

37 Years Til Tomorrow

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"This decision isn't yours alone Aca. We have to come to some sort of agreement. Lets put it out of our minds for the moment. Tabitha's down stairs and Wilson will be here any minute now." Trish gently rubs Aca's shoulder before leaving the room. Aca sits with his mouth in his hand. His eyes swell and crocodile tears trickle over his fingers. The doorbell chimes and Aca wipes away his tears and tries to adjust the muscles in his face so that his sorrow is masked.

"Aca, tough break buddy!" Wilson yells from the living room. "I heard the higher ups gave you a bum rap and a square deal at the same time. You gonna take it!"

Aca immediately gives up his charade and walks into the living room with his wife and friends. Tabitha sits silent in the corner.

"You can't speak Tabby? Or... are you incapacitated at the moment." Aca asks.

"I made it here alright didn't I? Whose there to speak to. I saw you earlier today." Tabitha says picking at her nails seemingly uninterested in conversation.

"When? I've been here all morning."

"I saw you on the news. Big sink hole opened up in Winter Park. They say it's sucking people in and killing them off. That's you right? That's your M-O right?"

Aca looks to Trisha. She rolls her eyes and begins setting the table.

"You should know by now not to bait her in. She only goes to the darkest places when she's feels threatened."

"She's a spaced out druggy with no ambitions in life and I'm the black pit of despair? Aca asks his wife not expecting an answer.

"You two gonna do this all night or we gonna eat?" Wilson says interrupting any chance Trisha had at addressing the tension.

Tabitha stands up and stretches. She walks past Aca slightly bumping into him before sitting at the table.

"The guy who seems happy the world is going to hell in a hand basket, what's his name, Art...ugh." Tabitha stumbles over her words.

"It's Gelman, Art Gelman." Trisha offers.

"Gelman; the news anchor on television says we have 37 years til the world explodes or implodes or is consumed by the sun, whatever. What's the point of ambition when its all for nothing? Leave me alone."

"Its only 28 years left now. When is the last time you bothered to look at the news? That was 9 years ago" Wilson says with a chuckle.

"She's too busy emptying as many unnatural resources as she can into her own body to care about what's happening around her." Aca says shaking his head in disgust.

"You got your neat little job as a pilot to the space station for NASA, you got my sister as your hot little wife, and you have this luxurious home right here in Miami Florida and you think you're hot shit. Well you strive for excellence in a time when its least appreciated and see where that gets you. We are all gonna die on this rock at the same time."

Trisha grows tired of the back and forth and drops a casserole in the center of the table with a thud.

"Not all of us. There have been some marvelous advancements with the islands. Its absolutely amazing some of the things they are doing to prepare to leave. Could you imagine? Starting with a few hundred crates of scraps and know how. They are all proving just how amazing we as a human race truly are." Says Trisha.

Everyone picks up on her tone and decides to shift with her conversation.

"Why those solar panel streets were such an spark of genius a few of the islands don't have much worry for energy at all. That is promise for the new planet. Clean energy and plenty of it." Wilson says as he spoons a hefty pile of casserole onto his plate.

"I had a solid chance you know. To get us off this planet. I could have been the pilot to take the winning group up to the new planet. Along with 4 people of my choosing." Aca says with a tremble of a cry in his voice.

"Aca, they gave us another option. You still have a decision to make. We still have a decision to make." Trisha explains reaching for Aca's hand.

"Yeah man. Like I was saying you got a raw deal but that second offer ain't the worst." Wilson says trying to help.

"It makes no sense Wilson. What difference does it make whether I'm 33 or... or 58. I'm a damn good pilot and I absolutely know the risks. We all do."

"Listen Aca. You and Trisha are both bright, maybe even brilliant people. Both of you graduated from MIT. Both of you work for NASA. The odds of you two having a child that will be just as great is pretty damn good. Take the offer, raise the child, and train him up as the best damn pilot you two can muster." Wilson offers compassionately.

“I can’t say that I disagree with Wilson. Hell, half of the kid will be my sister’s. That alone puts it head and shoulders over the competition.”

The other three people at the table all look puzzled by Tabitha’s words.

“Since you all seem to be so eager to discuss my life, Trisha’s life, and the potential unborn child of ours, how about you consider the notion of that child not cutting it by some trumped up standards that rolls around in the future? Then what? Then we’re stuck here and we’ve created another person to only die young and angry on a world that didn’t want it and it didn’t deserve. That’s giving a death sentence to an absolutely innocent person.”

The group eats their meal and continues to toil over the many aspects of their seemingly very short lives. As the group eats more and talks less they hear the television in the other room chime in with a news alert. Trisha taps a flat display on the edge of the table and a screen slides down displaying the same news feed from the other room.

