

MIDNIGHT BURGER

Chapter 34: Three Sisters

By

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Midnight Burger

Chapter 34: Three Sisters.

WE HEAR STRANGE BIRDS CALLING IN THE DISTANCE. WE ARE ON AN ALIEN PLANET. NEARBY WE CAN HEAR A CAMP FULL OF PEOPLE TALKING AND CHILDREN PLAYING. IN THE DISTANCE WE BEGIN TO HEAR INTERMITTENT GUNFIRE, AS IF SOMEONE IS DOING TARGET PRACTICE. WE HEAR A COMMUNICATOR ACTIVATE.

KAZI

Teta, can I speak with you?

THE GUNFIRE CONTINUES.

KAZI (CONT'D)

Teta?

THE GUNFIRE CONTINUES. KAZI BEGINS TO WALK TOWARDS THE GUNFIRE. IT GETS CLOSER AND CLOSER UNTIL IT'S DEAFENING. WITH EACH SHOT WE CAN HEAR SOMETHING EXPLODE.

KAZI (CONT'D)

If you turn off your communicator I have to come all the way over here to talk to you.

TETA

I didn't turn it off.

TETA RESUMES TARGET PRACTICE.

KAZI

Supplies are getting low in the camp, do you think this planet has any food sources?

TETA

Where are we again?

KAZI

Azules.

TETA

Where the fuck is Azules?

KAZI

I don't think that matters.

TETA

What would you like me to do? Start killing things until I find something that tastes good?

KAZI

That would be fine. Thank you for your help.

TETA
How long do we stay?

KAZI
Excuse me?

TETA
How long do we stay? How long is this supposed to take?

KAZI
This is our last stop, Teta.

TETA
Not according to Libuza.

KAZI
I think you know what I mean.

TETA
So we just stay here until it all falls into place?

KAZI
How many times have we been over this plan?

TETA
You know I don't listen during the planning meetings.

KAZI
Start listening, then.

TETA
There's a kid in the camp, I think he's from Lemonier. All he does all day is find rocks and sticks to make a model of the house he's going to live in once we get there. He doesn't know where "there" is, and neither do we but he knows what his house is going to look like. He is now running out of things to add to his house, because he's been doing it for so long.

KAZI
Why should I know about this?

TETA
Because if we lose that kid, we lose everybody.

KAZI
Anyone at this camp is free to leave anytime they want.

TETA

No they're not. Do you know why? Because we're on Azules. Which I've never heard of and neither have you. The only way they can leave is with the ship we came here on. Which means the only way they can leave is by taking the ship from us. I'm not going to let them take the ship from us, which means that if they get fed up and sick of waiting then I'm going to have to start killing people. Which is fine. But I feel like that's not part of the plan.

KAZI

They're welcome to take the ship if they want. This is our last stop.

KAZI STARTS TO WALK AWAY THEN STOPS.

KAZI (CONT'D)

I'm going to go talk to her, would you like to come?

TETA

Sure.

WE MOVE TO AN ISOLATED CLEARING IN THE WOODS. WE HEAR A SOUND ROLLING IN AND OUT, LIKE A DIGITIZED OCEAN.

LIBUZA

Node five transferring to eighty-seven in third group... third group move to subset of B in twelfth group... Twelfth group within eighth group within open groups nine, thirty-two, and sixty... spin down.

THE SOUND OF THE MACHINE GETS SOFTER. KAZI AND TETA APPROACH.

KAZI

Libuza.

LIBUZA

They won't steal the ship.

KAZI

... Good.

LIBUZA

They are all too far into the journey to turn back now.

KAZI

That's not surprising.

TETA

Can you tell us if anything on this planet is edible?

LIBUZA

I can tell you we won't find out.

TETA

Okay... I'm sorry this part still confuses me, does that mean I'm supposed to shoot some animals or does that mean I don't even try.

LIBUZA

It means you *wont* even try.

TETA

Okay.

LIBUZA

But I don't know why. That's not the story I was told.

KAZI

You were saying you were worried about overheating.

LIBUZA

I had to rearrange different data nodes. There's a low power mode now. It can sleep.

KAZI

How are the implants?

LIBUZA

They hurt less.

KAZI

Good, it means your body is accepting them.

TETA

If we stay here much longer the Teds are going to be on top of us again.

KAZI

We'll stay here as long as we need to.

TETA

Seriously, is there any way I can get a time-frame on this?

KAZI

It doesn't work that way-

LIBUZA

We won't be here much longer. But they will be coming for us. You should be ready, Teta.

TETA

Okay. See? Was that so hard?

KAZI

Libuza, I'm concerned about the weather on this planet, do we need to get the Vistek under cover?

LIBUZA

No... we'll be inside soon.

FAR OFF WE HEAR A LOUD CRACK IN THE AIR. THE DINER HAS JUST LANDED.

TETA

What the fuck was that?

WE CAN HEAR UNREST IN THE CAMP.

KAZI

Libuza?

LIBUZA

... It's here.

TETA

What's here?

KAZI

Libuza, you said a ship.

LIBUZA

I think it is... of sorts.

KAZI

Stay here.

TETA

I'm coming too.

KAZI AND TETA BEGIN TO WALK TOWARD THE SOUND. THE UNREST IN THE CAMP GETS LOUDER.

TETA (CONT'D)

What the fuck is that?

KAZI

(To the crowd.)
Everyone remain calm. Stay here. We're going to investigate.

TETA
I don't even... Is it from Earth?

KAZI
It appears to be... Do you have orbit alerts on?

TETA
Yeah, if anything shows up near this planet, I'm going to know about it.

KAZI
No alerts?

TETA
Nope.

KAZI
... So it just appeared.

TETA
I guess?

KAZI
... I'm going to go inside.

TETA
We're both going inside.

KAZI
Leave the gun here.

TETA
Why?

KAZI
Leave. The Gun. Here.

TETA
... Fine.

INSIDE THE DINER, CASPAR IS CLEANING THE COUNTERTOP WITH A SPRAY BOTTLE AND A RAG.

SONG: I'M A PILGRIM, I'M A STRANGER BY THE IMPERIAL QUARTET.

ZEBULON
Appears to be quite a collection of the concerned outside.

EFFIE
That's quite a mess of folks out there, Caspar. You think you'll be able to handle this many customers? Probably the most we've seen thus far...

ZEBULON

Situations such as this calls for soup or perhaps roasting a whole pig.

EFFIE

No time for a pig roast and you'd have to wait for soup to boil. I'd get to making sandwiches if I were you, Caspar...

CASPAR STOPS CLEANING THE COUNTER AND WALKS INTO THE KITCHEN.

EFFIE (CONT'D)

... I'm set to give up on this one, dear.

ZEBULON

Surely he can't ignore us forever.

EFFIE

Hush up, here they come. Hoo lord, this is colorful duo.

THE DOOR CHIME SOUNDS AS TETA AND KAZI WALK INTO THE DINER.

TETA

This is what we've been waiting for?

ZEBULON

And that was "I'm a Pilgrim, I'm a Stranger" by the Imperial Quartet. I'm Zebulon Mucklewain here with my wife Effie.

EFFIE

Hi, Y'all.

ZEBULON

And we're here doing our level best to bring the holy to the holler.

EFFIE

Dear, do you know what I was thinking about the other day?

ZEBULON

What's that, Dear?

EFFIE

Bread.

ZEBULON

Really dear?

EFFIE

I can really pull a loaf of bread out of that oven can't I, Husband?

ZEBULON

Oh, you most surely can, dear.

EFFIE

Sometimes I'll look at that loaf of bread cooling on the rack and I'll just sit back in my chair and I'll think, "Effie Mucklewain, you have gone and done it again with that loaf of bread, you ought to be in a magazine of some sort." I'd think to myself "I'd better not share this bread with my neighbors, as they would surely never be able to reach to the great heights to which I have brought them. Any bread they have from here on out will taste like a horse apple."

ZEBULON

And don't any of you go asking me how she does it.

EFFIE

Oh no, that's useless. He's watched me do it a hundred times and yet he'll try and make a loaf for himself and his bread comes out looking like we're about to flee the land of the Pharaoh.

