

Finding Elpis 2: Rondo of Pandora

by

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INT. PANDORA PALACE, VAULT CHAMBER

SANDMAN and MORPHEUS, played respectively by Starman and Orpheus, move their hands and construct the scene using the former's sand inside the latter's crystal ball. Both of their faces are concealed by capirotes, their hands prominently bare.

PANDORA'S VAULT, holding a smaller SECOND VAULT inside it with the former's door open and the latter's still shut, stands in the centre of the room, humming.

JAGUAR, 34, holds an unconscious LENI, 32, just like The Virgin Mary holds Jesus in Michelangelo's Pietà, seated on Léon's throne. He glances at the vaults, narrowing his eyes.

Gently Leni stirs awake and rubs her eye.

LENI

Oscar? What happened?

Jaguar's face darkens like he's shielding the truth in his eyes from her.

JAGUAR

You don't remember?

Leni shakes her head, but Jaguar still doesn't meet her eyes. She then notices that she's wearing a resplendent wedding dress, skirt and train so long that it covers a long stairway to the throne. She then notices that Jaguar is wearing a tuxedo.

LENI

Our wedding, shoot! How could I forget about that?

JAGUAR

Well, Len for what it's worth, you've lost all right to get mad at me for forgetting our anniversary.

Leni grins sheepishly.

LENI

Sorry...

When Jaguar rises, he effortlessly has her in a bridal carry as he descends the stairs, which go well past the floor; in fact at a point it straight up vanishes and she sees that they're descending into Hell.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, SPARE ROOM 2 - NIGHT

LENI, 33, bolts upright, awake in a cold sweat. She takes in the spare room with its space and pool in the corner acting as a bathtub, the window bolted closed. She checks her hands for burns and other evidences of harm, and sighs.

She flops back onto the bed, turning to her left but not falling asleep. She looks over her ring finger at an invisible ring, softly clothed in meagre light like the rest of the room.

She shuts her eyes and hugs her blanket hard enough to crush its ribs if it had any. Finally, she gets up out of the bed and stands by the window, looking out.

LENI

Come on out, I know you're here again.

With a sigh, CARA, a young woman in her 20s with an ombré bob and two long black marks on her forehead similar to a caracal's and a stocky build like a wrestler's, steps out from an unseen corner of the room.

CARA

I've been tasked with monitoring you at all times, bride.

LENI

I told you, Cara, it's Leni, not "bride."

CARA

It's time you got used to our ways.

LENI

(to herself)

I dunno if I ever will, even if it has been a while now.

Nonetheless she turns around.

LENI

In any case, I can't sleep if you're here watching me all night. Please, leave me alone.

Cara sighs again and reaches out, seemingly to Leni but it's really to pull OZZY, looking 17 and bulkier but still with his silver hair and eyes, out from where the audience would be.

OZZY

Guess I'm getting too big for that to work.

Ozzy grins sheepishly as Cara leaves, dragging him out with her. When they leave Leni once again looks at her left ring finger in the soft moonlight, as if willing the trick of the light to make the ring appear on her finger.

LENI

Some bride.

She returns to her bed.

Title card: Finding Elpis 2: Rondo of Pandora

INT. PANDORA PALACE, THRONE ROOM

LÉON, slouched on his throne, gazes into his locket with a forlorn expression. TIGRIS enters the room and he closes it, tucking it out of sight. Both look the same as before.

TIGRIS

Your Majesty. At your command,
Palang and I shall begin our task.

LÉON

Does it all ever strike you as
hollow, Tigris?

TIGRIS

Your Majesty?

LÉON

Somehow without him to go against
me himself, I can't say I'm
altogether keen on it.

TIGRIS

Your Majesty, surely you jest.
Victory is in your grasp at last!
Furthermore, he insulted your
honour, suggesting that all you
want is a mere dowry.

LÉON

Hmm. Perhaps you are right and I am
naïve.

TIGRIS

Pray pardon, Your Majesty, I would
never dare call you "naïve." Your
crown naturally weighs heavily on
your head. But rest assured, you
will not risk your honour in
action.

Léon once again looks at his locket though it's not open,
silently asking it if Tigris is right.

EXT. ANTHUS - DAYTIME

Title card: Anthus

Anthus is a small planette, perhaps 1/4th the size of our
moon. It has lush greenery with shielded flowers, its sky a
pale mauve.

As the clouds descend they morph into sheep, complete with
baas.

CALIX, a young man in his early 30s with a deep tan and
wearing shepherd's clothes, wipes sweat off his brow.

He's played by Iesu, but with a beard and shorter hair and holds a shepherd's crook taller than him in one hand, and behind him is an ever-growing flock of cloud-sheep.

He guides them towards a big pond and his confused face is visible when he sees what looks like a brightly coloured fabric rock complete with long flowing black hair, and then an arm is visible.

It is SHAMS NURELAYNE, a young woman in her 30s with an average not-yet-muscular build. She notices the sheep and then Calix, and yelps.

CALIX

No, I won't hurt you. But what are you doing in my home?

SHAMS NURELAYNE

I'm sorry, I've been travelling for a long time, and your planette looked so inviting. I didn't think anyone would be here, and I was so thirsty.

CALIX

You are of course welcome to have some water, but where did you come from?

Shams Nurelayne hesitates, and Calix seems to understand.

CALIX

All right, you don't have to tell me. But as long as you plan to stay here, you will have to help.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Of course, I will. Thank you so much. My name is Shams Nu--No, Shams. Please call me Shams.

CALIX

Welcome, Shams. I'm Calix. You have travelled long, it seems. Please rest a while and then I will require your services.

He turns and herds the sheep away from the pond, and Shams Nurelayne rises and pats down her dress and her cheeks.

EXT. TARTARUS - NIGHT

A lone moonbeam cuts through the vantablack darkness, no different from a white thread on black. Just like the stairway in the opening scene, it gradually vanishes, frays, as it gets further and further away, not quite reaching a seated DOOMER, 34, still wearing the white suit of armour.

He uses his sword to get up the way an old man would a cane. Not a single thing about him or his gear illuminate the area around him. No sound betrays his location. Not even he himself dares to speak, but nonetheless he soldiers on.

He turns for a moment as if hearing something, and then pauses as if wondering if it was his imagination after all. Then, he definitely hears a low, sullen laugh, coming from EREBUS, played by Doomer, directly behind him, wearing a plague doctor mask under cult-like robes complete with cowl.

Rather than being spooked, Doomer tilts his head, his face flat and expressionless like this is the most cliché thing he's ever seen.

DOOMER

Am I in a horror movie all of a sudden?

He pauses, blinking as he touches his forehead.

DOOMER

Man... Got some serious déjà vu. Do I know you from somewhere?

EREBUS

They call me Erebus.

DOOMER

Erebus, huh. Well, I'd love to stay and chat, but I'm in a bit of a hurry.

EREBUS

Still you hold onto the illusion of time. That which gives you hope. Elpis...

He draws a deep, shuddering breath, the kind that chills you to the bone, and indeed Doomer feels it, too.

DOOMER

You've heard of our band, then.

EREBUS

The last thing to leave The Vault... And you bear her name...

DOOMER

I take it back, I don't know you.

He turns to leave, but Erebus appears right before him as if having teleported.

EREBUS

But I know you. You still have what she took away.

He grips his robe with both hands as if getting ready to rip it open like you'd see in a corny romance, and Doomer himself grimaces.

DOOMER

Dude! No one wants to see that!

But Erebus pays him no mind and exposes that his body under the cloak just looks as black as the rest of his surroundings except for a blue spot where his heart would be.

EREBUS

That's why you're here now. Elpis sent you herself.

DOOMER

Look, man, I really can't stay. I gotta go back to her.

EREBUS

So you would also leave me.

Erebus then takes off his mask, and sure enough, Doomer's own less-handsome face looks back at him.

EREBUS

Yes, you've often denied me, all while wearing my face. Your hypocrisy runs deeper than The Rivers of Hell.

Once again Doomer tries to move past Erebus, only to get denied.

EREBUS

And yet you've got the mark of the light on you. You've seen Heaven. You finally have someone else to live for, don't you?

DOOMER

And I'll be damned if you're gonna stop me.

Now he bulldozes past Erebus who touches the blue spot on his chest. Doomer's armour gains more light and his steps illuminate jagged coals and the odd fossil. He pauses to look at the moon pixel and covers his own heart with his fist.

DOOMER

I will meet you. There's no way in hell I won't.

Erebus looks on as Doomer continues his indeterminate path.

INT. SPACE WHALE

The SPACE WHALE moans, the thinning walls of its body showing the part of space where it currently is when it does so.

IESU, 33, looks through it, and for a moment THE EARTH is visible.

He eyes the maw of the whale, hesitant to run out that way. The whale moans again, and now its entire body is transparent, and it's so loud that Iesu appears to float in outer space in addition to that.

He shuts his eyes and prays, and to his surprise the whale seems to swim downwards. He holds onto what he can of one of its ribs and notices the whale's maw opening and inhaling bits of an asteroid. One piece is so big it gets clogged in its gullet, causing it to try to cough it out.

Its body flails and Iesu first rams it with his shoulders, then dropkicks it, and finally he uses his back. When there's just a little bit of resistance still left, he pushes it with both hands.

Naturally, all that effort results in him falling out of the space whale alongside the asteroid.

EXT. ANTHUS - DAYTIME

CALIX is receiving his cloud sheep from the sky, and their exodus reveals what looks like a pink sun to shine upon the land, and its growing reach dots the greenery with flowers of all colours.

SHAMS NURELAYNE herself is herding the cloud lambs to the field and looks lingeringly at Calix. She is wearing clothes similar to Calix's, which is to say they're really his old clothes, complete with her hair contained in a burlap scarf acting like a loose turban.

She stops spacing out when she notices the lambs frolicking away from her and runs after them.

Meanwhile Calix now leads them towards the flock, his expression still.

Shams Nurelayne sighs as the cloud sheep are reunited and Calix presents her with a pair of shears. She groans but then forces a thankful smile as she accepts the shears.

CALIX

You know how to shear a sheep?

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Of course, of course!

CALIX

Then I'll leave you to it.

He excuses himself and Shams Nurelayne waits a few seconds before sighing. She kneels before a cloud sheep and opens the shears but doesn't manage to make a cut. She tries to hold a sheep down but her hand goes straight through the cloud-wool which makes her gasp.

Calix's chuckle can be heard.

CALIX

Come, watch.

He leads them to the barn, kneels, muzzling a sheep and comforting it whilst a growing coat of cloud-wool descends as the sounds of shearing continues.

Shams Nurelayne tries again after the first sheep is sheared and is pleasantly surprised when she makes her first successful shear.

CALIX

You have to calm them, or else their wool softens.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

They're such fascinating creatures.

CALIX

I owe them everything. Without them Anthus would be a barren wasteland. At night they water the very grass they end up eating, and when they die they give me their flesh.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

And the wool?

CALIX

The wool is what makes our clothes.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Have you ever thought about selling it? It's fantastically soft.

CALIX

What use have I for foreign riches? It's well enough for me to live out my life here, in this perfect circle.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

You're truly content living on this tiny planette with no visitors save I?

CALIX

It is the only life I've ever known, and I fully embrace it.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

I've never met someone who's so content with what he has. It's truly marvellous.

CALIX

I can tell you hail from a richer, larger planet. You constantly hunger for more, for you are not content with what's before you. Like right now, you are completely ignoring your task by focusing on me.

Shams Nurelayne panics and resumes shearing the sheep, this time her cuts are less uniform and she grows more frustrated as she fails to shear any more.

CALIX

You've done well enough. I shall resume.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

No, please. I want to learn your ways.

CALIX

You have done enough. I can tell it's hard work for you.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

I don't want you to think me useless.

CALIX

I think no such thing.

He continues shearing the sheep, not paying her any more mind. Shams Nurelayne, defeated, stands up and leaves the barn. Once outside she groans and finally weeps, wincing as her reddened hands dry her eyes.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Curse my blessed life...

She takes a deep breath and goes to the house, which itself is really just a white shack surrounded by a picket fence. She stands outside of it and sighs again.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

To him this is his castle... This tiny pebble his empire... His sheep, his loyal subjects--no, more than that. He can see so much that I cannot... How can he possess such an eye?

At that moment she looks up and sees the Pandoran warship in the far distance, only barely visible for us. She narrows

her eyes and then looks away.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, VAULT CHAMBER

JAGUAR, 34 and looking much the same as before, sits before PANDORA'S VAULT with ILEXI, a 34-year-old voluptuous female Pandoran with big black hair and blue eyes reminiscent of a lynx. Before them are several open tomes in Pandoran, completely unintelligible to us.

Jaguar groans.

JAGUAR

No offence, but putting mood into account when writing is a real pain in the ass when trying to learn the language.

Ilexi rolls her eyes and nonetheless continues writing in her notepad. Jaguar pinches the bridge of his nose as he catches a glimpse of The Vault, in particular the SECOND VAULT inside it like a matryoshka doll, glinting silver, its merkabah etchings briefly visible.

ILEXI

Look at this.

Jaguar gingerly gets as close as he can without touching her, though she hides a gentle furrow of her brows at the gentlemanly action behind a cough.

ILEXI

It says here that The Vault can hold an infinite amount of itself inside. And each one can contain a door to another universe...

JAGUAR

Well, that's just great. Just what you'd expect from the birthplace of the entire goddamn universe. Does the record say anything about going in there yourself?

ILEXI

No one has before. It says on this other page that if The Vault accepts something, then it cannot be retrieved by outside means.

Jaguar blanches. Ilexi glances at him from the side.

JAGUAR

Are you saying, then, that they're never gonna get out?

Ilexi's eyes then dart to the top of Pandora's Vault.

ILEXI

I told you to study if you
accompany us, Ozzy.

OZZY, looking about 16 now with a noticeably bulkier build,
front flips onto the floor from the top of Pandora's Vault,
chuckling.

OZZY

I was studying, though, Ilexi.
Hands-on learning.

ILEXI

And what did you find?

OZZY

Nothing yet. But I bet the two of
us could open it if we tried.

JAGUAR

Thanks, but I don't need your
disappearance on my conscience,
too. It's bad enough the guys are
in there.

OZZY

Yeah, and Lor Salviator got thrown
into jail, too. Such a drag, I
can't even get into that cell.

ILEXI

I'll pretend I didn't hear that,
Ozzy. Koko Khanoum only let you in
here because I'm helping The Son of
The King's Shadow.

Jaguar then gets up.

JAGUAR

I'd better check in on Leni. See if
she's realised it yet.

OZZY

Can I come?

Jaguar leaves, and Ozzy groans. Ilexi then grabs him by the
back of the collar and holds him down to force him to read
the book before them.

EXT. ANTHUS - EVENING

As the cloud sheep float into the sky, Calix plays "Der
Einsamer Hirte" by James Last on a panflute.

He abruptly stops when the clouds darken and theres a brief
flash of lightning, and so he gets up and makes his way to
his hut as thunder rolls.

INT. CALIX'S HUT

The faint sounds of "Der Einsamer Hirte" can be heard outside as SHAMS NURELAYBE pauses pouring cheese curds into a cheesecloth. When the song ends, she hears footsteps and the gentle rustling of the wind.

CALIX enters, and by now rain is falling outside, hard and heavy. He gets to work at the butter churn.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

They must be upset about something.

CALIX

Indeed, there is a deep silence when not even crickets chirp. Add to that the natural silence of winter, when the elders die...

SHAMS NURELAYNE

How sad.

CALIX

It is only the circle of life, this time tinged with coincidence. The affairs of other planets do not concern me so long as I can continue working in peace.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

You don't worry about them inadvertently getting caught in another planet's conflict?

Calix pauses to look at her. Shams Nurelayne looks away and puts the now drained curds into a wooden wheel.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Pardon me, I forget myself once again.

CALIX

Your concern is admirable.

Shams Nurelayne hides her face, now that the cheese wheel's lid is shut.

CALIX

It is clear that while your larger, richer planet has imbued you with a permanent sense of dissatisfaction, it has also blessed you with a potential for boundless compassion.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

You make it sound impossible to understand.

CALIX

On the contrary. It fascinates me.

Shams Nurelayne's smile can be seen though her eyes can't. Calix, meanwhile, pours a glass of milk and then offers it to her.

CALIX

You've earned it.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Thank you.

She accepts it and takes a sip. Calix then looks out the window as the rain gets worse.

CALIX

I suspect before long this peace
will come to an end. Even now I can
hear the deep silence steadily
approaching.

Shams Nurelayne then pauses, a look of guilt flashing across her face. She puts the glass down.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Calix... I have to tell you
something.

CALIX

Tell me in the morning. You are
tired and I will have to keep watch
lest there be cause for concern.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Oh... Yes, of course.

Very reluctantly she leaves him, all the while Calix stands where he is, and another flash of lightning is seen followed by a particularly angry roll of thunder.

CALIX

Yes... It is indeed coming to an
end...

Shams Nurelayne is then shown to be listening from behind out of sight, and she holds a fist over her heart.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, SPARE ROOM 1 - DAYTIME

LENI groans awake as sunlight caresses her face. Her long golden hair is tied into a braid. She then notices JAGUAR sitting on the edge of the bed, back to her.

JAGUAR

Morning.

LENI

Good morning. How long was I out?

JAGUAR

A day, give or take.

Leni yawns, then shakes her head as if to shake off the lingering drowsiness. Jaguar then turns to face her.

LENI

All I wanna do is sleep lately,
dunno what's come over me. Not only
that...

She blushes, pulling the blanket up to her shoulders.

JAGUAR

Len, we gotta talk.

