as she tried to pull herself out of the grips of the creatures.

She felt someone grab her under her arms, and they tried to pull her out. But, if they didn't shoot the thing, they wouldn't be able to pull her out.

"Shoot it!"
She shouted, as she felt a strain in her legs.
She heard some muffled shouts over the various shots that were over-heard.

"I don't care where. Anywhere!"
She shouted, as she continued to feel the strain between the creatures and Masey, Hicks, and Vasquez.
She heard the shots ring near her ears, and she let out a shout of pain, as she felt hot acid sear through her leg. The bottom half of her was released, as she was yanked backwards, and she felt her back hit someone's chest armor. She groaned, as she looked down to see that the acid was eating through her pant leg. She took out one of her combat knives, and she cut off where the acid was eating through.

Hicks rolled over just in time to shoot at a a diving creature before it took him down the hole too. Another appeared and he hit it full in the chest with pulse fire. Vasquez grabbed Hicks and pushed him into the corridor with the others, before she grabbed both Masey and Kendall, and she pushed them down the hallway as well.

"Come on, Hicks, go!"

Hicks seemed to materialize out of the smoke and ran toward Ripley and the others at the door.

"It's locked!"

Ripley shouted, as she indicated to the door.

Hicks unsnapped the torch off his belt and cut into the lock.

Vasquez, who stood just outside the entrance to the corridor, was destroying incoming aliens by the dozens. She stopped firing and pumped back the grenade launcher, as she let one fly. It detonated behind some machinery, which blew up a group of hiding aliens. Another was fired with the same affect of destruction. Vasquez turned and sprinted up the corridor.

As the flame from the torch melted the metal into white-hot liquid, before it broke. Kendall, Masey, and Ripley watched nervously down the corridor as Hicks finished on the lock.

"Got it! Let's go! Let's go!"

"Go! Go!"

"Move, Gorman!"

The group crowded into the annex and Hicks slid the door shut.

"Seal it!"

Hicks shouted to Vasquez, as she pulled out her torch, and she began to weld it closed. Ripley found the door to the Med-Lab locked. She banged on it.

"Burke!

In the Med-Lab, Burke, hyper-ventilating with terror, backed across the dark chamber. Gasping, almost paralyzed with fear, he crossed to the door which lead to the main concourse. He backed into and stumbled over some canisters on the way.

"Goddamn you! Open this door!"

Ripley's voice echoed through the sealed door, but he paid it no mind, as his fingers reached for the control panel. Instead the door moved by itself, as the door slowly opened. Burke's eyes widened, his eyes wide, as they were transfixed by his fate. One of the creatures stood in the doorway, it's slimy jaws opened and extended towards him, and Burke screamed.

In the Annex, Vasquez was still welding as fast as she could when the door was hit with a clanging impact.

"Get back!"
"Hurry up!"

Another impact and the door began to dimple inward.

"Gorman, get out of the way!"

"Ripley! This way!"

"What?"

Newt grabbed Ripley's hand and pulled her over to an air vent set low in the wall and expertly unlatched the grill, as she dropped it to the floor. Newt started inside, but Ripley pulled her back.

"Wait! Get behind me."

"Whatever you’re going to do, do it fast!"
Vasquez threw over her shoulder, as she continued to weld the door shut.

Ripley knelt and shone her flashlight down the air duct, that was lit by red emergency lighting. Nothing. The way was clear.

"Hicks!"

"Let’s go!"

"Come on, let's go! Move!"

Ripley entered the air shaft, which was a tight fit. Newt scrambled in behind, followed by Masey, who was having trouble supporting Kendall. She felt the weight of the young Lieutenant be lifted off of her shoulders, and thinking the worst, she went to lash out at whoever or whatever it was, but when she saw Hicks, now supporting Kendall, she let out a small sigh, as she continued forward. Hicks had Kendall's left arm draped around his shoulders, and his hand clasped hers, as he made his way through the air shaft. Vasquez finished up just in time as the door was hit full force by the alien mob. The dimple grew larger as the impacts on the door increased.

In the air shaft, Ripley and Newt came to a 3-way junction. Ripley looked in every direction, but she didn't know which way to go.

"Which way is it to the landing field from here?"

"This way."
Newt answered, as she pointed to the right-hand tunnel and they moved out.

Meanwhile, in the Med-Lab Annex, the increased impacts on the door had now made the dimple reach it's maximum and a gapping crack had formed in it's center, and Vasquez fired into it. The high-pitched death screams of several of the creatures could be heard.

Ripley turned into a larger main duct, where there was enough room to crab-walk in a low crouch, and she started to run, with Newt following. The troopers' armor clattered in the confined space, as they came to another intersection.

"Go right."

Ripley's light illuminated the slightly dark tunnel ahead of them as they come to yet another 3-way junction.
"This way! This way."

They headed off to the right, into a long connected duct. As they ran, Ripley's light casting a white glow upon her terrified face. Vasquez was quickly trying to catch up with the group. She fired behind her as she ran in a crab-walk. Dark shapes moved in the tunnel behind her. Ripley and the others moved at their top speed through the shafts.

"Which way?"

"Straight ahead and left."

"Bishop, do you read me?! Come in! Over!"
Hicks shouted into his headset.

"The ship is on it's way..."
Bishop's voice staticed over.

At the up-link relay, at the landing field, Bishop stood next to the base of the telemetry mast. The wind blew all around him and it gusted viciously.

"E.T.A. - sixteen minutes!"

"Good! Stand-by there! We're on our way!"

Vasquez finally managed to catch up, as she moved in behind Gorman. She looked back, and she saw more of the creatures, as they came up fast through the tunnel. She opened fire on them, and in the process, she killed the head alien. Ripley and Newt came to another intersection, and Ripley shone her light down each one.

"Which way now?"

"That way."
Newt said, as she indicated to the left, before she changed her mind, and she pointed to the right.
"No, wait! This way."

"You sure?!"

Hicks, Kendall, Masey and Gorman waited at the intersection for Vasquez. She moved up the tunnel and she blasted incoming creatures at the same time.

"Vasquez! Move!"

Ripley and Newt rounded a corner and Ripley stopped to look back for the group. Newt continued forward.

"Right up here. It's just up here."

"Hicks!"

"We're almost there!"

Ripley didn't see the group and she panicked. She looked the other way, and she noticed that Newt was getting too far up ahead.

"Newt! Wait! Newt!"
She had to make a choice, to stay and wait for everyone or follow Newt. She decided and quickly ran to catch up with girl.

Vasquez came to the intersection where Hicks and Gorman were, but they had moved on ahead. She blasted a few more creatures and the pulse-rifle went empty. She dropped the weapon, and she pulled out her service pistol and ran up the shaft after the group. Vasquez passed under an overhead air duct and looked up just in time to see a warrior, as it screeched down the vertical shaft, right towards her. She fired her pistol a few times, before it fell next to her, as it rolled, and writhed around. She wrestled it and managed to slam the thing's head against the wall with her foot.

"Oh yeah!"

She fired into it's head. Acid-blood spilled out and hit her ankle, and it seared into her leg. She grit her teeth against the white-hot pain, as she pushed the creature away and moved clear of it, as she emptied her last two shots into it. The alien rolled and bounced around the shaft in it's death throes. Hicks, Kendall, Masey and Gorman stopped at the corner Ripley was at earlier and looked back for Vasquez.

"Vasquez!"

Vasquez was sprawled out on the shaft's floor on her stomach. She moaned out in pain, while she managed to eject the magazine from her pistol.

"Go!"

Gorman hit Hicks on the back and ran back to help Vasquez. Masey stayed crouched at the corner, just in case Gorman needed help with Vasquez. She gestured for Hicks and Kendall to keep going. Gorman came up just as the pain hit her in full.

"Ohhhhh! Ohhh, nooooo!"

Gorman grabbed her underneath the arms and started to drag her towards safety. Just then, one of the creatures broke through an air duct grating in the tunnel's floor in front of them. Gorman pulled out his pistol and fired at it's head. The bullets just bounced off its armored skull. Masey fired from the other side, and after a few moments, she had managed to finally kill the creature, along with the help of Gorman.

