

SUBMERGED

a microplay

CAST

AMY (20s-30s, African American) An engineering nerd.

BREANNE (20s-30s, African American)
Laid back bohemian.

SETTING: Two hide out rooms suddenly connected by Zoom.

TIME: Day. Post pandemic. Post climate event. Pre ?

Mildred Inez Lewis, USA

SUBMERGED

AMY cracks her front door open, then slams it shut to block the blistering post-climate crisis sun.

AMY
I want outside! Warmth, not scorch death.

Her sleeping laptop awakes. Its light is weak.

BREANNE (O.S.)
(faint)
Hello? Hello?

AMY
I'm here!

She rushes to the laptop, but stops when she notices her reflection.

AMY
(mutters)
God, I'm feral.

BREANNE (O.S.)
(low)
Are you there? Uh Amy, can I turn my video on? Can't waste power.

AMY
Give me a sec.

AMY fixes herself and arranges her background.

BREANNE (O.S.)
Please hurry.

AMY
Ready.

They both appear on camera, mirroring each other. Evidently BREANNE was fixing herself too.

AMY
You got through.

BREANNE

Finally. I had to. It was a million to one that we found each other at all. Are you okay?

AMY

I can't believe how fast we got cut off before. But we're here.

BREANNE

So, hi.

AMY

Hi. God! This feels weird. It's like the first day of kindergarten.

BREANNE

Isn't it crazy to finally get the thing you've been longing for? A woman my own age. I didn't know it would mean so much.

AMY

You're like a poet. Even your name, Breanne.

BREANNE

What's left but words? And canned food. Lots of canned food.

AMY

Did I tell you I was an engineer in the before? I wish I'd read more. I feel like it would really help now.

BREANNE

How long do you think we have before the power goes?

AMY

No fucking idea.

BREANNE

I hear you. At this point, it's all a crapshoot.

AMY starts recording.

BREANNE

What are you doing recording?

AMY

It doesn't take much power. Don't worry.

BREANNE

Are you with some kind of authority?

AMY

No. It's in case we can't find each other again. Something to hold onto to know that this was real. That it happened.

I don't like it. BREANNE

But -- AMY

I'll log off. BREANNE

I'm stopping. AMY

She does.

See? I'm no danger to you. Please don't go. AMY

I won't, but don't do it again. BREANNE

Promise. AMY

I don't know where my head's at. I'm not even sure authority exists anymore. BREANNE

There used to be sirens all the time. I haven't heard any for a long time. Who knew the end of the world would be so dull and uninspiring? AMY

Yeah. BREANNE
(chuckling)

Do you ever let yourself think that it's already too late? AMY

Never. You shouldn't either. BREANNE

If we don't think about it, it won't happen? AMY

I know better than that. BREANNE

Damn I keep putting my foot in it. AMY

BREANNE waves this off.

AMY

Soz!

BREANNE

I've got one of the few decent houses left and still have to wade through an inch of water. You're right. Maybe it is too late.

AMY

I didn't --

BREANNE

It probably is. We can't stop living. We have to try.

AMY rubs her burns.

BREANNE

What's wrong with your arms? Show them to me.

AMY does so reluctantly.

BREANNE

You can't play with the sun. You won't make it.

BREANNE's power goes. She disappears from the screen.

AMY

Just needed a few more minutes, god damn it.

She shakes the laptop.

AMY

Like that was going to do any good.

*BREANNE reappears. AMY laughs.
BREANNE joins in.*

BREANNE

I know. I feel you.

AMY

I thought tech would be our salvation. I was stupid enough to believe it could stop all this.

BREANNE

Lots of us did. One good thing, I never paid my last Virtual Reality bill.

She gives Verizon the finger.

AMY

All right. Sticking it to the man.

BREANNE

Speaking as a former hippie, you just proved yourself.

AMY

I'm just grateful to still be able to crack a joke.

BREANNE

You said you were alone. That's hard. Was there ever anyone?

AMY holds up Chelsea's picture.

BREANNE

She's beautiful.

AMY

She couldn't take it. She ran out in the middle of the day. Raced out before I could grab her. When I went out that night ... there wasn't much left.

BREANNE

I'm so, so sorry. But best not get stuck on these things.

