

EXT. STREET, RUINED CITY - NIGHT

The screen is black, accompanied by voice-over.

STILETTO (V-O)

We arrived, via transit gate, at
the outskirts of the ruined city,
searching for our beloved Diana.

Four WOMEN emerge out of empty air at the foot of an iron tower, flashing in and out of time, leaping onto the city street. The women are STILETTO, ANDROMEDA, CONSTANCE, and LUMINA. Together they form the tribe known as SAPPHIRES. They are garbed in deep blue jerkins and trousers, as well as steel-tipped boots, and carry on their belts a variety of weapons, small canteens, and food and medical pouches.

The four SAPPHIRES breathe heavily from their transit, and gaze at the blighted tableau before them.

The street is dim with intermittent street lighting, strewn with trash and pieces of fallen architecture. Shuttered building facades are covered in graffiti. In the far distance stand immense ruined towers and edifices, where intermittent lights can be glimpsed. In the sky, a cluster of moons illuminate clouds from which heat lightning flashes across the firmament. The moons vary in size according to their distance from the planet.

STILETTO holds up a tracker device. It lights up and makes a strange electronic pulsing noise. STILETTO turns her gaze back to the ruined metropolis.

STILETTO (CONT'D)

This is where they brought her.

CONSTANCE

What use could they have for her?

ANDROMEDA snarls and spits on the ground.

ANDROMEDA

Word of Diana's power of foresight
must've gotten out to the other
tribes.

The SAPPHIRES begin to cautiously proceed down the foreboding thoroughfare.

STILETTO carries the tracker out in front. It continues its eerie pulse.

LUMINA

They must have dragged her through
the filth and refuse of a million
alleyways.

ANDROMEDA

They'll die a million deaths if
anything has been done to her!

CONSTANCE gazes up and around.

CONSTANCE

She could be languishing in any
number of places. How can we find
her?

STILETTO

The tracker and the transit gate
brought us here. She must be close
by.

The SAPPHIRES disappear around a corner.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. STREET, RUINED CITY - NIGHT

The SAPPHIRES emerge around another corner, the tracker still
emitting its eerie pulse.

As they walk along, the tracker suddenly stops, bringing them
to a halt as well.

ANDROMEDA

What's wrong with it?

STILETTO

Damn, they must have found her
crystal.

CONSTANCE

We've lost her, haven't we,
Stiletto?

STILETTO

Constance, no, we will not abandon
our girl! The tracker brought Diana
here. She must be close by!

LUMINA

Wait!

CONSTANCE
What is it, Lumina? Do you hear
something?

LUMINA
Shh.

LUMINA quiets the others with her hand. The SAPPHIRES remain silent. From somewhere in the vicinity, the sound of muffled screams and moans can be faintly heard.

LUMINA (CONT'D)
The sound of suffering.

ANDROMEDA
Those bastards!

ANDROMEDA quickly runs off in search of the source of the sounds.

STILETTO
Andromeda!

STILETTO, CONSTANCE and LUMINA quickly follow.

Across the street, a bearded old man observes the SAPPHIRES as they disappear down the darkened avenue. This is CAPTAIN STONE.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. DEMON'S WELL, RUINED CITY - NIGHT

The SAPPHIRES follow the sound of distant suffering until they arrive at the entrance to a burned-out building. Here the sounds are loudest, yet still muffled, as if echoing from deep within a chamber.

ANDROMEDA takes an electric torch from her belt and shines it inside the building. The SAPPHIRES step forward cautiously and peer over the threshold.

A gaping hole sits just inside the doorway of the building, the sounds of torment reverberating upwards from deep within.

ANDROMEDA
Diana!

From behind the SAPPHIRES a voice is suddenly heard.

CAPTAIN STONE (O-S)
Looking for someone?

The SAPPHIRES immediately pivot, ANDROMEDA brandishing the electric torch.

CAPTAIN STONE stands squinting in the light of the torch, shielding his eyes with his hand. He wears a fiddler hat with worn trousers and a striped jersey. His whiskers are white and brown.

STILETTO

Our friend Diana. Do you know where she's being kept?

CAPTAIN STONE

Hopefully not down the Demon's Well.

ANDROMEDA frowns and lowers the torch.

CAPTAIN STONE rubs his eyes.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)

Much obliged.

The SAPPHIRES part as CAPTAIN STONE proceeds between them up to the threshold of the door.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)

The Well is one of many a chasm throughout the city, running many fathoms deep, straight down to Daemonium.

CAPTAIN STONE leans forward and peers down the Well.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)

The tormented souls held therein ne'er return to the light of day again.

ANDROMEDA

If Diana suffers down there, we will make the descent and bring her back.

CAPTAIN STONE turns to ANDROMEDA with a sympathetic smile.

CAPTAIN STONE

The Demons below ain't known for parting willingly with their charges.

ANDROMEDA steps forward, shining her torch once more in CAPTAIN STONE'S face.

ANDROMEDA

It will take more than a few irate
Demons to stop us from bringing
back our beloved girl.

CAPTAIN STONE once more squints and shields the light from
the torch with his hand.

CAPTAIN STONE

Didn't mean any disrespect, ma'am.
Just saying that getting your
friend back - if down there she
lies - won't be no easy task.

ANDROMEDA frowns and lowers the torch again.

CAPTAIN STONE rubs his eyes again.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)

Much obliged.

STILETTO

Do you have a name?

CAPTAIN STONE

Captain Stone, at your service.

STILETTO

How do we attain the bottom of the
Well, Captain Stone?

CAPTAIN STONE

With great difficulty.

CAPTAIN STONE turns and motions at the Well.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)

As you see, no one larger than a
cub could squeeze down that hole,
and the others in the city ain't
much bigger.

CAPTAIN STONE turns and grins at the SAPPHIRES.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)

Been said a piece o' gold will
bring the Demons up from below, but
sane folks usually go out of their
way to avoid such company.

LUMINA

Then we shall have to find another
way in.

CAPTAIN STONE

You sure your friend's been
dispatched down there to the
underworld?

STILETTO

All we know is that she was
kidnapped and brought to this city.
We followed her with our tracking
device until we lost contact with
her crystal.

CONSTANCE

Can we please move away from the
Well? The echoes are horrible.

CAPTAIN STONE

There a few folks in town who may
have seen her. Follow me.

CAPTAIN STONE leads the SAPPHIRES back out into the darkened
street.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. PARK, RUINED CITY - NIGHT

A group of around 100 MEN stand like an army before a grass-
grown platform encircled by a low stone wall, like a stage,
lit by fiery torchlight. The MEN wear a variety of dark coats
and trousers. They are racially diverse, but all wear a
variation of the same face paint design: black coal over the
eyes and down the cheeks. In the distance, more immense
ruined buildings rise up over the treetops into an
increasingly cloudy sky, intermittently lit by heat lightning
flashing across the storm clouds.

KING JAMUS comes forward on the stage and addresses his MEN,
wearing a black trench coat, his fingers bedecked with
jeweled rings. His face paint is more ostentatious than the
others.

KING JAMUS

I got an itch, and it needs to be
scratched!

The MEN cheer on their king.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)

An infestation and I want it
dispatched!

The MEN cheer even louder.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
 A bug has come to town! / Make that
 four bugs, ready to throw down! /
 They want my seer bitch, they want
 her back! / But the bitch is mine
 now, and that's a fact!

The MEN hoot and holler, throwing their fists in the air.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
 Here's what I want to hear before
 dawn: / I want to hear that these
 females are gone! / Down a Well, or
 strung up high! / Enter my city -
 you're begging to die!

The MEN erupt in cheers once more.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
 I sent my best boys to fix them,
 and they better succeed! / 'Cause
 you trespass in my town, you're
 gonna bleed!

The MEN erupt into riotous hollering and applause.

KING JAMUS surveys his army with a confident curl of the lip.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. STREET, RUINED CITY - NIGHT

CAPTAIN STONE leads the SAPPHIRES down another darkened
 avenue, flanked on both sides by dead, abandoned buildings.

CAPTAIN STONE
 You all have a name?

STILETTO
 We call our tribe the Sapphires.

CAPTAIN STONE
 Do you each have a name?

STILETTO
 Stiletto.

ANDROMEDA
 Andromeda.

LUMINA
 Lumina.

CONSTANCE

Constance.

CAPTAIN STONE

Glad to know ya, ladies. However, I advise keeping the word 'tribe' to a minimum while you're in town.

ANDROMEDA

And why?

CAPTAIN STONE

King Jamus runs this city, and he takes ill of any other tribes trespassing on his ground.

STILETTO

If it was he who stole our Diana from us, then he trespassed against us -

CONSTANCE

Look! There!

CONSTANCE points at something in the near distance. CAPTAIN STONE and the SAPPHIRES pause and halt.

An AGILE MAN with a sinister grin is perched atop the overhang of one of the boarded-up storefronts.

ANDROMEDA

And there!

A group of KING JAMUS' MEN emerge around the corner at the end of the avenue.

CAPTAIN STONE

Looks like King Jamus' boys have made ya, all right.

The AGILE MAN lurking over top of the storefront alights onto the street and joins the other MEN as they walk steadily towards the SAPPHIRES. They wear the same face paint as all of King Jamus' Boys.

AGILE MAN

Step aside, Stone, or we'll have you scourged again.

CAPTAIN STONE droops his shoulders and turns to the SAPPHIRES.

CAPTAIN STONE
'Fraid an old cub like me ain't
gonna be much help to ya's anyway.

STILETTO
Go find safety.

CAPTAIN STONE
Good luck. Hope we meet again.

ANDROMEDA shoots CAPTAIN STONE a suspicious glare as he
hurries off.

CAPTAIN STONE disappears around the corner.

STILETTO fixes KING JAMUS' MEN with a steely gaze.

STILETTO
And whom are we addressing?

AGILE MAN
Didn't you hear the old man? We're
King Jamus' Boys! And this is our
city!

STILETTO
That may be, but you're holding
someone dear to us.

The AGILE MAN laughs and glances back at the other MEN,
before turning back to mock the SAPPHIRES, making circles
around his nipples through his shirt.

AGILE MAN
Ooh, a dear one, you say. How
sweet.

ANDROMEDA
Set her free so that we may take
our maiden and leave this filthy
metropolis of yours!

AGILE MAN
Now-now, don't be nasty.

KING JAMUS' MEN once again laugh mockingly at the SAPPHIRES.

LUMINA turns at the sound of something behind them. She tugs
STILETTO'S garment.

LUMINA
There!

STILETTO, CONSTANCE and ANDROMEDA turn.

More of KING JAMUS' MEN are stalking the SAPPHIRES from the other end of the avenue.

LUMINA (CONT'D)
There's more at our rear!

ANDROMEDA
They can kiss my rear!

ANDROMEDA charges towards the group of MEN in the rear, LUMINA instinctively following her.

Meanwhile STILETTO and CONSTANCE charge towards the group of MEN in the opposite direction.

ANDROMEDA and LUMINA pull weapons from their belt, resembling cattle prods that extend, and steel knuckles with slashing blades.

The MEN take their stances and bring forth weapons of their own, including spinning chain whips with glowing implements.

The SAPPHIRES begin engaging the MEN in hand-to-hand combat.

STILETTO deflects and blocks blows from one of the MEN.

CONSTANCE falls to the ground, then swings her leg around and causes one of the MEN to hit the pavement, cracking his skull.

ANDROMEDA ducks and avoids the blows from one of the MEN, before bringing her steel knuckles around, slashing the MAN'S throat.

The MAN falls to the ground with hideous choking sounds, grasping his throat as blood gushes through his fingers.

LUMINA blocks the blows of one of the MEN. She stumbles and falls backwards onto the pavement.

As the MAN looms over her, LUMINA brings her cattle prod around and jams it into the MAN'S crotch, where it makes an electric buzzing sound.

The MAN screams, grabs his crotch, and crumples backwards onto the ground.

One of the MEN grabs STILETTO from behind. STILETTO struggles in his arms. In the struggle, STILETTO'S tracker device falls out of her belt.

