

DUST DEVILS
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Panel 1: We open with Amarantha, an 8 year old Mars girl, doing exactly what she shouldn't be doing- toying with her family's Climate Assistance Machine, or CAM. The CAM is a tall tower amid a glass bubble of greenery. There are all sorts of familiar Earth crops around, thriving in the climate controlled environment, and the hexagonal panels that form the bubble reflect sunlight down onto the plants. It is a beautiful, clear day here on Mars. Certain panels are open to the Martian air. They form a pattern around the circumference of the bubble, letting in a breeze. The shot is pulled out, with Ama looking very small next to the tower.

1. AMA: Come on, CAM! Work with me here!

Panel 2: Down on the ground, Ama is pulling with all of her strength on a lever on CAM's base. Spelled out above her head on the machine is CAM's full title- "Climate Assistance Machine". Along the radius of the lever, there are symbols denoting different levels of airflow, similar to those on an AC. She is pulling the level towards the one with the most wavy lines, trying to allow more airflow into the bubble. Laying on the ground at Ama's feet is a brightly colored kite.

1. AMA: I just need... a little... more...!

Panel 3: Ama falls backwards into the dirt next to her kite as the lever slides into place. She is off balance from the sudden lack of resistance and stunned that it actually moved. Unfortunately, the movement is accompanied by a loud snap as the brake meant to hold the lever in place fails under the pressure.

1. SFX: Snap!

Panel 4: Ama looks up at the dome around her. All of the panels are rotating, opening up the entire dome to the harsh Mars winds! She is amazed, but knows this is bad. Her kite is already catching the breeze and starting to pull out from under her fingers.

1. AMA: Oh no...

Panel 5: Ama struggles to get to her feet in the onslaught of wind and lifts one arm to cover her face. The dust is starting to mix in with the wind, making it hard to see. Her kite slips from her grasp in the gust.

1. AMA: My kite!

Panel 6: With the dust and wind making visibility as bad as it is, she grabs at the dirt blindly. Her hand closes around the broken brake.

1. AMA: Gotcha!

Page 2

Panel 1: Ama and her family- her father and two teenage brothers- are sitting around the kitchen table. The inside of their house has the clean efficiency of much science fiction, made of whites and grays. Clashing with that aesthetic are the four of them at the table. They're all covered in red dust, basically from head to toe. They have sections of un-dusted skin where their protective goggles and respirators sat, but their hair and clothes are all thoroughly tinted.

1. DAD: I just don't know what happened to the CAM. It's such a reliable model.
2. OLDER BROTHER: Winds were supposed to be high today. I should've gone and shuttered up the dome.

Panel 2: One of the brothers shakes the dust from his hair, and the other is trying to wipe his hands on his shirt, but it isn't helping.

1. DAD: No, no. It wasn't anyone's fault. Could've been anything.
2. AMA (quietly): No one's fault...
3. DAD: What was that, Ama?

Panel 3: Head-on shot of Ama. She looks like a deer in headlights, but instead of telling her father the truth and giving him the missing part, she lies. As she speaks, the letters twist as they come out of her mouth, as if they were caught up in a tornado, the actual word on the page already starting to form the Dust Devil.

1. AMA: Nothing.

Panel 4: The word "nothing" spins around on its way to the floor. It is forming a small tornado that will ramp up into a Dust Devil. The focus of the panels is following this little guy now instead of the conversation at the table.

1. DAD (OFF): Well, we're going to have to cut back spending for a bit. Credits are going to be a bit tight, but if we keep our heads down...

Panel 5: The dust covering the floor mixes in with the lie, and the tornado turns an angry red color.

1. DAD (OFF): ...And trust each other...

Panel 6: It sprouts a small head from the eye of the storm. It doesn't have a neck, really just a lump from the center, identifiable as a head only because of its eyes and mouth. It has a devious grin on its face as it spins, growing in power.

1. DAD (OFF): ...We can get through this.

Page 3

Panel 1: Ama is back in her room. It fits the aesthetic of the rest of the house with the crisp, clean colors, but her walls have all sorts of posters on them. Many feature retro-Martian media with classic sci-fi outfits (fishbowl helmets, cheesy blasters, etc.). Her hair is still covered in dust, and there are bright red footprints around the room, but she's in fresh clothes now. She's sitting on the edge of her bed looking at the brake in her hand with a frown.

1. AMA: If we trust each other...

Panel 2: A book falls off of one of her many shelves crammed with novels and comic books. She hides the brake behind her at the sound, clearly feeling guilty about what happened and not wanting to get caught.

1. SFX: Thunk

2. AMA: What? Nothing!

Panel 3: She moves over to the fallen book, a look of confusion on her face, and bends to pick it up. It is a hardcover book with a gallant looking spaceman on the front.

1. AMA: Huh?

Panel 4: Ama looks up at the shelf, eye-level with the empty spot where the book had been. She is suspicious of how it fell, but doesn't get long to linger on those feelings.

Panel 5: Ama jumps back as all of the other books from that shelf go flying off. The Dust Devil is behind them, his cyclone form sending them towards her!

1. AMA: Ahhh!

Page 4

Panel 1: Ama hits the ground hard, surrounded by her books. The Dust Devil is sitting on the shelf, spinning. It has a devilish smile on its face, the word "Nothing" still whipping around in its body.

1. AMA: Ow!

Panel 2: The Dust Devil leaps from the bookshelf onto Ama's desk, sending papers and pens flying all over the place. She sits up, holding her elbow from where she fell.

1. AMA: Hey! Stop that!

Panel 3: Ama is chasing after the Dust Devil as it races away from her, kicking up the rest of the desk detritus as it goes. Coloring supplies, half-finished drawings, and even a cup of water all flying this way and that as the gusts send them flying.

