

CLASS

SERIES 1

EPISODE 7

"The Metaphysical Engine, or What Quill
Did"

BY

PATRICK NESS

SHOOTING SCRIPT

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1 EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT 10

1 *

This is mostly the same opening sequence as Episode 6, but separate shots would be useful.

An asteroid shower, huge STONES tumbling through space. We turn through them. It's awe-inspiring.

Find a smaller ONE, tumbling faster than the others, follow it around-

The tell-tale SIZZLE as a rip in space/time opens in its path.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
It was the smallest of infractions.

CUT TO:

2 INT. COAL HILL SCHOOL, CORRIDOR - DAY 10, 15:35

2 *

Quill, coming down the hallway, angry. Charlie behind her, trying to keep up.

QUILL
Sometimes I think you can't even hear the words you use.

CHARLIE
It was three minutes, at most-

QUILL
Late is late, Prince.

CHARLIE
With everything we've been through, I hardly think-

Quill stops suddenly, whips round to him.

QUILL
Everything we've been through? You mean the lies? The slavery?

CHARLIE
Punish- You know what? I'm not going to do this anymore.

QUILL
At any moment, you could destroy the species who wiped out our people, yet here we stand.
(leans in)
In a school.

CHARLIE
You shouldn't avenge genocide with genocide. That's what the Doctor said.

QUILL
And obviously no one else in all of
time and space can think for
themselves.

Takes off walking again.

CHARLIE
It isn't your decision, Quill.

Reaches Quill's classroom door. She stops, turns to Charlie.

QUILL
No, but detention is.

She opens the door, gestures him inside.

CUT TO:

INT. COAL HILL SCHOOL, QUILL'S CLASSROOM - DAY 10, 15:36

Charlie steps in, surprised to see April, Ram, Tanya and Matteusz all sitting at desks. They're surprised to see him, too.

CHARLIE
(turning)
Wait a minute. All of us-?

But Quill has shut the door behind him. He reaches for the handle-

She's locked it. He pulls on it.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Hey!

CUT TO:

4 INT. COAL HILL SCHOOL, CORRIDOR - DAY 10, 15:37 4 *

This time, we see the action through the other side of the door, Quill watching Charlie.

QUILL
You've all got an hour's detention,
and I've got things to do. April's
in charge. Obviously.

CHARLIE
(through the door)
You can't just lock us in here!
(turns to the others)
She can't just-
(stops, off their
reactions)
You've already had this argument
with her.

Charlie turns back to the door. Quill smiles through the glass.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
(through the door)
You're sworn to protect me.

QUILL
That's why I'm locking you in. So
you won't come to harm.

CHARLIE
(through the door)
Why? What are you going to do?

She just smiles and turns away, walking down the corridor.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
(through the door)
Hey!
(on door handle)
Hey!

Quill disappears down the hallway as the SIZZLE of the rip in space/time starts to open as in the last episode.

CUT TO:

5 INT. COAL HILL SCHOOL, CORRIDOR - DAY 10, 15:38 5 *

Quill reaches the end of the corridor where DOROTHEA waits. Dorothea wears an overdone set of clothes for travelling: safari-shirt, tons of camping gadgets - she could be heading into the jungle. She has a sleek PACK with her.

QUILL
Ready?

DOROTHEA
(on Quill's normal outfit)
Is that what you're wearing?

QUILL
Is that what you are?

They walk on, leaving the corridor. Behind them, we (but not they) hear the meteor hit from last week's episode.

CUT TO:

6 INT. COAL HILL SCHOOL, SCHOOL HALL - DAY 10, 15:40 6 *

Quill and Dorothea enter the school hall.

DOROTHEA
They'll stay in the classroom? I
don't want them trying to solve any
"mysteries" while we're away.

QUILL

They're all such goody two-shoes,
they'd probably stay there without
a key or a teacher. Now, are we
leaving or aren't we?

*

DOROTHEA

(surprised)

Are you really so eager? The
chances of you surviving this are-

*

*

QUILL

I'll either end today dead or with
this thing out of my skull.

*

Beat, as Dorothea considers this.

*

*

*

*

DOROTHEA

Are you entirely sure about that?

(off Quill's look)

The Arn knows your thoughts, yes?

*

*

QUILL

...yes-

*

*

*

*

*

Then it knows you want it out. And
surely the only reason it hasn't
killed you already is that you
yourself don't believe this will
work.

*

*

*

*

*

QUILL

What are you getting at?

*

*

*

*

*

DOROTHEA

At some point today, should
everything go according to plan,
there will come a moment when
you'll start to believe.

*

*

QUILL
...and when that happens-

*

*

*

DOROTHEA

When that happens, there will be
only one survivor.

*

*

QUILL
...Me or the Arn.

*

*

*

*

DOROTHEA

Once we leave, there's no going
back. You really will either end
this day dead or with your freedom.

This sinks in more. But-

*

*

*

QUILL

Then let's begin. I wish to be
free.

*

*

*

DOROTHEA
(all-important)
And who, I wonder, *is* Quill when
she's free?

Zoom into Quill, her phrase, but with a definite hint of a
question.

QUILL
I am war itself...?

THEME MUSIC RISES - "Up All Night" by Alex Clare.

TITLES.

CUT TO:

7 **INT. COAL HILL SCHOOL, SCHOOL HALL - DAY 10, 15:45**

7 *

Dorothea looks at her watch.

QUILL
What exactly are we waiting for?

Dorothea ignores this.

QUILL (CONT'D)
So it's going to be that kind of
day, is it?

DOROTHEA
Ah, here he is.

There's a shimmer of colour, and BALLON is suddenly with
them. Handsome, brooding, human-looking save for white
contacts over his irises. He wears a hoodie. His NECK is
partially REPTILIAN, as if he was emerging out of it in the
shape of a Human. He glares at Dorothea, holds out his hands,
which are BOUND by an alien device, held by cords of light.

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
You're late.

BALLON
(growly voice, on hands)
My travel is restricted. By you.

QUILL
(surprised)
The Governors keep alien prisoners?
Does UNIT know about this...?

Dorothea gives her a look that says, Don't ask. Out of her
pack, she takes a small alien key. Firm eye on Ballon, who
watches her resentfully, she holds the key over the bonds.

DOROTHEA
(perhaps slightly nervous)
Need I remind you of who we are and
the control we have over you?

BALLON
(contained fury)
You do not.

DOROTHEA
And you will not-

BALLON
(shouting)
I need NOTHING MORE of your games,
human. Cut the binds or do not,
just *shut up*.

QUILL
I like him already.

Ballon glances at her. It's not friendly.

Dorothea touches the key to his bonds. They separate.
Dorothea looks impressed at her own tech, as if she's maybe
not seen it work before.

DOROTHEA
(quietly, on the key)
Remarkable.

Ballon massages his wrists, scowling.

QUILL
Who is this person?

DOROTHEA
Quill, Ballon. Ballon, Quill.
That's all either of you need to
know for now.

BALLON
(glares at Quill)
Stay out of my way.

QUILL
(accepts the challenge)
Stay out of *mine*.

Dorothea opens her pack and takes out a small RELIQUARY, with
an ancient RELIC inside, a small orb of white within.

QUILL (CONT'D)
What's that?