ZEBULON

It is truly confounding.

EFFIE

But then, when I am at the heights of my confidence, right when I feel I am doing nothing but pulling manna from heaven right out of that oven, what happens?

ZEBULON

What happens dear?

EFFIE

Suddenly that grace has left me. Suddenly that bread is as flat as the day is long, and I may as well be making hard tack. And there is no explanation for it. I do everything the same as I always do but something just ain't right.

ZEBULON

I know to make myself scarce on those days.

EFFIE

He does. Because I cannot be spoken to. I'm there in my kitchen, face to the ceiling, saying "Lord. Lord, what the heck are you doing to my bread pan that makes it suddenly produce something not fit for the hogs outside?"

ZEBULON

She is not exaggerating, she definitely speaks to that ceiling.

EFFIE

But then I remember the words of my mother. I remember that she always said "The greatest baker in the world can't out-bake the weather."

ZEBULON

When the day is not right, it's not right.

EFFIE

And there ain't a damn thing I can do about it, excuse my language.

ZEBULON

And what should one do on those days, dear? On the days when, despite all efforts, the loaves are not what they should be?

EFFIE

Well, Husband, alls you can do is remember that each good day is like a coin. And each of those coins have got another side to them, don't they? And you can't have a coin without having both sides of it.

TETA

What the fuck is this?

KAZI

I don't know.

ZEBULON

In keeping with that theme, let's hear a bit from the Trinity Quartet, "Break Thou the Bread of Life"...

SONG: BREAK THOU THE BREAD OF LIFE BY THE TRINITY QUARTET.

TETA

Whoa!

TETA PULLS A GUN AND IT POWERS UP.

TETA (CONT'D)

Hold it right there, pal... Are you armed?

CASPAR

I'm not.

KAZI

I thought I told you to leave the gun outside.

TETA
I did leave the gun outside, this is the other gun.

KAZI
... Hello.

CASPAR
Welcome to Midnight Burger.

KAZI
What is this place?

CASPAR
It's a diner.

KAZI
No, it's not.

CASPAR
Well that's the only name I have for it.

TETA
It appeared out of nowhere.

CASPAR
Yeah, it does that.

KAZI
Who are you?

CASPAR
Caspar.

KAZI
...He's an Earthling.

TETA
How did you get here? Earthlings don't leave Earth.

CASPAR
Maybe I'm not an Earthling, maybe I'm just good at impressions.

KAZI
I've just scanned your DNA, you're an Earthling.

CASPAR
Okay, glad we cleared that up.

TETA
So, what is this place, how did you get here?

CASPAR
I don't know.

TETA
You woke up here or something?

CASPAR
I walked in to use the phone.

TETA
The phone.

KAZI
It's how Earthlings talk to each other... Start at the beginning.

CASPAR
Maybe you should start at the beginning.

TETA
Maybe you should start at the beginning since I've got a gun and you don't.

CASPAR
... I was on Interstate 5 and I needed to use the phone. I saw this place. I walked inside and it was abandoned. The radio started playing... and then... And then the whole thing started traveling.

KAZI
Traveling how?

CASPAR
I don't know. Like uh... on a TV show when the ship goes into warp speed or whatever, it was like that.

TETA
This place.

CASPAR
Yeah.

TETA
Earthlings don't have technology like this.

CASPAR
Yeah, no shit.

TETA
No one does.

CASPAR
And yet.

KAZI
... Have a look around.

TETA
What about him?

KAZI
He's fine. He's an Earthling, he couldn't be less threatening.

CASPAR
Thanks.

TETA
... Okay. Shout if you need me.

KAZI
Don't ignore your comms this time.

TETA
Yeah, yeah.

KAZI
... You make it sound like this place abducted you.

CASPAR
Call it what you want. I walked inside and then...

KAZI
How long have you been here?

CASPAR
I don't know.

KAZI
How did you get here?

CASPAR
I told you, I walked in.

KAZI
You're on Azules right now, do you know how far from Earth that is? It's not even in the same galaxy.

CASPAR
... That's pretty far.

KAZI
So what I mean is, how did you get from there to here?

CASPAR
I wasn't on Earth before I came here, I was somewhere else.

KAZI

Where?

CASPAR

I have no idea.

KAZI

... So this place just... moves?

CASPAR

Yes. About every twelve hours it leaves, then for about twelve hours it... travels. Then it's a new place. And then it leaves again. Over and over like that, never in the same place.

KAZI

... A ship that cannot be steered.

CASPAR

What?

KAZI

Twelve Earth hours?

CASPAR

Uh, yeah.

KAZI

We'll need to move fast, then.

CASPAR

What do you mean?

TETA

This place is... I don't get it, there's no technology, there's no power source. It's just... It's a restaurant from Earth.

KAZI

There's no control panel? Nothing?

TETA

No, it's fucking weird. I don't like it.

KAZI

We've got twelve hours.

TETA

Twelve what?

KAZI

Twelve Earth hours.

TETA
Kazi, I don't like this. In fact I hate it.

KAZI
This is the plan.

CASPAR
Twelve hours to do what?

KAZI
Every twelve hours you go somewhere new *for* twelve hours, is that how it works?

CASPAR
As far as I can tell.

KAZI
You're going to have some company for a while.

CASPAR
For a while? What do you mean?

TETA
We're really doing this?

KAZI
How many times do I have to talk to you about the plan?

TETA
This is insane, we don't know anything about this place.

CASPAR
What is the plan?

KAZI
We've got twelve hours to get everyone packed and moved.

TETA
You're insane.

KAZI
From the beginning, this plan has been insane. Every step. And after every insane step you are right there along with us, so can we skip the part where you argue with me, please? There's no time.

TETA
Shit... okay, here we go.

KAZI

Get Libuza first and then we'll move in everybody else.

TETA

If this kills us, it's on you.

KAZI

That's fine.

DOOR CHIME.

CASPAR

Everyone else, what are you talking about?

KAZI

One moment please, I need to change my circadian rhythms to an Earth schedule.

CASPAR

You need to what?

KAZI

Shh... Alright... My name is Kazi. That was my sister, Teta. She's about to get our other sister, Libuza. We have one hundred and sixteen refugees with us. It's going to be a tight fit, but it won't be forever.

CASPAR

A hundred and sixteen? Wait... coming in here? For how long?

KAZI

Our other sister is... a very special person... she can predict things. She knew that this place, whatever it is, was going to show up on this planet, in this place, at this time.

CASPAR

I don't see how that's possible.

KAZI

She also knows that if we stay here long enough, this place will eventually take us to where we need to go.

CASPAR

Eventually? For how long?

KAZI

I'm not sure how it translates to Earth hours. She'll be able to tell us, but it will be several... stops, whatever you want to call it.

CASPAR

You're going to cram all those people in here for God knows how long?

KAZI

We are.

CASPAR

That's a bad idea.

KAZI

How would you know?

CASPAR

I don't know how long I've been here but I think it's long enough to know that I'm not... I'm not getting back home again. I think if you're banking on this place taking you where you want to go, you may end up completely lost.

DOOR CHIME. TETA IS LEADING LIBUZA IN THROUGH THE DOOR.

TETA

Okay, we're walking through the door now.

KAZI

... Caspar was it?

CASPAR

Yes.

KAZI

My sisters and I are fugitives. And the people with us are desperate for a new life in a new place. All of us are lost right now. Once you're lost, you can't get more lost.

CASPAR

I can absolutely, without question tell you that that's not true... I had a lot to do back on Earth. There were a lot of things I was trying to figure out and then this place happened and... you can get more lost, trust me. I know I did. I know you think you have a plan and you've got it figured out but it's just an ocean of random shit out there, nothing means anything.

LIBUZA

(Singing.)

Oh I wish I had someone to love me,
Someone to call me their own,
Oh I wish I had someone to live with,
'Cause I'm tired of living alone.

(MORE)

LIBUZA (CONT'D)

Oh, please meet me tonight in the moonlight,
Please meet me tonight all alone,
For I have a sad story to tell you,
It's a story that's never been told-

CASPAR

Stop it... why is she singing that?

LIBUZA

If I sing you the song, you'll believe us.

CASPAR

According to who?

