

EARTHLIFE

Most Basic Training

Written by

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1 I/E. VIDEO CLIP/PHOTO MONTAGE

45-SECOND MONTAGE PLAYS, CONSISTING OF PHOTOS, VIDEO, NEWS CLIPS RELATED TO THE PANDEMIC, RACIAL JUSTICE PROTESTS AND GLOBAL WARMING. FINAL FEW IMAGES ARE DEVASTATING WILDFIRES.

FADE IN:

2 EXT. STREET CORNER - AFTERNOON

Dust blows. Sun beats down on a neighborhood that has sustained a lot of wildfire damage. Fires smolder in the distance. Firefighters, EMTs, police, media crews and distraught residents mill around.

FRED FERNOW, a sweaty, bewildered 48 y.o. man, stands on a corner wearing khakis and a blue shirt with buttons and blue baseball cap, both with "Fred's Parts" insignia. Microphone clipped to his shirt, he stares into an unseen TV camera.

Beneath his face flashes the graphic caption: FRED FERNOW, LOST HOME AND BUSINESS IN WILDFIRE.

FRED FERNOW

Yeah, I got the business going again after the pandemic. But then came the protests and the vandalism. Thought I was gonna make it. But fire took out the whole block: houses, offices, my store.... It was everything I had.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE (O.S.)
(indistinct words)

FRED FERNOW

Will I rebuild? Reinvent myself? Good question. No idea. Nine months ago it was cancer, then a divorce. Now everything up in smoke. Don't know who I am anymore! It's just too much--

Overcome with emotion, Fred yanks the microphone off, throws it at a media crew member and abandons the interview. He walks away with a slight limp, then stops, turns back, shouts:

FRED FERNOW (CONT'D)

Hey, can I ask YOU a question?

WISE GUIDE is male or female with a mature, wise voice. Wise Guide's face is always off-screen.

There are sometimes shots of Wise Guide's clothed arm, leg, back, shoes, gloved hand, etc. when Wise Guide speaks.

WISE GUIDE
Absolutely, my friend.

FRED FERNOW
Why is this happening to me? Am I
being punished? Can somebody please
help me out here?!?

Distraught, Fred wobbles forward onto the ground. Drooped over, his entire body takes on a subtle golden-yellow glow. Wise Guide's gloved hand helps him stand again.

WISE GUIDE
Certainly. I'd be happy to help.
Shall we walk while we talk?

Fred, still aglow, shrugs, limps down the street alongside Wise Guide. Flashes of Wise Guide's clothed shoulder, arm, etc.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

WISE GUIDE
So you're feeling like bad things
have been happening to you?

FRED FERNOW
I'm not just FEELING like bad
things are happening--they are!
Believe me, I'll show you the pile
of ashes that used to be my house.
Want me to drop trou right here,
show you the scars from my
surgery?Shit is definitely
happening to me.

WISE GUIDE
Ah yes, I understand it's been
quite challenging. However, when we
lose it all . . . we do have
everything to gain.

Fred stops short, exasperated.

FRED FERNOW
What are you talking about? I gotta
get outta here. I getta get home.
Ugh, home--there is no home!

WISE GUIDE

Let's walk a bit more, my friend.
Just ahead is a place where you may
find the help you're looking for.

FRED FERNOW

(shrugs)

I got nothin' better to do. I got
nothin'.

Fred and the mostly unseen Wise Guide continue walking, then turn toward the front of a small office building. Wise Guide's gloved hand holds the door open as Fred enters.

3 INT. TV STUDIO SUITE OF ROOMS - CONTINUOUS

Fred gazes around as they step into the empty, unlit lobby of a TV production studio.

FRED FERNOW

Why is nobody here? Seems deserted.

WISE GUIDE

(deflects)

Yes, well, it's a multi-use place.
It's devoted to you right now.

FRED FERNOW

Doesn't look like it has any uses.
It's dark, nobody's here. Isn't it
a work day?

WISE GUIDE

(deflects)

Hmm ... I see what you're saying.
I see what you're saying. Come
here, into the Control Room: very
comfortable chairs.

Fred allows himself to be guided into the Control Room.

4 INT. CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Fred looks around at all the instrument panels and knobs, then sits on a swivel chair.

FRED FERNOW

Seems like nobody's worked here in
years. Do you work here?

WISE GUIDE

I am more of a ... freelancer.

FRED FERNOW

But you were interviewing me back on that street corner, weren't you?

WISE GUIDE

I was certainly the one who answered when you asked for help.

FRED FERNOW

Who are you? I thought you were a TV reporter. I'm so freakin' confused. This day is just too much.

WISE GUIDE

How about a nice glass of water?

Fred reaches out as a full water glass is handed to him.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

And here's a little something to eat. You know, to keep body and soul together.

Fred accepts into his other hand a small plate with apple slices. He eats the apple slices and drinks the water.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

So you're trying to understand why all this heavy stuff is happening to you.

Fred nods.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

Ever play video games? Virtual reality? That kind of thing?

FRED FERNOW

Yeah, sure. How's that gonna help with my life being destroyed?

WISE GUIDE

Well, there's a chance for you to play a very fascinating game that may help a great deal.

FRED FERNOW

What?!? You brought me here to play a game?

WISE GUIDE

I'm responding to your request for help. You'll need to trust me on this one.

FRED FERNOW

I mean, Jesus, I just lost everything. I should probably be calling insurance companies, finding a place to stay....

WISE GUIDE

Indeed, but I believe trying this first could prove quite beneficial.... Are you willing?

FRED FERNOW

Whatever, I just don't know anymore. I'll do ... whatever.

WISE GUIDE

Excellent! I admire the trust and surrender. You're off to a grand start!

Fred looks perplexed, then shrugs, keeps eating.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Down the hall is the Wardrobe Room, where people get ready before they go on the air. In that room you will find an infinite number of characters. You will select one as your identity for the game.

FRED FERNOW

Infinite number?!? OK, whatever.

WISE GUIDE

Step One: enter the Wardrobe Room and let yourself be drawn to the right character for you. Then come tell me which one you chose, and we'll proceed to Step Two. Got it?

Fred nods, drinks the remaining water, sets down the glass, limps out the Control Room door, still aglow.

5 INT. WARDROBE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Fred opens the Wardrobe Room door to blinding white lights and bright colors.

The room is vast, way beyond the size of any that could fit in this building. It's heavily populated with vibrating holographic images of humans of all sizes, shapes, ages, genders, appearances, posed in different scenes.

Fred steps into the room, but, completely overwhelmed, dashes back out and shuts the door.

6 INT. CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Fred sails through the door back into the Control Room.

FRED FERNOW

Holy shit! What's going on in there?

WISE GUIDE

Indeed it is a lively room.

FRED FERNOW

How am I supposed to--there's hundreds, thousands of people in there! What am I supposed to do?

WISE GUIDE

Ah, yes. It can be overwhelming - without a plan. Let's chat for a moment about what you're trying to accomplish. That will help you find the right character.

FRED FERNOW

OK! I want to know why all this shit is happening to me.... And I want peace. I'm so freakin' stressed out and alone. I just want to feel PEACE!

WISE GUIDE

Very well, I'll make a note of that. Anything else? Any particular situation or type of character you feel might assist you with that?

FRED FERNOW

Soldier! I don't know why I'm saying that because that would be a person at war, not at peace, but "soldier" is in my head.

WISE GUIDE

Splendid! Trusting your instincts: supremely important!
(MORE)

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

And in fact, we sometimes get to peace by playing a character of war. Many such polarities in this game-- especially the early rounds.

FRED FERNOW

OK, whatever. I just want help figuring out what to do. I've lost everything.

WISE GUIDE

Sure thing. Ready to try again now that we have more specifics?

FRED FERNOW

Yeah, can you come in with me?

WISE GUIDE

Yes. You ask for my help, you've got it! Always. Remember that.

FRED FERNOW

Thanks.

7 INT. WARDROBE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Fred opens the door to the bright lights and colors. Now fewer holographic characters appear. All wear some kind of military apparel, including kids in soldier costumes.

FRED FERNOW

Wow--that really narrowed it down!

WISE GUIDE

Yes, the more you express what you want in this game, the easier it is to play.

FRED FERNOW

Cool! Now I gotta pick one of these people?

WISE GUIDE

That is correct.

Fred studies the many holographic characters in their various poses.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

Let yourself be drawn to one.
 There's something like a magnet in
 you that knows where to get the
 answers you need, the peace you're
 trying to find. Close your eyes and
 let the magnet of your heart lead
 you to the right character.

Fred shuts his eyes, relaxes. Then re-opens eyes and walks
 toward LATIQUA SHANTAY, a 28 y.o. woman in a camo tank top,
 dog tags and jeans. She sits on a holographic couch, arms
 outstretched in front of her. Fred stops, gazes at her.

FRED FERNOW

It's her.

WISE GUIDE

Excellent choice, my friend! Meet
 LATIQUA SHANTAY. I sensed you
 allowing yourself to be drawn to
 her.

FRED FERNOW

Yeah, I really did.... Now what?

WISE GUIDE

I'll activate the game for you once
 you're ready to step in and assume
 the identity of Latiqua.

FRED FERNOW

OK, but wait a minute! What is this
 game? How does it work?

WISE GUIDE

Well, you'll need to eat, drink,
 sleep -- all the human activities
 you're used to.

FRED FERNOW

Okayyy.... What else?

WISE GUIDE

Let's see.... Ah yes, you should
 know that this is a mirror
 universe.

FRED FERNOW

Mirror universe? What does that
 mean?

WISE GUIDE

It means that everyone and everything around you reflect back some aspect of you.

FRED FERNOW

What?!?

WISE GUIDE

When you get in the game and experience it, you'll understand. And if you need help at any point, just communicate that. Someone from my team will assist you.

FRED FERNOW

Your team ...? What's the ultimate goal? What am I trying to do?

WISE GUIDE

Well, you said it yourself: figure out why painful things happen in life and find a sense of peace going forward.

FRED FERNOW

What's it called, this game?

WISE GUIDE

It's called ... uh, EarthLife. Yes, that's right: EarthLife. It's the EarthLife universe. Any other questions?

FRED FERNOW

Yeah, how does it end? Can I make the game stop?

WISE GUIDE

When the round is about to end, things will slow down, you'll see yellow, then lights will flash.

FRED FERNOW

But can I stop the game myself if I want to?

WISE GUIDE

Yes, if you wish. Simply say "END THIS" three times. Understood?

FRED FERNOW
I think so.

WISE GUIDE
How are you feeling?

FRED FERNOW
I don't know how I feel. But I'm
ready to give this thing a shot....
Why not?

WISE GUIDE
Excellent! Your openness will take
you far in the EarthLife universe.
Very well. Repeat after me: I
hereby request

FRED FERNOW
I hereby request

WISE GUIDE
To take on the identity

FRED FERNOW
To take on the identity

WISE GUIDE
Of Latiqua Shantay

FRED FERNOW
Of Latiqua Shantay

WISE GUIDE
In the EarthLife universe

FRED FERNOW
In the EarthLife universe

WISE GUIDE
Your request is granted. So shall
it be. So it is!

8 INT. WORKING-CLASS LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Fred becomes Latiqua in a flash of golden light. She momentarily takes on Fred's golden-yellow glow, then becomes a normal person with no glow.

Her daughter, LANA, 8, sits beside her on the couch, intermittently squawking and pulling her head away as Latiqua's hands braid Lana's hair.

LANA
 (whining)
 How much longer, Mommy?

Latiqua doubtfully surveys her unfamiliar self and circumstances, then shakes it off.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 Uh, just a few more minutes, Honey.

Lana squirms, sighs heavily.

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)
 Would you like a cold drink to sip
 on while I finish?

Lana gives an exaggerated nod.

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)
 OK, Sweetie, I'll be right back.
 Now you hold still right there.

Latiqua walks out, with the same limp Fred had.

Lana somersaults on the couch. Latiqua then reappears at the doorway, sees this, stops, then loudly clears her throat. Lana sits still, smooths down her hair. Latiqua then enters, smiling, and hands Lana a glass with a straw in it.

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)
 Here ya go, Hon. I even found a
 straw so you won't have to move
 your head while I braid.

LANA
 Thanks, Mommy.

Smiling, Latiqua finishes braiding while Lana sips her drink.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 OK, Baby, all done! You sat so
 nice! See how beautiful you are?!?

Latiqua holds a hand mirror in front of Lana's face. Lana admires herself then turns the mirror to reflect both herself and her mother.

LANA
 We're both beautiful!

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Indeed we are! The mirror doesn't
lie! Now let's get you tucked in
and hugged and kissed goodnight!

The two smile, laugh, then exit the room, Latiqua limping
and with her arm lovingly around Lana.

9 INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Latiqua reappears, sits wearily on the couch. Rubs her
forehead, winces, drops her head down between her legs. When
she sits up, there are tears in her eyes. She picks up the
hand mirror, holds it in front of her face.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

I am ... Latiqua. Why the tears?
What is going on?

She begins to cry, clutches the mirror to her chest. She
surveys the room, then picks up a photo album from a nearby
table. She sees photos of herself: in dress army uniform and
in a military hospital with a leg up in traction.

Suddenly the doorbell rings. Latiqua limps to the door.

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)

Who is it?

Behind the closed door is ENO MCBRIDE, a sexy 35 y.o. man.

ENO MCBRIDE

What do you mean, who is it? Didn't
you feel me coming? It's me, Baby:
Eno!

Latiqua opens the door. Eno leans in, hugs her close.
Latiqua limply accepts the hug.

ENO MCBRIDE (CONT'D)

Chica, everything OK?

Eno keeps an arm around her, sweeping her along to the couch
and pulling her down onto it close to him. She moves to the
other end of the couch.

ENO MCBRIDE (CONT'D)

Everything OK, Honey? Why you
sitting so far away?

LATIQUA SHANTAY

I'm OK. I just don't feel totally
like myself.

ENO MCBRIDE
 Oh, Baby, what can I do for you?
 How about a nice foot rub?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 Oh thanks, but lemme go to the
 bathroom first. Be right back, OK?

ENO MCBRIDE
 Sure, Honey, take your time.

Latiqua rises, walks to the bathroom.

10 INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

She enters, shuts the door, slumps up against it. Then moves to the mirror, stares at her reflection.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 (whispers loudly)
 What am I supposed to be doing? I
 can't tell whether to trust him.
 For some reason, I'm crying, my
 stomach feels weird. Oh, God, help
 me! Help me figure this out!

Latiqua suddenly notices a small SPIDER on the toilet bowl. It travels from the seat up to the top of the tank where a book lies open. The spider walks across a page and stops. Latiqua reads the words next to the spider.

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)
 "Emotions and sensations are your
 greatest guides. Heed them well."

Agape, Latiqua smiles, makes prayer hands, looks up.

LATIQUA SHANTA
 Thank you!

11 INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Latiqua re-enters, returns to the couch.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 I'm back!

ENO MCBRIDE
 Cool, now sit down and put those
 feet on my lap.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 OK, if you're for real.

ENO MCBRIDE
I'm for real! Come on.

Latiqua sits again, stretches legs out, puts her bare feet on Eno's lap. Eno rubs a foot.

ENO MCBRIDE (CONT'D)
OK, beautiful toes! Lucky me--I get to give you a massage.

Latiqua smiles as Eno massages her foot.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Oooh, nice.... Wish I had you on call all the time!

ENO MCBRIDE
(winks)
That can be arranged.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Can it really?

ENO MCBRIDE
Sure, Honey, you just text me when you need me, and I'll be here!

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Cool! What if I wanted you to be on call right here?

ENO MCBRIDE
I am right here, Baby. Right here!

LATIQUA SHANTAY
I mean like living here. How about that kinda "right here"?

ENO MCBRIDE
Someday, Honey. Someday, for sure!

Latiqua drops her head and withdraws her feet from Eno's lap, pulling knees to chest.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
You think I'm only worth a little time around the edges. Right?

ENO MCBRIDE
Latiqua! I love you, Honey. I want to be with you.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

You just want to be with your wife more?

ENO MCBRIDE

Honey, we got nothing going on together. You know that. We just living under the same roof, we got kids, we got bills, that's all. Gimme some time.

Latiqua cries softly.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

I gotta go to the bathroom again.

Latiqua walks off.

12

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Latiqua enters, shuts the door, gazes at her tear-streaked face in the mirror, then looks intently at the words in the open book. Looks back again at her reflection.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

(in a loud whisper)

OK! Emotions --check! Sensations --check! But Jesus, I need more help here! The mirror thing How can he be a mirror of me? He doesn't think I'm worth a real relationship! Aaah, please help me with this!

Suddenly water drips from the shower head in the nearby tub. Latiqua goes over to investigate.

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)

Damn, now I got a leak?!?

She steps into the tub but then freezes when she sees her face in a small mirror mounted on the shower caddy. The shower stops dripping (without her touching anything).

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)

Wait! I got this! It's ME who thinks I'm not worthy of a real relationship. Eno's just a mirror of that. Showing me me. Wow!

Energized, Latiqua steps out of the tub, splashes her face at the sink, dries it, then exits.

13 INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

She returns to her seat at the end of the couch.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Hey Eno, I'm back. I love your sweet words and nice foot rubs. But I deserve a real relationship where I'm center stage, not off on the sidelines somewhere. That's the truth, and that's what I want.

A text pings Eno's phone. He silently reads it to himself, then jumps to his feet.

ENO MCBRIDE

Latiqua, Honey, I'm so sorry. I gotta run. I heard everything you said, Honey. Gonna call you. Gonna call you soon. I gotta dash right now though, just gotta bounce--

Eno darts over to Latiqua, hugs her absentmindedly. She mildly accepts the hug, looking strong and serene. Eno pockets his phone, dashes to the door, exits. Latiqua smiles, looks up, makes prayer hands.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Thank you so much! Thanks for Mirror Eno - he did his job real well!

14 INT. LATIQUA'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Latiqua lies in bed, agitated, mumbling in her sleep.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Yeah, all alone.... Nobody here for me.... The good guys all taken....

An incoming text jolts her awake. She checks her phone - it's from Eno: "Hey, Baby, feelin your vibe." Latiqua stiffens, puts the phone down.