DOROTHEA
(cheerful)
Very old technology, which I
confess we don't fully understand.
It's quite unsteady, liable to kill
us at any moment.

QUILL
Is that why they sent you?
Expendable?

There's a sound from Ballon. Was it a laugh? Quill glances over but he covers it.

Dorothea places the reliquary on the ground between the three of them. Is she just a little unsure of herself? Hides it behind a smile, but there's nervousness when she says:

DOROTHEA

Without further preface, The reliquary suddenly shoots THREE WHITE BEAMS from it, each passing RIGHT THROUGH our three characters and coming out of their backs.

Quill reacts as if she's been speared, which maybe she has. Ballon toughs it out, even Dorothea looks uncomfortable.

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
And zero.

In a flash, they DEMATERIALISE.

CUT TO:

8 OMITTED.

8

CUT TO:

9 INT. RELIQUARY - DAY 10

9 *

The interior space is a VERY basic orb - old, no seats, seemingly ready to fall apart - as if they're inside the small white orb in the reliquary, which they are.

Quill is pressed against the floor by acceleration. The sense of speed is overwhelming-

She sees Ballon and Dorothea, both managing to keep upright, though Dorothea is also clearly struggling to keep up her "in charge" persona.

Quill sees Ballon sneering at her infirmity. Then she passes out... It's quick, her eyes just touch closed before-

CUT TO:

10 OMITTED.

10 *

11 OMITTED. MERGED WITH SCENE 9.

11 *

CUT TO:

12 EXT. FOREST - DAY 10

12 *

Quill blinks herself awake, frowning. She's... Where is she? She sits up. It's leafy. It's a forest. She hears a sound.

Dorothea repacks the reliquary. Ballon stands, unnaturally still, his eyes closed.

BALLON
(without opening his eyes)
She is awake.

Quill makes to stand, but is clearly very dizzy.

DOROTHEA
I know. Me, too. There'll be a period of adjustment-

QUILL
What the hell just happened?

Dorothea holds up the reliquary.

DOROTHEA
A kind of atomic fuzzing. Makes us quite nearly not exist in the traditional sense.
(looks around, amazed)
But it can take you to the most remarkable places.
(sighs with delight)
Gosh.

QUILL
If you do something like that again without warning me, I will pluck the eyelids from your screaming face.

Ballon laughs again, more clearly, eyes still closed.

BALLON
An interesting company we make.

DOROTHEA
(smiles, to Quill)
You're going to regret those shoes.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. FOREST PATH - DAY 10, LATER

13 *

The three make their way down a forest path, Ballon in the lead, Quill in the rear.

QUILL
We didn't get "fuzzed" atomically to the Peak District, did we?
Because there are trains for that.

DOROTHEA
(looking around in wonder)
Oh, my, no.

QUILL
(frustrated)
Fine. I'll ask. Where are we, oh wise headteacher and mistress of nauseating space travel?

DOROTHEA
(grins)
Some place *wonderful*.

Quill makes to answer, but Ballon stops suddenly, alert.

BALLON
They're near.

QUILL
Who? I can't hear anything.

BALLON
(scornful)
When you were asleep, she told me you were a *soldier*.

Before Quill can snap back, Dorothea turns to her, sighing, uncomfortable with not being entirely on top of the facts.

DOROTHEA
Now, we're flying a little blind here, but our best zoological theory is that you need to talk about your childhood.

QUILL
(baffled)
Zoolo- *What?*

DOROTHEA
What are your first memories?
Quickly. It feeds on those. We think it'll come hunting.

There's now a distinct rustling in the bushes.

QUILL
(angry, confused)
What the f-

BALLON
(suddenly loud,
commanding)
What is your first memory,
soldier!?

QUILL
(surprised into it)
The death of our mother!

Dorothea and Ballon blink at her.

QUILL (CONT'D)
(pressing on)
Birth is the last thing a Quill does. She has her litter and dies and her body...

DOROTHEA
(genuinely fascinated)
...You eat it. For nourishment.
Don't you?

QUILL
(angry at it)
It's a contemptible tradition. And
medically unnecessary in modern
times. But there are archaic
cultural pressures-

BALLOON

There's a loud rustling in the BUSHES. Ballon gives a BATTLE CRY and dives in. Off-screen, we hear the sounds of a physical fight, the calls of some sort of CREATURE-

Who then dies with a sound as of a neck breaking.

Beat. Ballon steps out of the bushes, carrying a small bloody creature. Surprisingly small.

That's *it*? QUILL

BALLOON
(irritated, befuddled by
her reaction)
They're surprisingly strong.

QUILL
Well, what was all the-
(imitates his battle cry)
It's the size of a kitten.

BALLOON

Are kittens dangerous?

QUILL
Only if you insult their
worshippers online.

DOROTHEA (O.S.)
Are we safe?

They turn. She has her gun out, pointing at the bloody mess in Ballon's hand.

BALLOON
We are safe. It's dead.

QUILL

All right, ENOUGH! Where are we, who is Little Lord Growls-A-Lot and why are we all so worried that he killed a kitten? *

Dorothea gives Quill a look, steps forward, takes out a PEN with which to pick up the "kitten". She holds it up. Pull focus to Quill's face. Who might recognise it... *

QUILL (CONT'D)

That's not. No...

DOROTHEA

Oh, yes.

QUILL

...But that's... *impossible*.

DOROTHEA

Indeed.

She looks up to the surrounding forest, still in some awe.

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)

We're in the Birthing Grounds of the Arn. We need the pheromones of a fresh specimen to calm the one in your head enough for the procedure. *

QUILL

(shocked)

What procedure? And that's not... *

The Arn are a *grown* life form! *

Genetically modified. They do *not* live in any *forest*- *

DOROTHEA

Yes, those are the facts that everyone knows to be true. But not, apparently, what the Arn believe. *

QUILL

What the Arn believe? *

Dorothea drops the Arn into a thoroughly inappropriate clear plastic sandwich bag. *

BALLON

(surly)

And *I* was unharmed, thank you. *

Dorothea ignores this, takes out the reliquary, concerned. *

DOROTHEA

The trip here took more power than we calculated. Getting to our next destination could be a close-run thing. *

(sees Quill glaring)

Oh, all right. *This*, as best we can tell, is a metaphysical engine.

QUILL
Metaphysics? But metaphysics aren't real, they're-

DOROTHEA
Thought, yes. Everything in the universe is conserved. Everything. Even belief. Get millions of creatures believing something strongly enough for long enough and even space responds. You're quite right that the Arn weren't exactly wild creatures, but parts of them were. And they dream, like so many of us, of what comes after.

QUILL
I'm sorry, are you... Are you actually suggesting we're in Arn heaven?

DOROTHEA
Don't be ridiculous.

QUILL
Good, I-

DOROTHEA
We're in the *idea* of it. The belief itself making it so.

Quill opens her mouth to answer but then jumps a little, holding her head.

QUILL
It moved.
(looking up)
That's the first time I've ever felt it move without pain.

DOROTHEA
You see? It believes.

Dorothea fiddles with the reliquary, having difficulty. She's annoyed the others see this.

BALLON
How many times have you travelled on this... device?

Dorothea doesn't answer, doesn't look up. Quill is suddenly interested in her non-response.

