

SALTPETER BLUES

Pilot
"The Bottom of the Barrel"

Written by

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July 18th, 2021
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TEASER

INT. UNDERGROUND LABORATORY - NIGHT

A brightly lit state of the art laboratory. Water gurgles inside a LARGE TANK in the middle of the room. As the bubbles within clear, we see the exhausted expression of VITREA, a blue humanoid creature.

Fluorescent lights glitter across Vitrea's gemstone-like body as it weeps bitterly. Pearly tears fall from its black pock-marked face and are sucked from the tank into water drums.

VITREA

Please... let me go home.

Vitrea bangs a hand desperately against the glass. Its other arm is a blackened stump.

MASKED MAN (O.S.)

I'm amazed you haven't dried out.

A GRAY MINERAL TAB drifts into the tank and dissolves in front of its face. It spasms with pain. The pockmarks spread.

Bubbles cloud the glass. In the reflection, A MASKED MAN fastidiously straightens his raven half-mask before nodding to an ATTENDANT. The attendant drops another tab in the tank. Vitrea seizes. More dark fissures infect its body.

VITREA

Please. We are born here but are not meant to stay. I will die.

The masked man gestures at a tank in the corner where a BLUE SUBSTANCE floats. Vitrea clutches its arm stump, pained.

MASKED MAN

I'll make another. I can make anything, thanks to you.

(then)

You Aquamarines are extraordinary creatures.

The masked man boils Vitrea's tears in a beaker. A GRAY RESIDUE builds on the beaker's rim. He wipes some up with a gloved hand and frowns at the color.

MASKED MAN (CONT'D)

The process is still being refined.

(looking at other tank)

(MORE)

MASKED MAN (CONT'D)

We have higher hopes for the next generation.

VITREA

...You humans are all the same.

The tank water blackens. SLAM! Vitrea splinters the glass.

MASKED MAN

Spare me the histrionics. You are not my first "assistant," and you will not be the last.

Vitrea ROARS with bloodcurdling rage. WHAM! The glass breaks. Tank sludge fills the room, short-circuiting electrical equipment. ALARMS BLARE. Vitrea restrains the man.

VITREA

I should kill you.

Some tech EXPLODES and creates a tunnel. Fire catches on the sludge like a flaming oil spill. The man, unperturbed, guides Vitrea's hands to his throat. Vitrea looks at him, the fire, the tunnel, then the other tank, unsure.

Military boots STOMP above. Someone BANGS on the door.

LEAD GUARD (O.S.)

Someone get this door open!

MASKED MAN

Choices, choices.

MILITARY PERSONNEL BURST IN as Vitrea throws a cloth over the tank and carries it into the tunnel, sealing it behind them.

LEAD GUARD

How are you feeling, sir?

The masked man straightens his mask and touches the bruises around his neck. He picks up the tipped over beaker. Beneath the gray mineral is a gleaming BLUE PEARL. He smiles.

MASKED MAN

Lovely. Just lovely.

ACT I

OVER BLACK.

We hear MUFFLED GUNSHOTS. Click, bang. Click, bang. So rhythmic they seem bored. The shots continue ringing out.

EXT. WHITE WASTES DESERT - AFTERNOON

FADE UP on three suns boiling in a cloudless sky over...

A craggy desert wasteland. An insect scuttles from its den into the light and immediately dies. A scaled worm bursts from the dirt to swallow it. The worm's skin sizzles and it dies, too. A lizard scuttles out and eats the worm.

CLICK. BANG.

The lizard licks its chops -- and is squashed by a WIGHT, a zombie-like creature in desperate need of a Gatorade.

The wight stares at the BULLET HOLE in its arm. The arm withers to ash.

The wight stands and leads several other wights wearing pioneer gear in a beeline toward something off camera.

WIGHTS (AS ONE)

Blood...water...blood...water...

CLICK. BANG. The lead wight's other arm blows off.

ZEPHYR (O.S.)

I can't stand stupid motherfuckers.

ZEPHYR, mid-20s, Black, wearing a nun's habit and headdress, stands atop an overturned stage coach with a reckless glint in her eyes. She rolls up her sleeves and pushes her habit down over her electric blue cornrows with the butt of her GOLDEN DERRINGER. Its name is inscribed on the side: KNUCK. She kisses it tenderly.

She watches the swarm's rhythm. They're almost on her. Zephyr waits for the perfect shot. For a split second they're in a straight line. She fires. A single bullet blows through all six wight's foreheads.

Zephyr blows the smoke off Knuck and lifts her habit, revealing dual thigh holsters and her second derringer, BUCK. She holsters Knuck. In the distance, WHEELS CRUNCH GRAVEL.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

Soooo I guess I'll sit.

She plops on a dead man and kicks her feet. Then angles her BLUE GEM NECKLACE at the road. She sneers.

IN ITS REFLECTION: a SCI-FI COVERED WAGON trundles nearer.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

Took yer time, ya rat bastard.
Five...four...three...

