

# **Finding Elpis**

by

Banafsheh Esmailzadeh

604-992-4595  
banaesma@gmail.com

EXT. PARK - SERIES OF SHOTS

XIMENA swipes through her photos folder on her cellphone. She has several albums titled ELPIS. She selects one of them and scrolls through as if showing them to us.

IESU, 32 years old with long brown hair tucked inside a hairnet, loose tendrils sticking to his forehead as he bestows a bowl of soup to waiting hands like a modern-day Jesus.

Ximena's thumb swipes to reveal a more professional headshot of ERIK RHODES, 33 years old with ear-length black hair, deigning to look at you rather than the single red rose between his index and middle fingers.

Another swipe shows his cousin ORPHEUS, 33 years old with shorter curly black hair, arms full of gold trophies, smirking at the camera.

DOOMER, 33 years old and pale like the moon, looking exactly like the titular meme, down to the touque and sunken eyes taking a smoke break outside of a car wash.

JAGUAR, 34 years old with a healthy tan, his KING'S SHADOW BANGLE (shaped like a roaring black panther) prominent on his left wrist, battling a 65kg barbell with white knuckles.

She then lingers on a photo of STARMAN, 33 years old with short dirty-blond hair, seemingly seated alone at a restaurant and gently draped in the melancholy glow of a neon blue sign.

She gently underlines the words "LOVE, STARMAN" with her index finger on a simple, faded announcement: "Elpis disbands after our last show."

The park is reflected in her sunglasses--empty benches and matching stage, with only the tentative wind for company.

Title card: Finding Elpis

EXT. STAGE - EARLY EVENING

It is a simple stage in a park. IESU is on his phone while ERIK RHODES admires himself in a pocket mirror and combs his hair, and DOOMER smokes behind the drum set.

In the foreground towards stage right, STARMAN talks to LENI, 32 years old with wavy blonde hair, the very image of the sweet girl next door.

STARMAN

Thanks for coming out to this,  
Leni.

She squeezes his shoulder. In the background we can just barely see XIMENA, a slim 33-year-old blonde woman poised with a camera taking snapshots from behind a tree.

STARMAN

Where even is everyone? Are they  
really that happy to get rid of us?

LENI

C'mon, babe. Cheer up. People still  
like melodic rock, and they're late  
all the time.

STARMAN

Maybe I should've listened to my  
parents from the start.

DOOMER (O.S.)

Starman! Mic check!

STARMAN

Gotta go. See you after the show.

LENI

Love you.

Starman rushes off to the stage before Leni can give him a  
good luck kiss, but rather than looking hurt, she puts on a  
smile she doesn't entirely feel when she's joined by ORPHEUS  
and JAGUAR.

JAGUAR

This is it, huh. Can't help feeling  
responsible.

ORPHEUS

We made our choice, Jag. It was for  
the best.

JAGUAR

Was it, though?

Orpheus looks away.

ORPHEUS

At least you chose to go. I  
could've done so much more.

LENI

C'mon, you guys. Let's just enjoy  
this last show. They've been  
working so hard for this.

Now Orpheus looks on at Erik Rhodes in particular and smiles  
faintly.

STAGE

THE BAND are standing on the stage, instruments ready. Erik  
Rhodes tunes his violin. Doomer looks up at the darkening  
sky.

DOOMER

Well, isn't that just perfect. The day the band dies, it rains.

IESU

Count on you to pump everyone up, Doomer.

ERIK RHODES

Spent a whole week starving for this thing.

He gestures to his pristine violin, which everyone looks admiringly at.

ERIK RHODES (CONT'D)

Getting it caught in the rain is the last thing I need.

Starman adjusts his microphone, his voice tight.

STARMAN

Let's just play, like we planned.

Lightning strikes and rain falls. Everyone groans as they take cover under the meagre overhang, packed like sardines.

ERIK RHODES

Can't we just go home? No one's here and no one will be here.

DOOMER

Making a big ceremony about Elpis breaking up after this is just cringe, anyway.

IESU

I hate to say it but yeah. Was good while it lasted.

STARMAN

You guys...

Lightning strikes again and the rain falls harder. A light cuts through it and shines on the band.

IESU

Who ordered the spotlight?

STARMAN

Not me...

He shields his eyes with his hand and with a start, notices he's levitating.

STARMAN

What the--?

Iesu, Doomer and Erik Rhodes also begin to levitate, dropping their instruments, with the lone exception of Erik Rhodes.

ERIK RHODES

Iesu! Did you order The Rapture?

They then shoot up inside the pillar of light, all screaming.

INT. LOR SALVIATOR'S SPACESHIP

THE BAND find themselves in a heap on the floor of the spaceship. Its colours are almost entirely iridescent with wide windows as big as walls, not out of place in a 1960s sci-fi but noticeably better-looking.

Erik Rhodes gets up first as he looks around, slapping his cheeks with both hands. He then pauses and remembers his violin and when he looks at it, broken from all the excess body weight, he wails like his own child got hurt.

Starman pinches himself and Iesu and Doomer both rush towards opposite ends of the spaceship to look out of the windows.

DOOMER

Toto, I don't think we're in Kansas anymore.

IESU

I thought my mushroom omelette tasted weird this morning.

LOR SALVIATOR, a 7-foot tall humanoid alien with purple skin and a bald head wearing robes not unlike a wizard's, appears from the cockpit. When he speaks, Doomer tries to act fierce by putting unsmoked cigarettes between his fingers like Wolverine's claws.

LOR SALVIATOR

Greetings, gentlemen of Elpis! I do apologise for this rather abrupt introduction. As perhaps your most ardent fan, I simply couldn't allow you to disband without meeting you first.

He reveals that underneath his wizard-like robes he is wearing an Elpis band T-shirt.

STARMAN

What the hell? Where'd you get that shirt?

ERIK RHODES

Our 'most ardent fan'? That's a hell of a thing to say when you  
(MORE)

ERIK RHODES (cont'd)  
kidnap people and break their  
violins. Who even are you?

LOR SALVIATOR  
I'm known as Lor Salviator, but you  
can call me Lor. I'm originally  
from the planet Elpis, though I'm  
really something of a collector of  
planets, you can say.

ERIK RHODES  
Elpis...

DOOMER  
Lor Salviator... that sounds like a  
crazy band name!

IESU  
Are you seriously gonna ignore the  
part where he said he collects  
planets?

ERIK RHODES  
You're such a big fan that you  
named your planet after us?

LOR SALVIATOR  
I understand that this is all very  
strange to you. But you must  
understand, gentlemen. You have  
been mistaken this whole time about  
your popularity.

He gestures to outer space from the windows, in the far  
distance is a space whale almost indistinguishable from the  
stars.

LOR SALVIATOR (CONT'D)  
Out here you are the very stuff of  
legends. Your music has brought us  
together, stopped entire wars. You  
are simply unpopular on your home  
planet.

STARMAN  
On Earth? I could've told you that.

Erik Rhodes scoffs, smirk wide. If he had glasses this is  
where they would glint.

ERIK RHODES  
They don't call aliens intelligent  
life for nothing, if they're all in  
love with me.

DOOMER  
Always thinking about yourself as  
usual, eh, Rhodes?

IESU

You're just gonna ignore the part where he says we're the reason aliens aren't at war?

LOR SALVIATOR

That's right. I wanted to prove to you that you shouldn't give up. I just had to be a little more forceful about it.

STARMAN

"Forceful"?

LOR SALVIATOR

My previous methods just weren't working, they were much too subtle! I never knew you had such a thing as spam emails or that humans forget their dreams almost immediately upon waking!

DOOMER

That one's a pain to deal with for sure.

LOR SALVIATOR

Not to mention your newspapers are now practically useless, so full of lies and other distractions.

STARMAN

That's all very nice, but we're still confused. Like right now, where are we? What are we on?

LOR SALVIATOR

You are on my spaceship and right now we are currently headed towards your moon. Before we get started on the tour, I've taken the liberty of setting up for you, there are a couple things we have to do first. Two of your biggest fans are absolutely beside themselves with excitement to see you.

ERIK RHODES

I'd be glad to meet them.

LOR SALVIATOR

Of course, Mr Rhodes. Please sit over there while we land.

He motions towards four rather comfortable-looking seats before moving towards the cockpit. Outside of the windows Earth can be seen in stark relief, and Starman is particularly arrested by the sight.

EXT. STAGE - NIGHT

Meanwhile, on their show on Earth, the crowd has grown fairly large and they are standing around in wait, XIMENA blending in with them.

LENI practically stabs her phone's keypad with her finger and presses it close to her ear, then shakes her head.

LENI

Of course your phone dies.

ORPHEUS and JAGUAR exchange a quick glance at the familiar experience, a flash of frustration on the former's face.

ORPHEUS

I guess we can step up and do something in the meantime. These people didn't show up just to miss the show.

He nods, grin wide as he clenches his fist before him. In any other circumstance his tooth would glint.

ORPHEUS

Leave it to Jag and I. Give them a taste of the old Elpis. They'll owe us for this.

Orpheus and Jaguar leave to go onstage. Jaguar picks up the second bass guitar and Orpheus the guitar, tapping the microphones.

Upon the third tap, the crowd stops murmuring and wait as they start a song. The spotlight shines on them as they play, the crowd murmuring again but some cheering. Leni wrings her hands.

LENI

Where did you go?

Meanwhile, Orpheus and Jaguar wrap up their song to decent applause.

ORPHEUS

How's everyone doing tonight?

The audience cheers.

ORPHEUS

Jaguar and I wanted to thank you for coming. We're sure you're wondering where Starman, Iesu, Doomer, and Erik Rhodes are. The truth is...



JAGUAR

They called us to sub for them due to unforeseen complications. We know you've been waiting for this last show so let's have a good time while we wait for them to come back.

The audience gives confused applause while Orpheus and Jaguar start with another song. Meanwhile Leni looks out at a blink-and-you'll-miss-it flash in the sky.

INT. LOR SALVIATOR'S SPACESHIP

As LOR SALVIATOR is driving and nearing the moon, a transmission comes in on the dashboard. His eyebrow ridges furrow at the seemingly unknown number it's coming from but nonetheless accepts it and OZZY comes on, a young boy no older than 14 with shaggy silver hair and matching eyes.

LOR SALVIATOR

Can I help you?

OZZY

I actually got through. You're Lor Salviator.

LOR SALVIATOR

Yes, I am he.

Ozzy gushes, just like he's meeting his favourite celebrity, then claps his hands over his mouth when he gets too loud.

OZZY

Don't tell anyone, but I'm your biggest fan.

LOR SALVIATOR

I'm honoured to hear that, sir...?

OZZY

Ozzy.

LOR SALVIATOR

Sir Ozzy. I'm afraid I can't talk right now.

OZZY

That's okay, we'll be seeing you real soon. But listen, keep this meeting a secret, okay? I'm not allowed to use the comms.

Lor Salviator is about to respond when the transmission cuts. He then lands the spaceship before a large crystal castle and then swipes his fingers on the dashboard log.

LOR SALVIATOR

One way.

He thinks about this for just a moment, wondering if he should be concerned.

Meanwhile, in the sitting area, THE BAND sit on the couch, seeing the passing stars and glimpses of Earth getting further away. A meteor passes in the distance.

STARMAN  
Galactic superstars. Us.

ERIK RHODES  
Well, who else? God forbid Nicky ever becomes one.

DOOMER  
Hey, it's better than the creeping  
hellscape that Earth keeps wanting  
to become. I really hope these fans  
of ours don't think we're lame if  
they get to know us.

ERIK RHODES  
Just let me do the talking, then.  
You couldn't ask for a better  
wingman than yours truly.

LOR SALVIATOR (O.S.)  
Gentlemen, we will be landing soon.  
Please remain seated.

From the windows the approaching curve of THE MOON becomes visible and the spaceship hums as it gets ever closer and finally lands.

EXT. PRINCESS ALMAS'S CASTLE

Title card: Moon, Mare Serenitatis

LOR SALVIATOR escorts THE BAND out of his spaceship.

They are on the light side of the moon. Moon jellyfish "swim" in the air above the mare.

STARMAN  
Is anyone else seeing this or did I  
smoke too much before the show?

One of them seems to dance around Iesu and he evades it as much as he can while being delighted at being chosen by it.

PRINCESS ALMAS, early 20s with long flowing silver hair and wearing a wedding dress, runs towards them with her majestic crystal castle behind her.

Erik Rhodes looks excited to see her until she runs clean past him and holds Doomer's hands, resulting in the former looking quite affronted.

LOR SALVIATOR

May I introduce you, gentlemen, Sir  
Doomer in particular, to Her  
Highness Princess Almas.

DOOMER

Princess?

PRINCESS ALMAS

I hope you can forgive me for  
calling you out like this. It's an  
honour to finally meet you.

DOOMER

Likewise...

He does a shallow bow, clearly unsure if it's appropriate.  
Princess Almas titters.

PRINCESS ALMAS

You're just as handsome in person,  
Sir Doomer. Just like Endymion  
himself.

DOOMER

Me?

ERIK RHODES

Yeah, uh... You know I'm here,  
right, Princess?

Her eyes are shining just like diamonds, and she looks just  
like she would in a 1970s shoujo manga, complete with the  
jellyfish acting like sparkly stars and even blooming roses.

PRINCESS ALMAS

The very heartbeat of the band and  
all its songs, a man so full of  
mysteries I could study him for  
entire lifetimes and still not  
unearth all there is to know about  
him...

To the rest of the band's surprise, Doomer is suddenly  
looking much handsomer than usual with a clean shaven face  
and even cleaned eyebrows, and his brown hair neatly brushed  
without his touque.

DOOMER

Well... As soon as this tour's done  
I'll come back to you. Go to the  
moon for a girl a second time.

Now Princess Almas herself seems to shine, and she embraces  
Doomer just like a lover would, and he reciprocates the  
action. He even has that single tooth sparkle, complete with  
a "ding!"

Even a slight distance away from the band they're clearly in their own little shoujo manga world.

ERIK RHODES

What the hell am I watching, some girly anime?

LOR SALVIATOR

Her Highness has been an avid fan of Elpis since your inception, Sir Doomer in particular. It's wonderful to see them getting along so well.

Erik Rhodes swallows his envy whole, while Iesu looks tenderly on like it cuts him just a little bit deeper.

LOR SALVIATOR

Don't worry, Sir Iesu, I'm sure our next destination will be just as delightful for you.

IESU

What, do I also get a princess?

LOR SALVIATOR

No, I daresay this one is more personal to you.

ERIK RHODES

What about me? Don't I get something?

LOR SALVIATOR

Rest assured, Mr Rhodes, you shan't be disappointed in due time.

Starman meanwhile looks on at Doomer and Princess Almas, a thousand different emotions all over his face. Princess Almas snaps back to reality.

PRINCESS ALMAS

Please pardon me, I forgot myself entirely. Come inside, I've had my maids prepare you a feast.

She leads the way, holding Doomer's hand.

INT. PRINCESS ALMAS'S CASTLE

Even LOR SALVIATOR is dwarfed by the high ceilings in the parlour, to say nothing of THE BAND practically being blinded by the crystals making up everything. PRINCESS ALMAS continues leading them, practically skipping ahead.

Erik Rhodes whistles as he takes everything in, Iesu nudging him. Starman pauses to look at the gate, presumably where Earth is. Even though Lor Salviator doesn't do anything to break him out of his reverie, he snaps out of it when

eclipsed by him, and follows the others.

He catches glimpses of tapestries bearing embroideries of the Earth and the moon, as if telling stories of how it happened. He stops upon seeing one of PANDORA'S VAULT surrounded by billions of stars pouring out of it, made of crystals.

Lor Salviator then stops to look over at him, the corner of his mouth tugging just a little bit, his eyes a little less soft as he joins him before it.

LOR SALVIATOR

This is the story of how the universe was born. When Pandora's Vault was first opened.

STARMAN

Really?

LOR SALVIATOR

Yes, as I understand it, on Earth you call it "The Big Bang Theory."

STARMAN

I don't know much about it. It's just a theory, anyway.

LOR SALVIATOR

Quite so. The universe is a gift, Sir Starman.

STARMAN

I don't want the universe, though. I don't even really want Earth.

LOR SALVIATOR

I see it's Earth custom to be modest. It's strangely admirable. But don't let's keep Her Highness waiting, Sir Starman.

He patiently waits for Starman to be done standing there in silent arrest and then brings up the rear, like a kindly father watching his child make his first steps forward.

INT. PANDORAN WARSHIP

The interior of the warship is made of what looks like wood, covered with tapestries illustrating famous historical battles, primarily Mongolian style.

At the bow is LÉON, a 33-year old young man with long luxurious reddish-blond hair, heroic build and piercing honey-gold eyes, sits on top of a lion-like throne with his chin on his left fist.

He watches the galaxy pass by at a leisurely pace. With his other hand he opens a locket whose inner picture we don't

see.

TIGRIS, a man somewhere in his late 30s-early 40s with flaming red hair tied back and tawny eyes, appears at his side.

TIGRIS

To think, once upon a time all of these stars--the entire universe!--belonged to Pandora. And then The Vault was opened.

Léon closes his locket.

TIGRIS

It is mandated we take it all back. Make great our name once again. With you on the throne once and for all, Your Highness.

LÉON

And take it back, we shall. But the galaxy seems rather silent, does it not? Might be a trap lying in wait.

TIGRIS

It's only because they've heard word of our advance. It's been a good millennium, Your Highness. They must be trembling against Pandora's might, even in its shadows.