QUILL
(sing-song)
Oh, Headmistress...

Dorothea looks up, hesitant. Beat.

DOROTHEA
This is my first actual time. We've tried several simulations though-

QUILL

Your *first*?

BALLOON
Your *first*?

DOROTHEA
(defensive)

I've been fully briefed. I know
what I'm do-

The reliquary activates before she can finish. It shoots THREE WHITE BEAMS from it again, each passing RIGHT THROUGH our three characters.

In a flash, they DEMATERIALISE-

CUT TO:

14 INT. RELIQUARY - DAY 10

14 *

More juddering on the inside, but Quill, watching Ballon, sees that by not fighting it, the ride is easier. She steadies herself. They're all quite startled to be there. It's loud, they have to talk over it.

QUILL

DOROTHEA
You're in the hands of the only one
of us who's read the research on
how to stay alive while using it.

Gestures at the reliquary space. It's still loud. Dorothea WHACKS a panel. Everything quiets down a little.

DOROTHEA
(all right, fine)
The Governors study the tears in
space and time at Coal Hill. We
study the... *flotsam* that falls
through. It suggests... interesting
things.

DOROTHEA
(beat)
There are those who think that the
tears aren't accidental. That they
were *put* there. To provide. For
those who will listen.

se who will listen.
(almost reverently)
(MORE)

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
Coal Hill provides. It always provides.

QUILL
(concerned by this)
It's just a school.

Dorothea gives her a "really?" look. Quill turns to Ballon.

QUILL (CONT'D)
And what do you get out of this?

BALLON
My freedom.

Dorothea repeats her question from earlier.

DOROTHEA
And who is a free Ballon, I wonder?

QUILL
Some kind of hunter? *

DOROTHEA
Oh, no, my dear, he's your surgeon.

Quill looks at him, surprised, re-appraising, but-

QUILL
You can't get an Arn out through surgery.

DOROTHEA
You can if the surgeon is a shape-shifter.
(beat)
That's the theory anyway.

QUILL
(looking at Ballon)
Shape-shifter? I think I've heard of you on Earth. You're a Zygote.

DOROTHEA
Zy-gon.

QUILL
Yeah, because that doesn't sound made up.

DOROTHEA
And he's not a Zygon-

BALLON
I am a Lorr.

DOROTHEA
Who was posing as a Zygon.

QUILL
One shape-shifter posing as
another? *That's meta.*

DOROTHEA
Also a fine way to hide. Zygons are
protected on Earth. A good place to
disappear.

QUILL
(to Ballon)
What did you do?

BALLON
(defiant)
You are on this trip as well,
Quill. What did you do?

QUILL
I am a victim of circumstance.

BALLON
As am I.

DOROTHEA
Yes, I'm sure the families of the
people you both murdered would be
more than happy to consider
themselves a circumstance.

Ballon is angry but she's hit a sore spot.

BALLON
No one was supposed to die.

DOROTHEA
I'll bet that's her excuse, too. *

QUILL
(eyes on Ballon)
Not really. I knew what I was
doing.

The reliquary starts to shudder around them. Dorothea turns to Ballon. She's hesitant. She knows he won't like it.

DOROTHEA
(wary)
Remember what we've promised you.
Ask yourself, what is the reward
worth? *

BALLON
(resentful but trapped)
It is everything. But why-

Beat. Then flashes of white light and:

CUT TO:

15 EXT. LORR HELL - NIGHT 10

15 *

They stumble out into what appears to be a landscape of CLOSELY SET STATUES. Every statue is a LORR, frozen in expressions of horror.

BALLON
(eyes widening)
No. No! This isn't *real*!

*

DOROTHEA
Does no one listen to the posh anymore? No, it is *not* real, but yes, we are *really* here.

QUILL
Where?

BALLON
(grieved, terrified)
It is Lorr ap Thriss.

Quill looks to Dorothea for explanation.

DOROTHEA
Lorr hell. More or less. Isn't it *amazing*?

*

QUILL
...surprisingly quiet for a hell.

BALLON
Yes. An awful, awful quiet. We are creatures that flow. We live in the constant flow.

Quill examines a statue closely, getting it.

QUILL
And this is the opposite of flowing.

BALLON
It's a punishment I already suffer!
(to Dorothea, livid)
You said the second step would be the retrieval of a key-

*

*

*

A distant THUD, as of a LARGE CREATURE MOVING in the distance, among the maze of statues.

BALLON (CONT'D)
(more terrified)
No.

*

Another thud, closer, louder. Ballon, previously so tough, is reduced to near catatonic terror. Quill, surprisingly, feels a first hint of sympathy.

*

QUILL
(to Dorothea)
This seems cruel. Even for you.

DOROTHEA
(concerned)

His hands need to shift to get into
your brain. For that, I need a key
to unlock them, but it's impossible
to reverse the freezing of a shape-
shifter-

*
*

QUILL

Except in an impossible place.

*

Another thud, even closer, dust falls from nearby statues.

QUILL (CONT'D)

What's the key then?

Dorothea looks up, as a SHADOW covers them.

BALLOON

The blood of our god.

They turn round to see-

A GIANT SHIMMERING MASS, made of translucent ripples but in a posture that looks plenty pissed off.

Ballon lets out a cry and RUNS away. Dorothea, alarmed, runs after him.

After a second, Quill runs, too.

CUT TO:

16 **EXT. LORR HELL, DEEPER IN THE MAZE - NIGHT 10** 16 *

They run, Ballon full out, Quill catching up to Dorothea.

QUILL

We're supposed to get the blood of
a god?

*

DOROTHEA

That's the-

QUILL

Say theory again. Go ahead.

Ballon suddenly veers off to the side. The others follow.

CUT TO:

17 **EXT. LORR HELL, A HIDING PLACE - NIGHT 10** 17 *

Ballon hides behind a few STATUES that have grown together.
Dorothea and Quill join him.

BALLOON
(furious, terrified)

It's too much! I cannot be here!

*

*
*
*
*
*

DOROTHEA
(to Quill)
You'll have to do it alone. There
is a special knife-

She opens her pack and pulls out a LORR knife, holding it out to Quill, who's incredulous.

QUILL
I can't use knives, remember?
(taps her head)
Whole point of this trip.

DOROTHEA
(realising)
Oh. Oh, dear. That was an oversight-

A ROAR from the god as it approaches.

QUILL
(to Ballon)
What can I do?

But he's terrified, doesn't answer. She turns on a military voice, commanding, like he did to her.

QUILL (CONT'D)
Soldier! Tell me what I need to do!

BALLON
(astonished, impressed)
You need its blood. It will
solidify. You can pick it up.

Another THUD behind them, another roar. Quill sees his terror and his accompanying bravery. Surprisingly, she softens-

QUILL
In Quill, we called this the First
Fear. The one you can't face.
Everyone has it. Even Quill.

BALLON
It is cowardice-

QUILL
A soldier without fear is useless,
inefficient. They win battles but
lose wars.

BALLON
How... How do you overcome it?

DOROTHEA
(worried)
Hopefully quickly.

Quill holds out a hand to him. After a beat, he, surprised, takes it.

QUILL
(to him, re: knife)
We'll need that.