Then she hears sounds, turns to a large mirror nearby. In it she sees an upset Lana rushing into the room. Lana climbs into bed with her, shivering. Latiqua hugs her tight.

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)

Sweetie! What's up? You OK?

LANA

Oh, Mommy! It was so scary!

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Did you have a nightmare, Lana?

LANA

Yes, I was alone and scared and nobody cared about me.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Oh, that's not true, Baby! You are so loved and cherished. Those are just bad thoughts in your head.

LANA

But it felt so real!

LATIQUA SHANTAY

I know it can seem that way, Honey. But if you think happy thoughts, poof! the scary stuff disappears. Now tell me your three favorite things from yesterday. I'll guess which one was best of all!

LANA

Uhm.... Riding bikes at recess.... Ana brought her gerbil in.... What else? I got to run the pizza sale!

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Wow, they're all so good! Gonna be tough to guess the absolute best. Hmm.... I'm gonna say gerbil.

LANA

You're right!! It was SO cute!

Lana and Latiqua are seen in the mirror cuddled together talking. A dropped call from Eno lights up Latiqua's phone, but she does not see it. The alarm comes on: "How Sweet It is To Be Loved By You" (by Marvin Gaye). They hug and smile.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

How sweet it is! I love you! It's the start of a wonderful new day!

15 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM AT LAW FIRM - LATER THAT MORNING

Latiqua sits at a table with 45 y.o. LAW PARTNER, LARRY JACKSON, 28 y.o. man, and NELLY JARENGARD, 55 y.o. woman.

LAW PARTNER

OK, that's it for the next cases on the docket. Everyone clear on assignments...? Oh, and Latiqua,
(MORE)

LAW PARTNER (CONT'D)
 (looks at Latiqua)
 you should expect a Motion to
 Dismiss in the Halbert case from
 ... you, Larry.

(looks at Larry)
 When you have it in final form, get
 it over to Latiqua and she'll get
 it filed. And once again, Larry,
 we're glad to have a talented law
 student like you helping us out.

Law Partner rises and smiles at everyone.

LAW PARTNER (CONT'D)
 OK, everyone, have a good day!

LATIQUA, NELLY AND LARRY
 Thanks, you too!

All pack up their laptops, files, pens, etc. Law Partner and
 Nelly walk out the door.

LARRY JACKSON
 Hey, Latiqua, how you doing?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 Good, Larry. How are you?

LARRY JACKSON
 Great! Psyched about the Halbert
 case. God, you taught me so much on
 that other one. They don't teach
 you the real-life stuff in law
 school.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 No problem! You're doing great.
 You're gonna be a really good
 lawyer.

Latiqua smiles at Larry. He beams back at her, dreamy-eyed.
 When she leaves the room, he calls after her:

LARRY JACKSON
 Thanks, Latiqua. That's so nice of
 you to say!

16 INT. OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Latiqua enters, seats herself at one of two desks, which are
 pushed together. Nelly sits at the other.

NELLY JARENGARD
He's a sweet guy, that Larry.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Yeah, he is sweet.

NELLY JARENGARD
I think he may be a little sweet on
you, Latiqua....

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Me?

NELLY JARENGARD
Yes, you!

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Really? Does he have a girlfriend?

NELLY JARENGARD
Of course he doesn't have a
girlfriend! He's interested in you
because he wants one!

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Oh, I guess that makes sense.

NELLY JARENGARD
He asked me about you....

LATIQUA SHANTAY
He did? What did he say?

NELLY JARENGARD
Are you married? Did I think you
might be available?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
What did you say?

NELLY JARENGARD
I said you're not married, you have
a beautiful little girl--

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Did you say anything about Eno?

NELLY JARENGARD
(frowns)
No! Is there anything to say about
Eno?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 How did he act when you told him I
 have a daughter?

NELLY JARENGARD
 He said "I bet she's a great mom."
 He really likes you.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 Wow.

Latiqua gazes around looking rather stunned.

NELLY JARENGARD
 So you gonna give him a chance?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 Yeah, well, if he'll give me a
 chance....

NELLY JARENGARD
 You are an amazing catch, Latiqua,
 remember that. You deserve a guy
 who's gonna treasure you, Honey.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 Thanks, Nelly.

A knock at the open door. They turn to see who it is.

Larry steps in, arms behind him. Then pulls from behind his
 back a mayonnaise jar with yellow roses in it.

LARRY JACKSON
 Did you notice the roses on the
 side of the building? Shhh--don't
 tell! Just had to cut a few to
 share the beauty.

Latiqua and Nelly jump to their feet to admire the roses.

LATIQUA AND NELLY
 Oh, Larry, they're beautiful!

Larry places them where the desks meet then beams at
 Latiqua. She grins, but then gulps, shifts around nervously,
 looks away from him.

Loud sounds at the door: a cocky Eno strides in.

ENO MCBRIDE
 Hey, Baby! Stopped by to take you
 to lunch!

Nelly, Larry and Latiqua exchange awkward glances.

ENO MCBRIDE (CONT'D)
Hey, Nelly, sup?

NELLY JARENGARD
(flatly)
Hello, Eno.

LARRY JACKSON
Don't think we've met.

Larry walks over to Eno, shakes his hand.

LARRY JACKSON (CONT'D)
Hey, I'm Larry.

ENO MCBRIDE
Cool. Name's Eno.

LARRY JACKSON
K, guess I better go. See ya!

Larry quickly exits as Nelly and Latiqua call after him:

LATIQUA AND NELLY
Thanks, Larry!

Nelly sighs, sits down. Eno touches one of the roses, gets pricked by a thorn.

ENO MCBRIDE
Owww-- these are some dangerous
flowers he brought you!

Nelly sighs, shakes her head.

ENO MCBRIDE (CONT'D)
Whadda ya say, Latiqua? Lunch? I
got a surprise for you.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
You do?

ENO MCBRIDE
Yeah, for real!

Nelly throws Latiqua a negative look.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Well I am getting hungry. Yeah, I
could do lunch.

ENO MCBRIDE
Awesome, Babe!

Nelly rolls her eyes as Latiqua and Eno leave the room.

17 EXT. CITY STREET - AFTERNOON

A food truck owner hands Eno and Latiqua take-out containers. They go sit and eat in a spot next to a building with highly polished windows.

ENO MCBRIDE
I'm the luckiest guy in the world!

Eno strokes Latiqua's thigh. Her head is pointed down.

ENO MCBRIDE (CONT'D)
I love you, Latiqua. You're so beautiful ... in every way. I miss you, Baby! I'm just lying awake all night wanting to be with you.

Latiqua looks up, meets Eno's gaze. He stares at her wolfishly. She starts sneezing violently.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Oh, excuse me!

She sneezes three more times rapid fire.

ENO MCBRIDE
Whoa, that really came on suddenly!

LATIQUA SHANTAY
(sniffles and swallows)
It sure did! So you have a surprise for me?

ENO MCBRIDE
Yeah, yeah! You know I'm working hard to get in a situation where I can be with you. I just found out I got a promotion ... and a raise!

LATIQUA SHANTAY
That's great, Eno.

ENO MCBRIDE
Yeah, that's progress, Baby. More money for us to be together.

Eno's phone rings. He looks down to see who it is, then pushes the button to silence it. He quickly sends a text.

ENO MCBRIDE (CONT'D)
Yeah ... so what was I saying?

Latiqua sneezes again violently. She stands, grabs a napkin, blows her nose, then turns away from Eno. Now she notices her reflection in the shiny glass of the nearby building.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
(under her breath)
Oh, right! Emotions, sensations.
And it's all a MIRROR!

Latiqua turns back to Eno, says sarcastically:

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)
I think I'm allergic to you, Eno.

ENO MCBRIDE
Allergic to me? Haha--no, it's the opposite, Babe. Hey, we're gonna be together, right?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
You hear what I said last night?

ENO MCBRIDE
Course I did, Baby, and we're having a nice lunch, aren't we?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
I think I'm the one who forgot what I said. I deserve a real committed relationship. That's the truth. Feels good to say it again.

Suddenly, PENNY MAN, age 75, dapper, walks by, stoops down, picks up a shiny penny and places it next to Latiqua.

PENNY MAN
Find a penny, pick it up, all day long you'll have good luck!

He gives her a thumbs-up and walks on. She grins at the penny and then at her reflection.

When she turns back to Eno, he is already gone, walking away, talking on his phone. Walking towards her is Larry, carrying a brown bag. He beams when he sees her, shouts:

LARRY JACKSON
Yo Latiqua! Guess it's my lucky day!

Latiqua beams, holds the penny to her heart. She turns to the glass, bows, makes prayer hands then turns to Larry and gestures for him to come sit with her. He does. They smile, chat.

18 INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Latiqua grins, hums, chops vegetables in the kitchen while Lana plays happily with a dollhouse in the attached living room. Lana places the little figurines in a group except for one, NINA, who stands separately.

LANA (AS GROUP OF FIGURINES)
Nina, you're so cool! Please be
friends with us!

Then Lana picks up the separate figurine Nina.

LANA (AS NINA) (CONT'D)
Sure, let's hang out!

Latiqua's phone rings. Screen says "MARLA". Latiqua answers, propping the phone to her ear as she continues chopping. Daughter Lana can't hear what Marla says.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Hey, Marla! What's up?

MARLA (V.O.)
Not much, how you doing?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Good, good.

MARLA (V.O.)
Hope you not working too hard.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Oh no, work's fine. It's actually
been good lately.

MARLA (V.O.)
Nice! What's up?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
There's a nice new guy, started a
few weeks ago.

MARLA (V.O.)
Ooh--tell me more.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Name's Larry. I kinda had lunch
with him today.

MARLA (V.O.)
Does he know about Lana?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Yeah he does, he already knew about her from somebody else at work.

MARLA (V.O.)
You gotta be careful, Latiqua.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
What do you mean?

Latiqua frowns, nicks a finger with the knife she's using, then winces in pain.

MARLA (V.O.)
I mean guy finds out you have a young girl, and then he wants to get to know you? Weird stuff happens nowadays.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
What are you saying?

Eyebrows furrowed, Latiqua sucks on her bloody fingertip.

MARLA (V.O.)
I don't know, you just can't be too careful. Single lady on her own raising a young girl.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
God, I never thought of that!

Latiqua glances worriedly at Lana. A pot begins to boil vigorously on the nearby stove.

MARLA (V.O.)
Course he could be fine--it just crosses your mind, that's all. He a paralegal too?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
No, he's in his last year of law school.

MARLA (V.O.)
So he's gonna be a lawyer? And he's interested in a paralegal?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
I don't know. I mean we're just getting to be friends....

Latiqua knocks a bunch of cut veggies onto the floor, curses under her breath.

MARLA (V.O.)
You just be careful, that's all.

Latiqua frowns, notices the pot now boiling over.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Oh no, Marla, I gotta go! I got something boiling over.

MARLA (V.O.)
OK, bye. Nice talking to you--

Latiqua puts down the phone, dashes to take the pot off the burner.

Lana now looks tense, angry as she play-acts with the figurines. She removes a second figurine from the group, WENDY, who speaks in a snide voice.

LANA (AS WENDY)
What's wrong with you, Crybaby Nina?

LANA (AS NINA) (CONT'D)
(hurt, crying)
I thought you were my friends. Why are you being so mean to me?

Lana drops the figurines, runs out of the room.

A text from Eno pings Latiqua's phone: "Hey, Baby! Your vibe just hit my antenna." Latiqua clicks the screen off, stares at the counter. Then she looks up, makes prayer hands.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
(whispers loudly)
What should I do?

A sad-looking Lana runs into the kitchen. She holds the hand mirror, sets it down on the counter.

LANA
What should I do?

Latiqua looks quizzically between Lana and the mirror.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
What should you do about what?

LANA

Millie's so mean to me. She only sits with me at lunch to see if I have any cookies she can get off me. She thinks the only good thing about me is cookies.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Do you believe that?

LANA

No, but I'm not one of the cool kids. They never sit with me. Maybe Millie's the best I can do even though she's kinda mean.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Lana! You keep thinking those things, you're going keep yourself from having all the nice friends you deserve! It all starts with you, Sweetie. If you love yourself, then the magnet of your heart is gonna attract people who love you too.

LANA

The magnet of my heart?

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Yeah, I think I heard that somewhere.

LANA

OK, but I dunno know what to do.

Loud BIRD calls are heard from outside.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Hear those birds? Get your shoes on. Let's go out and hear what they have to tell us.

Lana looks curious as she walks off to get her shoes.

19

EXT. COURTYARD - DUSK

Lana and Latiqua stand in the courtyard of their apartment building, listening to the call of a bird.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Mourning dove!

LANA
But it's night.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
It's mourning like sad, not like
the morning time. It's saying
goodbye to something that's ending.

They hear the sound of the mourning dove again.

LANA
Maybe I should say goodbye to
Millie as a friend, and that's sad?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Hmm, maybe ... and maybe say
goodbye to thinking you're not
worth being friends with?

LANA
Yeah, I guess.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
The truth is you're so fun and
smart, Lana ... and kind! Best
friend anyone could ever hope for!

LANA
Ya think?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Totally!

A flock of crows flies in, cawing in a loud cacophony. Lana
and Latiqua look up and smile in amazement.

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)
Hear that applause?

LANA
Yes!

LATIQUA SHANTAY
(clapping)
They agree! Thank you, bird
friends!

Latiqua and Lana clap and laugh together and then hug one
another long and tight.

20 INT. LATIQUA'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Latiqua lies asleep in bed. Her alarm comes on: "How Sweet It Is". Sunshine floods the room, birds sing joyously. Latiqua smiles, looks up, makes prayer hands.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Thank you!

21 INT. OFFICE - LATER THAT MORNING

Latiqua enters her office, then exclaims when she sees a bouquet of pink roses on her desk with a post-it note: "Hi, Latiqua! Found more roses and wanted to share! Lunch was fun. Have plans for today? <smiley face> Larry"

NELLY JARENGARD

Looks like you had a visitor!

Latiqua smiles at Nelly, who's seated at her nearby desk.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Yeah, looks that way.

NELLY JARENGARD

Nice note from him?

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Yeah, but I don't know what I should do.

NELLY JARENGARD

What do you mean? If you like him, let him court you. Old-fashioned. You just be the queen and you watch and see if he measures up.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

He wants to have lunch together.

NELLY JARENGARD

Why not?

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Yeah, why not?

Latiqua smiles, then writes a text to Larry: "Thanks for the pretty roses! No plans for lunch". Then she hesitates, frowns, bites her lip, then nervously hits "send".

The phone rings immediately. Latiqua appears incredulous, but the call is from Marla, not Larry.

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)
 Hey, Marla, I just got to work--

MARLA (V.O.)
 I won't keep you. For some reason,
 I got you and Lana on my mind.
 Everything OK?

Latiqua is troubled. An incoming text from Larry pings: "Ur so welcome! Lunch around 1?" Latiqua gulps, closes her eyes.

MARLA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Latiqua, you there?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 Yeah, a text just came in.
 Everything's fine. I gotta run.

MARLA (V.O.)
 OK, take care.

Latiqua clicks the phone off and pushes it to the far corner of her desk. She takes a deep breath, opens her computer and tensely starts doing her paralegal work.

22 INT. OFFICE - LATER

As Latiqua continues working, an email about child sex trafficking appears. She clumsily deletes it, then shoves the laptop away. She holds her temples, closes her eyes.

NELLY JARENGARD
 You OK, Latiqua?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 I'm fine.

NELLY JARENGARD
 You don't look fine.

Latiqua quickly stands up, slams her laptop shut.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 I'm OK, Nelly. I'm just gonna
 splash some water on my face.

Latiqua smiles wanly, turns, leaves the office.

23 INT. OFFICE RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Latiqua enters, grabs the sides of the sink and hangs her head down. A spider walks across the mirror above the sink, but Latiqua doesn't notice the mirror or the spider.

Soon she straightens up, wincing, then turns her back to the mirror and the spider.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 (steeling herself)
 I'm totally fine. I got this!

She walks to the door. Spider trails along after her on the floor, but she exits without seeing it. When the door closes, the spider stops, unable to follow her.

24 INT. OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Latiqua re-enters, sees Larry by Nelly's desk. They turn toward her when they hear her enter.

LARRY JACKSON
 Hey, there she is! Hi, Latiqua!

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 Hi, Larry, how you doing?

Latiqua looks down, shifts her weight uncomfortably.

LARRY JACKSON
 I dunno if you saw my text, but
 lunch would be great if it works.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 Yeah, thanks, Larry. I just came
 down with a headache, so I think
 I'm gonna lay low today.

LARRY JACKSON
 Oh, sorry to hear that. Can I bring
 you something from the truck?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 Oh that's OK. I brought leftovers.

Latiqua smiles wanly at Larry who looks concerned. Nelly frowns, clears her throat. Larry changes his expression to a smile and begins to walk out.

LARRY JACKSON
 If you need anything, I'm here.
 Feel better.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 OK, thanks, Larry.

Larry leaves the office.

NELLY JARENGARD
Your headache really that bad?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Not really.

NELLY JARENGARD
What's with you then?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
I don't know anything about him. I have a young child. I gotta be careful. How do I know he's not some kind of weirdo?

NELLY JARENGARD
What? Why are you saying that? Did you hear something bad about him?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
No. But it doesn't add up. Why is he interested in me? Single mom, just a paralegal. Soon he'll be a lawyer. Think he'll want to hang out with a paralegal then?

NELLY JARENGARD
Latiqua! Listen to yourself! If that's what you've been thinking, no wonder you got a headache!

Latiqua's phone rings. She looks at the screen. then quickly answers, puts it on speaker.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
(to Nelly)
It's Lana's school.
(into the phone)
Hello.

SCHOOL SECRETARY (V.O.)
Hello, this is Amber Elementary calling. Is this Ms. Shantay?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Yes, it is.

SCHOOL SECRETARY (V.O.)
Hello, Ma'am. I'm calling about Lana. I'm sorry, but she had an accident on the playscape a few minutes ago and has lost consciousness. We've called an ambulance.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Oh, my God! I'll be right there!
I'll call you right back, as soon
as I'm on my way! Tell her I'll be
there soon! Somebody please hold
her hand!

SCHOOL SECRETARY (V.O.)