She ran towards the two of them, and she helped Gorman pull Vasquez towards the others. All the while, she opened up on the creatures that closed in. When they were in the clear, she took a M-41A grenade from Gorman, pressed the detenator stub, and she rolled it down the floor of the air shaft towards where more of the creatures were coming from. Rushing now, they made it to the shaft junction, where Ripley, Newt, Hicks, and Kendall reached a large metal housing and Newt crawled inside.

"Newt!"

"Up there, there's a short-cut across the roof."

It was a junction of several shafts, which included a vertical duct with ladder rungs that lead up to an exterior vent hood. The "floor" is actually the top of a large blower drum, a vained cylinder. The room was tall enough for all seven of them to stand up fully. Ripley crossed to the ladder, and she seized a rung to steady herself, and reached back for Newt.

"Hicks!"
Hicks handed Kendall to Masey, and he lifted Newt up, and he handed her over to Ripley. Newt grabbed onto the ladder and held on firmly.

Just then, the tunnel exploded in fire and debris. The explosion sent a powerful blast of flame up the tunnel.

Hicks, Gorman, Masey, Vasquez, and Kendall were crouched by the door to the ventilation room when it hit. The blast knocked Hicks, Vasquez, Gorman, and Masey over, which dislodged Newt from the ladder. The blast hit Kendall like a brick wall, and both she and Newt fell onto the blower drum, which caused it to rotate. Newt was ahead of Kendall, and she slipped nightmarishly through a narrow gap, into another duct, which was a chute, that angled at a 45 degree angle. Newt managed to narrowly catch the lip of the chute.

"Newt!"
Kendall cried, and despite her injured leg, she tried to make her way to the small girl, and she drew closer, and that was when she heard Ripley call out for Newt.

"Newt! God!"
Ripley shouted, as Kendall grew closer to Newt, but she also grew closer to the narrow gap, that led into another duct

"Ripley! Rae! Masey"
Newt cried out, pleadingly, and Ripley tensed slightly.

"Newt! Hicks! Hicks, get her! Hurry!"
Hicks jammed his pulse rifle into the drum, which stopped the rotation, but since it was such a sudden stop, it jerked Kendall closer to the duct. Kendall felt their arms lunge into the gap to reach out for Newt.

"Hold on, Newt!"
Kendall shouted, as she tried to grab at Newt.

"I'm slipping!"
"Don't let go!"
"Ripley! Rae!"
"Hold on, honey. Don't let go."
"Heelllppp!"
"I gotcha'! I gotcha'!"

Masey, Hicks, and Ripley reached through the small gap, to try and grab the small girl. Ripley had managed to seize the sleeve of Newt's over-sized jacket, but New slid through the jacket. On instinct, she grabbed the closest thing to her, which was Kendall-Rae's hand, and with Newt's weight on one end of her body, Kendall too slipped through the vent, and with an echoing scream, they slid down the chute, into darkness, and they disappeared around a bend. Ripley yelled after the both of them.

"Newt! Rae! No!"
"Newt! Damnnit! No!"
The shaft receded into darkness. There was no answer. Hicks and Masey pulls Ripley up out of the gap.

"Come on! We can find them with this!"

He showed her the locator from his belt, as it beeped slowly. Ripley nodded, then yelled down the chute into darkness.

"Stay where you two are!"

Two plaintive calls from the darkness were heard. Echoey, distorted, terrified.

"Ripley!"

"We're coming!"

Hicks kicked out a ventilator grille, as they emerged onto a stairwell landing, followed by Ripley, Masey, and Gorman, who were both supporting Vasquez, as they rushed down the stairs as fast as possible.

In the sub-basement, Newt and Kendall were in a low grotto-like chamber, filled with pipes. It was flooded, almost up to Newt's neck, and because Kendall was not using one of her legs, it was up to her breastbone. She glanced down at the locator that was around her wrist from Hicks. She looked to Newt, who was looking around, as she stroked the doll's head, that she still carried.

"Newt."
She said, quietly, as she took her free wrist, and she fastened the locator around her wrist.
"It's for luck."

Newt nodded, before she let out another shout.
"Ripley!"

Hicks, Masey, Gorman, Vasquez and Ripley reached the bottom of the stairs and sprinted along a corridor, intent on the locator's signal. The signal beeped faster as they closed in on Newt and Rae.

"This way. They're close."

"Newt! Rae!"

Newt continued to wade around, as she looked everywhere for unexpected visitors. Kendall glanced down at the counter for the pulse-rifle. She had 5 rounds left, and she didn't have a magazine.

"Ripley!"

"Where are you! Can you hear me!"

Hearing voices and footsteps, both Kendall and Newt looked up, and hearing Ripley's voice, some hope kindled their dampened hearts and spirits.

"Newt! Rae!"

"Here!"
They both called, as they climbed up on some pipes toward the overhead grilling. Kendall having more difficulty than Newt.
"I'm here!"

"Where?"

Newt's tiny fingers wriggled up through the bars of the grate work in front of Ripley, Masey, Gorman, Vasquez and Hicks. They stopped and dropped down by them. Ripley squeezed the child's precious fingers and shone her light through the floor grating to see Newt's face.

"Newt. Are you okay? Where's Rae? Is she with you?"

"I'm here."

Kenny said, as she managed to get herself up beside Newt, and her slender fingers wriggled through the bars of the grate work, and she felt someone grasp her fingers, as if they were a lifeline, before they let go. Hicks gripped the grating, and he tried to pull it up, with no success.

"Let's cut it."

"Climb down, you two. We've gotta' cut through."

Hicks unsnapped his welder and flipped up the guard screen. Since Vasquez seemed to be in too much pain to do much, Gorman took her welder, and he too flipped up the guard screen.

Kendall and Newt climbed back down into the water, and they looked up and watched Hicks. Hicks and Gorman cut into the bars. The torch emitted a blinding blue light that illuminated the corridor. Ripley blocked off the glare to her eyes with her light as she looked down into the sub-basement.

"Newt...Rae..."

Back in the sub-basement, Kendall cradled the pulse-rifle to her chest, as they both looked around, as the blue sparks rained down into the water next to them.

"...Now, don't move. Stay very still."

"Okay."

"We're almost there. Hang in there, okay?"

Hicks' motion tracker came to life. The beeping sound that elicited from it didn't go unnoticed. Ripley looked over and picked it up. A blob of white dots were moving onto the screen.

"Hicks! Gorman!"

"I know."

"Hurry!"

"I know!"

"I mean it!"

The two torch flames quickly cut through the bars on the grating.

Both Kendall and Newt started to look very frightened now as they continuously scanned the room. The blue sparks showered blindly beside them. Kendall glanced at the underside of the grating as the flame cut through the metal, as it turned the metal into hot liquid, and sparks.
Ripley watched the motion tracker closely, before she jerked away and looked down at Newt and Rae.

"Newt! Rae! Just stay still!"

Newt, stood shoulder deep in water, as she watched as sparks fell as Hicks and Gorman's cuts. Silently, a glistening shape rose in one graceful motion from the water behind Newt. Kendall slipped down from the pipes, and now the water was up to her neck. She pushed herself and she cocked the pulse-rifle. It stood, dripping, as it dwarfed Newt's tiny form. Newt turned and screamed as the shadow engulfed her.

"Move Newt!"
She shouted, as she let out one shot from the pulse-rifle.

At this point, every damn shot counted. The shot only bounced off of the armored skull, but it slightly pushed the alien away from Newt. Newt, was too frightened to move, stayed in her position.

"Move Newt!"
Kendall shouted, as she unleashed another shot, as she tried to distract the creature away from Newt, and to her.

She felt her leg give way, and she sunk down a bit farther, until the brim of the water was to her chin. She felt a weight on her chest, and she felt her entire body go underneath the murky water. She struggled, before the back of her head hit the floor, and everything was a daze, and she heard Newt's screams echo throughout the grotto. She tried to shout for newt, but water was filling her nose, and her mouth. She was going to drown.

Ripley panicked, as she heard screams, shots from the pulse-rifle, and splashing below. Then, what frightened her the most, was the silence afterwards.

