



Josh and Leisl are holding each other, sitting on the steps of the ship. You can't escape a brief pang of jealousy, so you decide to refocus onto Xavier's conversation with the crew instead.

"So the voidspace is like... absolute nothingness. Not even a vacuum. Just parts of the universe that were never created in the first place."

"Something like that, yeah." Jyoqu nods.

The screen beeps - the other ship is in close proximity now.

"This ship we're chasing, it's owned by - Well, used to be owned by, I guess, one of the most prolific pirates in the universe. They'd raided nearly every major planet. But then they did something strange. They went deep into large patches of the voidspace. And apparently, after one expedition, they came back with... whatever's on that ship."

Lukas stands. "Enough chit chat, everyone. We'd better get ready to board the pirate ship soon. Grab the cargo, grab the human, and then we'll need to get our own ship outta here pretty snappily, otherwise we might not be able to escape the gravity of Beta-One."

"*One lightyear until certain fatal incineration.*" The voice rings out.

There's a sudden, violent thump as this ship docks onto the pirate one, airlock to airlock. "Alright! Let's get moving!" Lukas runs off and beckons for everyone to follow. You all pass through the airlock system into the pirate ship - and there are bodies all over the floor. Some humanoid, some strange and unfamiliar, and there, huddled in the corner -

"Ori!" You yell. She jumps up and runs towards you, arms open for an embrace.

"You're here!" She says, laughing with relief.

"Not for long, missy. Unless you wanna fry." Lukas is scanning the ship for the cargo. The store rooms are empty, apart from a small, cardboard box. "Surely this ain't it." He says to no one in particular. With a scowl, he picks up the box and tucks it under his arm. "You find anything, Jyoqu?"

"Nope." Jyoqu sounds truly disappointed. "We have to head off now, though. Otherwise we're not getting out of this one."

"Alright." Lukas looks around the ship once more, and concedes that there's nothing else to find. "Let's go. Chop chop!"

Xavier leads the way back to Lukas and Jyoqu's ship. Josh and Leisl are trailing behind at the end of the group. "Cmon, run!" Lukas yells.

You all tumble back into the control room, just in time to hear the screen say "*No chance of escaping certain fatal incineration.*" Great.

"Dammit..." Lukas mutters, fiddling with switches and levers. A shining line of sweat is beginning to appear on his forehead.



Jyoqu’s chin-tentacles are bristling. “There has to be a way to escape Beta-One’s pull!”

There’s a flurry of stressed activity from the two and Xavier at the control panels, as the rest of you watch on. A screen flashes red, with two dots dangerously close to the mass in the middle.

Suddenly, both Jyoqu and Lukas stop. They glance at each other, at Xavier. “We can’t get out of it.” Jyoqu says softly. “We’re going to crash.”

As everyone stares at the screens in horror, you can feel the heat of Beta One getting closer and closer, the metal getting hotter and hotter beneath your feet.

Lukas says the same thing again, like the refrain of a prayer.

“We’re going to crash.”



Act II
Scene 3

Made out of Music and Machine

Author: Jeremy Yip



For my dear Scarlet,

Light packing was the key to my around-the-world adventure that started in Ireland; I can't believe that I have somehow hit every possible country and seen so many things ranging from orange deserts to crystal clear seas. France was a place to remember, with the escargot, blue seas and, of course, I can't forget the white wine – simply amazing. Much better than Cote d'Ivoire, where food portions were every so small, with meagre entrees of fruit at every meal; oranges, bananas and rambutan. I could eat two whole coconuts and two papayas in one sitting if I had the chance!

Another place I hadn't been to before was Cyprus, with its yellow buildings and green rivers. It was pretty good, compared to Bangladesh; and I'm sure if you went there too you'd agree not to go there again. Over there, things are pretty run down, and poverty is worse fourfold; it's a third world environment.

Getting around Saudi Arabia was tough, and luckily I packed some white silken clothes because it was just SO hot there. Afterwards, we were off to Indonesia to experience Asian culture, although my face quickly turned white when I realised nobody knew English. That didn't stop me from heading to Vietnam to round off my trip though, and since people spoke English at the floating markets, I guess I was spared there. Can't believe that my third trip overseas ended there though – eleven weeks and a whole lot of memories that I'll never forget.

Sincerely, Amber