Absolutely. We will, Ms. Shantay.

Latiqua turns off the call, grabs her purse. Nelly rushes to
Latiqua's desk.

NELLY JARENGARD

Oh, Honey. What's the fastest way?

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Bus is no good. I'll call a cab.

At that moment, Larry appears holding a stack of papers.

LARRY JACKSON

I brought the motion--oh no, what
is it, Latiqua?

NELLY JARENGARD

Her daughter got hurt at school.
She's about to call a cab to take
her over there.

LARRY JACKSON

My car's right outside, Latiqua.
Let's go!

Latiqua throws her phone into her bag, then heads to the
door.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Thank you, Larry. Thanks so much!

Larry and Latiqua run out the door. Nelly remains, eyes
closed, hugging herself.

25

INT. LARRY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Larry stares intently ahead as he drives. Latiqua is on
speaker with the school again.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

How is she?

SCHOOL SECRETARY (V.O.)
 Still unconscious. The EMT's are
 loading her into the ambulance now
 to take her to Children's.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 (to Larry)
 Children's Hospital: Know where
 that is?

Larry nods soberly.

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)
 What happened? Did she fall?

SCHOOL SECRETARY (V.O.)
 Apparently she had an argument with
 a girl named Millie. Millie called
 Lana a loser. A couple other girls
 stepped up and defended Lana. They
 asked her to go to the swings with
 them but she wouldn't. She ran off
 by herself. Musta climbed up on
 the monkey bars because everyone
 heard a scream, and then we found
 her unconscious on the ground
 below.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 (sobs)
 Oh God! Oh, Lana!

SCHOOL SECRETARY (V.O.)
 OK ma'am, the ambulance just pulled
 away. We're all praying for Lana.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 Thank you.

Latiqua ends the call, looks tearily at Larry who gazes at
 her compassionately.

26 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - LATER

Larry enters, looks around for Latiqua. She stands in a
 hallway and waves him over.

LARRY JACKSON
 Have you seen her yet?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
 No, not yet.

The inner doors then burst open. EMT 1 and EMT 2 wheel Lana on a gurney. Her eyes are closed, an oxygen mask covers her nose and mouth. Latiqua rushes over and grasps her hand.

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)
I'm her mother! I'm Lana's mother!
How is she?

The two EMT's stop.

EMT 1
She's lost consciousness, possible
traumatic brain injury. Doc already
signed orders for a CT scan. We're
heading there now.

Latiqua strokes Lana's hand while she listens.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Sweetie, Mama's right here with
you. I love you.

The EMT's start to move the gurney again, and Latiqua loses her grip on Lana's hand.

EMT 2
Ma'am, I'm sorry, but we need to
get her there stat.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
I'm coming with you!

EMT 1
Very sorry, Ma'am, but patients and
emergency staff only in that area.

Larry gently puts a hand on Latiqua's shoulder as she swallows a sob. The EMT's wheel Lana away.

27 INT. WAITING ROOM - ONE HOUR LATER

Larry walks over to Latiqua who sits on a chair, head hanging between her legs.

LARRY JACKSON
(gently)
Latiqua? I got you some water and
something for your headache.

Latiqua raises her head, winces and reaches for the water and medicine that Larry hands her. Swinging doors in the ER suddenly open: a middle-aged DOCTOR walks over.

DOCTOR
Ms. Shantay? Lana's mother?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Yes?

DOCTOR
Lana is still unconscious. There's a hemorrhage to the left side of the brain. Immediate surgery is recommended. The extent of the damage is unknown at this time.

Latiqua slumps forward, head hanging lower and lower between her legs. She closes her eyes and sways a few times.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
We're hopeful we can drain the area and improve her chances of recovery--Ms. Shantay? Ms. Shantay?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
(whispering loudly)
End this.... End this Oh, God, please END THIS!

A subtle yellow glow appears around her from head to toe. The color deepens and expands beyond her body and gradually obscures all other images. The doctor's voice becomes slower, more distant, muffled. Lights flash.

28 INT. WARDROBE ROOM AT TV STUDIO

Latiqua, still aglow and on the same chair, sits up, squints at the bright lights and gazes around, stunned, at the many holographic figures around her. Among them is half-hidden, reclining Fred Fernow, but she does not notice him.

WISE GUIDE
Hello, my friend.... Welcome back.

Latiqua looks up nervously but then relaxes once she recognizes Wise Guide.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Oh God, that was intense!

WISE GUIDE
Mmmm, yes.... EarthLife is definitely not for the faint of heart! But...the rewards are great.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

I dunno about that. I feel worse than when I started.... I thought I was supposed to feel peace.

WISE GUIDE

Peace comes when you learn the lessons of EarthLife, which takes time....
You started out remembering it's a mirror universe. You paid attention to your emotions and sensations. You asked for help.
But once you went into fear, you became unconscious. You forgot the rules of the game and well, you see what happened. Very common ... in the early rounds anyway.

Latiqua listens intently, looks stunned, confused.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

Care to rest in the Control Room?
Have a cold drink?

LATIQUA SHANTAY

No, no, I better get back. Lana's gonna have surgery. I need to be there when she comes out of it.

Latiqua jumps up, brushes off her clothes and grabs her purse from the back of the chair.

WISE GUIDE

Oh, I'm sorry to say that won't be possible.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Not possible? What do you mean?
Lana needs me! She's all alone.
She must be so scared!

Latiqua wrings her hands, eyes darting frantically.

WISE GUIDE

Once a round of EarthLife ends, there's no going back to being that character in that life.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

But Lana! My baby! I didn't mean to end the round. She needs me!
Please!

WISE GUIDE

I understand how you feel.
EarthLife is only a game, but it
can feel so real. Very easy to
become attached. Come sit in the
comfortable chair in the Control
Room, and we'll talk about Lana.

Silent and teary, Latiqua clutches her purse and wearily
trudges out of the Wardrobe Room.

29 INT. CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Latiqua collapses onto the swivel chair, looking distraught.
A small plate is handed to her.

WISE GUIDE

Honeycakes with pomegranate seeds.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

For real?

A glass with fruit garnish is handed to her.

WISE GUIDE

Yes. And drink this; you'll feel
like yourself again.

Latiqua sits, dazed, not eating or drinking. Wise Guide's
gloved hand reaches out and gently takes the plate and glass
from her and sets them on a nearby table.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

There is no hurry. Take your time.
It is a lot to integrate.

Latiqua swallows a sob.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Lana was so real. She's in trouble.
She's my daughter. I've got to help
her.

WISE GUIDE

Yes, I feel the love in your heart
as you say those words. Lana feels
it too. That's supremely
important. You are letting the love
in your heart lead. That will help
a great deal in the next round.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Next round?!? What about Lana?!?

WISE GUIDE

EarthLife is a rich and complex game. The characters in Latiqua's life were not just props. They are playing the game themselves. Lana is in the middle of her own round of the game.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

(voice cracking)

But now she has no mother?

WISE GUIDE

Yes, that's true in a sense. Her mother Latiqua is no longer an active character in the game. But your love for her endures beyond that round. That's precisely what you're feeling.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

So how can I help her from here if I can't go back there?

WISE GUIDE

By asking for help for her. Just like you asked for help for yourself in the game.

Latiqua shuts her eyes, frowns, fidgets. She opens her eyes again, still jumpy.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

OK, I asked. Did it work?

WISE GUIDE

Hmm ... a good start, but I think you'll find it's most effective if you take a moment to go into the love of your heart first, then ask. Care to try that?

Latiqua closes her eyes and relaxes into a meditative state. After 10 seconds or so, she opens her eyes again.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

This time I actually saw her.

30

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (LATIQUA'S VISION)

Lana lies awake in a hospital bed with a bandaged head. Nelly sits beside her holding her hand. Larry sets down a vase of flowers next to her. A faint pink/green glow of energy moves from their hearts toward Lana's.

LATIQUA SHANTAY (V.O.)

She was in a hospital bed after the surgery. Nelly and Larry were there. Nelly was holding her hand. Larry brought her flowers.

31 INT. WARDROBE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LATIQUA SHANTAY

(voice cracking)

I could see the glow of love from their hearts to hers!

WISE GUIDE

Beautiful! You've progressed a great deal from your round as Latiqua. Excellent heart access.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

I feel terrible that I was worried about Larry hurting Lana. It was based on nothing. I feel so bad for thinking that about him.

WISE GUIDE

There's a practice that can be quite helpful with such feelings. It also starts with going into the love of your heart. Would you like to try it?

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Yes, definitely! What do I do?

WISE GUIDE

First, drop into the love of your heart. Let me know when you're ready.

Latiqua closes her eyes, relaxes for a few moments, then gives an exaggerated nod.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

Good. Now direct that love at Larry and simply repeat after me: I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

WISE GUIDE

I love you. Thank you.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
I love you. Thank you.

A few moments of silence then Latiqua opens her eyes, smiles, appears sleepy. A slight pink-green glow stirs in her heart.

LATIQUA SHANTAY (CONT'D)
Wow, that works, and this isn't even the game!

WISE GUIDE
Sometimes a great deal can be processed and learned between rounds. I admire your openness.

Latiqua smiles, reaches for the honeycake with pomegranate seeds. She eats enthusiastically, intermittently sipping her drink. Then she leans back in her chair, nods off for a few moments, then awakens with a sleepy smile.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Will I ever get to see Lana again in person?

WISE GUIDE
Not as Latiqua. However, if you continue to cultivate your love for her, you may find yourselves meeting up in EarthLife again.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
For real?!

WISE GUIDE
Yes. A fascinating design, isn't it? Shall we talk about your next round? No hurry, just thinking in terms of planning.

LATIQUA SHANTAY
Do I choose a character again?

WISE GUIDE
Yes, just like last time. Any ideas about what type of character would be most beneficial?

LATIQUA SHANTAY
One who doesn't have kids--I can't go through that again!

WISE GUIDE

Very well. What else comes to mind?

LATIQUA SHANTAY

I dunno, maybe someone who works on boats or spends time on the ocean? I've always wanted to do that.

WISE GUIDE

OK, let's add that. Anything else?

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Hmm ... a character who's good at noticing things. One who can tell what the mirrors are showing and make good decisions in the game.

WISE GUIDE

Good thinking. And duly noted. We can head to the Wardrobe Room whenever you're ready.

32

INT. WARDROBE ROOM - LATER

Latiqua, still aglow, opens the door to the bright lights and colors and to hundreds of holographic figures, each with something maritime in their appearance, from kids wearing dolphin T-shirts to an admiral in full military attire.

She wanders around, open-mouthed, studying the different characters. Wise Guide is nearby but as usual, face unseen.

WISE GUIDE

Don't forget the magnet! Let the magnet of your heart draw you to the best next character for you.

She stops, closes eyes, pauses. Then reopens eyes and walks over to BERNARDO REED, 25, who wears neon pink and green swim trunks and holds a neon yellow mask and snorkel. He stands on a holographic boulder and peers around.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

(pointing)

I think that's the one.

WISE GUIDE

Ah, yes, BERNARDO REED. Excellent choice! Very resonant heart energy, We can activate this round as soon as you're ready.... Questions?

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Same rules? Everything's a mirror?
Emotions, sensations?

WISE GUIDE

Yes, precisely. However, due to
your heart's great capacity for
love, you've actually stumbled upon
another aspect of the game.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Another aspect?

WISE GUIDE

Yes. You see, there are powerful
magnetic properties in EarthLife.
Conscious use of them will take you
far. It's a universe of mirrors but
also of magnets.

LATIQUA SHANTAY

(whispers intently)
Mirrors ... and MAGNETS!

WISE GUIDE

Yes, that's right. Are you ready to
begin the next round?

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Yes, I'm ready.

WISE GUIDE

Very well. Repeat after me: I
hereby request

LATIQUA SHANTAY

I hereby request

WISE GUIDE

To take on the identity

LATIQUA SHANTAY

To take on the identity

WISE GUIDE

Of Bernardo Reed

LATIQUA SHANTAY

Of Bernardo Reed

WISE GUIDE

In the EarthLife universe

LATIQUA SHANTAY
In the EarthLife universe

WISE GUIDE
Your request is granted. So shall
it be. So it is!

33 EXT. ROCK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN - SUNSET

Latiqua becomes Bernardo in a flash of golden light. He momentarily takes on Latiqua's golden glow, then becomes a normal person with no glow.

Waves wash over his ankles as he stands on the rock. Ocean surrounds him. A shark fin circles. He examines his unfamiliar body, then looks around with dread. He shouts and waves frantically, whipping the mask and snorkel around.

BERNARDO REED
Help! S.O.S.! Please God, help me!

A second fin surfaces. He tenses, closes his eyes. Then bows head, makes prayer hands. In a few moments, his eyes fly open as the zip of a motorboat engine is heard. He shouts and waves at the small boat in the distance.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)
S.O.S.! S.O.S.! I'm here! Help!

The boat turns toward him. Someone on board waves a towel. Bernardo jumps for joy. As the boat approaches, Bernardo recognizes it and the people on board and beams. The name painted on the boat is "DONATO'S LOVE".

LUDMILA PETRARCA (Bernardo's girlfriend, 25), CONSTANCE REED (Bernardo's mother, 55) and SIMÓN PÉREZ (Bernardo's friend, 25) sit on board.

Constance cuts off the engine, steers toward Bernardo. The shark fins disappear. Ludmila throws him a rope, which he uses to pull the boat over to the rock. He steps on board and collapses onto a seat.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)
Sweet! I thought I was gonna be
shark food! You guys are the best!

LUDMILA PETRARCA
Next time we may let the sharks eat
you. Bon appetit!

Bernardo grins broadly at Ludmila and laughs.

LUDMILA PETRARCA (CONT'D)
 Not funny, Bernardo! We've been
 looking for you for hours! And it's
 not the first time! Ever hear of
 letting us know where you are?!?
 You know: text? call? email?
 voicemail? carrier pigeon? smoke
 signals? You know, one human being
 communicates with another--

BERNARDO REED
 I'm sorry, Honey! You're so right.
 (straining to remember)
 Yeah--I guess I had a last-minute
 idea to check the status of the
 coral reef out here. I didn't have
 my scuba gear. It was low tide. I
 figured I'd be real quick. Musta
 lost track of time.

LUDMILA PETRARCA
 I'd say so! And gee--I'm no grad
 student in marine biology, unlike
 certain people,
 (mock glares at Bernardo)
 but I just googled "how to avoid
 shark attacks" and guess what comes
 up?

Ludmila mock glares at him again and reads from her phone.

LUDMILA PETRARCA (CONT'D)
 "Don't swim alone. Don't swim at
 dusk. Don't wander far from shore.
 Don't wear bright clothing"

Ludmila looks him up and down reproachfully.

LUDMILA PETRARCA (CONT'D)
 Shall I go on?

BERNARDO REED
 No need, Ludmila. I'm so sorry. I'm
 such an idiot. Can you forgive me?

LUDMILA PETRARCA
 I suppose so, Bernardo.

Ludmila smiles and grasps his hands.

LUDMILA PETRARCA (CONT'D)
 I know how much you love the coral
 reefs and want to save them.
 (MORE)

LUDMILA PETRARCA (CONT'D)
 Just try not to kill yourself in
 the process, OK?! I love you, but
 sometimes you have plankton for
 brains!

Bernardo beams and wraps his arms around Ludmila. She softens and melts into the hug.

BERNARDO REED
 I love you, Ludmila. Thank you.

SIMÓN PÉREZ
 So Bernardo, how did that reef look
 anyway? Any bleaching or fragments?

BERNARDO REED
 Big-time damage! We gotta come back
 with the crew for measurements and
 photos. Hopefully we can save some
 of these little guys.

Simón nods, concerned. Constance restarts the engine. Boat heads back to shore.

34 INT. EAT-IN KITCHEN - EVENING

Constance, Ludmila, Simón and Bernardo enter the kitchen of a warm family home. Dog CODY greets them at the door. Bernardo limps in, carrying a pizza box. He wears camo tank top and jeans. They sit at the table, eating and chatting.

BERNARDO REED
 That was awesome getting rescued in
 Grandpa Donato's old boat! I didn't
 know it still worked.

CONSTANCE REED
 Me neither! When I heard they
 couldn't find you, I didn't know
 what to do. So I said a quick
 prayer.
 Next thing I know Cody's barking
 like crazy in the living room. I
 run in there and you know that
 picture of Grandpa standing next to
 his boat? It had fallen off the
 wall, and Cody was standing over it
 barking.
 It gave me the idea to grab the
 boat keys and go see if it would
 start up. Thank God it did!

Bernardo listens intently and then turns and looks at Cody who lies quietly on the floor nearby.

BERNARDO REED
Cody, did somebody knock that
picture off the wall?

Cody sits up and howls a kind of "yes."

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)
Really?... Was it Grandpa Donato?

Cody howls another "yes", then runs over to a large headshot of a smiling elderly man that's hanging on the kitchen wall. Cody jumps up on the wall below it and howls again.

Constance and Bernardo hug, look sadly at one another. Constance clears her throat.

CONSTANCE REED
Speaking of Grandpa, do you know if
his ashes have been put into that
new artificial reef yet? I haven't
heard back from the Coral Lab.

LUDMILA PETRARCA
What about Grandpa Donato's ashes?

BERNARDO REED
Oh, Ludmila, it's so cool -- he
wanted his ashes put inside one of
the man-made coral reefs we're
installing. Ya know, so he could be
part of a new home for lots of
plants and animals!

LUDMILA PETRARCA
I didn't know they put people's
ashes in them. We should do that
too! How perfect--Donato was the
King of the Sea!

BERNARDO REED
I know, right?! Mom, yeah, his
ashes did get put into that new
reef. It was installed last week -
on the far side of the island. In
the Mano Mano Coral Nursery. I've
been meaning to get over there to
check it out.

CONSTANCE REED
Oh please do, Sweetie! And take
some pictures when you go.

BERNARDO REED

Will do - asap! Speaking of that,
we gotta bounce, guys!

(looks at watch)

Big dive at the Ohana Coral Nursery
tomorrow, and I've got a ton of
prep to do!

Bernardo wolfs down the rest of his pizza and stands. He
leans over, hugs Constance.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)

Thanks, Mom! You're the best.