"Almost there!"
Hicks shouted, as the two separate flames grew closer together.

"No!"
Ripley, Hicks, and Gorman kicked, almost desperately at the grating, as they smashed it down.

"Newt! Rae!"
Ripley lunged into the hole with her light. The surface of the water reflected the beam placidly. Both Newt and Kendall were gone. Bobbing in the water, with eyes staring, was "Casey", the doll head. It sunk slowly, distorted, as it vanished into darkness. Hicks and Gorman pulled Ripley away from the hole. She struggled furiously, as she tried to tear out of their grip. Seeing another pair of eyes staring at them, they recoiled, but when they saw a hand reach out of the black water.

Without even thinking, Hicks slid down into the sub-basement to see which one of the girls had not been taken. With him properly standing, the water came up to about his torso. He could see the faint outline of the pulse-rifle underneath the water, with a pale hand clutching it. His arm was submerged into the water, as he grasped the pale hand, and pulled up Rae. When he was pulling her through the water, she seemed lifeless, but as soon as her head came out of the water, her eyes opened, and her arms wound tightly around his neck, and her legs wrapped around his torso, and she clung to him, like a scared child would cling to their mother, after they had a nightmare. Hicks stumbled slightly from the sudden action, but his hands hovered above her frame, before he rubbed her back, gently. She was soaked to the bone, she was shaking, and she was crying.
"It's my fault...It's all my fault..."
She mumbled, as he waded through the water to the pipes.

"No it's not. You did what you could."
He said, as he pushed himself onto the pipes, and he handed her to Ripley, who pulled her into a bear hug.

He pulled himself through the grating, and as soon as he was through, Ripley went back into her hysterics about Newt.

"Nooo! Nooooo!"

"Let's go!"

"They don't kill you! They don't kill you! They...she's alive! She's alive!"

"Alright! We believe you! She's alive! But, we've gotta' go! Now!"

With the help of a soaking and shaking Kenny, they both 'dragged' Ripley down the corridor toward an elevator, not far away at the end of the tunnel. Well. Hicks did most of the dragging, Kendall was not being much help, since her injured leg was slowing her down. Gorman and Masey supported Vasquez, who seemed to be slipping in and out of consciousness. When they had gotten close to the elevator, Kenny had to stop, and she felt her leg give out on her. She had to hold onto a piece of equipment, to keep herself upright. Something was broken. Something had to be. A bruise or something would not give her this much pain. Ripley glanced back, and she saw Kendall in the hallway, keeping herself upright using some dangling equipment.

"Rae!"
She called to her, but Kendall gestured for her to keep going. She didn't want to slow them down anymore.

Hicks followed Ripley's shout, and he saw as Kendall sunk down to the floor, her hand clasping her leg. He got Ripley into the elevator, and he made sure that Gorman, Masey, and Vasquez made it inside before he turned back to Kendall.

"Come on, we gotta' go!"

Kendall shook her head, as she pushed herself upright.

"I can't move much. I'm only going to slow you down."
She said, as she patted him on the chest, her palm smacking against the armor.

"Go find Newt, and then nuke the site from orbit. Stick to what we had planned."

"We plan on doing that, but you're coming along."

Kendall's grey eyes met his own grey ones.

"You know I'm going to slow you down, and yet you insist on me still coming."

"Ripley's going to need someone else to back her up on this story."
Hicks said, as he grasped her hand, to pull her up, but found that it was damaged with acid, and she hissed in pain.

He sent her an apologetic look, as he pulled her up, and he helped her to the elevator. She sent her
mother a thankful look, as she felt her back press against the back wall. Hicks hit the button to go to the surface level, but the door didn't close. Hicks hit it again and it began to close. Not fast enough though. An alien warrior leaped at the door and managed to get it's arms and head through, even though the doors closed on it. Hicks fired, point-blank, blasting it in the head. It fell off the door into the tunnel. Acid sluiced between the closing doors, and across Hicks' armor chest plate. The lift started upward. Hicks' fingers raced with the clasps. Despite Kendall's pain, Ripley's hysteria, and the others exhaustion, they all clawed at his armor, as they helped him as much as possible.

"Get it off! Get it off!"
He shouted as the acid made contact with his chest and arm.

He shucked out of the armor like a madman, as acrid fumes filled the lift. The armor hit the floor, and a sizzling hole could be seen in the chest. Kendall draped one of his arms across her shoulder, and her fingers linked with his own, helping keep him upright, but with the acrid fumes filling the lift, she felt light-headed, and she felt as if she was going to pass out. No. She couldn't do that. She coughed, but she made the mistake of inhaling some of the acrid fumes. She felt her throat grow scratchy, and she felt some of her throat close. She shook her head a few times, to try and keep herself together. Finally, what seemed like hours, stuck in the acrid-fume filled elevator, it stopped, the doors parted, and Ripley had her pulse-rifle ready. The doors parted and they scrambled out. She felt something heavy in her grasp, and she turned her head to see that she had somehow grabbed his melted in chest armor. Why she had grabbed this, she did not know.

------------------------------------------
At the North Lock, the six stumbled outside.

"Here!"
Ripley shouted, as Kendall, despite her injuries was supporting Hicks, who had doubled over in agony, as they emerged into the storm-blasted night.

Gorman and Masey continued to support Vasquez, who was now fully conscious.

"Come on, you can make it!"
Kendall said, through her teeth, as they made their way to the landing field, to the up-link tower base.

From behind a terminal monitor, Bishop steered the incoming drop-ship with a joystick. He glanced up as the second drop-ship flew over the North Lock building, and descended toward the landing grid, side-slipping in hurricane gusts. Bishop stood, as he guided it with the portable terminal. The ship set down hard, and it lowered it's access ramp on contact. The six of them stumbled up to Bishop, and Ripley shouted to be heard over the loud winds.

"Bishop! How much time!"
"Plenty! Twenty-six minutes!"
Came Bishop's reply, and he seemed pleased with himself, about it as well.

"We're not leaving!"
"We're not!?"
They all made their way up the ship's access ramp, before they disappeared inside.

Chapter End Notes
Don't forget kudos and comments.
"We ain't going anywhere."

Chapter Summary

“It wasn't that long, and it certainly wasn't the kind of kiss you see in movies these days, but it was wonderful in its own way, and all I can remember about the moment is that when our lips touched, I knew the memory would last forever.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Bishop was seated in the control seat, as he piloted the ship toward the massive processing station.

The atmosphere processing station, seemed to be like an infernal engine, as it roared out of control. Steam blasted and swirled, lightning zapped around the superstructure and columns of incandescent gas thundered hundreds of feet into the air. The drop-ship seemed to approach the processing station hypnotically, as it flew through the massive archway in the front, as it entered the belly of the beast.

In the drop ship, Ripley and Masey seemed to doing the same thing. If what Ripley had said was true, that the creatures don't kill you first, there was the slimmest chance of both Hudson and Newt being alive. They seemed to move in scary synchronization, as they each pulled down two weapons from a storage rack and tied their barrels together with some cloth. Then, they wound tape around the stocks, which securely fastened them together. They finished with the tape, and they dropped the now half-empty roll of tape. Thanks to the instruction from Ripley, they have both crudely fastened an M-41A assault rifle, side by side, with a flamethrower unit, and there were two of these machines. One for Ripley, and one for Masey. Twice as bad ass.

Meanwhile, Hicks was sprawled out in a flight seat, with the contents of a field medical kit strewn around him. He was out of the game...contorted with pain. Kendall was seated in front of him, even though her leg was killing her, she left it alone. She finished giving him a shot of pain killer, before she started to work on his face, just with the gentle cleaning of rubbing alcohol. Seeing him wince, she sent him an apologetic look, and before she actually realized what she had done, she grasped his left hand, with her left hand, as she continued to gently clean the area where the acid blood from the warrior, had sluiced away at his face.

"So...are you going to tell me that I'm acting like a girl, because of the fact that I wince when I feel the rubbing alcohol on my face?"

Kendall felt herself wince at his sarcastic comment, and she shook her head.

