RECON CHINCHILLA

When the Lights Return

Earthquake story • Illustrated treatment

01 After the Trembling



The earthquake had passed. On the mountain, a few shelves stood crooked and the Command Center screens had gone dark. Ash checked on his team. Everyone was together.



Below them, the valley was quiet. Windows that should have glowed were dark, too. Neighbors gathered outside, wondering when their lights would return.

02 Something We Can Share



The Unknown Engineer examined a closed control unit from the Command Center. “This can restore the valley's power,” he told Ash. “But we need it here, too.”



Ash looked toward the homes below. “Will it help them today?” “Yes.” Ash nodded and reached for the carrying handle. “Then let's get it down there.”

03 Ready Together



Bishop checked the route while Chiquitín gathered the supplies. A CRD hovered beside the workbench, ready to carry its share. “Everything secure?” Bishop asked. Chiquitín checked once more. “Secure.”



Ash joined them at the door. The Unknown Engineer gave his brother a small nod. Together, the Corps set off down the mountain.

04 The Way Down



The path curved through the trees. Bishop kept an easy pace, and the CRDs drifted steadily beside the team. Chiquitín glanced back at the dark Command Center, then hurried to catch his brother.



In the valley, neighbors made room for the supplies. Ash set down his end of the case. “All right. Let's get started.”

05 A Place for Every Paw



The CRDs opened their compartments. Tools and supplies soon stood within easy reach. Bishop checked that the work area was clear while the Unknown Engineer studied the task ahead.



Ash steadied the unit. Chiquitín passed his brother a tool. Nobody waited for someone else to do the work. There was a useful part for everyone.

06 Bishop's Answer



During a pause, Chiquitín looked toward the mountain. “Sergeant Bishop, don't we need that unit at home?” Bishop nodded. “We do. But we can manage while we help our neighbors.”



He looked across the dark windows. “The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.” Chiquitín listened, turning the words over quietly.

07 Shoulder to Shoulder



The Unknown Engineer had heard them. “Or the one,” he added gently. He shifted over, making room for his brother. Chiquitín settled beside him and picked up the next tool.



Across the platform, Ash was still working. Chiquitín watched for a moment, then helped his brother finish the job. They checked their work together before stepping back.

08 Windows Full of Light



One window brightened. Then another. Warm light spread along the street, and a small chinchilla pressed both paws to the glass. Behind the window, a family gathered close.



The Corps watched for a moment. Then Bishop closed his notebook, the CRDs collected the tools, and Chiquitín helped his brother pack. There was still a walk home ahead.

09 A Light at Home



By the time they reached the mountain, the sky was turning blue. Their own windows were still dark. Chiquitín adjusted his pack as Ash stepped toward the Command Center door.



Before Ash could reach it, every window lit up. The team stopped. Chiquitín's ears lifted. From the other side of the door came the gentle clink of tools.

10 One Corps



Inside stood Eleanor and the service droids, with tools still laid out around them. “As soon as you left, we got to work,” she said. “We knew we could make it happen.”



She smiled at her teammates. “I couldn't have done it without everyone here.” Ash smiled back. Chiquitín joined the cleanup, helping put the tools away. Small creatures. Big possibilities. One Corps.