

Brendan A.

The Fog

“Quick! Shut the main doors!” Maia screamed as she flew across the pod’s control center. Brock, hearing Maia’s warning, pulled a pipe clean off the pod’s wall. He then wedged it between the handles of both entrances. “That should hold it,” Maia said reassuringly. “Florick!”

“Yes?” I replied, sprinting out of the engine room. “Get Donnie. Tell him that you and him are given the orders of making sure everybody makes their way towards the escape route. Now!”

“Sure thing,” I responded.

I bolted through the main hallway as fast as I possibly could, my feet pounding against the cracked tile. I came to a sudden stop when I realized I had just nearly passed Donnie’s room. I regained my balance and rushed to the door, breathing heavily. “Donnie!” I coughed. “Get out here! It’s something urgent!” There was silence for a small amount of time, but I eventually heard a reply.

“What is it?” He asked. He obviously hasn’t been awake for quite some time.

“Our pod has been completely surrounded by a mysterious gas, and is leaking into the control system as we speak. We are unsure if it’s deadly or not, but we still have been given orders to evacuate. We were assigned the task of alerting the people in the pod and lead them towards the nearest escape route.” Silence.

Then the door opened from the inside, and out came Donnie, wearing nothing but a t-shirt and a pair of boxers. His hair was rustled and his eyes were saggy.

“So let me get this straight,” he said, rubbing his chin. “Our entire pod is surrounded in this mysterious gas, it’s slowly leaking into the control system, and you want us to *leave* the pod?”

I sat there confused. “Well... that’s the orders that we have been given.”

“That’s crazy!” He yelled, throwing his arms up into the air. “We literally just landed on Atreus a couple hours ago... a couple hours! We have no idea what could be out there. You do realize the only reason we traveled to this stupid planet was to observe and classify the organisms it contains, right? What if one of those creatures try to attack us! We’re not safe out there.”

He put his hands on his hips, clearly upset. It was pretty obvious that he was just finding an excuse to not get up and alert everyone. It was also pretty obvious he had no *idea* how serious this was. “Listen. If you want to complain about this situation, how about you get your butt up and go whine to Maia. But we have been given orders, and we need to follow them.”

Donnie sighed, and began to rub his eyes. “Ugh... fine,” he said. “Just let me put on some clothes first.”

After waking the other agents in the pod, Donnie and I sprinted back to the control system to retrieve our next set of orders. The closer we got to our destination, the more commotion we could hear. We made one more right turn and made it to the control room’s security door.

“Well... go on with it!” Donnie complained, pushing me towards the terminal. I walked up to door and pressed a button on the right side of the wall. A small part of the wall slid down and revealed a speaker. I cleared my throat. “Florricks Wickerson,

squadron 3. Serial number: 7891056,” and with that, the lights on the perimeter of the door changed from red to green, and the door slid open. Donnie and I threw ourselves into the room.

Brock was still attempting to keep the main doors shut, while Maia was busy making a distress signal.

“My name is Maia Crystal on board the S-721-VIPER. Our pod has been surrounded by a mysterious black fog that seems to be damaging the outside of the capsule and is limiting our sources of communication. Please send us the identification of this substance, and in the meantime we will be evacuating the pod,” Maia and a couple other members from her squadron sat by the distress terminal waiting for a response. Nothing.

Maia began to panic. She ripped the terminal off of the wall and threw it across the room, landing it right next to Donnie’s feet. She glared at us. “You two!” She screamed. “Have you alerted the rest of the agents in the pod?”

I nodded. She sighed. “Good. Now go to the engine room and open the emergency exit, I’ll try to help everyone else find their way there.”

“Got it,” Donnie replied. Donnie took are first steps towards the engine room until we heard a big bang coming from the main entrance.

We looked to the other side of the control center and Brock was sprinting towards us. “Get to the escape route, now!” And right behind him was the black fog that was surrounding our ship, pouring in through the main doors.

Screams were heard from every single direction, and everyone started to book it towards the escape route. People were trampled and pushed to the ground. I looked back, and saw the fog slowly closing in behind me. But then I stood still. I couldn't believe the horror I was witnessing.

The fog was *consuming* the people indulged in it, entering their skin, and withering away the flesh from their body. I started to sprint even faster now, not even daring to look back again. I made it through the escape route and ran through the main exit, my feet landing against Atreus' soil. I looked forward and saw a forest in the distance, figuring that could be a place to hide. More screams could be heard from the pod, and it seemed like I was one of the only people able to escape. But I didn't care, though. I just kept running until i reached the forest. I hid in the brush and looked back at the pod, watching my crew mates get withered and consumed by the fog...