LIBUZA

This is the story I was told.

TETA

Libby, sit down here, okay?

KAZI

That's Libuza. She's the reason we're here.

CASPAR

Why did she sing that?

KAZI

She's able to do things more complex than any creature I've ever encountered. I don't know why she sang that... Do you know why?

CASPAR

...

KAZI

You may think we're making a mistake. But that's our choice to make....

CASPAR

... Fine.

KAZI

This is a strange place. Can it do normal things like make food?

CASPAR

Yes.

KAZI

We have some hungry people outside. Some children.

CASPAR

Well that's bad news for them. I'm a terrible cook.

LATER. CASPAR IS IN THE KITCHEN COOKING AT THE GRILL.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

Shouldn't you be out there helping them?

TETA

They're fine. What's your name again?

CASPAR

Caspar. Can you put that gun away while you're talking to me, please?

TETA

This gun?

CASPAR

Yes.

TETA

This gun right here?

CASPAR

That one.

TETA

Sure.

TETA HOLSTERS HER GUN.

CASPAR

Thank you.

TETA

... "Caspar"... so you've just been living here?

CASPAR

Yes.

TETA

How long?

CASPAR

I don't know.

TETA

Most people in prison, they start making marks on the wall so they don't lose track of the days.

CASPAR

It's not a prison.

TETA

Why not?

CASPAR

Because it moves?

TETA

But you feel like you can't leave?

CASPAR

I could leave.

TETA

Why haven't you?

CASPAR

Because I wouldn't know where the fuck I was.

TETA

Prisons don't have to have bars. I was in a prison once called Lost Basan. It was a bunch of shacks on a moon. No bars. They drop you off and say "good luck, criminal."

CASPAR

Like Escape from New York.

TETA

What?

CASPAR

Escape from New York it's a... it's a movie on my planet.

TETA

Wait. The guy with the eyepatch?

CASPAR

Yeah. You've seen it?

TETA

I know that movie. What's that guy's name?

CASPAR

Snake Plisken.

TETA

Snake Plisken! I love that guy. What did they always say to him?

CASPAR

"I thought you were dead."

TETA

"I thought you were dead, Snake Plisken." That guys's great.

(MORE)

TETA (CONT'D)

How come in Earth movies people are named Snake Plisken but in real life they're named like Daniel Gregory or whatever?

CASPAR

Our movies are aspirational. We want to wear an eyepatch and be named Snake Plisken and have everyone think we're dead but in fact we're just some guy who works at the DMV.

TETA

What's the DMV?

CASPAR

Honestly I don't know how to explain it to someone who lives on another planet.

TETA

Cause it's so boring?

CASPAR

Yes... What's going on with your other sister?

TETA

What do you mean?

CASPAR

Is she blind?

TETA

Not really. Her people don't have very good eyesight to begin with, it's very dark on her planet. But what vision she does have started to go when she got hooked up to the machine she built.

CASPAR

What machine?

TETA

Oh, sorry, there's a huge machine in your refrigerator right now. We need to keep it cool.

CASPAR

Great.

TETA

She calls it the Vistek. It speaks to her.

CASPAR

Okay, whatever... What were you in prison for? Something violent, I'm assuming?

TETA

Now, why would you say that?

CASPAR

I just saw you bring in three bags full of weapons and the first thing you did was point a gun at me.

TETA

That's the first thing I do to anybody.

CASPAR

You were in prison for insurance fraud, then?

TETA

Weapons trafficking. So, only tangentially violent.

CASPAR

Forgive me... You speak English.

TETA

We all speak English.

CASPAR

How?

TETA

We love your movies. All over the system, can't get enough of them. The more and more the system got connected through warp gates the more there needed to be some sort of common language. Somehow your language was the winner.

CASPAR

Lucky us.

TETA

So this place is just a diner?

CASPAR

There are a couple of key differences, but yeah, it's a diner.

TETA

And then all of a sudden poof?

CASPAR

Yes.

TETA

I'll believe it when I see it.

CASPAR

You'll see it... so who are all these people?

TETA

Refugees.

CASPAR

From where?

TETA

All over the place.

CASPAR

They must be pretty desperate to sign up for a plan like this.

TETA

They trust us.

CASPAR

Don't take this the wrong way but, why in the hell would they do that?

TETA

Well, I don't know if you know this, Caspar, but we're kind of a big deal out there in the system. We are revered, we are feared. The name "The Sisters" strikes fear into the hearts of fascist shit heads everywhere.

CASPAR

The Sisters... How come you're the only one with horns?

TETA

What do you mean?

CASPAR

You have horns, they don't.

TETA

Are you looking at my horns, Caspar?

CASPAR

You have horns, your sister is white as a ghost, and your other sister is bright yellow, you don't look related.

TETA

Same father, different mothers.

CASPAR

Sure, but you don't look like you're from the same planet.

TETA

We're not.

CASPAR

You're not even from the same planet?

TETA

I'm from Lehari, Kazi's from M-Lynn, and Libby's from Nyx.

CASPAR

Okay, I don't see how that's genetically possible.

TETA

That's because you don't know our father.

KAZI

Everyone's in. I see you've chosen not to help.

TETA

I'm keeping an eye on this one.

CASPAR

I'm very threatening over here with my spatula.

KAZI

How does this work? Do we need to secure any belongings?

TETA

Don't touch my stuff.

CASPAR

You won't feel a thing. But everything outside will change. It'll be very disorienting.

TETA

Have I mentioned yet how psychotic this idea is?

KAZI

Yes. Many times. Is there anything else we need to do?

CASPAR

Take that tray of chicken sandwiches out to them.

TETA

What's chicken?

CASPAR

What's... it's a bird.

TETA

How am I supposed to know that?

CASPAR

You know what Escape from New York is but you don't know what a chicken is?

TETA
I'm assuming one's more interesting than the other.

KAZI
Also, what is the device on the counter?

CASPAR
What do you mean? The radio.

KAZI
That's not a radio.

CASPAR
Sure it is.

KAZI
Receiving from where?

CASPAR
I don't know, I don't know how it works. Don't worry about it. Can you worry about the chicken sandwiches please?

OUT ON THE FLOOR, THE DINER IS PACKED.

EFFIE
What do we make of all these folks, husband?

ZEBULON
They seem to all be exhausted from their journey here. Nice to have children underfoot, though.

EFFIE
From what I can gather, they're all expecting us to take them to a safe haven of some sort.

ZEBULON
I hope we're able to oblige.

EFFIE
I'm getting some very strange feelings from that yellow one in the corner.

ZEBULON
She seems to be not much older than fifteen years.

EFFIE
I think those looks may be deceiving... Dear, will you join me in a venture?

ZEBULON
Certainly.

EFFIE

As you know we've been trying to get this Caspar fellow to speak with us but he's not having it. Since we may be cohabitating with these folks for a spell, we should perhaps try and strike up a little conversation.

ZEBULON

Nothing ventured, nothing gained, I suppose.

TETA

Hey, you. Take this tray and start giving these things out, they're called sandwiches. They're made with chicken, I don't know what it is but don't worry about it, we're probably all going to die anyway.

ZEBULON

Ahem. Hello there... I hope we're providing for you all in a welcome fashion...

TETA

... What?

EFFIE

Forgive us. I'm Effie Mucklewain, this here is my husband Zebulon.

ZEBULON

Afternoon.

EFFIE

We could not help but notice what an impressive rack of horns you have on your head there.

ZEBULON

They are resplendent.

EFFIE

Do all folks have horns where you're from?

TETA

The fuck is happening right now?

EFFIE

You know, at first I was thinking that they would be quite a burden to have to carry around on my head all day long but now that I've put some thought into it, I think something such as the assortment you have on your head could come in handy during the days ins and outs.

ZEBULON

I hadn't thought of that, dear.

EFFIE

All sorts of uses come to mind.

ZEBULON

Shelling almonds, for example.

EFFIE

Opening a door stuck shut from the heat.

ZEBULON

A place to hang one's eye glasses.

EFFIE

Hats pose a challenge.

ZEBULON

True enough, though if one sees a hat as simply a way to make one's head interesting, well that work's done for you already, isn't it?