Her demeanor transforms into evangelical fervor. She weeps and kisses her necklace as she prays for the dead.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

Oh, may the Dusk Mother spread yer ashes across this desert.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST (O.S.)

Weep not for the dead, sister. The Mother cradles all Her children.

She squints against the sun -- seated on the wagon is PRIOR PRENDERGHAST -- 50s, austere, makes a whip look friendly.

ZEPHYR

Prior Prenderghast, is that you?
Sister Agathea sings yer praises at the convent, sir. I'm Amal.

He pats the extra seat, pleased but hiding it. She joins him, then digs into his waterskin and food. She BURPS. He frowns.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

Agathea never mentioned an Amal.

ZEPHYR

I'm new. Wights got us. Our salt-slinger left us fer dead.

His hawk eyes follow the trail of carnage to a copse of wights biting a cactus. Needles snag cheeks and pierce eyes.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

Immoral animals. Soon the Mother will bring order to this world.

ZEPHYR

I'll pray for 'em all the same.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

It is such a joy to meet a fellow
pure hearted devotee in this
morally destitute wasteland.

(then, thoughtfully)

Would you like to see a man be
eaten alive?

EXT. WHITE WASTES DESERT - EVENING - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Three blazing suns set like Molotov cocktails over the ruined
wagons from earlier... and the woman approaching them.

WRIT REEVA GORGEOUS, mid-20s to 30s, a brusque femme with a
metal prosthetic arm, slides off her steed Fluffy, a giant
thorny devil lizard, and surveys the scene while unwrapping
and chewing a single piece of hot pink bubblegum. Her gum is
the most extravagant thing about her.

Her WRIT BADGE glints in the suns. Her steel-toed boot rolls
over a Priory sister's corpse, revealing an unspent GOLDEN
BULLET with blue trim in the dirt. Two initials are carved
into it: ZB. She blows a bubble. Sucks it back in, unpoped.

She taps the LISTENING DEVICE in her ear.

WRIT GORGEOUS

Target located. Come on, Fluffy.

She swings onto Fluffy and rides off like a bat out of hell.

EXT. OUTSIDE BARREL TOWN - SIMULTANEOUS

Zephyr eyes the massive wall and sewage moat around the
bustling town of Barrel.

Something drips onto her cheek. She looks up. Corpses in
gibbets swing from the wall, a religious mark burned into
their foreheads. She discreetly wipes the blood on the Prior.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

You will love my congregation.

Kinder souls, you've never known.

He gestures at the wall sentries. They lower the drawbridge.

Zephyr gazes about, the portrait of girlish innocence --
until her eyes catch on a wanted poster.

CLOSE ON POSTER: "Zephyr the Blue. Wanted for Treason. DOA."

Zephyr checks out her own poster and winks at herself.

ZEPHYR
 (sotto voice)
 Damn do I make bad look good.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
 This keep crawls with unsavory
 types. Don't stray from my side.

ZEPHYR
 (innocently)
 No, Prior. I wouldn't dream of it.

EXT./INT. PRIORY OF THE DUSK MOTHER - MOMENTS LATER

Guards escort them into an under construction priory. Exposed rafters and praying civilians incongruous with gold idols and ornaments. She eyes the guards. He notices.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
 The Laird donates funds and salt-
 users to the Priory. They're crude,
 but they get the job done.

ZEPHYR
 What job?

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
 Magehunting.

ZEPHYR
 (perking)
 I've only seen mages in books.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
 You have salt and the Priory to
 thank for that. Mages once ruled
 The Dreggs with their psychic
 powers. Salt evened the odds.

He nods toward the window.

Outside a MERCENARY takes a salt tab with red flecks. Her body SWELLS with muscles; blood drips from her nose. She wipes the blood on a needle above her gun trigger. The blood is sucked in. It blazes red, then evaporates.

She hurls an empty oil drum into the air, shooting it to scrap with flaming bullets. Her face thins like she's lost water weight.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST (CONT'D)
 (to Mercenary)
 Hydrate. I won't have wights on
 consecrated ground.

He leads Zephyr deeper into the Priory.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST (CONT'D)
 A well-prepared a mage can destroy
 an army, but one salt-laced bullet
 will kill the magic in their blood.
 Unfortunately, the Priory needs
 that blood.

ZEPHYR
 Why for?

An ATTENDANT approaches and bows to Prior Prenderghast.

ATTENDANT
 The mage is in the dungeon.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
 Very good. Commence the ritual.
 (to Zephyr)
 You'll see tonight. You wouldn't
 believe the sewage that spills from
 a magician's mouth.

INT. DUNGEON BELOW THE PRIORY - SIMULTANEOUS

CLOSE ON the faces of TWO GUARDS: RORY (40s, extremely
 earnest) staring at something off-screen as he excitedly
 elbows WILKERS (30s, extremely grumpy).