He takes the Knife from Dorothea, and Quill drags him off around the statue.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. LORR HELL, BATTLE AREA - NIGHT 10

18 *

She drags Ballon out into an open area, the Lorr Devil hovering above her, still shimmering, formless, translucent against the darkness-

Still terrified, he presents it.

QUILL (CONT'D)
Hold it *out*.

She pulls his arm so he's holding the knife threateningly.

The Devil is about to bear down on them. Ballon is frozen, his arm still out-

Quill's arm is suddenly under his, supporting it, bracing it-

POV of the Devil moving down to fight them. Quill imitates Ballon's battle yell as the Devil lunges down-

CUT TO:

19 EXT. LORR HELL, A HIDING PLACE - NIGHT 10

19 *

We hear more ROARS and THUDS, then a louder ROAR which makes Dorothea wince. But she returns to a DICTAPHONE, into which she's actually dictating. She flinches in fear at every thump, but forces herself to keep recording.

DOROTHEA
(shaken, worried)
"Degradation seems at least 40% faster than originally theorised. We'll need to request more information from the Chairman--"

Stops at another ROAR, another THUMP, more yelling. She clicks off the Dictaphone.

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
(worried)
This won't look good on the report.

Then all sound stops suddenly. The thudding starts fading away, step, step, step, getting quieter. *

Dorothea just waits-

QUILL comes from around the corner, blouse TORN, dirty, but alive and holding a gel-like handful of solidified BLOOD. Ballon, also tousled, follows behind her, astounded. *

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
...how?

QUILL
It thinks we already are statues.
(to Ballon)
Is that how you view the rest of us? As pretty much already dead?

BALLOON
(surprised, truthful)
Yes. *

Quill hands the blood to Dorothea, who wraps it and puts it in her pack, taking out the reliquary. Quill goes to Ballon. *

QUILL
That was...
(thoughtful)
It's been too long since I fought side by side with an actual soldier.

BALLOON
I am filled with shame at my inaction.

QUILL
(not liking this response)
Okay, fine, you're welc-

Calls out in surprise, grabbing her head again. *

QUILL (CONT'D)
(concerned, frightened)
That... hurt.

DOROTHEA
You're starting to believe this might work. *

They both look at her; at the urgency in her voice. Dorothea holds up the reliquary. *

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
Which means this really is your last chance to turn back. From here on, there is only death or freedom. *

Quill thinks, glances at Ballon, decides.

DOROTHEA
(shaking her head)
You wouldn't believe me.

She presses the reliquary without warning and the lights hit them all again-

CUT TO:

20 INT. RELIOUARY - DAY 10

20 *

The lights are fading in the reliquary now, flashing in and out. A SPARK and one light goes out altogether.

QUILL
(to Dorothea)
Would you stop doing that?

DOROTHEA
I'm not sure how long we're going
to last-

QUILL

Dorothea looks at her, almost refusing to answer, but then reaches into her PACK and takes out a NOTEBOOK-

DOROTHEA
(proud, defensive)
I volunteered. I had to fight to
convince the Governors that we
should proceed at all.

(off Quill's astonishment)
No one else is all that committed
to saving you, Quill. Is that so
much of a surprise?

QUILL
(quietly)
Not really.

DOROTHEA

But the research we could gain
proved too tempting in the end.
(on her notebook)
Now, if you'll just let me check my
notes-

Ballon finally answers Quill's question, though still smarting from his embarrassment.

BALLON

The Arn sits on your mid-brain.
Apparently, your species occludes
that with a separate inner skull
that x-rays cannot cut through.

QUILL

We evolved it. It prevents mind
control.

BALLON

Yet, I will still need to see the
pathway there if I hope to take out
the Arn without your death.

DOROTHEA

(looking at her notes)
And as all Quill brains were
destroyed on Rhodia and you're
using yours at the moment..

QUILL

...Where are you going to find a
Quill brain?

Dorothea doesn't answer, possibly even she doesn't want to
enrage Quill that much.

*

QUILL (CONT'D)
No, don't even say it. Our
afterlife myth died out a thousand
years ago-

*

*

*

DOROTHEA

(worried, on her notebook)
Let's hope not or this will be a
very short trip.

Flash of light, then-

CUT TO:

21

EXT. QUILL HEAVEN - DAY 10

21

*

They stumble into the middle of a dense, DEAD THICKET. Dead
branches intertwine into an impassable briar patch over their
heads. There's also a denser, egg-shaped smaller THICKET in
the centre. Sun filters through, but it's a dead place.
They're the only ones there. They look around, baffled.

*

BALLON

Where is this exactly?

*

Dorothea looks to Quill, but Quill refuses to answer.

DOROTHEA

Our information isn't omnipotent.
If our theory-

QUILL
(sharply, to her)
I swear to this guy's god-

DOROTHEA
-is correct. This is where the
Quill goddess is about to be born.

BALLOON
(surprised)
So this is... your *heaven*?
(beat)
It's a bit dusty.

QUILL
Well, excuse me, statue boy, but we only believed in *this* before we realised the only thing out there protecting us was *us*. No goddess in a Quill nest looking out for our best interest.

DOROTHEA
It's so sad you think that's what
belief is.

BALLOON
(surprisingly agreeing)
yes.

There's a RUMBLE. They stop.

BALLOON What's happening?

Dorothea gives Quill a "well?" look. Quill rolls her eyes.

QUILL
This is a Quill nest. The *first* Quill nest, allegedly. The Quill goddess is supposed to...

Stops, suddenly mildly concerned, looks down.

DOROTHEA
(excited)
Where she's been trapped, isn't
that correct?

Another rumble. The ground starts to shake.

QUILL
And she rises with-

DOROTHEA

"Fury and venom," according to the text we have. Oh, how exciting!

QUILL

(very concerned now)
I'm beginning to think you don't know as much about my people as you pretend to-

The central smaller THICKET SUDDENLY ERUPTS, pushing them back. As the dirt falls, the GODDESS OF QUILL is suddenly among them.

She's terrifying. Towering over them, eight feet tall, a primitive version of Quill's own native looks, but vicious FANGS AND TEETH. This isn't a deity you could even talk to.

She looks at them, obviously furious they're there. She ROARS. Both Quill and Ballon look at Dorothea, incredulous.

*

BALLON

That's the head we're supposed to take?

DOROTHEA

(nervous)

Well. Get to it.

They look back up at the goddess-

In time for her to HURL A VIOLENT CLAW at Ballon, sending him flying. He bounces off the wall, groaning, falling to the floor and not getting up. The goddess turns to Dorothea.

*

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)

Oh, dear.

(glance to Quill)

If I die, you'll never get home.

QUILL

Really? Nothing in your notebook I can use?

The goddess rears up over Dorothea, who backs up. Quill gets an "oh for god's sake" look, moves into her action stance and aims a kick at the back of the goddess' HEAD.

Nothing happens except that she turns to Quill now, furious.

*

QUILL (CONT'D)

I'm a Quill!

She regards Quill.

*

QUILL (CONT'D)

I mean, I know I don't look Quill,
I had to have some plastic surgery-

The goddess throws a heavy BLOW at her, she ducks and runs underneath.

*

The goddess PUNCHES into the thicket, breaking many branches. *
She throws another CLAWED arm at Quill. Quill ducks again, *
running around the goddess, past Dorothea-

DOROTHEA

Hey!