"I think that whenever anyone has half their face eaten away by acid, that they have every damn right to wince when rubbing alcohol touches that kind of wound, now will you stop being a smart ass? Or is that too much to ask from you? And don't say that you have the capability of being a smart ass, because I know that you do."

Hicks sent her a half-smile, before he glanced down at her leg, where she had not even bothered to bandage up her wound. In his own opinion, her wound looked a lot worse than the one that was on his face and arms.

"You should take care of that, you know?"
Kendall glanced down at the festered wound on her leg, but she shook it off.

"Let me deal with you first."
She said, as she finished cleaning a section of his face, before they both looked over at Ripley, and Masey, both of them clearly mystified at what they were doing.

In the cockpit, Bishop looked around, as he was having some difficulty on trying to find a good place to set the ship down. Finally, he managed to see a narrow landing platform, that was twenty levels above the ground.

The drop-ship pivoted, as it hovered in the blasting turbulence, and settled down on the platform with a clang. Lightning arched all around the platform and the ship as the station began the sequence to self-destruct.

Both Masey and Ripley worked rapidly, as they prepared for what they had planned to do. In turn, they each slapped a magazine into their individual rifle. The counter lit up, and for each it read 95. Ripley taped Hicks' locator to the barrel of the rifle. As they hung their newly 'enhanced' guns over their shoulders, Masey pulled out a few M-41A grenades from a box, and she handed them to Ripley, who was quickly stuffing gear quickly into a satchel, their hands flew, as Ripley picked up a packet of flares and a bandoleer of grenades, and she shoved them into the satchel, just as Bishop came aft from the pilot's compartment.

"Ripley..."

"I don't want to hear about, Bishop. She's alive, and if luck holds, so is Hudson. There's still time."

"In nineteen minutes, this area is going to be a cloud of vapor the size of Nebraska."

"Hicks. Rae, don't let him leave."

Kendall looked back over at Ripley and Masey, as she gently held a wad of gauze over Hicks' damaged, yet still angelic face. Angelic. She thought that he had an angelic face. Smooth Kenny. Real smooth.

"We ain't going anywhere."
She heard Hicks say, and she nodded in compliance.

Both Ripley and Masey hefted their hybrid weapons, grabbed the satchel, and they both spun to leave.

"See you, Rae."
Kendall heard Masey say, and she turned to face the girl.

"Kendall. It's Kendall."
Kenny admitted.

Since they had met, she had been called Rae, but if this was the last time that they were going to see each other, she may as well know, and the two of them seemed to share a moment, albeit brief. Mutual respect in the valley of death.

"Just Masey."
Came Masey's reply, with a grim, half-hearted smile.

"Don't be gone long, you two."
Both Ripley and Masey smiled, before they turned to the door controls. The door opened to a side access ramp, as wind and machine thunder blasted in. A few minutes later, the door closed, and everything was silent.

"So, that's your name then? Kendall? How did you get Rae from Kendall?"
There it was. There was the smart-ass comment that was missing.

"Yeah. I got Rae from Kendall, because it's actually Kendall-Rae. What about you Hicks? I know Hicks isn't your first name. I spilled my real name, now it's your turn."

"Dwayne. It's Dwayne."

"Dwayne? I like it. It may take a while to start to call you Dwayne instead of Hicks. So, tell me, Dwayne, any pretty girls waiting for your return back home?"
Kendall jibed, as she swabbed at his wound that seemed to break open whenever she moved the bandage away from it.

"None yet. What about you? Pretty girl like you, there's gotta be someone waiting for you."

"I haven't been home in 57 years Hicks, no one remembers me from when I was at home. That's bull. You're a good-looking guy, and you're a nice person. There's gotta be someone."

"You think I'm a nice person? That means a lot coming from someone who thought that I was more of an asshole, or a smart ass?"

Kendall let out a shaky laugh, as she rolled her eyes.

"You know, Corporal...sometimes being a nice person is all about knowing when to be an asshole. Oh come on! I'm not made of stone, and my heart is not made of ice. I have feelings you know."
Kendall admitted, before she went from sitting in front of him, to sitting beside him.

Her arms gently wound around his good arm, and she rested her head on his shoulder.

"Alright, enlighten me. What's this feeling? You being all nice, and protective over a wounded soldier?"

Kendall sighed, as she glanced at him.
"Fine. I was abit scared for your sorry ass, alright? I become protective over people I care about, alright? What about you? What about all the times that you become protective over me? A civilian who just wanted to come along to wipe out these things."

"Well, it seems that we have the same views on things, kiddo...It seems that we both become protective over people we care about."

"Yeah well, that feeling circulated through all of the Marines. Your's was directed mostly at me. May I ask why?"

"Well, how many times has shit happened to you? Going inside the actual colony? Seeing those alive FaceHuggers, or whatever you call them? Your nightmare in Operations? You got stabbed by one of those bastards? Burke setting those things on you and Newt...The list can go on, kiddo."

"Well, I think that you care too much about me."

"Or I care enough about you."
"So what are you trying to say? That a tough-as-nails Marine has grown soft for a civilian?"

"Would that be a problem for you?"

Kendall opened her mouth to say something, but that was when she realized what he had said. "Is that what you're saying?"

Hicks said nothing, only to gingerly scratch the back of his head with his semi-injured arm.

"That is what you're saying!..."

Kendall started to babble without even realizing it, and after a few moments, she heard him sigh, before something pressed against her lips, silencing her.

At the sudden feeling, Kendall jumped in surprise, for she was not expecting it, but slowly, and surely, she felt herself return it. Their lips stayed pressed together, until Kenny realized what had happened, and she pulled back, slowly.

"Does that answer your question, kiddo?"

As if in response, Kendall only nodded, before she rested her head back on his shoulder, and she sighed. Now all they had to do, was to wait.

Chapter End Notes

Comments and kudos please!
Ripley and Masey ran down the ramp, and they crossed the platform to the closed doors of a large freight elevator. Ripley hit the open button, and the doors parted. In the background, the female voice of the warning system was heard.

"Attention. Emergency. All personnel must evacuate immediately. You now have fifteen minutes to reach minimum safe distance."

Ripley and Masey entered the elevator, just as the doors closed shut.

Inside of the freight elevator, as it descended, both women crouched on the floor, and they both loaded their individual grenade launcher in the M-41A, before they cocked their guns. They set their weapons down, as Ripley removed one of the flare packets from the satchel, and in turn, they each stuffed three flares in their pants pockets. As the elevator descended, Masey glanced over at the floor read-out, and the level counter decreased. Fifteen. Fourteen. Thirteen. Both Ripley and Masey removed their jackets, but Masey wound hers around her waist. If she found Hudson, she had to wrap any of his wounds with something.

Almost in synchronization, they both donned a battle harness directly over their T-shirts. Their eyes burned with determination, which seemed to hold the gut-panic in check. Ripley placed the bandoleer of grenades around her chest, before they both hefted the guns at their sides, as they stood at the ready. Ripley closed her eyes as she tried to calm herself. Masey was cracking her fingers. She had escaped that nest before, but with blind luck. She knew that this was probably the most terrifying thing that she had ever done. Scratch that. This was the most terrifying thing that she had ever done, for the both of them, as they glanced at each other, and that was when they realized that they were each drenched in sweat. The voice of the warning system echoed down the tunnel again, calm and mechanical.

"Attention. Emergency. All personnel must evacuate immediately. You now have fourteen minutes to reach minimum safe distance."

Both women primed the flamethrower, and a blue flame emitted by it's barrel. The lift motor whined, as it slowed down to a stop. It hit bottom with a bump, and the safety cage retracted. Slowly, expectantly, the doors parted. They both stood there, as they swiveled the weapons. Steam clouds swirled all around them.

Ripley and Masey moved out of the lift, their knuckles white on the rifle, as they glanced around. A jet of steam sprayed out above, startling them both. Before them was a network of pipes which stretched in every direction. Some glowed cherry red from heat build-up, but they still moved into the tunnel ahead and they shot the flame unit into the open space above them, just for precautionary measures. As they continued forward, they fired again, which lit up the tunnel, which set a few
pillars on fire in the process. As they rounded a pillar, Ripley looked back to see that the elevator doors closed with a bang. There was no turning back now.