CHARLEGMANE (O.S.)
 Piss. Shit. Fuck. Poo.

GUARDS' POV: CHARLEGMANE THE CHARLATAN, a mid-20s, sleepy
 eyed serial drifter dripping with jewelry and arcane tattoos,
 is bolted to a cell wall with magic chains.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)
 Hang on Rory, I got one more. It's--
 (drumrolls)
Cock.

RORY
 I knew mages could read minds!!

CHARLEGMANE

You're thinking of wizards, love.
They aren't real. Like taxes, or
monogamy.

RORY

Read my future Charlegmane!

CHARLEGMANE

I'll need my cards.

WILKERS

Could be a trap.

CHARLEGMANE

Without my spellbook I'm just an
incredibly handsome drifter with a
heart of gold, a tooth of gold,
some nipple piercings of -- you get
it. Plus my hands are literally
tied behind my back. Tell him Rory.

RORY

Pleeeeeeease Wilkers?

WILKERS

The ceremony's in 5 minutes. Fine.
Don't say I never get you nothing.

RORY

You didn't for our anniversary.

Wilkers moodily kicks a rat. Rory frees Charlegmane's left
hand, hands him the cards. The Sun card falls to the floor.

Charlegmane shuffles and pulls: Ace of Swords. He smiles.
Pretends to add it back to the deck. Sticks it up his sleeve.

BEHIND CHARLEGMANE'S BACK: He closes his hand, covered in
arcane tattoos, over the card. Palm opens. No card.

CHARLEGMANE

I see... wedding bells!

RORY

<GASP> Wilkie, is that true?!

WILKERS

Time's up.

He chains Charlegmane's hands behind his back and whispers:

WILKERS (CONT'D)

Way to ruin the surprise.

The guards lead him up stone stairs to the upper floor.

RORY
I want a Spring wedding. I don't
know what Spring *is* but books make
it sound nice. And itchy.

BEHIND CHARLEGMANE: He fingertuts MAGIC SEALS. His right palm
glows. A BLADE slides from it. He saws at the cuffs.

Anti-magic energy breaks the blade. Rory pats his shoulder.

RORY (CONT'D)
You're pretty decent, you know? For
your lot. Shame we haveta kill you.

They exit the dungeon. We linger in the total darkness.

CHARLEGMANE (O.S.)
This is going to sound crazy, but--

In his cell, the Sun card SIZZLES WITH ARCANES ENERGY.

CHARLEGMANE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I was *just* thinking the same thing.

INT. PRIORY OF THE DUSK MOTHER - EXECUTION STAGE

Zephyr eyes a STRANGE CIRCLE in the middle of the stage she
shares with Prior Prenderghast. He addresses the crowd.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
We thirst in this life so the
Mother's love may quench us in the
next. Tonight, we quench her thirst
for the blood of blasphemers.

INT. EXECUTION ELEVATOR - BELOW PRIORY - SIMULTANEOUS

Charlegmane, on his knees, stares at a poster of Zephyr.

CHARLEGMANE
Why do they call her Zephyr the
Blue?

WILKERS
'Cause she'll *blew* your head off.

RORY
That's not correct grammatical.

CHARLEGMANE

Either way, blue isn't her color.

The guards squint at the poster, then murmur in agreement.

EXT. BARREL TOWN - SIMULTANEOUS

Writ blows a bubble as she watches Zephyr in the Priory window. A CHILD stares at her. A WOMAN pulls the kid back.

WOMAN

That's a Writ. One of the Baron's lapdogs.

CHILD

A lawman?

WOMAN

Barons got no law. They make it.

INT. PRIORY OF THE DUSK MOTHER - MOMENTS LATER

The circle in the stage opens, revealing Charlegmane and the guards. Prior Prenderghast holds a CEREMONIAL KNIFE and CHARLEGMANE'S SPELLBOOK. The crowd CHEERS.

Rory and Wilkers find seats like a couple late to a movie. The Prior raises the knife. Zephyr catches his wrist.

ZEPHYR

Prior, may I?

(sweetly)

It's my first murder, is all.

He hands her the knife.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

It's not murder if they're subhuman.

Zephyr cuts the spellbook. Charlegmane doubles over as a matching cut appears on his abdomen. Blood seeps out.

CHARLEGMANE

I *just* stole this shirt!

His blood drips into the circle. The circle fills with shadows and turns into a portal full of <HELLISH SCREAMS>.

Prior Prenderghast CHANTS LOUDER. Zephyr pretends to gratuitously stab the spellbook. She whispers to Charlegmane.

ZEPHYR

Psssst. Yer a real mage, right?

He uncurls his right palm. The tattoos glow weakly. She nods.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

You heard of Rainbow Bridge?

CHARLEGMANE

The bridge at the End of the World
leading to untold riches, ephemera,
etcetera? What mage hasn't?

ZEPHYR

Yer gonna help me find it.