She sits up, keeping the blanket on her body.

JAGUAR

About Pandora's Vault... And the
guys.

Leni looks down.

JAGUAR

Ilexi says this pretty much has
never happened before and the
records only have theoreticals.

LENI

So they're away... Right after we
see them again.

She gently scoffs.

LENI

This is my fault, isn't it?

Jaguar regards his King's Shadow Bangle, its eyes remaining green and not hurting him.

JAGUAR

It's mine more than it's yours. All
I wanted to do was show you the
truth. I just didn't think the
truth was so much bigger.

Leni blushes, pulling the blanket up even more.

JAGUAR

I don't expect you to forgive me.

Now Leni shakes her head.

LENI

I will, though. I need you, Oscar.
More than I've ever needed anyone
else.

Jaguar gives the faintest hint of a smile, so much so you'd miss it if you blinked.

LENI

To tell you the truth, I don't really recognise myself anymore.

JAGUAR

How so?

LENI

I can't really explain it. You know how sometimes you forget what your name is? It's like that, only it's scratching the surface.

JAGUAR

First time you're telling me about an existential crisis.

LENI

Until now, I always thought of myself as the band's cheerleader. It was enough for me to just be that. But being here, with you, as your "bride"...

A blush fans across her face, and Jaguar catches it, too.

JAGUAR

You don't have to take them seriously, you know.

LENI

I know... But I'd be lying if I said it doesn't make me wonder about the past. And if he and I ever would've--

Her blush intensifies and she shakes her head.

LENI

Sorry, I know that's selfish.

Jaguar scoffs, reaching over to rustle her hair.

JAGUAR

That makes two of us.

Leni still blushes but nonetheless smiles.

INT. STARMAN AND LENI'S APARTMENT

XIMENA, 33, groggy, sits before her laptop, her movements heavy and slow.

XIMENA

Dammit... where is everyone? Am I just gonna have to wait here for them indefinitely?

She pauses to think about that, and covers her mouth.

XIMENA

Oh God... I don't know if I wanna do that.

Just then, she hears NYX CYTHERA'S space bike pulling up just in front of the balcony, spooking Ximena so much that she flails her limbs as she falls. She looks up, remaining on the floor as the space bike parks in front of the building and Nyx Cythera teleports inside, spooking her again.

NYX CYTHERA

You must pardon me, I've been watching you with great interest, Miss Ximena. You are no doubt quite close to my husband's favourite band. This is perfect, you will help me.

XIMENA

I will?

NYX CYTHERA

I'm sorry to say your planet's defences are laughably inert for what I am planning. Right now as we speak Pandora is readying their attack on Elpis, seeing as my husband is in their possession. This is where you and I come in. I'm afraid I'm not one to drive and shoot at the same time.

XIMENA

Wait, what?

NYX CYTHERA

I know you are adept with all the video games you play as well as all the time you spend at the shooting range. Now come, we haven't a moment to waste. I'm sure you want to see your friends again.

XIMENA is lost for words and can only nod as NYX CYTHERA teleports them out of the apartment and we see a shot of the space bike taking to the air.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

The Pandoran warship advances, the faint sound of a warhorn being blasted. It passes several planets, leaving most of

them alone. Rockets fire from the sides like cannons.

EXT. OUTER SPACE - SERIES OF SHOTS

A) A projectile hits Parva Seibel dead on, some of the debris hitting Yueyue.

B) Zygoma is similarly destroyed.

C) A series of blasts obliterates Rigil Antarea.

D) The warship finally reaches Elpis.

INT. PANDORAN WARSHIP

TIGRIS readies a cannon, closing one eye and the one he has open has a noticeable glint as he peeps into the scope, the reticle even appearing like a tiger's eye. He pulls the trigger with his whole hand.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

NYX CYTHERA drives her space bike, XIMENA in the side car, knees buckled as she holds a gun almost as big as she is.

NYX CYTHERA

Get ready, Miss Ximena!

Ximena nods, slinging the gun over her shoulder and doing her best to steady her hand as she peers into the reticle and gasps.

NYX CYTHERA

Now!

Ximena squeezes the trigger and the gun concentrates four smaller laser beams into one big one through a prism and it zooms forward like a ballistic missile.

INT. PANDORAN WARSHIP

TIGRIS aims his reticle on Elpis and is about to hit it dead on when the warship instead experiences an equally big hit, sending him and PALANG flying within it. Debris floats outside of the windows, some of it hitting the windshield.

Palang rushes over to help Tigris get up and the warship creaks apart from the impact blast, and soon NYX CYTHERA and XIMENA charge inside on the space bike, the former standing on it, cape flapping and jewelled sabre pointed at Tigris's neck.

Ximena is launched off of the bike straight onto Palang, and is too dizzy to get off of him. He's nonetheless gentle with her.

PALANG

(in sign language)

Are you hurt?

Ximena is then yanked up by Nyx Cythera who holds her close, still pointing her sabre at Tigris and Palang, and it's unclear who Ximena finds more threatening at that moment.

NYX CYTHERA

Take us to your leader.

Tigris and Palang both gulp.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, THRONE ROOM

The doors open with TIGRIS and PALANG both being marched in ahead of NYX CYTHERA and XIMENA, both respectively holding them by what look like chained collars and cuffs. LÉON, seated on his throne, rises to his feet.

LÉON

What is the meaning of this?

NYX CYTHERA

Good prince, your men are exemplary in battle, but I'm afraid even they couldn't hold a candle to a mere human woman.

Ximena gives her best possible poker face as Léon's eyes flash in her direction.

NYX CYTHERA

You will release my husband in exchange for your men. Otherwise, we will be forced to vaporise them.

Even Tigris and Palang freeze at the mention of being vaporised, their eyes pleading with Léon, who then briefly hands his head.

LÉON

Very well. I will call a ceasefire. Let them go.

With a smile, Nyx Cythera presses a button and release Tigris and Palang from the binds.

LÉON

Release Lor Salviator, Tigris.

Tigris bows and hurriedly escapes the scene alongside Palang.

EXT. WASTELAND - EVENING

ERIK RHODES, 34, wearing a dead crown and matching bracelets of thorns, sits alone in a field awash with dead rose petals. He is the very picture of defeat, not a hint of colour about or around him.

A close-up shot of his face reveals caked on tears of blood. His beautiful clothes sullied by dirt and weighed down by

shame.

He regards his hands, still unscathed but nonetheless shackled by the thorns.

He mimes tuning a violin and donning his bow as if to see if he can still do it with the bracelets

A vision in pristine white, complete with angelic choir, approaches and arrests him.

EURYDICE, who looks just like him if he were female, with the same beautiful blue eyes and long flowing black hair, standing on a seashell-shaped boat just like in The Birth of Venus but clothed in white.

She reaches out for his face and quickly envelops him in a hug.

EURYDICE

My darling, I've found you at last.

Erik Rhodes is too stunned to speak, let alone deliver one of his usual lines. When Eurydice pulls back, she touches every angle of his face like she would a lost lover.

ERIK RHODES

Wait, the thorns!

EURYDICE

My love, thorns are nothing to snake bites.

ERIK RHODES

But your fingers!

EURYDICE

Perish the thought.

She reaches for his crown of thorns, betraying no sign of pain even though she has to use both of her palms to grab it. He winces as she does so, carefully jimmying it off so as to not rustle his hair or graze his forehead.

Before he can protest she begins unravelling the bracelet on his right hand, holding it with her left. He sees that despite having touched thorns, they are unscathed. His heart races as she gets to the last inches and moves onto the other bracelet.

ERIK RHODES

Please, let me do it.

EURYDICE

No, your hands must be preserved, my darling, for your art.

ERIK RHODES

Even so... You shouldn't do this for me.

EURYDICE

Why not? Isn't a wife supposed to care for her husband?

ERIK RHODES

Wait a second... My what?

EURYDICE

Oh, my dear, you still have such a gift with humour. Our love story is the best ever told. So much so the stars themselves cross us in envy.

She finishes taking off the other bracelet and Erik Rhodes gingerly rubs each wrist.

ERIK RHODES

Hey, thanks, uh...

He then notices her eyeing his clothes and blushes for an entirely different reason.

ERIK RHODES

Sorry, I'm usually put together better than this.

EURYDICE

Oh, but seeing you in such rags...

For a moment he's stung by the mention of rags, then notices her expression, once again blushing for yet another entirely different different reason.

EURYDICE

It ignites fires in me that put Hades to shame.

Erik Rhodes gulps, clearly torn between taking off his filthy clothes and keeping them on to preserve modesty. He turns away from her.

EURYDICE

Oh, my love, there's no reason to hide yourself from me.

ERIK RHODES

It's not that. I'm... Dirty.

EURYDICE

Even roses are born from dirt. Come now, look at me.

He hesitates, not at all different from how someone would act when about to get intimate with their crush. He then chuckles, turning her way but unable to meet her eyes.

EURYDICE

Look at me, Orpheus.

ERIK RHODES

Orpheus?

Eurydice pauses, and Erik Rhodes gulps, like he knows all too well how much of a meltdown he's in for for forgetting such a thing.

Eurydice laughs heartily at his reaction, and the more he thinks on it, the more he relaxes like everything is simply clicking too well.

ERIK RHODES

Then you're Eurydice?

She smiles as she tucks his hair behind his ears, inching closer to him. He relaxes more as he speaks.

ERIK RHODES

I thought you looked familiar.

The gap between them closes and their silhouettes become one in the moonlight.

EXT. TARTARUS - CONTINUOUS

DOOMER keeps ascending the ladder of moon jellyfish, and the moon grows bigger and bigger the closer he gets. EREBUS glides along, cowl completely obscuring his face the brighter the surroundings get.

As he gets closer and closer to the moon, Doomer's visage looks more and more like a classic hero, even like Gigachad. When he's gotten close enough for the moon's features to become clearly visible, he's pulled back by Erebus.

DOOMER

Hey, let go!

EREBUS

You can't go. You'll die.

DOOMER

Speak for yourself. I've never felt more alive. I can't miss this.

He wrenches himself free and continues advancing, even though the moon jellyfish are slower to act as his platforms. Doomer reaches out and eyes the lack of moon jellyfish at his feet, and gulps.

DOOMER

Of course.

He takes seven steps back, because that's how many moon jellyfish are there. He readies himself and then charges forward, triumphantly leaping off of the forwardmost moon

jellyfish, his cape flapping in the air as he does.

He extends his hand out towards the moon as if to grab it closer to him, and of course it's too far away, and with a sinking feeling he notices that his leap of faith didn't pay off, and endless darkness awaits him below.

However, just as gravity's about to win, PRINCESS ALMAS'S HAND grabs his and pulls him up. He looks up to search for her face but nonetheless finds himself flying towards the moon after all.

Once he lands, he finds that it's made entirely out of diamond, as far as the eye can see. Erebus floats behind him. All the while the diamond reflects thousands of them as they pass.

Erebus flinches at each of his reflections, further sheltering himself in his cloak and almost imploding himself out of view. Doomer then sees Earth coming up on the horizon and he stops.

DOOMER

So many nightmares on that
godforsaken planet... But it's
home. For both of us.

He looks to Erebus when he says that last sentence.

DOOMER

You know what we gotta do next. We
can't run away forever. We gotta
take responsibility.

He extends his hand to Erebus, who looks at it like he's offended at the notion.

DOOMER

Come on. Let's go back home.
They're waiting for us, all of
them.

He keeps his hand extended.

EXT. DESERT - DAYTIME

The desert air waves eccentrically and buzzes like a bundle of cicadas. STARMAN and ORPHEUS, both 34, find themselves on a MAGIC PERSIAN CARPET as they wake up.

Wind blows their hair back, and Starman looks down and gasps as the sand stretches as far as the eye can see, like it's an entire ocean with no sign of life. Orpheus, meanwhile, sits in a ball, refusing to look anywhere as he shivers.

STARMAN

The hell're you doing?

ORPHEUS

Shh! If you're quiet, it'll pass faster.

Starman sighs and takes in the clear skyline. Orpheus, meanwhile, pants heavily and quickly, his face whiter than milk.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

They found the desert endless, a veritable planet full of nothing but sand. The longer they carried on, so did the dream.

SANDMAN (V.O.)

Would you like to keep dreaming? I can help you sleep. I know all too well how tired you are.

STARMAN

Hey, do you hear that?

SANDMAN (V.O.)

Come now. You know my sand won't hurt you. I'm simply granting your wish to remain asleep.

Orpheus meanwhile keeps cradling himself on the carpet, and Starman notices the different direction of the wind and an approaching CLOUD OF SAND.

STARMAN

Don't look now, but we might be in a bit of trouble.

Despite this, Orpheus gulps and gingerly sits up, shoulders still weighing him down. Nonetheless he catches a glimpse of the impending sandstorm and immediately ducks.

SANDMAN (V.O.)

I see you'd like to bury your head. You choose to remain asleep.

ORPHEUS

This is literally my worst nightmare. I wanna wake up.

STARMAN

Hey, how can I make this carpet not go towards it?

He tries in vain to change its direction by lifting up a corner of it.

STARMAN

Nicky! Quiet wimping out and help me! We gotta try to go above it!

ORPHEUS

Are you insane? You wanna go higher?!

STARMAN

We don't have a choice! Get up!

He pulls the front of the carpet up as hard as he can, which only minimally changes its trajectory.

STARMAN

Nicky, you're literally weighing us down!

ORPHEUS

I'm not going up any higher!

STARMAN

You moron! Do you want us to get killed? Get! Up!

He reaches over and pulls Orpheus up by the collar and Orpheus claps a hand over his hand and ducks again.

STARMAN

Ugh, FINE!

Starman, knuckles white, yanks the carpet up with enough force to knock them both back as it angles up, and they have to grab its back corners to not fall off. Orpheus screams and cries.

The storm reaches them Starman reaches to Orpheus.

STARMAN

Nicky, come on! We gotta go higher!

Orpheus shakes his head.

STARMAN

Nicky!

A particularly strong gust of wind blows and Nicky relents, eyes shut tight as he grips the edges of the carpet and tries to pull himself up. Starman does the same and when they're midway up the carpet, it rights itself and they both lie forward, panting.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

The sandstorm showed no signs of abating. They couldn't see where they were going.

As if on cue, Starman gingerly sits up to see if that's actually true. He squints, using the flat of his hand like a visor.

STARMAN

I actually can't see where we're going. It's some storm.

ORPHEUS

Excellent, maybe if we keep going higher, we won't have to die to get to Heaven.

STARMAN

Don't be ridiculous.

They cover their faces with their shirts as the sand storm worsens, as if burying them in midair.

STARMAN

Man, can't this thing go any faster?

The magic carpet zips forward, right as the wind blows harder.

ORPHEUS

Oh my God... I think we're reaching the stratosphere.

As soon as he says this, he looks about ready to faint until Starman smacks him upside the head.

SANDMAN (V.O.)

Their dreams were right in sight now, they were well above the storm. Everything made sense.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

They were plagued by all sorts of questions, ones from every age they both have and haven't been. What is the meaning of life? Why are we here? Where are we going?

SANDMAN (V.O.)

What they didn't know, though, is that at any time, they can wake up. But the call of the sand, the desire to remain asleep, will always be that much stronger if you will it to be.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

And the reality of dreams always sweeter than the dream of reality.

The sandstorm passes and still they sail high in the sky, Starman brushing off bits of sand from the carpet.

ORPHEUS

Let's go down a bit more. I can feel my soul trying to leave my body.

STARMAN

Then look out for anywhere we can land, like an oasis or something.

Orpheus mumbles curses under his breath as he specifically doesn't look any lower than the horizon. Starman, however, spots one.

STARMAN

Hey, over there!

He "steers" the magic carpet towards it.

EXT. BACCHUS

Title card: Bacchus

IESU finds himself coming to on the planette Bacchus, whose land is soft orange feldspar routinely punctuated with different pools of rich red wine. The sky above is even a lovely rosé colour, occasionally gradiented with orange.

Iesu gingerly crawls towards a pool of wine, grimacing at the bird's nest he calls his hair. He pulls apart the tangles and looks around at the abundant wine, even a waterfall of it not far away before getting up.

He alone is in the paradise of wine, and as he walks he's between finding it eerie and peaceful.

Finally, he pauses at one pool and kneels, finding a small bowl by it.

IESU

Is anyone else here?

He waits for an answer, holding the bowl. Finally, muttering something under his breath, he dips the bowl into the pool and tentatively sips the wine.

IESU

Woah.

That single sip goes straight to his head, and he's already stumbling as if he'd tried to drain the entire pool. He has no choice but to continue going forward on all fours, though before long he's equally hugging the ground.

IESU

God help me.

He gives up when the world spins just a little too hard. In the distance he hears the low moan of The Space Whale, soon followed by the sound of a roaring car engine overlaid with

aggressive hardbass. He turns his head towards the waterfall of wine.

IESU

Is it sacrilege to wish I could
turn wine into water?

He chuckles weakly, the pink sky above him now punctuated with purple clouds that look just like gigantic grapes.

He gingerly pulls himself up and with his hands mimes pushing the literal red sea apart. To his surprise, this works.

He looks over at his hand, gasping at what he just did, even moreso at the fact that The Red Sea remains parted. He stumbles towards it, tentatively tapping his toe on the sea floor. He doesn't step forward though, and The Red Sea returns to its original state.

The clouds above convene and PURPLE RAIN falls. Iesu opens his arms and lets it rain down on him, inadvertently catching some on his tongue.

The Purple Rain falls harder, and by now Iesu is so insulated by drunkenness that when he falls backwards he betrays no sign of pain. He is lulled to sleep like it's the most natural thing in the world.