EFFIE

And I've never met a milliner who wasn't up for a challenge.

TETA

Kazi.

KAZI

What? What is it?

TETA

The radio is talking to me.

KAZI

It's what?

EFFIE

No need to be alarmed, y'all. We just wanted to introduce ourselves.

KAZI

Is this a two-way device?

EFFIE

Appears to be.

KAZI

Who are you?

TETA

Well this is Effie Mucklewain and her husband Zebulon.

KAZI
I see. Where are you broadcasting from?

EFFIE
Toadsuck, Arkansas.

KAZI
Have we been to a planet called Toadzucarkansaw?

TETA
Doesn't sound familiar.

KAZI
Is this some sort of shipboard AI?

TETA
And it looks like that why? For aesthetics?

KAZI
I don't know. We don't have time for this.

LIBUZA
Kazi!

KAZI
What? Libuza, what is it?

LIBUZA
... They found us.

OUTSIDE WE HEAR SEVERAL TEDBOTS CRASH TO THE GROUND AND
DEPLOY. THE CROWD INSIDE BEGINS TO PANIC.

KAZI
Teta!

TETA
(Rummaging through her bang and assembling a
weapon.)
I'm on it! Hang on!

KAZI
I thought you had orbital alerts!

TETA
I had to pack up my gear! How many are there?!

KAZI
I count twenty.

TETA
It's okay, they won't come in until they've warned
us three times.

LIBUZA

It's happening soon.

CASPAR

What the fuck are those?!

TETA

The bad guys. How much time do we have?

CASPAR

Any second now.

TETA

What if I'm outside when it happens?!

CASPAR

Stay in the parking lot!

TETA

The what?!

CASPAR

The pavement! Just stay on the pavement!

TETA

Okay!

ZEBULON

What in the Lord's name are those abominations?

EFFIE

When she says they're the bad guys, I'm believin' her.

TETA

Okay, here we go! Everybody out of the way!

TETA KICKS THE FRONT DOOR OPEN.

TETA (CONT'D)

WHO WANTS PIE?!

TETA UNLEASHES A HAIL OF GUNFIRE IN THE PARKING LOT, MOWING DOWN SEVERAL TEDBOTS IN THE PROCESS. THEY RETURN FIRE.

KAZI

Everybody down!

TETA

(In the parking lot.)
My electric toothbrush is smarter than you fuckers.

LIBUZA

I should've seen them coming.

KAZI

You're calculating a billion things at once right now, you can't be expected to catch them all. How much longer?!

CASPAR

Any second now!!

LIBUZA

This won't be the last time we seen them.

KAZI

I know.

CASPAR

Here it comes!

THERE IS A CRACK IN THE AIR AND SUDDENLY THE DINER IS TRAVELING THROUGH SPACE/TIME.

TETA

(In the parking lot.)
Holy fuck.

KAZI

... That... is something... It looks like this?

CASPAR

Yes.

THERE'S A LOT OF UNREST IN THE DINER.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

Everyone, it's okay. I know it looks frightening but it's fine. I've been here a long time and it hasn't hurt me. At least I don't think.

EFFIE

Husband, let's get some music up to soothe some of these spirits.

ZEBULON

Of course.

SONG: FANTASIE FROM MADAME BUTTERFLY

LIBUZA

"The man would travel in an impossible ship. A ship that could go anywhere, but could not be steered."... Can you take me out there, please?

KAZI

Yes. I've got your hand. You're sure it's safe?

CASPAR

It's fine. Watch out for the vertigo.

THEY WALK OUT INTO THE PARKING LOT AND WE HEAR THE SOUND OF SPACE/TIME RUSHING BY.

TETA

This is a fucked up place you've got here, Caspar.

CASPAR

I know.

KAZI

This is astounding.

TETA

It's like going through a warp gate but, there's a whole other thing going on.

KAZI

How long does it last?

CASPAR

It's like this for about twelve hours and then it sets down for another twelve.

KAZI

Never the same place twice?

CASPAR

Not so far.

TETA

Well... good work, Libby. You found it.

KAZI

What about food supply. Will you have enough?

CASPAR

The refrigerator restocks itself.

KAZI

Really?

CASPAR

Yeah.

KAZI

No matter what?

CASPAR

I have to get a little creative sometimes, but it seems like it works fine.

TETA

Well I don't know about you all, but I need a fucking drink. What a day. I'll be inside with all the other stinkers.

KAZI

Right. What about hygiene?

CASPAR

There's a truck stop shower in the bathroom.

KAZI

Truck stop?

CASPAR

There's a shower.

KAZI

And the water comes from?

CASPAR

Fantastic question.

KAZI

Alright. Oh. And the radio?

CASPAR

... What about it?

KAZI

It was talking to us? Are you in communication with someone or is it some sort of simulated intelligence?

CASPAR

... You hear it too?

KAZI

What do you mean?

CASPAR

... They talk to you too?

KAZI

... Yes, what do you mean?

CASPAR

I knew it was a radio but I didn't... I wasn't in the best mental state when I came here... I'm sure you can probably imagine what I thought about this place at first.

KAZI

Did you think you were hallucinating?

CASPAR
Wouldn't you?

KAZI
I'm not prone to hallucinations, are you?

CASPAR
How would I know?

KAZI
Can you hold still for a second?

CASPAR
Probably not.

KAZI
...

CASPAR
What are you doing?

KAZI
Shh.

CASPAR
... Your eyes keep changing color.

KAZI
I'm switching lenses.

CASPAR
How come your eyes keep switching lenses?

KAZI
Because that's how I designed them.

CASPAR
You designed your eyes?

KAZI
I designed most parts of my body.

CASPAR
Okay... you ever thought about wings?

KAZI
Of course. You can't just add wings, you really need a transformation of the whole body for aerodynamics. Hollow bones, etcetera. Too much trouble.

CASPAR
Okay... Anything cool? Like claws?

KAZI

I have a claw. You don't want to see it.

CASPAR

I was kidding.

KAZI

I know. Your brain looks fine. I don't quite understand how your neurons are working right now, but I don't spend a lot of time on Earthlings.

CASPAR

You scanned my brain for insanity?

KAZI

Yes. You're not hallucinating, Caspar. The radio is actually talking to you. And I'm actually standing right here.

CASPAR

That doesn't make me feel better.

KAZI

I know. Now, speaking of scans, there are still several people inside that need medical attention, so I'm going to deal with that.

CASPAR

Okay.

KAZI

What's for dinner?

CASPAR

I have no idea.

KAZI

They've been living on ship rations for months, so the bar is low.

CASPAR

That helps.

KAZI WALKS INSIDE.

LIBUZA

Can you tell me what it looks like?

CASPAR

Oh... Uh... Not really but... Do you remember what the stars at night look like?

LIBUZA

My planet only had one side that faced our sun.
Most of my life has been night sky.

CASPAR

Okay. So imagine the night sky... And then take the
night sky and wrap it into, like, a tube.

LIBUZA

Alright.

CASPAR

And then take that tube and stretch it. Stretch it
so long that all those stars become long lines. But
then take another night sky, one you've never seen
before, and add that on top of the sky you know,
then do that about an hundred more times... and
then every once and a while there are little
flashes of light, far off. Like something very big
happening from far away. You're traveling through
that tube.

LIBUZA

And at the end?

CASPAR

... I don't know.

LIBUZA

It sounds beautiful.

CASPAR

Yeah, it is.

LIBUZA

...

CASPAR

...

LIBUZA

Please don't be scared of my sisters.

CASPAR

They're pretty intense.

LIBUZA

They've had to be. We're fugitives.

CASPAR

Fugitives from what?

LIBUZA

Kazi's home is a barely habitable moon called M-Lynn. Her people learned to manipulate their own bodies so they could survive, but then the practice was banned. Kazi refused to stop, and now she's considered a criminal. Teta's a brilliant engineer but seems to only be interested in making killing machines. She's often in trouble with the authorities.

CASPAR

What about you?

LIBUZA

Predicting the future makes people uncomfortable.

CASPAR

People are always trying to predict the future.

LIBUZA

Yes. They get uncomfortable when someone else can do it and they can't.

CASPAR

You can really do that? You can predict the future?