LÉON

I suppose that's correct.

TIGRIS

Forgive me, Your Highness, but you may rest assured that this time we will be successful.

LÉON

Indeed... those who dare call themselves 'Elpis'...

He balls his fists. Tigris looks somberly on. Léon draws a shuddering breath and finally rises.

LÉON

I'm going to my chambers. Alert me should it be necessary.

Tigris bows and Léon leaves him.

INT. PRINCESS ALMAS'S CASTLE

ERIK RHODES and STARMAN are seated in a window nook overlooking THE EARTH. Erik Rhodes is absolutely in love with the sight while Starman is heartbroken.

ERIK RHODES

It's funny, isn't it? You hear all the time about how small people feel thinking about how big outer space is... I think I get it now. Hell, this makes me wanna write a bunch of songs.

STARMAN

Good for you, man.

ERIK RHODES

What, you really don't get any ideas looking at the earth from the moon?

Starman shakes his head.

ERIK RHODES

Nothing that inspires you, makes you go "this is the BEST idea I've ever had in my life"?

Starman shakes his head again.

ERIK RHODES

Nothing that makes you wonder what else is out here for us to see, that we can't even imagine?

STARMAN

No. I just look at the earth and wish I was still there.

A single elegant eyebrow raised, Erik Rhodes shakes his head at any retort he would've had and instead his attention shifts to DOOMER and PRINCESS ALMAS in the garden not too far away, admiring the jellyfish "swimming" before them.

He leans forward just a little bit, chin in hand, eyes soft like he's imagining something he'd never say out loud. Starman then storms off, and Erik Rhodes doesn't pay him any further mind.

As he leaves, Starman bumps into IESU who is in turn marvelling at a marble staircase adorned with a royal blue rug, not least due to the fact that above it hang chandeliers made of diamonds.

He's so moved that the only way he can speak is through prayer, and even then it's so quiet and reverent that you can only hear it in total silence.

Starman remains there with him, as if waiting for the faithful energy to rub off on him, but ultimately he leaves him and makes his way back to the tapestry of Pandora's Vault, and studies it again.

STARMAN

The birth of the universe, huh. All that led to this.

He looks around, pretending he wasn't just talking to himself. LOR SALVIATOR joins him.

LOR SALVIATOR

I rather adore that story myself, how Pandora's Vault birthed the universe. Regrettably I never got to see it myself.

STARMAN

Must've been something.

LOR SALVIATOR

Indeed it must have been. I'm afraid that I've spent the whole of my life standing in the shadows of my ancestor's achievements. Nonetheless, Sir Starman, were it not for the birth of the universe, I would not have met you.

STARMAN

You too, huh? I guess that's something we have in common.

LOR SALVIATOR

Your family owns a... Car wash, I believe you call it?

STARMAN

It's nothing special, but looking back, it lasted a good few years. Of course that's nothing on how old the universe is.

LOR SALVIATOR

Maybe not, but every sliver of time, no matter how small, can become something precious, can't it?

In the distance the sounds of Erik Rhodes's violin echoes. Lor Salviator closes his eyes and gently sways to the music.

Starman, not listening himself, simply keeps staring at the tapestry of Pandora's Vault, almost in disappointment for birthing the universe and bringing him here.

EXT. PRINCESS ALMAS'S CASTLE

Meanwhile, outside where there are many more jellyfish "swimming," DOOMER and PRINCESS ALMAS sit on a stone bench overlooking THE EARTH.



DOOMER

I like your jellyfish farm.

PRINCESS ALMAS

Thank you, it's my hobby, alongside listening to your music. Sometimes you see rabbits here as well, they make delicious mochi.

Doomer finally looks at the Earth.

DOOMER

Must be something looking at the Earth like this all the time. You have no idea how things are right now.

PRINCESS ALMAS

I assure you, I do. It may not be instant, Sir Doomer, but I know you will change it someday.

DOOMER

Heh. Don't know about that, but I guess it's worth a shot.

Princess Almas titters and looks up at the Earth, too.

EXT. STAGE - NIGHT

ORPHEUS and JAGUAR are playing "Elysia," a keyboard and acoustic guitar medly on their respective instruments.

Orpheus especially appears to have an aura around him as he plays that like space dust spreads across the audience, and a few of them wipe away tears.

When they're finished, they earn a raucous applause that's almost as impressive as what Elpis got on the titular planet. Orpheus takes a bow while Jaguar reluctantly follows.

ORPHEUS

Once again, thank you all for coming out to our show.

He stands smiling with his arms out for a few seconds and then follows Jaguar backstage.

JAGUAR

Hey, uh... No sign of them at all, it looks like. Why would they bail on their own farewell show?

ORPHEUS

Hell if I know, especially Erik.

When they are behind the stage, LENI is there, expression even more distant than the band currently is. Jaguar is the

first to reach her.

JAGUAR

Len... Nothing at all?

She shakes her head, the very light in her eyes almost snuffed out.

LENI

It's weird... Nicky, when you played, I almost forgot they weren't up there with you.

She brightens up a little bit.

LENI

I swear I could've seen them on stage, all of you together again, just like the old days.

Jaguar and Orpheus exchange a brief look.

LENI

But then I snapped out of it the moment you stopped playing.

ORPHEUS

Damn. Sorry, Len.

LENI

It's not your fault. I was projecting. But yeah. I don't know what to do.

JAGUAR

I'm sure they'll turn up.

XIMENA surrepticiously watches them from behind a tree.

EXT. SIRIUS - DAYTIME

LOR SALVIATOR has brought THE BAND out of the spaceship behind them to the dog planet Sirius, a green paradise full of all manner of sticks and everything dogs love.

All sorts of DOGS who rush up towards them, most of them towards Iesu, who doesn't know who to pet first. Before long he's football tackled by so many dogs that it's almost impossible to see him.

LOR SALVIATOR

You are the most beloved member here on Sirius, Sir Iesu. All through word of mouth from your biggest fan.

Iesu gently gets up again, though still several dogs try to climb up on him.

IESU

My biggest fan, on a dog planet...  
Wait, you don't mean--

LOR SALVIATOR

Here he comes now.

In the distance a figure comes running, getting bigger and bigger the closer it gets. It is AKIRA, a sprightly Rottweiler. He tackles Iesu and licks his face.

IESU

Akira!

He hugs him, laughing.

DOOMER

Didn't Akira die like two years ago? How'd he end up here?

LOR SALVIATOR

All dogs eventually take residence on Sirius.

Iesu slowly gets up, Akira in his arms.

ERIK RHODES

Hey, so... Can we bring him with us? Call him a team pet or something?

LOR SALVIATOR

I'm afraid not. For you see, once a dog returns to Sirius, he or she may never leave. This is their true home.

ERIK RHODES

But... We will come back here, right?

LOR SALVIATOR

Of course. Akira will be waiting for you. Incidentally he's made friends with Laika and Hachiko. I'm sure they would also love to meet you, as would all the ones you've seen on your Internet.

Iesu glances from the band to Akira, and gulps.

IESU

I'm sorry, guys. I don't wanna say goodbye to him again, however temporarily. I won't do the tour.

STARMAN

So now not only do you not wanna go home, but you want to stay here on a planet full of dogs.

He throws his hands up, the very personification of defeat.

STARMAN

We've lost you forever.

LOR SALVIATOR

Looks like I ruined things a little bit.

DOOMER

This is a little more than "a little bit." You just used the nuclear option, or whatever your version of that is.

LOR SALVIATOR

So much I still don't understand about humans despite studying them for so long...

He thinks about it as the other dogs give the band attention. Iesu, meanwhile, looks at Akira.

IESU

You're still gonna be here, eh, boy?

Akira barks.

LOR SALVIATOR

Look, here's Hachiko himself, right along with Laika.

HACHIKO, an Akita, appears alongside LAIKA, a part-husky and part-terrier mongrel dog. They both approach Iesu as he opens his arms and hugs all three dogs.

IESU

At least you won't be alone this time. I'm sorry you all had to wait so long, but it's good to know you're home, eh? And you're happy.

Iesu lets go of them and gets up, rubbing his eye.

IESU

You've been watching me all this time from here?

LOR SALVIATOR

Indeed he has. Never once missed a single show, and I daresay he wouldn't dream of missing the tour.

Akira barks in agreement.

IESU

You're right, I'm still in. Let's  
do this tour.

Lor Salviator nods alongside Erik Rhodes and Doomer, Starman allowing himself to be distracted by the dogs vying for his attention. He cracks a smile as he kneels to pet them.

STARMAN

You guys got it all figured out.  
All you got to do is play, not  
worry about anything.

He gives them both belly rubs. A big dog clearly not from Earth, as big as a lion, joins them holding not a stick but an entire small tree trunk in its mouth, and it's about as tall as Starman.

STARMAN

Hah, you win for the best stick.

He gets up and takes hold of the trunk, but the big alien dog naturally won't let him actually throw it.

STARMAN

Hah. Guess "No fetch, only throw"  
is universal.

He nonetheless still tries to wrestle it away from the alien dog, but it's much too strong. Nevertheless, as if taking pity on him, it lets the trunk go and Starman lifts it up and throws it like a javelin, the dogs running after it like an entire furry battalion, maybe even a tidal wave.

INT. PANDORA PALACE - VAULT CHAMBER

Meanwhile, on Pandora, the titular VAULT stands, a large golden cube with a flower of life pattern etched into it.

OZZY'S silhouette is visible alongside that of PIROUZ, who is an older boy of about 16 with golden hair and tear marks on his face like a cheetah.

Their shoulders hunch, their breaths bated at the unearthly silence of Pandora's Vault.

Pirouz grabs Ozzy's arm.

PIROUZ

C'mon, let's go before Palang or  
Koko Khanoum see us.

OZZY

I wonder if it's true that there  
are monsters in there.

Pirouz hisses, his hair standing on end.

PIROUZ

All the more reason we should move  
it.

He tries in vain to pull Ozzy away, but for his size he's surprisingly heavy, even just out of sheer stubbornness. Then, he does move, but towards it, with a very slow, determined prowl.

PIROUZ

What are you doing? Your  
curiosity's gonna get both of us  
killed!

OZZY

That sounds fun.

They both jump when a sound like a roaring car engine is heard from the inside of The Vault. They both grab each other as it gets louder and louder, even moreso when The Vault appears to glow like a bursting star.

EXT. ELPIS - NIGHT

Title card: Elpis (the planet)

STARMAN shields his eyes and a large AUDIENCE of tens of thousands of attendees cheers.

The stadium is held inside a giant mountain and in the distance is an expansive forest. THE BAND is all equipped with much flashier instruments, Erik Rhodes in particular holding a pure white violin.

LOR SALVIATOR steps up holding a microphone.

LOR SALVIATOR

Thank you all very much for  
waiting. Without further ado, here  
is Elpis, the band!

He gestures for the band to begin. Iesu exchanges a look with Starman before plucking the opening bass notes while Doomer begins banging on the drums. They play "Seven Seals" and the audience cheers so loudly their music can't be easily heard.

STARMAN

Jesus Christ...

IESU

You're telling me...

They are all stone-faced except for Erik Rhodes who bows theatrically with a beatific smile as the audience calls for an encore following his violin solo, which he happily obliges, blowing kisses to the screaming fans.

Doomer chuckles, shaking his head. He's not donning his touque so his hair looks slightly wavy and light, and he's almost as handsome as Erik Rhodes.

DOOMER

Absolutely bombed that one and they're eating it right up.

LOR SALVIATOR

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your attendance. That concludes our first show. Let's hear it again for Elpis!

They cheer again and Starman is carried back onto the stage, helped up by Iesu and they all bow as the stage lights dim.

They make their way back to the spaceship but Erik Rhodes is stopped by three young ELPIAN GROUPIES who like Lor Salviator are tall with purple skin and wearing elegant robes.

ELPIAN GROUPIE 1

Erik Rhodes! In the flesh!

ERIK RHODES

Yeah, it's me.

She gushes and nearly faints.

ELPIAN GROUPIE 2

You're our favourite! Please, can you stay a little longer?

ERIK RHODES

I'd love to stay and chat, but we gotta go. See you at our next show?

He begins to reluctantly leave and more groupies muscle in in front of each other.

The growing crowd is at least ten people deep and every single one of them wants to reach out and touch Erik Rhodes, and they scream at each other to get out of the way.

ERIK RHODES

Ladies, please! There's plenty of me to go around!

No sooner than he says this does this spark a full on riot between the groupies, where he's basically the rope in a tug-of-war.

ERIK RHODES

Not the shirt! It's imported!

He tries to wriggle himself free and once he does, all their attention is on him and he runs for all he's worth towards the ship, the door slamming shut behind him.

INT. LOR SALVIATOR'S SPACESHIP

ERIK RHODES pants from behind the door, groaning when he turns to see that parts of his imported shirt have actually been ripped off in the scuffle. STARMAN looks over from his seat.

ERIK RHODES

I'm all for this, but they ruined my favourite shirt. Still, they were fighting this hard over me, so maybe I'll just have to get a new favourite shirt.

STARMAN

I'm calling a meeting.

ERIK RHODES

Seriously? All right, give me a sec, I can't wear this. RIP shirt.

THE BAND are then all seated, the air tense as a meeting begins. Erik Rhodes is now wearing a band shirt naturally with himself on it.

Starman, practically folding in on himself with his hands before his lips in a prayer position, nonetheless sits up to face the others.

STARMAN

Guys, I've made a decision.

ERIK RHODES

Let's have it.

STARMAN

You guys are locked in, I can tell. And I'm really glad to see it. We're more united than ever.

IESU

That's a good thing, isn't it? It's what you wanted.

STARMAN

Yeah, but again, I've been thinking. That was my last show.

DOOMER

Are you serious?

IESU

After all this?

Erik Rhodes scoffs, shaking his head as he contains boiling rage behind his beautiful face.



ERIK RHODES

You know, I can see why Nicky wanted you out. This is the result of all your thinking, after we literally came so far we're out of this world?

A very faint red aura blooms around him, somewhere between a rose and fire.

ERIK RHODES

You didn't even want to be a real rockstar underneath it all, did you? You just liked the idea of it.

Doomer takes a tentative sip of his can of Sucker Punch, flinching as he feels rather than sees the reddening aura.

ERIK RHODES

The minute it all got too real for you, when your pipe dream became reality, all you could think about was when it's over.

Then, he has a revelation with stunning, even shameful clarity.

ERIK RHODES

Say you get what you want. You go back to just being Tom. Do you actually, seriously think, that Leni would be happy knowing you did it for her?

Doomer hisses inwardly, even Iesu hurriedly gestures "cut it out."

ERIK RHODES

If I were her, I'd dump your ass right now.

Starman and Erik Rhodes both lunge at each other from their seats, as Iesu tries hopelessly to break them up. Doomer, meanwhile, still treats it like a juicy TV drama.

IESU

Doomer! Help me out here!

DOOMER

We all knew this was coming. Too bad we don't have popcorn.

Iesu shakes his head and finally steps in and grabs both of them by the ear, instantly stopping the fight. Doomer is even more interested now.

IESU

All right, that's it. Neither of you get to talk.

ERIK RHODES

But--

IESU

No buts! I've had it with both of you being idiots about this whole thing. Yeah, it sucks that you have to be away from Leni, and that you threw your cousin under the bus. But guess what? We were meant for this role one way or another. God only gives you as much as you can handle, and neither of you are in this alone.

Starman and Erik Rhodes both exchange softening glances while wincing in pain as Iesu holds onto their ears.

IESU

Maybe we will break up after all at some point. That's fine, everything has its own timeline. But if we are, I'd rather it be for a real reason, not because we can't handle a challenge.

Satisfied, if a little winded, he lets go of their ears.

IESU

I swear, the one time I don't have a spray bottle on me.

Doomer claps. Starman walks away in a huff.

LOR SALVIATOR who is standing as he watches the distance they are traversing, which looks like a starry night sky. He stays right where he is, not turning to face Starman.

LOR SALVIATOR

Isn't it marvellous, Sir Starman? Such a wonderful start to your galaxy-wide tour.

Starman now stands beside him, shaking just a little bit.

LOR SALVIATOR

And you'll only get better and better once you get used to larger audiences.

Starman does his best not to look swayed, keeping a stiff upper lip.

LOR SALVIATOR

I daresay before long you'll be known on every corner of the universe.

STARMAN

Lor, please, turn the ship around.  
I need to go back to Leni.

LOR SALVIATOR

You will. I don't intend to hold  
you hostage, you know.

STARMAN

That's not the point! Look, maybe  
these guys don't, but I want to go  
home. Leni needs me.

LOR SALVIATOR

It's a wonderful thing to be  
needed.

STARMAN

Look, turn this ship around and  
take me home or I'll--

Now Lor Salviator turns to literally look down on him, face  
dark and serious unlike his usual joviality, and Starman  
swallows all the words he was about to say.

LOR SALVIATOR

Or you'll what? Sir Starman, you do  
realise you're on my ship, correct?

STARMAN

Yeah...?

LOR SALVIATOR

And you've never once ventured  
outside of your home planet?

STARMAN

Well, no, it's not like I even  
could, but--

LOR SALVIATOR

So I don't imagine you know your  
way around the galaxy.

Starman looks away in defeat, and Lor Salviator's expression  
softens.

LOR SALVIATOR

I understand your feelings, but  
good sir, you're still thinking  
much too small. You have a very  
important role out here.

STARMAN

Come on... We're not actually the  
galaxy's favourite band.