Then Bernardo puts an arm around Ludmila and sweeps her out
the door with him (and Simón). She looks rushed, stressed.

35

INT. COUPLE'S BEDROOM - WEE HOURS OF THE MORNING

Bernardo wears latex gloves, sits at a table heaped with
papers, books, rulers, petri dishes, coral samples, etc.
Beside him: a tall metal cabinet covered with coral-related
charts and photos held in place by magnets.

He measures, photographs and enters data into his laptop.
Then he pauses, winces, rubs his temples. He grabs pills
from a nearby bottle and swallows them with cold coffee. A
clock shows 2:43. Ludmila enters, sits on the nearby bed.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

I fell asleep on the couch again.
Honey, how you doin'? It's late....

Bernardo keeps looking down at his work.

BERNARDO REED

I'm fine.... I just need to go over
everything again.

Ludmila sighs, walks over and puts her arms around him.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

So you're done, but you're gonna
stay up all night to do it all over
again?!? Are you insane? I'm
concerned about you, Bernardo.

BERNARDO REED

What do you mean?
(gruffly shrugs her off)
I'm fine.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

You don't look fine. You're washed out. I'm afraid you're getting sick.

BERNARDO REED

Aw, Ludmila, why do you have to worry all the time?

Ludmila walks over to a full-length mirror and looks at herself as she talks. He turns, watches her.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

Well, I think you're in danger... of getting sick or even getting yourself killed, like you almost did today. I have to do something!

Bernardo lowers his head and sighs. He makes prayer hands, looks up and whispers.

BERNARDO REED

Help me!

A FLY starts banging into the mirror. He rises, eyes glued to the fly, and walks, as if magnetically pulled, to stand behind Ludmila and also face the mirror. Gazing from her reflected face to his, a look of epiphany crosses his face.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)

Aah, I get it! You think you have to rescue me from getting sick or dying. So--mirror, mirror--that means *I* think *I* have to rescue the coral reefs from getting sick or dying. You're a mirror of me!

He laughs and knocks on the mirror. Ludmila looks puzzled.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

Mirror, mirror, what?!?

Bernardo carefully observes Ludmila's reflection as she speaks. Then he stares at his own reflection as he speaks:

BERNARDO REED

I always worry about the coral.

Bernardo turns to watch Ludmila's reflection as she replies.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

I always worry about you, Bernardo.

Bernardo turns away, paces the room, limping, stops, then closes his eyes and places hands over heart. Then he opens eyes and smiles. He returns to stand behind Ludmila at the mirror, watching her reflection as he speaks:

BERNARDO REED

No need to worry about me, Ludmila!
Not your job to rescue me. Relax!
Enjoy life!

Now he gazes at his own reflection.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)

That means I don't need to worry
about the coral. Not my job to
rescue them. Do what I can, then
relax, enjoy life.

Bernardo then gazes lovingly at Ludmila's reflection and hugs her from behind.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)

Thank you, Honey! And thank YOU!

Bernardo knocks on the mirror, looks up at the fly, bows his head, makes prayer hands. He takes Ludmila into his arms, and they kiss passionately while the fly buzzes overhead.

A sudden gust of wind causes many magnets and coral-related charts/photos to blow off the metal cabinet. The reflections of Ludmila and Bernardo melt together in the mirror. Merging pink-green energy glows around their hearts.

36 INT. COUPLE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Bernardo and Ludmila sleep cuddled with a stuffed toy LION between them. The alarm sounds: "How Sweet It Is." He awakens, shuts off the song and looks lovingly at her. Birds sing. A fly lands on his heart. He smiles, nods hello.

The fly flies off, and Bernardo gets up and limps to the full-length mirror, smiling at his reflection. He looks up, nods reverently, makes prayer hands, then whispers.

BERNARDO REED

Thank you!

37 INT. LAB CLASSROOM - MORNING

Bernardo, Simón, 3 other STUDENTS in their 20's and PROF. GERMISH, age 50, sit in a lab-style classroom, which includes tables, whiteboards, laptops, specimens in petri dishes, posters of coral anatomy, etc. Prof. Germish stands.

PROF. GERMISH
 OK, big day today! You'll be
 "planting" some damaged fragments
 into the Ohana Coral Nursery.
 Remember: heavier fragments get
 glued onto the nursery table.

He displays a photo of what it should look like.

PROF. GERMISH (CONT'D)
 Don't forget your underwater epoxy!
 Lighter fragments get strung along
 ropes attached to the table, like a
 coral clothesline.

He displays a photo of what it should look like.

PROF. GERMISH (CONT'D)
 Bring plenty of fishing line.
 Questions?

SIMÓN PÉREZ
 Do we need to wear gloves?

PROF. GERMISH
 Absolutely! For your protection and
 theirs. And make sure you handle
 these coral fragments with the
 utmost care. They are fragile,
 sensitive organisms. Let's give
 them the best shot we can to heal
 and to grow. Anything else...? OK
 then. Grab your gear--let's head to
 the harbor!

They all stand and pack up to leave.

38 EXT. CORAL LAB MOTORBOAT OFFSHORE- AFTERNOON

Bernardo, Simón, Prof. Germish and the other 3 students wear
 scuba gear and hold translucent boxes containing coral
 fragments. One by one, they check the coral, snap their
 boxes shut and fall backwards into the water.

39 EXT. UNDERWATER AT OHANA CORAL NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

While the other divers swim directly to the nursery table,
 Bernardo takes his time, greeting and "dancing with" all
 forms of life he sees on the way down to the table.

When he finally gets to the table, he gently removes each
 fragment, glues it, examines it closely, makes adjustments.
 He follows the same painstaking process when tying fragments
 to the "clothesline" attached to the table.

Meanwhile, the other divers glue and tie fragments much more quickly and less carefully. They finish and return to the boat while Bernardo continues at his slower pace. Time passes.

Simón descends, swims in front of Bernardo and points at his watch. Bernardo nods and gives a thumbs up. Simón swims back up and out of sight. Bernardo ties two last fragments to the rope, just as gently and tenderly as he had done the others.

He then swims by all the fragments, carefully observing them and taking photos with his watch. He makes prayer hands and then heads up to the boat, giving nods, strokes and waves of farewell to all the sea life he passes on the way.

40 EXT. CORAL LAB MOTORBOAT OFFSHORE - LATE AFTERNOON

Bernardo hoists himself onto the boat, joining the others who already have their scuba gear off and sit silently waiting for him.

BERNARDO REED
Gorgeous down there, huh?!?

Bernardo beams. The others gruffly indicate assent. Prof. Germish starts up the engine.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)
Still a lot of empty spots down there though. How 'bout we head to the closest reef and see if we can harvest some more fragments?

SIMÓN PÉREZ
Hey, man, I gotta head back. Oxygen's low, I'm super hungry, and remember: Ludmila's picking us up-
(checks watch)
ugh--right now!

BERNARDO REED
Oh right! Never mind. I'll text her.

Bernardo sends a text. The boat heads toward the harbor.

41 EXT. HARBOR - HALF HOUR LATER

Ludmila and RONNIE (Simón's partner, age 25) smile as they watch Bernardo and Simón step from the Coral Lab boat onto the pier. The couples kiss and embrace, then get into Ludmila's convertible.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

So how are things in Coral Land?

BERNARDO REED

Good, good! Put some new fragments in the Ohana Nursery. So beautiful down there! But there's room for more. I may do a quick dive after we eat, see what I can find.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

Oh, Bernardo. We'll see.... Let's get something to eat. How about the Clam Shack place down the block?

All say yes, and Ludmila drives off.

42

EXT. TABLE AT THE CLAM SHACK - EARLY EVENING

Bernardo, Ludmila, Simón and Ronnie sit at a picnic table eating food at a cheap take-out place.

BERNARDO REED

So how was your day today?

LUDMILA PETRARCA

Awesome day! Found this amazing sand artist who's coming on tomorrow. Gonna livestream it. And... we hit 300,000 followers!!

BERNARDO REED

Ludmila, that's incredible! Can't wait for the livestream tomorrow! And wow--300K!--we gotta celebrate!

Bernardo hugs and kisses Ludmila excitedly.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)

Raise your glasses, everybody!

All raise their take-out cups.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)

Here's to Ludmila: our favorite, brilliant, world-famous media influencer!!

As they joyfully toast Ludmila, a loud horn bellows. They turn to see where it's coming from. A large fishing boat speeds toward the harbor. "GLORY BE" is painted on its side.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)
 Jeez, they better slow down. They almost hit that little skiff!

SIMÓN PÉREZ
 Oh, man, that's the Glory Be! They got fined for illegal trawling last year. Remember all the damage they did to the reefs?

BERNARDO REED
 Oh God, yes! And now they're back?!? No way!

Bernardo pounds the table and jumps up.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)
 Grab your stuff, guys. We're going back to the harbor. We need to have a word with these people!

LUDMILA PETRARCA
 Bernardo, are you crazy? You think you're law enforcement for the entire ocean? What if you piss them off? Then they'll probably **try** to hurt the coral. Or hurt you! Is that what you want?

BERNARDO REED
 These idiots don't give a damn about the coral! They'll destroy anything to make a buck.

SIMÓN PÉREZ
 Hey, man--
 (touches Bernardo's arm)
 Let's celebrate Ludmila, like you said. We're just getting the party started....

Agitated, Bernardo pulls away, walks to the edge of the patio, squinting out at the Glory Be. Their horn blows again as they near their slip. Simón grabs his phone and texts.

SIMÓN PÉREZ (CONT'D)
 I'm reporting the Glory Be to the Coast Guard right now.

Jaw clenched, Bernardo closes his eyes and clasps hands over heart. Then re-opens eyes, looks up and whispers:

BERNARDO REED
 Please help me!

A SEAGULL lands in front of him, drops a shiny object by his feet and gazes at him with head cocked. Bernardo stoops to pick it up. It's a piece of a broken mirror.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)

Aah, yes ... mirror universe!

Before he can grab it, the seagull snatches it up again and flies over to the table and drops it on Ludmila's lap. She looks startled and calls to Bernardo:

LUDMILA PETRARCA

I'm worried about you! I'm not gonna let you endanger yourself!

BERNARDO REED

(to himself)

That's right--a mirror universe.... She thinks she needs to rescue me. She doesn't. I think I need to rescue the coral. I don't. She's the mirror showing me me.

(looks up, makes prayer hands)

Thank you!

Bernardo limps back to the table and sits. His hand reaches for Ludmila's as though magnetically pulled there.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)

You guys are right. We've got important celebrating to do!

Ludmila beams as their legs entwine under the table. Pink-green energy stirs between their hearts. Simón's phone pings.

SIMÓN PÉREZ

(reading phone)

Coast Guard says "Thanks for the info, we're on it."

43 INT. COUPLE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Bernardo sits in bed looking at his laptop. Stuffed toy lion beside him. Magnets and coral charts/photos are still scattered on the floor nearby. Ludmila enters, squeezes herself in next to Bernardo, smiles at him.

BERNARDO REED

Have you ever thought about magnetism?

LUDMILA PETRARCA

Have I ever thought about magnetism?!?

BERNARDO REED

I know: it's a weird question. Have you ever tried to tune in to the magnet of your heart?

Puzzled, Ludmila furrows her brow.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)

It says here: The heart has the most powerful electromagnetic field in the human body. Says it's sixty times greater than the brain's.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

OK...? So...?

BERNARDO REED

Have you noticed anything weird about this universe we're in? This game we're playing? I'm really starting to see the mirrors, especially you. Trying to get a handle on the magnets....

LUDMILA PETRARCA

Mirrors? Magnets? What are you talking about, Bernardo?

BERNARDO REED

Ya know, this game: it's a mirror universe and a magnet universe....

LUDMILA PETRARCA

What game, Bernardo? I don't know mirrors or magnets. All I know is ... I love you ... so much, Honey!

A beam of pink-green energy bursts forth from Ludmila's heart and encircles Bernardo's. She closes his laptop and places it on the nightstand.

LUDMILA PETRARCA (CONT'D)

Would your Lana the Lion mind making some room for me?

Ludmila smiles and touches the stuffed lion. Wide-eyed, Bernardo moves the lion and looks lovingly at Ludmila. A beam of pink-green energy travels from his heart and encircles Ludmila's.

BERNARDO REED

There's plenty of room for Lana and
for you, Honey!

Ludmila cuddles into the crook of his arm with the lion. He rests hand on heart, gazes upward, mouths "thank you", then exhales and closes his eyes. Pink-green energy flows between them.

44 INT. COUPLE'S BEDROOM - CLOSE TO DAWN

As the couple sleeps, Bernardo's watch on the bedside table lights up and pings. He grabs it and sees: "RED ALERT: Oil spill near Mano Mano Coral Nursery. Faculty & dive staff please report immediately. Students remain on standby."

BERNARDO REED

Oh, no!

Bernardo drops the watch, leaps out of bed, knocking the lion onto the floor and then limps over to a dresser and rifles through the drawers. Ludmila stirs in the bed.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

What's going on?

BERNARDO REED

Oil spill near Mano Mano Coral
Nursery! That's right near the new
reef with Grandpa Donato's ashes!
God, why didn't I get there sooner
to take pictures for my Mom?

Bernardo shuts a drawer on one of his fingers and lets out a yelp. Ludmila sits up, crosses her arms.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

How were you supposed to know there
would be an oil spill? Isn't Mano
Mano Nursery way over on the far
side of the island? That'll take
all day. Do you have to go?

BERNARDO REED

No, I don't have to go, but I'm
gonna go! I care about these coral
reefs, and I care about my
grandfather. I'm not gonna just
bail cuz it's inconvenient.

Bernardo pulls clothes on, then limps to the bed. He suddenly cries out and plops down on the floor in front of the full-length mirror. Blood oozes from one of his bare feet.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)

Aargh! A broken magnet! Just what I need right now!

LUDMILA PETRARCA

Stay there. Let me help you.

Ludmila lights a lamp and leaves the room.

Angry, Bernardo holds his bloody foot and stares at the broken magnet that cut it. He does not look up at the mirror in front of him. A mourning dove calls, and a fly buzzes and bumps into the mirror, but he only notices his wounded foot.

Ludmila returns, leans over to clean his cut with a wet wipe, but he snatches it out of her hand and wipes it himself. She looks taken aback.

BERNARDO REED

I gotta hustle. Every second counts. Oww!

LUDMILA PETRARCA

Honey, don't a lot of sharks feed in the Mano Mano area? Should you dive there with a fresh cut on your foot?

BERNARDO REED

This is a serious oil spill, Ludmila! Do you know how much destruction could be happening there right now?

LUDMILA PETRARCA

Do you think it'll improve things if you cause a feeding frenzy?

Bernardo angrily turns on Ludmila.

BERNARDO REED

Not funny. You really don't give a damn about the coral, do you?

LUDMILA PETRARCA

Bernardo! How can you say that?--

Suddenly the alarm comes on: "How Sweet It Is". Bernardo grabs the watch, angrily turns off the song and flings it aside. It hits the lion on the head and lands on the floor. Ludmila stifles a sob, closes her eyes.

Bernardo snatches a bandaid from the box Ludmila holds, puts it on, then staggers to his feet.

He finishes dressing, grabs his watch and scuba gear and exits, slamming the door. Ludmila picks up the lion, hugs it to her chest.

45 INT. COUPLE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Ludmila sits in bed with the stuffed lion, laptop open. The door opens. She looks at the full-length mirror and sees the reflection of a sad, weary Bernardo enter and drop his gear. He walks to the bed, reaches out for her.

BERNARDO REED

(choked up)

Ludmila! I'm so sorry! I missed your livestream, and I hate myself for it. I forgot everything. I forgot what this all is! I'm so, so sorry.... Please forgive me.... I love you so much.

Ludmila's eyes tear up as she gazes at Bernardo. She embraces him. He buries his head in her chest.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

It's OK, Honey. I've made mistakes. I know what it feels like.

Bernardo climbs onto the bed and curls into a ball, clutching the lion. A faint glow of pink-green energy connects him and Ludmila. She strokes his back.

46 EXT. NEAR MANO MANO CORAL NURSERY - AFTERNOON (FLASHBACK)

Bernardo stands on board the Donato's Love talking with Prof. Germish who stands on board the Coral Lab motorboat which is right beside it.

BERNARDO REED (V.O.)

When I got there, six divers were already down at the Mano Mano Nursery. Germish said it wasn't necessary for me to go, everything was on track...

47 INT. COUPLE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

BERNARDO REED

But ya know what I did?

LUDMILA PETRARCA

What?

48 EXT. DECK OF THE DONATO'S LOVE (FLASHBACK)

Geared up, Bernardo holds a translucent diving box and falls back into the water.

BERNARDO REED (V.O.)
I went in anyway! I just had to be
part of it, big rescue hero....

49 INT. COUPLE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

So I go in, and guess what happens?

LUDMILA PETRARCA
What?

BERNARDO REED
Sharks, Ludmila - you called it.

LUDMILA PETRARCA
Oh, no!

50 EXT. UNDERWATER AT MANO MANO CORAL NURSERY (FLASHBACK)

Bernardo swims in oily water toward the nursery where divers remove coral fragments. He suddenly sees two large sharks approaching. He pushes a button on his watch, which lights up his and the other divers' watches.

All now see the sharks and rapidly swim for the surface, sharks in pursuit. One diver hits a shark with his diving box, and all the coral fragments spill out. Another diver's box is bitten by a shark, coral fragments spilling out.

BERNARDO REED (V.O.)
Oh, yes. Every single diver had to
get out of the water. Thank God
everyone made it back to the boat.

51 INT. COUPLE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

BERNARDO REED
Germish grilled me. I admitted I
had an open wound. He took me off
Nursery Crew for violating dive
protocols. Said I also endangered
the sharks by drawing them into the
poisoned water.
(choked up)
Worst of all, very little coral was
saved. And forget about Grandpa
Donato's memory being preserved
there with his ashes! A total fail!

Ludmila curls around Bernardo, holding him tight. They are silent a few moments.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)

Thanks for forgiving me. You are so amazing, and I love you so much. And I want to hear all about your livestream today--

LUDMILA PETRARCA

Sure, Honey. We'll talk about that tomorrow. I love you, Bernardo. It's all gonna be OK.