The tracker device falls to the pavement, where it shatters.

The AGILE MAN moves in on STILETTO with a small hand saw.

AGILE MAN
I'm gonna slice you into pork
chops, pretty thing - feed you to
the townsfolk here -

CONSTANCE jumps on the back of the MAN holding STILETTO and digs her teeth into his ear. The MAN screams out in pain, momentarily loosening his grip on STILETTO'S arms.

STILETTO head-butts the MAN with the back of her head, and he stumbles backwards.

STILETTO dodges the hand saw as the AGILE MAN jabs it at her.

CONSTANCE calls out STILETTO'S name and pushes the stunned MAN forward.

STILETTO falls to the ground and quickly rolls out of the way as the stunned MAN falls forward into the AGILE MAN'S hand saw.

The stunned MAN screams in agony as the hand saw slices into his abdomen.

LUMINA struggles with one of the MEN swinging the glowing chain whips in both hands. One of the whips spins around LUMINA'S arm; the MAN yanks her down onto the pavement. LUMINA swings her steel knuckles around and slices the chain, taking that end for herself.

ANDROMEDA is trying to fend off two of the MEN, deflecting their blows and countering them with her prod and steel knuckles.

CONSTANCE breathes through a thin tube and sprays a stream of acid into the face and eyes of one of the MEN.

The MAN screams out in searing pain as his face scorches and bleeds.

The AGILE MAN continues to pursue STILETTO with the hand saw. CONSTANCE comes around and kicks the legs of the AGILE MAN from behind with her steel-tipped boots, causing the AGILE MAN to stumble forward onto his own hand saw. The hand saw slices his guts.

LUMINA and the MAN with the chain whips swing them at each other.

Having dispensed with the MEN on their end, STILETTO and CONSTANCE run to help ANDROMEDA and LUMINA.

The MAN with the chain whips once more ensnares LUMINA by the arm, just as LUMINA'S chain encircles his neck. The two tumble to the pavement.

STILETTO and CONSTANCE engage the two MEN fighting with ANDROMEDA.

ANDROMEDA goes to help LUMINA.

ANDROMEDA pounces on the back of the MAN with the chain whips, placing her knee in the small of his back and yanking him backward by the forehead, snapping his spine. ANDROMEDA then helps LUMINA up.

ANDROMEDA and LUMINA join STILETTO and CONSTANCE, facing off against the two remaining MEN. The two MEN (hereafter known as CYAN and GLOVER) look around at the casualties.

The other MEN are either dead or screaming in pain with their injuries and mutilations.

CYAN and GLOVER glance at each other and then turn to the SAPPHIRES.

CYAN
King Jamus already knows you've
entered his city!

GLOVER
And he'll have you hags hammered
into the ground!

CYAN and GLOVER make obscene gestures at the SAPPHIRES before turning and running off.

ANDROMEDA comes forward from the group.

ANDROMEDA
Give us back our girl!

CYAN and GLOVER disappear around a corner.

The SAPPHIRES breathe heavily, their faces cut, bruised and sweaty, clutching their sore limbs.

STILETTO
If we're to find Diana, we'll have
to let them lead us to this king of
theirs.

LUMINA
Let us stay to the shadows as we
follow.

The SAPPHIRES sneak off after CYAN and GLOVER.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. STREET, RUINED CITY - NIGHT

The SAPPHIRES emerge furtively around a corner, keeping to the shadows in the low-lit street.

CYAN and GLOVER can be seen further down the street, walking quickly, when they are unexpectedly accosted by DRAKEN and TIMUS, two of King Jamus' guards.

The SAPPHIRES stop and pull back into a darkened doorway.

After conversing with DRAKEN and TIMUS for a moment, CYAN and GLOVER bow their heads and are escorted away into a decrepit building at the end of the block. TIMUS shuts the door behind them.

The SAPPHIRES pick up their step and follow.

INT. DECREPIT BUILDING, RUINED CITY - NIGHT

The SAPPHIRES kick open the front door and peer inside.

A vacant doorway stands in the opposite wall, and is the only other means of egress from the room. All that can be seen through the inner doorway is darkness.

STILETTO

Could that be a transit gate?

CONSTANCE

A transit gate could drop us anywhere - into an ocean on the other side of the world.

LUMINA

Those two scummers were escorted by the guards into this building. It's probable they were being taken to their beloved king.

ANDROMEDA approaches the doorway.

ANDROMEDA

It could be a gate, or it could lead to a tunnel, or maybe the rotters are on the other side of that wall.

ANDROMEDA turns to the other SAPPHIRES.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)
I say we try it.

STILETTO
Andromeda, without a map, a tunnel
could lead us anywhere. Without the
tracker -

ANDROMEDA
So we just give up on Diana, then?

STILETTO
I didn't say that.

LUMINA
Stiletto, I think Andromeda is
right. They'll lead us to our girl.
I'm certain of it.

STILETTO turns and gazes out into the street beyond.

STILETTO
Who would have thought a city could
house so many jackals.

STILETTO turns around with a beleaguered sigh and stares
resolutely at the inner doorway.

STILETTO (CONT'D)
Stay tight. I'll go first.

As seen from the side, the SAPPHIRES, one by one, leap
through the doorway.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. KING JAMUS' LAIR, RUINED CITY PARK - NIGHT

The planet's multiple full moons are being slowly devoured by
the storm clouds, as lightning flashes are now followed by
rumbling thunder. As seen over the treetops, massive ruined
city structures are already being claimed by nature.

CYAN and GLOVER are escorted by DRAKEN and TIMUS into the
graffiti-covered ruins of a former power station. The
interior contains derelict industrial machinery, and is lit
by flaming torches and shafts of lightning flashing through
the vacant windows and doorways. The torches lend a medieval
quality to the scene; they line the way as CYAN, GLOVER,
DRAKEN and TIMUS turn a corner. Other GUARDS stand nearby.

KING JAMUS sits upon a throne at the end of an open-air torchlit corridor. The torch flames dance in the increasing winds.

DRAKEN and TIMUS announce CYAN and GLOVER'S names. CYAN and GLOVER approach and kneel, each on one knee, bowing and placing their fists to their foreheads.

KING JAMUS regards them with a steely frown.

KING JAMUS
The news you bring better be good.
/ You ice them bitches out of my
neighborhood?

CYAN
They were armed with weapons unseen
before, sire.

GLOVER
They're better fighters than we
thought, sire. There may only be
four of them, but their combat
skills are high level -

KING JAMUS rises from his throne in a rage, and addresses his GUARDS while pointing at CYAN and GLOVER.

KING JAMUS
Look at the hermaphrodites I got
for a crew!

KING JAMUS towers over the still-kneeling CYAN and GLOVER.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
What did I send you out to do? /
Did I send you out to admire their
skills? / I sent you out to bring
me four kills!

CYAN and GLOVER plead in desperation.

CYAN
Give us a larger army -

GLOVER
We can overwhelm them, sire, and
take the little whores out!

KING JAMUS laughs with contempt, waving a jewel-covered hand at CYAN and GLOVER.

KING JAMUS
Little bitch-ass shifts / giving me
the fits . . .

KING JAMUS addresses all assembled in a declarative voice.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
So any old tribe can enter my city,
/ so long as they're slim and
pretty? / I don't remember putting
out the welcome mat, / and yet here
my boys get laid down flat!

KING JAMUS practically spits the last word at the still-kneeling CYAN and GLOVER.

KING JAMUS snaps his fingers at DRAKEN and TIMUS.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
Shove these two down a Well! / Feed
'em to the Demons of Hell!

CYAN and GLOVER quickly stand, crying and pleading.

CYAN AND GLOVER
No, sire! Please! Mercy, sire!
I'll take them out! Give me
another chance!

DRAKEN and TIMUS take CYAN and GLOVER and begin dragging them away as CYAN and GLOVER struggle and plead for mercy. DRAKEN pulls out a police baton and stuns them both on the back of the neck. DRAKEN and TIMUS continue dragging the now-unconscious CYAN and GLOVER away.

KING JAMUS sighs in frustration and once more addresses the GUARDS.

KING JAMUS
I put a lot of labor into getting
here. / Maybe I didn't make myself
clear. / So I'll say it louder for
those in back - / the seer bitch is
mine, and that's a fact!

The GUARDS glance at one another with uneasy frowns.

KING JAMUS sighs in frustration again, rubbing his forehead as he sits back down on his throne.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
Yeah, I extract as much as I give.
/ But that's just how we got to
live.

KING JAMUS pauses and thinks for a moment.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
Looks like I got no choice, /
seeing as those females took out my
boys.

KING JAMUS turns and gazes out at the looming tempest.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
Lightning's putting on quite a
display.

KING JAMUS turns and addresses the GUARDS.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
Someone go fetch me Dominae.

SCREEN WIPE.

INT. UNDERGROUND PASSAGE, RUINED CITY - NIGHT

The SAPPHIRES proceed down an underground arched tunnel or catacomb, their electric torches being the only means of illumination. Their breathing is loud in the confined passageway.

STILETTO
We can only assume we know which
direction they took.

ANDROMEDA
We'll find them.

CONSTANCE
Why couldn't it have been a transit
gate?

CONSTANCE comes to a stop, bending over and breathing heavily, her hands on her knees. This brings the others to a stop as well.

CONSTANCE sits down on a ledge and looks up at the others in the dim light.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I need to rest.

ANDROMEDA
Constance, we don't have time to
rest.

CONSTANCE
I don't have the same adrenalin
levels as you!

STILETTO
Constance, here -

STILETTO takes a gel capsule from the medical pouch on her
utility belt.

STILETTO (CONT'D)
Take this, it's a cortisol gel.
It'll help bring your energy back.

CONSTANCE takes the pill and washes it down with water from
her canteen.

ANDROMEDA
Conserve your water, Constance. If
there's a water source in this
wretched city, it's probably
tainted.

CONSTANCE fixes ANDROMEDA with an angry glare.

CONSTANCE
I'll be fine, Andromeda.

As CONSTANCE puts her canteen away, LUMINA puts her hand up
to the other SAPPHIRES.

STILETTO
What is it, Lumina?

LUMINA addresses them in a whisper.

LUMINA
Wait, listen!

The sound of male voices can now be heard echoing from
further down the tunnel. The SAPPHIRES continue to speak in
whispers.

ANDROMEDA
Are they moving this way?

LUMINA
Yes!

STILETTO
Extinguish the lamps!

The SAPPHIRES turn off their electric torches, plunging them
all into darkness.

STILETTO (CONT'D)
Up on the ledges!

After a few moments in darkness, electric torchlight can be seen wobbling around the far corner. The laughing voices belong to DRAKEN and TIMUS.

DRAKEN
Can you imagine those two waking up down there in Daemonium with their buttoholes getting skewered?

TIMUS
I don't know why they didn't just off themselves before we got hold of them, or why they didn't flee the city altogether.

DRAKEN
Nah, King Jamus would've sought them out. He loves to make examples out of those who fuck up -

As DRAKEN and TIMUS reach the area where the SAPPHIRES are hiding, TIMUS interrupts DRAKEN with his hand.

TIMUS
Hang on.

DRAKEN
What?

TIMUS
I think there's somebody here -

TIMUS raises up his electric torch, illuminating ANDROMEDA as she growls and leaps off the ledge at him.

DRAKEN and TIMUS drop their electric torches, which go out, plunging the corridor into darkness. The sounds of shouting and scuffling are heard for a few moments.

STILETTO activates an electric torch. We can now see DRAKEN and TIMUS held with their arms pinned from behind by ANDROMEDA and LUMINA.

STILETTO and CONSTANCE hold their blade-tipped steel knuckles up to DRAKEN and TIMUS' throats.

STILETTO
Where is our girl?

DRAKEN
What girl?

STILETTO
Don't think you can fool us!

TIMUS
You sluts think we'll give up King
Jamus' seer?

STILETTO lowers her knuckles down to TIMUS' crotch.
CONSTANCE does the same with DRAKEN.

STILETTO
If you want to keep your balls you
will.

TIMUS
How about we put them in your
mouth, whore!