Dorothea holds up the notebook to protect herself. The Goddess GRABS IT and EATS IT!

QUILL
Oh, that isn't good.

The clawed arm swings again and catches Dorothea in the back of the head, knocking her down, unconscious- *

Quill tries to dive for the pack, but the goddess steps in the way. Quill looks up at her, nearly defeated. *

QUILL (CONT'D)
You don't deserve my belief.

The goddess regards her again, maybe listening?

QUILL (CONT'D)
Do you know how the Quill have been oppressed? For *centuries*?

The goddess leans down, threateningly-

QUILL (CONT'D)
We died. And died *again*. I should rip your head off just for daring to exist!

The goddess reaches out a claw. Quill is surely doomed-

QUILL (CONT'D)
Do it. I was a *soldier*. You weren't there to stop them from taking that from me! And what am I now?
(accepting death, defiant)
I will spit in your eye as my last act.

The goddess splays open her claws, ready to kill- *

But she merely strokes Quill's cheek, as if in recognition. *

Quill gives a confused look. The goddess' mouth opens, as if to speak-

Then suddenly she arches up and CRIES OUT! *

Ballon has stabbed her in the back with the LORR DAGGER. As she's calling out in pain, he cuts through the back of the goddess' neck and decapitates her. *

Her head falls to the ground. Ballon stands, breathing heavily.

BALLON
I am not a coward.

QUILL
(frustrated)
No one said you *were*. I think she was about to speak to me. I could have been the first Quill ever to-

BALLON
Would you *really* want to hear what your god would say?

QUILL
As a matter of fact-

BALLON
If it meant you would then have to believe in her?

This stops Quill.

BALLON (CONT'D)
If it meant you would have to worship her? That you would have to change how you thought of yourself and the universe?

QUILL
(beat)
You believe.

BALLON
But I always have. It is part of who I am. Your self is already formed.

QUILL
Yeah, but we didn't behead your god. We just... took a blood sample.

Ballon picks up the goddess' head, wraps it in a cloth.

BALLON
If she is right, this is a metaphysical place. Your goddess will rise again. She will always be born. All gods are.

He sets the wrapped head down.

BALLON (CONT'D)
I thought perhaps she was your First Fear. I thought perhaps you needed the arm of a fellow soldier.

Quill lets this moment sink in, a surprising connection. She doesn't know what to do with it, looks away.

They look at Dorothea, still unconscious.

*

QUILL
Don't suppose you know how to work
the thingybob? *

Beat. He doesn't.

CUT TO:

22 INT. QUILL HEAVEN - DAY 10, LATER 22 *

Ballon sits, going through Dorothea's pack, pulling out
amazingly useless things: a compass, an iPhone charger, a
Coal Hill badge...

Dorothea is still out cold. Quill finishes putting TWIGS over
the body of her goddess.

QUILL
Why don't you use the rest of the
blood to unfreeze yourself? *

BALLON
There isn't enough. It is
extraordinarily painful when only
part of you can shift.
(off her burying actions)
I don't see why you- *

QUILL
You start in the nest. You end in
the nest.
(adds final twig)
It's our way. *

BALLON
But this isn't the *real* goddess-

QUILL
And yours wasn't your *real* devil,
but you were still terrified of it.

BALLON
Because it could still freeze me
forever in one shape. A fate worse
than your death.

Quill sits near him, both looking at Dorothea.

QUILL
A fate you're in now.

This hurts. He gestures to the reptilian skin on his neck.

BALLON
(angry)
I was caught as I shifted. I am
neither one thing nor the other.
Their punishment is doubly unjust.

QUILL
You killed people.

BALLOON Are humans "people"?

Long beat.

BALLOON
My planet was attacked. By an enemy we couldn't hope to fight. I lost my family. The Lorr I loved. I came to Earth seeking sanctuary. But I did not find it. Only certain aliens are good enough, apparently.

QUILL

Like the Zygotes.

BALLOON
But if you are someone else from
somewhere else, no matter what
world you are trying to leave...

QUILL
They have a poet on Earth. She says, "No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark."

BALLOON
I did not mean for anyone to die. I had just arrived. I was hiding as a Zygyn, but you have to prove your genetic nature to get asylum. I was starving.

(beat)
It was the home of a family. When they caught me, I changed into one of those differently shaped small humans they always have with them?

QUILL
(thinks)
...a dog?

BALLOON
(nods)
But this terrified them. "Monster!"
they said. "Freak" they said. They
beat me. They would have beat me to
death...

QUILL
So you killed them.

BALLON
I did not mean to. I did not understand their biology. But... "Ignorance of the law is no excuse".

*

QUILL
That sounds like her.

BALLON
It was her. I had heard of UNIT, all arriving refugees do. I expected to be arrested but the family's child attended her school. The Governors found me first. And ruined me.

*

QUILL
But now they're setting you free?

BALLON
(very pessimistic)
If I can get the thing out of your head without your death.

QUILL
That sounded cheering.

They look at Dorothea passed out, still. Quill is thoughtful.

*

QUILL (CONT'D)
My planet was destroyed. All my people killed.
(beat, her real loss)
He was my lieutenant, which is - was - unusual for a male of my species. He was strong. And ambitious. And his quills were...
(smiles, moves hand as if she's feeling her quills on her head)
More than adequate.
(then more vulnerable)
There isn't a great deal of tenderness to my people. We're rough to begin with and we've fashioned ourselves into an army. Be he... He could... Make that not feel like weakness.

*

*

*

Her face drops.

BALLON
He was killed in the destruction of your planet?

QUILL
No. He was killed in the war with my enemies. He died in the same battle where they arrested me.
(looks to him)
They took him from me.
(MORE)

QUILL (CONT'D)

Then they took my will. And do you know what they did next? The *worst* thing they did?
(really vulnerable now,
this is hard)
They made me *used* to it.

He watches her, wary.

QUILL (CONT'D)

I shout my power. I shout my toughness and my danger... But I am shouting it to *children*. It's like they just... amputated the central part of who I was. Who I am.

Ballon shows his hand.

BALLON

You are frozen, too... I am sorry.

QUILL

I do *not* want your pity-

BALLON

I don't offer pity. I offer shared sorrow.

She looks at him. Another connection.

BALLON (CONT'D)

But I would say this. The question that a *soldier* would ask next is... How will I make them pay?

QUILL

(considers this)

That's part of the problem. They're gone. Without having been made to pay for their crime.

(beat, hard)

All but one.

She winces. Then she puts her hand to her head again.

*

QUILL (CONT'D)

*

Oh.

*

BALLON

Are you well?

*

*

QUILL

No. No, I don't think I am.

(looks to him)

I think I just started believing this might work.

*

*

*

*

Dorothea stirs. Quill and Ballon sit back, the spell temporarily broken.

*

DOROTHEA
(groaning)
Oh. What happened?

QUILL
(in pain now)
My goddess planted an egg in your
stomach. You'll spit up a litter of
Quill by the end of the week.

DOROTHEA
Well, that will be bracing.
(stands)
Did you get its head?

BALLON
(concerned for Quill)
Her head. And yes.

Dorothea takes out the reliquary.