Bernardo unwraps himself and faces Ludmila, lion still clutched in his hand. She kisses him tenderly and unbuttons his shirt. They embrace and kiss. She leans over and turns off the lamp. Pink-green energy glows between them.

52 INT. COUPLE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Bernardo and Ludmila sleep, cuddled, lion tucked between them. "How Sweet It Is" comes on. As the song plays, they both awaken and look lovingly at one another.

Birds sing, and a fly lands first on Bernardo's heart, and then on Ludmila's. Pink-green energy flows between them. The fly flies off. Bernardo turns off the song.

BERNARDO REED

How sweet it is!

LUDMILA PETRARCA

(reaching for his hand)

Yes, it's VERY sweet! How are you feeling? That was a lot yesterday.

BERNARDO REED

Feeling OK, good actually. Learned some lessons, like about fear... and ego.... But I do miss them.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

Miss who?

BERNARDO REED

The little coral fragments in the Ohana Nursery. I know it sounds weird, but I do kinda love them. Getting kicked off Nursery Crew is embarrassing and everything, but I mostly just feel sad. I love it down there with them.

(MORE)

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)
It's so peaceful-- like home. I
hope they're okay.

LUDMILA PETRARCA
Oh, Honey, I love the way you talk
about them! I wish I could see them
myself. I'm sure I'd love them too.

Their hearts continue to glow.

BERNARDO REED
Wait a minute!
(grabs his watch)
It's only 7:10. The dive crew won't
be there til 10:30 earliest. Let's
go! I want to show them to you.
It's so beautiful down there,
Honey. You'll fall in love with it!

LUDMILA PETRARCA
But, Bernardo, I thought you said
you learned some lessons--

BERNARDO REED
I did! Truly. It's not about trying
to save them or about rebelling. It
really isn't. It's just that I love
them. And I love you. I feel a
magnetic pull right here.

Bernardo touches his heart and smiles.

LUDMILA PETRARCA
But what about sharks? Won't the
same thing happen?

BERNARDO REED
No, not at Ohana. Lots of sharks
around the Mano Mano Nursery, but
they're almost never seen near the
Ohana Nursery. Plus Germish gave me
a special underwater bandage. And
I'll put waterproof duct tape over
that to be extra safe.

Bernardo jumps out of bed, rushes to the scuba gear in the
corner and examines the tanks there.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)
No full tanks, but there's a couple
with enough oxygen for a quick
dive.

Bernardo excitedly throws gear into a large duffel.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

I dunno know about this, Bernardo.
I love the sound of it, but I don't
want you to get in trouble.

BERNARDO REED

No trouble! I just want to quickly
look in on them and introduce you
to them. It's so, so beautiful.
I've really let go, Honey. I get it
now. It's not my job to save them
all. I know there are a lot of
other good people looking out for
them.... Are you in?

Ludmila smiles and heads toward the closet.

LUDMILA PETRARCA

I'm in!

53 EXT. LUDMILA'S CONVERTIBLE CAR - MORNING

Ludmila drives, and both beam as they look around at the
bright, sunny morning and passing sights.

54 EXT. HARBOR - CONTINUOUS

Bernardo and Ludmila load gear onto the Donato's Love, then
climb on board. Bernardo unties the mooring, starts the
engine, and they head out.

55 EXT. DECK OF THE DONATO'S LOVE - LATER

Bernardo and Ludmila stand on the boat, now anchored far
from shore. They wear swimsuits, scuba tanks, masks and
flippers. Bernardo takes Ludmila's hands in his.

BERNARDO REED

I'm so excited, Honey! Imagine
bringing my favorite person in the
world to see my favorite place in
the world!

LUDMILA PETRARCA

I know, I'm so happy, Bernardo!
(squeezing his hands)

BERNARDO REED

It's gonna be sweet! Not a lot of
oxygen in these tanks, so we'll be
quick. Just follow me. I'll make
all the necessary introductions.

(MORE)

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)
(laughing and bowing)

Ludmila laughs, gives a thumbs up. The two of them gear up and fall backwards into the water.

56

EXT. UNDERWATER AT OHANA CORAL NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

As they swim down, Bernardo strokes seaweed, shakes hands with it, waves at fish, turns somersaults, etc. Ludmila mimics him. Pink-green energy glows from their hearts.

Ludmila's body suddenly jerks back. One of her flippers is caught on a bit of fishing net tangled around a rock. When Bernardo notices, he tries unsuccessfully to untangle her. He pulls a knife from his belt loop and cuts the net away.

Free now, she gestures to Bernardo to ask whether to continue down or go back up to the boat. He points down, and so they go. The knife slips off his belt loop and out of sight, but they do not see this.

Bernardo points as they near the nursery table, but a huge, heavy fishing net covers much of it. Fragments have been overturned, knocked off. Bernardo pockets a few, patting them as if to reassure them that all is well.

He and Ludmila unsuccessfully try to pull the net off. They swim beneath and try to lift it off but instead get tangled up in it. The more they try, they more tangled they become.

He reaches for the knife in his belt loop, but he and Ludmila see that it's gone. They search in vain and then look soberly at one another. They redouble their efforts to escape the net but remain hopelessly tangled up in it.

Bernardo now emits a golden glow, and yellow light begins to spread. They see that the gauges on their scuba tanks read "empty". They hug through the mess of nets. Bernardo makes prayer hands and looks up.

A smiling image of Grandpa Donato appears overhead. He gazes around, admiring the beauty of the sea, then reaches out as if to hug the couple. Pink-green energy surges forth from him, encircles them and then vibrates out into the sea.

The couple gaze lovingly at Donato, place hands on hearts and relax into one another's arms. Their hearts glow. Everything slows down. Their eyes close. Yellow light blocks out all other images. Lights flash.

57 INT. WARDROBE ROOM AT TV STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Bernardo lies on the floor, glowing yellow, with nets draped over him. Behind him holographic figures populate the vast room, including half-hidden, reclining Fred Fernow whom Bernardo does not see.

Bernardo slowly draws himself up, surveys his surroundings, then turns when he hears a familiar voice.

WISE GUIDE
Hello, my friend.... Welcome back.

BERNARDO REED
(quiet and stunned)
Hello.

WISE GUIDE
May I offer you a hand up?

Befuddled, Bernardo remains still and silent.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)
Perhaps take the flippers off
first?

Bernardo looks at his flippers as though he has never seen them before, then slowly removes them. Then he takes off the scuba tank, mask and netting and reaches for Wise Guide's gloved hand. which helps him up.

BERNARDO REED
Oh, my God! I can't believe I'm
back here.
(looks around stunned)
What happened to Ludmila?

A glow of pink-green energy stirs in Bernardo's heart.

WISE GUIDE
Ludmila has moved on.... She
appears to be doing well so far.

Bernardo puts hand to heart and closes his eyes. Visible heart energy swells.

58 EXT. ASTRALLIFE UNIVERSE - DAY (BERNARDO'S VISION)

Ludmila, glowing yellow, emerges from a serene lake and looks around open-mouthed. A nearby meadow leads to an ancient looking, ethereal city with stone walls.

She walks across the grass toward the city. A gate opens, and several glowing people in pale pastel robes emerge, arms in a gesture of welcome. Ludmila smiles, reaches for them, her heart energy glowing.

59 INT. WARDROBE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

BERNARDO REED

I see her. Yes, she looks happy!

Bernardo opens his eyes, tears glistening in them.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)

Where is she?

WISE GUIDE

Ludmila has entered a new game, a new universe.

BERNARDO REED

A new game?

WISE GUIDE

Yes, that's right. We'll call it ... AstralLife, the AstralLife universe.

BERNARDO REED

(dreamily)

AstralLife?

WISE GUIDE

Yes. It's closely connected to EarthLife. Ludmila will be there a while -- length of time depends on a number of factors. But she'll certainly be back to play another round of EarthLife at some point.

BERNARDO REED

Will I be able to see her? Can I play a new round with her, like you said I could with my daughter Lana?

WISE GUIDE

Yes, well, there are infinite potentialities. Future rounds with your beloveds are possible. But you must keep up the heart magnetism and prayer requests if you desire such a reunion....

Bernardo nods, closes his eyes, moves his lips in silent prayer. He finishes, reopens his eyes.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

You look rather spent. Shall we relax in the Control Room for a bit? I have refreshments for you.

Bernardo nods, follows Wise Guide out of the Wardrobe Room.

60

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bernardo sits in the swivel chair, yawns, stretches. He is handed a frosty glass with tropical fruit garnish and a small plate with wrapped candies.

WISE GUIDE

Salt water taffy: I thought it might ease the transition.

BERNARDO REED

Thanks.

Bernardo unwraps a taffy, puts it in his mouth, then looks penetratingly at Wise Guide.

BERNARDO REED (CONT'D)

How did I do?

WISE GUIDE

Very impressive round.... How do you feel about it?

BERNARDO REED

I'm not sure. It was pretty short. I suppose I could have tried to stay in there longer. I was still young when the round ended.

WISE GUIDE

That's true....

BERNARDO REED

But I was really happy. I was in that beautiful place with the coral, the fish, the plants. Ludmila was with me, Grandpa Donato was there. It felt fine that it ended. I knew it was just one round and there would be others.

WISE GUIDE

Mmm, yes. Pleased for you.
Tremendous development in a single
round. Beginning to tap into your
higher potentials. Good to see you
making use of this rare opportunity
you're receiving.

BERNARDO REED

Thanks, I appreciate it.

WISE GUIDE

You're most welcome.... I wonder
whether you'd like to play one more
round in this format? It is
available to you. However you
should know that if you choose to
do so, you will be playing on a
more advanced level.

BERNARDO REED

Wait: so I can do another round of
the game or else go back to my real
life? God, what was my real name?
Jeesh, I can't even remember it!

WISE GUIDE

Ahem ... is Fred the name you're
trying to recall?

BERNARDO REED

Yeah, that's it: Fred! So go back
to my real self or do one more
round of EarthLife as a different
character first?

WISE GUIDE

That's more or less the choice
before you. You could be Fred now
... or another character first.

BERNARDO REED

Hmm.... What would make this round
more advanced? Is it more
dangerous?

WISE GUIDE

Oh it will just be the customary
dangers of EarthLife. The
advancement relates to a new
dimension of the game. You see,
EarthLife is more than a mirror
universe.

(MORE)

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

It's more than a magnet universe.
It's also a mesh universe.

BERNARDO REED

A mesh universe?

WISE GUIDE

That's right: mesh. Beginning players move through the universe not realizing this. They believe they are separate entities, single strands, and that they only have the capacity to act individually. Advanced players experience things from a more unified perspective. They are able to assume the identity of a single character, but also feel part of the larger whole, the one all-encompassing mesh. Consequently, they are able to perceive and create much more expansively.

BERNARDO REED

That sounds sick! Like a superhero!
Do I get a mesh cape?

WISE GUIDE

(chuckles)

Haha, perhaps that can be arranged.

BERNARDO REED

Wow, seems like I should do another round then. After all, when am I gonna get another chance to be in a mesh universe!?

WISE GUIDE

Well, you might be surprised at the answer to that question.... In any event, it sounds like you've decided to play another round.

BERNARDO REED

Yeah, I'm in.

WISE GUIDE

All right then. Shall we run through your questions and intentions before you begin the next round?

BERNARDO REED

Yeah, that sounds good.

WISE GUIDE

Perhaps consult your heart first about what it is that you desire? Then you'll be able to magnetize it to yourself more effectively.

Bernardo shuts eyes, places hand on heart. Breathes deeply for a few moments, re-opens eyes.

BERNARDO REED

Three things come to me. First, I'd like to feel deep love again, like I did for my daughter Lana, my girlfriend Ludmila and for the coral.

WISE GUIDE

OK, noted.

BERNARDO REED

Second, I'd like to do some kind of important work in the EarthLife universe so I can have a positive impact while I'm there.

WISE GUIDE

Very well, commendable. Any specifics about that? As we've seen, narrowing it down can make for less of a mob scene in the Wardrobe Room.

BERNARDO REED

Hmm... The character's work could be about resolving conflict, peacemaking, that kind of thing.

WISE GUIDE

Got it! And was there one other desire you wanted to mention?

BERNARDO REED

Yes, I'd really like to be able to check in with you while I'm active in EarthLife, ask you questions, run ideas by you. Is that possible?

WISE GUIDE

(long pause)

Yes ... that is possible, but with an asterisk.

(MORE)

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

So long as our communications don't undermine the learning purposes of the game. EarthLife is about finding the answers by living the questions not by just talking about them. Understood?

BERNARDO REED

Yeah, I think I understand.

WISE GUIDE

Excellent! I've noted your wishes here at the outset of this round.

BERNARDO REED

Could I take a minute to ask for help for Lana and Ludmila and for the coral? I seem to forget all about the past rounds once I'm in a new character's life.

WISE GUIDE

By all means! I'm pleased to see your heart up and running like it is. It's your greatest tool, your most powerful asset.

Bernardo nods, lowers head, closes eyes, then spends a few moments in silent meditation. The pink-green energy glows brightly in his heart. Then he re-opens eyes, stands, moves toward the door.

BERNARDO REED

OK, I'm ready.

WISE GUIDE

Very well. To the Wardrobe Room!

61 INT. WARDROBE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A glowing Bernardo opens the door to the bright lights and colors. He strolls among the many holographic characters: judges in robes, speakers at podiums, protestors with signs, parents with kids, musicians, painters, gurus meditating.

He stops, shuts eyes. When he reopens them, he is drawn to a seated figure in an overcoat who leans forward, hands on knees. It is LEE-DOA X, a 30 y.o. androgynous person with a short haircut and no facial hair.

BERNARDO REED

I think this is my next character.

WISE GUIDE

Ah yes! You've chosen LEE-DOA X.
 Congratulations, I sense a strong
 magnetic resonance. Well done....
 When you're ready, you may repeat
 after me.

Bernardo places hands on heart.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

I hereby request

BERNARDO REED

I hereby request

WISE GUIDE

To take on the identity

BERNARDO REED

To take on the identity

WISE GUIDE

Of Lee-Doa X

BERNARDO REED

Of Lee-Doa X

WISE GUIDE

In the EarthLife universe

BERNARDO REED

In the EarthLife universe

WISE GUIDE

Your request is granted. So shall
 it be. So it is!

62 INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Bernardo becomes Lee-Doa in a flash of golden light. Lee-Doa momentarily takes on Bernardo's golden glow and then becomes a normal person with no glow.

Lee-Doa sits in a battered compartment of a moving train, leans forward, listening intently to PALAMEH GANDAR, a 40 y.o. woman seated across from them who wears an old dress and shawl and speaks intensely in a low voice.

PALAMEH GANDAR

You won't believe how they're
 terrorizing us! The High Command
 are rounding up people, checking
 ID's.

(MORE)

PALAMEH GANDAR (CONT'D)

If they see you're a Kanda, they throw you in a van and you disappear. Or they might just shoot you on the spot. If you say you lost your ID or they catch you with a fake, they torture you first and then kill you.

LEE-DOA X

Oh, that sounds terrible!

PALAMEH GANDAR

It is. Refugee organizations are trying to get Kanda people out, but some of their workers have also been killed. We're working on an underground network of safe houses. Some success, but there are traitors and snitches. Just terrified Kandas trying to stay alive by betraying us to the High Command.

LEE-DOA X

I'm so sorry.... How can I help?

PALAMEH GANDAR

We have a strategy we believe could be successful, but we're open to your ideas. We're open to anything.

LEE-DOA X

Please, explain your strategy. Then let's move forward. It sounds crucial that we act now.

PALAMEH GANDAR

Very well, Lee-Doa. Because you are half Kanda and a stranger in this region, you are in a very unusual position. There are unusual opportunities, and unusual dangers.

Palameh removes two worn passport-like objects from her bag. She holds one up and shows it to Lee-Doa.

PALAMEH GANDAR (CONT'D)

First: Our people have created a standard ID for you with your actual name, indicating that you have Kanda ancestry on your mother's side. In other words, a true ID.

Palameh hands the true ID to Lee-Doa.

PALAMEH GANDAR (CONT'D)

The status of half-blood Kandas is less clear, but it's likely you will be killed if anyone on the High Command sees this ID. However, you may need to prove your Kanda ancestry if you are among Kandas; this is one way to do that. Obviously, you must exercise extreme caution in deciding whether to show this ID. Understood?

LEE-DOA X

Understood.

PALAMEH GANDAR

We feel our best chance to stop the terror and the killing is by infiltrating the High Command. Because your face is not familiar in this area and your features are not that of a full-blooded Kanda, we believe you are well-positioned to do so. We've been advised of your great expertise and are extremely thankful for your help. We feel certain you will either change the hearts and minds of those on the High Command or eliminate them, if necessary for the greater good.

Palameh and Lee-Doa stare soberly at one another. Palameh then picks up the other ID and shows it to Lee-Doa.

PALAMEH GANDAR (CONT'D)

And so, we've created this second ID for you: a false one. Name is BANKI GOJI, Able Officer, Tier 2, High Command.

Palameh hands Lee-Doa the second ID, then places a duffel bag on the seat next to Lee-Doa.

PALAMEH GANDAR (CONT'D)

As with the other ID, you must exercise great caution in deciding whether to show this. There is a risk that Kandas seeing it might act against you in self-defense. In this bag, you'll find a full character profile for Officer Banki Goji. You would be well advised to memorize it and destroy it as soon as possible. You will also find an officer's uniform as well as other basic supplies you will need.

A whistle blows. The train begins to slow.

PALAMEH GANDAR (CONT'D)

We're almost there. Do you agree to this plan, Lee-Doa?

LEE-DOA X

Yes, Palameh. I agree to the plan.

The train stops. They rise, shake hands.

PALAMEH GANDAR

Thank you, Lee-Doa. This is critical work, and I sense your heart is pure and strong.

They make eye contact, then hug briefly. Palameh rushes out. Lee-Doa watches from the window as she steps off the train, clutches her shawl and walks briskly away, blending into a group moving in the same direction.

Lee-Doa puts the two ID's into a pocket of the overcoat and picks up the duffel. Closes eyes momentarily, whispers:

LEE-DOA X

Please help! Guide me to a safe place so I can figure out what to do next.