STILETTO
How about we put you on your knees,
instead!

The four SAPPHIRES force DRAKEN and TIMUS down onto their
knees.

STILETTO (CONT'D)
I'll ask you again - where is
Diana?

DRAKEN and TIMUS purse their lips in reply.

STILETTO sighs in frustration.

STILETTO (CONT'D)
You're not afraid of what we'll do
to you if you don't give us what we
want?

DRAKEN
We're more afraid of what King
Jamus will do to us if we do!

ANDROMEDA
Let's take these vermin above
ground. More of their kind could be
on the way.

DRAKEN and TIMUS begin shouting for help.

STILETTO and CONSTANCE take out their prods and zap DRAKEN
and TIMUS into unconsciousness.

STILETTO
Drag them back the way we came!

ANDROMEDA

With pleasure.

The SAPPHIRES drag the unconscious DRAKEN and TIMUS roughly back down the tunnel, the bobbing of their electric torches diminishing into the darkness.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. BUILDING ROOF, RUINED CITY - NIGHT

DRAKEN is awakened by thunder with bleary, confused eyes as his face is pelted by a gentle rain, smearing his face paint.

From DRAKEN'S POV, storm clouds, lit by lightning, hang in the sky but look slightly off.

TIMUS wakes up as well, as raindrops slide up his face instead of down. With the realization of their situation, TIMUS and DRAKEN start screaming.

We now see that DRAKEN and TIMUS have been hung upside down over the side of a building with cords around their ankles and their hands tied behind their backs.

The SAPPHIRES have their feet pressed up against the lip of the roof. One pair holds DRAKEN'S cord while the other pair holds TIMUS' cord, all with black-gloved hands.

DRAKEN

You crazy hags!

ANDROMEDA

These cords are getting wet! We can only hold them so long!

STILETTO

Take us to Diana or we drop you to the pavement!

TIMUS

They're holding her in the Theater of Skulls!

DRAKEN

Timus, shut the fuck up!

STILETTO

What's the fastest route to the theater?

TIMUS

Transit gate! How else?

DRAKEN

Timus, I'm gonna rat you out to
Jamus, I swear!

TIMUS

Fuck you, Draken.

LUMINA

How do we find the correct transit
gate?

DRAKEN

Find it yourself!

TIMUS

If anything happens to us, you'll
be in a world of -

The SAPPHIRES allow the cords to slacken.

DRAKEN and TIMUS scream incoherently as they jerk slowly
downwards.

TIMUS (CONT'D)

All right, all right, we'll show
you which gate!

ANDROMEDA

You cretins are smarter than you
look.

While DRAKEN and TIMUS struggle with their binds and continue
to mouth off to each other, the SAPPHIRES laboriously hoist
them back up onto the roof.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. DEMON'S WELL, RUINED CITY - NIGHT

CAPTAIN STONE stands beneath a gnarled tree next to one of
the city's larger Demon Wells, situated in a vacant lot. The
Well exhales its muffled, distant cacophony of souls
suffering in pain, which mingles with the sound of the rain
and thunder.

CAPTAIN STONE grins to himself in thought, scratching his
beard, rainwater dripping off the brim of his hat. He glances
upwards, rainwater now pelting his face. He nods to himself.

CAPTAIN STONE

Yep, ladies'll be the ruin of me.

CAPTAIN STONE turns towards the Well. He removes a large gold coin or amulet from his pocket and leans over the gaping, black orifice.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)
Come on up! Got a trade to offer!

CAPTAIN STONE drops the piece of gold down the Well.

CAPTAIN STONE'S smile is replaced by a steely frown. He backs away from the hole.

The muffled sounds of suffering bellowing up from the Well are superseded by echoing sounds of tittering and clawing growing louder.

CAPTAIN STONE continues to gaze hard at the Well with a steely frown.

The clawing and tittering sounds draw louder and closer.

CAPTAIN STONE does not tremble or flee. He stares at the Well without fear.

As the sounds of clawing and tittering grow even louder, a thin, pale, ghastly wet arm, crowned with a five-fingered claw, emerges from the Well in a flash of lightning, and grasps the earth surrounding it.

SCREEN WIPE.

INT. KING JAMUS' LAIR, RUINED CITY - NIGHT

KING JAMUS stands frowning with his back to the interior, staring out at the rain, flanked by two of his GUARDS.

KING JAMUS
Rain . . . or to reign? / Fucking
hell, this life is a pain. / The
seer bitch said "the rain will
fall". / I asked what else, but
that was all. / Is that why I
brought her here? / To pierce me
with riddles like a fucking spear?

KING JAMUS spits on the ground.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
Shit, I should just feed her to the
Demons below -

DOMINAE'S laughing voice is heard from behind.

DOMINAE (O-S)
Then what will you know?

KING JAMUS and the two GUARDS turn abruptly with weapons drawn at the sound of DOMINAE'S voice.

DOMINAE drops down onto the floor from one of the steel girders overhead. She wears a sleek black unitard and thigh-high black boots, and smiles sardonically at KING JAMUS.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
Oh, my liege, the many times I've
told you - never stand with your
back unguarded.

KING JAMUS sighs and rubs his forehead. He angrily gestures at the GUARDS to leave them. The GUARDS walk off, frowning at DOMINAE.

KING JAMUS
I got a lot on my mind, Dominae, I
ain't thinking straight. / Things
are getting messy, and the hour's
getting late.

DOMINAE and KING JAMUS start slowly circling one another, DOMINAE with a placid smile, KING JAMUS with a wary frown.

DOMINAE
So yet again, you brought me in
from the cold, to clean up the
mess.

KING JAMUS
My boys let me down, what can I
say? / You think I want it this
way?

DOMINAE
You and your boys have ruled this
city without challenge for eons, my
liege.

DOMINAE'S placid smile changes to a smirk.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
Perhaps your boys have gotten -
soft?

KING JAMUS points a threatening finger at DOMINAE.

KING JAMUS

Don't sneer at me - you're all I
got! / Invaders are in town and
they're tougher than we thought!

DOMINAE is unfazed by KING JAMUS' threat and continues to smirk.

DOMINAE

Yes, I heard reports through the
usual channels. What makes you
think I can do any better with
them, my liege?

KING JAMUS stops and pauses, glaring at DOMINAE.

KING JAMUS

We think they're like you, with
special talents. / From when the
catastrophe knocked the world out
of balance. / Heightened strength,
that sort of thing. / Heightened
senses, heightened everything!

DOMINAE pauses as well and ponders a moment.

DOMINAE

I suppose I should feel flattered.

KING JAMUS

Don't. Just take them out! / You'll
be rewarded -

DOMINAE interrupts KING JAMUS with a giggle.

DOMINAE

That much I doubt.

KING JAMUS glares at DOMINAE.

DOMINAE affects a contrite expression devoid of sincerity.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)

Where are they now?

KING JAMUS

Reports say they've gone to rescue
their friend. / And that, my dear,
is where this shit's gonna end.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. TRANSIT GATE, FOREST - NIGHT

DRAKEN and TIMUS stumble forward, flashing in and out of time in front of a ruined stone arch. As they're hands are still bound behind their backs, they tumble onto the wet ground. The rain has ceased and the forest is lit fitfully by the re-emerging moonlight.

The SAPPHIRES leap forward, flashing in and out of time in front of the same ruined arch. They land and slip as well on the wet forest floor.

ANDROMEDA

Wonderful - you've brought us to the middle of nowhere.

TIMUS

Damn it, the safest way to get to the theater is by water! Across the inland sea! That way!

TIMUS gestures in the direction of the sea with his head as best he can. DRAKEN, meanwhile, is struggling to get up off the ground.

DRAKEN

Way to go, Timus. Maybe they'll take you on as their servant boy.

LUMINA

In your dreams.

STILETTO

Why can't the theater be reached by land?

TIMUS also struggles to get up off the ground.

TIMUS

It - shit! - yeah, you can get there by land. If you want to get slaughtered by the Woodcutters first.

STILETTO

Woodcutters?

DRAKEN

You'll be invading their territory. They'll hack you to pieces before you even know they're there.

TIMUS
Your weapons and skills won't save
you. Even King Jamus won't fuck
with the Woodcutters.

STILETTO
Damn.

STILETTO turns to the other SAPPHIRES.

STILETTO (CONT'D)
All right, we go by water. We need
to conserve our strength for what
may lie ahead at this theater of
theirs.

ANDROMEDA
Then I guess we swim for it.

DRAKEN and TIMUS both laugh.

DRAKEN
Seriously?

TIMUS
It's seven nautical miles at least.
And you'll have to swim through the
Graveyard of Battleships.

DRAKEN
You girls will be lucky if you get
there without drowning your pretty
little heads.

ANDROMEDA comes over and smacks DRAKEN so hard across the
face that he slips and falls back on the ground.

ANDROMEDA
Vile filthy husk!

STILETTO comes over and grabs TIMUS from behind by the wrists
and collar.

STILETTO
You've been most helpful. Now back
you go to that sewer of a city of
yours. Constance -

CONSTANCE comes over and lifts DRAKEN up sharply by his
collar and his bound wrists.

DRAKEN

Wait, do you - ow, fuck! - do you realize what Jamus will do to us if he finds out we helped you -

STILETTO

Sorry if we seem ungrateful, but your king is your problem. DRAKEN and TIMUS No! No!

CONSTANCE and STILETTO thrust DRAKEN and TIMUS at the ruined arch. In a moment, DRAKEN and TIMUS flash in and out of time, and are gone.

STILETTO turns to the SAPPHIRES.

STILETTO (CONT'D)

Well, then - it looks as if we'll have to build a boat.

ANDROMEDA nods while LUMINA looks up and around at the dim forest. CONSTANCE wipes sweat wearily from her forehead.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. DOCK, INLAND SEA - NIGHT

Near a dock which stretches out into the darkness, ANDROMEDA and LUMINA kneel over a series of thick tree limbs, lashing them together with vines.

STILETTO and CONSTANCE laboriously drag more thick tree branches from the woods.

CONSTANCE breathes heavily and pauses a moment.

STILETTO gives CONSTANCE a concerned look.

STILETTO

Constance, do you need another cortisol gel?

CONSTANCE looks back at STILETTO with a slight expression of annoyance.

CONSTANCE

I'll be all right, Stiletto.

CONSTANCE sighs and begins dragging the branch anew.

STILETTO frowns and follows her.

CONSTANCE and STILETTO approach ANDROMEDA and LUMINA and lay their tree branches down next to the other ones.

ANDROMEDA

We're going to need a lot more vine
-

LUMINA

Wait! Something's approaching.

The SAPPHIRES step onto the dock and walk towards the bowrider as it pulls up. They peer into the boat to see who is piloting it.

CAPTAIN STONE turns the motor off and grins at the SAPPHIRES, lifting his cap.

CAPTAIN STONE

Evening, all. Glad to see you alive
and well.

STILETTO

We're glad to see you, too,
Captain. We could do with safe
transit across the sea, to the
Theater of Skulls. Are you familiar
with the site?

CAPTAIN STONE

Quite familiar. My fishin' boat is
here at your service.

ANDROMEDA steps forward with a frown.

ANDROMEDA

Wait - how did you know we would be
here?

CAPTAIN STONE

Oh, I was able to transact
information of value -

CAPTAIN STONE turns and gazes out into the darkness with a
strange grin.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)

- in exchange for something else of
value - well, to me, anyway. From
that I kinda assumed you'd be
heading in this direction.

ANDROMEDA

All very convenient.

STILETTO
Andromeda?

ANDROMEDA turns to STILETTO, LUMINA and CONSTANCE in confidence.

ANDROMEDA
He led us into a trap once already.
How do we know he won't do it
again?

STILETTO frowns and thinks for a moment. She then turns to address CAPTAIN STONE.

STILETTO
What can we expect at this Theater
of Skulls?

CAPTAIN STONE
Well, it was explained to me that
your friend is hidden therein.

ANDROMEDA
Who told you?