Ripley looked around, then down at the locator. It beeped slowly, which showed the range to its target. A blast of energy went off to their left, which caused Ripley and Masey to close their eyes for protection, before they started to move that way, as they approached a "Sub-Level 03" stairway. The bottom was obscured in mist, so carefully, Masey let out a short stream of flame, as a precaution, before they sprinted down the stairs, and they came to a landing with an overheated red-hot pipe over it. Ducking, they moved straight on to a two-way junction, and Ripley panned the locator around. The monotonous beeps became faster to the right, as they moved on.

Just before they entered the catacombs, both Masey and Ripley stopped just outside the entrance to the alien-encrusted tunnel before her. Just to be on the safe side, they sent a blast of flame scorching ahead of them. Masey pulled out a flare, ignited it and threw it down. It almost disappeared in the encrustation. Momentum sped up as they continued forward as fast as possible, their guns aimed straight ahead at all times. Ready for anything. Their breathing was fast and hard, as they came to another stairwell junction, Ripley released a jettison of fire straight ahead, as they moved around the stairs, before they stopped at a corner to peer around it in terror, their breathing had become short gasps and their hearts raced, THUMP-THUMP, THUMP-THUMP, it started to beat loudly, just as the locator had begun to beep faster by the second. As Ripley checked it, the signal got louder when it was aimed toward a nearby descending staircase, to which they dashed down.

At the bottom, they quickly moved around the stairs and began up another corridor. The locator's beeping had increased again, and as they stopped under a flashing yellow klaxon, Ripley sent a burst of flame out ahead of her, and they moved forward, both of them swiveled to look everywhere. Another flare was lit, by Masey to mark the way back. As they appeared out of a steam cloud, they came around to a corner, and Ripley panned the locator around and headed right, and they ran-walked along the corridor until the locator's signal had become a stream of sound. That couldn't be right. They both glanced down at the digital counter of the locator. It read zero. They couldn't believe it. Where was Newt then? With that thought in mind, they both looked down. There, lying in the sticky encrustation, was the tracer watch. All hope receded, as it disintegrated into mindless chaos. Both of them were at a loss for words, as Ripley gripped the bracelet hard and began to weep.

Masey sent the woman a look of sympathy, as she rested a hand on her shoulder, as she started to move through the chamber. Newt and Hudson had to be alive. The bracelet only fell off of Newt's wrist, so that meant that Newt wasn't too far ahead. It fell silent in the chamber, before she heard movement, and she raised her gun as a precaution, before she pulled the small flashlight that she had managed to swipe from Operations, and the light shone onto...Hudson's face. Hudson. She made her way over to him, avoiding the already opened eggs like the plague, and she knelt before him. His chest armor had been shucked off, as if he had tried to escape from the grip of the creatures, and it had fallen off in the process. She rested her hand on his chest, and she kneaded it, gently, as she checked to see if he had an embryo implanted in his chest. Luckily, there was not one. She started to slap at his face, and shake him, as she tried to wake him up. After a few moments, his eyes opened, and he looked dazed.

"Hudson..."
She said, almost breathlessly, as she kissed his forehead, before she started to pull at the sticky resin that imprisoned the Marine.

After a few minutes, of him getting himself together, he tried to help her out, and once they had gotten him free, she pulled him up, and into a one-armed embrace. His hands hovered above her frame, before he returned it, quickly.
"Come on. we gotta go."
She said, as she grasped his hand, and she led him back to where Ripley was.

Meanwhile, in another section of the egg chamber, Newt was cocooned in a pillar-like structure at the edge of alien egg cluster. Her eyelids fluttered open and she became aware of her surroundings. The egg nearest to her began to move, as it opened like an obscene flower. Newt stared, transfixed by terror, as jointed legs appeared over the lip of the ovoid one by one, and she let out a blood-curdling scream.

Back in the catacombs, where Ripley was still mourning the loss of Newt, heard the scream, and she broke into a run. With Hudson, hearing the scream as well, Masey gingerly pulled Hudson along with her, as she too followed the scream of Newt.

Newt watched the FaceHugger emerge and turn toward her, just as Ripley ran in, the FaceHugger tensed to leap, and Ripley fired, as she blasted it with a burst from the assault rifle. Out of nowhere, the figure of an adult warrior came, as it bounded along a corridor's walls like it was a spider. As she fired from the hip, Ripley drilled it with two controlled bursts which catapulted it back. Two more warriors showed up, and she took out one of them, before she took out the other one, it exploded with 2 shots, and she turned her head, for a brief moment to see Masey with Hudson. She sent them, a slight smile, as she tried to slow down her racing heart.

"Ripley! Ripley!"
Newt shouted, as she regained her attention.

They all ran to Newt, and Ripley began to tear at the fresh, resinous cocoon material. Masey and Hudson knelt down near Ripley, and they helped her free the child, and once she was free, they stood up, as Ripley pulled her up onto her chest. Strands of the sticky resin stretches between them.

"Grab onto me! Hold on!"

A huge fireball billowed out of the center of the station, as the structure began to self-destruct.

Back in the egg chamber, Masey and Ripley turned to retrace their steps, only to have an explosion on a lower level engulf the passageway in an enormous fireball. They recoiled, before they retreated, as they moved through another steam-filled corridor, and they emerged into a large chamber. As they entered the chamber, they all froze, as their expressions changed to worry, as they turned, as they surveyed the room. A room full of eggs. Dozens and dozens of them lined the floor everywhere around them. Hearing something, they turned slowly, only to watch as a strange tube-like membrane placed an egg on the floor with the others. It retracted, as it dripped slimy, gelatinous ooze from the tube’s opening onto the egg.

The four of them eyed along an egg-filled abdomen which swelled and swelled into a great pulsing tubular sac, which was suspended from a lattice of pipes and conduits by a web-like membrane as if some vast coil of intestine was draped carelessly among the machinery. Finally, they looked up and that was when they saw it. A massive silhouette in the mist, the Alien Queen glowered over her eggs like a great, glistening insect-Buddha. All the while, one though bounced around in their minds.

"You were right, Hudson. It's like the same thing with ants. The one female that runs the whole show. The Queen. She seems badass, and she's fucking big."
Masey murmured, lowly, as she tried not to move her lips, as she spoke.

Hudson, who remained completely still and silent (for once.) only managed to nod. The Queen's
deep, heavy breathing echoed around the chamber, and as they watched, the Queen's legs, arms and massive inner jaws extended, as she hissed loudly at them. The hiss was really a silent call for guards and three drones stepped out of the shadows and mist around the chamber. One hissed at Ripley, and another hissed at Masey, seeing them both, Ripley set Newt down, and she pushed the girl behind her, and Masey's grip on Hudson's hand seemed to tighten, and it took a few seconds, before he returned the grip.

The Queen looked down on the four intruders that have entered into her lair, just as Ripley swiveled and fired a burst of flame above the eggs. Masey had jumped slightly at the sudden action by Ripley, before she realized what she was doing. The Queen screamed and twisted in her throne. Ripley turned back to the queen and pointed the flame unit at an egg, and she stares at her for a response.

The drones froze. A nightmare tableau. The Queen got the point, and she motioned and hissed to the left and right with her large crested head. The hiding drones backed off into the shadows that hid them. It was a Mexican standoff between two females fighting for their young. Masey, Hudson and Ripley watched the drones disappear, before they began to back out of the chamber, away from the queen.

The four of them carefully moved backward towards the tunnel that they had come from, as they stepped gently, and firmly, and they stopped in the entrance to the tunnel. Hearing the sickening sound of an egg opening, Masey turned her head to see a FaceHugger emerge from the top, and leap towards her face. Reacting quickly, she released a shot, which caused the FaceHugger to explode, acidic blood flying, but it fell short to the faces of the group. Acid landed on Masey's calf, and she bit down on her bottom lip, until it bled to keep from shouting, and having a string of curse words elicit from her mouth. Trying to push the pain out of her mind, she felt her knuckles turn white, as her grip tighten on the enhanced pulse rifle. Ripley scanned the room, and she noticed as another egg started to enfold near her.