EXT. TARTARUS - CONTINUOUS

DOOMER traverses the darkness of Tartarus as the lone source of dim light, using the moon like you would use Polaris. He groans.

DOOMER

How many circles is this now?

EREBUS hovers over him.

EREBUS

All you've proven is that you are
where you are meant to be.

DOOMER

No, I'm not there yet. Dammit,
would be real helpful to have
magical powers of some kind.

As if on cue, his sword glows brighter, its blade even changing texture so it looks like one big pointy diamond. He looks it over and raises it to the sky so it appears like a road to the moon in his view.

A smile spreads across his face, making him shine even brighter. Erebus covers his eyes with his cowl.

EREBUS

The moon. Born from Earth's rib,
just like Eve was from Adam. Just
like Elpis was from me.

Doomer grips his sword with both hands and marches on,
Erebus gliding after him. The moon above is a slightly
brighter, or maybe even bigger, pixel.

Doomer himself notices it, and it seems to be getting closer
and closer, so he sheathes his sword. It then turns out that
it's not the moon but a MOON JELLYFISH like what Princess
Almas has. Doomer is of course delighted to see it while
Erebus hides himself in his cloak from it.

DOOMER

I knew you'd come for me.

The jellyfish, to his surprise, makes noise similar to
vocoder, and even emotes in colours now. Little by little
more and more moon jellyfish descend from the sky, emoting
as they get closer to Doomer.

Before long enough of them have descended before him that
they form a kind of stairway, the ones closest to Doomer
gently nudging him.

DOOMER

Are you sure? I'm heavier than I
look.

The moon jellyfish emote again, and Doomer hesitates. He
looks behind him at Erebus who cowers from the jellyfish
trying to illuminate him.

DOOMER

You coming or what?

With a quick apology to the jellyfish, Doomer begins using
them as stepping stones just how they want. The ones from
the back keep relaying to the front to expand the walkway,
meanwhile Erebus glides after him with no assistance.

Doomer hums the tune of "Scar Tissue" by Red Hot Chili
Peppers as he continues on.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, THRONE ROOM

TIGRIS and PALANG escort LOR SALVIATOR to the throne room
where LÉON sits and NYX CYTHERA and XIMENA stand. Nyx
Cythera embraces him.

NYX CYTHERA

My love, I'm glad to see you're not
hurt.

LOR SALVIATOR

I assure you, my dear, Pandora has not been unkind to me. Pray tell, who's this?

Ximena stands stock still, gulping as he towers over her, like he's inspecting a particularly interesting-looking bug.

NYX CYTHERA

She's your saviour, Miss Ximena. Manned the old planetary laser like it was the most natural thing in the world.

LOR SALVIATOR

You don't say. I'm glad it finally got some use.

XIMENA

It was nothing.

LOR SALVIATOR

Well then, perhaps I should gift it to you when we're done here.

XIMENA

You're gonna give me a planetary laser?

LOR SALVIATOR

Oh yes, it's been gathering dust in our archives for a while now. I'm sure you'll find great use for it.

Ximena thinks about such uses and a wide grin creeps across her face.

XIMENA

Hell yeah, I knew spending my entire childhood playing Galaga was worth it!

Lor Salviator turns his attention back to Léon.

LOR SALVIATOR

Now then, Your Highness. Did you enjoy the feeling of having me in a cage?

LÉON

Still you insult me.

LOR SALVIATOR

On the contrary, I rather enjoyed a bit of respite. That is, of course, until I realised something rather troubling.

LÉON

Which was?

LOR SALVIATOR

Elpis.

LÉON

What of your charges?

NYX CYTHERA

They are the galaxy's beloved
idols.

LÉON

And?

NYX CYTHERA

I shan't be rude, Your Highness,
but they took notice of your act of
war on my husband's planets and
surmised you are the culprit of
their disappearance. You must know
how that blights Pandora's face.

Léon's face remains stoic, betraying no emotion. Lor Salviator and Nyx Cythera exchange a look and Tigris nods to Palang who leaves them and just as quickly returns with OZZY and PIROUZ.

LÉON

You two. I want you to verify her
words. Traverse the galaxy and
bring me word of the happenings.
Remember that you are my eyes and
ears.

PIROUZ

(simultaneously with
Ozzy)

Yes, Your Majesty.

They both dash out of the scene.

INT. PANDORA'S VAULT

Still masked in their capirotes, SANDMAN and MORPHEUS look inside the latter's levitating crystal ball at the desert scape. Sandman swirls a cloud of sand with his index finger.

Morpheus reaches into his pocket and pulls out an EVIL EYE CHARM, spooking Sandman. He swings it like a pendulum and inside the crystal ball, day turns into night and the charm comes to a complete stop.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

The same charm is now acting as a moon in the desert, literally overlooking STARMAN and ORPHEUS'S descent on an oasis with clay shacks surrounding a single pond, connected

by unlit paper lanterns.

Their magic carpet lands right by the pond and Orpheus scurries over to it and cups his hands to drink the water.

ORPHEUS

Praise the Lord, it's not a mirage!

Starman drinks some of the water himself, washing his face in it as well. He notices that they're all alone here as well, and a wind blows, cutting through his clothes.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Their bones weighed heavy, longing for respite.

STARMAN

By all means, drink the whole thing dry. It's not like I'm here with you, in the middle of a goddamn desert.

ORPHEUS

Hey, I nearly died, ingesting all that sand. It makes you kinda thirsty.

Starman shakes his head as he drinks a bit more. Satisfied at last, Orpheus sighs.

ORPHEUS

I can't believe I lost my notebook. How am I supposed to strategise without it?

STARMAN

What notebook?

ORPHEUS

None of your business.

STARMAN

You brought it up.

ORPHEUS

Don't you have the decency not to listen when someone's thinking out loud?

Starman throws up his hand in a gesture of defeat as Orpheus then shoots up and runs off, all the water he drank finally catching up with him.

SANDMAN (V.O.)

You can do with some light.

A gentle line of sand blows into the air and passes the line of lanterns, each one softly glowing with grains of sand like a Van Gogh painting. The same grains of sand then

become even more stars in the sky.

Those stars are reflected in Starman's eyes as a forlorn expression washes across his face.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Both of them realised they were no
bigger than grains of sand,
inconsequential in the grand scheme
of things.

The sand-stars glitter as if in comfort of that sentiment. Starman tentatively reaches out to touch the sand and finds that his fingers do in fact move the sand. He writes Leni's name in it.

Through Leni's name he notices the outlines of The Evil Eye in the sky and he pushes the sand over it.

STARMAN

The hell is that thing?

This catches Orpheus's attention, who then joins him and looks up at The Evil Eye. He shivers.

Both of them jump when The Evil Eye blinks and upon opening seems to split in two, both sides taking one of them aside. When both Starman and Orpheus turn to look around, they don't see the other at all.

SANDMAN (V.O.)

You better preserve your strength.
I'll help you.

The stars seem to fall gently like powder snow and both Starman and Orpheus fall asleep on the sand like it's the most comfortable place in the universe.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, THRONE ROOM

OZZY and PIROUZ burst into the room where LÉON, TIGRIS, and LOR SALVIATOR are, panting and bristled. They bow as they approach him.

PIROUZ

Your Majesty!

LÉON

Speak.

Ozzy and Pirouz exchange looks.

TIGRIS

His Majesty commanded you to speak!

They flinch but nonetheless regard Léon, steeling themselves.

MONTAGE

A) EXT. CHANGGIES - DAYTIME

OZZY and PIROUZ creep upon a meeting of CHANGGIANS practicing throwing sharp projectiles at an unseen target. Both of them cringe and clap a hand over the other's mouth to shut each other up.

B) EXT. MAGNA SEIBEL - DAYTIME

OZZY and PIROUZ now hide underneath a table where a group of MAGNA SEIBELLIANS draw out a battle plan for hitting Pandora, jumping every time they tap a spot on the map with notable fury.

C) EXT. KLELLIA - SUNSET

Now OZZY and PIROUZ disguise themselves with kelp and starfish as they view KLELLIANS arming a massive warship using marlins and narwhals.

D) EXT. OLYANA - SUNSET

OZZY and PIROUZ now both don balaclavas as they watch OLYANANS creating flower and pollen bombs, with a huge pile of them already exuding visible dust.

E) EXT. IDUNN - EVENING

OZZY and PIROUZ hide behind a majestic apple tree watching as IDUNNIANS pray around a particularly large old tree and bite their tongues as they see its bark pattern contort into an old man's face.

They jump when they see the tree they were using as cover similarly gaining a face alongside the rest of the forest.

F) EXT. DANICA - EVENING

Finally, OZZY and PIROUZ now shiver as they watch DANICANS swimming in ice cold water. Ozzy dips his toe in it and yelps. His toe is immediately encased in ice and like a virus it spreads throughout his body, petrifying him. Pirouz grabs him and runs fast enough to become a shooting star.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, THRONE ROOM

When PIROUZ is done explaining his and OZZY'S exploits, both LÉON and LOR SALVIATOR are grim-faced, as are TIGRIS and KOKO who stand on either side of Léon. Ozzy sneezes as Pirouz forces him to bow down alongside him.

PIROUZ

We're remiss to come with bad news,
Your Majesty.

LOR SALVIATOR

My wife also reports that even in parallel galaxies word has been spreading. I must say, though, in some ways your little stunt has been wonderful for the band's fame.

OZZY

Can we go to a show of theirs after this?

Pirouz smacks him.

TIGRIS

You're dismissed.

Both of the youths bow again and dash out of the room. Léon sighs, forehead in hand.

LOR SALVIATOR

It's a fine mess you've gotten yourself and your planet in, Your Highness. Your slights against me are their own issue, but you had to have known what stealing Elpis away would entail.

LÉON

Are a gaggle of Earthlings really so beloved across the galaxy?

KOKO

I hear tell that their blood runs as hot as ours, but for different battles.

LOR SALVIATOR

Indeed, Miss Koko. And you know, I've been thinking of one rather interesting tidbit of your planet's history. If I may be so bold, Your Highness... might I confer with you privately?

LÉON

Very well. Leave us.

Tigris and Koko both bow and leave.

LÉON

You wish to ask now about The King's Shadow, do you not?

LOR SALVIATOR

You know me well indeed, Your Highness. It is a unique tradition in your kingdom. Furthermore, I have to comment that it intrigued

(MORE)

LOR SALVIATOR (cont'd)
 me how despite your dynasty being
 uninterrupted for hundreds of
 millennia, you sought to revive it.

Léon answers with a simple grunt, his eyes not meeting Lor Salviator's.

LOR SALVIATOR
 I know in your magnanimity it was
 not solely to open The Vault. Could
 it be perhaps... You needed him in
 his ancestral role? Should you fail
 your duties to your kingdom, as you
 are currently in danger of doing?

Léon grips his locket tightly, but not enough to break it.

LOR SALVIATOR
 Of course you know I don't ask this
 to make light of you. Despite
 everything, I have no wish to see
 you suffer. Your ancestors are why
 mine are blessed, after all. And I
 firmly believe that you wish very
 much to make them proud.

Léon grunts again before answering.

LÉON
 I see nothing gets past you.

LOR SALVIATOR
 I have you to thank for that. Being
 in solitary confinement does
 wonders for organising the mind.

LÉON
 Quite. To answer your question...
 You're not entirely correct. There
 was another reason I called him
 back. I only realise it now that
 you've brought it up.

LOR SALVIATOR
 There's no shame in saying it
 aloud, Your Highness.

Léon scoffs.

LÉON
 Easy for you to say. You are not a
 true King.

LOR SALVIATOR
 True, I am but the heir of
 pillagers. My ancestors have always
 known freedom. Nonetheless, for
 (MORE)

LOR SALVIATOR (cont'd)
 what it's worth, I commend you for
 not having malicious intentions for
 one of my idols.

LÉON
 It seems I can stand to learn from
 them.

LOR SALVIATOR
 Oh yes, I know they teach me
 something new every time I listen
 to their songs, even moreso when I
 speak to them. Humans are really
 such interesting creatures. I
 imagine if you talk to them, you
 will also find that for yourself.

LÉON
 I see... Ahem. Ozymandias. Pirouz.

They both tentatively step out from behind Lor Salviator.

LÉON
 I take it you both are aware of the
 ones calling themselves Elpis.

OZZY
 Yes, I've been listening to them
 ever since Lor Salviator started
 the tour. Oscar and his bride both
 told me a lot about them, too. And
 that other human woman.

LÉON
 And would you say you'd like to
 meet them?

OZZY
 Yeah!

PIROUZ
 Ozzy! Don't speak so casually to
 His Majesty!

Lor Salviator chuckles.

LOR SALVIATOR
 Well, then. We must do our best to
 ensure they return to us from The
 Vault sooner rather than later,
 wouldn't you say?

PIROUZ
 If I may suggest something, Your
 Majesty.

LÉON
 Go on.

PIROUZ

If they are safe and sound... And we can convince them to befriend us...

He screws his eyes shut, sweating bullets before finishing that thought.

LÉON

Befriend us, you say... I suppose it is a new era and with it a new way of doing things. Very well, both of you will be in charge of that. Off with you now.

They both leave.

LÉON

You have given me much to think about, Lor Salviator. I suppose I must thank you.

LOR SALVIATOR

No thanks necessary, Your Highness. All I did was speak my mind. The rest is up to you. Now, then, I will be off.

Without waiting for Léon's dismissal, he leaves. Léon finally opens his locket and stares pensively at it. His reverie is broken by Tigris re-entering the room with PALANG. They both bow.

TIGRIS

Your Majesty. Palang has found her whereabouts.

PALANG

(in sign language)

It is a small planette in the middle of nowhere. I do not know its name but it smells strongly of flowers.

Léon smirks.

LÉON

Good work, both of you. Take me there at once.

TIGRIS

Yes, Your Majesty!

They both bow to him.

EXT. HELL - PURGATORY

Dazed and languid, IESU finds himself in Purgatory which is nestled between land and Hell, a silent and gloomy place

full of unsaid words and regrets. LOST SOULS stretch as far as the eye can see.

Iesu alone has any sort of colour about him, everyone else is mostly matte. They form a disorderly line, feet dragging forward every time three dogs growl.

He gently pushes past everyone, closer to the noise.

He then sees that the three dogs are really CERBERUS, the massive three-headed dog like a German shepherd crossed with a shadow, complete with red eyes. It especially growls at him, so much so that its shadows flare up and create a literal firewall.

Despite its growling, however, it doesn't attack him. Indeed its tail wags as if to fan the flames, and Iesu notices the shadows of formerly herculean muscles and the slight rasp in its growl.

IESU

It's okay, I won't hurt you.

Iesu smiles softly and reaches out to pet its center head, and it allows him, even whining.

IESU

There's a good boy. You're...
Cerberus, aren't you?

Cerberus barks.

IESU

You're doing such a good job, but
maybe you don't need me to tell you
that.

Cerberus barks again.

He then turns to look at everyone around them, expressions dispirited and giving him and Cerberus a wide berth.

IESU

There's really no end to your work,
is there? Are these all the lost
souls of the galaxy or something?

Cerberus barks again.

IESU

Must be a good billion of them. But
do all of them deserve to be here
forever?

He searches their faces, bereft of all life and soul.

IESU

No... They're not lost because
they're evil, they're lost because
they need hope.

He then opens his arms at the crowd of lost souls.

IESU

All of you... Let me help you.

Some of them groan in confusion. But some others who look at
his face seem to gain just a small spark of soul.

IESU

Yes... You're all the people I
wanted to meet on the tour, but
didn't have a chance to.

He approaches them, and some step back but he gets closer.

IESU

I was meant to come here for a
reason. To meet you all.

Some groan in confusion while others glow just a little bit
brighter, even approaching him tentatively like fans meeting
their greatest idol.

He turns his attention to a trio of young lost souls, of an
alien race not previously seen. They huddle together as if
to merge the little sparks of soul they have and gain
presence.

IESU

Hey. I'm glad to meet you.

Little by little more of them gather a bit of soul and seem
to gradually shuffle closer, and though the energy is low,
it's the beginning of a big meet-and-greet.

IESU

Where are you from?

The trio-turned-one are too shy to speak, but Iesu
nonetheless smiles and nods.

IESU

I bet it's a beautiful place.
Hopefully when I get back to
everyone I'll visit it.

He then turns his attention to another lost soul, looking
again like another unfamiliar alien race. Nonetheless he
still smiles warmly like he's seeing an old friend.

IESU

It's funny, I can't say I'm too sad
you're here because I'm happy I can
(MORE)

IESU (cont'd)
see you. Fate's neat like that,
huh?

He now looks at another SMALLER LOST SOUL and this one especially hits him because its shape is like an animal rather than a humanoid alien. It looks up, softly shivering.

IESU
You're here too... Don't be afraid,
Cerberus won't hurt you. I know he
looks scary, but he's just doing
his job.

He reaches over to pick it up, and he's mildly surprised that his hands can actually hold it, even pet it. Soon more LOST ANIMAL SOULS come his way, surrounding him on all sides.

IESU
You were all waiting for me? Do you
not want me to leave you?

He finds himself overpowered by lost animal souls leaping up to be held in his arms, some of them succeeding in latching onto him.

IESU
I'd love to, but... Cerberus
doesn't want me to stay here.

He looks at Cerberus, the firewall still behind him. He turns his attention again at the billions of lost souls all now looking his way, and he seems to feel in his bones that there are exponentially more to come.

IESU
It's so warm in here now... But
none of you can feel it, can you?