CAPTAIN STONE
You'll have to forgive me, my lady,
but I'm not permitted to disclose
such particulars at this time. To
be sure, those involved are quite
familiar with the situation at
hand.

The SAPPHIRES fidget a moment.

STILETTO
Very well, then, you may take us to
the site.

ANDROMEDA
But at the first sign of collusion
between you and Diana's captors, we
toss you into the sea.

CAPTAIN STONE nods, still grinning.

CAPTAIN STONE
My lady, that's fair enough for me;
though you severely overestimate my
influence in the hierarchy. Shall
we?

STILETTO, ANDROMEDA, CONSTANCE and LUMINA pause a moment
before nodding cautiously to one another.

The SAPPHIRES alight onto CAPTAIN STONE'S boat.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. CAPTAIN STONE'S BOAT, INLAND SEA - NIGHT

The boat skims across the placid surface of the inland sea beneath the light of multiple moons.

The SAPPHIRES sit across from one another on benches behind CAPTAIN STONE as he pilots the boat. They share a small concentrated meal from their food pouches.

CAPTAIN STONE addresses them over the sound of the motor in a rambling fashion.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)

Yep, us old folk can still remember how things were before the catastrophe.

Back then there weren't none of them queer transit gate thingies, or holes opening up down to the pit o' Hell. Some folks think that the reason some can hear farther than others, or got more stamina and strength than others, is because of what happened.

STILETTO

How does King Jamus hold so much sway over the ruined city?

CAPTAIN STONE

He controls the supply chain for the folks still in town.

CONSTANCE

Why don't they leave?

CAPTAIN STONE

A lot have left, to gosh knows where. There ain't much outside the city in walkin' distance that's worth building a new home. And folks are too scared to try them transit gates and wind up in a worse part of the world with no way back.

ANDROMEDA

Worse than that city?

CAPTAIN STONE chuckles.

CAPTAIN STONE
Well, can't rightly say. I've
always been here, and I guess here
is where I'll stay.

STILETTO
Why did Jamus take Diana from us?

CAPTAIN STONE
He's scared, you see. None of his
people can see what's to come; so
when he heard about your friend, I
guess he figured he was entitled to
bring her here, to calm his fears.
'Course I've never bothered to ask
him . . .

STILETTO
He's a coward then.

CAPTAIN STONE
Well, he does get his boys to do a
lot of his dirty work for him.

ANDROMEDA
Diana is coming back with us, even
if we have to plow through everyone
of his boys to save her.

CAPTAIN STONE
She sounds like a very special
lady.

The SAPPHIRES smile in recollection

STILETTO
Diana is our teacher.

LUMINA
Our dreamer.

ANDROMEDA
Our champion.

CONSTANCE
And our joy.

CAPTAIN STONE
Well, then, let's get you to her.

CAPTAIN STONE pushes the boat forward through the moonlit ripples of the sea.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. PARK, RUINED CITY - NIGHT

DOMINAE sits upon the grass-grown platform encircled by a low stone wall, where earlier King Jamus addressed his men. It remains lit by torchlight, but DOMINAE is alone. In the distance the immense ruined buildings rising up over the treetops are lit by the moons as they emerge from the receding storm clouds.

DOMINAE sits upon the wet grass, her chin on her knee, pensively thinking aloud in soliloquy upon the grassy stage.

DOMINAE

She prophesied to me, too. She told me the One I've been waiting for is soon to arrive. She's almost here, the seer said. Almost here . . .

DOMINAE rises up from the grass and stands, staring into the distance.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)

How could the seer have known that I await - that I have always awaited - the arrival of the One? The One who is to answer my passion's release - the One who is to bring me ardor - to whom I have already surrendered - the One who will match me, blow for blow, cut for cut. Is she one of the four? How else could the seer have known?

DOMINAE stands erect, and bellows into the night, her breath erupting like clouds in the torchlight.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)

Then let them come forth - no, better yet, let me find them, so I may see which of them may fulfill their seer's promise - if at all!

DOMINAE leaps off the grassy stage and runs forth into the park, disappearing into the shadows.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. GRAVEYARD OF BATTLESHIPS, INLAND SEA - NIGHT

CAPTAIN STONE'S boat lantern traverses the husk of a battleship, rust-covered with weeds jutting up out of its rotted deck.

The lantern light traverses another dead battleship, half-sunk in the shallow waters of the inland sea.

STILETTO (O-S)

This is such a treacherous route to
the Theater of Skulls.

CAPTAIN STONE operates the lantern with one hand while steering the boat with the other.

CAPTAIN STONE

No need to worry. I've crossed this
sea so many times over the years I
can steer round these hulks
blindfold.

CAPTAIN STONE guides the boat carefully through the timber and metallic relics, shining his lantern at the wrecks as if they were large dead beasts.

The SAPPHIRES huddle close to one another on the benches behind him, unnerved by the huge vessels.

STILETTO

There were no reports of a battle?

CAPTAIN STONE

It's assumed the battle happened
during the great catastrophe. But,
as there were no surviving
witnesses, no one can say for sure.

The boat lantern illuminates more of the ships, their angular shells looming large in the darkened waters.

CONSTANCE

The battle must have been horrible,
terrifying.

LUMINA

And such a useless way to die.

CAPTAIN STONE smiles to himself.

CAPTAIN STONE

I guess dying a useful death might
be a small mercy, then.

ANDROMEDA

How much longer do we spend amongst
this miserable wreckage? Our Diana
awaits us.

CAPTAIN STONE downshifts the boat, and it picks up speed,
slightly.

CAPTAIN STONE

Not much longer.

ANDROMEDA frowns in response.

LUMINA

Don't worry, Andromeda. We'll find
her, and bring her back. And then
we, as a tribe, will move on,
forward, into the future.

LUMINA smiles at ANDROMEDA through the dark.

LUMINA (CONT'D)

Our future.

ANDROMEDA'S frown changes to a smile.

The four SAPPHIRES huddle closer to one another.

CAPTAIN STONE'S boat winds its way among the dead
battleships, the boat lantern spotlighting rusted metal and
rotting timber in the darkness.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. SHORELINE, INLAND SEA - NIGHT

The bowrider pulls up to the rocky shoreline.

CAPTAIN STONE turns the engine off and ties the boat to one
of the rocks.

CAPTAIN STONE and the SAPPHIRES disembark, stepping
precariously over the boulders, and alight onto solid ground.

The SAPPHIRES peer into the night. STILETTO activates her
electric torch.

The torch illuminates trees and dense foliage.

STILETTO turns to address CAPTAIN STONE.

STILETTO

Is there a path that leads us to
the theater?

CAPTAIN STONE comes forward with a lantern.

CAPTAIN STONE

You'll have a bit of a drudge
straight ahead through the trees
until you make the road. Follow the
road to the left and you'll arrive
there soon enough.

ANDROMEDA regards CAPTAIN STONE with a frown.

ANDROMEDA

I vote we have the good captain
take us there himself.

CAPTAIN STONE

I'd be all too happy to oblige,
ma'am, but I have a very serious
appointment to make - one that,
unfortunately, I'm not at liberty
to divulge.

STILETTO

It's not important. We can take out
anything they throw at us.

CAPTAIN STONE

I have no doubt of that.

CONSTANCE

What of these Woodcutters we were
warned about?

CAPTAIN STONE

Ah, the Woodcutters. Yes, they're a
right dangerous group of forest
folk, to be sure. I suggest you
stay straight through there to find
the road and you're sure to avoid
their rough acquaintance.

ANDROMEDA

I suppose they never venture beyond
their territory.

CAPTAIN STONE shrugs, grins, and gazes off into the woods.

CAPTAIN STONE

Sometimes. But it's a bit late in
the evening for such expeditions.

CAPTAIN STONE turns towards his boat.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)
Best of luck finding your friend.

CAPTAIN STONE climbs over the rocks and unties his boat.

STILETTO addresses the SAPPHIRES.

STILETTO
Right, let's go get her.

With electric torches lit, the SAPPHIRES make their way towards the trees.

LUMINA turns to the sound of the bowrider's engine starting up.

CAPTAIN STONE backs away from the shore; and, with a grin and a wave of his hat, turns and heads back out to sea.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. WOODCUTTERS' TERRITORY, FOREST - NIGHT

Crouching down next to a tree, DOMINAE stares forward with intensity, sweat dappling her forehead, her breath erupting like vapor into the air.

In the distance, a group of WOODCUTTERS lounge and doze around a fire.

Seen in medium close-up, the WOODCUTTERS sport long bedraggled hair from head and face, sharp feral teeth protruding over their lips as they snore. They wear head gear that resemble medieval caps, and bulk out their animal skin garments. In fallen logs and the trunks of nearby trees, large steel axes stick out of the bark where they've been jammed.

DOMINAE bites her lip, and moves out.

Moving cautiously in the fitful moonlight that filters through the canopy above, DOMINAE sneaks through the undergrowth, maintaining her distance from the WOODCUTTERS.

To avoid making noise, DOMINAE leaps onto a fallen tree log and tiptoes across as if balancing on a tightrope.

DOMINAE leaps up and grabs a branch in order to overleap dense foliage. In doing so she scares a night bird, which squawks and takes flight from the tree. DOMINAE slips and falls roughly into the foliage.

The WOODCUTTERS awake. They immediately look around, growling menacingly.

DOMINAE noisily dislodges herself from the foliage and glances back at the WOODCUTTERS.

The WOODCUTTERS have seen DOMINAE. Shouting angrily, they pull their large steel axes from logs and tree stumps and begin charging in DOMINAE'S direction.

DOMINAE

Shit!

DOMINAE turns and begins running heedlessly through the dense forest.

The WOODCUTTERS are already in fast pursuit, yelling to one another in harsh feral voices. They begin fanning out, as if to corner her.

DOMINAE leaps and dives over and under tree branches and thickets, her breath coming out hard and fast in the damp air.

In full flight, the WOODCUTTERS hack away at the undergrowth with their axes while tearing through the rest.

As DOMINAE enters a clearing, a WOODCUTTER comes up on her right, swinging his axe.

Without breaking her stride, DOMINAE whirls around in slow-motion and high-kicks the WOODCUTTER in the face. The WOODCUTTER drops his axe and falls to the ground.

DOMINAE stops long enough to grab the WOODCUTTER'S axe. She turns, ducks as another axe flies just over her head, and throws her axe at the oncoming WOODCUTTER.

DOMINAE'S axe lands in the face of the WOODCUTTER, bifurcating his skull.

DOMINAE grabs up the other axe and breaks into another run, but not quick enough for a WOODCUTTER coming around on her left.

The WOODCUTTER and DOMINAE parry with their axes while in full flight before the WOODCUTTER runs headlong into a large tree.

DOMINAE races around the tree and through the undergrowth as two more WOODCUTTERS close in on her from either side. They have axes with longer handles, and swing them furiously.

DOMINAE hurls her axe at the WOODCUTTER on her left.

The axe lands in the WOODCUTTER'S belly. He groans, drops his axe, and falls to the ground.

Defenseless, DOMINAE turns to face the WOODCUTTER on her right. The WOODCUTTER swings his axe at her as she ducks, leaps, and dodges his attacks.

DOMINAE trips over a fallen branch and falls hard on the ground.

The WOODCUTTER stands over DOMINO, raises his axe and brings it down.

DOMINAE rolls aside but not before the axe blade grazes her left arm, tearing a hole in her garment. DOMINAE cries out in pain.

Another WOODCUTTER runs up swinging his axe.

Quickly, DOMINAE grabs the fallen branch, swings it around and smacks the WOODCUTTER across the face with it.

As the one WOODCUTTER falls, the other WOODCUTTER once more brings his axe down.

With the skill of a gymnast, DOMINAE flips over out of the way of the axe and runs off, the WOODCUTTER in pursuit.

Holding her bleeding arm, DOMINAE runs as hard as she can, her breath growing labored. She glances back.

The remaining WOODCUTTERS start to fall back, their guttural voices echoing among the trees.

Nearly tripping, DOMINAE turns her head back around.