LIBUZA

I found you, didn't I?

CASPAR

How does it work? Do you have visions?

LIBUZA

Sometimes. It also speaks to me. But it's hard to understand what it's really saying. And then underneath the voice is usually embedded data.

CASPAR

What does it sound like?

LIBUZA

It's sounds like... I believe Earthlings call them fairy tales?

CASPAR

It tells you a fairy tale?

LIBUZA

For instance, the part about you went like this:

"Then the seer saw a man. The man would travel in an impossible ship. A ship that could go anywhere, but could not be steered.

(MORE)

LIBUZA (CONT'D)

But the seer could see where the ship would go next. The three sisters boarded the ship and traveled a long way. And just as the seer foretold, it brought them to the far off land where they would build the city in her visions."

CASPAR

... So you're off to some new place? Where no one is hunting you? Where there's no bad guys?

LIBUZA

Yes.

CASPAR

There's bad guys everywhere, you know.

LIBUZA

I know, I can see them.

CASPAR

But not where you're going?

LIBUZA

No. But bad people are headed there. We're going to get there first and keep them out.

CASPAR

I see... you know there was this time on my planet when a lot a people discovered there was a whole continent that they didn't know was there. A lot of people decided they would leave the old world behind and start over again in the new one... They wound up just bringing the old world with them.

LIBUZA

Should we not do anything because of the dangers of doing something?

CASPAR

Good point, I guess.

LIBUZA

We make the world, Caspar. Not those before us.

CASPAR

My whole life, all I've done is live in somebody else's world. Seems pretty unchangeable to me.

LIBUZA

That's just a fun trick that they pull. If you made a world wouldn't you want to convince everyone that it couldn't be changed?

CASPAR

You're very astute for a young person.

LIBUZA

I'm older than I look... I'm also very tired. Can you bring me inside?

CASPAR

Yeah... sure...

LIBUZA

It's nice to meet you, Caspar.

CASPAR

... You too.

ANOTHER ALIEN PLANET. WE ARE ON THE SHORES OF AN OCEAN.

TETA

Pull!

TETA QUICKLY DRAWS HER PISTOL AND FIRES. WE HEAR AN APPLE BURST INTO A MILLION PIECES IN MID AIR.

TETA (CONT'D)

Boom!... Again.

CASPAR

You know, I've got a lot of people to feed inside, this probably isn't a great use of these apples.

TETA

It's fine, the fridge'll just make more, c'mon I'm on a roll!

CASPAR

Okay.

TETA

... Pull!

TETA OBLITERATES ANOTHER APPLE IN MID AIR.

TETA (CONT'D)

Ha! What is that now?

CASPAR

Twenty-two.

TETA

Gotta be a record somewhere, right?

CASPAR

So your other two sisters are fugitives because of the science they study, you're a fugitive because what? You just like guns and crime?

TETA

Well, I do like guns and crime, Caspar, but that's not why I'm a fugitive. Pull!

ANOTHER APPLE IS MURDERED.

CASPAR

So why you, then?

TETA

I'm from Lehari. Lehari was in a power vacuum and that led to a civil war. When you've got infighting you're easily conquered, so the civil war we were fighting was secretly being funded on both sides by an intergalactic empire of fuckheads. Pull!

BULLSEYE.

TETA (CONT'D)

I was going to end the civil war, so they made me public enemy number one.

CASPAR

You were going to end the war with a radical peace treaty, I'm assuming?

TETA

No, I was going to end the war because my guns were like, WAY better.

CASPAR

I see.

TETA

So, I'm forced to go on the run, and that's when I get a mysterious message from my two sisters.

CASPAR

Right, so no one's explained to me yet how a man has three daughters on three different planets. That doesn't make any sense.

TETA

He had multiple children on multiple planets. Way more than us three. Though there's not too many of us left now.

CASPAR

Sounds like a busy guy.

TETA

He was a very busy guy. He was a conqueror.

CASPAR

A conqueror? Of women's hearts?

TETA

No, of entire planets, Caspar.

CASPAR

Entire planets? You know some people like to embellish the life story of their parents to make them sound cooler.

TETA

Yes. And I feel bad for those people. Pull!

INSIDE THE DINER. EFFIE AND ZEBULON SIT ON LIBUZA'S TABLE.

SONG: LITTLE TOWN IN OLD COUNTY DOWN.

LIBUZA

That's nice.

ZEBULON

It's lovely isn't it? It's called "Little Town in Old County Down." It's about a man who wishes to transform himself into a bird and fly far away to a quiet shore and make a nest there.

EFFIE

We usually don't play music such as this but we thought it fitting seeing as how y'all have all, in spirit, turned yourselves into birds and alighted yourselves to fairer shores.

LIBUZA

I suppose we have, yes.

EFFIE

And what awaits you there?

LIBUZA

I've no idea.

EFFIE

Oh really?

LIBUZA

Yes.

EFFIE

Well now, I hear tell that you've got a particular distinction when it comes to the future of things, youngster.

LIBUZA

A particular distinction?

ZEBULON

No need to mince words with us, now. The ladies on Effie's side of the family have, for many generations, been given a... what shall we say?

EFFIE

Bit of a finger on the side of the nose from The Lord.

ZEBULON

A bit of a nudge-nudge.

EFFIE

A bit of a tip of the old hat from our greater forces if you're speaking my language.

LIBUZA

You have visions of the future?

EFFIE

I'd say they're more like feelings. Gumptions, if you will.

ZEBULON

Always know when to bring the hogs in before a storm, and the like.

EFFIE

That's how it is with myself. How is it with you?

LIBUZA

I studied people like you, in the beginning. On several planets there are a small percentage of the population who have predictive elements. Some were just frauds, but others truly had a gift. So I began to wonder, is there something to be calculated? Are principles of uncertainty too reductive? All that brought me to this place.

EFFIE

Well, I'm sure I don't know what that means, dear. But it's awfully fancy talk for someone of your age.

LIBUZA

My age?

ZEBULON

You can't be more than ten minutes past fifteen years old.

LIBUZA

How long are the years on your planet?

ZEBULON

Well-

EFFIE

Dear. Where is Caspar?

ZEBULON

I believe they're outside shooting at apples.

EFFIE

Everyone needs to get their butts back inside right now.

LIBUZA

Kazi!

KAZI

Everybody down!

TEDBOTS CRASH DOWN AGAIN AND BEGIN TO MOVE ON THE DINER.
CASPAR AND TETA RETREAT INSIDE WITH TETA SHOOTING BACK WITH
HER PISTOL.

CASPAR

Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck.

TETA

I need a bigger gun!

CASPAR

Which one?!

TETA

The really terrifying one!

CASPAR

They're all really terrifying!

TETA

The one that says "Dame Judi Dench" on it!

CASPAR

How do they keep finding us?!

KAZI

That doesn't matter right now!

CASPAR

Here we go. Okay, Dame Judi, time to win some BAFTAs. Here!

CASPAR TOSSES THE GUN TO TETA.

TETA

Well look what I found!

TETA OPENS FIRE WITH THE BIGGER GUN.

TETA (CONT'D)

How long until we jump?!

CASPAR

We've got hours to go.

TETA

Shit.

TETA PULLS THE PIN ON A GRENADE.

TETA (CONT'D)

Everybody cover your junk!

SHE TOSSES THE GRENADE OUTSIDE AND THERE'S A MASSIVE EXPLOSION.

TETA (CONT'D)

Get me a grenade belt and two more magazines.

KAZI

What are you doing?

TETA

They can't get in here, I'm going to lure them over to those woods over there.

CASPAR

You're going out there by yourself?

TETA

No, Caspar, I'm going out there with the invisible army standing right behind me. Here, take the pistol, make sure nobody gets in the back door.

CASPAR

I don't know how to use this.

TETA

Take a wild guess! Here I go!

TETA EXITS THE BUILDING FIRING HER GUN. THE TEDBOTS FIRE BACK.

KAZI

... She'll be fine...

LATER. WE HEAR THE SOUND OF SPACE/TIME RUSHING BY. EVERYONE
IN THE DINING ROOM IS ASLEEP BUT CASPAR.