LOR SALVIATOR

Interesting, even when I showed you Elpis' entire populace coming out to your first show, you're still convinced they don't mean anything to you.

STARMAN

I never said that.

LOR SALVIATOR

No, but it's how you feel, correct? None of it matters as long as you still have Miss Leni by your side.

Starman poises himself to retort, finger raised, and then folds, lost for words. Lor Salviator's expression is kind.

LOR SALVIATOR

I suppose I was a little too forceful after all. Allow me to make it up to you.

He dials something into the dashboard.

INT. STARMAN AND LENI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is cozy and lived-in, with different rock band posters and photographs lining every available stretch of wall.

The television turns on by itself, as we hear but don't see Doomer, Iesu, and Doomer, whose voices sound like recordings, gradually rousing Orpheus and Jaguar awake who were asleep on the couch.

DOOMER (O.C.)

Crazy how Elpis has Sucker Punch. Could've sworn I dreamt it.

IESU (O.C.)

Lor did say he tried to reach us in our dreams so technically you might've. Though by all accounts it was free advertising for them.

DOOMER (O.C.)

You think one day they're gonna advertise like this on Earth? Give everyone a mandatory brain chip and you can't block ads, and all your dreams are really gonna be ads? And you just keep funnelling more and more money that isn't even real into products and services until you're really just a glorified machine masquerading as a human?

IESU (O.C.)  
Dude, don't even joke about that.

ERIK RHODES (O.C.)  
That last show was easily the best  
I've ever done, though. You guys  
were all right, I guess.

DOOMER (O.C.)  
Gee, thanks, Erik.

ORPHEUS rubs his eyes.

ORPHEUS  
Man, what time is it? Why're you  
watching TV all of a sudden?

JAGUAR yawns.

JAGUAR  
I was just gonna ask you the same  
thing.

LENI enters the living room, rubbing her eye, languid from  
just having been awakened.

LENI  
You guys, the neighbours're gonna  
complain.

They all jolt fully awake upon seeing STARMAN on screen,  
Leni making a beeline for it, ignoring the thumping sounds  
from the neighbours.

LENI  
Babe! What the hell, I gotta be  
dreaming this!

STARMAN  
You're not. It's actually me.

LENI  
How are you talking to me from the  
TV?

STARMAN  
Long story.

LENI  
Tell me, I've been worried sick!  
You just ran out on your last show  
without telling me anything. What  
the hell was that all about?

STARMAN  
You're totally not gonna believe  
it.

Leni laughs.

LENI

You're gonna tell me you got  
abducted by aliens or something?

Starman chuckles weakly. Leni stops smiling as she absorbs  
the realisation. Orpheus and Jaguar laugh.

ORPHEUS

That makes sense. Abducted by  
aliens. It's so obvious.

LOR SALVIATOR appears onscreen, spooking them.

JAGUAR

That is some insane stage makeup.

LOR SALVIATOR

You must pardon me, sirs and madam.  
I did indeed snag them away without  
your permission. My name is Lor  
Salviator and we have just left my  
home planet Elpis, where we just  
had a wonderful start to our tour.

ORPHEUS

A planet called Elpis?

LOR SALVIATOR

It is an honour to make your  
acquaintance, Sirs Jaguar and  
Orpheus. Such a shame you had  
irreconcilable differences with the  
rest of Elpis, otherwise this tour  
would doubtless be an even bigger  
success.

JAGUAR

Did you just say "tour"?

Starman clears his throat and as Lor Salviator steps aside,  
he places his hand against the screen as if reaching out to  
Leni.

STARMAN

Look, Leni. Like Lor said, we're  
gonna be touring the galaxy.

He looks away ever-so-slightly, though his hand lingers.

STARMAN

If we don't, whole planets'll  
literally riot.

He looks at his hand and takes it back, and Orpheus scoffs.

ORPHEUS

Of literally all the bands to ever  
exist, ours is the one to hold the  
(MORE)

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
universe together. Sounds like a  
really bad movie.

Erik Rhodes pushes Starman aside on the screen.

ERIK RHODES  
You're just mad that I made it and  
you didn't, especially after you  
stole my stage name.

Iesu facepalms.

IESU  
Here we go again. Orpheus-gate 2.0.

ORPHEUS  
Cope harder, you wanted to call  
yourself "Orpheus" when your violin  
made everyone's ears bleed.

ERIK RHODES  
You cope harder, you with your  
"god-given talent" didn't become a  
hit with aliens all over the  
galaxy.

Orpheus scoffs as Leni stares straight ahead at the screen.

ERIK RHODES  
Admit it, Nicky, you lost. Nobody  
even knows who the hell you are.  
Meanwhile, I'm a galactic  
superstar.

ORPHEUS  
People do know who the hell I am,  
your being a hit with aliens  
doesn't mean a goddamn thing!

ERIK RHODES  
Says the guy who's NOT a galactic  
superstar.

DOOMER  
Shut up, Rhodes. Both of you. It's  
true, we can hardly believe it  
ourselves, but we actually are  
celebrities out here.

He is visibly moved, looking somehow even handsomer.

DOOMER  
It's ironically humbling, you  
should've seen the crowd on Elpis.  
Hell, even the moon is cooler than  
I thought. Space is so big, you  
have no idea.

At the sound of "space," Leni's shock wears off enough that she clears her throat, and Starman once again takes the central position on the screen, shoving Erik Rhodes out of the way.

LENI

So this whole time I couldn't reach you... because you're in outer space. Is that what you're telling me?

STARMAN

Well... Yeah. Kind of out of the service area, heh.

Leni's brain short-circuits and her knees buckle as she faints, Jaguar catching her before she hits the floor. It's only momentary, but his KING'S SHADOW'S BANGLE eyes flash red and he in turn flinches.

All the while Starman reaches out to her in vain from behind the screen.

INT. STUDIO (FLASHBACK)

Title card: Four years ago

DOOMER, IESU, ERIK RHODES, JAGUAR, and ORPHEUS are practicing a general tune but give up when Orpheus slams his hands on his keyboard, ruining the illusion it was building, in this case the title card.

ORPHEUS

This is the third time this week he's been late. Erik, you gotta do something.

JAGUAR

Yeah, this can't really go on.

ERIK RHODES

I'll have to talk to him.

ORPHEUS

You gotta actually make a decision this time. I know he's your best friend but think for a second.

The studio entrance door opens and Erik Rhodes puts his violin back in its case.

ORPHEUS (CONT'D)

He's always late and every time he shows up, he's worse than last time. How does he expect Elpis to flourish when he won't put in the work?



ERIK RHODES

I'm not happy with how he's been acting since he moved in with Leni, either. But you know this isn't just our band.

Orpheus shakes his head.

ORPHEUS

That's your problem, Erik. You're not all that serious, either.

ERIK RHODES

I'm not serious? Dude, you're always bitching about him one way or another, and the sound you're going for doesn't fit Elpis.

ORPHEUS

Excuse me for wanting to go back to what worked.

Doomer takes out a bag of gummy worms and eats some like he's watching a TV drama.

ORPHEUS (CONT'D)

In case you haven't noticed, less and less people are coming to our shows and buying the CDs.

Iesu takes notice of the doorway from over his phone and quietly gasps.

ORPHEUS (CONT'D)

Starman's voice and guitar is turning them all away. It's obvious he's weighing us all down!

IESU

Hey...

Iesu motions to the doorway but neither Erik Rhodes nor Orpheus look that way.

ORPHEUS

He's your best friend, I get it. But if you don't do something, I'm leaving.

Erik Rhodes gives a small shake of his head and pinches the bridge of his nose as he sighs, his shoulders relaxing like a big weight was forcibly removed from them.

ERIK RHODES

If that's what you want, then sure.

ORPHEUS

About goddamn time you saw some sense.

ERIK RHODES

It's so obvious what I should've done.

IESU

Hey, Rhodes...

ERIK RHODES

No, Iesu. He's got a point. I should've done this a lot sooner.

Jaguar appears relieved for just a moment.

ERIK RHODES (CONT'D)

I hate to say it, but I let my emotions get in the way for a long time and we've all suffered for it.

He takes a breath, and Orpheus looks satisfied, if a little regretful. A somewhat faint thud is heard on the wall on the other side of the doorway. Erik Rhodes then claps a hand on Orpheus's shoulder.

ERIK RHODES

You can't quit, Nicky. You're fired.

Orpheus's expression flits between several different emotions at once, until finally he exclaims:

ORPHEUS

Wait, WHAT?

DOOMER

He finally did it.

JAGUAR

He "finally" did it?

ORPHEUS

You're actually firing me? Are you insane?

ERIK RHODES

If you're gonna be the guy who can't reel his own ego in and be a part of the team, then obviously you can't be here.

Jaguar's facial expression says "are you actually serious right now?"

ERIK RHODES (CONT'D)

Go and do your own thing, you keep messing with our sound, stealing the spotlight like we're just your backup anyway.

Doomer starts drinking a can of Atomic Punch.

ERIK RHODES (CONT'D)

If anything, you're driving audiences away because they can't tell if they should be listening to us or watching you show off.

Orpheus is speechless, and for a while no one says anything, the air still feels oddly electric. Finally, though, Jaguar looks at the doorway where Iesu initially hinted at and sighs.

JAGUAR

I guess that's it, huh. There's no place for me here, either, if Nicky goes.

ERIK RHODES

I don't want anyone here who doesn't want to be here. If you're also gonna complain, then go. Best of luck to you.

IESU

Rhodes...

ERIK RHODES

Everyone go home. Imma hit the spa.

He storms out of the studio, and Orpheus does too after the shock wears off.

Jaguar follows him and once he gets to the doorway, he sees LENI now slumped on the floor with her back to the adjacent wall, a box of doughnuts beside her. He tentatively stands beside her.

JAGUAR

Sorry you had to hear all that, Len.

Leni breathes gently, shaking ever-so-slightly.

JAGUAR

It's not your fault, okay?

Leni doesn't answer. Jaguar moves to touch her shoulder but ultimately doesn't.

JAGUAR

Again, Len, I'm sorry. And you were the one who convinced me to try out.

LENI

Tommy's sick, you know.

JAGUAR

Huh?

LENI

I came here to give you guys these,  
Tommy's dead asleep. Was up all  
night practicing, and he already  
wasn't feeling well. I was just out  
getting medicine, and I figured  
since I was close by...

On the inner side of the doorway, Iesu and Doomer listen in,  
Orpheus on the other side parallel to Jaguar.

Jaguar sighs and starts cleaning up the doughnuts, and  
blocks Leni's attempts to help. Leni herself looks like  
she's realising only too late what she ought to have said  
but the words nonetheless don't want to come out.

JAGUAR

C'mon. I'll walk you home.

Leni slowly nods and gets up, leaving with him. Meanwhile,  
Orpheus opens his notebook and writes something while  
clicking his tongue.

DOOMER

What are you even writing, anyway?

ORPHEUS

Journal.

DOOMER

You seriously keep a journal?

IESU

Leave him alone.

DOOMER

I never thought he was the type.  
Hey, what do you even write in  
there? Is it like when you play?

He snaps his fingers.

DOOMER

I bet you outline plans for world  
domination, don't you?

Orpheus looks up from his notebook, Doomer and Iesu both  
leaning in, anxiously awaiting an answer. He smirks and  
shuts it with one hand.

ORPHEUS

Wouldn't you like to know.

When he leaves them, Iesu nudges Doomer, shaking his head.

INT. RHODES FAMILY HOUSE (FLASHBACK)

Title card: Fifteen years ago

The Rhodes family house, particularly the living room, is comprised of marbles and rich reds, FAMILY MEMBERS all dressed to the nines acting as audience for ERIK RHODES and ORPHEUS, both aged 18 here and wearing their finest black ties.

Erik Rhodes has bags under his eyes and band-aids all over his fingers.

A similarly aged STARMAN sits among the audience, the only one not dressed like everyone else and feeling the secondhand pressure. Erik Rhodes readies his violin and Orpheus sits at the grand piano at the corner of the room.

Erik Rhodes begins playing Mozart's "Rondo alla Turca," closing his eyes to shut out everyone else's scrutiny and wincing whenever he does a movement that's particularly hard on his hands. Starman leans forward and balls his fists as a quiet cheer but he even feels everyone's stares then and sits still.

When Erik Rhodes is done, Starman is the only one who applauds, but again, he soon slows to a stop, and pulls on his collar briefly and coughs.

Orpheus then assumes the position and begins playing Liszt's "Grande Fantasia di Bravura sur la Clochette de Paganini" with a straight face though he's practically beating the piano within an inch of its life.

Both Starman and Erik Rhodes feel each note like an attack. So much so that when the song is over, both of them are visibly deflated as everyone else gives him a standing ovation.

Erik Rhodes storms off to another room and Starman follows, Orpheus catching a glance as he bows to the family.

Erik Rhodes sits on the staircase, face down to hide how much the loss stings. Starman tilts his head in sympathy. In the background someone plays the accordion.

STARMAN

Hey, man. You did great, he was just showing off.

ERIK RHODES

Doing "great" isn't enough. He's always better. You know how much I practiced just for this? A whole year! Meanwhile he just does that like it's nothing.

Orpheus approaches them, a blue ribbon pinned to his lapel.

ORPHEUS

Crying again, Erik?

ERIK RHODES

Shut up.

ORPHEUS

You'd think with all your  
experience, you'd take a loss  
better.

STARMAN

C'mon, that's uncalled for.

Erik Rhodes stands and is about to leave again when Orpheus stops him.

ORPHEUS

Good luck next year.

Erik Rhodes grunts but Orpheus's grip remains firm.

ORPHEUS

I've been thinking about something  
for a long time. Why don't we start  
a band?

ERIK RHODES

The hell're you talking about?

ORPHEUS

These competitions are fun and all,  
but maybe we need a change of pace,  
you know? No one else in our family  
has ever done it. With me on  
keyboard and you on guitar--

ERIK RHODES

Why would I be on guitar? That's  
Dad's thing.

ORPHEUS

I think you'd be better at it, is  
all.

Erik Rhodes scoffs but nonetheless the idea is planting a seed in his head.

ORPHEUS

We can be a new act, it'll make a  
big splash. We'd be guaranteed to  
get some really good jobs. Besides,  
I think it would be even more fun,  
don't you?

ERIK RHODES

All right, fine. We'll give it a  
shot, but I'm not on guitar. Tom's  
better than I am at it, anyway.

ORPHEUS

Tom?

STARMAN

Yeah, me?

ERIK RHODES

You can't just talk about starting a band in front of someone and not include them, Nicky. That's why everyone thinks you're a dick.

Orpheus, rather than retorting, seems shot through the heart by what he said.

ORPHEUS

Everyone?

ERIK RHODES

Yeah, why else do you think you always get dumped? Girls start off thinking how cool it is to date you until they get to know you.

Starman looks from the cousins, Orpheus visibly stung by the reveal. Nonetheless, Erik Rhodes pants him on the shoulder.

ERIK RHODES

C'mon, Tom. Let's get some hors d'oeuvres.

He leaves Orpheus with Starman following behind. Orpheus looks at the ribbon pinned to his chest, as if wondering if all his achievements were worth it.

INT. PANDORA'S VAULT

Begin dream sequence. The interior of Pandora's Vault right now is pitch black darkness, and LENI appears to be asleep on the floor, the lone light. She stirs awake, rubbing her eye as she gets up.

LENI

Geez, what time is it?

She looks around, confused, gingerly getting up. She looks for something familiar, but finds nothing, fear blossoming in her face.

LENI

Where is everyone?

She looks around, even more timid than a fawn.

LENI

Oh, right. Outer space. Leaving me behind. What else would you do with a dead weight?

The dread in the air weighs on her and she falls to her knees.

LENI

None of them need me... How can I  
even find them when they're so far  
away?

She then notices a neptune blue outline forming around her on the floor in the shape of a hand, from whose fingertips SHADOWY FIGURES appear (played by Starman, Doomer, Iesu, Erik Rhodes and Orpheus). They eclipse Leni when they rise.

She sees their faces under their cowls, and rises to approach them, but they remain still, as if made of stone.

LENI

What's wrong, you guys? Aren't you  
happy that your dreams came true?  
Don't worry about me, I didn't mean  
what I just said.

She forces a smile, desperate to be believed. All the while she doesn't face the figure played by Starman who is directly behind her. She realises she's lying and turns around to face him, and the others vanish.

She very tentatively touches him, and when she takes her hand back, she notices it's full of sand. Naturally this confuses her.

She turns and sees that the figure played by Iesu is offering her pink flower and then with a blessing hand gesture, he fades away.

Panicking, she sees the figure played by Erik Rhodes taking the flower she had received and posing like a model, and the flower is replaced by a red rose, and he blows her a kiss as he also disappears.

Now Leni is emotionally devastated, about to run when she runs into the figure played by Doomer, whose handsome face underneath his cowl is visible, and before he could make a similar gesture as the others, Leni runs.

All the while she's running, the figure played by Orpheus stands still, as if following her all the same. He extends his hand and though he's too far to touch her, she reacts just like he had grabbed her by the wrist.

LENI

No, I can't run away.

Leni then begins to shine as "Orpheus" raises his hands as if directly brightening her, and then he snaps once.

INT. STARMAN AND LENI'S APARTMENT - DAYTIME

It is late morning, the curtains are drawn so natural sunlight is filtered. "Starman" by David Bowie is playing on an old radio.