DOMINAE emerges from the forest, finds the road, and leaves the WOODCUTTERS behind.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. MAIN PLATFORM, THEATER OF SKULLS - NIGHT

The Theater of Skulls is made of stone and brick covered in graffiti, and resembles a ruined military fort. A tower overlooks the main platform; a large black tattered tapestry covered in esoteric symbols hangs loosely from its windows. In the center of the platform, a series of steps or seats in a crescent formation surround a lower circular stage. Situated around the platform are a series of tall spikes, topped with human skulls, along with flaming tripods. The theater is lit by the lambent glow of their fire, and the milky gray light from the moons above.

The SAPPHIRES converge cautiously on the theater, spaced several feet apart, weary but alert.

Seen alternately in close-up, the eyes of STILETTO, ANDROMEDA, LUMINA and CONSTANCE dart back and forth, their faces drenched in sweat in the humid night.

ANDROMEDA

Diana?

ANDROMEDA is answered in silence.

LUMINA AND CONSTANCE

Diana? Diana?

Again, there is no reply.

The SAPPHIRES come to the steps surrounding the lower stage. STILETTO points a finger into the shadows.

STILETTO

There! And there!

A handful of vacant doorways are situated around the platform. The fire and moonlight only penetrates a few feet within each one.

LUMINA

This must have been a prison, some time in the past, not a theater of play.

STILETTO

Then we shall have to separate and search the doorways one by one. Andromeda, Lumina - go around the back of the building and see if there are more doorways. She may be held there, and her mouth bound. Constance and I will search up here.

ANDROMEDA and LUMINA move out. STILETTO addresses them as they depart.

STILETTO (CONT'D)

Whichever pair finishes first, reconnoiter with the other.

ANDROMEDA and LUMINA nod as they leave the vicinity.

STILETTO (CONT'D)

All right, Constance, you take one side, I'll take the other.

CONSTANCE
These doorways look as if they lead
into eternal darkness.

STILETTO
I will come to your aid, Constance,
should you need me.

CONSTANCE pauses and frowns.

CONSTANCE
I'm not helpless, Stiletto.

STILETTO turns to CONSTANCE with a puzzled look.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
I know I haven't the gifts that
unbalanced nature has given to you
and the others. But I can carry
myself.

STILETTO
I meant no offense, Constance.

CONSTANCE wearily waves her off.

CONSTANCE
It's not important.

CONSTANCE turns and walks towards one of the vacant doorways.

STILETTO starts to speak, and then frowns. She, too, turns
and walks towards one of the vacant doorways.

As seen from above, STILETTO and CONSTANCE part ways, while a
shadow in the moonlight moves unseen along the roof of the
tower.

EXT. COLONNADE OF CELLS, THEATER OF SKULLS — NIGHT

ANDROMEDA and LUMINA descend a grassy hill that ends at a
series of what look like prison cells along a colonnaded
walkway.

ANDROMEDA
Check the rooms along that row,
I'll search the ones on the other
side.

LUMINA
Right.

ANDROMEDA and LUMINA separate.

LUMINA walks along the colonnaded row, shining her electric torch into each cell.

The cell interiors are dirty and dank, yet none of them are sealed, or occupied.

LUMINA continues along the avenue of cells, poking her electric torch inside each cell and murmuring in a trembling voice.

LUMINA (CONT'D)
Diana, are you there? Can you
speak? Can you make any sound?

LUMINA pauses, places the torch against her head, and weeps.

LUMINA (CONT'D)
Oh, Diana, forgive us your
abduction, and for letting you
languish so long in this hellish
sty.

Still weeping, LUMINA continues her search of the cells.

LUMINA (CONT'D)
Oh, Diana, please, say you still
live, please -

LUMINA shines her torch into one last cell, only to find DOMINAE squatting inside.

LUMINA cries out in shock and jumps back.

INT. CELL, THEATER OF SKULLS - NIGHT

ANDROMEDA, who is inspecting a larger cell with a debris-covered floor and graffiti-covered walls, hears LUMINA'S brief cry echo in the distance outside. ANDROMEDA turns, her eyes wide.

ANDROMEDA
Lumina?

ANDROMEDA turns and runs out into the night.

EXT. COLONNADE OF CELLS, THEATER OF SKULLS - NIGHT

ANDROMEDA comes hurtling around the corner and down the colonnade until she skids to a halt.

DOMINAE is standing over the prostrate body of LUMINA. DOMINAE has torn a strip of her unitard from her belly and tied it in a tourniquet above the axe wound on her left arm.

ANDROMEDA looks down at LUMINA'S body with a slight groan.

ANDROMEDA
Lumina?

DOMINAE
She cannot hear you.

ANDROMEDA turns her eyes to DOMINAE, trembling with tears of rage.

DOMINAE looks down in sorrow at LUMINA.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
She's not the One.

ANDROMEDA hisses at DOMINAE.

ANDROMEDA
Assassin!

ANDROMEDA bolts towards DOMINAE, pulling the electric prod from her belt.

DOMINAE jumps away from LUMINA but does not flinch as ANDROMEDA charges towards her.

ANDROMEDA lunges at DOMINAE with her prod.

DOMINAE bats the prod away with a swift high-kick.

ANDROMEDA is knocked to the ground. ANDROMEDA rolls over on her side and takes DOMINAE'S legs in a scissor-kick, causing DOMINAE to fall to the ground.

ANDROMEDA jumps up and seizes the prod.

DOMINAE flips over, stands, a look of giddy excitement on her face.

DOMINAE
Can it be? Are you the One?

ANDROMEDA
The one who's going to send you to Hell!

ANDROMEDA attempts to jab the prod at DOMINAE'S legs, but DOMINAE high-kicks the prod once again, before swiftly kicking ANDROMEDA in the abdomen.

ANDROMEDA stumbles backwards, clutching her stomach.

DOMINAE comes at ANDROMEDA. The two begin deflecting one another's blows with lightning speed. DOMINAE does a rapid swirl and lands another high-kick blow with her foot, this time hitting ANDROMEDA in the side of her head.

ANDROMEDA totters with dizziness before DOMINAE grabs her from behind, pinning her arms with one hand while grabbing ANDROMEDA'S neck with the other. ANDROMEDA struggles mightily in DOMINAE'S grip.

DOMINAE

No, it can't be you. Please forgive me, but I must put you to sleep along with your friend.

ANDROMEDA

You may kill me, but my tribe will destroy you!

DOMINAE

Oh, no, you will not die. Jamus doesn't know of my code: I never kill a woman. Just a simple tap -

DOMINAE lets go of ANDROMEDA'S neck, only to hit a portion of it with the side of her palm.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)

- and you fall to your dreams.

ANDROMEDA'S eyelids flutter, and she falls to the ground at DOMINAE'S feet.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)

I honor your strength, my sister - but you are not the One.

DOMINAE moves on, leaving behind the unconscious LUMINA and ANDROMEDA.

SCREEN WIPE.

INT. TOWER, THEATER OF SKULLS - NIGHT

STILETTO squeezes through heavy, loose stone and broken masonry that partially blocks the entrance to the wide tower overlooking the main theater platform. Feeble moonlight enters through long thin windows that circumvent the room.

STILETTO shoots her electric torch around the room.

STILETTO
Diana? My sweet one?

STILETTO trips over more debris, which covers the floor. But the room is empty.

Behind her, STILETTO hears a sudden scraping sound. She turns.

The stone and masonry loosened by STILETTO have fallen back across the entrance, pulling more debris into place with it, trapping her in the room.

STILETTO runs over and attempts to move it.

INT. CELL, THEATER OF SKULLS - NIGHT

CONSTANCE is searching inside one of the theater's interiors, her electric torch guiding her way.

CONSTANCE enters through an arched entryway into a narrow cell.

CONSTANCE
Diana?

CONSTANCE directs her torch around the room.

The brick walls glisten with slimy webwork and decay, but DIANA is not present.

CONSTANCE turns the torch upwards. She grimaces in disgust and horror.

Human bones are dangling at the ends of chains which depend from the ceiling.

CONSTANCE redirects her torch away from the human debris over her head. She turns to exit the room, and screams.

DOMINAE'S face is illuminated in electric torchlight.

DOMINAE grabs CONSTANCE by the mouth, and pulls her away from the arched entryway. In the process, CONSTANCE drops her torch to the ground. It continues to illuminate them from below.

DOMINAE grips CONSTANCE by the cheeks, and gazes at her in disappointment.

DOMINAE
I can tell already - you're not the
One.

CONSTANCE gazes wide eyed at DOMINAE, but her mouth makes no sound beneath DOMINAE'S hand.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
How can all of you be so fragile?
You're the tribe that vanquished
the King's men. Yet you fall at my
hands like berries shaken from a
tree.

DOMINAE does not notice CONSTANCE slowly removing her bladed steel knuckles from her belt.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
And now I'll have to put you to
sleep as well. No, this will not
do. One of you has to be the One.
I cannot have come this far to -

DOMINAE cries out in pain and releases CONSTANCE, grabbing her thigh where CONSTANCE slashed through the garment with her bladed steel knuckles, drawing blood.

CONSTANCE runs out onto the main platform.

CONSTANCE
Stiletto!

INT. TOWER, THEATER OF SKULLS - NIGHT

STILETTO hears CONSTANCE shouting her name below and runs over to one of the windows overlooking the theater.

As seen from the window, CONSTANCE has emerged onto the platform near the seating.

STILETTO
Constance! Up here!

CONSTANCE looks up at STILETTO.

STILETTO (CONT'D)
I'm trapped! I need your help
moving the - stone -

STILETTO sees DOMINAE emerge onto the platform as well.

EXT. MAIN PLATFORM, THEATER OF SKULLS - NIGHT

CONSTANCE turns to face DOMINAE, STILETTO behind her up in the tower window.

DOMINAE comes forward, limping slightly from the bleeding wound on her leg.

DOMINAE
I misjudged you, Constance. You are most formidable.

STILETTO
Whoever you are, do not attempt to fight our tribe!

DOMINAE looks up in smiling fascination at STILETTO.

DOMINAE
The fourth!

STILETTO
We have taken down the king's men - we can dispatch you just as easily! Andromeda! Lumina!

CONSTANCE
I'll hold her off, Stiletto! You try to move the stone!

CONSTANCE enters into a fighting stance, her prod in one hand and her bladed steel knuckles gracing the other.

DOMINAE turns her gaze from STILETTO to CONSTANCE.

DOMINAE
Which of you . . .

INT. TOWER, THEATER OF SKULLS - NIGHT

STILETTO rushes back over to the rubble blocking the entrance, but the additional debris proves heavier than expected.

EXT. MAIN PLATFORM, THEATER OF SKULLS - NIGHT

CONSTANCE and DOMINAE start circling one another.

CONSTANCE
Andromeda's suspicions were right - that villainous Captain Stone did lead us into another trap, didn't he!

DOMINAE replies with an amused chuckle.

DOMINAE

Captain Stone? Oh, he's a loveable old fellow, that one, but he certainly does not collude with the king.

CONSTANCE

Andromeda! Lumina!

DOMINAE

Your friends are fast asleep, my chick.

Belying her leg wound, DOMINAE charges at CONSTANCE.

CONSTANCE holds her prod out in front; but DOMINAE slides into her with her good leg, causing CONSTANCE to trip and tumble down the steps to the stage, crying out.

INT. TOWER, THEATER OF SKULLS - NIGHT

Hearing CONSTANCE'S cry, STILETTO leaves the rubble, which hasn't budged an inch, and runs over to the window.

As seen from the window, CONSTANCE stands up slowly and painfully from where she fell, her prod on the ground next to her. She once more takes her fighting stance.

STILETTO watches helplessly from the window.

EXT. MAIN PLATFORM, THEATER OF SKULLS - NIGHT

DOMINAE steps slowly down the steps towards CONSTANCE.

DOMINAE

Shall we entertain on this antique stage?

CONSTANCE sees her steel knuckles have been broken in her fall. She throws them aside, pulls the last acid tube from her belt, and blows through it in DOMINAE'S direction.

DOMINAE quickly leaps aside as the stream of acid lands nearby, bubbling and eating away at the stone seats.