She thought for a second, before she unleashed the flame thrower, which ignited the field of eggs with an insane fury. The Queen went berserk, as she screeched like some psychotic steam whistle. She clawed at the air, as she tried to get at Ripley, but she was too far and was stuck in her throne. They glanced at the walls of the chamber and saw the three drones, as they came for them. They were blown off the walls that they cling to by Ripley's and Masey's pulse-fire. They continued to fire, as they focused more on the burning eggs, which exploded on contact with the bullets. They both continued to fire, until they each had 12 rounds left in the gun, before they stopped, and they pumped the slide of the grenade launcher, and they fired. The grenades punched deep into the Queen’s egg sac and exploded, as it ripped it open from within. Eggs and tons of gelatinous matter sprayed across the chamber floor. Masey and Ripley pumped and fired again and again and again. Four times into the egg sack. The Queen was crazy with rage.

"Let's go!"
Newt shouted, and with that, they started to back into the exit tunnel, and Masey and Ripley continued to fire the flame units into the chamber, as they continued to ignite the eggs.

"Behind us!"

Ripley turned and blew away an approaching drone. It dropped to the floor. Ripley unloaded the rest of her ammo into it, before she grabbed Newt, and moved into a corner. Masey and Hudson followed suit, and they pushed themselves against the wall. Ripley unslung the bandolier of grenades, primed one, and threw the whole thing as far as she could into the egg chamber. As she scooped up Newt, they dashed into the catacombs and was hurled forward by the shock wave of multiple explosions.

In the egg chamber, the Queen was in hysteria. The explosions around the Queen had caused her
supports to break, which dropped her into the flames around her. She lashed out in pain and anger, and pulled herself free from the egg sac, which ripped away and she dragged torn cartilage and tissue behind her.

In the catacomb like corridor, Masey, Hudson, Ripley and Newt ran, blindly, with panting intensity, which verged on hysteria. Seeing one of the flares that was dropped earlier, they turned, and upon seeing another, they sprinted towards it, as the foundations of the world shook. As they rounded a corner, Ripley and Masey found the stairs they had come down and dashed up them. At the top, the entire superstructure rocked as another explosion ignited within the heart of the station. Holding on, the group carried on. Upon rounding another corner, they saw the lift, and they ran towards it, as they gasped for breath, Ripley hit the up button. Nothing. She hit it again, and they looked up the shaft for the elevator, as the lift slowly came down, with flames billowing all around it.

Masey moved to the adjacent lift and hit the up button. The sound of lift motor's whined as it began its slow descent as well from several floors up. Both Masey and Ripley were frantic, as they hit the buttons over and over again, as they hoped for some faster action. An enraged screech echoed in the corridor behind them, and they turned, terror consuming their souls, as they began to hit the buttons once more.

"Come on! God damn it!"
Ripley shouted, before the screech came once more.

This time closer. Ripley looked up the corridor once more, and she sprinted for a nearby ladder, Masey and Hudson trailed behind her.

"Hold on to me!"
She ordered to Newt, as she began to climb.

Masey was about to urge Ripley to climb faster, just as the silhouette of the Queen rounded a corner and slowly made it's way up the corridor. Knowing that they would not all make it, Ripley backed down the ladder. The Queen saw them and hissed. Ripley heard the lift and looked back to see it stop and open for them. She raced into it, with Masey and Hudson in tow, and jammed the up button. The Queen quickly moved its way up the misty corridor, as she screeched at the top of her lungs. Ripley dropped Newt, and Masey released Hudson's hand, and they readied their weapons to fire.

The lift cage slid closed just in time as the Queen came up to it. Ripley fired her flame thrower through the cage, and Masey let out what remaining shots she had left, only for them to bounce off the armored body. The Queen screeched and reeled back, as Ripley continued firing until the unit ran dry. The Queen noticed this, but the lift doors closed too quickly for an attack. The elevator started upward quickly, as Masey, Hudson, Ripley and Newt hugged the back wall, terrified. A large explosion nearby rocked the lift, as it continued upward, and some debris fell on its roof with a bang as a huge fireball slightly engulfed the lift.

Back in the corridor, the second lift reached bottom, and its doors rolled open for anyone. The Queen looked over and froze, as if she contemplated the open lift cage.

The ride up was not comforting as explosions constantly shook the tiny lift and its occupants. Masey's leg was stretched out, as she tore away at the pant leg that covered the acid burn, and she ripped it off at the knee, and she tossed the discarded piece into a corner, as she tied the jacket around the wound. All the while, Hudson was with her, still not saying a word. The mechanical voice of the warning system was heard again, and it was much shorter now.
"You now have two minutes to reach minimum safe distance."

The lift reached the top and Masey, Hudson, Ripley and Newt hustled out onto the platform. Ripley looked around through wind-whipped streamers of smoke and she saw...nothing. The ship was gone.

"No."

The platform was completely empty. Ripley looked up and shouted an outrage at the final betrayal.

"Bishop! God damn you!"

She slumped over in defeat, breathing heavy. A sound behind her captured her attention, and they moved over to the adjacent lift cage and looked down. The second lift slowly approached, with clouds of fire exploding all around it. Masey, Hudson, Ripley and Newt backed away from the doors. Both of them checked their guns. The counter read empty. They dropped the weapons, as Ripley picked up Newt, they backed up toward the railing.

There was no place to run. Multiple explosions detonated in the complex far below and all around. Huge fireballs welled upward through the machinery. The platform bucked wildly. Nearby, a cooling tower collapsed with a thunderous roar and the shriek of rending steel. Chaos and destruction totally surrounded them, offering no reprieve, and just then, the lift stopped. They stared transfixed as the safety cage opened. Flashes from the explosion gave a glimpse of the apparition within. Then, it moved into full view. The Queen had come.

"Close your eyes, baby."

Just when, they thought that all hope was lost, the drop-ship rose up right behind them, its hovering jets roared, and Newt saw it first.

"Look!"

Hearing Newt, they turned, and they saw it too, before they looked back at the lift. The creature screeched maddeningly at them, as it moved forward. Ripley lifted Newt onto the loading stairs, which extended from the ship's side. She crawled up, before she turned to help Ripley up. Hudson lifted Masey up, and with the help from Ripley, they pulled him up. Just as Hudson got half-way up the ramp, a tremendous explosion ripped through the complex below. They quickly moved inside, just as Ripley hit the close button on the ramp, while running to a flight seat with Newt.

The explosion hit the ship, slamming it sideways. Its extended landing legs fouled in a tangle of conduit, as it ground with a hideous squeal of metal on metal. Ripley cradled Newt, as she began to strap in, Masey was seated on Hudson's lap, but at this point in time, neither one cared. Bishop wrestled with the controls. The landing legs retracted, and ripped free, but still trailed some debris. Hudson and Ripley slammed their seat harness down, and locked it down into place.

"Punch it, Bishop!"

Ripley shouted, to be heard over the explosions in the station.

The entire lower level of the station disappeared in a fireball. The air vibrated with intense heat waves and concussions, and as the drop-ship engines fired. Ripley and Hudson were slammed back in their seat, as the ship vaulted out and up, Bishop stood it on its tail, pouring on the gears. Ripley, Masey, Hudson and Newt saw everything, as it shook into a blur.

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In the stratosphere, the drop-ship lunged up out of the cloud layer into the clear high night. Below, the clouds lit up from beneath from horizon to horizon. A sun hot dome of energy burst up through
the cloud layer, and the tiny ship was slammed by the shockwave, tossed forward, but it still continued to climb upwards, and surprisingly, it was still functioning, as they climbed towards the stars.

In the cockpit of the drop-ship, Bishop checked over the instruments for damage. All was fine. They had survived. He picked up the inter-ship mike.

"It's okay. We're okay."

In the hold of the drop-ship Ripley, Masey, and Hudson heard Bishop's words and they closed their eyes, relieved. They made it. Ripley looked down at Newt, who was still seated in her lap.

"Hey?"

Newt looked over at her.

"We made it."

"I knew you'd come."