He sees the meadow of soul sparks, though they're much too small to be anything more than pixels.

IESU
Do you really feel like it's too
late? That I'm too late? You might
actually be right...

Lightning flashes for just a second, followed by the faraway roll of thunder. He searches the heavens for an answer, and finally shakes his head.

IESU
(to himself)
No... I'm meant to be here now. No
use thinking about timing.

The sea of lost souls wait, recoiling at another flash of lightning and the sound of thunder rolling again.

IESU

It's not too late. For me or for
you. Can't you feel the sun up
above, just beyond the clouds?

Though of course no one answers plainly, Iesu points up.

IESU

As long as you accept its warmth,
you will know salvation. You will
know peace.

The lost souls naturally don't all accept the message, but a
couple do; they rise above the crowd and gain colour as they
do so, disappearing through the ceiling like shooting stars,
creating light pillars.

IESU

I know misery loves company. But
each and every one of you was born
of love, and have simply lost your
way.

As the crowd soaks in his words, they lighten up and begin
floating away, gaining form and colour the higher they get.

IESU

Go on, change your lives. I believe
in all of you!

One by one, more lost souls become found, rising up as if in
Rapture. The ones shaped like animals remain.

Iesu, hand acting like a visor, watches them all take to the
sky until barely any are left, and the clouds darken despite
the light skewers. Before long rain begins to fall from
them, putting the firewall out.

Iesu turns his attention to the animal-shaped lost souls and
there's still a good hundred or so of them, surrounding him
like a phalanx. He tries to shield them all from the rain.

Cerberus barks, showing that he serves as a cover from the
rain.

IESU

C'mon, you guys. Cerberus won't
hurt you. See? He wants to help.

Naturally they don't want to go that easily.

IESU

Come on, don't be afraid. Let's go.

He gently leads them towards Cerberus, and they reluctantly
follow him. He then gestures for them to stand under
Cerberus while he himself stands where he is, thoroughly
soaked by the rainfall.

Though the sight is dreary, Iesu notices colour returning to the ground; brown grass slowly gets a yellow hue, shale rocks regain a bit of lustre.

Cerberus nudges Iesu closer with one of its heads, and he obliges.

Eventually the rain stops and Cerberus, fully soaked himself, shakes the rainwater off. The clouds part, now pure white, and though it's far, the sun comes into view.

The rays and the shaken rainwater form THE RAINBOW BRIDGE. Iesu gestures towards it when he's done being awed.

IESU

Guys... This is for you. Come on.

Gingerly a few of the lost animal souls approach The Rainbow Bridge, seeing that when they step on it, the rainbow is solid. After that tentative first step, and with Iesu nodding in encouragement, they continue on, all of them eventually crossing it.

The Rainbow Bridge stands, Cerberus eyeing it as well, whining.

IESU

You wanna join them?

Cerberus whines again, and the corner of his mouth tugs.

IESU

Poor thing. You can't abandon your post even though you want to, eh?
Who would take your place?

Cerberus whines again, wistfully gazing at The Rainbow Bridge that stands in waiting.

EXT. ANTHUS - EVENING

Lightning dances in the sky like a long golden thorny vine, strangling the now nimbus-coloured cloud-sheep whose tears pelt the world below.

THE PANDORAN WARSHIP, newly rebuilt, descends, the resulting THUD eclipsing even the thunder, parting the sea started by the rain.

LÉON exits the ship, coming face to face with CALIX as SHAMS NURELAYNE gingerly opens the hut door and comes outside herself.

LÉON

Light of my eyes!

He rushes to embrace her, and Shams Nurelayne casts a look to Calix who remains stoic.

LÉON

How could you steal away in the dead of night like that? Without even so much as a goodbye? Am I so unworthy after all?

SHAMS NURELAYNE

How could you be unworthy? You're to be king.

LÉON

How can I call myself a king when my queen won't have me?

He looks away from her, scoffing softly.

LÉON

Perhaps it was a fool's errand after all. I come to you empty-handed except for my heart.

He turns to Calix.

LÉON

To think, you would search far and wide for who you feel is your better match. A shepherd.

Shams Nurelayne gives Calix another lingering look, which he does not reciprocate.

LÉON

At least a shepherd has a loyal following. Soon I might not even have that.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

You might not?

LÉON

By my own hand, The King's Shadow has returned, and though he is mostly human, he is quickly gathering favour in court.

Calix turns around and raises his crook, which seems to calm the cloud-sheep in the sky.

LÉON

His bride has also wrought havoc among their hearts... I have sown no seeds but those of my own upheaval.

Little by little the cloud-sheep lighten in colour by Calix's guidance.

LÉON

Perhaps you are right to cast me off. How can you ever see such a ridiculous man as your beloved?

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Léon...

She reaches out to touch his face.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

You're not a ridiculous man. If anything... I'm the ridiculous one. I should have held firm and remained by your side. I made you suffer, and still you came after me.

She rubs her eyes with the back of her hand as Calix now strides towards them.

CALIX

I am glad to see you've at last come to terms with your truth, Shams.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Yes. I have you to thank for making me see that, Calix.

LÉON

"Calix"... Rather an extravagant name for a shepherd.

CALIX

It's simply what I've known myself to be all my life. As the one who protects this planet and all its flowers.

LÉON

One who protects...

CALIX

You will lay down all that you have for your home planet, will you not?

LÉON

As her King... All that I am belongs to Pandora. All that I do is for her sake.

CALIX

You have incurred terrible suffering to that goal, it seems. What will you do to atone?

Léon does not answer right away, instead he looks at Shams Nurelayne first.

LÉON

I have wronged Pandora... But also you, my intended. Could it be that I am unworthy of elevating either of you to greatness?

No one says anything for several seconds. Shams Nurelayne looks especially stricken looking at Léon's crestfallen face.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Léon...

CALIX

Whether you are or not is still for you to decide. Nonetheless I have made my decision. I will aid you.

LÉON

You will "aid" me?

CALIX

Your situation is a dire one... But I have hope for you yet. I will give you all that I have, it is up to you what you do next.

He claps his hands in prayer and the cloud-sheep part to create a brilliant pillar of sunlight, and Calix gradually begins to disintegrate into golden stardust. As he does so, gradually the cloud-sheep come down and congregate all around them, not a single baa among them.

When Calix has fully dissolved into golden stardust, so then does Anthus begin to shake and quake. The golden stardust takes to the skies but the cloud-sheep don't follow nor generate thunder and lightning, waiting for orders.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Come on, Léon. Let's go.

Léon regards the massive flock overtaking every available inch of Anthus as it quakes, and he picks up Calix's crook and begins guiding the cloud-sheep to the Pandoran Warship. Shams Nurelayne, meanwhile, notices that on her own head is a golden diadem reminiscent of the sun.

She touches it and her eyes well up as she follows after Léon.

EXT. DESERT - TWILIGHT

THE EVIL EYE IN THE SKY still acts like the moon, sand particles act like stars.

STARMAN remains asleep, and though he's still unseen, Sandman manipulates the sand around him, pushing them aside as if parting The Red Sea, only in his case it's to make a moat.

He pushes so much sand this way that the circular chasm, initially dark because of the depth of the shadow, is quickly becoming tangibly dark because crude oil is coming to the surface.

SANDMAN (V.O.)

I see. It's time.

The Evil Eye in the Sky shuts as sunlight creeps up, waking Starman in turn. He doesn't quite trust his eyes showing him the growing moat of crude oil threatening to envelop his spot.

He shields his eyes as a glint off the side catches his attention. He crawls towards it, and the closer he gets, the clearer it is that the winds are unearthing a MAGIC LAMP in the sand.

He gingerly picks it up.

STARMAN

Probably shouldn't give into that intrusive thought...

He sees the growing moat and makes up his mind. He rubs the side of the lamp and sure enough, from it blows more glittering sand revealing SANDMAN, not wearing any hats or coverings.

SANDMAN

Tell me your wish.

STARMAN

Uh... This is a trap, right?

SANDMAN

Would you prefer it be a trap?
Would that ease your worries about
wasting your wish?

STARMAN

Is that a trick question?

Sandman laughs gently.

SANDMAN

Yes. I already know your wish.

He reaches inside his pocket and throws sand at Starman, which rather than irritating him, makes him yawn.

STARMAN

Oh, you did NOT just...

He literally falls asleep, but with Sandman's sand catching him and glittering like stars, even rising above the desert and out of the frame as the crude oil swallows everything up.

EXT. PANDORA PALACE, COURTYARD - DAYTIME

LENI and XIMENA sit at a stone bench overlooking a sad-looking garden with minimal flowering plants, the only interesting thing about the landscape being how sepia it is.

Leni laughs so hard she snorts.

LENI

I'm sorry, that's just too perfect.
You got a
stalker-stalker-stalker-stalker.
Unless I'm missing another stalker
somewhere in there.

XIMENA

Laugh all you want, at least I got
to shoot a laser beam and saved an
entire planet. Wish you were there
to see it.

LENI

Hey, I believe you. I'll believe
anything now, really.

At that moment, just a ways away, TANA and ILEXI converse.

ILEXI

I tried to tell him attacking his
planets was unwise.

TANA

And all to woo that Anaïd girl.

ILEXI

Truth be told, I think The King's
Shadow won't remain a shadow much
longer.

That little tidbit makes Leni sit stalk still, and Ximena cup her ear to hear better.

TANA

Wow, Ilexi, you of all people
saying that.

ILEXI

He may be a human, but there might
well be advantages to his blood
running colder. I hate to say it,
but His Majesty's arrogance
betrayed his own hubris.

Tana gasps just like how you'd expect a court lady to do and CARA joins them.

TANA

My little caramel, it might be time for you to curry favour with The King's Shadow.

CARA

Tch. As if I would ever stoop that low.

TANA

Ilexi says he might be better suited as king.

CARA

I'm so sure! His Majesty need only come to his senses!

TANA

My little caramel, let it go. He's already tearing the galaxy apart for her. His sense is not coming back.

CARA

I'm still not bowing to a human king.

LENI

(to Ximena)

I don't think we should be listening to this.

XIMENA

Shhh!

ILEXI

Be that as it may... The King's Shadow returning means by our constitution that he can take the throne if the current king fails his duties. Like it or not, that's a real possibility.

Ximena and Leni exchange looks, and Ximena grins.

XIMENA

You're gonna have me as your lady-in-waiting, right?

LENI

It's not gonna happen.

XIMENA

Come on! You know I'm on your side no matter what. All I ask is that you give me a really cool title.

Leni laughs uneasily, and Ximena swings her legs on the bench, serious now.

XIMENA

Jaguar made a really big comeback though. Maybe I backed the wrong horse after all.

LENI

Can you not talk about my life like it's a soap opera?

XIMENA

But it is just like a soap opera, and I have to know how it ends. Sorry, Leni, that's the rule.

Leni shakes her head with amusement.

EXT. BACCHUS

The large pink jellyfish leads DOOMER to Bacchus, EREBUS floating close behind. It sets him down on the feldspar ground and floats away as if drunk off the scent alone. Doomer searches for the moon in the grape-shaped clouds.

DOOMER

Too bad we can't go here for a while.

Erebus keeps his hood close to his face, to not breathe in the wine-soaked air.

DOOMER

And maybe it'll go here, too. Heh, I already know I won't stand for that.

Nonetheless he finds a bowl and scoops up some wine and swishes it around before giving it a sniff.

DOOMER

Well, she's not here, so come on. Drink with me.

Erebus shakes his head.

DOOMER

C'mon, quit being lame. Drink with me.

After taking a sip, he grabs Erebus's robe and puts the bowl of wine in his hands.

DOOMER

Drink!

Erebus sighs and obliges, his eyes still hidden by his cowl.

DOOMER

Y'know... It's been a while since we've done this.

EREBUS

It has.

DOOMER

It's a pretty big deal, becoming the man in the moon. We might never do this again. There won't be any point.

EREBUS

You would leave Elpis for another.

DOOMER

Hey, even I gotta have my shot at a fairytale, man.

EREBUS

Even if it's the kind where everything's on fire?

Doomer pauses, then scoffs as he drinks more wine.

DOOMER

You're definitely me, all right. Besides, leaving Elpis is kinda inevitable, don't you think?

EREBUS

I didn't want her to leave.

Doomer pauses mid-sip.

DOOMER

Her to leave? You're not talking about the band?

EREBUS

There being two forms of Elpis is only a coincidence. Maybe even nothing more than the dance between Earth, Sun, and Moon that you call "eclipse."

DOOMER

I don't know about any of that.

EREBUS

You're lying. You last saw her visage. You even said yourself, you had déjà vu.

Doomer is about to retort, when mid-thought, he lowers his finger, the wine's wisdom washing over him like a wave.

DOOMER

Ohhhh. I actually forgot about that.

Erebus nods.

DOOMER

But that doesn't matter anymore.
Does it? I mean...

He searches his memories, then softly gasps.

DOOMER

Woah. Forgot about that, too. But
then why would she... Goddammit,
why's everything making sense now?

He holds his head in his hands as the wine takes over his
brain. Nonetheless he keeps the bowl of wine in hand.

DOOMER

You know nothing would've happened
with her anyway, though. And I'm
not saying that because she chose
him.

EREBUS

No... But you should've fought for
her when you had the chance.

DOOMER

I didn't have a chance. Besides,
none of that matters anymore. I
have her now. And soon...

He looks up again at where the moon would be, and stands up,
using his sword as an anchor.

DOOMER

I'll have her, too. I dunno how,
but I just know it'll be a girl.
And maybe it won't be just her,
either.

He turns to face Erebus.

DOOMER

I can't dread the future forever.
For once all I wanna do is charge
at it, make sure it's great, to
make up for all the times it
wasn't.

A halo begins to shine around his head, and in the
background THE EVIL EYE IN THE SKY opens.

DOOMER

I wanna make THEM smile. Me, the
guy who calls himself "Doomer."

He shines brighter, and for once Erebus doesn't shield
himself from it. He even lets his cowl blow off and his face
is now clearly visible; he looks just like Doomer normally
does while Doomer is handsomer than ever before.

A moon jellyfish comes bearing the ENDYMION CROWN, which shows the different phases of the moon and coronates him with it.

EREBUS

You're more than Doomer now.
You're...

Erebus's cloak starts dissolving into golden stardust, and finally his body beginning from his hands begin to dissolve too.

EREBUS

Endymion.

Doomer rushes over to grab Erebus, but it's too late. Just like one of those nightmares where you're slower than molasses, he tries to run but really ends up moonwalking as Bacchus zooms out past him and all that he can see of Erebus is fading golden stardust flowing into The Evil Eye.

EXT. BACCHUS - DUSK

EURYDICE cups a handful of wine from a pool and offers it to ERIK RHODES, who looks at his reflection inside it.

EURYDICE

Drink.

ERIK RHODES

I dunno...

EURYDICE

You deserve to know the truth, you know you do.

He hesitates before Eurydice practically forces him to drink. When he does he drinks slowly, and it hits him hard enough to knock his head back.

ERIK RHODES

Woah, is that like, millions of years old or something?

EURYDICE

It could be. This particular pool is older than the dinosaurs.

ERIK RHODES

That explains it.

EURYDICE

The romance of history in these pools, but still they can't hold a candle to our love.

She leans towards him, so much so that before long he's on his back. Erik Rhodes's heart beats like a drum, even moreso when Eurydice lays down against him just like a lover.

EURYDICE

I've crossed these oceans time and
time again to find you. I've died
for you every time I've been born.

Erik Rhodes's whole face reddens like a fresh pool of wine,
and a single tear rolls down his cheek like he's drowning in
the words.

ERIK RHODES

I remember. I put you through hell
so many times.

EURYDICE

Hell has forged me to stand proudly
by your side. Do not sully the
memory with an apology.

Erik Rhodes gently shakes his head and pulls her closer to
him. She relaxes into his hold until she leaps as if sensing
an evil presence, but none are visible except for what looks
like an eclipse in the sky.

ERIK RHODES

What is it?

Eurydice turns to him and touches his face.

EURYDICE

Nothing, my love. Don't worry about
it.

Before he can retort, she curls up to him again. Meanwhile
the eclipse passes. Erik Rhodes strokes her shoulder and
then she sits up again, eyes focused on something in the
distance and she places a fist up against her heart.

She looks up at the skies that seem to tremble, or maybe
it's because of her own glistening eyes. She scoffs and
notices that Erik Rhodes is fast asleep.

EURYDICE

The stars once again laugh at us.
Our time together always draws to
an end much too soon. How can I
make you understand?

She looks up again at yet another eclipse in the sky, this
time one of the moon, painting it a foreboding crimson.

Deciding it's now or never, Eurydice grabs his face and
kisses him on the forehead, waking him up.

ERIK RHODES

What was that for?

EURYDICE

To help you when you need it most.

He notices that despite the darkening sky, she is outlined in golden stardust, eyes welling up as she slowly disintegrates.

ERIK RHODES

Wait... It's not goodbye already,
is it?

EURYDICE

We are a perfect circle, with no
beginning or end. We never say
goodbye.

ERIK RHODES

But why are you leaving me again?

EURYDICE

Only my body is. All that I am has
always belonged to you. As long as
you don't forget that...

She once again touches his face and leans forward, closing her eyes and before she can properly kiss him, she's entirely disintegrated into golden stardust.

THE EVIL EYE IN THE SKY receives the river of golden stardust as the last of it embraces Erik Rhodes a final time.

EXT. HELL - PURGATORY

IESU sits beside CERBERUS who still eyes The Rainbow Bridge, the gate behind it still shut albeit without the firewall. The field is barren of lost souls, it's just the two of them.