DOMINAE lands crouching on the stage.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)

Your toys won't deter me, Constance.

DOMINAE slowly stands.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
You must match me, blow for blow,
cut for cut. Only then will I know
if you're the One.

CONSTANCE
Maybe my hands will shut you up -

CONSTANCE throws her prod to the ground and engages DOMINAE in hand-to-hand combat.

As seen from below, STILETTO continues to look on helplessly from the tower. Directly below her, the ragged symbol-covered tapestry flutters in the breeze.

CONSTANCE and DOMINAE match one another until DOMINAE is able to get a kick into CONSTANCE'S abdomen. CONSTANCE collapses on the ground, holding her stomach.

As seen from below, STILETTO is in panic. She looks around before leaning forward and looking down at the tapestry, which nearly reaches the ground.

CONSTANCE rises as DOMINAE rushes forward. CONSTANCE swirls her legs around, sending DOMINAE to the ground.

CONSTANCE stands, still winded from DOMINAE'S kick.

DOMINAE sits upon the ground, breathing heavily, and smiling up at CONSTANCE.

CONSTANCE approaches DOMINAE cautiously.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
Leave us be!

DOMINAE continues to breathe heavily, smiling up at CONSTANCE from the ground. She silently shakes her head.

Seen from below, STILETTO laboriously squeezes a leg through one of the tower's narrow windows.

CONSTANCE picks up her prod again.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
Then I must remove you from our
path.

In a flash, DOMINAE does a backwards flip.

CONSTANCE rushes forward with her implement in hand.

In slow motion, DOMINAE slides under CONSTANCE as CONSTANCE dives at her. DOMINAE narrowly avoids the prod as she trips CONSTANCE.

DOMINAE swirls and regains her feet as CONSTANCE stumbles forward, losing grip on her prod in the process.

DOMINAE comes up swiftly behind CONSTANCE, grabs CONSTANCE'S neck from behind, and administers her sleep movement.

CONSTANCE loses consciousness as DOMINAE gently lowers her to the ground. DOMINAE stands over CONSTANCE, breathing heavily.

DOMINAE
You're more a treasure than you
know, Constance.

DOMINAE turns at a sound above.

STILETTO has cleared the window and is grabbing hold of a corner of the tapestry.

DOMINAE gazes up at STILETTO with an expression of excitement, and arousal.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
Yes, of course - the fourth one. It
must be you!

Attempting to climb down the tapestry, STILETTO only succeeds in pulling the tapestry down as she and the fabric plummet to the ground, the tapestry covering STILETTO in the process.

DOMINAE'S expression momentarily wavers.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
Perhaps not.

STILETTO flails away under the fabric as she attempts to extricate herself.

DOMINAE watches with a look of bemusement.

After a few moments, STILETTO finally emerges and gets to her feet.

DOMINAE hasn't moved an inch, but now gazes upon STILETTO in rapture.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
No, it is you, for she said you
would be beautiful.

STILETTO

Whoever you are, hear me: you serve
a vile, lunatic king! Diana is
ours, and I will rescue her if I
have to obliterate all the king's
men - and women!

DOMINAE begins to weep.

DOMINAE

It is you! Oh, I have waited all my
years for you to come! Yes, your
Diana foresaw my destiny! And so
beautiful you are!

STILETTO

To Hell with your flattery! For
the final time, where is our
Diana?!

DOMINAE

I will take you to her.

STILETTO

All this night, everyone of you
have said you'll take us to her,
and yet still she remains beyond
our grasp! For the last time, tell
me where she is, or die!

DOMINAE

I don't have to fight you, to prove
you are the One. No, I can feel
your energy, flowing through me as
if from a fountain of pure delight!

STILETTO

Oh, enough of this madness!

STILETTO charges at DOMINAE.

STILETTO and DOMINAE engage in furious hand-to-hand combat,
though DOMINAE appears unwilling to fight. STILETTO matches
DOMINAE, blow for blow, and cut for cut.

STILETTO aims a high kick, striking DOMINAE on the side of
the head.

Stunned, DOMINAE falters for a moment, but brings herself
back. She begins to weep.

DOMINAE

Forgive these tears. They're tears
of joy.

(MORE)

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
 Please don't make them tears of
 grief. I had to test all of you, so
 I would know for sure -

STILETTO roars like an animal, and resumes her assault on
 DOMINAE.

DOMINAE, weeping, continues to deflect STILETTO'S blows.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
 Please stop - I will take you to
 her - Please -

STILETTO continues her barrage, but there is a hint of
 exhaustion in her fight.

STILETTO
 Where are they! - what did you do
 to them! - you horrid, filthy -

DOMINAE
 Please, stop!

STILETTO aims another blow at DOMINAE'S side. DOMINAE falls
 to the ground.

STILETTO rushes over and pounces on DOMINAE, pinning
 DOMINAE'S arms behind her head.

STILETTO breathes heavily, lingering over DOMINAE like a
 predator with its prey. DOMINAE continues to weep.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
 Oh, I'm such a fool. I should've
 known. Diana said -

STILETTO
 Where is she?! Where?!

There is a moment of silence, punctuated by STILETTO'S
 breathing and DOMINAE'S weeping.

DOMINAE
 At the gates of Hell!

STILETTO releases DOMINAE and slowly backs away, gazing at
 DOMINAE in tearful disbelief.

STILETTO
 Why? Did she really deserve such
 treatment? What could she have
 promised you that would make you
 imprison her in such a place?

DOMINAE quivers in tears.

DOMINAE
That bastard Jamus locked her away
down there!

DOMINAE stands and turns away from STILETTO.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
But I was selfish, and I wanted to
know. I needed to know!

STILETTO stands as well.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
She knew that the One I have dreamt
of, as far back as memory allows,
would come to bring her back.

DOMINAE turns and faces STILETTO.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
And that One is you! And now that I
face you, the shame of it all
washes over me.

DOMINAE begins to weep again.

STILETTO
Whatever it is you think I would
bring to you, you are mistaken. I
am here for Diana, and I want to
know - does she live?

DOMINAE'S face brightens through her tears.

DOMINAE
Yes! Yes, she lives!

DOMINAE rushes up to STILETTO, but STILETTO instinctively
backs away.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
Let me take her to you! Let me -
redeem myself?

DOMINAE waits in expectation.

STILETTO stares blankly at DOMINAE for a moment.

STILETTO
Lead the way.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. DOORWAY TO HELL, THEATER OF SKULLS - NIGHT

An arched doorway stands open, dark, vacant and foreboding, surrounded by ivy and other vegetation. No moonlight reaches the stone recess. Only STILETTO'S electric torch brings it out of the darkness.

DOMINAE stands facing the doorway. Directly behind her, to her left, stands STILETTO, her torch trained on the doorway ahead.

DOMINAE
This portal will lead us down, all
the way down, to the entrance to
Daemonium, where Diana is kept.

STILETTO
We have seen every portion of this
region tonight, inside and out. If
she is still there, alive, she
leaves with me. If not . . .

DOMINAE
I will accept your judgement.

STILETTO
Well, then . . .

STILETTO motions to the doorway with her torch. DOMINAE proceeds ahead of her.

DOMINAE and STILETTO enter the doorway. As they proceed onward, their shadows, outlined in a halo of torchlight, grow smaller and smaller, until they disappear.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. MAIN PLATFORM, THEATER OF SKULLS - NIGHT

CONSTANCE awakes, blearily, in confusion. She focuses her eyes.

ANDROMEDA leans over her, a smile visible in the dim light.

CONSTANCE'S head is cradled in LUMINA'S lap. LUMINA sits on one of the stone steps surrounding the lower stage.

LUMINA

The woman who fought us spoke the truth. None of us were taken from each other.

CONSTANCE slowly sits up, rubbing her neck.

CONSTANCE

Where is Stiletto?

ANDROMEDA

We're not sure, but we think she may have left us a message.

ANDROMEDA points to the stage area. CONSTANCE turns and looks, squinting in the fading moonlight.

Scrawled on the floor of the stage, seemingly with burnt charcoal or a charred stick, are the words WAIT FOR ME.

CONSTANCE looks around.

CONSTANCE

And the woman who attacked us?

LUMINA

We can only assume she's with Stiletto.

ANDROMEDA sits down next to CONSTANCE, exhaustion in her eyes. She turns her gaze skyward.

ANDROMEDA

It'll be light soon.

ANDROMEDA turns to CONSTANCE, smiles, and leans her head on CONSTANCE'S shoulder.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)

Let us rest awhile. When it's light, we'll go find them.

LUMINA

And Diana?

ANDROMEDA lifts her head slightly, the exhaustion in her eyes tinged with weary defiance.

ANDROMEDA

And Diana.

A light wind whips up around them.

SCREEN WIPE.

INT. TUNNEL TO DAEMONIUM - NIGHT

DOMINAE'S shadow is framed in a halo of electric torchlight as she and STILETTO proceed down the tunnel, walking rapidly. They converse with heavy breaths.

STILETTO
How far down is it?

DOMINAE
The descent is gradual.

DOMINAE continues to walk rapidly, STILETTO behind her to her left. The two are quiet for a moment, breathing heavily.

STILETTO
Your precious king chose to
imprison Diana in a remote
location.

DOMINAE
There are various tunnels leading
to her. This one is the most
direct.

STILETTO
He tore her crystal away, before
bringing her here, didn't he?
That's why our tracker lost contact
with her.

DOMINAE
I know nothing about any crystals.
Do you all have them?

STILETTO
Yes, on the back of our necks.

DOMINAE stops and turns to STILETTO.

DOMINAE
Show me.

STILETTO pauses, frowns, then hands the electric torch to DOMINAE.

STILETTO turns and pulls the hair up from the back. DOMINAE shines the torch up to STILETTO'S neck.

Situated in the back of STILETTO'S neck is a sapphire-colored crystal, implanted into the flesh.

DOMINAE hands the torch back to STILETTO and they continue on their way.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
Jamus told me nothing about
crystals. He must have forced the
information out of her, to keep
others from coming in pursuit.

STILETTO
Clearly, he failed.

DOMINAE
Yes, clearly.

DOMINAE and STILETTO are quiet for a moment.

STILETTO
What exactly is your relationship
to Jamus?

DOMINAE
One of dependency.

STILETTO
You don't seem the dependent type.

DOMINAE
He relies on me to clean up his
messes.

STILETTO
You serve him, then.

DOMINAE stops and turns to STILETTO.

DOMINAE
I serve no one!

STILETTO points the torch in the direction they are headed.

STILETTO
We are wasting time.

DOMINAE and STILETTO resume walking on in silence for a
moment.

DOMINAE
Can you - do you think you can
bring yourself to forgive me?

STILETTO takes a moment before answering.

STILETTO
Depends on what we find when we
reach her.

DOMINAE
And then you will leave here?

STILETTO
There's absolutely nothing to hold
us here.

Another moment walking in silence.

STILETTO (CONT'D)
It seems to me there's not much
holding you here either.

DOMINAE does not reply; but in the dim glow of STILETTO'S
torch, DOMINAE smiles.

CROSS-FADE.

INT. TUNNEL TO DAEMONIUM - NIGHT

The halo of electric torchlight continues to progress down
the darkened tunnel.

DOMINAE and STILETTO continue to walk quickly as before until
something is caught in the light, forcing a cry from STILETTO
and bringing them to a stop.

Scrawled on the wall in blood, are the words HOPE NO MORE.

DOMINAE points to the opposite wall.

DOMINAE
And there -

STILETTO turns the torch to the opposite wall.

Again, scrawled in blood, are the words DEMON ASCEND.

STILETTO responds to the sanguine graffiti with repulsion,
and urges them on their way.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
It is thought by some that soon,
the Demons will grow weary of their
underworld, and ascend to terrorize
and rule over the surface dwellers.

STILETTO
No one rules me.

DOMINAE waves them forward.

DOMINAE
We're nearly there.