What choice does he have? Charlegmane nods. He whispers:

CHARLEGMANE

Those sigils restrict my magic.

ZEPHYR BLUE

On it.

Zephyr starts scuffing the sigils out of view.

A SHADOWY CLAW from the portal narrowly misses his thigh.

CHARLEGMANE

*This is why teens are leaving the
Priory. There's no pre-marital sex
and you send people to ultrahell!*

The final sigil to destroy is in view of the congregation.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

Sister Amal, finish the heretic.

Zephyr stabs the knife -- CHIK! -- into the sigil.

ZEPHYR

Man, fuck you.

A COLLECTIVE GASP. The congregation comes to a dead stop.

CHARLEGMANE

Oh, that's the line?! Not murder?!

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

Sister, what are you doing?!

-- And not a moment too soon. Charlegmane rolls aside just as
a SHADOW BEAST BURSTS FREE FROM THE PORTAL.

ACT II**INT. PRIORY OF THE DUSK MOTHER - CONTINUOUS**

The Beast SCREECHES in their faces, then -- sits down. Tongue lolling like a stupid dog. Congregants GOLF CLAP POLITELY.

ZEPHYR

Mighty unconcerned about a hell-beast drooling on your Sunday best.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

That beast is a gift from the Goddess and under my command.
(to the Beast)
Servant, devour her enemies!

Zephyr draws Knuck. The Beast looks at it. Then the defenseless congregation. Then the broken sigils. It charges the pews and begins devouring congregants.

CHARLEGMANE

Right. The sigils locked *it* up too.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

You have sullied a perfectly good harbinger of darkness!
(to guards)
Kill them!

ZEPHYR

Aight, time to scoot.

But guards rush Charlegmane and Zephyr.

CHARLEGMANE

Not to rush you, but this is the part where you go pew pew pow pow.

She shoots his cuffs off.

ZEPHYR

Quality salt, not that white crud, is hard to come by. Knuckles up, partner. We're beatin' our way out.

She kicks a guard in the face then shoots him in the ass.

CHARLEGMANE

I only have pre-loaded spells left.

Charlegmane throws his card deck upwards. He dodges attacks as they shuffle midair like a slot machine.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)
Come on sweeties, give daddy
something to work with!

The cards finish shuffling and land on...

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)
The Ace of Wands?! Ugh!

Charlegmane dodges a guard's attack.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)
Careful, my face is my livelihood.

GUARD #2
It ain't much to look at.

Long beat. Charlegmane pulls the Ace of Wands (a club) from his palm and bludgeons the guard to the floor.

CHARLEGMANE
(kissing Ace of Wands)
Daddy's sorry. You're fantastic.

Zephyr uses a congregant as a battering ram to clear a path toward the door.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
Wilkers! Rory!

WILKERS
Yes Prior.

Rory and Wilkers take white salt tabs. They fire white bullets that explode into ash. Zephyr shields Charlegmane.

ZEPHYR
That ash'll paralyze you.

CHARLEGMANE
I'll show you paralyzing.
(to Wilkers)
You're never getting married unless
you work on your attitude problem!
(to Rory)
A Spring wedding? Get real. Spring
hasn't existed in 800 years!

This stuns Wilkers and Rory long enough for Zephyr and Charlegmane to barrel past them.

They slide behind a pew and eye the exit. The Shadow Beast prowls in front of the door. Zephyr and Charlegmane watch.

ZEPHYR

Our way out's cocked. Can you magic blast a hole through that mutt and get us out of here?

A man stabs the Beast. The Beast tail-smashes him into pulp. Charlegmane fingertuts intricate magic seals.

CHARLEGMANE

I have a better idea that won't get me turned into man-jam. Cover me. I can't move while doing Big Magic.

Zephyr eyes the exposed stone rafters up above.

ZEPHYR

You got it. Just sit pretty.

She takes a BLUE SALT TAB. As it enters her system, her veins bulge. Her heart races. Her hair and nails glow light blue.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

That the best your table salt can do, boys?!

Zephyr rips off her nun habit, revealing travel gear. She throws the habit in a guard's face then parkours up him to a rafter.

As bullets fly she tight-ropes across it and leaps to the next. We get the sense that she solves every problem with the most challenging and entertaining solution available.

Lightning quick, she snipes one, two, three guards making for Charlegmane. The rest take cover -- and promptly become snacks for the Shadow Beast.

Zephyr poses smugly atop the rafter.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

Y'all aren't messin' with your average slinger. I'm the baddest motherfucker in The Dreggs, or my name ain't --

KRAK! Zephyr barely side-steps a BULLET. Her blood spatters Charlegmane's face. Zephyr touches her split cheek. Shocked.

In the aisle below, Writ Gorgeous aims her gun at Zephyr. Zephyr fires back -- CLICK! The chamber's empty.

Zephyr pulls her second derringer and pricks her finger on a needle over the trigger. Blood drips into the gun. It blazes blue, then evaporates. Blue writing spells BUCK on its side.