Ripley smiled and kissed her, before she went to thank Masey for her help, but she found that both Masey and Hudson had passed out, obviously out of exhaustion, Masey still in Hudson's lap, and his arms draped loosely around her frame. Ripley and Newt glanced at each other, with a small smile, before they turned and looked out at the welcoming stars of space, as the tiny ship rocketed upward, as it headed back home to the Sulaco.

Chapter End Notes

Comments and kudos! (:}
Sometime later, in the Sulaco Cargo Lock, the scorched and battered ship once again sat in its drop bay, steam blasted from cooling vents beside the engine, and the rotating clearance lights swept around the large chamber.

Inside the drop-ship, Bishop had finished giving Masey, Hudson, Vasquez, and Gorman a shot of painkiller, that would knock them out, but help them with the pain, and he moved over to Ripley, as she inspected the comatose Hicks. Bishop and Newt were beside her. Kendall was seated beside the comatose Corporal, her eyes closed, and her leg stretched out in front of her, and her head rested on the unbandaged shoulder of Hicks. Ripley glanced down at the top of the seat restraint, and she felt a small smile grace her lips. Even though Hicks was in an unconscious state, he cared for Kendall. Her bandaged hand was resting in the almost limp grasp of his own.

"He's going to be alright. He's just out. I had to give him another shot for the pain. Kendall just needs a stretcher. The damage to her leg can be fixed, but it took a while to give her the painkiller. It seemed nearly impossible for her to stay in one place, which was very difficult for her to do."

Ripley started to lift the seat restraint to take Hicks out, but Bishop stopped her.

"We need a stretcher…to carry him up to medical. The rest of them are just out. They may not need a stretcher, but they should have some time to rest before we move them."

Ripley nodded and lowered the restraint back, before they left the ship.

The group appear, coming down the loading stairs, and into the cargo lock.

"I'm sorry if I scared you. That platform was just becoming too unstable. I had to circle and hope things didn't get to rough to take you off."

Bishop apologized, as he stopped under the back landing leg of the ship. Ripley caught up to him, and she stopped before him.

"Bishop...you did okay."

Ripley admitted.

"I did?"

He asked, clearly surprised at what she had said.

Ripley smiled, slightly, as she looked at Bishop. It was hard to admit it, but she did.

"Oh yeah."

They heard a sizzle sound from below Bishop, and they looked down, and they saw a tiny
innocuous drop of liquid, as it splashed onto the deck next to Bishop's shoe. 'SSSS.' A hole began to form, and only one thing could have caused this. Acid. Suddenly, something burst from Bishop's chest, and sprayed Ripley with milk-like android blood. It was the razor-sharp scorpion tail of the alien Queen, and it was driven right through him from behind. Ripley pushed Newt back out of the way, onto the floor, as Bishop thrashed, as he sprayed white blood out of his mouth. He seized the protruding section of tail in his hands, as it slowly lifted him off the deck and up to the Queen's chest.

Above them, the Queen glowered from its place of concealment among the hydraulic mechanisms inside the landing-leg bay. It blended perfectly with the machinery until it began to emerge. She seized Bishop in two great hands, before she ripped him apart and flung him aside, shredded, like a doll. Bishop's upper-half landed hard on the deck near the front of the drop-ship, with his milky blood covering him, before he looked over at what did this to him. The Queen descended slowly to the deck, the rotating lights glistened across its shiny black limbs, which dripped acid and rage. It was huge, powerful...and very pissed off. It descended, it's six limbs unfolded in inhuman geometries.

Ripley moved with nightmarish slowness herself, as she stared, almost hypnotized...terrified to break and run. Never taking her eyes off the creature, she motioned to Newt with her hand.

"Go. Move."

On command, Newt started to crawl slowly backward. The Queen saw her and hissed, but Ripley waved her arms, decoying.

"No! Here! Here!"

The Queen turned her attention to Ripley and hissed. Her open jaws were filled with long, sharp, translucent teeth. Drool dripped from her open maw. Ripley slowly backed away, before she called to Newt.

"Run."

Newt got up and ran to an open maintenance hatch in the deck, before she dropped inside.

To keep her attention off of Newt, Ripley waved at the alien to keep its attention on her, which she managed to do, since the Queen loomed in front of her, as she stood sideways, on the landing strut, ready to attack.

"Here!"

Ripley slowly lowered her arms and backed up carefully. Not carefully enough. The Queen saw her movement and didn't approve, as she hissed at Ripley once more.

Ripley noticed an open cargo bay behind her. She spun, as she sprinted toward it. The creature leaped for her, as she moved like an out-of-control locomotive. Its feet slammed, which echoed, on the deck behind her. Ripley cleared the cargo door, and she hit the close switch. It whirred half-way closed when the creature hit. BOOM! It backed up and the door closed completely. Angrily, it rammed the door again. BOOM!

In the dark chamber, Ripley backed away from the door, as she gasped for breath, as the creature outside continued to slam into the door. She looked around and noticed something that would help her out of this situation, and she quickly moved to it.

Back in the cargo lock, Bishop flailed around, as he positioned himself to see the Queen, as it walked
by, with its feet clomping on the deck, and Bishop watched it quietly.

In the sub-floor channels, Newt looked up through the grille-work flooring. Light played across her shadowed face in bars. The Queen lumbered into view overhead, as Newt watched her through the bars as it looked down at the floor for her. It passed over her hiding spot, before it back up. It had seen her, thanks to the fact that it had noticed the movement of Newt's head, as she watched. The Queen hissed, as it pulled up the flooring with its big hand and reached in for her.

Newt screamed and scurried away. She crawled along quickly like a rabbit as the looming figure of the alien appeared above. A section of grille in front of Newt was ripped away. She retreated, as she crawled back the way she came, only to have the Queen reach in for her through another hole in the flooring in front of her. She quickly turned away in another direction. Newt stopped, and stared up through the flooring, as she continued to watch the Queen, and it moved around above her, before it paused, seeing her. Newt noticed this, and she scurried away. The Queen beat her to it, and she ripped up the floor right above her. Newt froze in fright, as she screamed, at the alien that reached down to get her.

Back in the cargo lock, a loud clank echoed throughout the chamber as the door that Ripley when into opened, and the Queen spun at the sound of it, as she turned to see what it was. As the door opened, it revealed an inhuman silhouette that stood there. It was Ripley, who wore two tons of hardened steel. It was the power loader. She lifted the arms horizontally beside her, as she stomped out, the massive feet crash-clanged on the deck, as she stopped midway to the Queen.

"Get away from her, you bitch!"
Ripley snapped, bitterly.

The Queen hissed with pure lethality, and Newt looked out of the flooring and to Ripley.

Ripley moved the arms up for combat, both in swinging positions and she took two steps. The Queen screeched and charged, only to meet a roundhouse from one great hydraulic arm which caught the creature on its hideous skull, and slammed it onto the deck. The Queen got up and Ripley hit it again with the other arm, which sent it sliding into some heavy cargo boxes. The alien righted itself, as it stood in a lethal stance, and it hissed violently, clearly really pissed off. Ripley swung around, as she positioned herself toward the Queen.

"Come on!"
She screamed.

Both stood their ground now. Ripley, constantly moved her arms around, which kept the Queen back and the Queen, hissed, clawed, and struck with her tail to get at Ripley. It was a stalemate. Ripley sensed this and changed the game plan. Getting an idea, Ripley keyed in a command, and the doors of a rectangular pit opened up nearby. It was the vertical loading airlock.

The Queen sensed the change in direction of the fight and charged. Ripley lowered an arm and closed it around the alien's neck. The creature screamed. Its face was now right in front of Ripley. The striking teeth extended almost a meter from inside its fanged maw, which shot between the crash-bars. Ripley ducked and the Queen struck again. Ripley ducked again and flicked open the
cutting torch trigger on the control joystick. The flame on the torch shot out, right into the alien's face.

The Queen screamed and moved it's head away. Ripley screamed with exertion as she lifted her right arm, which brought the alien of it's feet. It dangled in the air writhing. Ripley hit the turning controls, as the upper body of the loader swung right, and she brought the Queen with it. It was now hanging over the open loading airlock, and the Queen swung in open air above the lock. Ripley bent the loader forward, and she dropped the alien into the lock. It grabbed the loader, and pulled it off balance. Ripley screamed as they toppled and fell together, over the lip of the pit.