EFFIE

Caspar, you should get some sleep along with everyone else. All that worrying ain't going to mend anyone's wounds... "Well, you say that Effie Mucklewain but here you are up at an ungodly hour..."... That is true Caspar, but from time to time I have a tendency to stroll the halls at night, be the day a peaceful one or no. No rhyme or reason to it for me... "Effie I am sorry, that I have been so rudely ignoring you and your husband this whole time, seeing as how you, clear as day, are only concerned for my well-being." Well, make no mention of it again, Caspar. I can't imagine what you've been through since we first met... I just wish you'd let us help you... Well, that's enough of that. I'm off to bed. Again. Take a page out of my book, if you can.

KAZI

You're still up.

CASPAR

How's she doing?

KAZI

Laharians are incredibly difficult to kill. Especially one with her unique genetic profile. All that said, she should've died. Somehow she didn't. I've got an army of microscopic helpers working on her right now, but it will be a few days until she's annoying me again.

CASPAR

Okay...

KAZI

... I'm exhausted but i've got a lot of post-work to do.

CASPAR

Do you want a cup of coffee?

KAZI

I can manufacture a chemical in my body right now that give me all the benefits of-

CASPAR

Goddamnit. Kazi. Do you want a cup of coffee?

KAZI
... Fine.

CASPAR GRABS A CUP AND POURS HER A CUP OF COFFEE.

CASPAR
Sugar?

KAZI
No.

CASPAR
...

KAZI
This is popular on Earth?

CASPAR
Very.

KAZI
Why?

CASPAR
Because we're very tired... "Her unique genetic profile."

KAZI
Yes.

CASPAR
This is because of your father?

KAZI
Yes.

CASPAR
Who was he?

KAZI
... Krok.

CASPAR
Krok.

KAZI
That's right. A long time ago the galaxies were ruled by warlords. Warlords and conquerors. They had fleets of ships and they would hop from star system to star system claiming territory. Our father was one of them.

CASPAR

He would conquer a planet and then have some kids and then just move on to the next planet.

KAZI

Essentially.

CASPAR

And everyone was just okay with that?

KAZI

It's not like they had much of a choice, but apparently he was quite charming.

CASPAR

You never met him.

KAZI

No, he had moved on by the time I was grown.

CASPAR

How did you go from that to being fugitives?

KAZI

A new age got ushered in. An age of warp gates and commerce and politics and all of it run by... shitheads, as I believe you say on Earth.

CASPAR

I'm familiar with them.

KAZI

The warlords and conquerers were all seen as a threat, that included the inheritors of their "unique genetics." A lot of our brothers and sisters were made irrelevant, turned into hollow figureheads, some of them killed... the three of us refused to go quietly.

CASPAR

I see... but none of that matters anymore because you are off to a new world.

KAZI

That's right. Cryptessia. A young galaxy just out of reach of the shitheads.

CASPAR

Is all of this going to be worth it?

KAZI

Yes.

CASPAR

I hope so, because you've got a hundred people in here, Teta almost died today, Libuza is... I don't know what the hell Libuza's doing to herself.

KAZI

Libuza's the reason we're all here.

CASPAR

Libuza is a kid and she's had things put into her skull.

KAZI

Libuza made a choice to more fully integrate herself with her creation, it was a very brave choice.

CASPAR

So you just said okay?

KAZI

Who do you think installed those nodes in her temples? And she's not a kid, Caspar. Regardless of how you perceive her, she's much older than you can possibly imagine. That age of conquerors I was telling you about wasn't last week.

CASPAR

The three of you are going to strike out into new territory and you think it's all going to be easy street because your sister made a science project. You're going to get yourselves killed.

KAZI

... Well... I'm flattered, Caspar.

CASPAR

What are you talking about?

KAZI

You've grown attached to us.

CASPAR

... Stop looking at my brain.

KAZI

It's not my fault that there are certain parts of your brain that light up for certain reasons.

CASPAR

Why can't people stay put? For a minute?

KAZI

...

CASPAR

...

KAZI

What was the song Libuza sang to you? I've never heard her do that before.

CASPAR

... I sang it to my son to try and get him to go to sleep.

KAZI

I see... That's a very depressing song to sing to a child.

CASPAR

Look, when you're trying to get a child to go to sleep, you grab any song you've got memorized, okay? It was either that or the banana boat song... don't ask me about him, okay?

KAZI

I don't need to...

CASPAR

...

KAZI

... Caspar, we're going to be leaving soon. You can spend your time being angry about that or you can... you can do something else... but we are leaving.

CASPAR

I know... I know.

A FEW DAYS LATER. FOOD IS COOKING ON THE GRILL.

LIBUZA

You want me to do what?

CASPAR

Look, I know it sounds crazy, but this thing drives me fucking crazy and I just need to show it who's boss.

LIBUZA

This is an odd misuse of my technology.

CASPAR

Is it a bit like killing cockroaches with a bazooka, sure. But you'd be doing me a favor.

LIBUZA

... Alright... One moment, please... it's going to appear over there.

THE PARMESAN CHEESE POPS INTO EXISTENCE ON THE COUNTER.
CASPAR GRABS IT.

CASPAR

AHH! AHHHHHH-HAHA! FUCK YOUUUUUU PARMESAN CHEESE! I HAVE YOU NOW!! YOU ARE IN MY HAND!! I'M GOING TO PUT YOU ALL OVER SOME EGGPLANTSSSSSSS!!

THE PARMESAN DISAPPEARS AGAIN.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

Damn. Well it was short lived but it was a victory.

LIBUZA

What is happening?

CASPAR

The parmesan cheese. It disappears and reappears all over the kitchen, I can never quite catch it.

LIBUZA

Do you feel better?

CASPAR

A little. Thank you.

TETA

(From the back room.)
Would you get this shit away from me?

CASPAR

Goddamnit.

CASPAR OPENS THE DOOR TO THE BACK ROOM.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

Eat the fucking soup.

TETA

You eat the fucking soup!

CASPAR

I'm going to take this soup and I'm going to pour it all over your goddamn body if you don't eat it!

TETA

That'd be a better use for it!

CASPAR

I'm trying to take care of you, you idiot.

TETA
Fuck, Caspar, you're so into me, it's embarrassing
for you.

CASPAR
Okay, you know what? Fucking starve.

TETA
Can I have a sandwich?

CASPAR
...

TETA
Not the chicken, but the other kind?

CASPAR
... Ham.

TETA
Yes. I'll have one of those.

CASPAR
... You're going to eat this whole sandwich.

TETA
I know.

CASPAR
I don't care if Kazi has to surgically implant this
sandwich in your body, you're eating the whole
thing.

TETA
I know!

CASPAR
Fine!

OUT IN THE DINING ROOM.

KAZI
You'd like to do a what?

ZEBULON
Well, calling it a sermon wouldn't be quite right.

EFFIE
No, more of a story. Just a little something to
entertain the children, make the time go faster.

ZEBULON
We've noticed that all those among us now, have not
much to do but contemplate their destination.

(MORE)

ZEBULON (CONT'D)

One shouldn't spend so much time with thoughts on the future. A good story can keep one in the here and now.

KAZI

Seems harmless enough. Caspar?

CASPAR

What?

KAZI

The Mucklewains are going to have a... story time for everyone?

CASPAR

Okay.

KAZI

Is that alright with you?

CASPAR

Yeah, fine.

KAZI

Would you like to join us-

CASPAR

I have to get some ham.

KAZI

Alright...

EFFIE

We're wearing him down, I can feel it.

THE DOOR TO THE WALK-IN OPENS. WE CAN HEAR THE "BREATHING" IN AND OUT OF THE VISTEK.

CASPAR

... Hello there, terrifying, monolithic, alien technology.. I'm just going to get some ham... you know I'm sure you consist of technology that I can't possibly understand, but where I come from, things like you are almost always some sort of metaphor for hubris... you're sending them to the right place, right?... They deserve a good place... okay... okay this was a good talk I'm glad we had this time together.

BACK OUT IN THE DINING ROOM. PEOPLE ARE GATHERING AROUND THE RADIO.

EFFIE

Alright, gather around y'all. You children up front settle. Everyone can hear us alright? Alright.