IESU

You long for home, too, don't you?

Cerberus whines in response.

IESU

I've been there, you know. My own
dog's up there. I bet he'd love to
meet you. They all would.

He also looks at The Rainbow Bridge, leading off to an indeterminate point.

IESU

I also have to go home. One of
these days. I guess unless that's
not part of God's plan. Or even...
His plan.

His face darkens at the thought making him cross his chest, and he quickly turns his attention to Cerberus who then looks back at him.

IESU

You know I don't belong here, but
you also won't let me leave.
Maybe... I should take your place?
Judge who gets to pass and who
doesn't?

He scoffs.

IESU

Yeah, right. I can't let the band
down like that. No matter how much
I want to do more than make music.
We already almost broke up once.
He's the reason we didn't end
things after all. I should be
thanking him, and yet...

He looks again at the vanishing point of The Rainbow Bridge
and laughs bitterly.

IESU

I'm the worst. And here I was
telling the guys that we gotta hold
it together, our path was laid out
for us. I lied to them.

Cerberus nudges him with all three of its heads and he pets
it.

IESU

Thanks, boy.

He then sees that Cerberus is standing up and making its way
to The Rainbow Bridge, sniffing it and pawing at it to make
sure it's not an illusion. Without so much as a backward
glance at Iesu or its post, it steps onto The Bridge and
before long is running down it, completely gone from view.

Little by little, The Rainbow Bridge fades away, leaving
Iesu all alone as he smiles sadly.

His reverie is soon broken by the sounds of aggressive
hardbass, too far to make out clearly but nonetheless coming
from a subwoofer on full blast. As it gets louder and
louder, he notices a RED CONVERTIBLE (the Gagarin Car)
hurtling towards the gate and scrambles out of the way as
fast as he could.

Sure enough, the convertible, hardbass and all, slams into
the gate, busting it wide open. The gradually distancing
hardbass beats and the cheers of its FOUR PASSENGERS (the
Gagarin brothers) act as an audio "trail," since not once
did it touch the ground to leave tire marks.

Iesu finds himself being carried away by the same light that
brought him here before he can even so much as look through
the now-broken gate, where THE EVIL EYE IN THE SKY awaits.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

Meanwhile, in the deepest reaches of space where SANDMAN and MORPHEUS are, the golden stardust surrounds them from THE EVIL EYE, as if creating new stars and planets. They still wear their capirotes.

The stars flow into Morpheus's GRIMOIRE, as if having documented the whole thing.

They exchange a look and nod as they wave their hands over the grimoire, the stardust forming an image that gains gradual clarity.

INT. PANDORA'S VAULT

A MASKED FIGURE (Malachi Metatron) with large, emerald-coloured angel wings, stands at attention holding a spear and wearing a suit of armour, its face covered by a silver volto mask.

A lyre plays "Greensleeves" causing an entire field of roses to grow and bloom in the darkness almost like neon signs beginning at its feet.

They even get neon dewdrops that come to life, becoming moon jellyfish. Little by little they all begin swimming towards the giant moon in the black sky and the figure is nowhere to be seen. All that remains of it is the silver volto mask.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, SPARE ROOM 2 - NIGHT

LENI bolts awake, panting and awash with sweat.

LENI

What the hell what that..?

She places a hand over her heart as if to still it. Her room door opens and JAGUAR enters, his King's Shadow Bangle's eyes glowing white.

JAGUAR

You felt it too, didn't you?

LENI

I think so.

JAGUAR

Come on.

Leni gets up and follows Jaguar outside.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, VAULT CHAMBER

The Second Vault's kaleidoscope pattern shifts to create the THIRD VAULT, a smaller structure made of black and white diamond with Vesica Piscis patterns engraved on it in some spots. LENI waits with bated breath just outside of it, JAGUAR beside her.

She flinches as the door unlocks and DOOMER moonwalks out, wearing brilliant white Endymion robes with golden accents not unlike the stardust Erebus dissolved into. She's at a complete loss for words as Doomer dusts himself off and looks around.

DOOMER

Oh, hey, Leni.

LENI

How do you know my name?

DOOMER

You don't recognise me?

Leni shakes her head.

DOOMER

It's Doomer.

LENI

Doomer?! I mean... Wow, you look different.

DOOMER

Is that a bad thing?

JAGUAR

Not used to seeing you look so put together.

LENI

Props to whoever gave you a makeover.

DOOMER

Heh, glad you think so. You look different, too.

LENI

I do?

DOOMER

Yeah, of course it might just be because I haven't seen you guys for a while.

LENI

Maybe. But uh... Is everyone else coming?

DOOMER

They're not already here? I was all by myself.

LENI

Oh... Is that how it works, then...

She looks away.

DOOMER

Hey, uh, listen. When I was there..

Now she looks at him, lighting up. The corner of his mouth tugs and he blushes, Jaguar raising an eyebrow.

DOOMER

...I'd better tell you later.
Sorry, I had a bunch of wine.

JAGUAR

There's wine in there?

DOOMER

Yeah, but it's ridiculously strong.
I don't even know if I'm
hallucinating this whole thing.

He feigns a laugh.

DOOMER

But one thing was keeping me going.

Leni then blushes and finally shudders.

LENI

Oh, ew. I did NOT need to know
that.

DOOMER

Excuse you?

JAGUAR

Len?

LENI

Nothing, just... Had a weird dream
and I got what it meant. Doesn't
have anything to do with you. I
think. Now, what did you say kept
you going?

DOOMER

Well, none of the guys know this,
but... I'm gonna be a Dad.

JAGUAR

No way. Congrats.

Leni once again BSODs, and Doomer waves a hand over her face.

DOOMER

Is it really that shocking?

Leni shakes her head.

LENI

Sorry, congrats. But... Yeah, ew.

DOOMER

Were you always this rude? Man, you think you know someone.

LENI

No, you don't understand. It's the dream.

DOOMER

Well, now I gotta know.

Leni cringes and motions for him to get closer. When she's done whispering to him the colour drains from Doomer's face for just a second. Then, he's right back to looking like a shoujo manga prince.

DOOMER

I did not think you were into that. If I knew, I would've made a move on you sooner.

Leni flashes scarlet, and Doomer laughs, ruffling her hair like a big brother would.

DOOMER

I'm just messing with you. It's too late now, anyway.

For just a moment Jaguar's head is literally steaming but it stops the moment TANA enters the room.

TANA

My, so this is the drummer. I couldn't help overhearing talk of a would-be tryst?

LENI

No, Tana, it's not--

She slinks over to him much too fast to keep up, and even Doomer can't help noticing her curves.

TANA

I'll take it from here, bride. But don't worry, I'll see you again as soon as I'm done.

She turns around with a wink at Leni and takes Doomer by the cape out of the chamber. Leni casts Pandora's Vaults another look.

LENI

Three Vaults now... When are you coming out next, Tommy?

The Third Vault's kaleidoscope forms THE FOURTH VAULT, a smaller structure made of brilliant green malachite punctuated with a Metatron's cube pattern.

The internal locking mechanism CLUNKS.

The door creaks open and IESU tentatively exits, alongside THE GOLDEN FLEECE, a golden cloud-lamb. The Fourth Vault's interior lining is once again kaleidoscopic.

The Golden Fleece shakes itself dry, creating a rainbow-coloured halo. Leni tackles Iesu in a hug.

LENI

Immanuel! Thank God, you're back,
too. But who's that?

They both look at The Golden Fleece.

IESU

I have no idea.

Doomer and Jaguar reenter the room.

DOOMER

Hey! You're out!

IESU

Yeah... Who are you, though?

DOOMER

C'mon, it's Doomer!

IESU

No way! I come back with a sheep
and you get a makeover?

DOOMER

I don't even know, man, better ask
him.

He gestures to Jaguar, who pats his shoulder.

JAGUAR

It's a long story.

IESU

Is everyone else here?

JAGUAR

No, just you guys. And us.

At that moment LOR SALVIATOR enters the room.

LOR SALVIATOR

Sir Iesu, welcome back. And you
even brought The Golden Fleece, how
fortunate.

IESU

Golden Fleece? This one?

LOR SALVIATOR

Oh yes, it's a good omen.
Nonetheless, we shouldn't
congregate here, it's rather rude
to our host, misdemeanours
notwithstanding.

LENI

It's another long story.

DOOMER

We missed a lot in there.

IESU

No kidding...

LOR SALVIATOR

Come, Sir Iesu. I look forward to
hearing your account after you've
rested.

Lor Salviator begins to lead the way while Iesu remains
where he is, and the former pauses when he realises.

DOOMER

Earth--er, Pandora to Iesu? You
comin' or what?

IESU

Oh, yeah, sorry.

He follows Doomer and Lor Salviator out of the room, leaving
Leni and Jaguar alone.

JAGUAR

You didn't do anything wrong, Len.

LENI

Didn't I? I thought all I did was
say how I feel. I don't like having
this much power, Oscar.

Jaguar hugs her.

JAGUAR

You gotta give the guys some
credit, Len. Two of them already
came back, now you just gotta wait
for the other three. We're about
halfway there.

LENI

If you say so.

He leads her out of the room, too, but they're stopped by
another familiar CLUNK.

The Fourth Vault's kaleidoscope pattern shifts to form the
FIFTH VAULT, this time a ruby red with a Grid of Life

pattern. They stand before it with bated breath, waiting for the creak of the door.

ERIK RHODES stands inside, hurriedly wiping his face and plastering a smile he doesn't entirely feel as he exits, the kaleidoscope pattern once again recreating itself inside.

LENI

Erik!

ERIK RHODES

Leni?

She tackles him in a hug, too, snapping him clean out of his reverie but he winces.

ERIK RHODES

Oof, were you always this strong?

JAGUAR

Maybe you're just a delicate little flower.

LENI

Oh, sorry. Are you okay?

He looks strangely stricken by the question but as he searches her face, his expression softens and he visibly resists the urge to look back.

ERIK RHODES

Why wouldn't I be? I just survived an ordeal like a boss.

LENI

What happened?

ERIK RHODES

I'll tell you all about it later. I'm beat and also just kinda need to be alone right now.

He walks off, but then remembers he doesn't now where he is.

ERIK RHODES

Where's everyone else?

JAGUAR

Doomer and Iesu're with Lor somewhere. Starman and Nicky are still in there.

ERIK RHODES

Wait, Nicky got beamed in there, too?

Both Leni and Jaguar are waiting for Erik Rhodes to snark about him, but he doesn't right away.

JAGUAR

He did want to come back to the band, but didn't get a chance to tell you.

ERIK RHODES

He did, huh. Even after all that. Blood really is thicker than water.

He then puffs his chest.

ERIK RHODES

Well, he better get here first and tell me himself, otherwise it doesn't count. No offence, Jag.

JAGUAR

Wouldn't expect it any other way. Now c'mon, rest up. I'll tell the guys you're here. If Leni's dream was anything to go by, we should see Nicky and Starman soon.

Erik Rhodes regards Leni, eyes slight like he's searching for any hints of ulterior motives in her. Even she shrinks back a bit. But instead he just pats her shoulder in reassurance and turns around, back towards his room.

LENI

I swear, I can never read that guy. Why did that feel like a declaration of war?

Jaguar snickers and ushers her out of the room, too.

EXT. PANDORA PALACE, COURTYARD - NIGHT

The night is rather gentle, with the cloud-sheep not in the sky but rather roaming the barren-looking fields. ERIK RHODES and DOOMER sit on the stone benches.

DOOMER

Wish I had a cigarette right now. Feels like ages since I've had one.

He nonetheless spots a lone blade of grass and plucks it out.

ERIK RHODES

You sure about that?

Doomer pauses, then flings the grass blade away, grinning crookedly.

DOOMER

Heh, you're right. 'Bout time I quit.

ERIK RHODES

I mean, yeah. With that face,
smoking would just make you look
like a dork.

DOOMER

Fair point.

ERIK RHODES

Hey, so. You and the princess.

DOOMER

What about her?

Erik Rhodes looks around and motions for him to get closer.

ERIK RHODES

Is she, like, the love of your
life?

DOOMER

Kinda.

ERIK RHODES

How'd you even get her, anyway?

DOOMER

Don't tell me you're jealous.

ERIK RHODES

Hah! You wish! But for real. Being
away from her's gotta suck, right?

DOOMER

Yeah. Why?

ERIK RHODES

No reason.

Doomer shoots him a knowing glance but doesn't prod further.
They then both hear giggles in the bushes.

XIMENA (O.C.)

Shhh! You'll give us away!

PIROUZ (O.C.)

Ozzy's crushing me!

OZZY (O.C.)

Am not!

PIROUZ (O.C.)

Are, too!

XIMENA (O.C.)

You two have so much to learn. How
are you so bad at stealth?

DOOMER

Hey, who's that? You may as well
come out, no use hiding.

XIMENA sighs as she rises first, pulling OZZY and PIROUZ up
from either side of her, behind a knotty bush. She lights up
and darts towards them as Ozzy and Pirouz hide away.

XIMENA

Oh, my God. It's so great to
finally meet you both! Doomer, you
look amazing!

DOOMER

And you are?

XIMENA

Leni's friend. Name's Ximena. Been
your biggest fan since the start.

ERIK RHODES

From which planet?

XIMENA

Earth, silly! I'm from your
hometown.

ERIK RHODES

No way.

XIMENA

Way! Ah, man, but it's too bad
Starman's not with you. Same with
Nicky.

ERIK RHODES

You know Nicky?

XIMENA

Of course. In fact...

She looks surreptitiously about and fishes out Orpheus's
NOTEBOOK.

XIMENA

I know everything about him.

ERIK RHODES

Where'd you get that?

XIMENA

Trade secret. I know ALL the dirty
details.

DOOMER

Figures our one Earth fan is a
weirdo.

Erik Rhodes reaches over for the notebook but Ximena guards it tight, even slapping his hand away for good measure.

XIMENA

That's private property! And ohmigod, I'm so sorry, it was a reflex.

Erik Rhodes wipes his hand as if it really stings. Sure enough, the indentations from the thorny bracelets are still on his wrists.

XIMENA

I'm sorry! But I really can't let you read this notebook. It's for your own good.

ERIK RHODES

My beautiful hands... What'll you do if I can't play the violin ever again?

The way Erik Rhodes looks at her, eyes somewhere between bedroom and dead like a hardened gangster, flusters Ximena, especially when he gets real close to her.

DOOMER

Oh boy.

ERIK RHODES

Tell you what. I'll make nice. I can tell you everything you ever wanna know about him. He'd lie in his diary anyway.

Ximena's pounding heart can be heard even as far away as where Ozzy and Pirouz are hiding.

ERIK RHODES

So whaddaya say? We good?

XIMENA

Uh... Sure, of course.

ERIK RHODES

Good.

Lingering just long enough to savour and appreciate the moment, Erik Rhodes snatches the notebook and gently bonks her on the forehead with it before stashing it away.

XIMENA

Hey! That was dirty!

ERIK RHODES

And stealing someone's personal property isn't? I don't care how big of a fan you are, that ain't
(MORE)

ERIK RHODES (cont'd)
cool. Even Nicky's got a right to
privacy.

Ximena's jaw drops to the floor while Doomer slowly golf
claps as Erik Rhodes flips his hair and yawns.

ERIK RHODES
That does it for me. See ya around.

He turns on his heel and leaves them. When he's a ways away,
his expression softens as he pauses to look at the notebook
before putting it away again as he keeps walking.

Ozzy and Pirouz, meanwhile, snicker, at least until CARA
reaches over to us with both hands and pulls them out of
their hiding spot.

CARA
Still up to your usual child's
play?

PIROUZ
We're not kids!

CARA
Oho, then are you finally ready to
fight me like men?

Both of them gulp and she lets them go, and they dash away
as she sighs. She then notices Doomer and Ximena.

CARA
You're new.

Doomer gets up and does an overly formal bow befitting
someone playing at royalty. Ximena holds back a snort.

DOOMER
Doomer, of Elpis.

She looks him up and down.

CARA
I didn't realise Elpis had human
inhabitants.

DOOMER
Other Elpis. The band.

Cara tilts her head.

XIMENA
The best band in the galaxy.

CARA
A band of brothers, hm? And I
suppose you are their commanding
officer, or their king?

DOOMER

Nothing that fancy, but I've been called "the heartbeat," so I guess I'm up there. Maybe I really should try war drums.

CARA

Hmm, interesting. I didn't know humans were so varied. In any case, night is long on Pandora. I suggest you make good use of it.

She stalks off.

DOOMER

(to Ximena)

You know where my room is, don't you?

Ximena nods, leading the way.

EXT. BACCHUS - CONTINUOUS

ORPHEUS wakes up on Bacchus, rubbing his eye with his knuckle. As he wakes up more and more, he approaches one pool of wine.

Orpheus then sees MORPHEUS where his reflection would be, complete with a witch's hat rather than a capirote. He frowns, but then yelps when Morpheus reaches out to him with a full chalice in his hands.

ORPHEUS

What the hell?

He tries to grab Morpheus's wrists to pull him up, but all he can actually touch is the chalice; his hands just go straight through Morpheus's.

He hesitates but ultimately takes the chalice.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

His thirst ran deeper than Hell itself. Luckily oceans awaited.

As soon as he says this, Orpheus gently rubs his neck with one hand and look longingly at the chalice. Finally, unable to resist, he takes a deep sip, still going even when it's literally bottoms-up.

Even when he's done, the chalice is still full like he hadn't had a single drop.

ORPHEUS

Woah. This is all water?

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

He thirsted more. His very throat was dryer than the desert.