AMY

Easier to say when you have people.

BREANNE

It is.

AMY

I almost ran out there before this. You saved me, tethered me back to earth.

BREANNE

I'm glad.

*Lights out for good this time.
They sigh and resort to
flashlights and speak more
rapidly.*

BREANNE

Great. Now we're on the clock.

AMY

It's like some kind of creepy sleepover.

*AMY starts laughing. She is
not okay.*

BREANNE

You're in bad shape.

AMY stops laughing, nods.

BREANNE

Who else have you got?

Beat.

BREANNE

There's got to be somebody.

AMY

The few of us who are left only go out after dark. I still feel heat then. It's lodged in my bones.

BREANNE

Do you talk to them?

AMY

Nah, it's mostly grunts and pointing. We have to move fast.

BREANNE

When was the last time?

AMY

Awhile. Things are kind of erratic.

BREANNE

How ...?

AMY

The Wilderson brothers have a siren.

BREANNE

You have to keep to a routine. To stay human, you know? Get up. Wash up. Walk around your space.

AMY

Talk to you.

BREANNE

When we can manage it, yeah.

AMY

Um, I don't know if once a week's going to cut it.

BREANNE

Shit, we might not even get that.

AMY

You cuss?

BREANNE

Party, too. What you've got to do ma'am is find a way to hold yourself together.

AMY

After Chelsea ... I tried. When my SAT line went down, I'd hop on here to try to find someone, everyday between two and four. I found another girl a year ago, maybe two, but she got scared. I wonder if ...

BREANNE

It's all so fragile.

*BREANNE touches, then strokes
the screen.*

AMY

Stop, I mean it. It's too much. I'll start bawling again.

*The lights flicker back on.
They cut off their flashlights.*

AMY

Where are you? If you don't mind my asking. If things change, maybe we could ... um, meet up? I'm in Northwest Minnesota.

BREANNE

Well, that's out. I'm in New Orleans.

AMY

(angry)

Too far. Fuckin' A, we might as well --

BREANNE

What's it like there now?

AMY

(noting the
distraction)

I see what you're doing.

BREANNE

Did it work?

AMY

119 degrees. In Minnesota. In what used to be spring. I had just gotten used to the 90s. On top of that, we've been run through by people escaping north. Chasing cool breezes.

BREANNE

Why didn't you go?

AMY

I can't leave Chelsea. The earth here burns and blows away. No matter how deep you bury them ...

BREANNE

Where do the travelers come from?

AMY

Dallas, Arkansas, Chile, oh and Uruguay. I never even heard of Uruguay in the before.

BREANNE

That's one problem we don't have. Nobody can get to us. We're melting into the sea, just like they said we would.

AMY

You've got to get out. You must have heard of Katrina.

BREANNE

We can barely see the mainland now. I've never seen anybody make it across.

AMY

That's --

BREANNE

Is what it is. Care didn't forget us after all.

BREANNE rocks herself.

BREANNE

If you still can, you should head north.

AMY

I won't leave her.

BREANNE

She'd want you to.

AMY

She doesn't get a say. Got any other advice?

BREANNE

All we can do is wait and work.

AMY

That's fucking depressing.

BREANNE

We're still together here. Every day we dry out the sand bags, then pile them back against the shore. A young guy with no arms sings for us. Barely recognizable, but still N'awlins.

AMY

There are too many guns around for us to trust each other much.

BREANNE
Man, all the bad things all at once.

Amy's computer starts to die.

AMY
I'm dying. The computer, I mean.

AMY nears her screen.

BREANNE
How long did you have it on?

AMY
Too long.

BREANNE nears the screen.

BREANNE
Trust.

They speak faster, almost in a hush.

AMY
I get scared.

BREANNE
Me too. So what can we be to each other, Amy the engineer?

AMY
That's the most important question, isn't it?

BREANNE
Always was.

AMY
Try tomorrow?

BREANNE
Too soon. Recharging's tricky. Can you hang on till next week?

AMY
I think so.

BREANNE
I know so.

AMY
Unless the power ...

The lights fade.

GODDAMN!

AMY

Until ...

BREANNE

Until.

AMY AND BREANNE

*Blackout. The sounds of water
and scorching heat.*

END PLAY