

The Call of Duty

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The Call of Duty

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Summary

Edison's family reunion on Terra Nova is suddenly interrupted by the unexpected arrival of his old friend and former mentor, Admiral Stuart Reed. What begins as a surprise visit may quickly unravel into something far more urgent.

Terra Nova, Earth Colony

Edison Farm

Balthazar Edison lay asleep in the guestroom, his large frame barely fitting the small bed. Beams of sunlight filtered through the wooden slats, warming his face. Outside, the morning birds sang their familiar melodies. Slowly, Edison stirred, stretching his limbs as his muscles and bones protested the movement.

Suddenly, the peaceful morning was shattered by the distant roar of an engine, rapidly growing louder. Edison bolted upright, rushing to the window. He rolled up the shutter just in time to see a military shuttlepod streaking toward the farm. Without hesitation, he grabbed his pants and dashed out of the room.

Sarah Edison was already outside, plasma rifle in hand, as the shuttlepod hovered menacingly above the courtyard. Edison burst through the front door, hastily dressed in just his pants, with his nephew David trailing behind him in his pajamas.

Edison reached for the rifle, his tone scolding. "Are you out of your mind? You want to get us all killed? Those pods are armed with plasma cannons. One shot, and we're ash."

Seeing the futility of her stance, Sarah reluctantly handed over the rifle.

The shuttlepod finally touched down in the courtyard. As the roar of its impulse engine faded, two armed Navy officers disembarked, quickly securing the area. Edison tossed the rifle to the ground in surrender. One of the officers tapped his earpiece and reported, "Site secure, sir."

Edison's tension eased when he recognized the man with the admiral's rank stepping out of the shuttlepod. The admiral walked toward the Edison family, signalling his subordinates to stand down. "Apologies for the intrusion. I hope we didn't disturb your rest."

Sarah and David turned to Edison, seeking an explanation.

"This is Admiral Stuart Reed," Edison explained. "My mentor and, dare I say, an old friend."

The two men shook hands. "You're looking well, Zar," said the admiral.

"Thank you, sir."

"To be honest, I didn't think you'd last more than a week out here. But here we are, four months later," the admiral chuckled.

Edison glanced at his sister. "Must be something in the air, sir."

However, Sarah's smile was absent. The unexpected reunion between her brother and the admiral stirred unease. "Admiral, you've travelled quite a distance for a social call."

The admiral's expression shifted, guilt flickering across his face. "You're right. As much as I'd love to catch up, there are more pressing matters that brought me here."

Edison and Sarah exchanged concerned looks, the weight of the admiral's words sinking in.

Moments Later

Edison and Admiral Reed walked through the fields, the picturesque landscape stretching before them.

“Can you believe it’s been over twenty years since I last set foot on Terra Nova?” the admiral remarked.

Edison was taken aback. “Really? What’s your first impression?”

“Much has changed. The people here are gradually building a new life, far from Earth.”

Edison noticed the concern in the admiral’s eyes. “And that worries you.”

“A colony is like a child,” the admiral began. “In its early years, it relies on its mother for everything - sustenance, protection. But as it grows, it seeks independence.”

“You’re talking about adolescence,” Edison said, understanding. “The pushback against authority, the search for identity.”

“Exactly,” the admiral agreed, placing a hand on Edison’s shoulder. “But it’s not the fear of a potential rebellion that brought me here.”

They stopped, and Edison knew they were about to delve into the heart of the matter.

Two Hours Later

A lush green meadow stretched out before them, cows grazing lazily within a fenced enclosure. Edison sat on one of the fence’s wooden posts, a blade of grass dangling from his lips.

“They’re recalling you to active duty, aren’t they?”

Edison turned to face his nephew, his expression pensive. “Something like that, yeah.”

The evening falls

Admiral Reed, who had been conversing quietly with the officers that had accompanied him, signalled Edison that they were ready to depart.

Sarah pulled her brother aside. “I’m going to miss you, you know. Things have been different since you came out here. It’s been good to have you around, even if it’s been short-lived.”

Edison hugged his sister tightly. “I’ll miss you too, Sarah. Just remember, I’ll be back as soon as I can. And take care of David.”

David, standing a few feet away, looked up at his uncle with a mix of admiration and sadness. Edison stepped over to the young man. David nodded, trying to hold back tears. “I’ll miss you, Uncle Zar.”

Edison ruffled his nephew’s hair affectionately. “I’ll miss you too, kiddo.”

With a final wave, Edison made his way back to the shuttlepod, his steps heavy but determined. As he climbed aboard, he glanced back one last time. Sarah and David stood together, watching him leave with a mix of pride and sorrow.

The shuttlepod’s engines roared to life, lifting off from the ground. Edison peered through the viewport as Terra Nova receded into the distance. He thought of his family and the peaceful life he was leaving behind, a silent promise to return.

TO BE CONTINUED

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