It was quiet in the rocket except the murmuring of Captain Hobbs and the groans of the badly affected as they were poked and prodded by medics. The descent back to Earth was smooth. Technology had obviously come a long way when I first went on a rocket 7 years ago with the first team to ever live on Mars permanently. Permanently… so much for those plans…

4 years and I was feeling like Mars really was my home now. Four new people arrived a few days ago and everyone’s trying their best to feel at home. After all that is what this planet is meant to be for us right…home? Or were humans created to exist on Earth and only Earth? I mean life here isn’t exactly cherries and sprinkles. We do have to take extra precautions here but I have faith the scientists and hope that their research is the right research. 4 years was the right time to go up a level in power energy. That’s when they team decided a nuclear power station was needed. 2 years it took to construct. Only 2 and it was strong. It was sturdy. There were no flaws… or so they thought…

There was only so much nuclear power the station could contain seeing as it was small. This however didn’t occur to Aaron Prairie. A power addict. Obsessed with being the best. I remember on the flight coming to Mars he bought up the subject of the two human races being rivals and how we’d be more powerful and evolved than the feeble critters down below on the blue ball of shame.

The station was alive, well and working for one year only when it exploded into smithereens from Aaron’s foolish obsession producing 80 times more energy than the station could hold. I still remember it like it was 5 minutes ago. Rocks, bricks, housing flung into the sky, the air instantly contaminated. We were lucky we were outside so we knew exactly what to do from the 50 drills in survival camp back on Earth. Oxygen masks on and the team ran from the site. Several died from large boulders crashing down. I wished Aaron was amongst them because I already knew what punishment awaited him on Earth. Death…

9 months yet it felt like 9 years when we lived underground waiting for a rocket back to Earth. 9 months without a glimpse of sun or a breath of fresh air. There were 8 of us. Now there are 5. But we were still rotting away as our emergency food bag was running low in the last few months. You could see the shape of our skeleton, our eyes sinking back into their
sockets, our lips thin and dry. 2 more died from the poor conditions of the underground
tunnel and I wish not to recall what the 3 starving survivors including me, did with the bodies.

The day the rocket arrived it was only me, Aaron and a new girl, Mandy, left. I
wouldn't say we were the lucky ones after everything we've been through. Now Mars would
be a forbidden site for the next 50 years for the contaminated air to clear up. I won't lie and
say I was sad to be going back to Earth. It's the little things you miss really. The birds
tweeting at sun rise, the old people out on their porch watching the grandchildren. Well that's
if you live in the perfect sunny suburbs. I myself lived in the dingy outskirts of London but I'm
still not complaining…