

FIFTEEN MINUTES LEFT

Sound of an FUTURISTIC
EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM.

Light's creep in; they're hazy, colored in
bright, mustard yellows and oranges.

MEON, wearing a tarp over their jumpsuit,
works at a computer clicking and typing
clicking and typing.

VOICEOVER

This message is being transmitted at the request of the
Venusian Government. -Sector 7B- is experiencing a critical
failure with it's attachment systems... //

QILL rushes into the office and tears open
one of the drawers rummaging through the
papers inside.

QILL

(Panicking)

// Holy crap.

Papers fly.

VOICEOVER

...And will detach from it's holding blimps in -15 minutes.-

QILL

They said 7B couldn't detach it's 7B man —

MEON

(Trying to Focus)

You need to do your job, Qill —

QILL

Meon there's so much to scan are we even —

VOICEOVER

All residents still within -Sector 7B- will descend into the surface of Venus in // -15 minutes.-

QILL

// Oh god I'm gonna die in this // STUPID OFFICE —

MEON

// Qill —

QILL

FUCK THIS MAN FUCK THIS —

MEON

Qill! Do your goddamn job, and we'll make it.

QILL tears through papers.

QILL

What am I even SCANNING —

MEON

The papers —

QILL

WHICH ONE!

MEON

Just scan them! Okay?!

MEON frantically continues clicking and typing.

MEON

71 percent.

QILL

There's no time —

MEON

72 percent.

QILL finally finds the paper they need and they scan scan scan.

QILL rips open another desk drawer. They tear through it. Papers keep flying.

MEON

Now we're at 74 percent. Come on come on —

QILL

What's so valuable about this crap.

MEON

Company data.

QILL

They can't transmit it themselves?

MEON

Transmitters not working, we're sending it over manually. Keep working, Qill.

QILL finds another paper and quickly scans it.

QILL

Why the hell are // we doing —

MEON

Great, 77 percent —

QILL

Why are we doing this?! We're not qualified, we're not experts —

MEON

We're proving our worth. That's why.

QILL stops scanning papers.

QILL

No, that's not right. I'm not poor, I should be on Mars —

MEON

It doesn't matter —

QILL

It's not right! I knew I should've called out I would've gotten to an evac blimp and —

MEON

QILL, *listen.*

For a moment MEON stops typing.

MEON

You would've been turned away because they hate deserters. But we'll both become worth keeping around, and get rescued, if // you just —

VOICEOVER

The corrosion force-field is now -offline.- Please take cover from the rain. // Thank you!

MEON continues to work, much faster

now.

QILL

(Panicking Again)

// No no no no no no NO NO —

MEON

Qill —

QILL

FUCK MAN // FUCK!

MEON

Qill! I'm trying to // focus!

BUSINESSMAN

(Offstage)

What are they teaching you now, pumpkin?

QILL and MEON continue to work as the
BUSINESSMAN relaxes in his study. He's
having a little chat with his daughter.

BUSINESSMAN

Oh, isn't that just ridiculous. Come a little closer, dear. I'd like to clear up a few things your teacher taught you in school. Let's start with Earth, shall we? Earth... it was never habitable, dear. That's just a lie created by the Martians, who envy what we have. They really are a detestable bunch. They go on and on about how bad Venus is, and how we need to leave. But despite their wealth, 1 in 4 of their children die of cancer, every Venusian year. So much for living on the Martian surface! Well, anyway... Earth has always been an uninhabitable heat bubble. Not as bad

as the Venusian surface, but you'll find it's conditions far from ideal. Sweltering temperatures, destructive weather patterns, and a chance to die from millions of diseases. "Disease." That's a word you shouldn't think about, dear. Just be grateful you were born in the Venusian atmosphere. Clean, well-furbished, never too warm, and we're protected from the planets quirks. This is paradise, sweetie. And yes, Earth rains sulfuric acid. It probably rains stronger acid —

The sound of RAINING.

MEON

Oh god 89 percent!

The rain falls through holes in the ceiling, and stains QILL's hands and feet. QILL cries out in agony, falling over.

The BUSINESSMAN

Oh, that's just the rain, dear.

LIGHTS OUT on BUSINESSMAN's study as MEON throws the tarp over themselves, and pulls QILL into it. It's pouring now. The sound of paper dissolving.

MEON

It's okay —

QILL continues to cry out in pain...