Orpheus sure enough drinks the wine again for all he's worth, even bending over backwards as if trying to drain the chalice of all the wine. Finally, he casts it aside and dives into a pool of wine and drinks that.

As if via teleportation, he drinks one pool dry and moves onto another, repeatedly, and still there's so much to drink and he looks the same.

He stops, exhausted, his belly noticeably bigger from all the drinking. He hiccups and bumps his head on the ground, and that's when the drunkenness hits, hard enough for the very particles that make him to come apart.

ORPHEUS

Woah. I knew galactic fame was bullshit. The universe is tiny! No bigger than an atom! Hell, it's not even real!

He laughs at the realisation, so hard that he cries wine.

ORPHEUS

In fact... None of this is real.
I'm not real!

He laughs still, arguably even harder, to the point where there's no sound.

ORPHEUS

I'm just a bunch of words!

He curls up laughing, still in tears, unaware that the grape-shaped clouds are gathering and darkening into purple, a growl in the air like hellish thunder. When he does clue in, rather than being scared, he stands defiant.

ORPHEUS

Hah, do your worst.

Sure enough, a bolt of lightning comes towards him, and it hits Morpheus's crystal ball acting as Orpheus's bubble.

ORPHEUS

Hah! How'd you like that?

He then finds the glass bubble moving upwards with him inside, and a colossal Morpheus is moving it upwards with hovering hands. Orpheus cowers with his back to the proverbial wall, all the colour falling from his face.

ORPHEUS

Hey... What're you doing?

The bubble moves closer and closer to the clouds. Orpheus curls up into a ball.

ORPHEUS

C'mon... I was just messing
around...

By now the bubble is going through the clouds, and Orpheus would have fainted epically were he not safe inside the bubble.

Nonetheless, despite his soul desperately trying to leave his body, he can't help looking at the blanket of clouds all around him, the ground no longer visible.

ORPHEUS

Hmm. Bet those clouds feel real
good.

A cloud-sheep jumps into view, followed by several more. He then shields his eyes as sunlight shines through the glass bubble, giving it touches of pink, cyan, and pale purple.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

He wondered if this little bubble
he was in would give way under him,
so he could know for himself the
truth of the clouds.

As soon as he says this, Orpheus does indeed react like that's a real possibility, scrambling in vain to avoid such a fate, especially when Morpheus's finger draws near as if to burst the bubble.

Orpheus vigorously shakes his head and hands to discourage the action, but the finger draws closer like a charmed snake. For good measure, Morpheus even hums the tune of "Egyptian Ella."

ORPHEUS

This is so gonna suck!

He takes a deep breath, waiting for the bubble to pop, but instead he hears the shuffling of a deck of cards.

He finds a RING OF TAROT CARDS surrounding the bubble like a halo.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Pick a card. Any card.

The cards all move clockwise around him, and Orpheus searches the backs of them. He pauses for a moment before pointing forward and the ring stops. The card he selected flips over to reveal THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE. Morpheus chuckles.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Now pick another.

The ring of cards once again begins rotating clockwise, but twice as fast. Naturally Orpheus can't easily keep up, but

nonetheless he waits a bit before pointing forward, and this time the chosen card flips over to reveal THE INVERTED FIVE OF SWORDS.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Now pick another.

This time, once again the ring of cards rotates faster than before, but counter-clockwise. Orpheus groans as he picks another card. It is THE INVERTED THREE OF PENTACLES.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Choose another.

Again the ring goes even faster, so much so that for all Orpheus knows, it's an unbroken ring betraying no break or pause. Nonetheless the card he ends up choosing is THE INVERTED DEVIL.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Now choose the last card.

ORPHEUS

Aw, man...

Once again the ring goes much too fast, but to make it even worse, the bubble itself spins in the opposite direction.

ORPHEUS

Oh come on!

Nonetheless none of it stops, and Orpheus claps a hand over his mouth but surprisingly does not vomit. If anything for a moment time appears to stop and he can see the faces of all the cards he hasn't chosen.

He leans forward to take in all the cards, at first his brow furrowed in confusion but before long the gears in his head are working. He mouths the cards' names and seems to understand them.

ORPHEUS

Wait... That can't be right... You mean THAT'S what happens to--

Then, THE JUDGMENT card glows, and Morpheus groans. The Judgment card even blows the trumpet in real life, and Orpheus finds it penetrating the bubble but not popping it entirely. It even wags its finger at him before placing it against his mouth.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, SPARE ROOM 1 - NIGHT

JAGUAR'S bangle's eyes flash red, shocking him awake. In the pale moonlight, his skin glistens with sweat. His pants are the only audible sound.

He then jumps when he seems XIMENA beside his bed.

JAGUAR
The hell're you doing?

XIMENA
Woman's intuition. I had to see for myself.

JAGUAR
What?

XIMENA
If it was true. You and Leni really didn't get hitched yet?

JAGUAR
Oh, God, is that all?

He falls back into bed.

JAGUAR
Nonetheless, you're right about one thing.

XIMENA
And what's that?

JAGUAR
The intuition part. Don't quote me on it, but I wonder if we're gonna have to go back to The Vault room soon.

XIMENA
Really? That's great! Oh, wait...

Both of them feel the growing heaviness in the air.

XIMENA
So what're you gonna do?

JAGUAR
There's not a lot I can do now. This whole thing is my fault.

XIMENA
Even if it is... You still brought her here with you, didn't you?

Jaguar wonders if he should correct her, especially seeing as how she's sure that that's the truth.

XIMENA
Starman never did that... He just decided to roll with the galactic tour. Moreover, didn't you hear the rumours about you?

JAGUAR

Oh, I see where you're going with this. You think I always knew I was royalty and therefore decided to kidnap Leni and get her to marry me after her and Starman broke up?

He gives her a sidelong glance, and Ximena nods.

JAGUAR

You seriously watch too many movies.

XIMENA

Who cares about movies? Real life is way more interesting. Besides, that's super romantic. Every girl wants something like this.

Jaguar shakes his head in exasperation and looks at his bangle's eyes flickering red. Ximena, appearing to clue in, gets up.

XIMENA

All right, I'll leave you to it. You could seriously learn some manners before becoming king, you know. You're gonna make all Earth men look bad.

She shudders as she leaves him. Jaguar tilts his head, frowning, not once cluing into what she meant. His bangle's eyes still flicker red.

EXT. PANDORA PALACE, COURTYARD - DAYTIME

LENI, DOOMER, IESU, and ERIK RHODES are surrounded by the curious cloud-sheep, but mostly pay attention to THE GOLDEN FLEECE, petting it and trying to handfeed it tufts of grass.

SHAMS NURELAYNE is also with them, gazing at Iesu all the while.

ERIK RHODES

You'd make a really nice sweater. Yes, you would. Yes, you would.

IESU

Heh. In another life, I bet Akira would've made a good sheepdog.

DOOMER

You might be right. He probably would've had a blast chasing Almas's jellyfish around.

Leni then notices the fleece of one of the nearby cloud-sheep's darkening, and she feels the static shock.

LENI

Hey guys, I think the sheep are electric.

DOOMER

Does that make us androids now?

He then notices their fleece expanding and darkening, their baas deepening in bass like low thunder.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Stand back!

Everyone heeds her words as the fleece expands enough that the cloud-sheep are more cloud than sheep, the odd lightning spark visibly dancing across them like a long, thorny vine.

Iesu grabs hold of Calix's crook, breath caught in his throat as if he's being hit with *déjà vu*. It's soon replaced with a calm smile.

IESU

It's okay, you guys. You're safe.
This planet's only scary because
it's new.

Shams Nurelayne herself regards him like those words reached her.

The Golden Fleece's halo shines as its brethren all begin looking up and gradually levitate, their fleece expanding and softening as they become one big nimbus cloud.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Let's go, it's going to rain.

They both rush to join the others under an overhang as the cloud spreads and rain falls.

OZZY and PIROUZ dash over to where they are, huddling behind them.

PIROUZ

What's happening?

LENI

It's raining.

OZZY

Well, make it stop!

DOOMER

Didn't think sheep would have so much baggage. You don't think they're gonna flood the planet?

ERIK RHODES

Seriously, don't even go there.

TIGRIS then enters the scene, a hard grimace on his face. Ozzy and Pirouz stand at attention, and Shams Nurelayne shudders.

TIGRIS
What did you two do?

PIROUZ
Nothing, Tigris Khan.

OZZY
The sheep did this.

TIGRIS
The sheep?

Shams Nurelayne then stands up.

SHAMS NURELAYNE
Yes, the sheep water the ground and
bless it with life. He...

She looks at Iesu, who once again is confused at the action.

SHAMS NURELAYNE
Pardon, Calix entrusted them to me.
They're a gift for Pandora.

PIROUZ
They are?

TIGRIS
Gift or not, they've made a mess.

IESU
Excuse me, but it's not a mess. If
you give it time, you'll see it's
good for the land.

Tigris furrows his brows and nonetheless turns his attention back to Ozzy and Pirouz, who grin sheepishly.

TIGRIS
In any case, you two. Orders from
His Majesty. You are both to clean
up the debris of Lor Salviator's
planets.

Both Ozzy and Pirouz look just like The Scream by Edvard Munch. Erik Rhodes, meanwhile, nearly faints.

PIROUZ
We have to clean all of THAT up?!

OZZY
That's a whole new galaxy all by
itself!

IESU

Wait... What do you mean, the debris?

DOOMER

You guys actually hit his planets? That's a deathwish and a half.

TIGRIS

Pandora's affairs doesn't concern humans. Now you two, I gave you an order, do I now have to punt you forward?

PIROUZ

(simultaneously with Ozzy)

No, Tigris Khan!

Pirouz grabs hold of Ozzy and both of them are gone in a flash, complete with a "whoosh!" sound. Iesu steps forward.

IESU

Please, tell us. Why would you hit Lor's planets?

ERIK RHODES

Yeah, what gives?

Doomer, meanwhile, responds with Sailor Moon's "In the Name of the Moon, I will punish you" pose. Leni just about falls over in exasperation.

Iesu, meanwhile, remains fairly calm, as if once again experiencing major déjà vu just half a second before.

IESU

I'll admit, we don't know him like you do. Still, if it weren't for him, we wouldn't be here, or maybe even anywhere. Maybe you guys have beef going back years, but destroying planets, where people live...

His fist trembles, and he can't bring himself to finish that sentence. Nonetheless Tigris doesn't look affronted; in fact he seems to understand something he'd never say aloud.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, THRONE ROOM

LOR SALVIATOR sneezes. NYX CYTHERA tilts her head as LÉON also regards him.

LOR SALVIATOR

Your Highness, back to the matter at hand. Until I have sufficiently rebuilt my properties, I'm afraid
(MORE)

LOR SALVIATOR (cont'd)
 the displaced are going to need a
 place to stay. It is my
 understanding, however, that
 Pandora will only be able to hold a
 small portion of them.

LÉON
 Yes, that is true.

LOR SALVIATOR
 Your satellites will similarly also
 only house an even smaller number
 combined.

Léon clears his throat.

LÉON
 Yes.

LOR SALVIATOR
 My good Prince, you unfortunately
 did not think that far ahead, did
 you?

Léon shifts uncomfortably in his seat.

LÉON
 ...I regret to say that I agree
 with you.

Lor Salviator smiles tightly.

LOR SALVIATOR
 It's no matter. In the spirit of
 our newfound friendship, I am
 willing to extend a hand.
 Fortunately your reconnaissance
 work did not account for my
 residences in Cyaxares or Tuguldur
 or even any of The Moirais.

NYX CYTHERA
 As well as The Pleiades or the
 Geminids or even The Mousais.

Léon's eyebrow twitches as an uneasy smirk crawls across his
 face.

LÉON
 I see... I will have to have a word
 with the ocelot.

LOR SALVIATOR
 So to that end, Your Highness... I
 will provide shelter for them, but
 Pandora must be held liable for
 damages. I'm afraid you will have
 (MORE)

LOR SALVIATOR (cont'd)
to incur significant financial loss
in order to uphold your part of the
proceedings.

LÉON
Yes, yes, of course.

Though he's not angry, Lor Salviator's look could cut
through glass.

LOR SALVIATOR
You do realise what that means, do
you not, Your Highness?

Léon does his best to will any sweat to crawl back up his
forehead.

LÉON
...I do. Should we fail to repay
you...

He doesn't meet either of their eyes, he can't even bring
himself to finish that sentence.

Meanwhile, from the windows of the throne room, a bright
series of lights shines from the sky as the rain lets up. So
bright are the rays that even Léon's attention is caught, so
he rises from his throne and strides towards the window.

A lone pillar of light shining towards SHAMS NURELAYNE as
her diadem glows, and inside the pillar of light THE GOLDEN
FLEECE frolics towards her, looking freshly sheared. She
receives it with both arms.

LOR SALVIATOR
Well now, that's a wondrous sight.

NYX CYTHERA
Indeed, my love, what a wonderful
omen of days to come.

LÉON
Excuse me.

Léon then rushes out of the room into the courtyard while
Lor Salviator and Nyx Cythera look on, the latter leaning
against him like a proud mother looking on at her child.

EXT. PANDORA PALACE, COURTYARD - DAYTIME

By now everyone sees that in the muddy fields, little flecks
of gold are scattered about like sand glitter like baby
stars. TIGRIS's eyes nearly betray his heart at the sight,
so LÉON bursting through the door is a welcome distraction.

TIGRIS
Your Majesty.

LÉON

The fields...

ERIK RHODES

It's thanks to this guy.

He gestures to THE GOLDEN FLEECE, whom SHAMS NURELAYNE has put down. Nonetheless Léon approaches Shams Nurelayne.

LÉON

Light of My Eyes... This is your doing, isn't it?

Shams Nurelayne, in lieu of answering right away, looks at IESU with a smile.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

It wasn't me alone.

LÉON

I see... It was also the ones who call themselves Elpis...

He turns to DOOMER, ERIK RHODES, IESU, and LENI.

LÉON

You have done Pandora a great service, though I wonder if we truly deserve it.

Both Doomer and Erik Rhodes, and even Leni nudge Iesu in different directions.

LÉON

Nonetheless, The Golden Fleece is a good omen, and we shan't squander good graces. Now that our talks have adjourned, Elpis... Your presence is expected at tonight's banquet in your honour.

Doomer and Erik Rhodes both bow as formally as they know how.

DOOMER

We would be honoured.

ERIK RHODES

Pleasure's all ours.

Léon then regards Leni.

LÉON

Bride of The King's Shadow.

LENI

Yes?

LÉON

Your presence is also expected.

LENI

Yeah... Sure, I'll be there.

IESU

If it's all right... I might take a rain check. Thank you for the offering, but I want to make sure the sheep are okay.

DOOMER

Don't piss off royalty, Iesu.

ERIK RHODES

Yeah, I'm not missing the banquet.

LENI

No, guys... Let him. In fact I'll help, too.

Doomer and Erik Rhodes exchange looks, and Erik Rhodes sighs.

ERIK RHODES

All right, fine... Banquet's better when we're all reunited, anyway.

DOOMER

(to Léon)

Yeah... Thanks, though.

LÉON

I see... Earth customs are as such. Very well, then. As you were. Come, Light of My Eyes. You as well, Tigris.

TIGRIS

Yes, Your Majesty.

Shams Nurelayne, though clearly reluctant, nonetheless exits the scene with Léon and Tigris, leaving the others alone. Almost all at once they surround Iesu.

LENI

Sooooo...

DOOMER

Wanna catch us up to speed?

ERIK RHODES

Yeah, what the hell, Iesu?

IESU

I have no idea what you guys are talking about.

LENI

Come on! How can you not tell us about being involved with a potential queen?

ERIK RHODES

Nevermind that, why would you say no to a banquet so you can work with sheep?

IESU

I dunno, okay? I'm just trying to figure things out.

LENI

Figure things out? Is everything okay?

Iesu nods and kneels to pet The Golden Fleece.

IESU

This sheep came with me out of The Vault. It must've saved me. I don't even remember a lot of what I saw in there, because I don't think I could believe it if I did remember.

DOOMER

I mean... When you put it that way, I guess I also can't believe a lot of what happened to me.

ERIK RHODES

Tch. I'll never forget my experiences, no way. Would be a cold day in hell if I did.

LENI

Do you think Nicky and Tommy'll have the same experiences? If maybe... They'll also be saved?

Silence descends heavily upon them, broken only by the baa-ing of The Golden Fleece.

Meanwhile, a ways away, XIMENA nudges JAGUAR as they listen in.

XIMENA

Why'd you have to inherit something I can't hack? I love a good puzzle, too.

JAGUAR

Sorry for my bloodline.

She casts him a sidelong glance and sighs.

XIMENA

Look, even if it is your title, you can't just creep around in the shadows all the time. Those are still your friends, why do you have to make it harder on yourself?

Jaguar's about to make a dismissive expression but she points at him.

XIMENA

And don't say I wouldn't get it just to get me off your case.

Jaguar sighs, shaking his head.

JAGUAR

You really wouldn't, though.

Ximena rolls her eyes.

XIMENA

Whatever, I've had enough of your moping.

She grabs his wrist and attempts to pull him towards the others, but naturally he's too heavy. Both of them jump when it seems to work, only it's thanks to ILEXI pushing him forward.

ILEXI

I heard it all. I want you to introduce me to your friends.

JAGUAR

So go and say hi.

ILEXI

No, I told you, I want you to introduce us. You are one thing, but they're full humans. I want to talk to them properly.

XIMENA

Hell yeah, sister. C'mon, quit being a dork.

As they push him forward, TANA happens to see them as well and catwalks alongside them. When they near the group, Leni lights up.