Lee-Doa makes prayer hands, looks up, mouths "thank you", then exits the compartment.

63

EXT. TRAIN STATION AREA - AFTERNOON

Lee-Doa steps off the train. Sees some High Command officers and civilians by an old station. In a dirt parking lot nearby: a few junky cars and bikes, a new High Command van with tinted windows, an old rickshaw and pedicab.

RICKSHAW MAN, 65, thin, with ragged clothing, sits on the ground next to the rickshaw. DAMLE YURANA, simply dressed 45 y.o. man, leans against the parked pedicab.

Lee-Doa starts limping toward the parking lot. BIG DOG #1 appears out of nowhere, barking savagely, baring its teeth. It chases Lee-Doa away from the parking lot, toward a wooded area.

Once Lee-Doa is hidden in the woods, BIG DOG #1 stops, stares mildly at Lee-Doa, then quietly lopes away.

Lee-Doa watches as the doors of the High Command van fly open. Uniformed OFFICERS 1,2 and 3 emerge and rush over to Rickshaw Man. They speak harsh, unintelligible words.

Damle quietly creeps away, pauses for cover behind a car, then dashes into the same woods, about 500 feet from where Lee-Doa hides.

Officer 1 yanks Rickshaw Man up, shoves him against the rickshaw, frisks him. Officer 2 pulls an ID from the man's pocket, examines it, then lets out a cry. Officer 3 throws a sack over the man's head.

Then they hustle him into the van and roar out of the parking lot.

EXT. WOODS NEAR TRAIN STATION - CONTINUOUS

Shocked, Lee-Doa looks up, makes prayer hands, whispers:

LEE-DOA X
 Oh my God, please
 protect him! And thank
 you, dog friend: that
 could have been me!

Now angry, Lee-Doa grabs a flask from the duffel, takes a few swigs. Then pulls out the officer's profile, begins to read it, but pauses, ill at ease. Then speaks in whispers:

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
 I gotta figure out what's going on here. OK, concentrate. Mirrors: OK, Palameh.... She's worried about her people, the Kandas. She's coming up with a plan. What's the mirror? How is she showing me me? Or maybe the High Command people? Or the person they snatched? Oh, God, how are these people mirrors of me?

Frustrated, Lee-Doa tosses the duffel aside. A small mesh bag falls out. Lee-Doa picks it up, opens the top, tips it over. A heart-shaped magnet, small mirror and piece of coral fall out. Lee-Doa picks up the mirror.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
Mirror!

Then Lee-Doa picks up the magnet.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
Aah ... magnet! And what is this?

Lee-Doa then picks up the coral, rubs it, looks at it quizzically, then holds it tight.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
Not sure, some kind of pretty shell
. . . and all in a MESH bag!

Smiling, Lee-Doa drops the items back into the mesh bag, then dangles the bag and gazes at it.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
That's right: a mesh universe....
Not just separate characters.. .. A
unified whole.

Lee-Doa closes eyes, clutches the mesh bag. A few moments later, eyes open extremely wide, hands squeeze the mesh bag tightly.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
Oh my God! Now I see! Is there a
war going on inside ME? - just like
this whole situation?

Lee-Doa looks up and around searchingly.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
Please if you're there, I need to
run this by you.

Lee-Doa looks around more. A faint flash of violet light.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
OK, thank you! Some people here
hate a certain group called the
Kandas. So parts of the population
are murderous and evil. Other parts
are peaceful and good. People take
sides and are afraid to show their
true selves.

Lee-Doa holds up the mesh bag.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

I think I get it--it's ALL one
giant mirror - showing me ME!
Am I right? Parts of me are
hateful, ugly. Parts I wanna hide
cuz I'm ashamed. And some parts are
good, loving. Is this whole thing
my psyche being turned into a civil
war?

The violet light flashes again, followed by a soft, echoing
version of Wise Guide's voice:

WISE GUIDE (V.O.)

Yes, you might say that. EarthLife
is a theater of the self. It is the
self in all its aspects.

Lee-Doa beams, awestruck. Holds prayer hands high.

LEE-DOA X

Thank you!

Lee-Doa puts mesh bag back in duffel, then changes into the
officer's uniform. Once the overcoat is removed, a camo tank
top is seen. It's kept on under the uniform.

Lee-Doa puts on officer's cap and belt with holster. Then
pulls a gun from the duffel, stares at it, shakily puts it
in the holster.

Then Lee-Doa sits down, begins to read the profile again.

Suddenly leaves rustle, branches snap. Lee-Doa shoves the
profile into a pants pocket and jumps to standing. Damle
Yurana appears, frozen with fear. He puts his hands in the
air at the sight of the High Command officer.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

There is nothing to fear.

DAMLE YURANA

I'll do anything. Please, please!

LEE-DOA X

May I see your ID?

DAMLE YURANA

Uh, yes, yes, of course. I don't
have it with me. It's in the
pedicab. Honest, I can show you!

LEE-DOA X

OK. We'll walk over there together.

Lee-Doa grabs the duffel, assumes an authoritative air and walks, with the slight limp, toward the parking lot. Damle walks alongside, eyes darting nervously.

EXT. TRAIN STATION PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

As the two reach the pedicab, Damle bolts. Lee-Doa drops the duffel, chases him. Even with the limp, Lee-Doa soon overtakes Damle and wrestles him to the ground.

DAMLE YURANA

I remember now--my ID is at home! I can get it for you, no problem!

LEE-DOA X

I told you: there is nothing to fear! I don't need to see your ID. It's obvious you're a Kanda ... and that's good.

DAMLE YURANA

Good?

LEE-DOA X

I need you to take me to your community. I need information.

Damle eyes Lee-Doa suspiciously.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

There's more to me than meets the eye. I am not your enemy.

Lee-Doa releases Damle, stands, then lays hands on heart.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

I feel you. Your fear is my fear. We are one and the same. May we find trust and courage together.

Damle stands up, looks perplexed. They meet one another's gaze, but Damle turns away, embarrassed. Lee-Doa retrieves the duffel then climbs into the pedicab. Damle, suspicious, climbs into the front seat.

DAMLE YURANA

Where do you want to go?

LEE-DOA X

Take me to your house.

DAMLE YURANA
My house?

LEE-DOA X
Don't worry. No harm will come to
you.

Damle hesitates, looks doubtful.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
I said take me to your house...

Damle remains stock still.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
Now!

Lee-Doa pulls the gun from the holster and into view. Damle grabs the handlebars and starts pedaling. Lee-Doa puts away the gun, then closes eyes, exhales deeply.

EXT. ROAD TO ALEHA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The pedicab rolls onto a dirt road. Old cars, rickshaws, buses pass. People walk along the road carrying bundles, pulling wagons, etc. They pass ramshackle vegetable stands, poor kids selling trinkets.

A High Command van passes, lights flashing, siren wailing. It stops near several stands. Two officers get out. Terrified vendors raise their hands.

Lee-Doa removes the officer's cap and throws the overcoat over the uniform to hide it. Shouts and gunshots are heard.

Next they pass a scene where two officers grab a young woman's arms and drag her towards a grove of trees. Then a scene where officers are ripping off people's shirts, hooding and handcuffing them. Lee-Doa is shocked, sickened.

The pedicab turns onto a dirt lane with a few shacks. Damle stops by one. He dismounts the bike, then turns to Lee-Doa.

DAMLE YURANA
This is it.

Suddenly KANDA REBELS 1,2,3 and 4 burst out of the shack, knives drawn. Rebel 1 grabs the duffel; Rebel 2 reaches for the gun. Lee-Doa keeps hold of it, tries to run. Damle and the others grab and drag Lee-Doa into the shack.

64

INT. ALEHA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Rebel 2 seizes Lee-Doa's gun. Rebel 3 shoves Lee-Doa onto a chair while Rebel 4 ties arms and legs to it.

ALEHA YURANA, Damle's 75 y.o. mother, enters, sizes up Lee-Doa, notices the name on the uniform shirt.

ALEHA YURANA

What say you, Officer Banki Goji?

LEE-DOA X

(breathlessly)

I'm not Banki Goji. I'm not from the High Command. I'm working undercover - with Palameh, Palameh Gandar. Do you know her?

ALEHA YURANA

No, Officer Goji, I don't. And I don't believe you for a second!

Kanda Rebel 1 hands Aleha the two ID's. She examines them, then pulls up a chair and sits directly in front of Lee-Doa.

ALEHA YURANA (CONT'D)

Where did you get these?

LEE-DOA X

From Palameh. If you talk to her, she'll explain everything.

ALEHA YURANA

I do not know this Palameh, but I have heard that efforts are underway to fight the High Command and save the people. Is that what you claim to be doing?

LEE-DOA X

Yes, I'm supposed to infiltrate the High Command by pretending to be this officer.

ALEHA YURANA

My son Damle says you pointed a gun at him.

LEE-DOA X

It was the only way to get him to move. I kept telling him I wasn't his enemy, but he didn't believe me. I had to get out of there.

Aleha tosses the ID's aside, looking unconvinced.

ALEHA YURANA
You claim to be half Kanda?

LEE-DOA X
Yes.

Aleha turns to the others.

ALEHA YURANA
Remove the shirt. Let's see if
there is a crystal mark.

Kanda Rebels 2 and 3 step forward and untie Lee-Doa's arms, then remove the uniform shirt. Lee-Doa still has the camo tank top on. Aleha inspects Lee-Doa's shoulders from behind.

ALEHA YURANA (CONT'D)
No sign of a Kanda crystal mark,
Officer Goji. True Kanda freedom
fighters bear that mark.

Lee-Doa closes eyes, lowers head. Pink-green energy surges from the heart. Then Lee-Doa lifts head, opens eyes wide.

LEE-DOA X
I am Lee-Doa X, not Banki Goji. I
am half Kanda and would be proud to
bear such a mark.

Aleha, Damle and the others exchange glances.

ALEHA YURANA
Very well. If you are who you say
you are, then we will be happy to
place the mark on your shoulder
right now. As you probably know,
the High Command understands the
meaning of the mark. If they
discover it on a person, it means
certain death.

LEE-DOA X
I am not afraid to die.

Aleha nods to the others, leaves the room. Damle and Rebel 4 fetch tattoo tools, and then tattoo the back of Lee-Doa's shoulder. Lee-Doa grimaces at times from the pain.

The tattoo finished, Lee-Doa looks weary but calm. Two Kandas untie Lee-Doa's legs. When Lee-Doa stands, the profile of Banki Goji falls out of the pants pocket. Damle picks it up, reads it to himself, then cries out:

DAMLE YURANA

This is no High Command officer!
This is a profile for the officer
our friend is impersonating.
Clearly, a true Kanda stands before
us!

Damle touches his heart, bows respectfully to Lee-Doa, then
embraces Lee-Doa. The others do the same. Last is Aleha.

ALEHA YURANA

Lee-Doa, you are most welcome here.
You are among your own. Come
everyone, let's share a meal and
see how we can help Lee-Doa with
this important mission.

65

INT. DINNER TABLE AT ALEHA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Lee-Doa, in camo tank top, crystal mark tattoo showing, sits
with Aleha, Damle and the other Kanda Rebels. They drink
soup from chipped bowls and pull chunks of bread from one
loaf in the center of the table.

DAMLE YURANA

Are you planning something for the
National Pageant?

LEE-DOA X

I don't know my plans yet. When is
the National Pageant? What is it?

DAMLE YURANA

Aah, yes, that's right - you have
Kanda blood, but you are not from
here. The National Pageant is in
three days. Every year, dignitaries
from all over come for a day of
speeches and ceremonies. The High
Command is always out in force,
battalions from all over. Perhaps a
time when you could blend in...?

LEE-DOA X

Yes, that sounds like a perfect
time! Any idea how I might insert
myself into a battalions without
raising suspicion?

ALEHA YURANA

Troops from outlying regions are
arriving in the city every day now.

(MORE)

ALEHA YURANA (CONT'D)

Damle, could you drop off Lee-Doa, that is, Officer Banki Goji, at the central barracks tomorrow, in some opportune place?

DAMLE YURANA

Yes, certainly.

Lee-Doa makes prayer hands, bows head to Damle and Aleha, then gazes around at everyone.

LEE-DOA X

I can feel the sadness and suffering you've all endured. It's heavy on my heart. What has it been like for you? I want to understand.

The Kandas drink and talk earnestly to Lee-Doa for a while (words not intelligible), sometimes crying, sometimes pounding a fist in anger.

Lee-Doa listens compassionately, at times offering a hug or gently touching a shoulder. Lee-Doa's pink-green heart energy glows brightly.

66 INT. ALEHA'S HOUSE - LATER

All are abed: heavy breathing, snores. Still awake, Lee-Doa lies on a straw mat by a lit candle, stares up at the ceiling, rubs the piece of coral, whispers:

LEE-DOA X

Please help me. Please help US!

67 EXT. IN FRONT OF ALEHA'S HOUSE - DAWN

Damle slips out the door, eyes darting around, then gestures for Lee-Doa to follow. In High Command uniform, cap under arm, and carrying the duffel, Lee-Doa exits the shack, limps to the pedicab, climbs in.

Damle places a large dark cloth over Lee-Doa, to hide the uniform. Then Damle climbs in front, starts pedaling down the dirt lane towards the road.

68 EXT. ROAD TO CENTRAL BARRACKS - FIVE HOURS LATER

Damle now pedals through a more populated, affluent area. He pulls over, dismounts, pretends to check a rear tire as he speaks quietly to Lee-Doa:

DAMLE YURANA

The barracks are about 50 meters ahead. Looks like there's a checkpoint there to process arriving officers. Best if you get out before then - High Command don't usually ride in pedicabs. I see a lane up ahead. I'll pull in and stop under the tall tree. You get out, I'll head home, and we never saw each other. Agreed?

LEE-DOA X

(whispers)

Agreed.

Damle returns to the front, pedals down the lane. At the tall tree, he stops. Lee-Doa steps out, walks back toward the road they had been on. Damle pedals the opposite way.

Lee-Doa looks very nervous, sweats profusely. A SMALL CHILD runs out from behind a shack screaming:

SMALL CHILD

Monsters!! Help!!

Lee-Doa steps toward the child to comfort her, but when she sees Lee-Doa, she wails even louder:

SMALL CHILD (CONT'D)

High Command! High Command!

She runs in the front door, slams it shut. Shadows of people inside peer out at Lee-Doa. Lee-Doa gazes at Lee-Doa's own weak, frightened reflection in the windows.

LEE-DOA X

Ah, yes, the mirror!

Lee-Doa takes a deep breath, straightens the cap, stands tall, then walks on. Lee-Doa pulls the coral from a pants pocket, holds it tight, whispers:

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

Please help me! Help me get through this.

Lee-Doa shoves the coral back in the pocket, which sends the small magnet flying out onto the ground. Lee-Doa stops, picks it up, rubs it, whispers:

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

Magnet. Yes. Magnetize.... Courage. Trust. Love.

Lee-Doa squeezes the magnet, puts it back in the pants pocket. Lee-Doa now appears calmer, more relaxed, pink-green energy glows from the heart. Small Child re-appears, now laughing and playing happily.

69

EXT. CENTRAL BARRACKS CHECKPOINT - LATER

Lee-Doa walks to the High Command checkpoint, where Officers SHAYNA LOGEE and JENRO GENZ, both age 22, stand at a table.

LEE-DOA X
Good afternoon.

SHAYNA LOGEE
Good afternoon. Checking in for the National Pageant?

LEE-DOA X
Yes, yes I am.

SHAYNA LOGEE
Name?

LEE-DOA X
Goji, Banki Goji.

Shayna consults the papers in front of her, then turns to her colleague.

SHAYNA LOGEE
I don't have a Goji on this list.
They on yours?

JENRO GENZ
(checks papers)
No, no Goji here.

SHAYNA LOGEE
Did your commanding officer confirm your registration?

LEE-DOA X
No, I don't think that happened.

SHAYNA LOGEE
Then you should contact them. I can't check you in if you're not on the list.

LEE-DOA X
I thought I just need to present my ID, which I have right here.

Lee-Doa pulls the ID from a pocket, places it on the table. Shayna brushes it aside without opening it, looks blankly at Lee-Doa.

SHAYNA LOGEE
Rules are rules.

Lee-Doa smiles, puts the ID back in the pocket.

LEE-DOA X
OK. I'll see what I can do.

Lee-Doa walks a short distance away.

EXT. SHADY SPOT NEAR CHECKPOINT - MOMENTS LATER

Nervous, Lee-Doa pulls out the mesh bag, clutches it, closes eyes and whispers emphatically:

LEE-DOA X
Please help! Kandas, High Command
Officers. We are one ... one
unified mesh. Help us! Whatever is
in the highest good of all ...
please!

Lee-Doa looks up at the sky, then back at the table where the officers stand. Suddenly, a strong gust blows the papers off the table. The officers chase after them, but they fly away, get run over by passing cars, etc.

Lee-Doa looks up, mouths "thank you", smiles broadly. A loudspeaker announcement is heard:

LOUDSPEAKER VOICE
Attention: rule modification. Staff
at checkpoints will admit all
officers with proper ID.

Lee-Doa suppresses a chuckle, then returns to the table.

EXT. CENTRAL BARRACKS CHECKPOINT - CONTINUOUS

LEE-DOA X
Hello again. I'm Able Officer Goji.
Do you need to see my ID?

SHAYNA LOGEE
Yes, Officer Goji. Rules are rules.

Lee-Doa hands over the ID.

SHAYNA LOGEE (CONT'D)

You're all set. You are assigned to Barracks C - number 143. And I see you are on Rifle Squad. Welcome!

Shayna makes notes on a paper, then hands the ID back to Lee-Doa. Lee-Doa nods gratefully, walks toward the barracks.

70

INT. BUNK ROOM IN BARRACKS - LATER

Lee-Doa limps through a large room with bunk beds in different areas. A few officers chat, lounge on beds, write in journals, etc. Lee-Doa puts the duffel on the upper bunk of a single bunkbed off in a corner, #143.

A 26 y.o. woman named ARA-LEE MEEJ is resting on the lower bunk in civilian clothes. She turns and looks at Lee-Doa.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Hi there! Welcome to 143. I'm Ara-Lee, Ara-Lee Meej.