MEON

It's gonna be okay.

...which turns into QILL sobbing.

MEON

Qill, Qill put this on.

MEON's helps QILL wear one of MEON's gloves. MEON's bare hand is covered in scar tissue.

MEON

You'll get used to it. Trust me.

QILL reaches for the papers to but MEON swipes QILL's hand away.

QILL

(Anguish)

No no it's dissolving, it's all gone —

MEON

We'll find them on the computer —

QILL

And we're gonna run out of time and they'll leave us —

MEON

Qill, Qill we'll be fine. We'll make it if we keep —

SOUND OF AN AIR RAID SIREN. It's deafening.

VOICEOVER

Nine minutes until -Sector 7B- descends into the surface.

MEON

We just have to finish working —

QILL

We can't.

MEON

I know but we really don't have time —

QILL

It's still raining. Oh god it — it...

QILL and MEON remain under the tarp — As lights focus on the BUSINESSMAN, still sitting at his study. He's still talking to his daughter. The wailing air raid sirens are replaced by the SOUND OF RAIN.

BUSINESSMAN

What else have they taught you? Hm ... it's true. Standing on the surface of Venus would burn you to a crisp, *and* implode you in an instant. But it's not because of some, runaway greenhouse effect, or any of that nonsense. No dear, it's because we live in Lucifer's domain. Hard to believe, but Venus was once a paradise planet. Besides humans, it had lions, monkeys, and even dogs. But when The Devil was banished from Heaven, he and his followers twisted Venus into the hell-world we know today. They forced the clouds to rain acid.

The rain STOPS. MEON and QILL TAKE OFF the tarp.

MEON

Here, lets just, come on.

MEON helps QILL lay in front of the desk. QILL lays there, and MEON gets to the

computer.

MEON

90 percent. Okay...

MEON starts typing. The keys sting
and hurt to touch. As MEON works,
BUSINESSMAN continues speaking.

BUSINESSMAN

Now thankfully, we're too far up to be affected by Satan. Most of the time, at least. Sometimes, the poorer sectors dip just a bit too low in the atmosphere, and... Satan is a greedy little thing, darling. He uses the rain to erode the sectors support beams, until they detach from their blimps. Then the sector falls into Satan's hungry arms. That's what's happening to 7B, actually. Quite the tragedy, isn't it? 7B was built to last, and now there's nothing we can do to save it. Sector 7B will detach; it's as inevitable as the rain. But, give us a few months, and Sector 7C will replace it. So be fortunate you live in a blimp, pumpkin. You'll never have to worry about the surface. And someday, you'll be among the bright minds to defeat Satan. Doesn't that sound lovely?

LIGHTS OFF on Businessman's study as
MEON continues to work. QILL thinks
about their life.

QILL

(Rambling)

You ever live in a blimp.

MEON

95 percent —

QILL

You live in a sector, and all you see is yellow and orange sky. Yellow orange everything, and it's so warm too... But when I was a kid, before we lost all our money, my parents took me vacationing to a blimp above Sector 3, and, and it had white clouds, blue skies, and beautiful sunsets inside. Sometimes it was cold too. You know what that feels like? 67 degrees? They really made you feel safe. You didn't worry about acid rain, or the surface. They were that good.

MEON

98 percent. Fuck where is it —

QILL

When I was younger, I read about 8K detaching, and at the time I thought "Why are sectors still detaching?!" So I asked dad, "Why are sectors still detaching?!"

MEON

99 percent —

QILL

And he said "I don't know, but it'll never happen to you, so don't worry about it." That stuck with me, MEON. Up until today I thought "It'll never happen to me. It could never —

MEON

Oh my god IT SENT!

A giant weight falls off of QILL and

MEON's shoulders.

VOICEOVER

(Distorted)

5 minutes until -Sector 7B- descends / / into the surface.

MEON

(Celebrating, to VOICEOVER)

// FUCK YOU TOO ASSHOLE! FUCK YOU!

QILL

FUCK YOU FUCK YOU!

MEON pulls out their communications device, and calls the number given to them. The BUSINESSMAN receives the call in his study.

BUSINESSMAN

This is the CEO of Amendix Enterprises.

MEON

Meon. 7B. Your companies data is safe, send evac.

BUSINESSMAN

Oh, yes yes, you're one of the transporters. Good work.

Businessman TAPS on his communications device.