LENI

There you are, Oscar. I swear, I keep missing you.

DOOMER

Yeah, man. You don't gotta be all mysterious.

ERIK RHODES

I think he's bored of us now.

IESU

Come on, I'm sure that's not true.

Jaguar clears his throat.

JAGUAR

Guys... These are Tana and Ilexi.
And these are Elpis. Most of them,
anyway. That's Doomer on drums,
Iesu on bass, and Erik on violin.

Ilexi does a half bow.

TANA

I never knew humans were so
handsome. Especially you...

She sashays over to Erik Rhodes, the movement so exaggerated that everyone has to try not to check out her perfect curves. For good measure, when she fully approaches him, she purrs, only for Ilexi to yank her back.

ILEXI

Excuse her. Her blood temperature
has always been high.

LENI

Even for you guys?

ILEXI

I will demonstrate.

She places a hand on Tana's head and it even steams up, complete with a "hissssss." Meanwhile Tana's body is caught between restraint and melting internally, a sight that makes both Leni and Ximena exchange a scandalous glance.

TANA

Really, now. I'm just being
friendly. You're such a stiff,
Ilexi.

Erik Rhodes, though still pink, remembers where and who he is, and so he extends his hand.

ERIK RHODES

Well, it's nice to meet you,
anyway.

For a moment he wonders if he regrets this when Tana looks like she wants to do something other than shake it, but Ilexi forces her to shake it properly.

Erik Rhodes, meanwhile, tries not to yelp at how tightly she's doing it, not to mention how hot. All he's thinking about is if he can still play the violin after this.

JAGUAR

Well... Why don't we go inside for a bit? Sit down, get to know each other?

XIMENA

Good thinking. Let's go.

She sneaks him a quick wink as she pushes him to lead the way. The Golden Fleece, meanwhile, glows just a little bit brighter.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, THRONE ROOM

THE PANDORANS all stand in wait and bow when LÉON enters with SHAMS NURELAYNE on his arm, complete with her sun diadem. She huddles close to him but nonetheless does her best to square her shoulders and not buckle under their hot glares.

The silence can freeze hell itself, but nonetheless Shams Nurelayne lets go of Léon's arm and faces everyone.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

It's good to meet you all again. I've been thinking a lot in my absence, and you were right before, I wasn't worthy.

Cara, Ilexi and Tana all smirk.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

I am just a simple girl from Anaïd. It's no wonder you didn't accept me before. But I've already come to love you all as my own people, and I don't want to be seen as unworthy any longer.

She then gestures to the window showing the courtyard where the cloud-sheep graze.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Pandora is historically mighty, but it's a new age. It is ailing. The cloud-sheep are a gift from Anthus. They will give Pandora water to quench her ancient thirst and soften her land. You are a proud people and I've long admired that, even when you were cold to me. I now want to help you in the only way I can, and I will not let any of you tell me otherwise.

She looks about ready to faint from saying all that, and then Koko claps slowly.

KOKO

Well, well. Your time away has made a woman out of you. I look forward to seeing what you do.

ILEXI

I suppose I can help you understand the terrain. The records will have to be updated regularly, so Ozzy and Pirouz, you will have to help with that.

TANA

I suppose Pandora is due for a makeover.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

Thank you. I want to rebuild Pandora alongside you. Until then... I won't call myself your queen. I'd rather be your equal.

She looks to Léon in silent apology, and he nods.

LÉON

Very well, Light of My Eyes. If that's your condition before accepting your crown.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

It is. I want to earn it on my own merit, not just have it handed to me. It's what I learned on Anthus.

For a moment there's a distant look in her eye as she remembers Calix, but it's not for longing. She touches the sun diadem on her head.

SHAMS NURELAYNE

I know it's what he would want, too. Until then, let me wear this.

LÉON

As you wish.

Now Shams Nurelayne regards Cara, arms crossed and frowning. She extends her hand. Cara looks away, still frowning, but nonetheless shakes it as well.

INT. PANDORA'S VAULT

The darkness of Pandora's Vault is pierced with flaming runes, specifically Hagalaz, Dagaz, Perthro, and reversed Mannaz. They are soon connected by an electric circle acting like a mandala-halo behind a silhouetted head, whose arms extend as far as they go.

The resulting CLAP literally sounds like thunder as THE EVIL EYE opens.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, VAULT CHAMBER

The FOURTH VAULT'S kaleidoscope lining now makes the FIFTH VAULT, a smaller cube this time made of iridescent pearl with a Tree of Life/Sefirot pattern, glinting cyan, pink, and mauve depending on the light trajectory.

ORPHEUS sees DOOMER, IESU, JAGUAR, LENI, XIMENA, LOR SALVIATOR and NYX CYTHERA clapping as he exits, ERIK RHODES enveloping him in a hug.

DOOMER
Congratulations.

IESU
Congratulations.

ERIK RHODES
Congratulations, Nicky.

JAGUAR
Congrats.

LENI
Congratulations.

XIMENA
Congratulations.

LOR SALVIATOR
Congratulations.

NYX CYTHERA
Many congratulations.

DOOMER
Sorry, couldn't resist.

LOR SALVIATOR
I am glad to see you are well, Sir Orpheus. It is a pleasure to formally make your acquaintance at last.

Orpheus simply nods, any words that would have even so much as bubbled into his head gone even quicker. Erik Rhodes scrutinises his face, brows furrowed.

ORPHEUS
What?

Erik Rhodes studies him harder.

ORPHEUS
What?

Erik Rhodes hisses internally, index finger curled before his lips like he's figuring out a complicated differential equation in his head.

ORPHEUS
 Seriously, what?

Finally, Erik Rhodes shakes his head and joins everyone else, who are all different flavours of exasperated. Orpheus notices that he had covertly given him his NOTEBOOK back.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTER SPACE

STARMAN awakens atop the sparkling cloud of sand, finding himself in a bubble of his own, ascending ever higher. He looks around and tentatively touches the inner walls of the bubble as if daring it to pop.

STARMAN
 Where am I?

SANDMAN (V.O.)
 Exactly where you need to be.

STARMAN
 No, I'm not. If I was, I'd be in front of Leni, asking her if she meant what she said.

SANDMAN (V.O.)
 Of course she meant what she said. It's you who would rather she lied to you.

STARMAN
 What the hell do you know?

SANDMAN (V.O.)
 Only everything.

Starman continues elevating, and the visible galaxies change, a black hole comes into view swallowing them up.

BACK TO:

INT. PANDORA PALACE, VAULT CHAMBER

THE BAND, LENI and XIMENA all face PANDORA'S VAULT with its sub-vaults, the SEVENTH VAULT small enough for just one person to pass through. Its exterior looks like a graffiti supernova, dotted with small Greek "phi" letters if you know where to look for them.

JAGUAR
 Almost everyone's here now. Just Starman left.

ORPHEUS
 He's not here?

JAGUAR

No. Looks like everyone was split up.

ORPHEUS

You were? Starman and I were together.

LENI

You were?!

She darts over to him, and he exchanges a brief glance with Jaguar and Ximena.

LENI

Then he's gotta be with you! But...

The Fourth Vault's interior lining is still a kaleidoscope trying to figure itself out. Leni looks about ready to break down until Jaguar grabs both of her shoulders.

JAGUAR

We're not out of the woods yet, Len. You'd best rest up some more in case.

XIMENA

Yeah, Leni. Take it from me, prophetic dreams take a lot out of you.

NYX CYTHERA

Miss Ximena and I will be sure to get you some herbs to restore your strength, my dear.

LOR SALVIATOR

They are right, Miss Leni. Please go and rest some more. I do have some important matters to discuss with everyone in the meantime.

Leni nods faintly as Ximena and Nyx Cythera lead her away, Ximena casting a final knowing look in Jaguar's direction as he waves them off. The remaining men all regard the layers of The Vault.

BACK TO:

EXT. OUTER SPACE

Starman, arrested in horror, watches as the bubble completely bypasses the black hole, with only the sand shimmering away into it.

STARMAN

Where are you even taking me?

SANDMAN (V.O.)
Exactly where you need to go.

STARMAN
Which is?

Sandman merely laughs, and Starman shields his eyes from a beam of light. The trail of sand not yet devoured by the black hole in the not-distance creates Leni's face. Starman tries in vain to reach out to her, stopped by the bubble.

The apparition of Leni soon gets a body made of the sand, her hair covering it like Lady Godiva, and the sand goes the extra mile and gives her swirling, infinite halos. She looks calm and delighted, mature.

STARMAN
Wait... I've seen that face before.

He tries to get the sand bubble to veer closer to her.

CUT TO:

INT. PANDORA PALACE, SPARE ROOM 1 - DAYTIME

THE BAND (minus Starman and LOR SALVIATOR are now convened in Jaguar's designated room.

DOOMER
So. The tour.

ORPHEUS
What about it?

ERIK RHODES
Tsk, get a load of this guy.

IESU
Hey, c'mon. He literally just came out of The Vault.

DOOMER
(to Jaguar)
Isn't that thing connected to you?
Can't you, like, use your superpowers and get him out or something?

ORPHEUS
Hah!

JAGUAR
I tried that. Just my luck that something like this hasn't happened before.

LOR SALVIATOR

Be that as it may, gentlemen... We must discuss the tour. Upon my own release, I have been communicating with our partners at the remaining venues, and I have told them that you all need some rest after the first leg. However.

Lor Salviator composes himself.

LOR SALVIATOR

We will have to say Sir Starman is currently incapacitated and wishes for some time away from the public eye. I'm sure in the meantime they'll celebrate your return, Sirs Jaguar and Orpheus.

JAGUAR

You sure you wanna include me, though? I left the band on my own.

ERIK RHODES

Consider it a brief cameo. Might be good for ratings.

LOR SALVIATOR

Indeed it will. Now come with me, gentlemen. I'm sorry to run you ragged so soon, but we do have a promise to the fans.

ERIK RHODES

Yeah, maybe now Nicky'll know what it means to actually be successful.

Orpheus smacks him upside the head.

ORPHEUS

Shut up, Erik.

Erik Rhodes shoots him a dirty look as he rubs his head, but if you look closely he's still searching for what's different about him before giving up.

LOR SALVIATOR

In any case, gentlemen, I shan't keep you. I will see you later, please rest until I need you again.

He's just about to open the door when from the other side, LENI and XIMENA open and enter.

LOR SALVIATOR

Ah, Miss Leni. You don't wish to rest?

Leni shakes her head.

LENI

I'm really not that tired.
Besides... I don't wanna be myself.

LOR SALVIATOR

Very well. Please.

He gestures for them to come in as he ducks out of the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTER SPACE

Starman once again tries in vain to get closer to her, as the sand grows more plentiful and "paints" her in.

STARMAN

That's not Leni... But it is... Ah,
I'm so confused.

SANDMAN (V.O.)

You're almost there.

STARMAN

She looked just like that before...
Was the most beautiful I've ever
seen her. And not because it'd been
so long.

The apparition of Leni sure enough now only looks like her insofar as it's ELPIS, who is played by Leni. Starman seems to understand.

STARMAN

Wait... I remember! When Lor took
us back to Earth, she called us
here. She called me here.

His smile leaves his face as he holds his head.

BACK TO:

INT. PANDORA PALACE, SPARE ROOM 1 - DAYTIME

THE BAND (minus Starman), LENI, and XIMENA are in Jaguar's designated room, chattering, the mood lifted even if it is somewhat artificially in the face of their missing friend.

DOOMER

It was the weirdest thing. Guy had
a whole crater in his chest and
these creepy cult robes and masks.
It was like looking at myself as a
theatre kid.

XIMENA

I still can't get over how good you
look now.

DOOMER

Magic of love, I guess.

ERIK RHODES

Only I'm cool enough to say that
with a straight face.

ORPHEUS

You look exactly the same, though.

ERIK RHODES

I hope so, you know how hard I had
to bathe to get that gunk off me? I
still feel it on my skin.

IESU

You wouldn't have liked where I
was, then.

LENI

Hey, Oscar. Why're you so quiet?

JAGUAR

I'm just listening.

ORPHEUS

Well, that's fine and all, but
can't you talk, too? You're making
us all look bad here.

Jaguar sits up and faces them all, a sad smile on his lips.

ERIK RHODES

Yeah, I mean... What's up with you
being here in the first place?
You're gonna be alien royalty or
something?

JAGUAR

Something like that.

IESU

You probably got the best deal out
of all of us, then.

JAGUAR

I guess. Might finally have
someplace to belong.

DOOMER

What d'you mean?

JAGUAR

I mean, you guys'll go on touring,
won't you? And when Starman comes
back...

At the mention of Starman, the room falls silent. Jaguar
scoffs.

JAGUAR

I mean, c'mon. It's not like there'll be a whole lot of point going back home for me.

IESU

But why're you talking like you won't be touring with us?

JAGUAR

Cuz I won't be. I left, remember?

DOOMER

Well... Yeah, but that doesn't mean you're not one of us anymore.

ERIK RHODES

I'm pretty sure there isn't a rule that you can't come along on the tour. Lor's spaceship is huge, it's not like you'll be in the way.

JAGUAR

I would be, though. Besides... I've been thinking I kinda wanna stay here. Even though it's all new to me... It feels right. And not because I can legally usurp the throne, either.

LENI

Oscar.

They hold a gaze for a few seconds, and Ximena notices.

JAGUAR

You'll all be fine without me. It's Starman you can't do without.

An uncomfortable silence descends upon them all, none of them willing to make eye contact until Doomer sighs.

DOOMER

Well, if we're gonna talk about this, I'd better come clean. I've gotta quit the band for sure.

LENI

Doomer.

DOOMER

I don't want my kid growing up without a father.

ORPHEUS

What kid?

DOOMER

Mine.

ERIK RHODES
You don't have a kid.

DOOMER
I'm gonna.

You can actually hear the clicking in the Rhodes's heads.

ERIK RHODES
(simultaneously with
Orpheus)
WHAT?

IESU
Congratulations.

DOOMER
I wanted to tell you all when
Starman's here, too, but, y'know.

LENI
Guys... Don't get sidetracked here,
we were talking about Oscar, too.

JAGUAR
It's fine, Len. Let them talk, too.

ERIK RHODES
Well... Without Starman, Jaguar,
and now Doomer... That's just the
three of us left. It won't be an
impossible setup, but it's still
gonna be disappointing for the
fans.

IESU
Actually... I kinda wonder about
that, too. Maybe I need a bit of a
break from the band at least. My
time in The Vault made me think
about a lot of things and I still
need to process it all.

XIMENA
Oh geez. This is one insider scoop
I did not think I would get.

ORPHEUS
Stalker's perks, just for you.

Leni's eyes linger on each individual band member, but most tellingly on Jaguar, isolated from them all. She grips her heart with her right hand, as if willing herself to swallow a pain that wants to bubble up.

LENI
Then, you guys... I'll stay here
with Oscar. Even if Tommy comes
back... I can't leave Oscar alone.

JAGUAR

Len...

XIMENA

Then you're serious about..?

Leni pauses, fully aware of the weight of everyone's gazes upon her, even touching her left ring finger.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTER SPACE

STARMAN is still caged in the sand bubble, looking at ELPIS.

STARMAN

Wait... But why would she call me here? Hell... Why can't I remember what she said?

He searches Elpis's face for answers, but all she does is regard him calmly but with endless love, and the sparkling sand creating her looks just like a galaxy.

STARMAN

Wait... She called me... Here? Like... Here, here?

Starman then sees Elpis's hands seemingly cupping the bubble, stopping it from soaring even more. Even though her light overwhelms his eyes, Starman tries his best not to even blink. The sheer difference in size between them, like she's looking at a butterfly in her hand, humbles him.

STARMAN

Leni... This whole time... Were you...?

Elpis smiles gently, her hands now more tightly cupping the bubble inside and pulling it towards her, as if about to apply it to her heart.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, THRONE ROOM

THE BAND (minus Starman) now congregate before the throne where LÉON presides, flanked by his usual retinue on either side, all of them stony faced and standing at attention. Only SHAMS NURELAYNE beams, almost literally.

The room is decorated with what's clearly borrowed from Lor Salviator's supply.

The band exchanges uneasy glances as they wield their instruments until JAGUAR clears his throat, casting a glance LENI and XIMENA'S way.

JAGUAR

This is a rather personal one, but we all know it. It's an original of mine. Here's... "Helene."

He straightens his back and strums the opening notes for what was initially known as "Lenore," but with a more noticeable rawness to it that catches Leni entirely by surprise.

As Jaguar plays, the rest of the band remains standing, Orpheus the only one knowing what's really going on. Léon leans forward, a thousand different thoughts and emotions all over his face as he grabs Shams Nurelayne's hand.

All the while Leni appears to silently piece the true story of the song together, and rubs her eyes though no tears have actually fallen.

When he's finished, Jaguar is greeted by a stunned silence, everyone much too affected to ruin it with applause. He gently scoffs, looking at Leni all the while.

Finally, Léon is the first to clap, and the other PANDORANS are quick to follow.

LÉON

Splendid, Son of the King's Shadow!
To think, you had such an ability
all this time, and to regale all of
us alongside your bride... Such a
strange tradition Earthlings have.

Jaguar smiles crookedly, as if to non-verbally say he doesn't deny that.

LÉON

Now then, take your seats. We shall
feast. Your friends are polite, but
you are wise to accept a wedding
banquet.

OZZY and PIROUZ take the band's instruments from them as CARA leads the way out. Ximena pushes Leni forward as Jaguar hangs back.

LENI

Oscar. That song...

Jaguar does his best to downplay his blush, though Leni has no chance of hiding hers.