WRIT GORGEOUS

Zephyr the Blue, you are wanted for
treason by the Baron Concordat.

ZEPHYR

Who the hell are you?

WRIT GORGEOUS

The one taking you in. Writ
Gorgeous.

Zephyr checks Buck. SPECTRAL BLUE BULLETS form inside.

ZEPHYR

Wanted for treason, ay?
(coyly)
How else d'you want me?

BANG! She dodges a too slow. Another cut opens on her arm.

WRIT GORGEOUS

Dead or alive. Your choice.

She locks eyes with Gorgeous, intrigued, challenging --

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST (O.S.)

I prefer dead!

WHAM! The Beast's long tongue wraps around her ankle and reels her toward its mouth, its saliva burning her skin.

Prior Prenderghast uses the shadow knife stabbed into its head to steer the Beast.

Zephyr knocks the Beast's tongue loose. It whips wide and smacks Writ's gun away.

Writ's prosthetic unfolds into a GATLING GUN and FIRES.

But as bullets speed toward her, Zephyr is unfazed.

ZEPHYR

Sure Prior, I can do that.

Zephyr puts Buck to her head. And FIRES.

A spectral bullet seamlessly enters her head, leaving no damage. Her head rocks back. Bullets inches away. Time slows.

We're in (salt augmented) bullet time, baby!

Everyone moves in slow motion, including Zephyr. A blue spectral Zephyr steps out of her body and taps a bullet.

The bullet wobbles in mid air. Blue math equations appear around it like constellations, mapping its new trajectory.

Spectral Zephyr stops the wobbling bullet and WHISTLES.

SPECTRAL ZEPHYR

Alright ladies, let's get it done.

MORE ZEPHYRS appear and begin maneuvering around bullets. Looking for a way out that won't turn her and Charlegmane into Swiss cheese. All the spectral Zephyrs die... but one.

SPECTRAL ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

I reckon that'll do just fine.

The copies fade. Spectral Zephyr fades. Bullet time ends.

Real Zephyr turns. Fires a single blue bullet. It flies through the air and buries in...Prior Prenderghast's eye.

He HOWLS IN PAIN and flails the knife. The Shadow Beast throws the Prior off, kicks Writ through a wall, and jerks into the bullets' path, saving the duo.

Charlegmane finishes the spell and activates the circle.

CHARLEGMANE

Alright, this show is over.

BACK TO: the dungeon. The Sun card FLARES AND COMBUSTS.

BACK TO: the priory. Explosions shatter the floor, knocking people out windows. Charlegmane flips them all off.

ZEPHYR

About time.

Zephyr joins him in the circle. She winks at Gorgeous.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

See ya, Gorgeous.

They fall through the floor, leaving chaos behind them.

Gorgeous scowls. Then aims at the twitching Shadow Beast. A device in her ear flashes. A familiar voice instructs:

MASKED MAN (O.S.)

Down, Reeva.

She squeezes the trigger. Wanting to disobey.

MASKED MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Good girl.

WRIT GORGEOUS
 ...Understood, Baron.

She heads for the door, marching past --

The seething Prior. He watches the Beast drag a guard to the portal. The guard clings to life and reaches for the Prior.

SCARED GUARD
 Prior, please save me!

The Prior steps on the guard's fingers. CRUNCH. They let go with a SCREAM and disappear into the dark. CRUNCHMUNCH.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
 Is anyone else eager for salvation?

Rory shakes his head yes. Wilkers stops him and shakes both their heads no. The remaining survivors do too.

Prior Prenderghast sneers and STABS the knife into the portal, sealing it behind the Shadow Beast.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST (CONT'D)
 Then find me my mage.

EXT. DUSTBOWL FARM - DAY - FLASHBACK

A YOUNG WOMAN looks straight at us. Or she would be if we saw more than her mouth. She smiles mischievously and whispers:

PRE-LAP:

CHARLEGMANE (O.S.)
 If you die I'm taking your wallet.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - MOMENTS LATER

Zephyr comes to and pushes herself out of a pile of rubble. Banged up. She wipes her nosebleed on a dead guard's sleeve.

ZEPHYR
 I'd haunt you fer every last cent.
 Thanks for the concussion, uh...

CHARLEGMANE
 Charlegmane the Charlatan. The
 pleasure, I'm sure, is yours.
 (MORE)

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)

I already know you, Zephyr the Blue. I've never seen blue salt before.

She holsters Buck and reloads Knuck.

ZEPHYR

Most folks don't get a second look. Yer bleedin' all over the place.

Charlegmane touches his stomach wound. It doesn't look great.

CHARLEGMANE

Bleeding to death is all the rage.

WIGHT (O.S.)

Water...Blood...water...

They turn. Wights outside a sewer grate try to get in.

Zephyr hocks a bloody loogie on one. The rest tear into it.