1. AMA: Get back here!

Panel 4: Her desk chair starts to spin uncontrollably as the Dust Devil rushes past it, and she hits the furniture hard, knocking the wind out of her.

1. AMA: Ooof!

Panel 5: Ama stumbles after the Dust Devil into the closet, clutching her stomach. There are already clothes flying out. She is angry, and reaching forward hoping to grab it.

1. AMA: What even are you!?

Panel 6: Ama reappears out of the closet, covered in wayward clothes and looking distinctly unamused.

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Panel 1: The door to Ama's room creaks open, and she swings her gaze in that direction, eyes wide and panicked.

1. SFX: Creaaaaaaaak
2. AMA: No!

Panel 2: Shot from the far end of the hallway. Ama is framed in the door to her room, and the younger of the brothers is sticking his head out of his room. The hallway is in chaos, pictures flown everywhere, a broken vase on the ground, and the long rug scrunched and displaced. As Ama lies again, her words spiral around and start to form another Dust Devil.

1. YOUNGER BROTHER: What happened out here?
2. AMA: I have no idea! Uh, a rat! I saw a rat in my room!
3. YOUNGER BROTHER: A rat did this!?
4. OLDER BROTHER (OFF): Agh!

Panel 3: Ama and her brother rush down the hall, the new Dust Devil (this one with "No idea" spinning around in it) hot on their heels. There is a cacophony in the kitchen as the first Dust Devil gets to work.

1. SFX: Crash!
2. OLDER BROTHER: Watch it!
3. SFX: Clang!
4. OLDER BROTHER: Ha!
5. SFX: Crunch!
6. OLDER BROTHER: Ouch!

Panel 4: Ama and her brother burst into the kitchen, the brother throwing his arm in front of Ama to stop her before she enters the war zone. Their older brother is in there already, covered in flour and holding up a wok to protect himself from the other projectiles. The second Dust Devil is moving in towards the first.

1. OLDER BROTHER: The wind is crazy! We need to shut all the windows!

Panel 5: The second Dust Devil combines with the first, and it grows. Both lies are spinning in the vortex now, and the creature has thick arms. One of those arms is already reaching for a dirty pan in the sink.

Panel 6: The younger brother is running for the window, and Ama stands in the doorway shouting after him. The Dust Devil is preparing to throw the pan at him.

1. AMA: Look out!

Page 6

Panel 1: The younger brother is able to duck the pan, his hands up over his head. It clangs against the wall, leaving a crack in the material.

1. SFX: Clang!

Panel 2: Ama tries to run in, but the winds are too strong. The Dust Devil is throwing the silverware caddy into the air, all the utensils flying around.

1. AMA: Stop! You have to stop!

Panel 3: A knife slices over the younger brother's head, chopping at some of his hair as he wrestles with a window.

1. YOUNGER BROTHER: Woah! Ama said it's a rat!

Panel 4: The older brother is holding up the wok again, this time defending against the Dust Devil banging on it with a serving spoon.

1. OLDER BROTHER: I don't think a rat-

2. SFX: Clang!

3. OLDER BROTHER: -could do that!

Panel 5: Ama's dad comes up behind her, pulling her away from the room. She is reaching out towards her brothers, distressed. Her words get caught up in the vortex as she says them, the lies feeding the Dust Devil.

1. DAD: Ama! What happened?

2. AMA: I don't know!

3. AMA: It isn't my fault!

Panel 6: The Dust Devil is huge now, towering behind Ama and her father. The lies are making up the gusts of wind. Ama is dwarfed by it as her dad kneels in front of her. She is crying as she lies again.

1. AMA: I didn't do it!

2. DAD: It's okay!

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Panel 1: Ama's dad has his hands on her shoulders. They're both being bombarded by the wind, but he is steady in front of her, looking into her eyes.

1. DAD: Whatever it is, we can fix it.
2. AMA: Together?
3. DAD: Together.

Panel 2: Ama looks down, ashamed and scared to admit to her lies, even with her father's reassurance.

1. AMA: I broke CAM.

Panel 3: The Dust Devil reaches up, trying to hold onto its strength as Ama starts to tell the truth. It is shrinking, though, and as she continues to tell the truth, the gusts die down, falling to the floor around the Dust Devil.

1. AMA: I wanted to make it windy so I could fly my kite! But then the lever broke, and all the windows opened!
2. AMA: I should have told you, but I was scared! I lied, and then my lies became tornadoes.

Panel 4: The winds have almost completely died down, and Ama is holding the broken piece of CAM out to her father. The Dust Devil isn't even visible behind her anymore. With her final truth, she dissipates it completely.

1. AMA: I'm sorry.

Panel 5: Ama's dad pulls her into a tight hug, and her brothers are standing in the doorway to the kitchen, dusty but unarmed.

1. DAD (NARRATION): Come on, CAM! Work with me now.

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Panel 1: Ama, her brothers, and her father are out with CAM. Dad is holding the lever on the second highest setting (the one it had been on before Ama broke it) while the older brother has his hand on the brake. Ama is sitting on the younger brother's shoulders, staring up at the dome. The wind is blowing, but it isn't the high winds from before.

1. DAD: Almost there!

Panel 2: The older brother looks to his younger siblings with a smile, and the younger gives a thumbs up. Ama is still looking up.

1. OLDER BROTHER: You ready, Ama?

Panel 3: Ama looks down at her brother. Up close we can see that she's holding onto the spool of her kite. She is smiling.

1. AMA: Ready.

Panel 4: Wide shot, showing the whole family. The hexagons are moving back into their proper positions, but Ama's kite is still flying high in the sky.