LENI is laying on the couch in a t-shirt and shorts, staring at the ceiling with the radio beside her. She is haggard from bad sleep and her hair is a mess.

Her phone shows nothing but outgoing calls to Starman. She tries to reach him one more time, once again to no avail.

A KNOCK then sounds on her door.

She gets up like her body is glued to the bed. The bright sunlight when she opens the front door makes her flinch as XIMENA becomes visible, wearing a pink jacket, white tank top and pale blue denim hot pants.

Ximena looks messianic when holding a bag of fast food from Burger Planet.

LENI  
Can I... help you?

XIMENA  
Hi, Leni.

LENI  
Hi..?

XIMENA  
You don't know me. But I know you.  
My name is Ximena, and I'm a fan of  
Starman's.

LENI  
How'd you get this address?

XIMENA  
That's not important. Look, I know  
he went missing. I can't find  
traces of him anywhere.

Ximena sizes Leni up, also glances inside the apartment over Leni's shoulders.

LENI  
Look, it's too early in the morning  
for this and you're really creeping  
me out.

Leni tries to close the door but Ximena grabs hold of it.

XIMENA  
You want to find him, don't you?  
Seeing as you're his girlfriend and  
all.

LENI  
Obviously.

XIMENA

Then isn't his stalker the best help you could hope for?

LENI

You've got a point there.

XIMENA

Besides, you're in no position to investigate looking like that. You haven't even eaten anything yet, have you?

She presents the bag of fast food.

XIMENA

Your favourite, spicy chicken burger and small fries with lemon iced tea.

LENI

...Thanks?

XIMENA

Relax, I'm not a STALKER-stalker. I'm not gonna hurt my favourite musician's girlfriend.

LENI

That's, uh... Good. Yeah.

Ximena thrusts the bag into Leni's hands.

XIMENA

Eat up. We got a lot of work to do if we want to find them. My keylogger on Starman's phone isn't even picking anything up.

LENI

...what were you saying again about not being a "stalker-stalker"?

XIMENA

Oh, I am a stalker-stalker-stalker. In that I stalk his stalkers. Not the kind of stalker who goes out and hurts people.

Leni makes the most priceless face imaginable before backing away.

XIMENA

Oh yeah, he's got so many. I mean, they all do. But no doubt you already knew about that, huh, since you caught one a couple years ago at the Johnny Valentine's.

Leni slowly begins to close the door.

XIMENA

Too bad I didn't get to her first,  
so that's on me. I got her  
eventually, though, so you don't  
have to worry about her anymore.

LENI

Listen, thanks for this, but you  
should go.

XIMENA

You shouldn't be alone right now.  
You never know who could be  
lurking, knowing your situation.

LENI

Okay, bye now.

She then shuts the door and locks it and sighs deeply. She  
inspects the bag of fast food and her stomach grumbles. She  
takes a tentative bite of the burger first and then  
practically inhales the meal forthwith.

She eyes the door, listening for any unusual silence. She  
then looks at the TV as if questioning if it, too, was a  
dream. Then her expression is determined as she marches back  
towards the door.

LENI

I'll bite. I don't even know if I  
slept last night, but it's just as  
well you're here. We're finding  
Elpis, come hell or high water.

Ximena blinks, even backing away ever-so-slightly until  
she's yanked inside the apartment by her wrist.

INT. PANDORAN WARSHIP

PALANG, manning the cockpit of the ship, spots a marker in  
the interactive map on the dashboard. He dials something in  
it and TIGRIS joins his side, and Palang nods in lieu of a  
bow.

TIGRIS

So that is where Elpis hides.

He strokes his beard and then says the following in sign  
language.

TIGRIS

But now is not the time to strike.  
Continue your primary task.

Palang nods and grunts in obedience.

INT. STARMAN AND LENI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

JAGUAR and ORPHEUS smoke on the balcony, looking up at the stars. Jaguar's King's Shadow bangle's eyes flash red, but you'd miss it if you blinked, just like he does.

JAGUAR

Do you really think they are...  
y'know...

ORPHEUS

No way. We must've had a shared  
hallucination or something.

JAGUAR

Right, totally.

Meanwhile, in the living room, XIMENA types away at her laptop and LENI leans back until she's lying down on the floor and staring at the ceiling.

XIMENA

How bizarre... I hacked into lots  
of phones and cameras and police  
databases, nothing's turning up.  
It's like they just vanished into  
thin air or got written out of  
existence altogether.

Leni pinches the bridge of her nose.

XIMENA

They're not anywhere in the world  
as far as I can tell.

LENI

I knew he was struggling, but why'd  
he go this far?

XIMENA

Were you about to break up?

Both girls look at each other, and Leni flashes red.

XIMENA

We'll find him, Leni. If for no  
other reason than me getting  
closure about this.

Jaguar and Orpheus enter the room.

JAGUAR

Any luck?

XIMENA

I saw a transmission that seemed  
kinda promising, but the connection  
was really bad. Went offline the  
(MORE)

XIMENA (cont'd)  
moment I clicked and I couldn't  
find it again. Felt like I imagined  
it.

ORPHEUS  
It's been a rough week, we're all  
pretty desperate for some kind of  
an answer.

LENI  
At this point I really might just  
settle for them being abducted by  
aliens after all.

She feigns a chuckle.

LENI  
It makes perfect sense, right? The  
craziest stuff always does. No one  
just vanishes.

Jaguar and Orpheus exchange looks.

JAGUAR  
You should really go to bed. Let us  
figure this out, okay?

LENI  
If I go to bed and wake up, he's  
not gonna be here, is he?

Jaguar's jaw tightens, his index finger tentatively leading  
his hand to reach out to Leni, but stops himself the moment  
Leni opens her mouth.

LENI  
All his stuff is here, all of our  
memories in this apartment... And  
he's not here. What the hell is  
even the point?

This time Ximena notices Jaguar catching himself from  
touching Leni's shoulder.

LENI  
If I have to go through that  
everytime I go to sleep, I'd rather  
just not wake up.

JAGUAR  
Leni, go to bed. You're not  
thinking straight.

For just a moment Leni's heart appears to skip a beat, and  
she doesn't resist as Jaguar pushes her towards her bedroom  
door and practically shuts it behind her.

Meanwhile, Ximena eyes Jaguar who tries and fails to look nonchalant.

JAGUAR

What? It's not what you're thinking.

XIMENA

What isn't?

JAGUAR

...whatever you're thinking.

XIMENA

Then it definitely is. Way to not read my mind.

Jaguar sighs.

JAGUAR

It doesn't matter, anyway. I'm not gonna be that guy.

XIMENA

That's nice and honourable of you.

JAGUAR

You don't have to put it that way.

XIMENA

What? I love a good love triangle as much as anyone else. Especially one I can tell has been a thing for years.

Jaguar's lips press into a thin line, hardening his muscles at the shame only such words can bring.

XIMENA

But I can't be disloyal as Starman's biggest fan and Leni's friend, so I have to root for him over you.

Jaguar makes the most priceless face imaginable, and Orpheus pats his shoulder as Ximena resumes typing.

INT. STUDIO (FLASHBACK)

Title card: Seven years ago

Here LENI and JAGUAR are aged 25 and 27, respectively, Leni holding a guitar case as Jaguar follows behind, exasperated. They have just entered the studio where the younger 26-year old ERIK RHODES is seated, looking miffed until they come in, when he stands up.

JAGUAR

I don't know about this.

LENI

C'mon, why not? I kept saying it  
looks like it'll fit your vibe.

ERIK RHODES

You're here for the audition?

LENI

He is. Plays really good guitar.

ERIK RHODES

All right.

LENI

Show him.

Jaguar sighs as he takes his case from her and begins  
donning his acoustic guitar. He plays "Stairway to Heaven"  
but abruptly stops after the first three seconds.

JAGUAR

Sorry.

He starts over, and though still visibly nervous, he gets  
less so as he plays. All the while Erik Rhodes's face is  
still. Jaguar then plays "Wonderwall," forgetting the second  
verse and stopping as he does so for all of twenty seconds  
until Erik Rhodes coughs.

ERIK RHODES

Well, you're better than the other  
three we had, though you don't  
exactly look all that serious.

IESU, aged 26 here, then enters with AKIRA. Leni kneels down  
to pet him.

LENI

Hey, you! What's your name?

IESU

Hey, Oscar, you finally made it!  
And this is Akira. He's a rescue.

JAGUAR

Well, when you, Nicky and Leni are  
all telling me to come...

ERIK RHODES

The others should be here soon.

LENI

Then I'll come back later, Oscar,  
Immanuel.

IESU

You don't have to do that, stick  
around.

LENI

You sure?

IESU

Akira can really use the  
socialisation.

ORPHEUS, 26 here, enters with DOOMER, also 26, behind him.  
Doomer wordlessly heads straight for the drumset while  
Orpheus sets up his keyboard. All the while Leni is playing  
with Akira.

Then STARMAN, also 26, enters and zeroes in on Leni.

ORPHEUS

At last, the elusive leader shows  
up.

STARMAN

It's not my fault the buses are on  
strike. Anyway... Who's that?

ORPHEUS

That's Leni. She brought Oscar from  
our ethics class, finally.

STARMAN

Nice to meet you. I'm Tom.

LENI

Likewise.

Jaguar silently watches this exchange but nonetheless keeps  
a straight face.

STARMAN

Anyway, sorry. Oscar?

JAGUAR

I play the guitar.

STARMAN

You're gonna be backup, then. Cool.  
Anyway, let's get started.

They all play a song, their instruments on acoustic, Leni  
seated on the couch with Akira laying on her lap when  
they're finished, her clapping rousing him awake.

ERIK RHODES

You definitely work better than the  
other three.

IESU

Good stuff, Oscar.



ERIK RHODES

Anyways, besides that, you can think on it for a while, but the rest of us were coming up with stage names. I'm gonna be Orpheus.

ORPHEUS

No, you're not. I picked Orpheus. I earned it.

ERIK RHODES

You know that's my name!

ORPHEUS

Yeah, well. If you wanted it, you should've done better at the Christmas competition.

IESU

"Christmas competition?"

ERIK RHODES

Screw the Christmas competition! It's rigged anyway!

ORPHEUS

Says the guy who loses every single time.

ERIK RHODES

Whatever, you would win every time when it's rigged that bad. Do you believe Grandpa when he says your music is magic? That's bullshit and you know it.

ORPHEUS

I'd call that a God-given talent, which, if you remember, is what Orpheus had. Ergo, I don't care if you think it's bullshit, you are not Orpheus!

Both of them huff and turn their backs on each other.

STARMAN

(to Iesu)

To answer your question, their family has a competition every Christmas and it gets pretty intense. Not surprising, though, given literally everyone is an award-winning musician.

IESU

Jesus.

ERIK RHODES

You know what? Think I'm just gonna go by my actual name after all. I don't even need to pretend I'm a legend, I'll just be one.

Orpheus rolls his eyes but Starman gives him a thumbs up.

STARMAN

In that case, I've been thinking about mine, Major Tom sounds cool and all but if you're going by your real name, I'll go with Starman. You know, like that David Bowie song?

IESU

I like that one. Me, I was just drawing a blank. Honestly think I'll go with Iesu after all. What about you, Damien?

Everyone turns to look at Doomer, who shrugs.

DOOMER

I'm gonna be Doomer.

JAGUAR

I already figured mine out, I'll be Jaguar.

ORPHEUS

You do look like a Jaguar.

ERIK RHODES

We're all spoken for. Now, let's keep going.

Jaguar catches Leni's grin, while Starman's own gaze on her lingers.

EXT. MOON

Meanwhile, a ways away from Princess Almas's castle, OZZY sits viewing the Earth with a spyglass telescope. He zooms in on the crosshairs but then drops it when a MOON JELLYFISH eclipses it.

OZZY

You're lucky eating you is pointless.

The jellyfish "swims" away, it genuinely could not care less. Ozzy once again looks through the spyglass. His concentration is broken once again when a silver MOON RABBIT comes up to him, trailing behind it a small wagon of mochi.

Ozzy takes the mochi from the wagon and downs it in one bite.

OZZY

Thanks, bunny.

The moon rabbit scampers away. Ozzy looks at the Earth once again, not with his spyglass, and exits the frame.

INT. PANDORAN WARSHIP

LÉON stands before the GALAXY MAP, itself so big it acts as a quarter of the wall. His gaze lingers on a spot where nothing is marked but nonetheless stands out because nothing is there versus the rest of the map. TIGRIS stands at his side, ever at the ready.

LÉON

It seems the ones who dare call themselves Elpis are leaving their mark.

TIGRIS

They are simply shadows, Your Majesty, in the grand scheme of things.

LÉON

Nonetheless, perhaps it is fate smiling at us. Yes, I can see it now, Tigris.

TIGRIS

Your Majesty's sight bears witness to all truths as always.

LÉON

'Tis lamentable, however, that we still cannot open The Vault, even when he is long gone.

TIGRIS

Rest assured, Your Majesty, his descendent's whereabouts have been gleaned.

LÉON

Truly? Fine work, Tigris. We have much on our shoulders, a myriad wrongs to right.

Tigris bows low. Meanwhile, the SPACE WHALE passes them by outside the windows, its low moan filling the air and making the interior of the warship vibrate.

EXT. IDUNN

Title card: Idunn

The planette Idunn is full of majestic apple trees, several of them with golden apples punctuated among the emerald leaves and ruby-red apples. THE BAND plays inside the trunk

of a particularly large tree with almost all golden apples.

The IDUNNIANS look like classic forest druids, some dancing along the MAYPOLES as the band sets up.

Starman rubs his hands on his clothes, overwhelmed by the beauty of the planette. Iesu prays, Erik Rhodes tunes his violin, and Doomer stretches.

STARMAN

(to himself)

C'mon, Tommy, don't do this now.

He takes a deep breath and begins tuning his guitar, giving it a test strum. His heart is all the way on Earth and the band notices.

Doomer starts tapping his drums and Iesu begins the bass riff for "Champion." The audience cheers and Starman closes his eyes as if letting the music fill him with the energy and excitement he himself doesn't feel.

Finally, he takes the mic.

STARMAN

"Your dreams lie in pieces, nothing more than dust, you think you're done, you won't make it through the night..."

He plays a riff while the audience cheers and the band grin.

STARMAN

"But what if I told you, if you can't get through the thorns, you'll never see the light?"

The audience cheers as he gets into the zone, Erik Rhodes accompanying him on violin, and they're even playing back-to-back.

STARMAN

"The battles you've won ain't over yet, you're a champion, don't ever forget..."

As the audience erupts in cheers, Starman is good and fired up, so much so that he epically shreds on his guitar, even getting on his knees to really get into it. The band shake their heads but nonetheless grin and accompany him, headbanging along.

He continues his guitar solo, as if only he is on the stage with his eyes closed. He imagines LENI as the lone audience member before him when he opens his eyes and stops playing as he gets up, taking the mic again.

STARMAN

Your name will be spelled out in  
constellations.

He pants, and his imagined Leni stands where she is, hands clasped, and she is soon eclipsed by the actual audience in thunderous applause. Sure enough when Starman looks out at them, she is nowhere to be seen. He cracks a sad smile as if silently laughing at himself.

INT. PANDORA'S VAULT

Begin dream sequence. Just like before, LENI wakes up in total darkness, the only source of light. But this time, she's slowly being covered by it.

She runs, the darkness only partly relenting, and it's one of those dreams where no matter how hard you run, you're slower than molasses going uphill in January.

A soft blue-white descending upon her catches her attention, and it's PRINCESS ALMAS reaching out to her.

PRINCESS ALMAS

My dear, do not be afraid.

LENI

Hah. I thought angels saying "be not afraid" was just a meme.

PRINCESS ALMAS

You are so close to truth. You just have to stop running.

LENI

I can't stop, I have to reach outer space.

PRINCESS ALMAS

You will. But you have to stop running.

Reluctantly, Leni does indeed slow into a halt. The next thing she knows, stars start to bloom like flowers.

LENI

If I stay right where I am... Are you saying that's how I'll see them again?

But Princess Almas is not there anymore, and Leni is once again all alone, until a dark pair of hands belonging to JAGUAR grab her shoulders from behind.

INT. STARMAN AND LENI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

JAGUAR, at that moment, flinches, his body reddening and face getting flushed despite steam seemingly rising from his forehead. XIMENA, wearing a tinfoil hat, looks up from her

laptop while ORPHEUS gets a can of Rocket Punch from the fridge.

XIMENA

Are you okay? You don't look too good.

His pants are almost like low growls, but he nonetheless shakes his head. Orpheus relinquishes his can of Rocket Punch and Jaguar downs it like he hasn't drunk anything in months and rubs his mouth with his forearm.

JAGUAR

I'm all right.

ORPHEUS

I dunno, man, for a minute you looked kinda feral.

He looks at Ximena as if wondering if he should say what he says next.

ORPHEUS

And to be honest, it looked worse than last time.

Ximena cowers away like he'd attack her, but then an alert on her laptop catches her eye and she groans.

XIMENA

Aw, man! I lost it!

She continues typing, and Jaguar goes to the fridge and gets a can of Nuclear Punch, standing beside Orpheus as they drink. Orpheus raises an eyebrow as he looks over Jaguar.

JAGUAR

What? I said I'm fine.

ORPHEUS

You sure? Cuz you're running a hell of a temperature right now. I can feel it from here.

Jaguar gets another can of Nuclear Punch from the fridge and downs it just as quickly.