DOROTHEA
(on Quill)
What's wrong?

BALLON
The Arn is fighting her.

DOROTHEA
(quickly)
Then we're out of time-

Touches the reliquary immediately, the blasts of light shine- *

CUT TO:

23 INT. RELIQUARY - DAY 10

23 *

Quill screams, holding her head in the reliquary, which is
clearly in dire straits now. Lights are going off all over
the place; it groans and judders badly.

QUILL
Tell me there isn't much left to
do.

DOROTHEA
We need an operating theatre.
(looks around)
But I don't think we're going to
make the one we had planned...

Quill calls out again.

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
(concerned)
Can you find a way to convince
yourself the chances are very slim?

Sinks in for Dorothea. She turns to a CONTROL PANEL.

DOROTHEA

Lights flash again-

CUT TO:

24 INT. COAL HILL SCHOOL, SCHOOL HALL - DAY 10

24 *

They stumble out into the boring, old school hall of Coal Hill Academy.

BALLOON
(off the room)
This isn't appropriate. It isn't
antiseptic, it isn't-

DOROTHEA
But it *is* a place I can control. I suggest you get started quickly.

Ballon immediately starts preparing, taking things out of Dorothea's pack. Dorothea makes to leave.

QUILL
(struggling)
You're not staying? To watch me
die?

DOROTHEA

The mission didn't go as planned. I
will have to explain-
(almost to herself)
And try to buy you more time.

QUILL

Dorothea looks like she won't answer. But then, perhaps even in an attempt to make Quill actually understand:

DOROTHEA
There are bigger things in the universe than *this* life. Hidden things we can't even imagine. And if a place can be created from belief, if a goddess can...

QUILL
(getting it)
Then what *else* might you be able to
make. If you believe hard enough?

Dorothea smiles. Quill's nailed it.

DOROTHEA
(sincere)
Try not to die. You're...
intriguing.

Dorothea leaves them, going out the hall doors.

BALLOON
(watching her go)
How will she stop either of us from
killing her when we are free?

QUILL
(in agony now)
Maybe *neither* of us are supposed to
survive.

He helps her lie on the floor, putting the pack under her head.

QUILL (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Thank you.

BALLOON
I don't do it out of kindness. I do it for the appropriate angle to open your face.

QUILL

BALLOON

She looks at him. Beat.

BALLOON (CONT'D)
People are wary of shape-shifters.
We are not well-liked in the
universe.

Ballon reacts with muted surprise.

BALLON

Of course I haven't. It's impossible, remember? There are preparations I *must* make, but... I will hurry.

(beat)

Fight this. You've fought it all this way. Fight more. I will be your arm.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

She likes this, very much. Nods. He rushes to Dorothea's pack.

*
*

CUT TO:

25 **INT. COAL HILL SCHOOL, SCHOOL HALL - DAY 10, SECONDS LATER** 25 *

Quill is on the floor, we pan across all the materials that have been gathered. The ARN has been dissected. The blood pack has a chunk cut from it. And we come upon Ballon, his hands deep in the head of the goddess.

*

With a squish, he pulls them out, holding what looks to be an ARN-

But it is just his hands in the shape of the Arn.

BALLON

It works.

(looks up to her, wryly,
telling a little joke)

*
*

"In theory".

Quill, still in pain, groans. He SHIFTS his hands back and moves to her.

*
*

BALLON (CONT'D)

I will shift my hands to avoid nerves. Make it as painless as possible when I go through your eye-

QUILL

My eye?

BALLON

There *will* be some pain as the Arn comes out, though.

QUILL

How much?

BALLON

(genuinely curious)

Would you really turn back if you knew?

QUILL

(beat)

No.

*

Ballon holds up his hands, takes a deep breath, then they
START TO MORPH into a long SPIKE, very narrow, like an awl.

BALLON
This will be horrible.

Before she can reply, he stabs the SPIKE into the corner of her eye. It's an uncomfortable FX. She's trying to hold still, but he is literally burrowing into her brain. She cries out, maybe in pain, but mostly in sheer horror.

Ballon is concentrating, intensely.

BALLON (CONT'D)
I've reached your secondary skull... I have found the Arn. You will need to be very still.

She stills.

BALLON (CONT'D)
It senses the pheromones on my hands-

QUILL
The attack is slowing-

BALLON
Which is what we want...
(beat, beat)
It is releasing. I am surrounding it now.
(he looks in her free eye)
This is going well.

QUILL
Oh, God, don't say-

She suddenly SCREAMS. She bucks, Ballon tries to ride the buck with her, the spike of his hands still in her eye.

BALLON
It's fighting me!

QUILL
Get it out! Get it out!

She SCREAMS again, much worse, as Ballon suddenly-

PULLS BACK HARD. The ARN ERUPTS from her face, opening a vertical tear down over her eye, from forehead to cheek. The quickest glimpse of utter body horror.

But Ballon is already flinging the Arn away, slamming it to the floor, then stomping it to death, while Quill holds her face in shock-

Then Ballon is on her-

BALLON
Remain still. The wound is very bad-

Ballon looks around, worried. They've got nothing for this.

BALLOON
No. No, we must...

He looks around frantically now. Spies the Lorr God Blood Gel. Gets an idea. Beat.

BALLOON (CONT'D)

QUILL
Wonderful! Just do it fast!

He takes a chunk of Lorr blood and moves back to Quill's face. He holds his hands over it, they SHIFT and SHIFT...

BALLOON

And the wound is closing. He finally pulls away. She's left with a LIVID scar running down her forehead, across her eye, down her cheek. Beat, as she pants.

QUILL

BALLOON
The blood of my "devil", as you
call him. It let me manipulate your
flesh. The flow.
(beat)
Though you are scarred

Quill toughens at this, reaches up, feels the scar.

QUILL
What good is a soldier without a
scar?

She looks to the smashed Arn. She gets up, still looking at it, beat-

She pounds it with her feet, working her way to furious tears at what it did to her, stomping and stomping.

She finally calms. Ballon watches her, appreciative.

BALLOON

She turns to him, letting it sink in.

BALLOON (CONT'D)

QUILL

There are certain Headteachers who have things coming to them-

BALLOON

Not until I am free, too.

QUILL

...No. No.

(beat, hard for her)

Thank you. I will see that you get your freedom.

BALLOON

(amused)

I'm sure you could. I've seen you fight. But I shall see to it myself.

QUILL

Yes, I've seen you fight.

There's a definite spark between them now. More than lust. This is the kinship of war.

QUILL (CONT'D)

Quill celebrate victory in battle in a particular way-

BALLOON

(smiling)

All species say that. All are lying.

Quill likes this. Then they're on each other, kissing passionately.

*

BALLOON (CONT'D)

We are in a school.

*

QUILL

Do you really think she's going to let anyone in here?

*

*

They kiss again. Then more serious, vulnerable:

*

BALLOON

It has been... too long since I was close to someone.

QUILL

The last person I kissed was a robot.

BALLOON

It has made me... coarse. Unshifting, like this form I wear.

QUILL

(this hits home)

Yes. Yes, we do wear forms, don't we?

BALLON
I only wish to be free.

QUILL
That's all I wish for, too.

They carry on kissing, it grows more and more passionate. We pull away as it's clearly going to move into love-making.