DOMINAE and STILETTO continue onward.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. TUNNEL TERMINUS AND ENTRANCE TO DAEMONIUM - NIGHT

Three tunnels converge and terminate at a recessed junction. The halo of STILETTO'S electric torch suddenly illuminates DIANA leaning against a wall on the floor, her wrists manacled and a chain connecting them to an iron floor anchor. A plate of food scraps and a water flask sit on the floor to DIANA'S left; a large jar filled with urine is visible to her right. Behind her is a large sliding door; upon the door are symbols identical to the ones on the tapestry in the Theater of Skulls. DIANA wears a long blue jerkin and trousers like the other Sapphires, though soiled and torn in places; she is, however, barefoot. She raises her shackled hands to shield her eyes from the sudden bright light in the darkness.

DIANA
Who is it? Who's there?

STILETTO immediately shoves the torch into DOMINAE'S hands.

STILETTO
Diana!

DIANA
Stiletto?

The light now out of her eyes, DIANA lowers her wrists as STILETTO, weeping, kneels down to embrace her. Matted hair and dirt on DIANA'S face show deteriorated hygiene. Her lip is cut and a bruise discolors her right cheek.

STILETTO
Oh my love!

DIANA
Have they put you down here as well?

STILETTO
No, we've come to take you out of here!

STILETTO pulls out her prod.

DIANA
Where? Are the others here?

STILETTO uses the prod to burn through the chain and manacles.

STILETTO
Constance, Lumina and Andromeda
remain up top.

DIANA squints in DOMINAE'S direction.

DIANA
Who is that there?

DOMINAE brings the electric torch up to her face.

DOMINAE
Dominae.

DIANA
You?

DOMINAE
I have come to redeem myself.

STILETTO successfully removes the chain from the floor anchor and begins severing the manacles carefully from DIANA'S wrists.

STILETTO
She led me to you.

DIANA speaks in a heightened tone, her voice shaking.

DIANA
I - I don't think their king is
happy with me. The things they said
he'd do to me -

DIANA begins to break down in sobs.

STILETTO successfully removes the manacles from DIANA'S wrists. She throws them aside and takes DIANA by the arm.

STILETTO
Here - try to stand.

DOMINAE comes over and helps STILETTO, taking DIANA'S other arm as DIANA continues to sob uncontrollably, her legs quivering and nearly buckling.

STILETTO (CONT'D)
We would've found you sooner but
our tracker lost contact with your
crystal.

DIANA
One of the king's men found it and
- and ripped it from my neck.

DIANA lifts her hair from the back of her neck. Both STILETTO and DOMINAE turn to look, with DOMINAE shining the torch on it.

A large open wound sits in the center of the back of DIANA'S neck.

STILETTO
To Hell with their king! We're
taking you out of here!

KING JAMUS (O-S)
Not so fast, my pretty little
thing!

DOMINAE instantly turns the torchlight in the direction of KING JAMUS'S voice.

KING JAMUS and two of his MEN turn on two lanterns as they emerge from the darkness. KING JAMUS grins demonically at STILETTO, DIANA and DOMINAE.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
You never know what the night will
bring.

STILETTO and DOMINAE still hold DIANA up between them. DIANA gazes in anguish upon KING JAMUS while STILETTO's gaze is one of rage. DOMINAE'S expression is curiously blank as she lowers the torch.

DOMINAE
Stiletto, this is King Jamus.

STILETTO continues to stare at KING JAMUS with quiet rage in her eyes.

STILETTO
Scum.

KING JAMUS grins triumphantly at STILETTO as he steps forward, addressing DOMINAE.

KING JAMUS
I see you took out the other three,
/ and left the last pretty one for
me.

In a sudden movement, DOMINAE drops the torch and pulls DIANA away from STILETTO, gripping both of DIANA'S arms from behind and pinning them. In her weakened state, DIANA is only able to offer the most meek of resistance.

KING JAMUS snaps his fingers and points at STILETTO.

KING JAMUS' MEN, who have since placed their lanterns on the floor, immediately pounce on STILETTO, pinning her against the wall. One of the MEN pulls STILETTO'S prod from her belt and throws it aside into the darkened corridor, where it clatters on the floor.

KING JAMUS comes up close to STILETTO, turning his head slightly to address DOMINAE.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
You take care of her friends above?

DOMINAE smiles ambiguously.

DOMINAE
With all my care and love.

STILETTO turns her gaze toward DOMINAE in disbelief.

STILETTO
You lied! You said they were
asleep! All this time, you were
lying to me!

DOMINAE'S expression remains stoic as she lowers her eyes.

KING JAMUS laughs triumphantly.

KING JAMUS
That's right; all the pieces are in
place!

KING JAMUS points a finger at STILETTO.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
And now I'm gonna rid myself of
this disgrace!

KING JAMUS turns to DIANA, addressing STILETTO.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
But first, Miss Stiletto, I want
you to watch some fun. / Your
friend's time here is just about
done.

KING JAMUS walks right up to DIANA, who turns her face away in disgust and anguish.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
 "The reign will end" was all I got
 outta you! / You're a waste of my
 time, and now you're through!

With a flourish, KING JAMES slides open the large door.

The two MEN holding STILETTO bring her around so she can see. STILETTO gazes in disbelief at what is revealed.

DIANA turns her face to what is there, then closes her eyes and looks away, weeping.

Just beyond the doorway is a field of dirt, slate, and red glowing fiery lava rock. Beyond that stands a mammoth stone structure, like a vast palace, its entrance facade illuminated ghoulishly by flaming tripods. The structure consists of different levels, each with a colonnaded facade, the columns topped with ionic capitals. The entire construction is surmounted by towers which ascend up into the darkness of what can only be an enormous cavern. Dead, leafless trees cast shadows on the steps which lead down from the lowest portion of the structure to the field. The horrific sounds of torture emanate from within its confines, echoing in the sulphur-smoky atmosphere.

KING JAMUS gazes up at Daemonium with a smile of admiration.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
 They say Daemonium took just an
 hour to build. / Those Demons, they
 got some mad, mad skill.

KING JAMUS turns and comes up close again to DIANA'S face.

KING JAMUS (CONT'D)
 My seer bitch has got a date with
 Hell! / They'll skin you, scalp
 you, and brand you well -

KING JAMUS is suddenly distracted by something back in the tunnel.

A bobbing lantern is seen coming down the tunnel, but the person carrying it cannot be seen. Just then, CAPTAIN STONE'S voice is heard.

CAPTAIN STONE
 Just a moment there, your highness.

KING JAMUS frowns and squints, straining his eyes.

KING JAMUS
Who's that? Stone? / What're you
doing - are you alone?

CAPTAIN STONE can now be seen as he gets closer.

CAPTAIN STONE
Sorry, your highness, I don't move
as fast as I used to.

DOMINAE looks at CAPTAIN STONE with a subtle look of pleasant surprise.

CAPTAIN STONE stops and looks at STILETTO and DIANA being forcibly held by the others.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)
Well, now, this is a sorry sight.

KING JAMUS
Stone, I ain't gonna lie - / If you
ain't on your way, you're begging
to die!

CAPTAIN STONE sets his lantern down and waves off KING JAMUS with incongruous calm.

CAPTAIN STONE
No need to trouble yourself, your
highness - that's all been
arranged. See, I made a little deal
with our friends out there in that
city yonder. Strange chaps - very
committed to their work -

KING JAMUS
Stone, don't be fucking with me! /
I ain't in good humor, as you can
see -

CAPTAIN STONE turns to KING JAMUS with placid calm.

CAPTAIN STONE
No, your highness, I'm strictly on
the level. The Demons are going to
take me instead of Miss Diana
there.

A look of disbelief comes over DIANA'S face. Behind her,
DOMINAE maintains a subtle smile on her lips.

STILETTO

No, Captain Stone, don't! The
Demons will torture you! We can
take out these thugs -

One of the MEN holding STILETTO cups his hand over her mouth.

CAPTAIN STONE turns and smiles at STILETTO as her
exclamations are muffled by the hand.

CAPTAIN STONE

I know you can, my dear, I know you
can. You and your ladies have
certainly proven that. But when it
comes to the Demons, a deal's a
deal. One of us has to go - you can
take your hand off her mouth now.

Frowning, KING JAMUS' MAN lowers his hand from STILETTO'S
mouth. STILETTO gasps in the bad air.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)

And anyway, a piece o' gold bought
me promise of a swift dispatch -
along with intelligence about where
his highness was holding your
friend.

CAPTAIN STONE gestures at DIANA as he turns to KING JAMUS,
his look of triumph matching KING JAMUS' increasing look of
rage.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)

Say what you like about them
Demons, your highness - they keep
their word.

KING JAMUS

Stone, you're a confident man. /
How about I kill you where you
stand?

CAPTAIN STONE

And deny them Demons their
pleasure? Unwise, your highness.
They might take you, instead.

CAPTAIN STONE turns his gaze towards Daemonium.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)

In fact, here they come now.

The others turn their eyes fearfully in the same direction.

DEMONS emerge slowly from the colonnaded entrance. They are bipedal and humanoid, but walk down the stone steps slowly in a strange gait, their legs wide and alternating each step as they descend, their hands stretched out with grasping claw-like fingers. The delegation appears to be four in number.

CAPTAIN STONE gazes at the DEMONS with a stoic expression and a strange, sad, half-smile.

DOMINAE turns her eyes away as DIANA continues to train her trembling gaze on the DEMONS afar.

The two MEN holding STILETTO also turn their eyes away from the DEMONS. STILETTO notices this.

The DEMONS begin crossing the field of dirt, slate, and volcanic rock in their strange, slow, creeping gait. As they lurch closer, their features become distinct: unlike the demons of religious iconography, the DEMONS of Daemonium are slim, bald and pale, clothed in fluttering rags. Their ghastly white faces are androgynous, with large glaring pale eyes, each mouth frozen in an uncanny rictus of a toothy, excited grin. Each DEMON flexes its fingers at CAPTAIN STONE, as if reaching for him, as they stalk closer.

CAPTAIN STONE turns to STILETTO and addresses her with a smile of resignation, doffing his hat.

CAPTAIN STONE (CONT'D)
Good knowin' ya, Miss Stiletto.
Hope my poor help here will get you
closer to your goal.

STILETTO gazes at CAPTAIN STONE with tears trailing her cheeks.

CAPTAIN STONE laughs to himself before turning and going forth to meet the DEMONS.

The MEN holding STILETTO continue to look away, loosening their grip on her in distraction and revulsion at the sight of the DEMONS.

CAPTAIN STONE steps out onto the noxious field. The DEMONS come forward and surround him, jumping, tittering and clapping their claws in giddy joy as they escort CAPTAIN STONE to the city of the underworld.

His lip curled into a frown, KING JAMUS watches CAPTAIN STONE depart with his Demonic escort.

KING JAMUS

The old coot turned out to be quite
a foe. / Should've wasted his ass a
long time ago.

STILETTO takes advantage of KING JAMUS and his MEN'S
distraction by kicking both of the MEN holding her in the
shins with her steel-tipped boots. Both MEN cry out and grab
their legs.

Her arms now free, STILETTO chops both of the MEN in their
throats with her hands.

The MEN collapse to the floor with choking sounds before
passing out.

KING JAMUS immediately turns, fire in his eyes.

DOMINAE

Stiletto! Take her!

DOMINAE pushes DIANA towards STILETTO.

STILETTO takes DIANA in her arms.

KING JAMUS makes a move towards STILETTO and DIANA, but
DOMINAE comes between them.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)

The play is finished, my liege.

KING JAMUS

Traitorous bitch!

DOMINAE nods in affirmation with a smirk.

DOMINAE

And now, I'm going to scratch your
itch.

DOMINAE comes at KING JAMUS and the two engage in furious
hand- to-hand combat.

At one point, DOMINAE turns briefly and addresses STILETTO
and DIANA.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)

Go! Get out of here!

STILETTO and DIANA, however, remain, anxiously watching the
battle.

KING JAMUS lands a kick in DOMINAE'S side, causing DOMINAE to fall. KING JAMUS then comes at her, but DOMINAE rolls over and lands a high kick in KING JAMUS' jaw.