Then, LENI comes out of her room wearing pyjama shorts and a tank top, dazed and zombie-like, passing Ximena from behind. She stumbles shoulder-first and in a flash Jaguar grabs her, and she hugs him, facilities still not entirely there.

LENI

Mmm... So warm...

Ximena then appears to feel Jaguar's heat from about a foot and a half away, and she yelps.

XIMENA

Oh, my God, get a room!

Now Leni seems to clue in on his body heat rising, and flinches.

LENI

Yowch! Oscar, you're burning up!

She goes to the kitchen and wets a dish towel in cold water.

LENI

It's because you wear muscle shirts  
and shorts year-round. You're bound  
to get sick eventually.

She then pushes him towards the couch and then presses the cold towel to his forehead before he can object, but then flinches as it appears to heat up against his forehead, like it's touching a hot pan.

He calmly gets back up, using the towel to wipe away his sweat, and then he looks just fine even though everyone else's mouths are agape.

JAGUAR

I'm fine, you guys. Ximena, you  
find anything?

XIMENA

No... I must be losing my edge.

ORPHEUS

Well, it's kinda hard to get away  
with stalking now.

XIMENA

You're telling me.

Leni's eyes dart around the living room, and out the window at the night sky. She then sits on the couch and pulls Jaguar's shirt to get him to join her.

LENI

You really should take it easy,  
Oscar. Even if you're fine now,  
it's not normal to have a fever  
that high.

JAGUAR

I'm fine, Len. Sometimes I just get  
a random fever.

She then steals a glance at him, though he himself doesn't see it. She blushes, a secret thought bubbling up inside, itching to come out of her mouth.

Finally, she leans on his shoulder, and feigns a yawn for good measure.

JAGUAR

Len?

Jaguar's hands shoot up in an "I'm innocent" position when she falls completely asleep, like a cat on a warm surface--in this case, his lap. Ximena grins widely while Orpheus pretends he didn't see that.

JAGUAR

What? I didn't do anything.

He makes to get up, but Leni using his lap as a pillow arrests him, making him very careful as he breathes.

His King's Shadow's bangle's eyes glow for just a quick second, and Ximena eyes it, squinting as she combs through fuzzy memories.

XIMENA

You know, I've always wanted to ask you something. Where'd you get that bracelet?

JAGUAR

Heirloom. I've always had it.

XIMENA

Could've sworn I saw something like it once before.

JAGUAR

Wouldn't know.

XIMENA

Ahh man, this is gonna bug me.

She straightens her tinfoil hat and goes back to typing. Jaguar sighs and very gingerly lifts Leni by the shoulders off of his lap and starts getting her in a bridal carry.

He carries her to her room, and though she's asleep, she cuddles up to him and he notices that her bedroom door is closed. He whistles in Orpheus's direction, and the latter comes.

JAGUAR

Door.

Orpheus gives him a knowing look, and Jaguar's eyes plead with the Heavens to give him a break. Orpheus shakes his head and opens the bedroom door and Jaguar carries Leni inside.

Once inside her room, he lays her down, but her arms wrap around his shoulders and don't let go, even though she's still asleep. Jaguar shuts his eyes for strength and grabs her by the biceps but stops short of pushing her off of him for a few seconds.



Finally, though, he does and tucks her in before hurriedly leaving her room and closing the door behind him.

EXT. PARK - DAYTIME (FLASHBACK)

Title card: Twenty years ago

Families are outside enjoying the park. A lone child, a young JAGUAR, aged 14 here, inspects the King's Shadow's bangle which is still quite big for his wrist. Though he's seated beneath a tree he's already quite big for his age and starting to develop muscles.

A young LENI, aged 12, approaches him.

LENI

Can I sit here?

Jaguar doesn't answer, instead looking at her like a scared animal despite her smile.

LENI

No?

He coughs and doesn't meet her eyes.

JAGUAR

No, go ahead.

She smiles again and obliges.

LENI

You're Oscar, right?

JAGUAR

How d'you know my name?

LENI

Yearbook. I've been wanting to talk to you.

JAGUAR

Why?

LENI

No reason. By the way, what's that?

He hides the bangle in his pocket, and for a moment its eyes change colour to pink.

LENI

Sorry.

He shakes his head and she giggles.

LENI

You're shy, huh? That's funny. And kinda cute.

JAGUAR

Cute?

Leni then seems to spot something or someone in the distance and gets up.

LENI

I'm Leni, by the way. I'll see you at school. Show me that thing sometime, okay? Bye.

She runs off and Jaguar watches her go, gently blushing. He takes out the bangle again and puts it on.

EXT. OLYANA - DAYTIME

Title card: Olyana

DOOMER, IESU, and ERIK RHODES are onstage on Olyana, whose dominant colour scheme is soft pinks and creams, and even the stage calls to mind a massive white lily without the stamens.

STARMAN, meanwhile, is surrounded by OLYANANS who are roughly the same height and have green skin, appearing to wear oversized flowers as hats and clothes. He is halfheartedly signing autographs.

OLYANAN 1

What an honour it is to meet you,  
Man of Stars!

STARMAN

I'm glad to meet you, too. Sorry I flubbed basically all my lyrics up there.

OLYANAN 2

Not at all, this in and of itself is fortuitous. To get to speak with you is a dream.

STARMAN

You really love us, huh.

OLYANAN 3

Of course! Your songs are so full of longing and hope, your dreams from your little planet planted the most curious of seeds.

STARMAN

They did?

OLYANAN 4

Yes. Humans are a tragic species and yet you have boundless love and imagination. It's a shame you have  
(MORE)

OLYANAN 4 (cont'd)  
convinced yourselves you cannot see  
it.

STARMAN  
You know, you're right, now that I  
think about it. Thank you so much.

The Olyanans smile at him and Starman himself smiles and has renewed energy as he signs autographs and soon excuses himself to join Doomer, Iesu, and Erik Rhodes on the stage.

The audience cheers as Starman picks up his guitar and takes the microphone and begins playing the starting notes of "Flipside."

STARMAN  
"I look in the mirror and see a  
stranger, not even my name is mine  
anymore..."

The audience cheers loudly as the song continues.

STARMAN  
"But whispers in the sky call out  
to me..."

He reaches up towards the sky and closes his fist as he pulls it back down in an epic strum of his guitar. As the Olyanans cheer, pollen releases in the air like stardust and it seems to especially favour Starman.

They cover him almost like a cape as he begins a guitar solo, shimmering just like a star, though his nose visibly reddens and when he sneezes he messes up a chord.

He steals a glance at the audience, and allows himself a smile as he gets to the best part of the solo even though it's punctuated by sneezes.

The crowd goes absolutely wild and Erik Rhodes grins as he and the others rejoin the song.

INT. ZYGOMA

Title card: Lor Salviator's mansion, Zygoma

Lor Salviator's mansion follows an art deco scheme, complete with statues bearing golden armour and weapons. DOOMER walks alongside the wall acting like a museum of said pieces, stopping before a platinum set, his reflection "wearing" it.

LOR SALVIATOR, on a stroll of his own, stands beside him.

LOR SALVIATOR  
Would you like to try it on, Sir  
Doomer? I think it would look  
rather nice on you.

DOOMER

Nah, it might be cursed or something. No offense.

LOR SALVIATOR

Not at all, you might be right. If memory serves, it belonged to an old clan enemy and never actually saw battle.

DOOMER

Explains why it looks new. But you got a crazy collection.

LOR SALVIATOR

Thank you, it's important to know my family's history.

Doomer then happens upon a jar holding what looks like silver stardust levitating inside it, completely arresting him.

DOOMER

What's this thing?

LOR SALVIATOR

Good eye, Sir Doomer. That's what remains of my earliest ancestor.

Doomer backs away, flinching, like he saw a cadaver rather than stardust in a jar. Lor Salviator laughs.

LOR SALVIATOR

It's nothing to be ashamed of. All of outer space is made of memories, luckily a lot of it is tangible. One day we will also become part of something bigger.

DOOMER

Huh. Never thought about it that way. On Earth all we talk about is being cogs in a machine. Even though you basically said the same thing, somehow it doesn't sound all that bad.

He looks again at the jar of stardust.

DOOMER

One day that's gonna be me... Hah, to think, seeing someone else's ashes makes me wonder what his story was.

LOR SALVIATOR

I'm afraid we may never know, but all the more reason to make your  
(MORE)

LOR SALVIATOR (cont'd)  
mark, especially as the "heartbeat  
of the band."

Hearing that makes Doomer grin a cheesy grin, then  
not-so-subtly hide it behind a cough.

DOOMER  
Bet your ancestor was up to some  
crazy stuff back in the day.

LOR SALVIATOR  
Oh yes, in fact some of the  
planettes in our galaxy are said to  
be born of her fights with rival  
clans.

Doomer's expression is caught between adulation and horror  
as he thinks about what that means.

LOR SALVIATOR  
I do believe the galaxy you call  
Andromeda is born entirely of such  
battles, as of course is the Milky  
Way. When Pandora's Vault first  
opened, there were of course  
growing pains.

DOOMER  
And all those generations later,  
here you are, the galaxy's richest  
pirate.

LOR SALVIATOR  
I do my best.

They share a chuckle as Lor Salviator leaves him. Doomer  
once again looks at the jar of spacedust in absolute awe.

DOOMER  
Wonder if I'll ever look this cool  
when I'm long dead.

He sighs dreamily at the thought.

EXT. CHANGGIES - EVENING

Title card: Changgies

The planet Changgies basically a giant, endless plain, with  
simple buildings made of what looks like giant fossil bones  
draped with animal pelts. A similar structure acts as a  
stage but no one is performing on it.

Instead, THE BAND and LOR SALVIATOR are surrounded by  
CHANGGIANS, who are all statuesque Amazonian women with long  
flowing hair and barbarian garb.

Every single one of them is gushing over the guys, but special attention is given to Erik Rhodes who is having a much easier time accepting this than the others. He is autographing some swords.

ERIK RHODES

Aaaand that's you, thank you so much.

CHANGGIAN 1

You wield your pen like an expert swordsman, just like you do your instrument.

ERIK RHODES

Yeah, well. Can't be caught lacking, looking at the likes of you all.

The Changgians giggle as he grins, continuing to autograph a sword. His finger slips and he cuts it.

ERIK RHODES

Well. You can't say I don't bleed for my art.

Doomer, meanwhile, is given a shield to autograph.

CHANGGIAN 2

If we had you as our drummer, we would win wars before they start.

DOOMER

Win wars before you even start, huh. Too bad I'm kinda already promised to someone else.

CHANGGIAN 2

Then may you bring her to victory.

Doomer grins crookedly and autographs with great flourish, showing his penmanship is much cleaner and even more regal than you might expect from a guy who looks like him.

Starman himself is looking at his reflection in a helmet he was given to autograph, as if forgetting how to write his name, or even what his name is.

He shakes his head as he notices how long the lineup for his autograph is getting.

CHANGGIAN 3

It's just like your song, looking for yourself everywhere you go.

STARMAN

You could definitely say that. I guess I'm literally doing that now.

CHANGGIAN 3

In our language, that's what life  
is. A hunt for yourself.

STARMAN

A hunt for myself, huh...

Iesu, meanwhile, looks a bit distraught and another Changgian bearing a spare breastplate for him to sign takes notice.

CHANGGIAN 4

You look rather flush, like you can  
use a good mug of mead and hearty  
stew.

LOR SALVIATOR

We do indeed have time if you would  
like to oblige, Sir Iesu. Changgian  
stew is legendary. But please come  
back before nightfall.

IESU

Nah, I'm good, thanks. Please  
excuse me for a bit.

Before anyone can object, he leaves the group and keeps walking until he sees a small encampment of REFUGEES, no taller than five feet and with pink skin and black eyes.

Their encampment is comprised of a broken down spaceship no bigger than a king size bed, and they are gathered around a metal pot.

One of them, who appears to be a young boy, looks up from his spot and nudges another child who looks like his older sister. They both jump up and run to Iesu and chatter at him in an unintelligible alien language.

IESU

Man... Wish I could speak your  
language, learn how you got here,  
what your planet was like...

They pull him towards their family who treat him just like one of their own and force him to sit down and eat with them, all of them laughing together.

INT. STARMAN AND LENI'S APARTMENT - DAYTIME

XIMENA types away on her laptop, even wearing a VR headset as she does so. LENI looks through the window at the sky, not really seeing it. JAGUAR and ORPHEUS enter from the front door bearing bags from Burger Planet and a six-pack of Rocket Punch.

JAGUAR

Len, we got food. Let's take a  
break.

She turns to look at him and grins.

LENI

I think we're making real progress.  
So far we've learned that they're  
not anywhere in the country.

Orpheus and Jaguar exchange looks as Ximena takes off her headset, momentarily dazed at her return to reality. Beside her is a growing wall of Atomic Punch.

XIMENA

Oh, good timing. Brain ran out of  
calories.

Orpheus sets the coffee table with the food, and Jaguar looks at Leni all the while.

LENI

Oscar, come sit down. Let's have a  
break, we're gonna be back at it  
soon.

He very slowly sits down, not getting his own burger unlike everyone else. Ximena just about inhales her fries.

LENI

I was thinking, you know...  
Cellphones have universal trackers  
on them and all that now, right?

Both Jaguar and Orpheus sit up in alarm.

LENI

Why don't we broaden our search?  
Use a satellite in outer space...  
Just on the off chance....

JAGUAR

Len, can I talk to you for a sec?

LENI

Okay.

The two of them get up and go to the kitchen. Leni keeps feigning a smile while Jaguar is stone-faced.

JAGUAR

What are you doing?

LENI

Being proactive. We gotta broaden  
our search.

JAGUAR

I get that you're desperate, but  
this has gone on long enough. She's  
not the kind of person you should  
be telling this kind of secret to.



LENI

What secret?

Jaguar sighs, shaking his head slightly as he puts both of his hands on her shoulders.

JAGUAR

That Starman's not on Earth anymore. That he's somewhere in outer space and likely won't be back for a very long time.

As his words sink in, Leni's forced smile falters and rather than breaking down, she's visibly unburdened and a true, timid and sheepish smile comes out.

LENI

I guess we were gonna have to talk about that elephant in the room sooner or later, huh?

XIMENA

What did you call me?

LENI

(to Ximena)

We weren't talking about you.

She faces Jaguar, who removes his hands from her shoulders.

LENI

I know they're not here anymore, but we still have to try. There's something I need to tell Tommy, and Ximena can help us.

Jaguar's cheek twitches, like he ate a particularly strange-tasting fruit, but nonetheless he follows Leni back to the coffee table.

LENI

Hey, Ximena.

XIMENA

What's up?

LENI

I gotta be honest with you about something.

Ximena puts her can of Rocket Punch down.

LENI

I haven't been all that honest with you from the start. The truth is, we all know where everyone is.

Ximena gasps.

LENI

And they're... Not here.

XIMENA

Well, I know THAT.

LENI

No, I mean they're not on Earth.

Silence descends upon them, Jaguar and Orpheus releasing any built-up tension they had from holding onto that secret.

XIMENA

Oh, thank God, you finally admit it!

LENI

You knew?

XIMENA

Well, yeah. Don't ask how, but I found out a long time ago. I would've told you, but I didn't wanna ruin our friendship.

Orpheus scoffs heartily only to be elbowed by Jaguar.

LENI

That's so sweet.

XIMENA

I've always wanted to stalk someone in outer space.

LENI

Well, they're touring, so hopefully we'll catch them that way.

XIMENA

Hell yeah, girl! By the way, are you gonna eat those fries?

LENI

Nope, they're all yours.

XIMENA

Awesome, I'm gonna need all the calories for this.

Jaguar and Orpheus sit back, gobsmacked, as Leni beams with genuine joy and Ximena stuffs her face full of fries and downs an entire can of Rocket Punch.

EXT. DANICA

Title card: Danica

THE BAND is setting up, very few DANICANS present in the audience. The actual planet Danica is comprised largely of

pinks, purples, and whites, like dawn is breaking. Iesu yawns, Doomer himself whistling the fife part of "The British Grenadiers."

LOR SALVIATOR looks from the sidelines, grim-faced as Starman downs an entire can of Boom!ChocoLatte, adding it to the growing pyramid on the corner.

STARMAN

I think I've built a resistance to these things.

ERIK RHODES

At this rate I'm gonna need actual lightning to wake me up.

Doomer plays the drum portion of "The British Grenadiers," shocking the others awake. He stops to shrug.

DOOMER

You're welcome.

Little by little their audience grows and Iesu plays a bit of "Kalinka" on his bass guitar to the others' snickers.

As their audience grows, Erik Rhodes smirks and plays a bit of "Le Chanson de l'Oignon," though none of the others seem to recognise it. He shrugs a shoulder.

Starman clears his throat and plays a bit of "Scotland the Brave" on his guitar and cracks up alongside everyone else. He then sees the crowd has amassed quite a bit, and he stretches while cracking his knuckles and neck.

STARMAN

All right, guys. We got this.  
Thanks, Doomer.

Doomer gives him a thumbs up and Starman faces the crowd, the rising sun itself acting as his spotlight in the sky.

STARMAN

Alright, how's everyone doing today?

The audience cheers.

STARMAN

Y'all ready to have fun?

The audience cheers again.

STARMAN

Alright, let's go!

Doomer hits the drums and Iesu the bass for "Boreal."

STARMAN

"I took the road least travelled,  
it led me to the sky above, I saw  
nothing but beauty, but could only  
think of your love..."