WIGHTS

Bloodbloodbloodblood!

ZEPHYR

Dumbfuckers. Let's go before the damp fucks my hair.

Charlegmane holds out a dowsing rod. It points left.

CHARLEGMANE

This way. Take a swig before you dry out into one of them, *partner*.

She reaches for his waterskin but he side-steps her. She runs into some TUBES recycling waste into graywater. She breaks one and guzzles, grimacing at the taste.

ZEPHYR

Graywater tastes so foul.

CHARLEGMANE

It's hard to believe water came from the sky before the Aquamarines left.

ZEPHYR

Dogshit.

CHARLEGMANE

That *is* what you're drinking, yes.

Zephyr splutters.

Charlegmane pulls another card: The Star. A shooting star BURSTS from the card and zings down a walkway.

ZEPHYR
What's down there?

CHARLEGMANE
What I came to this sky-forsaken,
backwards town for: Fresh water.

He leans on a wall and limps after it. Zephyr helps him. He gives her "the look."

ZEPHYR
Keep it in your pants. Yer with me
now. I don't leave mine behind.

No one notices his bloody handprint on the wall. At least, no one *human* does.

The wights from earlier finish eating their bloody fellow. They rattle the grate, ghoulish screams echoing in the dark. The grate bars bend slightly.

WIGHTS (AS ONE)
Bloodbloodbloodbloodblood!

INT. LAIRD'S MANSION - PIT'S OFFICE - EVENING

Prior Prenderghast (eye bandaged) stands before the LAIRD of Barrel Town, as he eats candy from a candy dish and shoots artifacts with a shotgun.

LAIRD
How did a mage get loose in my
town?

Prior Prenderghast touches the bloody bandage over his eye.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
It had help from Zephyr the Blue.

The laird shoots the attendant behind the Prior in the knee.

LAIRD
Who?

In the bg, Gorgeous examines the artifacts.

WRIT GORGEOUS
A Baron's target.

LAIRD
Which Baron?

Silence. He hides his nerves and turns to the Prior.

LAIRD (CONT'D)
Why're you still here? Don't come
back until the mage is dead.

Prior Prenderghast bows, seething, and exits. Gorgeous stays.

LAIRD (CONT'D)
And this Baron sent you to me for?

Gorgeous opens a small box. A COMPUTER CHIP glitters inside.

WRIT GORGEOUS
An upgrade.

She lifts a panel on her metal hand, revealing a port slot.
She inserts the chip. Electricity crackles over her palm.

LAIRD
Uppity little-- Anything else?

She takes a bubblegum from his candy dish.

WRIT GORGEOUS
The Baron appreciates your
cooperation.

She exits.

The Laird hurls the dish at the shot attendant on the floor.

LAIRD
Clean up my mess.

The bleeding attendant whimpers but slowly picks up gum.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - LATER

Charlegmane leads Zephyr down a narrow turn off.

CHARLEGMANE
Why Rainbow Bridge?

ZEPHYR
What's it matter to you?

CHARLEGMANE
It's rare for a Sunken to know
about it. What have you heard?

ZEPHYR

Stories. After the wars, the Aquas left The Dreggs for a paradise fulla treasures beyond yer wildest dreams. But you gotta cross Rainbow Bridge to get there.

CHARLEGMANE

So you're a treasure hunter.

ZEPHYR

Guess so. The Bridge only appears for Aquas. Since y'all worship them or water or whatever, yer my best shot at finding it.

CHARLEGMANE

55.

ZEPHYR

Huh?

CHARLEGMANE

My cut of the treasure. 60%.

ZEPHYR

You said 55% just now.

CHARLEGMANE

You misheard. I said 65%.

ZEPHYR

<GRUMBLES> Yer nickname tracks.

She spits in her hand and holds it out. He's surprised.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

Fine. So long as I get what's mine.

Before he can shake, the star fizzles out ahead. The path ends in mossy rubble. Zephyr pokes the moss, disturbed.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

What the shit is this?!

Charlegmane sets a hand on the rocks. His tattoos LIGHT UP.

CHARLEGMANE

It's a welcome mat. We're here.

Charlegmane 'sets' the Seven of Cups in midair and pours his waterskin into it -- water disappears into the main goblet.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)

Do you know the most important distinction between salt and magic?

ZEPHYR

One of them gets you hung?
(off his look)
Shut up.

CHARLEGMANE

Salt bends the body to meet the needs of the mind. You run quicker, see further, hit harder.

He fingertuts a magic seal. The card grows, and grows, and..

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)

The difference between you and I is as such: Mages do not bend for the world. The world bends for us.

GOLDEN LIQUID flows from the Cups and dissolves the stone. Light and the SOUND OF WATER spills from the new ENTRYWAY.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)

That is why I'm worth 70%.

He limps inside. Zephyr follows, annoyed -- and amused.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - SOMETIME LATER

Writ Gorgeous leads the Prior and his guards. She clocks the bent grate bars as the Prior sourly eyes the sewage channel.