::BREAKING NEWS::

This is Art Gelman with breaking news. Anarchists stormed and took over the courthouse in downtown Miami. I must stress that this is past tense as the S.W.A.T. team wasted no time making it to the scene. The leader of the Anarchists expressed they had zero demands except to, and I quote, “Watch the masses bleed”, end quote. After a brief gun fight three officers are dead, seven are wounded, and all twenty-six of the self-proclaimed Anarchists are dead. If at all possible steer clear of downtown Miami as the streets are littered with protestors and police. This is Art Gelman sending you to our street team Lisa...”

Trisha taps the table and turns the screen off. The group sits quietly as they realize this incident is the beginning of many more to come.

Four Years Later...

“This was the dumbest decision you have ever made Tabitha.” Trisha yells walking behind Tabitha. The two are dressed in dark clothing. The moon’s glow is the only light leading them through the dark street they’re traveling on.

“I know. Don’t you think I feel bad enough as is. The guy told me he had a vasectomy. I thought we were safe.” Tabitha says sporadically looking over her shoulders as anything in motion catches her attention.

“Oh no. He’s not the guy. Wilson has a name and I recall you knowing it very well.”

“What did you think was going to happen when you dragged us down into that bunker with the two of you? We’re human. Okay the world is shit but we have needs too.”

“Well look at what those needs have lead us to. Lets get to this pharmacy and hope there is still something worth taking.”

37 Weeks Later...

Tabitha screams echo through the bunker. Wilson paces back and forth in the background as Aca and Trish focus on delivering Trisha’s child.

“God! What were we thinking?” Wilson asks himself pacing hurriedly

“Shut up Wilson. This isn’t the time for doubting now. This is happening and you have a responsibility.” Aca says with his hands deep between Tabitha’s legs.

Several hours pass. The bunker is quiet and no one is moving about. A faint wheezing breaks the silence. Everyone springs to alertness. Aca and Trisha rush over to the trash can.

“She’s alive. She is breathing.”

A rapid knock at the bunker’s hatch muffles the collective sigh of relief. Through the slot in the hatch a pamphlet drops down and lands at Wilson’s feet. He picks it up and begins to read it aloud.

“Three of the islands have been discovered and over run by outsiders. We’re now down to thirty thousand still vying for a chance to continue the human race. There have been some new advancements as well. It seems there has been some substantial progress in the diamond teleportation chambers. Years ago it was just data and communication transmitted. Now it seems they have had several trials with porous rocks and algae. The algae contained parasites. All of which survived.”

Three Years Later...

Aca and Tabitha sit at a table with the toddler. The toddler plays with a bowl and spoon while she sits on Aca’s lap.

“She’s three years old and she isn’t talking yet. Not so much as a mommy or daddy.” Aca says looking over to Tabitha

“Well she’s been in this bunker all her life. No television, no radio. We’re practically cave men. It should be expected her development would be a bit slower than if the world were just dandy.” Tabitha says before getting up.

"No, you see we're here and we talk a great deal. We really talk too much at times. I think maybe there is something wrong with her."

"There's nothing wrong with her. Give me my child."

Tabitha snatches the baby from his lap. The child begins to cry.

"I can't teach a child to fly if she can't talk. That means she's developing slowly, much slower than needed to start her teaching her basics in two years."

"Are you still hung up on that? We're all gonna die man. The government, NASA, whoever don't even know we're down here. They don't check on us. That whole leave the planet thing was a farce to placate the masses."

Aca cocks his head to the side as he realizes Tabitha is too far gone to reason with. Wilson and Trisha come down the ladder through the bunker's hatch with supplies. The two smile at one another pour the supplies onto the table out of their bags.

"We got a huge haul this time." Trisha says spreading the canned goods out onto the table.

"Tabitha was on drugs during her pregnancy with Eve. Eve is developing slower than a normal child of her age. We're doomed to this planet."

Before Wilson can open his mouth Trisha spins around with tears in her eyes.

"That isn't true. It just isn't." She cries out.

"Look there was never any chance of us leaving this planet. I mean come on the rich people maybe but you two were rich and look at you. I needed to take the edge off. It's a cruel world out there. It's a boring one in here."

"Get out of our bunker, now!" Trisha says pointing towards the hatch.

"I got friends. I don't need yall. I'd say it was nice but I'd be lying."

Tabitha begins to pick up the toys for Eve.

"That is my child too. Leave her things, leave her and go." Wilson says as he fights back tears.

Tabitha drops everything and snatches up her bag and climbs the stairs.

"Easier for me anyways." Tabitha scoffs as she slams the hatch.

19 Years Later

An aggravated banging wakes everyone sleeping in the bunker. A note drops through the chute. Now an adult Eve walks over to the note and picks it up. She reads it aloud.

“While your candidacy for pilot has been denied your participation in the mainland experiment is greatly appreciated by you nation. You and four people of your choosing will be allowed to volunteer to teleport to the secretly built living facility on the moon and live there until a time can be determined to teleport the survivors to the new planet.”

The occupants in the bunker begin to cry and hug one another.