LENI

Why didn't you tell me it was
yours?

JAGUAR

You'd've never believed me.

For a moment, Leni struggles to find her words.

LENI

I would've. I do. Oscar... I'm
sor--

Jaguar raises a finger to gently shush her, and she swallows everything she was about to say.

JAGUAR

Don't worry about that. And really,
if he comes back and you decide
that's what you want after all, I'm
not gonna stand in your way.

He chuckles as he gestures with his face to all the decorations.

JAGUAR

It's a shame to let a party like
this go to waste. Let's go join
everyone. Worry about the
particulars later.

Leni nods as she accepts Jaguar's offered arm and leaves with him.

EXT. PANDORA PALACE, COURTYARD - EVENING

The party still goes on, though it's gradually winding down. Out in the courtyard, ORPHEUS and IESU stand with goblets of wine, contemplating them more than drinking.

They are soon joined by DOOMER. THE GOLDEN FLEECE walks up to them, baaing for attention, and they're only too happy to oblige. Iesu in particular seems to appreciate its presence, and its halo appears to glow even brighter the darker it gets outside.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

Nestled inside both the sand bubble and ELPIS'S hands, STARMAN is nonetheless drowning in emotions much too big for his body.

STARMAN

Leni... Feels like forever since
I've seen you.

She looks at him with endless love still, and gently closes her eyes as she brings the sand bubble closer.

She puckers her lips and Starman closes his eyes, too, fully expecting a kiss...

Only for Elpis to blow the bubble away.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, SPARE ROOM 2 - NIGHT

LENI tosses and turns, eyes shut tight like her forehead is trying to eclipse the rest of her face. She groans as she opens her eyes.

OZZY creeps up from under her bed.

OZZY
Another bad dream?

LENI
I wish. Now I'm not dreaming anything. Besides, you know you shouldn't be in here, Ozzy.

TANA
Yes, Ozzy, get on out of here.

Leni jumps, seeing that TANA is in bed with her.

OZZY
No fair, Tana. Just because you're a girl.

Nonetheless he slinks out of sight just like a shadow. Before Leni can object, Tana pulls her close and kneads her head and shoulders.

TANA
Now, my dear, tell me your worries. What troubles you so close to the promised date?

Leni winces as Tana's fingers dig a little too close to some tender spots but nonetheless finds herself relaxing into it.

LENI
I didn't have a dream about him this time. What if...?

Tana pauses and pulls away just enough to look at Leni, her eyes glinting in the darkness just like the Cheshire cat's.

TANA
Maybe that's your heart speaking. You'd best listen to it and stop running away.

LENI
You think so?

She then caresses Leni's hair, tucking it behind her ear.

TANA
Sounds to me like you got caught in your own trap, my little kitten.

Leni's heart beats like a drum as Tana's face inches closer to hers, and then she finds herself pulled back by TANA from behind, who glares daggers at Tana, who frowns.

TANA

Honestly, you have the worst timing, Cara.

CARA

You're one to talk. The bride is my charge.

TANA

So you seek to be her little secret, do you? Too bad your touch is rougher than mine, you'd skin her alive.

The tension between them makes hell look cold, and Leni herself is stuck between different emotions. Tana sighs and leaves the bed.

TANA

Too bad, Cara got in the way this time. Could it be...

Her eye glints as she shoots Cara a knowing look.

TANA

Our little Caramel has found someone worthy of her sweet little heart?

Cara bristles at that nickname and leaps up towards Tana, who effortlessly evades her attempts to grab her and they go around the room in a one-sided catfight. All the while Leni watches and soon sighs.

LENI

I can't get used to this.

Nonetheless before long, despite the two Pandorans fighting, she falls asleep and ultimately Cara is defeated by Tana who leads her out of the room.

INT. PANDORA PALACE, SPARE ROOM 1 - DAYTIME

THE BAND (minus Starman) are now congregated in JAGUAR'S designated room, pretty much surrounding an invisible elephant, the air just as heavy around them.

ERIK RHODES

Well, I can't say I don't understand.

ORPHEUS

Me neither.

DOOMER

I totally get it. I'd do the same.

JAGUAR

Thanks, guys.

IESU

At some point, though, you're gonna have to tell her.

JAGUAR

I know.

ORPHEUS

I gotta admit, this brings me back. Those discussions in Ethics class.

IESU

Who knew they'd be useful now?

A knock sounds on the door, and Jaguar goes to answer it. LOR SALVIATOR enters and looks around, his jovial smile fading as he sees Starman is not there.

LOR SALVIATOR

Pardon me for intruding, gentlemen. As I've said previously, I have done my best to assure your fans of your safety, but they must see you themselves to be convinced. My words are but feeble currency.

ERIK RHODES

I guess we don't have a choice. We'll just have to make use of Nicky's power of bullshit after all.

ORPHEUS

What're you calling "power of bullshit"?

ERIK RHODES

That thing you do when you play.

ORPHEUS

You're just jealous you can't do it.

Before the cousins can launch into their typical bickering, Lor Salviator raises both hands as if to gently chide them against it.

LOR SALVIATOR

Furthermore... I hope you can pardon me for not doing this sooner. The attack on my planets rather made me think. Having it all
(MORE)

LOR SALVIATOR (cont'd)
 is rather pointless if you just
 collect. And so I got to thinking,
 why don't I put my money where my
 mouth is, as I believe your
 expression goes?

ORPHEUS
 Meaning?

DOOMER
 Oh yeah, I actually forgot you
 didn't pay us.

ERIK RHODES
 How could you forget something like
 that?

LOR SALVIATOR
 Because the tour is going to have
 to continue in earnest, with or
 without Sir Starman, and the
 journey will be arduous to say the
 least, and it's just bad business
 for me to not reward you for your
 work... I would like to give each
 of you your very own planet, to do
 with as you wish.

Every single band member BSODs at the mention of his very
 own planet. Iesu speaks up first.

IESU
 Thanks, Lor, but I don't think we
 need anything like that.

Erik Rhodes's glare shoots daggers at him, and even Orpheus
 looks affronted.

IESU
 I'm glad that you're starting to
 think about social responsibility.
 Why don't you put your planets to
 good use instead of giving them to
 us? House the displaced, for one
 thing?

ORPHEUS
 I mean, okay, he's got a point
 there. Gotta think about the bigger
 picture at the end of the day.

Erik Rhodes may as well be crying tears of blood on the
 inside.

DOOMER
 To be fair, a planet of my own when
 I'm gonna be the literal Man in the
 Moon one day is kinda greedy.

JAGUAR

And I got Pandora, pretty much, so
I'm good.

LOR SALVIATOR

My goodness, I'm moved by your
selflessness, gentlemen. In that
case, I will think of another way
to repay you. Now then, please make
the necessary preparations while I
make some calls.

As soon as Lor Salviator's back is turned, Erik Rhodes has to be stopped from shaking Iesu silly for cheating him out of his own planet.

EXT. PANDORA PALACE, COURTYARD - EVENING

THE BAND (minus Starman) stands on a makeshift stage in the fields, and they shield their eyes as camera flashes go off like Big Bang clusters. Doomer sits behind his drum, Iesu wields his bass guitar, Jaguar his guitar, Erik Rhodes his violin and Orpheus on keyboard.

Jaguar steps up to the mic and finds LENI in the crowd, standing beside XIMENA wearing a band shirt just like OZZY and PIROUZ are.

JAGUAR

Thank you all for coming out. I
know this isn't the lineup you
expected, but it nonetheless means
a lot to us that you're here.

The camera flashes get even more blinding, especially as we see that there aren't just millions on the ground, but in the sky, too.

JAGUAR

Now, without further ado, we're
going to start with a new song, in
honour of the royal engagement.
Here's "Light of My Eyes."

Leni and Ximena cheer alongside the audience, the sheer impact of the noise knocking the band back a bit. Erik Rhodes and Orpheus exchange a nod as they start off the song.

Orpheus playing seems to conjure a negative space where Starman would be, and both Leni and Ximena seem to see it even though no one else does. Leni grabs Ximena's hand.

The band plays with the notable absence of Starman's voice and guitar, though Orpheus's ephemeral apparition of him plays along with everyone as if on mute.

The audience nonetheless digs every second of it, even waving their arms. Above them all sit LÉON and SHAMS

NURELAYNE in splendid formal garb.

Shams Nurelayne reaches over for Léon's hand as she notices the cloud-sheep in the distance taking to the sky. THE GOLDEN FLEECE naturally joins them like a star falling in reverse.

As the band keeps playing, the clouds grow but nonetheless glow gold, and they stop when it rains gold, the water droplets reflecting rainbow bits when light hits them.

LÉON

Light of My Eyes... Are you seeing
what I'm seeing?

Some of the masses don't pay any special attention to the gold, while the band marvels at it falling down, when they're not flinching at the larger pellets hitting them. LOR SALVIATOR nods while holding an official Elpis umbrella.

Doomer resumes playing the drums and with a nod Erik Rhodes joins him with the first notes of "Seven Seals," soon joined by the rest of the band as the audience continues waving to the music.

When the rain of gold finally stops at the end of the set, the clouds part and the sun shines, showing the fields already beginning to grow greener in real time among the gold pieces.

Lor Salviator begins clapping first and the audience soon follows, the sound louder than thunder. He then stands on the stage.

LOR SALVIATOR

Thank you, everyone, for joining us
on this special spot on our tour. I
will let you know when we will
begin again in earnest. Please
ensure all your belongings are
accounted for. Due to space
limitations, there will be no
meet-and-greet.

Little by little the guests all trickle out, though of course not without grumbling a little. Léon then joins him on the stage.

LÉON

Pandora is grateful for your
patronage and goodwill. We look
forward to your return.

He bows to the applause of the audience as they continue trickling out. Iesu can be seen giving away any and all gold pieces around him to the guests. He then faces the band.

LÉON

Elpis. Pandora appreciates your gesture.

IESU

Thank you.

LÉON

You might be conformed to know that The Vault is a vessel of gifts. I didn't realise it before, but I do now. You were--nay, are--the greatest gift bestowed upon us.

He hesitates, his face almost as red as his hair.

LÉON

I hope you know that you can call Pandora home. Not only Oscar Khan, The King's Shadow, but all of you.

JAGUAR

Thank you.

LÉON

I look forward to meeting your leader when The Vault opens.

Jaguar glances at Leni, still fiddling with her left ring finger without any actual ring. He nods.

JAGUAR

Here's hoping he doesn't keep you waiting long, Your Highness.

The band laughs uneasily. Meanwhile, Lor Salviator then approaches Erik Rhodes, motioning for him to come to the side.

LOR SALVIATOR

Mr Rhodes, if I may impose.

ERIK RHODES

What's up?

Lor Salviator gestures for him to get closer, which naturally piques Orpheus's curiosity.

LOR SALVIATOR

I couldn't help thinking, the others not wanting their own planets is fine, but I have one that might be a good one for you.

ERIK RHODES

Go on.

LOR SALVIATOR

It's got water on it, safe for human consumption, in addition to potential for plant life. If you like, we can work on building on it however you like. Perfect for a family.

ORPHEUS

Family? So both of us?

LOR SALVIATOR

Absolutely. In fact, in hindsight, I suppose all that space just for you might be too much for you.

Erik Rhodes is about to object, but then he thinks about it.

ERIK RHODES

I know just the name for it then. So I'll never be alone.

ORPHEUS

Rhodesia?

ERIK RHODES

Hell no, I'm not calling it Rhodesia. What do you take me for? I got the perfect name for it.

ORPHEUS

Which is?

ERIK RHODES

Shut up, Nicky. You're lucky Imma let you on it out of the goodness of my heart and all.

ORPHEUS

Well, thanks for that, truly. It's an honour.

They both roll their eyes and scoff at each other, but Orpheus and Lor Salviator both exchange a wink as Erik Rhodes sees the future of his planet getting brighter and brighter, even like that last kiss on his forehead still feels warm.

INT. PANDORA'S VAULT

Now, in the darkness of The Vault, a GRIMOIRE opens by itself and a single page is torn out.

SANDMAN (V.O.)

Pardon the pun, old chap.

With a final laugh, the grimoire is gone with a firm SHUT!

INT. PANDORA PALACE, SPARE ROOM 1 - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

LENI jolts awake out of the bed, spooking OZZY, PIROUZ, CARA, TANA out of their hiding spots and JAGUAR awake on the floor on the opposite side of the bed.

JAGUAR

What happened? Another dream?

LENI

Let's go to The Vault. I think Tommy finally came out.

She doesn't seem to notice anyone else in the room, though Jaguar shoots them all a look as he follows her out of the room. Leni scurries almost like she's hunting prey, and even Jaguar can barely keep up with her.

Leni busts into the rooms of the remaining members of THE BAND to wake them up and they follow her and Jaguar. Erik Rhodes rubs his eyes as he trudges on, bumping into Orpheus.

ORPHEUS

Watch where you're going.

ERIK RHODES

(to Iesu)

Something's different about him, don't you think?

IESU

No clue.

Finally they arrive at the Vault Chamber, breathless, and Leni's smile fades.

LENI

What... The hell?

None of the Vaults are anywhere to be found. Jaguar's jaw tightens as Leni staggers back towards him.

ORPHEUS

Yeah, what the hell kind of plot twist is this so late in the story?

Erik Rhodes smacks him upside the head.

ERIK RHODES

Way to go, Nicky, you broke everything.

ORPHEUS

How the hell did I break everything? I didn't even leave my room until now!

He pulls out his notebook and sure enough, a page is missing and there's no visible writing, nearly making him faint.

DOOMER

Does this mean Starman got
Raptured?

Iesu shivers and crosses himself. Leni's bottom lip trembles
and XIMENA runs into the room through the crowd.

XIMENA

Dammit! Was I late?

JAGUAR

Looks like we all were.

She shoots Leni a look and Erik Rhodes pinches the bridge of
his nose.

DOOMER

Well, that's just great. He's more
than late now. He's missing.

LENI

Missing...

Her knees give out and Jaguar especially rushes to catch
her. Jaguar then sighs.

JAGUAR

This is all my fault, you guys. All
I wanted was for Leni to wake up.
See who she really was. We had no
idea this would happen to all of
you.

Leni regards him with eyes drowning in tears, and she then
faints out of view. When she comes to, she isn't Leni but
ELPIS, complete with her Godiva-esque golden hair and
infinite halos.

Everyone present tries not to ogle her noticeably generous
curves, especially since she appears naked.

ELPIS

My children, do not be afraid. This
was all according to my plan. Leni
herself knows it in her heart.

Ximena exchanges a brief knowing look with Jaguar.

ELPIS

Starman still has a long road ahead
of him that none of you can join
him on. But you can still light his
way forward with your own
strengths.

ERIK RHODES

With our music, you mean?

ELPIS

Precisely. You must have hope for him just as I've always had hope for you. It's about time I came out of The Vault...

She smiles softly at Jaguar.

ELPIS

And I have you to thank for seeing the truth. For opening the door for the others.

JAGUAR

It was the least I could do.

ELPIS

I should go back to Leni now. Please take care of her until Starman comes back.

She closes her eyes and crosses her arms over her chest like an X as she trust falls backwards out of the frame, and then Leni stirs awake, groaning.

LENI

I just had the weirdest dream... Wait, why am I here?

JAGUAR

Don't worry about that. Let's get you back to bed.

Before she can protest, he picks her up in a bridal carry and with a nod to everyone else, they leave. Once they're well enough away, just about everyone exhales like they've been sucking in their guts the entire time.

XIMENA

I was NOT ready for that, and I've seen her naked a bunch of times.

ERIK RHODES

She's got nothing on Eurydice, though.

ORPHEUS

Excuse me? Eurydice? As in, the wife of Orpheus, Eurydice?

IESU

Oh, man, not this again.

ERIK RHODES

The very same. I met her and you didn't. She was all over me.

DOOMER

No wonder Erebus couldn't get over her.

IESU

You're all gonna need a cold shower. Or maybe a straight up baptism.

They get their last bit of merriment out as they then sigh, the mood back to what it was before.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

Meanwhile, in outer space, a river of stars forms, though it can just as easily be glittering sand. Each individual grain sparkles, some of them coagulating, some remaining just where they are. Still others push others away.

The SAND BUBBLE drifts along like a planet on its own orbit, STARMAN in it all the while, asleep. He's completely oblivious to the fact that he's headed towards THE EVIL EYE, and even moreso that it's dissolving into sand, as if undoing its own composition.

SANDMAN (V.O.)

You are blessed...

The Evil Eye dissolves into an impossible amount of glittering sand-stars, and when they coagulate into what looks like a giant clump, they explode into a massive sandstorm supernova, finally waking Starman up.

From inside the bubble, all he can see no matter what is sand. It's outside of it that he sees the clouds, and there's no telling where he is.

If you look closely, within the clouds of sands you can see images, like a sand artist tells a story. SANDMAN'S hands shape the sand into stars. Starman is completely arrested by the sight, almost like he's beginning to understand what it all means.

SANDMAN (V.O.)

This is your stop. Mind the gap.

The sand bubble expands massively, almost like a miniature Big Bang, and in so doing it inverts; when Starman was initially inside, he's now outside, or on it, like in a real-life desert, all while golden sand gently rains down, almost too small to see.

He tries to reach out to grab the sun bearing down on him, and when he does succeed, the picture cuts out.

POST

CREDITS

EXT. DESERT - DAYTIME

An angelic choir vocalises the opening bassline of "Under Pressure" by David Bowie and Freddie Mercury as the desert stands still.

When the sung lyrics would normally start, though, the last note echoes.

Title card: To Be Continued