As the audience cheers and the band plays, their movements are heavy beneath the energy they're putting out, and Lor Salviator checks something on his wristwatch that we don't see. Nonetheless he puts it away and looks on at the band, his expression unreadable.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

PIROUZ runs across outer space, leaping off of an asteroid impossibly high and landing on the SPACE WHALE'S back with an artful and fluid backflip.

He stretches his arms and legs before leaping off of the whale's back and diving onto another planet.

INT. RIGIL ANTAREA

Title card: Lor Salviator's mansion, Rigil Antarea

Lor Salviator's Rigil Antarea mansion has a markedly different feel to it than Zygoma; it follows a distinct vaporwave scheme, complete with an indoor garden with an oasis in the centre, and purple fish swimming in it.

Outside of a lone window, if you blink you would miss PIROUZ effortlessly landing on his feet before creeping away out of sight.

STARMAN tunes his guitar by the oasis, several pages of music notes before him. Once done, he strums a few notes, mumbling along to the music. ERIK RHODES joins him, sitting on the opposite end of the oasis.

ERIK RHODES

Hey, I've been thinking.

Starman stops playing.

ERIK RHODES

Do you actually wanna quit when all  
this is over?

He looks over at Starman, who doesn't look at him. Instead, he puts down his guitar.

STARMAN

Yeah. And it's not just for Leni.  
Being this far away from home makes  
me realise I regret so many things.

He chuckles bitterly.

STARMAN

I wasn't there for my family,  
didn't wanna take over the business  
until after we broke up. Figured  
it's not bad, washing cars for a  
living. Good, honest work. Mom  
always said that I'd better clean  
up my act.

He chuckles again.

STARMAN

She also said with a little effort,  
Doomer would clean up real nice.

Erik Rhodes also chuckles at that.

STARMAN

All I can think about is things  
like that. This tour, all the fans,  
everything about it... Do you ever  
feel like deep down, you're just  
playing at it all?

ERIK RHODES

No. I believe we got here because  
we worked for it. And now that  
we're here, we gotta do even  
better.

Erik Rhodes leans back on the grass, and Starman does as well.

ERIK RHODES

Honestly, though, I get what you  
mean. Sucks that I'm not home  
getting to rub being galaxy famous  
in everyone's faces. Would make all  
the times I got negatively compared  
to Nicky worth it.

He feigns a laugh, but it's hollow.

STARMAN

Mom was right, though. About me  
needing to clean up my act. Lor's  
not gonna ferry us back home just  
like that, so no use thinking about  
everything I should and shouldn't  
have done.

ERIK RHODES

If you're gonna do that, write new  
songs. You can't just play the same  
things over and over again, no  
matter how much they lose their  
minds hearing it live.

Starman says nothing, soaking the words in, and then he picks his guitar back up and strums the notes to the acoustic song, "Sunrise."

STARMAN

"Night's blanket falls from your shoulders, you turn away from me to face the sun..."

Erik Rhodes closes his eyes and listens along to the music.

EXT. KLELLIA - MIDDAY

Title card: Klellia

The planet Klellia has very little actual land; the only land is an islet in the middle of endless blue ocean. The attendants this time all appear to be merpeople with various seastars, crustaceans and kelp adorning their hair.

THE BAND all stand on the islet which itself is surrounded on all sides with KLELLIANS. They are playing their song "Century."

STARMAN

"I marked the years gone by like rings on a tree, counting down the minutes until you find me..."

A small skiff carrying seven REFUGEES, this time ones that look like cat people no taller than two feet, sails with various Klellians either moving out of their way or gently pushing them forward like a mosh pit.

When the skiff stops in front of a group of Klellians and capsizes, Iesu is the first one to stop playing and dives into the crowd and they carry him towards the refugees.

He picks up three of them and the surrounding Klellians pick up and ferry over the remaining four.

They are all carried over to the stage islet where Iesu is pulled up by Erik Rhodes most prominently, and Doomer takes the refugees from him. He and Starman gently give them gentle chest compressions.

IESU

Are you guys all right?

They're a little shaken but otherwise just fine. He sighs in relief.

Starman, watching them, surreptitiously wipes the edge of his eye and steps closer to Doomer to speak to him, so only he can hear.

STARMAN

You know, maybe this really is what we were meant for.

Doomer, in lieu of a corny line brewing behind his crooked smile, pats Starman on the shoulder. He then nods, facing the crowd, the refugees in particular, and starts singing "Leave Her, Johnny."

STARMAN

"I thought I heard the old man say,  
'Leave her, Johnny, leave her.  
Tomorrow ye will get your pay, and  
it's time for us to leave her.'"

Erik Rhodes joins him on violin, Doomer and Iesu in the chorus.

STARMAN

(together with Iesu and  
Doomer)

"Leave her, Johnny, leave her. Oh,  
leave her, Johnny, leave her. For  
the voyage is long and the winds  
don't blow, and it's time for us to  
leave her."

STARMAN

"Oh, the wind was fowl and the sea  
ran high--"

STARMAN

(together with Iesu and  
Doomer)

"--Leave her, Johnny, leave her."

STARMAN

"She shipped it green and none went  
by--"

STARMAN

(together with Iesu and  
Doomer)

"--and it's time for us to leave  
her."

KLELLIANS

"Leave her, Johnny, leave her. Oh,  
leave her, Johnny, leave her. For  
the voyage is long and the winds  
don't blow, and it's time for us to  
leave her."

Starman closes his eyes as everyone sings, letting the song wash over him just like Klellia's waters, the last stanza echoing.

His reverie shatters when he is hit with what looks like a starfish and seaweed, even some fish and shells.

STARMAN

I'm sorry, was that rude?

He and the band try in vain to dodge the various sea flotsam and jetsam being thrown at them, but then Starman realises what's happening, right when he dodges a particularly large fish that would most assuredly injure him otherwise.

STARMAN

Heh. Thanks.

He then starts the next song, using his dodges as part of the stage dance.

INT. PANDORAN WARSHIP

TIGRIS and PALANG stand before a large celestial map written in Pandoran, whose script resembles Arabic. Several planets are connected by a single red line like a trail of blood. .

TIGRIS

(in sign language)

They're making progress further west. The best time to strike would be after they reach Magna Seibel.

Palang nods.

TIGRIS

(in sign language)

He truly is insolent, putting on pacifist airs. I almost pity his charges.

Palang nods.

TIGRIS

(in sign language)

Regardless, continue your task. We have waited thousands of years for this moment.

Palang nods deeply and leaves him.

INT. PARVA SEIBEL

Title card: Lor Salviator's mansion, Parva Seibel

Lor Salviator's mansion interior shows a mauve living room lined with sets of armour and priceless jewelry and artwork along the walls, with one long couch in the centre looking at it all on one side.

IESU is seated in front of a large half-oval window overlooking an even larger multicoloured garden that spans at least one hill and a marble fountain, with a clear starry sky above.

Just within the line of sight is a small brown planet acting as a satellite. ERIK RHODES joins him but he doesn't bring a chair to sit down.



ERIK RHODES

Imagine seeing something like this  
back home, huh?

IESU

All this space just for you.

ERIK RHODES

You never cared much for luxury,  
huh?

IESU

It seems pretty wasteful. And he  
has a dozen of these places.

ERIK RHODES

I think it's more than a dozen.

IESU

Yeah, you wouldn't get it.

Erik Rhodes leans against the wall beside the window.

IESU

Ever since we went to Sirius, I've  
been thinking. With how famous we  
are after all... Shouldn't we be  
more responsible?

ERIK RHODES

Responsible how?

IESU

I dunno, just... Remember when Lor  
said we're the reason aliens aren't  
fighting each other?

ERIK RHODES

Yeah, so?

IESU

Doesn't that mean we should maybe  
do something more than just making  
music for the fans?

ERIK RHODES

I dunno. I'm good with this just  
being my life.

IESU

Of course you are.

ERIK RHODES

You're the one who asked. I never  
said my way was the right way, just  
that it's mine. Clearly it's not  
yours.

IESU

Clearly.

Erik Rhodes leaves and Iesu sighs, once again looking up towards the smaller brown planet. LOR SALVIATOR comes in and stands in Erik Rhodes's spot.

LOR SALVIATOR

Is something on your mind, Sir  
Iesu?

IESU

Was just telling Erik that there's  
gotta be more to all this fame. It  
doesn't seem right for this to be  
all I do.

LOR SALVIATOR

Your motivations are more than just  
fame and success, aren't they, Sir  
Iesu?

Iesu makes a bashful expression.

LOR SALVIATOR

In that case I have something I  
would like to show you. I noticed  
you noticing it just now.

IESU

Is it that planet not too far from  
here?

LOR SALVIATOR

It's called Yueyue. Shall we head  
off? It will be a quick trip.

He ushers him out of the room.

EXT. YUEYUE - DAYTIME

IESU stands in the middle of a barren wasteland, where a highly advanced society once stood. Only the base foundations of buildings remain, the debris splattered about as if it had been bombed.

Even the sky is a very unflattering shade of brown. A weak breeze is audible. He looks absolutely crestfallen and even falls to his knees and hands, LOR SALVIATOR stands as normal.

IESU

What happened to this place?

LOR SALVIATOR

This was once a very prosperous  
kingdom. Its peoples were peaceful  
and wished only to live their  
lives.

A TUMBLEWEED rolls by them.

LOR SALVIATOR (CONT'D)  
Unfortunately their plentiful  
resources made them a prime target  
for pillagers.

Just a stone's throw away from them what appears to be a  
hollowed out, now dirty lake basin is seen.

LOR SALVIATOR (CONT'D)  
So in a final act of defiance they  
torched their homeworld and  
themselves along with it. It truly  
is a tragedy, they had such a  
beautiful planet, not unlike yours.

IESU  
Not unlike... ours?

He very gingerly gets up and wipes his face. Then he hears a  
rustle, and turns to look at a YUEYUAN PET shaped similarly  
to a rodent who runs towards him. He picks it up.

IESU  
What are you doin'? This is your  
home, huh?

Iesu chuckles as he puts the animal down. It yaps and little  
by little similar ones creep out from the ruins, and run  
towards Iesu, trying to climb up his legs. He crouches down  
to greet them all with a hug.

LOR SALVIATOR  
I'm truly astounded by your love of  
living things, Sir Iesu.

IESU  
This is their planet now, huh?  
Almost like Sirius.

LOR SALVIATOR  
Indeed.

IESU  
Were they pets? They must've been,  
to be this happy to see us. Wow,  
all of you lost your masters. I  
hope you know it wasn't your fault.

He gets up to face Lor Salviator.

IESU  
Hey, Lor... There are other Yueyues  
out there, right?

LOR SALVIATOR  
Indeed there are, Sir Iesu.

IESU

So there's gotta be a bunch of  
refugees and whatnot, right?

LOR SALVIATOR

Indeed there are.

Iesu regards Lor Salviator pointedly, as if about to ask a  
heavy question but deliberates if he should.

IESU

Don't you feel any sort of greater  
responsibility? Not like guilt or  
anything, but...

He clears his throat.

IESU

There's no point beating around the  
bush.

He steels himself.

IESU

I've been wondering about how you  
have so many planets, and if,  
well... You actually have something  
to do with it.

Iesu looks like he regrets it, while Lor Salviator looks on  
kindly.

LOR SALVIATOR

It's no wonder you are so loved by  
the downtrodden of the galaxy, Sir  
Iesu.

Iesu keeps a straight face.

LOR SALVIATOR

To answer your question, my family  
did indeed acquire wealth through  
what you would no doubt call  
shameful means, but it is still my  
inheritance and only I can do with  
it as I wish.

Lor Salviator takes out a small pouch and empties it before  
the Yueyuan pets, which appears to be cereal.

LOR SALVIATOR (CONT'D)

I cannot heal the wounds of those  
who have suffered on my own with my  
resources. All it will do is enable  
another great tragedy in the  
future.

He turns to face Iesu again.

LOR SALVIATOR (CONT'D)  
 But you, Sir Iesu, and your fellow  
 bandmates, can and will heal many  
 with your art. It will naturally  
 not be instantaneous but you have  
 indeed contributed so much more  
 than you realise.

He clasps his hands.

LOR SALVIATOR (CONT'D)  
 This is why I have decided to give  
 you your tour across the galaxy. I  
 simply wish to help you.

IESU  
 I see... Sorry, Lor.

LOR SALVIATOR  
 None taken. In fact I have to say,  
 I'm glad we are having this  
 conversation. You have given me  
 much food for thought. I hope this  
 conversation has been similarly  
 enlightening for you.

IESU  
 It has... But I still think I  
 should be doing a lot more than  
 just playing music. In fact...

He looks at the Yueyuan pets happily eating the cereal.

IESU (CONT'D)  
 Is it true that aliens think we as  
 humans are total idiots?

When Lor Salvator's face doesn't show any particular  
 expression, Iesu quickly continues talking.

IESU (CONT'D)  
 I mean we have all these problems  
 we can't solve and we're killing  
 the planet, seeking out new ones to  
 exploit...

A couple Yueyuan pets approach Iesu for food, which he  
 doesn't have.

IESU (CONT'D)  
 We say we want world peace but have  
 no idea what that even means...

LOR SALVIATOR  
 I haven't asked anyone that myself  
 nor have I seen it. Honestly, I  
 never cared to find out something  
 so trivial...

Iesu looks just a little bit offended at this sentence.

LOR SALVIATOR (CONT'D)  
 ...and I daresay no one else ever  
 stops to think about it. But I  
 certainly don't think that about  
 you.

IESU  
 Guess that sorta thing really  
 doesn't matter ultimately, huh.

He crouches down to offer his hand to the Yueyuan pets and  
 they flock around him for pets.

IESU  
 That's actually good to know. We  
 talk about it all the time on  
 Earth.

He picks some of them up.

IESU  
 We both want and don't want to know  
 whether or not you're out here, if  
 you will attack us, laugh at us...

He looks down at the pets in his arms as more of them flock  
 around him.

IESU  
 Guess it is pretty stupid, but  
 that's what we are. And maybe  
 that's all right after all.

Finally Iesu smiles and puts down the pets he was holding.

IESU  
 Thank you, Lor. Let's go back.

LOR SALVIATOR  
 Of course, Sir Iesu. Might I say, I  
 do look forward to your endeavours  
 across the wider galaxy.

Lor Salviator smiles and ushers him back to the spaceship.

EXT. MAGNA SEIBEL

Title card: Magna Seibel

THE BAND plays their song "Shine" on the stage on Magna  
 Seibel, which looks like it's being held by two giant white  
 Roman statues before their biggest audience yet. Starman  
 shreds on his guitar to thunderous applause, awash in sweat.

STARMAN

"A bouquet of diamonds is all I  
have to show for how long I've been  
without you..."

For just a moment his eyes see all the way back to Earth,  
but he continues his song.

STARMAN

"Sapphires rain down whenever I  
think about you..."

He closes his eyes, feeling the words of his song, and for a  
moment he appears to want to fall forward into a stage dive,  
but then he looks up, determined.

STARMAN

"A hell of rubies surrounds me."

He shreds on his guitar again, and for just a moment it's  
hard to tell if that's a tear falling from his eye or he's  
just sweating that hard.

STARMAN

"But no jewel shines as bright as  
you."

For added emphasis he reaches out to the audience and they  
cheer even louder. He rubs his eyes with his forearm and  
then raises that same arm as the rest of the band bow.

STARMAN

Thank you, Magna Seibel! Now this  
next one, is a personal one no one  
else has heard before. Goes out to  
someone I love a lot. Maybe you  
already know her.

After tuning his guitar, he starts playing the gentle tab  
procession of "Lenore."

STARMAN

"My life was a mess until you  
stepped inside. When you looked at  
me, all I wanted to do was hide."

The MAGNA SEIBELIANS wave their arms as he plays.

INT. STARMAN AND LENI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Meanwhile, XIMENA types away on her laptop as ORPHEUS,  
JAGUAR, and LENI are respectively moving a satellite dish  
outside and tuning a radio. Leni happens upon mostly static  
until the chords of the song are audible.

XIMENA

That's it! We just gotta hone in  
some more.

Jaguar tilts the satellite dish just a little bit towards the right, and after some more typing, the sound is still grainy but it is indeed Starman playing "Lenore."

STARMAN (O.S.)

--dreams do you have, am I in any of them?"

Leni listens intently, and when he and Orpheus come back inside, Jaguar stiffens listening to the chord progression.

ORPHEUS

Hey, isn't that..?

JAGUAR

That absolute bastard...

ORPHEUS

Yup, it is.

Though his fist quakes, Jaguar appears to calm as he watches Leni listening to it and being overcome with emotion. He takes a seat on the couch as Orpheus sits beside him, watching them both.

LENI

I haven't heard this one.

JAGUAR

You weren't supposed to.

Orpheus clears his throat and Ximena clues in, covering her mouth with her fingertips. Leni doesn't appear to have heard him, all her focus is on the recording.

STARMAN (O.S.)

"I'll cross oceans of sky to find you, dreaming of the day I swim in your eyes of blue..."

Jaguar covers a gag with a cough, and Orpheus cringes in support. He then flinches when he sees Jaguar's shoulders quaking and his bangle's eyes glinting. When he speaks he sounds more like a jaguar.

JAGUAR

(to Orpheus)

Is it bad that I wish he was here just so I could throw him into outer space myself?

ORPHEUS

No, but calm down, maybe.

He looks over at Leni, still arrested as she listens to the song, a gentle blush spreading on her face and her eyes shining like stars.



LENI

Thank God... He's still thinking  
about me out there.