WILKERS

I found fresh tracks leading west.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

After you, Writ.

He turns to face her -- but she's already gone.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAVE - EVENING - SAME TIME

A LUSH CAVE full of life. Bioluminescent moss reclaims rusted tech. Glowing water bubbles between cracks in the stone. Fairy-like insects skate over puddles. As Charlegmane kneels to collect water, Zephyr looks around, stunned.

ZEPHYR

Fresh water did all of this?

CHARLEGMANE

Mhm. Spring water is full of magic.

He cups water in his hands and lets a single droplet splash onto the ground. A small flower sprouts. He narrows his eyes.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)

But usually not *this* full. Hm.

DISTANT FOOTSTEPS UPSTAIRS. They share a glance. Gotta hurry.

She crouches to collect water, then notices a low, small MOUND covered in algae, moss, flora in the middle of the cave. Water trickles from it in spurts. Zephyr tries widening a trickle spot, gags at the wet moss.

She takes a sip from her waterskin as she pulls more moss off. She notices glass. And something blue behind that glass.

ZEPHYR

What in hydration...

She tears more moss free -- then scrambles back with a YELP!

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

GAH! BLUE BABY!

Beneath the moss, a dull, child-sized AQUAMARINE floats in a cracked glass tank, like a child in a womb.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

What. Is. That.

Charlegmane sees the Aquamarine. He goes still. Awed.

He makes a religious sign and kneels in prayer. Gone is his sleepy, slutty attitude -- he's startlingly pious.

CHARLEGMANE

(reverently)

It's...an Aquamarine. They're not all gone. There is hope.

He notices its dull skin color. He saddens.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)

At least, there was. This one is no longer with us.

ZEPHYR

It looks like an old man. Or a dead baby. An old dead baby.

(realizing)

(MORE)

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

We can use this stillborn science
experiment to cross the Bridge!
Hold it steady. I'm kickin' it in.

Charlegmane snatches her wrist, stopping her dead.

CHARLEGMANE

We're not desecrating a holy grave.

She wrenches her arm free with a dark glare.

ZEPHYR

It won't mind. It's dead.

Charlegmane's cards float behind him in warning.

CHARLEGMANE

It is a sacred creature.

ZEPHYR

Was a sacred creature.

They eye each other. Daring the other to move first.

Zephyr breaks the tank. Charlegmane pulls the Six of Swords.

She shoots the first two blades and kicks the third back at Charlegmane. He forms an acid-water shield to dissolve it mid-air. She dodges the fourth. It slashes her thigh.

Blood spatters the Aquamarine. Its dull blue color brightens slightly. Its eyelids flutter.

The last two blades stab through her clothing and pin her to the ground. Knuck is centimeters from her hand.

CHARLEGMANE

It's my duty, Zephyr. We serve the
Aquamarines, dead or alive.

ZEPHYR

I made a promise to get across that
bridge. I intend to keep it.

They look at each other for a long beat. Neither backs down.

BABY DOLL (O.S.)

<BABY WHIMPERS>

They turn, ready to beat the shit out of -- the AQUAMARINE soon to be known as BABY DOLL. It falls from the tank, licking blood from its lips.

CHARLEGMANE
It's... alive.

ZEPHYR
And puny.

It makes water tendrils and pull them into a TIGHT HUG.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
So, uh, truce?

The Aquamarine wraps a hand around Charlegmane's finger.
Charlegmane blinks back tears.

CHARLEGMANE
Truce.

BABY DOLL
Toooooose. <HAPPY GIGGLE>

WILKERS (O.S.)
I heard something over there.

Zephyr and Charlegmane cover each others' and Baby's mouths.
Baby makes a new mouth and GURGLES louder.

ACT III**INT. UNDERGROUND CAVE - CONTINUOUS**

Baby gurgles and waddles after a bug. Zephyr reloads and elbows Charlegmane's wound. He chokes and dispels the Swords. They whisper back and forth.

ZEPHYR
Shut that thing up.

CHARLEGMANE
Hush darling.

BABY DOLL
Hasharling. Hasharling! Hashhaaaaa!

Zephyr points her guns at Baby Doll.

ZEPHYR
Shut up, you big drip!

CHARLEGMANE
You are not helping!
(to Baby Doll)
Babies like toys. Want a toy,
sweetheart?

He rifles through his bag. Paper, ink, sex handcuffs... and a HUSK DOLL. He hands it over. Baby cradles the toy, entranced.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)
Lovely, play with your baby doll.

BABY DOLL
Bay-bay dawllll.

CHARLEGMANE
(to Zephyr)
Who points a gun at a baby?!

ZEPHYR
What! People usually shut up when
there's a gun in their face!

CHARLEGMANE
It. Is. A. *Baby!*

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - SIMULTANEOUS

A wight ravenously licks Charlegmane's bloody wall handprint. It trudges down the dark passage with a low groan...