In the loading lock, they crashed together five meters below. The loader pinned the Queen, as it shrieked and clawed in pain, as it tried to get free.

In the cargo lock, Newt saw them go over and jumped out of the sub-floor channels.

"RIPLEY!"
Newt screamed.

In the loading lock, Ripley frantically pulled her arms out of the controls of the loader and clawed toward a nearby service ladder, and she quickly climbed it. When she was halfway up, the Queen loosened itself slightly and seized Ripley's ankle, who gripped the ladder rungs tightly, as she fought against the alien strength. As she fought against the pull of the alien, she noticed something. Next to the ladder was an airlock actuating control panel. Thinking quickly, she hit the red 'Inner Door Override' button.

A klaxon began to sound, and red warning lights came on just below Ripley. The Queen still continued to screech, as she tried to free herself. As Ripley pulled down on the 'Outer Door Open' lever, there was a hurricane shriek of air as the doors on which the loader and the Queen were lying on, parted to unveil infinite pit of stars, below. The airlock suddenly became a wind tunnel, which blasted and buffeted Ripley as she struggled to hold onto the ladder. The air of the vast ship howled past her into space as she locked her arm around a ladder rung, which felt like it almost torn out of it's shoulder socket.

In the cargo lock, Newt screamed as the hurricane air stream sucked her across the floor toward the airlock. Bishop, who was torn virtually in two, seemed to have the same problem, but managed to grab hold of the barred flooring right next to the lock. Newt also grabbed hold of the flooring.

In the loading lock, the doors opened slowly, due to the weight on them, but they finally opened completely. The loader tumbled clear, as it fell into the void. The Queen fell free, as it hung in the opening of the door by Ripley's ankle. It screeched in the wind as the air pushed against it with extreme force. Ripley was losong the fight, her strength in almost gone, and her arm felt as if it was going to rip free at any moment. She screamed in pain as her shoe ripped away from her foot, which dropped the Queen into the depths of space. The Queen spun away from the open airlock door, as she tumbled into the blackness, as she shrieked and clawed for survival. The fight of the Queen was over.

Back in the loading airlock, with all of her remaining strength, Ripley fought against the blasting air, as she crawled up to the lip of the inner doorway and started to climb over it.

Newt's strength was gone and she slide away from the equipment that she held onto toward the open airlock. Bishop reached out desperately for her as she slid past him.

"BISHOP!"
Newt screamed desperately, as he caught her by her arm, and he hung on, as she dangled, almost
doll-like in the air blast.

At the airlock lip, Ripley's hand came over it, then the rest of her, before she crawled over the lip and
lay on the deck.

Newt clawed up to Bishop and held onto him, just as Ripley yanked at the closed 'Override' panel on
the deck, pulled it open, and she hit the 'inner door close' button, and the door closed next to her, just
as she pulled her leg out of the way. The turbulent air eddied and settled. She rolled over and lay on
her back, drained of all strength, as she gasped for breath. Weakly, she turned, to see Bishop and
Newt together. Ripley slowly crawled over to them and grabbed Newt, and she turned and hugged
her desperately.

"Mommy!"
Newt whimpered, as she held onto her tightly.

"Oh god."
Ripley breathed, relief swelled over her, as she held onto the small girl.

Bishop looked up at them. He was encrusted with his own vanilla milkshake blood. His voice was
gargled with the fluid.

"Not bad for...a human."

Ripley looked down at him, as he gave her a small, grim smile. She turned back and clung to Newt.
She had won the war.

Chapter End Notes

Comments and kudos!
Hypersleep.

Chapter Summary

"As human beings, we are vulnerable to confusing the unprecedented with the improbable. In our everyday experience, if something has never happened before, we are generally safe in assuming it is not going to happen in the future, but the exceptions can kill you and climate change is one of those exceptions."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Newt stood cross-armed, by a hypersleep capsule, and she glanced down to see Bishop enclosed within a plastic membrane.

Hicks was in the capsule next, with his eyes closed, and with bandages over his face and chest. Since there were not enough capsules in that one room, Kendall was gingerly curled up beside Hicks. Her face and hair had been roughly scrubbed clean. Her arms were loosely draped around his neck, and her cheek rested on his uninjured shoulder. She looked...peaceful. Something that she had not been for 57 years. Kendall sat up a bit, and she opened her arms out to Newt, who went into her arms, and she hugged her tight. She kissed her now clean hair, and she smiled.

"Sleep well, Newt. Have good dreams."
She said, as she lay back down in the capsule, and before she closed her eyes, she felt Hicks stir beside her, before his eye opened.

"Don't try and open your other eye, it's going to hurt like hell."
She said, quietly, as she let her finger play with the dogtag that was around his neck.

"Where are we?"
Came his quiet question, and Kendall glanced up at him.

"We're on the Sulaco. We made it."

"Hudson? Vasquez? Gorman?"

This poor guy was stressing himself out, and without thinking, Kendall-Rae gently cupped his bandaged side of his face into her hand, and she let her thumb brush across his lips, silencing him.

"Yes, they're all fine. We're fine."
She said, as she gave him a half-hearted smile.

"You need to sleep..."
She said, sleepily, as she rested her cheek on his shoulder.

She half-expected him to fall asleep, but instead she felt two things. She felt a kiss be placed to her hair, and she felt his gaze.

"Now what's bothering you? What do you want, a good night kiss this time?"
"It wouldn't hurt, now would it?"

"Bastard..."
Kenny muttered under her breath, before she turned her head to press a gentle kiss to his cheek, but it seemed that he wanted to be cheeky, so he turned his head, ever so slightly, so that the kiss that had been meant for his cheek, met his lips instead.

Feeling the sudden contact, Kendall jumped slightly, considering the fact that was not what she was expecting to happen. This was the second unexpected kiss, but this one was a bit shorter that the first, and this one lasted for a few seconds, before Kenny realized what had happened, yet again, and she pulled back.

"Cheeky bastard..."
She grumbled, but a very faint smile was gracing her lips.

She rolled her eyes at him, before she curled up against his side, as the capsule doors whined closed. Newt watched nearby, as the door closed, she could see Hicks' face, as he slept peacefully through the clear top, with Kendall asleep beside him.

Newt walked over to the next capsule, where Masey was also scrubbed clean, and her dark hair was pinned back. She was seated with Hudson, and since she had found him in the processing station, the two of them barely left the presence of the other. Seeing Newt, Masey enveloped the girl into her arms, and she held her tight, before she kissed her clean hair. Ever since their narrow escape from the atmosphere station, she had either passed out from exhaustion, or the painkiller that Bishop had given her, had knocked her out. Bishop. She craned her neck, to glance at the android that had been mercilessly torn into two pieces by the Alien Queen that had stowed away on the drop ship. She sighed, before she lay back down beside Hudson, and as their eyes closed, she felt a light kiss be pressed to her hair, before the lid closed, over top.

Newt walked over to Ripley, who was at the hypersleep control board. Ripley punched in a few more commands and closed the keyboard. They both move over to Newt's capsule. Newt got in and sat up.

"Are we going to sleep all the way home?"
Newt asked.

"All the way home."
Came Ripley's answer.

"Can I dream?"
Ripley smiled and brushed a strand of hair from Newt's forehead.

"Yes, honey. I think we both can."
Ripley pointed to something on Newt's shirt. She looked down and Ripley flicked her nose, before they both laughed lightly, as Newt lay back on the bed.

"Sleep tight."

"Aye-firmative."

A few moments later, the lights went out, and there was enough lighting in order to see Newt in her capsule, with Ripley behind her, perfect in sleep, as the monsters that had chased them around in reality, were chased out of their dreams with Ripley in a powerloader, and a flamethrower.
And, that's the end of Aliens.

Chapter End Notes

Comments and kudos!

End Notes

"In space no one can hear you scream."
There will be an excessive amount of swearing and gory scenes.
This is based off of the Alien Trilogy.
I only own Kendall-Rae, and anything else you do not recognize.
Please leave comments on what you think.
I'm trying to be as close as I can to the movies.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!