Orpheus, frowning, writes something in his notebook.

INT. PANDORAN WARSHIP

Even LÉON is listening to the song in The Ship, though with  
much crisper definition. A smirk spreads on his face.

LÉON

Tigris.

TIGRIS bows.

TIGRIS

Yes, Your Majesty.

LÉON

I take it you have made the  
necessary preparations.

TIGRIS

Aye, Your Majesty. Palang and I  
have made certain it will take  
place without a hitch.

LÉON

Very well. Then deploy Pirouz and  
the ocelot for their own task. I  
will leave the rest to you and  
Palang.

TIGRIS

Yes, Your Majesty!

He bows again and leaves the scene. Léon, meanwhile, opens  
his locket and gazes wistfully at it.

INT. STUDIO (FLASHBACK)

Title card: Three years ago

JAGUAR, aged 31 here, is playing the notes of "Lenore" on  
the acoustic guitar, eyes closed as he feels the music.  
ORPHEUS, also 31, meanwhile, pets AKIRA who lays down beside  
him on the couch. When he finishes playing, Orpheus claps.

ORPHEUS

Nice! I can see that becoming a  
real hit.

JAGUAR

It's not really one you want  
everyone to hear. I didn't even  
know you were there.

ORPHEUS

That's just how it goes. Wish I  
came up with that song.

JAGUAR

Heh, thanks, man. Still, no way in  
hell is this one leaving this room.

ORPHEUS

That's a shame, but it's your song,  
so I respect that.

STARMAN, 31, is seen outside of the slightly ajar studio  
door, having listened in.

He shuts his eyes, but opens them again when ERIK RHODES,  
also 31, enters. He gets a phone call and leaves the frame  
just as Orpheus comes out first, and he and Erik Rhodes  
pause when they see one another.

ERIK RHODES

Nicky.

ORPHEUS

Erik.

ERIK RHODES

Sorry you got that song of yours  
plagiarised.

ORPHEUS

It's what I get for being a  
succesful artist. Ain't like I  
don't also have bills to pay,  
though.

Erik Rhodes gently scoffs at the humble brag but nonetheless  
nods.

ERIK RHODES

I had to get a new violin after my  
last one bit the dust, that really  
hurt the funds.

ORPHEUS

Well, for what it's worth,  
Grandpa's gonna come to the rescue  
with Christmas money.

ERIK RHODES

That's true, he always does.

Jaguar then comes out as well with Akira on a leash, and  
Erik Rhodes pets him. Soon after they are joined by IESU and  
DOOMER, respectively 30 and 31. Iesu looks rather haggard.

ERIK RHODES

Hey, Akira. You're looking good  
today. Feeling better?

IESU  
Yeah, he's doing better today, but  
his vet bills are through the roof.

Erik Rhodes looks at Akira for about three seconds as  
Orpheus not-too-conspicuously leaves the scene.

ERIK RHODES  
Hey, why don't you come over to the  
house tonight? After your shift.  
I'll split my Christmas money with  
you.

IESU  
Aw no, it's fine.

ERIK RHODES  
C'mon, it's Christmas. I want to.  
It's for Akira.

Iesu, embarrassed, nonetheless looks at Akira and nods. Erik  
Rhodes grins and they go towards their instruments to begin  
practicing.

INT. ICHIGO ICHIE'S PANCAKE PALACE

Title card: Six years ago

Ichigo Ichie's Pancake Palace is comprised mostly of  
yellows, oranges whites, its mascot bringing to mind  
strawberry shortcake, its tables resembling giant orange  
slices and chairs cherries.

LENI, 26, and Jaguar, 28, sit at one such table as a  
WAITRESS, whose uniform resembles a fruit fairy, leaves  
them.

LENI  
Thanks for coming out, Oscar.

JAGUAR  
No worries. What's up?

LENI  
Well...

Leni fidgets, blushing.

LENI  
Tommy asked me to move in!

JAGUAR  
...Oh.

LENI  
Yeah! Can you believe it?

JAGUAR  
...Yeah, actually.

LENI

Do you think it's too soon?

JAGUAR

Uh, not really. It's been two years.

LENI

I'm so nervous, though... I don't even have brothers, so I've never lived with a guy before, other than my Dad, but that doesn't really count.

JAGUAR

I guess that would be a bit of an adjustment for you, eh.

LENI

Yeah, like... What do I do? We're gonna be sharing a room and everything. Such a crazy thought!

JAGUAR

Well, Len, if you're not ready for that, don't do it.

LENI

He was so happy, though.

JAGUAR

So you asked me over to tell me that, huh.

LENI

Yeah, I mean, you're my best friend. You know everything about me. Who else am I gonna tell?

JAGUAR

Maybe a girl, for one.

LENI

Aww Oscar. You're better than any girl. Girls have no idea how guys think or what they expect.

Jaguar's face says "look who's talking..."

LENI

So will you hear me out? I'll treat you to pancakes and whatever else you want.

The pause is just long enough to not be suspicious to Leni. Jaguar sighs and forces a smile.

JAGUAR

...yeah, sure, why not.

LENI

Oh my gosh, you're the best!

Jaguar nods while Leni smiles and waves over a waitress.

INT. PANDORA'S VAULT

Begin dream sequence. LENI is once again waking up in the expansive darkness of Pandora's Vault as the lone source of light. She gingerly gets up and looks around.

LENI

This place feels awfully familiar.

She is about to walk when she appears to remember.

LENI

No, wait. I do know this place.

She then examines her hands, even though they don't change.

LENI

If it's this dark... I shouldn't be able to see myself. But I can, I'm right here.

Her befuddled expression soon gives way to a smile just like when the sun pierces through clouds.

LENI

Of course! Why couldn't I think of it before?

As soon as she says this, she glows bright enough that she can see a patch of ground at her feet, like a reverse shadow.

A step forward reveals more of the same ground, and so on, and so on.

She then finds herself before the FIVE HOODED FIGURES from the first time, but none of them move in the glow of her light.

She then yelps when something brushes against her leg, and she yelps again when she sees two chartreuse eyes belonging to A JAGUAR.

The jaguar looks up at her, head tilted. Leni squints and reaches her hand out to seemingly pet it, and its glow reveals the melanistic rosettes in its coat.

LENI

Such a good kitty.

The jaguar "meows," and it sounds just like if Jaguar was pretending to do it.

LENI

Why are you here in such a dark place when you got such a beautiful coat? You should show it to everyone.

She scratches under its chin, and it "purrs" as much as a jaguar can.

LENI

You're just like me, aren't you? That's why we're both here. You're such a sweetheart, though. I don't know why I was ever scared of you.

She then kneels before the jaguar, still petting it.

LENI

You're so soft... I mean, you are just a big cat. I've always loved cats. Of course, I never actually had one as a pet. Allergies. But you're like velvet, so I probably could've had you as a pet.

The jaguar yawns and flops over, Leni still petting it.

LENI

You'd be great to have as a guard. No one would ever mess with a jaguar. I'd feel so safe, and I'd get to play with you, too. It's the best of both worlds.

She stops petting the jaguar, who groans as if to ask why she stopped.

LENI

He's probably never coming back. And if I wake up... Maybe none of this will have happened. But that'd be bad writing, wouldn't it?

She chuckles, and the jaguar gently paws at her and she leans against it like it's one big pillow.

LENI

Hey... You feel familiar, actually. Like I've known you every time I've been alive.

She hugs the jaguar around its midsection and cuddles closer.

LENI

I think I'm gonna name you...

But just then, everything rumbles like a mega earthquake, and like God himself ripped the heavens apart light rains

down like falling stars, and all around Leni and the jaguar just as many shadows shoot up, and several of them try to lift her up alongside them.

She grabs onto the jaguar as tightly as she can, the jaguar itself pulling her down and growling louder the more it resists.

INT. STARMAN AND LENI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

LENI bolts upright and awake, panting and awash with sweat. The moon is big and full outside her window, almost preternaturally so.

The moonlight spills inside her room from the open window, forming a projection of PRINCESS ALMAS.

PRINCESS ALMAS

My dear, don't be afraid. I had to reach you as soon as I saw. Now listen to me, you must--

But before she can finish that sentence, Leni bolts upright and awake, just like before, showing that she dreamed that. The moon looks normal now, though still shining strangely bright.

LENI

Geez, what was that dream?

She's about to turn back in when in so doing OZZY is visible in the moonlight's trajectory.

Leni screams, and Ozzy claps a hand over her mouth and in one fell swoop, is out of the room with her in tow as quickly as he showed up.

INT. LOR SALVIATOR'S SPACESHIP

An alert message beeps on the dashboard as LOR SALVIATOR inspects it, eyebrows dimpled. Over in the sitting area, THE BAND are lounging.

ERIK RHODES

Good job, guys. That one was easily our best show.

IESU

No kidding. I actually think I'm getting used to this tour.

DOOMER

Same. Never thought a dinky band like us could manage this, huh, Tom?

Starman shakes himself out of his reverie.

STARMAN

Yeah, definitely.

Iesu smiles crookedly, Erik Rhodes also exhales through his nose.

ERIK RHODES

We'll go home eventually. Though I gotta admit, I can't wait to lord this over Nicky forever. Guy may've won a bunch of trophies, but he's nowhere near as famous as me.

DOOMER

Right? I actually miss the car wash. Never thought I'd say that.

IESU

I'm gonna miss Sirius, but there's so many more back home I wanna help.

DOOMER

Wonder if the Princess is gonna come down to Earth sometimes. Or if I can visit her myself.

When Starman doesn't answer, and instead looks even more lost in thought, the others exchange looks.

ERIK RHODES

What's with him?

DOOMER

Heh. So that's what I looked like before meeting her.

ERIK RHODES

Wow. I can't believe that joke wasn't beneath you.

IESU

Leave him alone, he's just tired.

Meanwhile, Lor Salvator approaches them, putting on a smile that he doesn't entirely feel. On the dashboard behind him the alert still beeps and through the windshield Saturn passes by.

LOR SALVIATOR

Gentlemen, I would like to take a moment to thank you for indulging me on this tour.

DOOMER

In fairness, you didn't leave us much of a choice, but you're welcome.



LOR SALVIATOR

Indeed it was selfish of me to put you through it with flagrant disregard for how you might feel.

IESU

The Lord works in mysterious ways.

LOR SALVIATOR

I'm glad I got to partake on this with you, as it's something I've been wanting to do for as long as I've been your fan.

ERIK RHODES

Pleasure's all ours.

LOR SALVIATOR

All that said... I think it's time to say goodbye. As we speak we are nearing Earth. By the time we arrive it will be nighttime.

At the mention of "Earth," Starman snaps out of it, even sitting up.

STARMAN

Did you just say "Earth"?

LOR SALVIATOR

Yes, Sir Starman. Watching you all on this journey made me realise, you've put all your energy to indulge me and the audiences. And the galaxy is a big place. No doubt you're quite tired and need a rest in a familiar place.

ERIK RHODES

But... That doesn't mean the tour is over, right?

DOOMER

Yeah, I mean I can keep going.

LOR SALVIATOR

I'm glad to hear that, sirs, but seeing as how you haven't ventured outside of your planet before, I can't risk you experiencing any health issues. I daresay I didn't stop to think that even resting in my various residences would be hard on you physically.

ERIK RHODES

I mean, I am gonna miss that shampoo and conditioner set.

LOR SALVIATOR

I will be sure to give you a couple  
when we land, Sir Rhodes. Now then,  
gentlemen, please prepare for  
landing.

He leaves them, and Starman gets up to follow him to the  
cockpit.

STARMAN

Wait, Lor. Why now?

LOR SALVIATOR

Please return to your seat, Sir  
Starman.

STARMAN

I will, but answer me, please. Why  
are we going home now?

LOR SALVIATOR

As I said, Sir Starman. You ought  
to rest in a familiar place. I  
thought you would be happy.

STARMAN

I mean... I am, but I was also  
thinking we'd be at this a while  
longer.

Lor Salviator smiles.

LOR SALVIATOR

I assure you, Sir Starman, I am  
more than willing to show you every  
corner of the galaxy. But I have  
overstayed my welcome as it is, and  
I don't imagine Miss Leni is all  
that pleased with me for taking you  
away from her.

STARMAN

Gotta admit, Lor. It's kinda weird  
for you to be this considerate now.  
But thanks for everything.

LOR SALVIATOR

My pleasure, Sir Starman. Now  
please join the others, we will  
land shortly.

Starman lingers for just a little bit longer before  
rejoining the rest of the band. They fasten their seatbelts  
as Earth gets closer and closer. Iesu silently begins  
praying and Starman joins him.

ERIK RHODES

Geez. Look at the earth, though.  
Was just a pixel and now it's  
getting big again. Feels so wrong.

He steals a glance at Starman, who at this point is feeling all of Iesu's prayer several times over. Erik Rhodes exhales through his nose as he smiles crookedly.

ERIK RHODES

Heh. Guess there's a lesson in  
there somewhere.

Meanwhile, in the cockpit, Lor Salviator drives, a forlorn expression on his face as the ship goes through the clouds and enters the atmosphere.

EXT. CAR WASH - DAYTIME (FLASHBACK)

Title card: Fourteen years ago

STARMAN, aged 19 here, wears a blue and white uniform bearing a MAJOR CLEAN badge sewn on the shirt, hosing down a small car while a similarly aged DOOMER finishes wiping it down with a big soapy sponge.

Doomer largely keeps to himself, not facing Starman as the latter makes sure the car gets water at every angle. When he's done, he speaks.

STARMAN

Missed you at the auditions the  
other day. I keep saying you'd be  
great on the drums.

DOOMER

I dunno, man. Those Rhodes guys  
seem like a real pain in the ass.

STARMAN

That's not really their fault. They  
just need to meet more normal  
people.

Doomer snickers.

DOOMER

And starting a band is the way to  
do that?

STARMAN

Why not? Dunno about you, but I  
don't really wanna do this all the  
time, even if it is steady money.

The car turns on and drives away, and they put away the hose and squeeze out the sponge, stretching and cracking necks and knuckles.

STARMAN

So yeah, think about it. Even if we don't actually become a real band, it'll still be fun. I'll catch ya later.

Starman leaves him as he really think about it while readying the sponge for the next customer.

INT. PANDORA PALACE - THRONE ROOM

JAGUAR, dazed, finds himself regaining consciousness inside Pandora's throne room, a very large white room with gold details and a tall throne elevated by several stairs, LÉON presiding on it. His golden eyes chill the room.

LÉON

Welcome home, Son of the King's Shadow.

Jaguar tries to overcome the sensation of the bangle against his skin but nonetheless winces as it gets stronger.

LÉON

Doubtless your blood awakening and calling for home is a source of great pain for you.

As soon as he says this, Jaguar begins growling in pain.

LÉON

How about I offer you a deal?

He gets off his throne and descends the stairs deliberately, each footstep soft, silent. He snaps his fingers.

Jaguar's attention, still mostly dedicated to the boiling sensation, quickly diverts to LENI now being escorted in by KOKO, a woman in her 40s with short sandy hair and eyes with a burly gymnast's physique. She shoves Leni towards Léon.

LÉON

I've found the records of your life on Earth rather disappointing, but luckily for you, I am willing to pardon all of your sins and even reward you for your improvements. I know that you both harbour great pains tied to Elpis.

At the mention of Elpis, both Leni and Jaguar feel something striking their hearts.

LÉON

Not only that, but your blood is unique among Pandorans, irrespective of the fact that it's mostly human.

Jaguar, hissing away the boiling sensation now, regards the bangle.

LÉON

That heirloom belongs to The King's  
Shadow, passed down through  
generations making its way to you.  
And it's not cosmetic, but a key.

Jaguar no longer seems to be reacting to his abnormally high body heat; even the bangle's eyes aren't radiating red now, they're steadily turning back to green.

LÉON

Only one of your bloodline can use  
it to open The Vault. Take hold of  
your destiny.

Jaguar then regards Leni, sweating bullets as Léon grabs hold of her chin to inspect her face.

LÉON

And since you alone remain of your  
bloodline... I'm sure you will love  
nothing more than to change that,  
wouldn't you?

He turns it one way as if to inspect her ears.

LÉON

Just imagine. A galaxy united under  
your name. Stars birthed in your  
honour. Great power, beyond your  
wildest dreams. You can have it  
all, Son of the King's Shadow.

Leni tries to wrestle herself away from Léon's grasp, and fails. He instead turns her around so he's got her neck secured with the crook of his arm.

LÉON

You can inherit the entire universe  
if you choose. Would you not want  
your bride adorned with the finest  
stars? 'Tis the least she deserves.

LENI

Oscar, don't listen to him! Don't  
give in!

She tries again to wriggle free, but to no avail.

LÉON

The heirloom only brings you pain  
because you resist the truth. Do  
you not know that it's a sin to  
betray yourself?

The more Jaguar listens to Léon's words, the less he writhes in pain from the bangle, to Leni's abject horror.

LÉON

Do you believe it honourable?  
Presenting your entire being as a  
falsehood?

By now Jaguar isn't writhing or shivering at all. Léon grins.

LENI

No... Oscar...

LÉON

Very good. Will you aid Pandora,  
then, in her endeavours? To open  
The Vault and reclaim true Elpis?

With a final lingering look at Leni, Jaguar's shoulders relax, steam even literally rises from them and his head as his face turns stoic, like a stone statue of himself, and kneels. When he speaks, he sounds just like a jaguar.

JAGUAR

You have convinced me. I will aid  
you.