ZEBULON

Welcome all. As I'm sure you all know, I'm Zebulon Mucklewain here with my wife, Effie.

EFFIE

Hi, y'all.

ZEBULON

We've spent time with y'all for many a day now and I must say, we've been inspired by your presence. All of you here with us today have taken it upon yourselves to seek out a new life, out there in the great wilderness. It's surely a daunting task and one not taken on lightly, I'd imagine. And I find that in those times, when one has taken on a great burden, it helps to hear of those who have taken on a great burden themselves.

EFFIE

When one takes a great burden upon themselves, a great loneliness can settle about.

ZEBULON

Indeed. A great purpose requires great strength, and for whatever unknown reason, the strong must, at times, know loneliness.

EFFIE

And we imagine all you strong people here with us today, must feel quite a bit of loneliness.

ZEBULON

But the strong are never alone for long. To be strong, to be forthright, to be unbending to the oncoming trials of the world. It is a beacon to those who seek their own strength. They will find you, grow stronger because of you, and you will in turn find strength in them.

EFFIE

After all, y'all had flung yourself out into the great beyond with only your fortitude as your guide. And when you did, there we appeared to you.

ZEBULON

And it brings me to the story of a boy named Ishmael. Ishmael and his mother had been cast out from their home, into a wide and unforgiving desert.

(MORE)

ZEBULON (CONT'D)

And after searching for days for safe harbor, Ishmael's mother despaired, for surely this desert would take their lives. But Ishmael, even as a boy, was of a different sort. As his mother lost all hope, Ishmael screamed to the heavens that he would live. He did not hope to live, he did not beg to live, he demanded to live. For what is the use of a wide world, if not to provide for those that fight to live within it? And there in the barren desert, Ishmael's demands were met. For suddenly there was a great spring, and a great oasis, and a tree bearing fruit.

EFFIE

People like to say that the world don't owe you nothing. And perhaps they're right. But who makes the world, children? Is it a world of our making? Did we not build spires to the heavens and humble homes and the streets we walk upon? And if it is our world that we had made together, then perhaps from time to time it behooves us to raise our voices and say to the sky that we demand to live.

ZEBULON

And we send salutations to those of you out in that great desert, demanding to live.

THE LAST DAY. THE DINER HAS LANDED IN A SWAMP. CASPAR IS IN THE PARKING LOT WITH LIBUZA.

LIBUZA

Where are we today?

CASPAR

We are in a swamp.

LIBUZA

A swamp. I've never seen a swamp, what's it like?

CASPAR

A swamp? Uh, a swamp is... combine a forest and a lake, and then add humidity and bugs. Also a number of terrifying creatures just below the water that really want to drag you under.

LIBUZA

Sounds lovely.

CASPAR

Oh yeah, it's great.

LIBUZA

... This is our last day.

CASPAR

Yeah, I know.

LIBUZA

I can't thank you enough for everything you've done for us.

CASPAR

I didn't really do anything.

LIBUZA

You cooked for a hundred people for several weeks and you very obviously hate cooking.

CASPAR

It was no big deal. I learned a lot. Like how to not burn things.

LIBUZA

You also took care of Teta.

CASPAR

That I will accept thanks for. She is the worst.

LIBUZA

She likes you. It's how she acts when she likes you.

CASPAR

Sure, whatever.

LIBUZA

... I want you to know something.

CASPAR

Okay.

LIBUZA

I already know that if I ask you to come with us, you'll say no.

CASPAR

You do?

LIBUZA

Will you come with us?

CASPAR

...

LIBUZA

It's alright. Even though I knew the answer, I wanted you to know that I asked.

CASPAR

... A lot of people on my planet do this thing... They have this place on the map, this place they're going to go to one day. When they go to this place, everything's going to be okay. "One day I'm going to leave all this behind, they'll say." They think when they get to this place, they'll finally be free of all the bullshit that they usually have to put up with. For some people it's the beach, for some people it's the desert, the real weird ones go for Alaska.

LIBUZA

What is it for you?

CASPAR

Oh, I have no idea. But whatever it is it's... I'm not ready to go there yet.

LIBUZA

I understand.

TETA WALKS OUT OF THE DINER.

TETA

I am up, I am walking, I am now free of Caspar's terrible bedside manner.

CASPAR

That's great news for both of us.

TETA

Do I feel gross because I now have a million of Kazi's nano-minions coursing through my veins? Yes. But hey, it's certainly not the grossest thing I've had coursing through my body, am I right everybody?

CASPAR

Teta, welcome to the swamp, I'm sure you have lots of friends here.

TETA

Silence, nurse. How are you doing, Libby?

LIBUZA

I'm okay. I'm glad you're out of bed.

TETA

Me too, Caspar you need to spruce that room up a bit. Get a window treatment or something.

CASPAR

Maybe a rug to tie the room together.

TETA
What's for lunch?

CASPAR
I have no idea.

TETA
Well chop chop. You have one job. Almost dying is hungry work.

LIBUZA
Caspar, can you take me back inside, I need to prep the Vistek for off-loading.

CASPAR
Sure, here we go.

WE HEAR A STRANGE SOUND, LIKE A WAVE OF ENERGY PASSING THROUGH. THEY ALL PAUSE.

CASPAR (CONT'D)
What was that?

TETA
...

CASPAR
Teta?

TETA
Caspar, get Libby inside and bring me Judi and my belt.

CASPAR
...

TETA
Caspar.

CASPAR
Yeah, okay.

LIBUZA
I'm not seeing anything.

CASPAR
Let's go.

CASPAR AND LIBUZA GO INSIDE. ALL'S QUIET.

TETA
... Come on... I know you're out there somewhere.

THREE FIGURES MATERIALIZE IN THE SWAMP.

TETA (CONT'D)
What the fuck?

THE THREE FIGURES BEGIN WADING THROUGH THE WATER TOWARDS THE DINER.

TETA (CONT'D)
I do one warning and then I kill people. This is your one warning.

THE THREE FIGURES DON'T STOP.

TETA (CONT'D)
Fine.

TETA OPENS FIRE WITH HER PISTOL. SHE FIRES SEVERAL SHOTS BUT THEY ARE STILL COMING.

TETA (CONT'D)
Fuck.

CASPAR COMES BACK OUT.

CASPAR
Who the fuck are these guys?

TETA
I have no idea but my pistol isn't working.

CASPAR
Here.

TETA
Okay... C'mon Dame Judi.

TETA OPENS FIRE WITH THE BIGGER GUN. STILL NO EFFECT.

TETA (CONT'D)
Guns aren't working.

STRANGE BEING 1
Multiple anomalies in the structure.

STRANGE BEING 2
Threat assessment of hostile.

STRANGE BEING 1
Threat level minimal.

STRANGE BEING 3
Disarm and integrate.

TETA
Minimal threat, huh?

TETA POWERS UP A GRENADE AND TOSSES IT.

TETA (CONT'D)
Inside.

CASPAR
Shit.

TETA AND CASPAR BURST INSIDE THE DINER.

TETA
Grenade! Everybody down!

CHAOS ERUPTS IN THE DINER AS THERE IS A MASSIVE EXPLOSION OUTSIDE.

TETA (CONT'D)
Let's see how that worked.

THE DUST SETTLES.

CASPAR
They're still there.

KAZI
Who are they?

TETA
I was hoping you knew.

LIBUZA
I can't see them.

EFFIE
I got a bad feeling about this.

TETA
I think we all have a pretty bad feeling. They're humanoid but I don't recognize the suits. They're armed but I don't recognize the weapons.

STRANGE BEING 1
(Outside.)
Attention. Vacate the building and prepare for processing.

CASPAR
Processing?

EFFIE
Oooh, I've got a real bad feeling about that.

KAZI
Libuza, anything?

LIBUZA

I can't see them, it's like they're not there for me.

TETA

Trying another grenade, everyone stay down.

TETA OPENS THE DOOR AND TOSSES ANOTHER GRENADE. ON THE THE BEINGS FIRES ITS GUN AND THE GRENADE DISAPPEARS.

TETA (CONT'D)

Oh, what the fuck?

CASPAR

The grenade disappeared.

STRANGE BEING 1

(Outside.)