Ara-Lee smiles at Lee-Doa, sits up, offers her hand. Lee-Doa returns the smile, shakes Ara-Lee's hand.

LEE-DOA X

Thanks, I'm Banki Goji. Good to meet you, Ara-Lee. Good to be at 1-4-3!

They both smile and chuckle a little at the rhyme.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Great we're on leave tonight, huh?

LEE-DOA X

Yeah, really great.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Have any plans?

LEE-DOA X

No, not at all. You?

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Well, I was thinking of that amazing stew place in the center. Have you been?

LEE-DOA X

No - sounds good! Mind if I tag along?

ARA-LEE MEEJ

That would be great! Want to change out of your uniform? Then we can head down whenever you're ready.

LEE-DOA X

Excellent! Be ready in a minute.

Ara-Lee stands, uncoils her long hair from a bun, then brushes it out while looking at a small wall mirror.

Watching her, Lee-Doa removes the uniform cap and shirt revealing the camo tank top. The Kanda tattoo is visible for a moment, but not to Ara-Lee. Lee-Doa quickly pulls on a shirt with a colorful ocean pattern, then changes pants.

Ara-Lee finishes at the mirror, then steps away.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

I have to use the bathroom. Meet you out front?

LEE-DOA X

Yes, perfect.

Lee-Doa watches Ara-Lee's reflection leave the mirror, then stares into the mirror, whispering:

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

OK. Ara-Lee is me. High Command is me. Kanda is me. Lee-Doa, Banki: all me. I can make peace with them all.... I can love them all.

Then Lee-Doa turns to the wall, looks up, whispers:

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

Can I check in with you again? Are you there? Am I on the right track?

A faint violet glow, then the soft, echoing voice.

WISE GUIDE (V.O.)

Yes, my friend. EarthLife is the self in all its aspects ... and also: love in all its forms.

LEE-DOA X

(whispers slowly)

The self in all its aspects....
Love in all its forms... Thank you.

Lee-Doa looks up with prayer hands, then turns and exits, pausing to glance at the mirror one last time.

71

INT. SABA STEW RESTAURANT - EARLY EVENING

Ara-Lee and Lee-Doa sit across a table from one another chatting amiably as they eat. It's a busy, upbeat place.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

I don't know what comes next. I've been in the Command 5 years now, the first two patrolling, the last three in the communications office.

LEE-DOA X

Are you interested in something else, instead of the Command?

Ara-Lee looks around warily, leans in closer.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Between you and me, I feel conflicted. I want to do my part and everything, but the Command takes its toll. Know what I mean?

LEE-DOA X

Yeah, absolutely. What else interests you?

Ara-Lee looks around cautiously, leans in again.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

I like putting on parties, kids' parties. Pony rides, magic tricks, ya know - fun stuff.

LEE-DOA X

Oh wow, that's SO fun! Your face lights up when you talk about it!

A faint pink-green glow comes from Ara-Lee's heart.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Thanks, Banki. I would like to do it someday.... But please don't say anything. The Command likes to hold onto you once they've got you.... How about you? I can't imagine being a sharp shooter. What's it like?

LEE-DOA X

Uh, it's, it's difficult at times.... I also feel conflicted.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Really? I always thought the assassins were down for life in the Command. What else would you do?

LEE-DOA X

I dunno--I like the ocean a lot. Something about it draws me.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Really? I hadn't noticed!

Ara-Lee touches Lee-Doa's ocean-patterned shirt and laughs.

ARA-LEE MEEJ (CONT'D)

I gotta tell you it feels so good to talk honestly about ourselves. I've never been this open with anyone in the Command before. You're nice to talk to.... I feel like I already know you even though we just met.

LEE-DOA X

Yeah, I know what you mean.

The two smile at one another as a server comes and clears dishes. Ara-Lee checks her watch.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Wow--it's already 9 o'clock. We better get back to the barracks!

LEE-DOA X

Definitely. I'm ready when you are.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

OK, let's hit the road.

They stand, walk out of the restaurant.

72

EXT. ROAD IN FRONT OF SABA STEW RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

A few businesses are still lit up; some people are out walking. Lee-Doa and Ara-Lee walk close to one another. A loud commotion breaks out up ahead. Alarmed, they look at one another.

A WOMAN and TWO SMALL KIDS in shabby dress run toward them. In hot pursuit are HIGH COMMAND OFFICERS A, B AND C. Ara-Lee and Lee-Doa stop, agape, as the Officers overtake Woman and Kids and wrestle them to the ground.

Kids cry; Woman tries to comfort them. Officer A yanks her to her feet, then Officer B tears her shirt off one shoulder, revealing a crystal mark tattoo.

OFFICERS A, B AND C
Kandas!!

Officer B strikes the Woman. Officers A and C put their hands over the crying Kids' mouths. A High Command van screeches up. They shove Woman and Kids in back, climb in after them and roar off.

Ara-Lee and Lee-Doa look stunned. They walk on in silence.

73

INT. BUNK ROOM IN BARRACKS - LATER

Lee-Doa, in camo tank top and gym shorts, lies on the top bunk while Ara-Lee, in a nightshirt, lies on the bottom.

LEE-DOA X
Well, thanks for the nice dinner and conversation.... Too bad it was such a rough end to the evening.

ARA-LEE MEEJ
Yeah, I was thinking to myself I wish you had your weapon with you.

LEE-DOA X
That thought crossed my mind too.

ARA-LEE MEEJ
I'm not surprised.... Those filthy Kandas!

Lee-Doa's eyes widen. Jaw clenched, eyes closed, Lee-Doa grips the covers tightly, breathing deeply.

ARA-LEE MEEJ (CONT'D)
Banki?

LEE-DOA X
(exhales slowly)
Yes.

ARA-LEE MEEJ
Want to try to take breaks and have meals together tomorrow?

LEE-DOA X
Sure, Ara-Lee.

ARA-LEE MEEJ
Great! Goodnight, Banki.

LEE-DOA X
Goodnight, Ara-Lee.

Lee-Doa pulls out the mesh bag, looks at it intently, clutches it tight, then turns off the light.

74 EXT. EXHIBITION FIELD, TARGET PRACTICE AREA - AFTERNOON

Lee-Doa and twelve other uniformed High Command officers, ages 20-30, march on part of a large field, rifles in hand. They follow the orders of SERGEANT, a 55 y.o. man. Nearby other squads practice, including a band with instruments.

SERGEANT
(shouts)
Rifle Squad at ease!

Lee-Doa and the others stop, lower their rifles.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Target practice here in exactly ten minutes. You are dismissed!

Sergeant and Rifle Squad members salute, walk to the sidelines. Some grab water from a nearby table and chat. LONNI ABERDAR, an androgynous 30 y.o., approaches Lee-Doa.

LONNI ABERDAR
Finally, we get to shoot! With all this time off, I don't even remember how to aim anymore!

LEE-DOA X
(forced smile)
Oh yeah, I know what you mean. Have you been with the Rifle Squad here at the National Pageant before?

LONNI ABERDAR
Yeah, this is my third time. Your first, right? Don't think I've seen you before.

LEE-DOA X
That's right; I'm a rookie. You know, just wondering how this is gonna go.

LONNI ABERDAR
Yeah, I remember my first time.... Don't worry it'll go great. I mean, you made it onto the most elite sharpshooting team in the entire High Command. You'll do fine.

LEE-DOA X

Uh, thanks.

(gulps)

What kinds of targets will there be today?

LONNI ABERDAR

The usual - some stationary stuff, mechanicals, some live game.

Lee-Doa nods, swallows, looks out at the field where officers are setting up targets and carrying around cages.

75

EXT. EXHIBITION FIELD, TARGET PRACTICE AREA - LATER

Wearing eye and ear coverings, Rifle Squad members stand in front of a line painted on the grass and fire at tin cans and other such targets. They stop and re-load as necessary. Sergeant walks behind, observing, then shouts:

SERGEANT

Final round, Rifle Squad! Then silence your weapons!

A few more shots, then it's quiet.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

At ease for five while we set up live game.

Lee-Doa walks away from the target practice area, sits on the grass, hands trembling slightly. Lee-Doa pulls out the coral from a pocket, rubs it. Ara-Lee appears.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Banki! I just spotted you from across the field! What's that you've got?

Lee-Doa looks up, sees Ara-Lee smiling down.

LEE-DOA X

Oh, hey! How's it going? Oh this? I'm not sure. It's some kind of shell or coral. I just like it.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Ah, yes, the ocean lover! You almost done here?

LEE-DOA X

Not yet. We still have some more target practice.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Great! I can watch you shoot! My
squad's done for the day.

LEE-DOA X

(clears throat nervously)

Cool.

Ara-Lee sits close to Lee-Doa, leans across and admires the coral. Lee-Doa smiles at her dreamily, but then jumps up and grabs the rifle.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

About to start!

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Good luck!

Lee-Doa jogs to the target practice area, stands at attention. Sergeant faces the group.

SERGEANT

OK, Rifle Squad: on to live game!
The rest of the field has almost
emptied out at this point, but
there are still some personnel
around. Any doubt? Hold your fire!

RIFLE SQUAD MEMBERS

Yes, Sir!

SERGEANT

Ground game will be released first.
If you successfully hit ground
game, air game will be released.
Officer Aberdar, are you ready?

LONNI ABERDAR

Ready, Sir!

SERGEANT

Step up to the line.

Lonni Aberdar walks to a line painted on the grass and raises a rifle.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Ready? ... Release ground game!

CAGE OFFICER, 25 feet ahead of Lonni, opens a cage. RABBIT #1 hops out and dashes away from the squad. Lonni takes aim and fires, grazing, but not killing, Rabbit #1, which now moves slowly, with a limp. Sergeant raises his arm.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Halt!

MEDIC OFFICER runs out, carries Rabbit #1 off the field. Lee Doa's eyes close, heart energy glows pink-green. Other officers pat Lonni on the back. Lee-Doa turns away.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Ready? ... Release air game!

Cage Officer opens a cage, and a DOVE flies out. Pink-green energy surges in Lee-Doa's heart. Lee-Doa looks down, mouths a silent prayer. Lonni fires, misses, tries to take another shot, but the action on the rifle jams so it won't fire.

LONNI ABERDAR

Got a malfunction here, Sir!

SERGEANT

Step aside then, Aberdar. And get that weapon back in working order!

LONNI ABERDAR

Yes, Sir!

Lonni walks back to where the rest of the Rifle Squad stand and continues fiddling with the rifle. Lee-Doa suppresses a smile, looks up at the sky, mouths "thank you."

SERGEANT

Next up ... Officer Goji!

Lee-Doa bolts upright, walks briskly to the shooting line. Pink-green energy moves outward from Lee-Doa's heart in a wide arc. Lee-Doa raises the rifle, ready to take aim.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Ready? ... Release ground game!

Just as Cage Officer releases RABBIT #2, BIG DOG #2, wearing a High Command harness, charges over to the target practice area and chases Rabbit #2. Lee-Doa lowers the rifle, turns to Sergeant.

LEE-DOA X

Holding my fire, Sir!

SERGEANT

(shouts across field)

Canine unit! We got a rogue canine over here!

The sky darkens, wind blows, thunder claps.

CANINE OFFICERS 1 AND 2 run across the field. They shout at Big Dog #2 and chase it around in circles, but it will not obey. Rifle Squad looks on. Rabbit #2 hops away.

A lightning bolt flashes. A downpour starts. Sergeant runs, hands on head.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Abort target practice! Abort target practice! Rifle Squad dismissed!

Everyone runs off, Lee-Doa and Ara-Lee smiling and laughing. Canine Officers keep chasing Big Dog #2 around in the rain.

76

INT. SABA STEW RESTAURANT - EVENING

Lee-Doa and Ara-Lee, in civilian clothes, lean across the table while they eat and chat animatedly.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Two nights in a row of this celestial stew - it's like I died and went to heaven!

LEE-DOA X

I'm right up there on the cloud with you! I never knew stew could reach such heights!

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Banki, I probably shouldn't say this, but I thought it was kinda great that no animals got killed at the target practice. Wasn't that amazing how the dog ran out and then the thunderstorm came?!?

LEE-DOA X

You absolutely should say it! I felt the same way. I didn't want to shoot at any of those animals. I actually prayed in my heart that they would be spared.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Wow, a sharpshooter praying for their target to survive. Things are not always what they seem....

LEE-DOA X

Ara-Lee, why do you hate the Kandas?

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Why? Well, they do terrible things:
they steal, hurt people, kill
people.

Lee-Doa pulls the mini mirror out of a pocket and turns it over in their hand under the table while looking penetratingly at Ara-Lee.

LEE-DOA X

Last night, after we saw the
Command round up that woman and her
kids, I told you I also wished I
had my weapon with me. The reason I
said that is because I wanted to
shoot the officers.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Shoot the officers?!? I don't get
it....

LEE-DOA X

You were thinking "filthy Kandas".
I was thinking "filthy High
Command".

Ara-Lee looks mystified, reaches out and touches Lee-Doa's hand across the table.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

Yeah, in this game, you're a mirror
showing me me, just a slightly
different version.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

What game? What do you mean I'm a
mirror?

Lee-Doa sighs, looks deeply into Ara-Lee's eyes, then grasps both of her hands.

LEE-DOA X

What I mean is I understand how you
feel because I've felt the same
way. This experience is helping me
find the places in my heart where
hate is still tucked away.

Ara-Lee listens, a caring look on her face. The two fall silent for a few moments. Then Lee-Doa releases Ara-Lee's hands, picks up a fork, holding it comically, like a scepter, and speaks in a mock regal voice:

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
I hereby banish all such hatred
from the kingdom of my heart!

Ara-Lee laughs heartily.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
Maybe I could fill in the empty
space with this tasty stew?!? I'd
sure like to keep some on hand!

Ara-Lee grabs the fork from Lee-Doa's hand.

ARA-LEE MEEJ
You are the weirdest sharpshooter,
animal protector, ocean lover,
ruler of the royal fork I have ever
met!

Ara-Lee laughs, grabs Lee-Doa's hand. They lean in closer,
foreheads touching. They quietly stay that way for several
moments, then pull back from each other slowly and gently,
gazing at one another as they move.

Suddenly a body appears tableside: Lonni Aberdar.

LONNI ABERDAR
Hey, Rookie! How's it goin'?

LEE-DOA X
Hey, Lonni. Ara-Lee, this is Lonni
from the Rifle Squad. Lonni, this
is Ara-Lee.

They exchange a nod and a smile.

LONNI ABERDAR
Anyway, I'm headed back to the
barracks. Big day tomorrow. Those
Kandas won't know what hit 'em!

Lonni smiles and waves, then walks out the door. Lee-Doa
stares ahead blankly. Ara-Lee looks searchingly at Lee-Doa.

77

INT. BUNK ROOM IN BARRACKS - LATER

Lee-Doa and Ara-Lee stand by the bunkbed glancing around to
see if anyone else is close enough to see or hear them. Ara-
Lee wears a nightshirt, Lee-Doa the camo tank top and gym
shorts.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

(whispers)

Hey, Banki, wanna climb in here for
a sec?

Ara-Lee sits down on the lower bunk and pats the area next to her. Lee-Doa nods, shuts off the light and silently climbs in next to Ara-Lee. They clasp hands and speak in whispers.

ARA-LEE MEEJ (CONT'D)

You OK, Banki?

LEE-DOA X

I'm OK.... Ara-Lee, what happens at
the Pageant tomorrow? To the
Kandas, I mean?

ARA-LEE MEEJ

You're on the Rifle Squad, and you
don't know?

Lee-Doa turns and looks at Ara-Lee gravely.

ARA-LEE MEEJ (CONT'D)

It's a firing squad, Banki. The
three most wanted Kandas go before
the firing squad.

LEE-DOA X

(robotically)

And I'm on it.

Ara-Lee curls up to Lee-Doa, pink-green energy glowing in her heart. Lee-Doa puts an arm around her as she falls asleep, then looks up, teary-eyed, and whispers:

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

I really need to check in with you
now. Do you hear me...? Are you
there...?

A faint violet glow. Lee-Doa whispers:

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

I've hated the High Command just as
they've hated the Kandas. Clear
mirror. But I no longer feel that
way. And I've used the magnet in my
heart to change some bad things
here in EarthLife. So I'm thinking
I can end this round. I've learned
a lot, and I think ending the round
makes sense.

(MORE)

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
 But I wanted to run it by you
 first....
 (looks up and around)
 Are you there?

All is silent and dark.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
 Can you please just confirm that I
 should end the round? You said
 you'd be available....

All remains silent and dark. Lee-Doa sighs heavily.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
 "unless it undermines the learning
 purposes of EarthLife", right?
 OK, then I'll stay in the game.
 But I'm asking for help. Help me
 get through this tomorrow! Please!

A faint violet glow. Lee-Doa wipes away a tear then looks
 lovingly at Ara-Lee.

78

INT. BUNK ROOM IN BARRACKS - MORNING

Ara-Lee awakens, turns to the sleeping Lee-Doa. Lee-Doa
 stirs and sings the beginning of "How Sweet It Is". Ara-Lee
 smiles, watches Lee-Doa start to wake up.

ARA-LEE MEEJ
 You were singing in your sleep.

LEE-DOA X
 Really? I dreamt of a beautiful
 spirit. We were swimming together.
 She looked so familiar. She kept
 calling me "Bernard" and saying "I
 love you".

ARA-LEE MEEJ
 Sounds nice.

LEE-DOA X
 Mm-hmm. Yeah, very nice.

ARA-LEE MEEJ
 You doing okay, Banki?

LEE-DOA X
 I'm OK.... Thanks for caring.

They hug for a moment, then sit up.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
We'd better get going. We gotta be
at the field soon.

When Lee-Doa turns to stand up, Ara-Lee sees the crystal
mark tattoo. She gasps. Their eyes meet. Ara-Lee looks
searchingly at Lee-Doa. They speak in whispers.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
Yes, Ara-Lee: I am half Kanda, on
my mother's side. My name is Lee-
Doa X, not Banki Goji.

ARA-LEE MEEJ
Why are you here? To assassinate
the president?

LEE-DOA X
No, I'm not here to kill anyone,
Ara-Lee. Kandas or High Command.

Ara-Lee bites her lip, tries not to cry.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
I am here to have compassion, to
change myself, to make peace.