Leni looks on in horror as Léon laughs heartily. Leni then forces him to let go of her, and darts over to Jaguar, who doesn't look at her.

LENI

Oscar... Snap out of it! This isn't  
you!

When he remains as he is, she turns to face Léon.

LENI

What have you done to him?

Léon studies her face, and Leni does her best to keep her upper lip stiff, though her eyes betray her true fear.

LÉON

I've done him a favour, but perhaps  
it was a mistake on my part.

LENI

A favour?

LÉON

You know, you have the kind of face  
that launches a thousand ships.  
Pity I didn't take notice of you  
myself first.

Leni makes the most priceless face imaginable, the kind that goes "where the HELL did that come from?" Léon then motions

for Koko to take hold of her, which she does.

LENI

Ow! Let go of me!

LÉON

Take the bride to the spare chamber, Koko. Ensure she is well compensated for her efforts.

Koko nods and carts Leni off.

INT. STARMAN AND LENI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

XIMENA, poring over her laptop, notices a curious alert sounding on it and clicks it. Her eyebrows dark all the way up to the top of her head as she nudges ORPHEUS awake on the chair beside her.

ORPHEUS

What?

XIMENA

Look at this! It's... Them!

He languidly turns his attention to her laptop, clearly more interested in going back to sleep, not taking any of it in.

XIMENA

They're back... But how are we gonna tell them about Leni and Jaguar?

ORPHEUS

Maybe we won't tell them.

Ximena shoots him a glare that actually seems to wake him up a little.

XIMENA

What do you mean, "maybe we won't tell them"? They're gonna notice something's off, and they have a right to know.

ORPHEUS

There's some things man just isn't supposed to know.

Ximena clicks her tongue, shaking her head as she turns her attention back to her laptop, the frowns.

XIMENA

What the hell? I'm losing the signal.

She types something and then a live feed of the park shows on her screen, and she sees LOR SALVIATOR'S SPACESHIP rising and them zooming away.

XIMENA

Well that's anticlimactic, isn't it?

She turns to look at Orpheus, who is no longer there.

XIMENA

Hm. Kinda rude to just disappear like that.

Nevertheless, she goes right back to typing on her laptop until she notices his notebook lying unattended where he was seated. Eyes darting surreptitiously around for any and all surveillance, she opens it and reads just as quickly, frowning.

XIMENA

The hell is this?

She nonetheless reads more of the notebook, covering her gasping mouth with her hand before scowling like whatever she's reading insults her entire bloodline, her hair even evoking static electricity.

XIMENA

"Things man wasn't meant to know," he says! He thinks he can fool ME?

Nonetheless she keeps reading, almost like she wants to make herself even angrier.

From the window, moonlight pillars shine and PRINCESS ALMAS appears as a projection, her hands in a prayer position.

Ximena then looks up from the notebook and then finally put it down in a double take, scrambling for her tinfoil hat, fashioning it into a rather nice looking cloche.

XIMENA

Hey, you're that lady from my dream last night!

PRINCESS ALMAS

Yes, my dear, and what a lovely hat.

XIMENA

Oh, you know, us girls gotta have style.

PRINCESS ALMAS

I couldn't agree more. I wanted to tell you in person, I just gleaned the whereabouts of Elpis.

XIMENA

My girl! I already know it'll be loads better than whatever this guy  
(MORE)



XIMENA (cont'd)  
wrote. Tell me before he comes back  
and overhears.

Princess Almas motions for her to come closer, and Ximena giggles just like a schoolgirl as she does so, and Princess Almas whispers in her ear.

Ximena's face goes from excited and giggly to steadily shocked, then back to grinning ear-to-ear like she heard the best gossip humanly possible.

EXT. JOHNNY VALENTINE'S HOMESTYLE RESTAURANT - NIGHT  
(FLASHBACK)

Title card: Three years ago

Johnny Valentine's Homestyle Restaurant's exterior looks just like a red brick house turned into a restaurant.

XIMENA, aged 29, watches the door from behind some bushes with binoculars and readies her camera with zoom when the door opens and LENI, 29, and STARMAN, 30, exit.

She snaps several photos in quick succession but hears the rustling of another gaggle of bushes not far from the entrance; the OTHER STALKER, a woman of similar age dressed entirely in black, approaches them.

She talks to Starman while Leni tries to drag him away, and the stalker then turns her attention on Leni and grabs her by the arm and Starman tries to wrench her off. Leni screams, and Ximena looks down on her equipment bag beside her and seems to quietly curse it.

Just then, however, an equally big, burly figure in black, with a certain BANGLE with flashing red eyes, wrenches the stalker off as Starman and Leni run off. But just as Ximena is about to catch evidence of this hero, he's gone.

INT. PANDORA PALACE - THRONE ROOM

TIGRIS and PALANG march first into the throne room where LÉON is seated, and quickly closes his locket.

LÉON  
You're back so soon? Was it that  
resounding of a success?

Tigris doesn't speak, and they are soon joined by LOR SALVIATOR, and Léon masks his heart dropping to his feet with his kingly stoicism. Lor Salviator does a half bow.

LOR SALVIATOR  
It's an honour to meet you at last,  
Your Highness.

Léon scowls at the honourific for just a moment.

LÉON

Lor Salviator.

LOR SALVIATOR

I'm afraid you caught me at a rather bad time. I was truly hoping you would bear witness to Elpis's tour. But I see you wouldn't have come, since I caught your men eyeing one of my planets.

LÉON

And so you come to me personally to negotiate peaceful surrender? That's quite wise of you.

LOR SALVIATOR

I'm afraid that's not why, because I daresay coveting even my entire fortune would not bring you the fulfillment you seek. It would not change Pandora's distinction as a vestigial empire.

LÉON

I've heard tell of your insolence, Lor Salviator. I see it still holds true.

LOR SALVIATOR

I assure you, you and I are not much different, Your Highness. As such, I believe I understand you better than your closest aides.

Léon casts a brief glance at Tigris and Palang.

LÉON

And how do you figure that?

LOR SALVIATOR

You no doubt recall from your history lessons the great tragedy that befell Pandora, which is to say, when my ancestors plundered The Vault.

LÉON

Aye.

LOR SALVIATOR

My ancestors were blessed with good fortune, as such they named the first three of my inheritance the Moirais; Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos. From those three the foundation was laid to claim the Pleiades, hidden inside The Vault.

(MORE)

LOR SALVIATOR (cont'd)

For aeons they sieged, and it must have been done, for it was mandated from on high.

LÉON

Are you going to arrive at your answer or will you keep harping on about what we already know?

LOR SALVIATOR

At your age you naturally want to carve your place in the world, but since you are no ordinary man, the task is much greater.

Lor Salviator brings out a beautiful LOCKET of his own, encrusted with all manner of gems that glitter like a small galaxy unto its own, holding it in his hand.

LOR SALVIATOR

You are Prince Léon of Pandora, the Great Giver of Gifts. You of all people cannot insult your intended without at least the galaxy as a dowry. Until you have that and your bride secured, you cannot hope to call yourself King.

Those words sting Léon like several wasps, so much so that Tigris and Palang both leap towards Lor Salviator but he effortlessly stops both by grabbing them by the forehead, like they're naught but rowdy children.

LÉON

I've heard quite enough out of you. Tigris, you and Palang will escort him to The Chamber alongside The Son of The King's Shadow.

TIGRIS

Yes, Your Majesty!

They grab Lor Salviator by the arms and lead him away. When they're all gone, Léon once again opens his locket and gazes wistfully at it, then crushes it closed in his fist like those words still sting, because he knows them to be true.

Nonetheless, he stands committed to his words so he storms off his throne.

INT. PANDORA'S VAULT

Once again, surrounded by complete darkness where even the air is heavier than lead, is LENI, on her knees, her shoulders practically being crushed by loneliness. It's hard to tell if she's dreaming or not.

LENI

Even Oscar's leaving me behind.

She sniffs.

LENI

Am I really not enough?

She looks up, tentatively, searching for nonexistent stars. Her eyes glisten with tears that she hurriedly wipes away.

LENI

Am I just gonna be here until the end of time? Will I never see Tommy or anyone else ever again?

Now she can't stop the tears from falling, so much so that they form a puddle before her knees, and it brings her no real joy to see her reflection.

LENI

Look at me. I'm no beauty. Nobody special. Just a pawn.

Her reflection looks at her like those words sting, and Leni herself looks on in apology.

LENI

All I wanted was for everyone to succeed, and let me cheer them on. Hell... That's what I wanted for him all along.

She gasps softly at this accidental confession, hurriedly looking around as if to see if anyone else heard. She gasps when JAGUAR'S hand touches her shoulder.

INT. PANDORA PALACE - SPARE ROOM

This action snaps LENI back to reality, as she hurriedly rubs her eyes with her forearms before turning to face JAGUAR. In an instant she grabs him by the shirt and shakes him as best she can.

LENI

Oscar, how could you do that?

She stops and ducks her head, half in defeat and half in longing for unspoken comfort.

LENI

Maybe I shouldn't ask that. Maybe I know why you did it. It's because I hurt you, isn't it?

She draws a deep, shuddering breath, and doesn't react when Jaguar strokes the back of her head.

LENI

Did I really hurt you so badly,  
though, that you have to kneel  
before some alien king who might  
just destroy the universe?

JAGUAR

I did it for you.

Now she looks up at him, as do OZZY and PIROUZ from under the bed, though neither of the formers know they're there.

JAGUAR

It hit me that it's now or never.  
If I don't make you realise it now,  
I'll be an even bigger idiot than  
Starman is.

When Leni frowns, Jaguar tucks a lock of hair behind her ear.

JAGUAR

He was right, you should be adorned  
with the finest stars. But you  
don't need The Vault to do that.

Leni's eyes search his for clarity, but he remains firm.

JAGUAR

You just need to wake up.

Before she can respond, he leans in and presumably kisses her, but Ozzy and Pirouz clap hands over their eyes and stamp their feet and a bright light shines from where Leni is standing.

INT. PANDORA PALACE - VAULT CHAMBER

Pandora's Vault's etched flower of life pattern glints in ripples, and its internal locks click and grunt as they disengage. Nonetheless THE BAND, including ORPHEUS, find themselves teleported before it. Orpheus himself pats his body in search of his notebook but blanches when he realises it's not there.

ERIK RHODES

What the hell? This isn't my house.

IESU

Nor mine. I think this is a dream.

Starman then notices the familiar light from in front of The Vault's door, and he and the others gasp when they see it's LENI, but she looks like she's painted by Elisabeth Louise Vigée-Le Brun, her soft complexion like milk and her hair a long river of golden light, and infinite haloes radiating from behind her head, gently rousing them awake.

STARMAN

Leni? Is that you?

He darts over to her, touching her hands and face and finally enveloping her in a hug. While he's transfixed, the others notice Orpheus is there, though Doomer soon starts raptly watching Starman and Leni.

ERIK RHODES

Come to roll out the red carpet for us, Nicky?

ORPHEUS

This isn't supposed to happen. Oh, man, did I seriously...?

STARMAN

You have no idea how good it is to see you, Leni. Man, but you're so beautiful. But your hair... How long was I away?

Leni smiles softly at him, and he notices a few tears falling from her eyes though besides that she doesn't actually cry.

STARMAN

Hey, it's okay. I'm back now. Don't tell those guys, but I really do plan to stay. Outer space was hell without you.

He dries her tears with his fingers but they still keep coming.

STARMAN

Leni... You don't have to hold it together if you don't want to, I'm here now. I promise I'll never leave you like that again.

She then gently shakes her head, and Starman realises that she's not touching him in return.

IESU

Guys... I don't think we should be watching this.

DOOMER

Speak for yourself, this is even better than Florida Man's Greatest Hits.

STARMAN

Leni... Talk to me. Say anything. Please.

JAGUAR then steps beside her, looking like the dark groom to her starlight bride. Starman looks from one to the other.

STARMAN

Hey... Why does Jaguar look like..?

When Leni speaks, her voice brings to mind crystal.

LENI

Tommy.

He looks at her again.

LENI

I love you.

STARMAN

I love you, too.

LENI

But it's time to say goodbye.

STARMAN

Goodbye? I just got here.

LENI

I can't keep you anchored anymore.  
You must become a galactic  
superstar, as you were always meant  
to be.

STARMAN

As I was always meant to be?

In the background The Vault door opens, revealing a  
kaleidoscopic interior like it's having an identity crisis.

IESU

Guys? I got a bad feeling about  
this.

DOOMER

You're telling me, I'm getting déjà  
vu.

ORPHEUS

Goddammit! I really did lose the  
plot!

ERIK RHODES

You WHAT?

Leni herself looks more and more like Elpis, her infinite  
halos eclipsing the opening of the door and making the band  
minus Jaguar levitate. Tears still flow from her eyes though  
she still smiles gently.

LENI

Good luck, Tommy. Good luck,  
everyone.

Finally she opens her arms wide and one by one the band minus Jaguar transmogrify into beams of light and are drawn into Pandora's Vault, its interior like a black hole.

When the last one is accepted inside, it switches again to a kaleidoscope pattern and Leni looks like her usual self, fainting into Jaguar's arms.

She smiles faintly, her tears very real, and now she is indeed crying but out of relief.

LENI

I did it, Oscar. I told him.

She then falls asleep in his arms.

TIGRIS and PALANG come with LOR SALVIATOR in tow, LÉON leading the way. He comes to an abrupt halt seeing the state of Pandora's Vault.

LOR SALVIATOR

Sir Jaguar? Miss Leni?

OZZY and PIROUZ covertly try to take Leni from Jaguar, but cower behind him when Léon appears to spot them.

LÉON

Son of The King's Shadow. What is the meaning of this?

The corner of Jaguar's mouth tugs.

JAGUAR

The Vault has accepted Elpis.

Both Léon and Lor Salviator frown, even share a brief look.

TIGRIS

Explain yourself!

JAGUAR

It's as I said. Elpis was found, then summoned, and finally accepted.

While Léon puzzles over the explanation, Lor Salviator calculates through it, especially seeing Leni in Jaguar's arms. It clicks for him, and he cracks a smile and effortlessly pulls his arms free of Tigris and Palang and claps.

LOR SALVIATOR

Very well played, Sir Jaguar. You hold Elpis herself in your arms.

LÉON

Elpis herself..?

Jaguar smirks.



JAGUAR

I really should thank you for that  
favour of yours, but now you got  
another problem.

He gestures to Pandora's Vault, its door open, revealing that similar to a matryoshka doll a smaller, silver Vault with a glinting merkabah pattern sits inside.

MONTAGE

INT. PANDORA'S VAULT

Inside The Second Vault is the familiar darkness, except rather than Leni is DOOMER, his light only just enough that he's visible. He rises awake, taking in his surroundings.

DOOMER

"Hello, Darkness, my old friend..."

He realises he's wearing the same armour that he saw on Zygoma and denied wanting to try, complete with a ceremonial sword. Well above him, no bigger than a dead pixel, is the moon.

EXT. WASTELAND - DAYTIME

In another instance, ERIK RHODES stirs awake, wincing. He is better lit, because he's in what appears to be a barren wasteland that was once an endless field of roses.

Now they're all dead and black, and he stops short of wiping his eyes when he sees that his wrists are adorned with thorns like handcuffs, a matching crown on his head. For good measure he also has them on his ankles.

The sight of the dead petals blowing in the wind brings tears to his eyes.

INT. SPACE WHALE

In yet another, IESU is awakened by the low yet booming moan of the space whale. He's surrounded by a melancholy blue glow that briefly gradients into purple, and he notices that while the ceiling is semicircular, it's also held together by a spine and rib bones.

Another low moan reveals that the sides of the whale become translucent, and he can see all the stars and passing planets.

EXT. DESERT - DAYTIME

Finally, there's a desert with stagnant air and eternal silence except for the sizzle of the unseen sun on the sand. The dunes stretch for miles. STARMAN hears before he sees ORPHEUS kicking the sand.

STARMAN  
Nicky. I just had this dream that  
Leni broke up with me.

ORPHEUS  
That wasn't a dream.

STARMAN  
Huh?

ORPHEUS  
That was real.

STARMAN  
What?

ORPHEUS  
I lost the plot.

STARMAN  
The hell are you talking about?

ORPHEUS  
What the hell kind of ending is  
this? Mine was way better in every  
metric.

STARMAN  
Nicky! Shut up and answer the  
question.

Orpheus shoots him a look over that contradictory sentence,  
but nonetheless sighs.

ORPHEUS  
I don't know.

STARMAN  
The hell do you mean, you don't  
know?

ORPHEUS  
I don't know means I don't know!

They both pant, Starman tapping one ear with the flat of his  
hand to get sand out of the other.

STARMAN  
So what did you mean that Leni  
breaking up with me wasn't a dream?

Orpheus groans and walks on ahead, his steps heavy in the  
sand.

STARMAN  
Oi! Nicky!

He tries to run after him, the sand similarly slowing him  
down.

POST  
CREDITS

INT. PANDORA'S VAULT

The FIVE SHADOWY FIGURES stand in a line. None of their faces are visible, their hoods cover them completely.

One of them offers the audience flowers. Another blows them kisses. Yet another is about to remove his hood but this time rather than being interrupted, half of a mask, similar to that of The Phantom of the Opera, is seen.

Still another moves his hands like he's working a crystal ball, showing that all of this happened inside it. The final one then reaches into his pocket and blows sand towards the audience and as it spreads into the darkness, with his finger he writes the fateful words.

Title card: To be continued