Your weapons are ineffective. Begin evacuation immediately.

TETA

They're going to come in here if we don't do something.

CASPAR

What do they mean by processing?

KAZI

That could mean anything. Processed as prisoners... as food.

CASPAR

Food?!

ZEBULON

Oh, I don't like that at all.

STRANGE BEING 1

(Outside.)

Your time has elapsed. Struggling will elongate this process.

CASPAR IS RUMMAGING AROUND IN TETA'S BAGS.

CASPAR

I have an idea.

TETA

What are you doing?

CASPAR

The green ones are the ones that make smoke, right?

TETA

Yes.

CASPAR PULLS THE PINS ON THREE SMOKE GRENADES AND THEY BEGIN TO HISS.

CASPAR

Shit, out of the way!

THE CROWD PARTS AS CASPAR HEADS FOR THE DOOR. HE OPENS THE DOOR AND TOSSES THE GRENADES OUT.

TETA

That's not going to do anything!

CASPAR

Okay, while they can't see us, everyone out the back door, move, let's go!

EVERYONE IN THE DINER BEGINS TO MAKE THEIR WAY OUT THE BACK DOOR.

KAZI

What are you doing?

CASPAR

I've got an idea, I don't have time to explain, go!

LIBUZA

Kazi?

KAZI

Come here, Libuza. You're sure this will work?

CASPAR

No, not at all.

TETA

What are you going to do?

CASPAR

Wing it. Push something against the door once you're out there.

THE CROWD LEAVES THROUGH THE BACK DOOR. THE DOOR CLOSES AND EVERYTHING'S QUIET.

EFFIE

I don't know what you've got up your sleeve, Caspar, but we're here with you, through it all.

ZEBULON

Godspeed, my friend.

CASPAR

So you two are just going to keep talking to me until I talk back, is that it?

ZEBULON

... That was our plan, yes. Though you may be hard-pressed to explain our presence in your life, we believe we are here on the side of the angels, for what all that's worth.

CASPAR

Fine... I'm Caspar.

ZEBULON

And I am Zebulon Mucklewain, here with my wife Effie.

EFFIE

Hi, Caspar.

CASPAR

Just follow my lead, okay?

EFFIE

Lead on.

THE DOOR OPENS. THE THREE STRANGE BEINGS WALK IN THE DOOR AND STOP.

STRANGE BEING 1

Identify yourself.

CASPAR

Thank God you're here. I have been held prisoner by these people for weeks now, they make me make them food, they boss me around. You're the first people who've been able to stop them. They made me throw smoke grenades outside and then they left!

EFFIE

Praise Jesus, right husband?

ZEBULON

Oh yes! They were so terrible!

EFFIE

We worried for our lives every day!

ZEBULON

But we have been provided with saviors such as you, praise the lord!

STRANGE BEING 1

... What is their evacuation point?

CASPAR

... They're all hiding in there... The deep freeze.

STRANGE BEING 1

... Maintain your location.

THE THREE STRANGE BEINGS TURN AN HEAD FOR THE DEEP FREEZE.

CASPAR

They're heavily armed and they're terrifying! Be careful! Thank you for saving us!

THE DOOR TO THE DEEP FREEZE OPENS. THE WINDS HOWL. THE DOOR CLOSES.

EFFIE

... Do we think that did it?

CASPAR

Hang on...

CASPAR WALKS TO THE DEEP FREEZE DOOR. HE CRACKS THE DOOR OPEN AND LISTENS. WE HEAR TOTAL CHAOS. THEY ARE BEING ATTACKED BY A VERITABLE ARMY OF WOLVES.

STRANGE BEING 1

Systems malfunction! No shielding!

STRANGE BEING 2

Multiple hostiles! We are disconnected from host!

STRANGE BEING 3

Reboot weapon systems. Reboot weapon systems-

CASPAR CLOSES THE DOOR.

CASPAR

... I really need to put a lock on this thing.

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF ANOTHER ALIEN PLANET. WE HEAR AN ANIMAL RUMMAGING THROUGH THE GRASS AND EATING. IT SUDDENLY STOPS AND RUNS OFF. THERE IS A CRACK IN THE AIR AND THE DINER APPEARS. CASPAR EXITS THE DINER HOLDING THE RADIO.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

Okay. Here it is. What do we think?

ZEBULON

Goodness me, is that a volcano?

CASPAR

Yeah. Yeah, that is a very large volcano.

EFFIE

That is some fiery majesty. Are we sure it's a good notion for them to set up camp so close to something so angry.

KAZI

A lot of the planets in this system will be like that. It's a new galaxy, a lot of the planets haven't decided what they're going to be yet. Besides, we need active geology if Teta's going to build us a geothermal generator.

TETA

I don't like building things that aren't weapons, but it'll involve lava.

KAZI

(Calling back inside.)
Everyone can come out. This is home.

THE PILGRIMS ALL MAKE THEIR WAY OUT OF THE DINER AND BEGIN TO INSPECT THEIR NEW HOME.

CASPAR

Where will you even start?

KAZI

We'll set up camp over there I think. It'll be rough at first, but we should be fine for a while. After that-

LIBUZA

After that it's up to me.

KAZI

Libuza will be our guide after that.

CASPAR

Kazi, what about our mystery guests from yesterday? What if they come back?

KAZI

We don't know who they were and we have no idea where we were yesterday. We could've been on the other side of the universe.

CASPAR

You could've been right next door.

KAZI

We won't be spending much time on "could," Caspar. We'll be spending time with "should." We'll be okay. Libuza we'll guide us and Teta and I will do the rest.

TETA

Caspar, I want you to know that I've forgiven you for being such a shit sack this entire time.

CASPAR

Thanks.

TETA

As a token of our gratitude, I will be naming that volcano after you.

CASPAR

Please don't.

TETA

Mt. Caspar. Because it's constantly spewing toxic garbage into the atmosphere.

CASPAR

Thanks.

TETA

I'm going to walk away now, and I give you permission this one time to look at my ass while I'm walking away.

CASPAR

Thanks?

KAZI

I'm sure our passengers would like it if you came and said goodbye.

CASPAR

Sure.

LIBUZA

Thank you for everything, Caspar.

CASPAR

It was my pleasure... Honestly I think the whole time I've been here I've just been... I don't know, getting from one day to the next. This was the first time that... It felt like time was passing. I know that sounds weird.

LIBUZA

I have to tell you something.

CASPAR

Do you realize how stressful it is to hear that from someone who can predict the future?

LIBUZA

I'm sorry.

CASPAR

It's okay. Let's hear it.

LIBUZA

... You're going to forget about us.

CASPAR

What do you mean?

LIBUZA

It's okay. People forget more things than they remember.

CASPAR

I think it's going to be pretty impossible for me to forget this experience.

LIBUZA

I'm pretty good at knowing what's going to happen.

CASPAR

Well maybe it's time for a tune up of your terrifying device... Libuza I'm never going to forget you.

LIBUZA

Then... I'll say this. If one day you forget about us, and somewhere far down the line, you remember us again. Please forgive yourself. I forgive you. Just remember that even if you forget us, we still met you and knew you... and we were inside you somewhere the whole time.

CASPAR

Okay. But I promise I won't forget you.

LIBUZA

Alright. I have to wait here while they unload the Vistek from the walk-in. I'll see you at camp.

CASPAR

Okay.

CASPAR BEGINS TO WALK TO CAMP WITH EFFIE AND ZEBULON.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

... Don't let me forget about them, okay?

EFFIE

We shall not.

ZEBULON

We shall do our level best, Caspar.

THE SOUND FADES OUT, REPLACED BY THE SOUND OF THE DINER
TRAVELING THROUGH SPACE/TIME. WE HEAR KAZI'S VOICE AGAIN,
SENDING A MESSAGE TO CASPAR.

KAZI

3... 1... 4... 1... 5... 9... 2... 5... 3... 5...
8... 9... 7... 9... 3... 2... 3... 8... 4... 2...
4... 3... 3... 8... 3... 2... 7... 9... 5... 0...
2... 8... 8... 4... 1... 9... 7... 1... 9... 3...
9... 9... 3... 7... 5... 1... 0...

THE END