CUT TO:

26 OMITTED. MERGED WITH SCENE 25.

26

CUT TO:

27 INT. COAL HILL SCHOOL, SCHOOL HALL - DAY 10

27

*

They've finished, dozing together on the floor. He has an arm around her. She regards it, almost clinically, at first.

But then we watch her newly-scarred face change. First there's grief, then there is a teary appreciation of finally being able to be close to someone, after all she's lost. Here is the tenderness that her lost love gave her.

She runs a finger down the skin of his arm with almost unbearable gentleness. She's lost so much and here, for once, she feels like she's stolen some of it back.

She puts her arm over his again to rest-

But she feels something odd on the floor. We keep on her face as she's picking something up.

Pull focus to see her hand, dribbling away a scoop of SAND-

What the hell? She covers herself and rises in:

*

CUT TO:

28 EXT. ALIEN DESERT LANDSCAPE - DUSK 10

28

*

A desert with an orange sky, one we've seen before. Though Quill hasn't. The Hall has vanished completely.

*

DOROTHEA (O.S.)
A place you recognise, perhaps?

Quill turns suddenly, sees Dorothea standing there, next to the reliquary and a box on the desert floor. But something is strange, STIFF about how Dorothea looks.

*

Ballon is sitting up now, too, stunned, putting on his clothes. Quill is beyond confused.

QUILL
What... What is this place? Where did the school go?

DOROTHEA

(makes an apologetic face)

You were never there, I'm afraid.
The simplest possible hologram, but
needs must. We had to come to *here*,
but the chances of you reacting
badly to it were... rather high.

*
*
*
*

QUILL

(shaking her head)

I don't-

*

DOROTHEA

This is the closest to Rhodian soil
we could find. Increased the
survival chances of the surgery by
nearly four percent.

*

(turns to look)

A metaphysical place created by the
Rhodia, who - being practical
people - put it inside a *physical*
one.

*
*

Quill is still looking round-

And then she sees... Over distant hills, lights gathering and
parting, hovering, interacting. The souls of the Rhodia.

QUILL

(horrified)

We're in the Cabinet of Souls.

BALLON

We're in a cabinet?

QUILL

(still looking around in
horrified wonder)

It's bigger on the inside.

DOROTHEA

It's beautiful. Wish I hadn't had
to leave.

*
*

Beat, as this sinks in.

BALLON

What?

*

We TURN slightly around Dorothea to see that she is, in fact,
being PROJECTED out of the box on the desert floor.

*

DOROTHEA

Another hologram. Very limited, but
suitable for our momentary needs.
The reliquary really is dying. I
had to come home or there was a
chance I'd never get back. Though I
did send you back a present.

*

She nods down to the box, almost gleeful.

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
Go ahead. Open it.

Quill and Ballon still wary. She sends him a questioning look, "Should we?". He shrugs "Why not?". She approaches.

The box is covered with a black silk cloth. Quill cautiously pinches it with her fingers, pulls it back-

It's a clear box. Inside, is her gun. WHOLE, REPAIRED.

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
(quoting Quill)
"A Quill needs her gun."

QUILL
How...? Where?

DOROTHEA
As I said, Coal Hill provides.

Quill reaches for it, but-

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
(naughty, naughty)
Ah, ah, ah. You have a mighty
dilemma facing you. Both of you.
(slightly sheepish)
EverUpwardReach calculated an 85%
chance that only one of you would
survive this trip. You've already
beaten some quite long odds.
(frowns)
But unfortunately, that ends now.
Despite my arguing, quite
strenuously, the Governors have
voted. There's only enough energy
left in the reliquary for one of
you to return. I'm sorry, but there
it is. If it's any comfort, the
decision, at least, is yours.

Shocked beat.

QUILL
You're leaving one of us here to
die?

BALLON
You are breaking your word!

He angrily takes out his knife and THROWS it at Dorothea-

Whom it passes through, harmlessly.

DOROTHEA
You can keep trying. My meeting
with the music department isn't
until four.
(grins)
I'm cutting their budget.

BALLON

So we're supposed to... what? Agree to die so the other lives?

*

DOROTHEA

It's a shame, I agree. In another life, you and I could have been great friends, Miss Quill.

QUILL

I would rather swim in my own vomit.

DOROTHEA

(hardening a little)

Regardless, the little we know about both your species suggests a fight to the death. But again, up to you.

BALLON

I just saved her life. I will not now take it.

QUILL

Yeah. Ditto.

*

DOROTHEA

There is something else I need to tell you. Quill's reward if she returns is the gun.

(to Ballon)

Yours-

A hologram flashes next to Dorothea. It's a young Lorr-

*

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)

It turns out there is another Lorr on Earth. Your niece.

BALLON

My... She is alive?

(beat, hardens)

This is a lie. I never sensed another Lorr-

DOROTHEA

I have been assured she is alive and well. And waiting for you. If you return.

Despite himself, Ballon looks at the picture longingly.

*

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)

I really am sorry. EverUpwardReach feels it's for the best. One of you, the Governors will be able to handle. Two of you might put the school in danger. Reluctantly, I have to concur.

BALLON
(furious)
What's so precious about this school? That it must be protected at all costs?

DOROTHEA
It's being prepared.

QUILL
For what?

DOROTHEA
(patronisingly)
You wouldn't understand. You have no faith.

QUILL
(beat)
You're a true believer... But in what? *

DOROTHEA
Another time perhaps. There are more pressing matters at hand. *

BALLON
We will not fight each other.

DOROTHEA
You'll never be free unless you do. You'll never return from this living death. Never see your family again. *

This is having some effect. Quill sees it. What will happen?

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
(to Quill)
And you. A Quill with the greatest weapon her people ever made. Enough to force a certain Prince to wipe the Shadow Kin off the grinning, smirking face of the universe. You say you are war itself. Now you actually can be. *

Long beat, as both Quill and Ballon let this all sink in.

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
(sorrowful)
I've been told to say that the gun is set for open firing. But don't delay. Time passes differently here. You might wake up tomorrow and find yourself already old. *

With a final smile, her hologram vanishes. Quill and Ballon are left in silence. They regard one another, noting the space between them for the first time.

The realisations happen in silence, with changes of body language. Quill looks at her gun, then back at Ballon-To find that he's looking at it, too. He glances up at her.

They wait, standing off. Can they trust each other? How far did their encounter go?

She opens her stance more defensively, turning slightly so she has an advantage if he goes for the gun. He sees this and turns, too.

Beat, as they breathe, regarding each other.

Then Ballon, sadly, shakes his head. It's ambiguous. Is he saying no? Is he saying he's sorry?

Quill tenses, worried, her face showing her conflict. Then she settles: fatalistic, furious, disappointed, into how she sees this is going to go.

Don't. QUILL

BALLOON

So have I. QUILL

BALLOON
And my family-

QUILL
If that's even true-

BALLOON
Is that not a risk you would take
yourself? If there were another
Quill?

Quill doesn't answer. It *is* true.

BALLOON (CONT'D)
(beat, beat)
I am sorry.

Beat, Ballon DIVES for the gun.

NO! QUILL (CONT'D)

She dives for it, too. The fight is on-

They land on each other and ROLL across the sand, she's stopping him from getting to the gun and rolling him away.