BUSINESSMAN

They'll arrive in 4 to 8 minutes, give or take.

MEON

What?

BUSINESSMAN

Well, they have to get ready —

MEON

What do you mean they're not ready?!

BUSINESSMAN

Correct. We weren't sure if this operation would / / be —

MEON

Sir, *sir we have five minutes left* —

BUSINESSMAN

I'm sorry to hear that, but you'll have to / / wait.

MEON

My coworker can't FUCKING WALK!

BUSINESSMAN

That's not my — !

The power to Sector 7B is suddenly cut off. SUDDEN BLACKOUT IN BOTH STUDY AND OFFICE. BUSINESSMAN leaves. MEON and QILL hurriedly TURN ON their light sources.

QILL

Is evac coming?

MEON

(Tense)

I, I don't know ...

QILL and MEON wait. The silence is deafening...

MEON

Qill, my— my friend and I were living at their parents house in Sector 8K, actually. Six years ago.

QILL

Did they make it.

MEON

My friend did. Their parents didn't.

QILL nods. MEON anxiously shines their light around the office.

QILL

What was 8K like?

MEON

Same rotten smell, same musty colors... There were just, museums there, and I was working at one of them when 8K detached.

QILL

Wow.

MEON

Yea. They, needed their old artifacts transported. So they gave me and four others two choices; stay overtime, or lose our jobs. We all stayed overtime. Three hours to collect everything. We did it in two and a half. After that, the power went out. So we sat, and waited. We knew Evac was coming, and surely they'd give us enough time to transport, right? Well, by the time they came, we had fifteen minutes to transport everything. So... So we loaded the small things, like books and plays, and left behind paintings, and statues,

and the last piece of an Earth pyramid —

QILL

Earth wasn't habitable —

MEON

A *Venus* pyramid. Point is, so much art was destroyed —

QILL

We're just unlucky, MEON —

MEON

And that was that. 8L replaced 8K, and there was no mourning. We just, forgot about all that art, and all those people who —

QILL

I would too.

MEON

Jesus Qill, h—how did we get here?!

QILL

I don't know —

MEON

Why are sectors expendable?!

QILL

Ask the CEO guy.

MEON

But he's not gonna tell me —

QILL

Then no one will. I don't know what to say, man.

MEON

But we have to do something about it, Qill. This, this can't be the rest of our lives. I can't live in another sector and do this shit again and again and again —

The sound of a large structure
CREAKING. Sound of FAINT PANIC
AND SCREAMING, coming from outside
the office. They've been SCREAMING
THE WHOLE TIME, but now MEON and
QILL finally hear it.

QILL

You think it's instant?

MEON

What?

QILL

If we, if we reach the surface alive, will Satan crush us instantly?

MEON doesn't know how to respond.

QILL

I, I don't wanna feel —

The sound of an EVAC BLIMP
LANDING. MEON GETS UP
immediately.

MEON

Qill, Qill they're here. Come on! Get up!

MEON tries to help QILL get up. But they
can't, MEON's gloveless hand hurts too

much. QILL falls back down.

MEON

(Panicking)

QILL, there's no time. Come on! COME ON!

QILL lays there, breathing heavily. The creaking grows LOUDER. Sector 7B is DETACHING. MEON RUNS for their life. QILL tries to get up, but collapses to the ground, groaning in pain. The creaking gets LOUDER and more VIOLENT. QILL lays on the ground... And tries again to get up. This time, they're on their feet. Flashlight in hand, QILL limps towards — SNAP. QILL's flashlight GOES OUT. Sector 7B DETACHES from it's blimps, and PLUMMENTS towards the surface of Venus. BUSINESSMAN sits at his study, in the middle of a phone call. A drink of wine in hand.

BUSINESSMAN

A real shame that is. But we have the other one, right? That's good. We'll uh, we'll move [him/her/them] to, Sector 4A. That one hasn't detached, right? And as for Qill... make some room on the plaque board, will you?

MEON walks in, drained of life.

BUSINESSMAN

Thanks. Goodbye.

BUSINESSMAN hangs up and notices

MEON.

BUSINESSMAN

(Grinning)

Ah! There you are. Why don't we celebrate?

The **BUSINESSMAN** offers MEON the drink.

BUSINESSMAN

You've earned it.

MEON doesn't take it. They just stare at the **BUSINESSMAN**.