KING JAMUS stumbles backwards and falls onto dirt and slate, narrowly missing one of the fiery glowing lava rocks.

DOMINAE leaps up and comes at KING JAMUS again.

When she's on top of him, KING JAMUS grabs DOMINAE'S arms and flips her over with his legs.

DOMINAE lands hard on her back, her head narrowly missing a lava rock as a portion of her hair gets singed. DOMINAE frantically pats her hair as she leaps back up.

STILETTO and DIANA continue to watch the melee.

Behind them, one of KING JAMUS' MEN starts to come around, grabbing his throat and wheezing in the sulphurous air.

STILETTO turns and kicks the MAN in the side of the head. He falls unconscious again.

DOMINAE and KING JAMUS now face each other in the middle of the lava field, Daemonium behind them in all its dark majesty. They silently circle one another.

KING JAMUS' face is contorted in rage. He growls like an animal and charges towards DOMINAE. KING JAMUS deflects two of her blows, and the two fall into a rough embrace, grabbing each other by the jaw. DOMINAE slowly moves her hand over KING JAMUS' face.

Down below, DOMINAE and KING JAMUS kick at each other's feet.

DOMINAE forces KING JAMUS backwards, her arm shaking as he struggles mightily in her grip.

DOMINAE finally gets a leg around his and pushes KING JAMUS down onto a lava rock. DOMINAE pulls back and releases herself as KING JAMUS shrieks in agony, his body writhing as it is quickly consumed in fire.

DOMINAE stands and backs away, limping and holding her wounded leg as the wound bleeds anew. Her face is lit by the flames that engulf her king.

KING JAMUS' shrieks subside into unnatural groans as his body is steadily incinerated beyond all recognition.

Once DOMINAE is clear of the lava field, she pulls the door shut on the underworld. She turns towards STILETTO and DIANA, bloodied and breathing heavily.

After a moment's pause, STILETTO and DIANA rush towards DOMINAE and embrace her in tears. The three then gaze at one another, caressing each other's faces.

STILETTO grabs up her prod, while DOMINAE grabs up the electric torch. DIANA strips one of KING JAMUS' MEN of his boots.

DIANA, STILETTO, DIANA and DOMINAE step over the MEN'S crumpled forms and make their way back up the tunnel from whence they came.

CROSS-FADE.

EXT. DOORWAY TO HELL, THEATER OF SKULLS - MORNING

A warm morning sun glistens through the trees.

STILETTO, DIANA and DOMINAE emerge from the doorway, squinting in the bright sunlight.

STILETTO (V-O)
We emerged from the subterranean
darkness, and breathed in the
clean, fresh, morning air.

STILETTO, DIANA and DOMINAE stop, close their eyes, and take a moment to catch their breaths.

CROSS-FADE.

EXT. MAIN PLATFORM, THEATER OF SKULLS - MORNING

Seated up against the wall, CONSTANCE, ANDROMEDA and LUMINA lie next to one another, asleep beneath the tapestry of symbols. CONSTANCE and LUMINA have their heads on ANDROMEDA'S shoulders. Gradually a shadow crosses over them. After a moment, as if sensing DIANA'S presence, CONSTANCE, ANDROMEDA and LUMINA open their eyes, squinting in the sunlight.

DIANA crouches down before them, smiling with tears in her eyes. Though her face is still cut and bruised, her hair still dirty and matted, a halo of sunlight behind her head renders her beautiful.

With tears of joy in their eyes, CONSTANCE, ANDROMEDA and LUMINA slowly rise from their tapestry blanket.

When they're on their feet, CONSTANCE, ANDROMEDA and LUMINA each greet DIANA by touching their palms against hers. The four of them then collapse into a tribal embrace.

STILETTO and DOMINAE stand further back, watching the SAPPHIRE'S reunion with blissful smiles. They glance at one another, almost coyly, before turning their gaze back to the SAPPHIRE'S.

When they finish their embrace of DIANA, CONSTANCE, ANDROMEDA and LUMINA notice STILETTO and DOMINAE. There is a flicker of guardedness when they see DOMINAE. Noticing this, DIANA addresses them while turning back to look at DOMINAE.

DIANA
This is Dominae. She saved our
lives.

Tearful, joyful smiles returning to their faces, CONSTANCE, ANDROMEDA and LUMINA come forward and embrace DOMINAE and STILETTO.

STILETTO'S expression grows momentarily somber.

STILETTO
Captain Stone saved us, as well -
by sacrificing himself to the
Demons below.

CONSTANCE, ANDROMEDA and LUMINA also grow somber. They are silent for a moment.

ANDROMEDA
And King Jamus?

STILETTO turns to DOMINAE as DIANA comes around.

DIANA
The reign has fallen.

CONSTANCE, ANDROMEDA and LUMINA close their eyes and bow their heads in relief.

CROSS-FADE.

EXT. STONE RUINS, FOREST - MORNING

Sunbeams cascade down in the morning mist.

Sitting amidst stone ruins in the sunlight, CONSTANCE, LUMINA and STILETTO encircle DIANA, grooming her and tending her wounds; almost as if she were a fetish. A bandage covers the sore on the back of her neck.

ANDROMEDA converses with DOMINAE.

ANDROMEDA

Did you know Captain Stone was going to upset Jamus' plans?

DOMINAE

No, I wasn't sure what was going to happen. I pretended to betray Stiletto and Diana, and that was very - hard. I mean, it wasn't hard to fool Jamus - he was never that intelligent.

ANDROMEDA stifles a giggle.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)

But I knew we would have to wait for our moment, to take him and his men down. Whether we could defeat the Demons or not - well, Captain Stone removed that threat.

ANDROMEDA

I thought he had led us into not one but two traps. I said as much. I regret not giving him my trust.

ANDROMEDA bows her head. DOMINAE strokes her hair.

DOMINAE

Don't recriminate yourself, Andromeda. In a vortex of suffering and brutality such as this -

DOMINAE gestures at the relic that surrounds them.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)

- where weak, cowardly men rise, amidst the ruins, to power they did not earn, trust itself must be earned. I guarantee you Captain Stone was not offended by your doubts.

He was too old and too wise for that.

ANDROMEDA smiles as she and DOMINAE embrace. While embracing, DOMINAE turns and locks eyes with STILETTO.

LUMINA grows alert. She stands and silences everyone with her hand.

LUMINA

Wait! Voices!

DOMINAE and the SAPPHIRES grow quiet. In a moment, MEN'S voices can be heard approaching the ruins.

DOMINAE addresses the SAPPHIRES in a whisper.

DOMINAE
Quick! Hide behind the walls! I'll
get rid of them!

The SAPPHIRES follow DOMINAE'S instructions.

A few moments later, a group of KING JAMUS' MEN appear around the corner of the ruins

MAN 1
I don't care if they could be
anywhere in the forest! We're
hunting those bitches down!

MAN 2
Fucking whores, taking our king
away -

The MEN pause in surprise.

DOMINAE stands in the center of the ruins with her arms crossed.

MAN 1
Oh, hey, Dominae.

DOMINAE nods silently at the MEN.

MAN 2
We're looking for those bit- those
women who took King Jamus out.

The SAPPHIRES lean hidden behind the stone walls, their eyes and mouths open wide as they listen to the exchange.

DOMINAE (O-S)
I took care of the women. The
Demons grabbed King Jamus before I
could stop them and dragged him
away to Daemonium.

The MEN gaze at one another in a kind of limbo. One of the MEN glances at DOMINAE'S wounds.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
Go back to the city. I will join
you there.

DIANA peeks her eyes through a crevice in the stone.

From DIANA'S POV, the MEN nod their heads, but the gesture seems more like a bow. The MEN wander off.

When the MEN are gone, DOMINAE turns back to the SAPPHIRES. They rise and converse in low voices.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
They're gone. But now that Jamus' demise has reached the city, chaos and anarchy will soon follow.

LUMINA
Then we won't be able to navigate our way home without imperiling ourselves again, even if we construct a boat for that purpose.

CONSTANCE looks fearfully at DOMINAE.

CONSTANCE
And from what you told us of your ordeal with the Woodcutters, it would seem that way is closed to us as well.

DOMINAE
There is another way, another transit gate near here, which will take all of you away from this place. But to where, I cannot say. No one has returned to tell the tale.

DIANA
Perhaps there's beauty and calm in its destination, that kept them from returning.

ANDROMEDA
Or perhaps, as Constance says, it dropped them into the middle of an ocean on the other side of the world.

ANDROMEDA and CONSTANCE share a chuckle.

DOMINAE turns a questioning gaze to DIANA.

DOMINAE
Diana, can you – foresee what might await on the other side?

DIANA thinks for a moment, and then closes her eyes in concentration.

DOMINAE and the SAPPHIRES wait expectantly.

After a moment, DIANA frowns and opens her eyes.

DIANA
The transit gates are just too
murky for my foresight to
penetrate.

DIANA smiles sadly.

DIANA (CONT'D)
Else I might have seen them coming
for me.

DOMINAE and the SAPPHIRES remain quiet in reflection.

DIANA's smile brightens.

DIANA (CONT'D)
I say, we risk it. Wherever it may
take us, we Sapphires will stand
together. There is strength in
that.

STILETTO
And besides, we're a match for
anything.

STILETTO smiles at DOMINAE.

And DOMINAE smiles in reply.

SCREEN WIPE.

EXT. BRIDGE TRANSIT GATE, FOREST - MORNING

DOMINAE and the SAPPHIRES arrive at a derelict steel truss
bridge emerging from the forest, bathed in sunbeams, the
waters rippling gently below.

DOMINAE
Here lies the gate, just across the
threshold.

DIANA
What will you do, Dominae?

DOMINAE gazes wistfully at the forest that surrounds them.

DOMINAE
There really is much beauty to be
found in this world.
(MORE)

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
 But, as Stiletto wisely observed,
 there is nothing keeping me here.

DIANA
 I saw how those men gave you
 deference. You could return to the
 city and take Jamus' place, and
 lead the people towards a brighter,
 more civilized future.

DOMINAE shakes her head with a smile.

DOMINAE
 I have never wanted to lead anyone.
 It's time the people took control
 of their own lives.

DOMINAE gazes wistfully at STILETTO.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
 All I've ever wanted, I've already
 found.

DOMINAE turns her gaze to the other SAPPHIRES.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)
 The five of you go forth, and build
 your world anew.

DIANA nods, and she, ANDROMEDA, LUMINA and CONSTANCE prepare
 to pass through the transit gate. They turn and look back at
 STILETTO.

DIANA
 Stiletto - are you joining us?

STILETTO bites her lip pensively while gazing at DOMINAE.

STILETTO
 The four of you go on ahead. I'll
 follow in a moment.

DIANA, ANDROMEDA, LUMINA and CONSTANCE nod. DIANA gives
 DOMINAE a knowing smile.

DIANA
 Dominae, I foresee -

DIANA shoots a quick glance at STILETTO.

DIANA (CONT'D)
 - good things for you.

DOMINAE and STILETTO exchange smiles and eyes of longing.

Holding hands, DIANA, ANDROMEDA, LUMINA and CONSTANCE rush forward and leap over the bridge's threshold. They flash in and out of time, and are gone.

DOMINAE and STILETTO are quiet for a moment, with thoughts unspoken.

STILETTO

Well – Goodbye, Dominae.

STILETTO prepares to cross the transit gate.

DOMINAE smiles and bows her head with acceptance.

After a pause, STILETTO turns and rushes up to DOMINAE with fire in her eyes. She grasps DOMINAE by the head.

STILETTO (CONT'D)

You're coming with me. I don't
intend to let you out of my sight.

DOMINAE

Good, you had me worried.

STILETTO and DOMINAE laugh, and then passionately kiss.

DOMINAE (CONT'D)

Oh, Stiletto, you thrill me.

The two separate and prepare to cross the transit gate.

STILETTO

Ready?

DOMINAE nods with heady excitement.

Holding hands, and howling for joy, STILETTO and DOMINAE run and leap through the transit gate, flashing in and out of time.

THE END

Copyright 2025 John Richard Sullivan