Ara-Lee throws her arms around Lee-Doa, heart energy between
them surging.

ARA-LEE MEEJ
I believe you, Banki, Lee-Doa,
whoever you are. I feel the truth
right here.
(taps her heart)

LEE-DOA X
Thank you, Ara-Lee....

Lee-Doa hugs her tightly for a few moments, then begins to
gently pull away.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
Now it's time to live this day,
here in this crazy universe!

Lee-Doa tries to smile and be light-hearted, but a heaviness
remains. They release their embrace and climb out of bed.

79

EXT. HIGH COMMAND CAMPUS - MORNING OF NATIONAL PAGEANT

Lee-Doa and Ara-Lee walk in dress uniform on a sunny day. Uniformed personnel move briskly about, especially near the Exhibition Field, where flags fly and garlands festoon the entrance gates. Lee-Doa looks up, mouths a prayer.

As Lee-Doa and Ara-Lee approach the field, a High Command van passes, parks by the gates. OFFICER WITH CONDEMNED PRISONERS gets out, opens the back door, barks an order.

PRISONERS 1, 2 and 3 emerge, wearing cut burlap sacks, hands tied behind them, a rope connecting them. Kanda crystal marks on the backs of their shoulders. Lee-Doa stops short, then strides quickly toward the van, whispers to Ara-Lee:

LEE-DOA X

This is our chance! Follow my lead.

Ara-Lee nods, quickens her pace to keep up with Lee-Doa. Lee-Doa makes quick prayer hands, looks up, whispers:

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

Please help me! Please help US: the one, the mesh, the all!

EXT. EXHIBITION FIELD, ENTRANCE GATES - MOMENTS LATER

Prisoners walk in a line toward the gates. Officer follows them, gun drawn at the back of the last prisoner. Lee-Doa steps up to the officer. Ara-Lee is close behind.

LEE-DOA X

These the prisoners for the firing squad? I'm Goji, Rifle Squad.

OFFICER WITH CONDEMNED PRISONERS

Yes, Officer. I have orders to deliver them here.

LEE-DOA X

Well done. I'll take it from here.

Lee-Doa steps boldly in front of the officer, points a rifle at the closest prisoner and shouts:

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

All right then, move along!

The officer starts to protest, but Ara-Lee interrupts.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Well done. May it be a National Pageant we can all be proud of!

Ara-Lee salutes the officer, then walks quickly ahead to catch up to Lee-Doa and the prisoners. Officer limply salutes, shrugs, gets back in the van and drives off.

Lee-Doa and Ara-Lee salute the guards at the gates as they enter with the prisoners. Various personnel mill around the field. Lee-Doa draws close to Ara-Lee, whispers:

LEE-DOA X

How we gonna get them out of here?

They both glance around alertly.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Our battalion's van is parked right there by the edge of the field.

LEE-DOA X

Can you drive it?

ARA-LEE MEEJ

Yes, I have the key on my ring.

LEE-DOA X

Perfect! I'll stop and tip off the prisoners. You get the van. If you pull up behind the bleachers, I think we can load them in without being noticed.

ARA-LEE MEEJ

OK. We've got this!

They look intently at one another. Then Lee-Doa calls out to the prisoners while Ara-Lee quietly jogs across the field toward the van.

LEE-DOA X

Halt, you prisoners!

Lee-Doa pulls the prisoners in with the rope, looks into their frightened faces and points the rifle at them, looking as menacing as possible. Then Lee-Doa speaks in a low voice:

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

This gun is not loaded. I will not harm you. We're going to help you escape. In a minute, a van will pull up by the bleachers. You'll get in, and my friend will drive you to safety.
Do you know the Yurana family?

PRISONER 1
 (in a low voice)
 Yes, Aleha is a good person. Her
 son Damle too.

LEE-DOA X
 (in a low voice)
 Good. Tell the driver how to get to
 her house. She'll bring you there.

Lee-Doa then releases the rope and shouts:

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
 March!

EXT. EXHIBITION FIELD, BLEACHER AREA - CONTINUOUS

The prisoners march toward the bleachers where they see a High Command van with tinted windows slowly making its way. Lee-Doa marches behind them, rifle pointed at the back of the last one.

They reach the bleachers just as the van pulls up. Lee-Doa throws open the back door. The three prisoners climb inside and crouch down. Ara-Lee looks back from the front seat as Lee-Doa puts hand on heart and gazes around.

LEE-DOA X
 I'm praying for you all. Safe
 journey to Aleha's.

Lee-Doa closes the door, walks back toward the center of the field. In a few moments, Lee-Doa turns, sees the van being waved through the checkpoint, then smiles as it drives away out of sight.

80 EXT. EXHIBITION FIELD, FIRING SQUAD AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Lee-Doa arrives where the Rifle Squad is gathered. Elsewhere on the field, groups of uniformed personnel assemble. Sergeant stands in front of the Rifle Squad.

SERGEANT
 Attention, Rifle Squad!

They come to attention.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 The Pageant will begin soon with a
 procession. After the Highest
 Prosecutor speaks, the condemned
 prisoners will be presented one by
 one to you. Form a line and choose
 a rifle from this pile at my feet.
 (MORE)

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

By protocol, one or more of these weapons has a blank.

Lee-Doa and the others each pick up a rifle and return to their place. Meanwhile, spectators pour into the stands, and personnel assume their designated places.

81

EXT. EXHIBITION FIELD, MAIN STAGE - LATER

A 50 y.o. MASTER OF CEREMONIES in fancy uniform stands center stage at a podium. Behind the podium are band members and 13 empty chairs. Uniformed personnel sit in groups all over the field. Thousands of spectators sit in the stands.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Honorable officers, cadets,
citizens of our beloved homeland,
welcome to this year's National
Pageant!

Applause, cheers.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (CONT'D)

First, let us welcome the highest
officers in our great nation!

The band plays a rousing march. Ten people, ages 50-80, wearing fancy military attire, proceed through the gates and up to the main stage where they occupy the empty seats behind the podium. Applause, cheers.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (CONT'D)

Our homeland is, above all, a place
of law and order. So we'll begin
with a few words from our Highest
Prosecutor.

Applause while Master of Ceremonies takes a seat and HIGHEST PROSECUTOR steps to the podium.

HIGHEST PROSECUTOR

Thank you. Yes, law and order first
and foremost.... We all know there
are desirables and undesirables
within every society. Make no
mistake: it is us against them. We
must continue to hunt down and
prosecute all those who threaten
our way of life.
Today we celebrate the successful
capture of three such notorious
outlaws.

(MORE)

HIGHEST PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)
 According to our annual tradition,
 these thugs will be eliminated and
 our society thus cleansed. I hereby
 turn it over to the honorable
 Sergeant of the elite High Command
 Rifle Squad.

EXT. EXHIBITION FIELD, FIRING SQUAD AREA - CONTINUOUS

Crowd cheers as Sergeant steps up to a microphone.

SERGEANT
 Attention, Rifle Squad!

Lee-Doa and the others stand, rifles at their sides.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 Proceed to target area!

They march up to the platform for the condemned, then space
 themselves along one side of it. The sky clouds over.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 Staff Sergeant, present the first
 condemned prisoner!

After a brief silence with no sign of a staff sergeant or
 any prisoners, Sergeant clears his throat.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 Staff Sergeant?

STAFF SERGEANT, a 45 y.o. man, runs in, flustered.

STAFF SERGEANT
 Sir, the holding cells are empty!

Collective gasp from the crowd. Lee-Doa stands still, mouth
 twitching, eyes darting around. The sky darkens.

SERGEANT
 This is outrageous! Staff Sergeant,
 you fool! You will pay the price
 today in place of the prisoners you
 allowed to escape!

Lee-Doa closes eyes, lowers head, whispers:

LEE-DOA X
 Help us! Help us please!

SERGEANT
Step up to the platform for the
condemned, Staff Sergeant.

Staff Sergeant stands paralyzed, agape. Thunder claps.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
That was an order, Staff Sergeant!

Lee-Doa suddenly throws the rifle on the ground and calls
out to Sergeant:

LEE-DOA X
I am the one who let the prisoners
escape, not the Staff Sergeant!

Collective gasp from the crowd.

SERGEANT
You?

LEE-DOA X
Yes, me!

SERGEANT
Then step up to the platform and
prepare to die, Goji.

Lightning strikes in the distance. Lee-Doa limps toward the
platform, then shouts for all to hear:

LEE-DOA X
I am not Banki Goji, my friends. I
am Lee-Doa X!

Lee-Doa removes the uniform shirt, throws it to the ground,
then pulls the camo tank top off one shoulder, displaying
the crystal mark tattoo for all to see. The crowd gasps
again. Thunder booms.

SERGEANT
Traitor! You will make for some
fine shooting today!

Lee-Doa reaches the platform then gazes around--at Sergeant,
Staff Sergeant, Rifle Squad, dignitaries on the main stage,
thousands of spectators in the stands. Then Lee-Doa closes
eyes and whispers:

LEE-DOA X
Mirror ... magnet ... mesh
Please help. Please help us ALL!

A huge surge of magnetic energy bursts forth from Lee-Doa's heart into all parts of the exhibition field.

SERGEANT
Rifle Squad, present arms!

They raise the rifles.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Does the prisoner have any final words?

LEE-DOA X
Yes ... I do.... I love you all. I know what it is to fear and to hate. I have feared. I have hated. And yet I now love myself, in all my aspects.

Lee-Doa humbly touches hand to heart.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
And I love you in all of yours.

Lee-Doa opens arms wide, heart energy surges outward.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
I am your sister, your brother. We are all just reflections of each other. Parts of the same whole. We are one. I love us all.

Lee-Doa now looks up, makes prayer hands. As Lee-Doa continues to speak, glowing images of Grandpa Donato and Ludmila smile down from the sky. A powerful thunderclap booms.

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)
Thank you for the chance to be in this amazing, beautiful universe!

Lee-Doa's face wears an expression of ecstasy. The pink-green energy bursts forth even more powerfully and radiates out even farther. Lee-Doa's arms reach out as if hugging the entire world and everyone in it.

SERGEANT
Ready! Aim!--

Rifle Squad members prepare to fire. As Sergeant gives the order...

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Fire!

A huge lightning bolt zaps Lee-Doa in the heart, magnifying the glow already there in a dazzling way and lighting up the entire sky.

Then everything begins to slow down, become muffled and turn yellow until only yellow is visible. Lights flash.

82

INT. WARDROBE ROOM AT TV STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Lee-Doa lies on the floor, body glowing yellow, pink-green energy pulsating from the heart.

Behind Lee-Doa, scores of holographic figures populate the vast room, including half-hidden, reclining Fred Fernow, whom Lee-Doa does not see.

Lee-Doa clasps shaking hands over heart. Tears stream down. Then Lee-Doa kneels, makes prayer hands and bows so deeply that forehead touches floor.

With reverence and awe, Lee-Doa surveys the surroundings. The magnetic heart energy pulsates brightly. Then Lee-Doa turns toward the sound of a familiar voice.

WISE GUIDE

Hello, my friend.... Welcome back.

Lee-Doa breaks into a radiant smile.

LEE-DOA X

Hello!

WISE GUIDE

How are you?

LEE-DOA X

How am I? ... what to say? ...
Blissed out! ... So, so grateful! I
feel like a hydrant--just gushing
with gratitude ... amazing....
Impossible to describe with words.

WISE GUIDE

I believe I understand.... Very
happy for you, my friend.

LEE-DOA X

I really gotta thank you. EarthLife
is INCREDIBLE! Never experienced
anything like it!

WISE GUIDE

Well, whether or not that is actually the case,...I understand how you feel, and you are most welcome.

Lee-Doa reaches up, hugs Wise Guide, whose sleeves/gloved hands alone are visible.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

Congratulations! You seized the opportunities before you, you trusted, and you showed a great deal of courage. And most importantly, you never forgot about the mirrors, magnets and mesh. You are quite a player!

LEE-DOA X

Thank you! I got so much help. Otherwise I don't think it would have worked out so well.

WISE GUIDE

Yes: the wise seek help and accept it. It is always there.

LEE-DOA X

Even Ludmila and Grandpa Donato came to help! I didn't recognize them while I was in the character of Lee-Doa, but I definitely had the sense that they were loving, supportive beings.

WISE GUIDE

Indeed, they love you very much. They recognize the true you no matter which character you're playing in which round. And they come when you ask for help.

LEE-DOA X

(choked up)

Truly miraculous! I'm so grateful!

WISE GUIDE

Yes, the discarnate are as much a part of the mesh as everyone else, but it often takes many rounds of EarthLife to attain this awareness.

Lee-Doa listens intently, gazes around looking blissful.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

Very well then. Do you need a rest? Some refreshments? We can go to the Control Room if you like.

LEE-DOA X

Thanks--I think I'm good. I still feel exhilarated. I think I'm ready to wrap things up if that's what happens next.

WISE GUIDE

All right then. We can proceed as we have in the past. The process will be even simpler this time since we know in advance which character you will be playing.

LEE-DOA X

(puzzled)

What do you mean, "which character" I'll be playing? I thought the game was over and I was going back to my real life....

WISE GUIDE

Well that's one way of thinking about it..... In any event, you will certainly be Fred again.... Perhaps you'd like to take a moment to bring your heart's energy back to Fred? As you know, that will magnetize him to you.

LEE-DOA X

OK, I will.

Lee-Doa closes eyes, touches heart, breathes deeply. The heart energy surges. Behind Lee-Doa's back, holographic characters vanish a few at a time until only the reclining holographic Fred Fernow remains. Lee-Doa re-opens eyes.

WISE GUIDE

Any intentions or desires you'd like to state before becoming Fred?

LEE-DOA X

Only that I'm really glad I got to do this. Thanks again. EarthLife is beyond amazing!

(MORE)

LEE-DOA X (CONT'D)

Really hard and really scary at times but also full of help and goodness and beauty--especially once you understand about the mirrors and magnets and mesh. What an experience!

WISE GUIDE

So pleased for you. But trust me, my friend, you have merely scratched the surface of EarthLife.

Lee-Doa smiles and looks dreamily into the distance.

LEE-DOA X

Would now be a good time to ask for help? For the Kandas and the High Command, and also for Ara-Lee and Ludmila and for my daughter Lana and of course the coral? I don't want to forget.

WISE GUIDE

Yes, now is a perfect time.

Lee-Doa shuts eyes, magnetic energy surging from the heart. After a few moments, Lee-Doa re-opens eyes, looking relaxed, dreamy.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

Very well. We can activate whenever you're ready.

Lee-Doa nods slowly.

WISE GUIDE (CONT'D)

Repeat after me: I hereby request

LEE-DOA X

I hereby request

WISE GUIDE

To take on the identity

LEE-DOA X

To take on the identity

WISE GUIDE

Of Fred Fernow

LEE-DOA X

Of Fred Fernow

WISE GUIDE
In the EarthLife universe

LEE-DOA X
In the EarthLife universe
Earthlife universe?!?
(shocked)
What?!?

WISE GUIDE
Your request is granted. So shall
it be. So it is!

EXT. STREET CORNER - LATE AFTERNOON

Lee-Doa becomes Fred Fernow in a flash of golden light. Fred momentarily takes on Lee-Doa's golden glow, then becomes a normal person with no glow.

Fred lies on the dusty street corner, eyes closed, a balled up blanket under his head. Fires still smolder nearby and local residents, media crews and first responders still mill around the devastated neighborhood.

Fred wears his khakis and blue shirt and hat, both with "Fred's Parts" insignia. Two EMTs in scrubs with nametags crouch near him: LUDWIG SWEET, a 22 y.o. man, and L. DONATO, a 45 y.o. woman.

L. Donato speaks in a hushed, caring voice to Ludwig Sweet.

L. DONATO
Background is he apparently lost everything in the fires. Also had cancer and a divorce recently. Poor guy. Was being interviewed by the news. Suffered a loss of consciousness.

Ludwig jots notes on a pad. L. Donato puts a stethoscope in her ears, rubs the flat end on her heart first to warm it and then unbuttons Fred's blue shirt, revealing a camo tank top underneath.

She slips the end piece onto Fred's heart. Fred's eyelids flutter. Dazed and confused, he opens them as L. Donato looks on kindly. She grins and slowly pulls the stethoscope out of her ears and off Fred's heart.

L. DONATO (CONT'D)
Well, hello, friend Welcome
back.

Out of it, Fred wrinkles his brow and forces a small smile.

L. DONATO (CONT'D)
Do you know where you are?

Fred gazes around, confused, shrugs. L. Donato smiles serenely and positions her face close to Fred's.

L. DONATO (CONT'D)
Do you know your name?

Fred frowns and then focuses intently on the nametag pinned to her shirt, which says "L. Donato, EMT". He looks as if he's trying to place a familiar name.

FRED FERNOW
L. Donato.... Donato?

L. DONATO, EMT
Haha, no, that's MY name
(sweetly)
I'm asking you yours.

Fred studies her closely, then his eyes fall on the shiny end piece of the stethoscope, now dangling from her hand. He squints to see his reflection in it.

FRED FERNOW
Ah ... that's right, I'm Fred
(face lights up)
Fred Fernow!

L. Donato smiles, then gently helps Fred into a seated position. An ELDERLY LADY approaches, hands him a plate of apple slices and a glass of water. Fred smiles appreciatively.

He smiles again when a SMALL DOG comes and licks his face and when a BIRD toddles over and drops a shiny penny beside him.

When the two EMTs help him to his feet, an object falls from his pants pocket. L. Donato picks up the familiar small mesh bag (which Fred doesn't recognize). She smiles and hands it to Fred who smiles and looks at it quizzically.

FRED FERNOW (CONT'D)
Oh thanks! Now what is this?

Fred loosens the gathered top, an excited, curious look on his face. He glances down at the open mesh bag and then looks up again, smiling brightly.

FRED FERNOW (CONT'D)
I wonder what's inside!?

Pink-green energy encircles him. It spreads across the entire screen touching, penetrating and connecting everyone and everything. Then all the images dissolve into it leaving only the beautiful, glowing, pulsating heart energy.

The song "How Sweet It is To Be Loved By You" by Marvin Gaye plays.

ROLL END CREDITS.