QUILL (CONT'D)

*

He pushes her off him and staggers back to the gun. She TACKLES him, knocking him down, trying to reach past him to grab the gun herself.

He pulls her back and they tumble down a small slope. She ends up on TOP of him and BACKHANDS him across the face-

QUILL (CONT'D)

He BUCKS, knocking her off-

They start a HAND TO HAND fight, exchanging blows, blocks, kicks. She knocks him down, he jumps right back up, punching her with a cool move against some rocks.

BALLOON
I won't kill you. You can hide-

QUILL
And stay here to starve? Why don't
you hide?

BALLOON
(anguished)
Because your planet is *gone*. Your people are *gone*. You have *nothing* here.

This hits her hard, but she covers the truth of it with fury, tackling him and knocking him down again. She kneels across him, hitting him across the face, forcing him into submission. Then she hears him saying something, pauses...

BALLOON (CONT'D)
(gasping)
Please. Please.

She holds her last punch. They look up at each other, the tragedy of this situation really sinking in. They breathe heavily, wondering what to do now-

BALLOON (CONT'D)
I do not wish this. I... submit.

Beat, then Quill, just slightly, relents, pulling back-

He IMMEDIATELY BUCKS her off again and DIVES for the gun-

QUILL
No!

But he's grabbed it and turned, pointing it at her, lying on the ground on his back-

She freezes. Beat. Beat.

QUILL (CONT'D)
(furious, emotional)
I won't beg you.

BALLOON

BALLOON
I have to take the *chance*.

Beat. Then Quill, proud, prepares herself, standing tall, hard, ready. Noble.

BALLOON (CONT'D)
Look away.

QUILL
I will *not*.

Ballon struggles, wanting to shoot.

Do it. QUILL (CONT'D)

He hesitates.

Do it! QUILL (CONT'D)

BALLOON
(whispers)
Forgive me.

He PULLS THE TRIGGER—

THE GUN FIRES BACKWARDS INTO HIM—

QUILL (CONT'D)

He has the briefest moment to realise what's happened before, looking in her eyes, he's BLASTED AWAY-

The Gun falling harmlessly to the sand.

Quill falls to her knees over where he died, OVERCOME with emotion, grief, fury-

She WAILS, uncontrolled, anguished, for a long moment...

DOROTHEA (O.S.)
Did you know?

Quill doesn't even look up as Dorothea reappears. She raises her head, grief-stricken, defiant.

QUILL
You set the gun. You did.

DOROTHEA
But surely you must have thought,
even on a subconscious level.

Quill looks at her with purest hatred.

QUILL
I... will kill you. Slow.

DOROTHEA
(smiles)
You might try. *

QUILL
(exasperated)
Who are you?

DOROTHEA
Were you not listening?
(leans in close)
I'm a true believer.

Quill looks at her, still not knowing what this means.

Quill suddenly reaches for the gun, FLICKS A SETTING, and FIRES IT REPEATEDLY INTO DOROTHEA'S HOLOGRAM, having no effect, but at least getting some frustrations out.

Quill finally lowers the gun.

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
Are you quite finished? Because I'm afraid I have a confession to make.
(makes a "my bad" face)
Sending back the gun and this hologram device drained the reliquary quite dry. You won't be able to leave here by it. *

QUILL
So you want me to die after all- *

DOROTHEA
Oh, my dear, how did someone so very stupid ever become a general of her people?

Quill looks at her, questioningly.

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
We are in the Cabinet of Souls. A Cabinet... with doors.

Quill looks confused, looks around her.

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
You just need to find them. You'll
end up right at home.
(looks at her watch)
And with how time passes here
versus how it passes there, I don't
even think detention will be over.

QUILL
(more outrage)
So... So we *both* could have left?
He didn't have to die?

DOROTHEA
Literally? Yes, you both could have
left. But no, we wouldn't have
allowed that. *

She turns to go, stops.

DOROTHEA (CONT'D)
I am, however, glad it was you. *

Quill looks at her with hatred again. *

QUILL
I will stand on your corpse. You
mark my words.

DOROTHEA
Duly marked.

She vanishes. Quill is alone. We pull back across the great
expanse of desert to see just how alone she is.

CUT TO:

29

EXT. ALIEN DESERT LANDSCAPE - DUSK 10, LATER

29

*

It's later. Quill holds her gun, looking at the spot where
Ballon died.

We see her put a last STONE on a pile of them, just like the
branches in the thicket over her goddess. *

Then she gains resolve. She looks around, finds the ARN that
Ballon removed from her head, wraps it in plastic from the
dissected one. Puts it in her pocket. *

CUT TO:

30 EXT. ALIEN DESERT LANDSCAPE - DUSK 10. LATER

30 *

She walks through dunes, under the orange sky. She heads towards the POINTS OF LIGHT that are the souls. She watches them, her face ambiguous.

CUT TO:

31 EXT. ALIEN DESERT LANDSCAPE - DUSK 10, LATER

31 *

Quill walks in the vast empty landscape, ever closer to the points of light.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. ALIEN DESERT LANDSCAPE - DUSK 10. LATER

32 *

Quill climbs a dune. There are the DOORS, closed, hanging in mid-air. She's under the points of light now. They sail through the sky, interacting, moving, beautiful.

She FLICKS her hand up to TOUCH ONE. The STARS suddenly RACE ACROSS THE SKY, far too fast, like time has sped up-

Quill lets go, blinking in surprise. Her HAIR is suddenly LONGER. She notices.

QUILL
"Time passes differently here."
(looks up)
How much of my life am I losing?

Quill is drained and bitter underneath the souls.

She cocks her gun ready for firing.

QUILL
(angry, grieving)
In no mood to talk.

Ram moves swiftly for the door.

I'm gone. RAM

April watches him go. Tanya watches her not go.

TANYA
Aren't you going after him?

APRIL
No. I'm not.

TANYA
But if that thing was making us angry-

APRIL

TANYA
(beat, stung)
And there it is.

Tanya leaves. April watches her go, angry, too.

APRIL

She leaves, too.

Angle on Charlie and Matteusz, staring in horror at Quill.

CHARLIE
How can you fire a gun?

CHARLIE
Day? You've only been gone 45
minutes.

MATTEUSZ
What happened to your eye? And your
hair?

CHARLIE

She stares back at him, at the blood drying on his face.

CHARLIE
I... But you-

QUILL
Consider it my last favour.

MATTEUSZ "Last"?

Eyes on Charlie, she reaches into her pocket, pulls out the SQUISHY CLEAR PLASTIC BAG and throws it at him.

He catches it. Through the plastic, he can see-

QUILL
It's the Arn.

Charlie looks up, astonished, worried.

QUILL (CONT'D)
(truly grieved)
I am no longer your slave, Prince.
I have my free will and I have my
gun.

She holds it up, cocks it, looks very dangerous.

Dolly to Quill. Dramatic beat-

*

Then her EYES ROLL UP IN HER HEAD and she collapses. They watch as she falls unconscious. Then rolls on her back-

MATTEUSZ
(shocked)
No. No, that can't be.

CHARLIE
How? How did she...?

We pull back from them, panning down to Quill.

To Quill's stomach. Quill is very, very pregnant.

六

END CREDITS