Which is echoed by the many, *many* wights following after it.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - OUTSIDE UNDERGROUND CAVE

Wilkers shines a light into the underground cave. Nothing.

WILKERS

Just an old sewage pipe. Clear.

(over radio)

Babe, we on for dinner with your parents this week?

Wilkers moves on.

CHARLEGMANE

(whispers, to Zephyr)

If they make it a year I'll give you my 80% of the treasure.

Water drips down onto Zephyr's hair. She scowls, pats it dry.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST (O.S.)

Get off the radio and check again.

They hide until the voices fade. More water drips on her.

ZEPHYR

Okay, magic us away.

CHARLEGMANE

Why does everyone think mages can do INSANE things on a lark?

ZEPHYR

Can't you.

CHARLEGMANE

Yes, but I'm knackered.

She looks up. Notices graywater dripping from a grate. Rivets hold it in place. She tries wrenching it open. No dice.

Charlegmane nudges her aside. He pulls a tool roll from his book. Zephyr gives him a look. He shrugs.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)

I contain multitudes. You babysit.

She grimaces but notices Baby Doll wandering to the door.

She picks Baby Doll up, accidentally knocking the doll to the floor, and carry-drags Baby to the grate. Baby Doll squirms with displeasure and tries going back for the doll.

Lights shine down the hall. Zephyr pulls Baby back.

BABY DOLL
<STRUGGLING> Nnnnnn. No!

Charlegmane gets the grate open.

CHARLEGMANE
Come along children.

Baby Doll melts into water and reforms in the middle of the room with their doll. They plop down and begin playing again.

ZEPHYR
HEY! Get over here before we're--

A light sweeps through the doorway... and lands on Baby Doll.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
...Fucked.

Wilkers sees them. He grabs his radio.

WILKERS
I need back up!

GUARDS swarm in, weapons drawn.

CHARLEGMANE
(whispers)
Zephyr.

Zephyr clutches her chest. Her heart beats thunderously.

ZEPHYR
Can't yet. I'm done.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST (O.S.)
On that we agree, "sister Amal."

Prior Prenderghast enters, flanked by Rory and Wilkers.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST (CONT'D)
You offend all that is holy. You--

RORY
Aw, a weird blue baby! I want one.

Prior Prenderghast notices Baby Doll and blanches.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
Annihilate them!

GUARD #2 trains their gun on Baby Doll -- when a WIGHT SINKS ITS TEETH INTO THEIR NECK. They SCREAM. The wight horde from earlier corners the guards and slaughters them en masse, giving the trio a chance to flee.

Zephyr and Charlegmane carry Baby Doll into the grate --

But we stay with the guards as they fight for their lives.

WILKERS
You never said you wanted kids.

RORY
Really? You want to do this now?
(pointing at dead guard)
Tiffany is *dead!*

INT. SEWER RECYCLING PLANT - SOMETIME LATER

Massive outdated machines work up stem into their glass tops as they boil sewage into graywater. Large plexiglass pipes crisscrossing the room carry cloudy graywater back up into Barrel Town. Like in the Underground Cave, the abandoned technology of yesteryear is being reclaimed by nature.

A rat standing on a grate sniffs white powder in a beaker. The grate is KICKED OPEN by Zephyr. The rat goes flying.

She hauls Charlegmane and Baby Doll up. Finger to her lips.

Baby Doll <SQUEALS HAPPILY>. Charlegmane covers their mouth.

Zephyr notes old lab equipment. Grimaces and sidles on. Charlegmane and Baby Doll follow.

Zephyr peers around. On the right side of the room are three canal-sized metal tubes. No knowing where those go.

She scans the room: machines, a sewage drain... there!

A service hatch on the other end of the room. Between it and them are a lot of dark places for enemies to hide.

She shows Charlegmane the hatch. He nods. She counts on her fingers: one, two, three, go! They sprint for the hatch--

Too late, Zephyr sees metal glint in the rafters. She pulls Charlegmane and Baby Doll to safety as -- ZING! A bullet headshots the husk doll. It falls by a plexiglass pipe.

WRIT GORGEIOUS (O.S.)
It's in your best interest to cooperate.

Zephyr checks Knuck's chamber. Three shots before her last reload. She scans the rafters.

ZEPHYR
I said I weren't goin' with you. I can't stand thick-headed girls.

WRIT GORGEIOUS (O.S.)
How ever do you live with yourself?

Charlegmane reaches for his cards. A warning shot wings him.

WRIT GORGEIOUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
The only head I'm hunting is hers.
Don't make this complicated.

He looks at Zephyr. She nods stiffly. This isn't his fight.

ZEPHYR
Watch the drip. This'll be quick.

He holds Baby Doll back. She sidles to the next machine.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
A government dog like you oughta know how to do what she's told.

She ignores Charlegmane's "What are you doing?!" glare.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
Then I thought, "Zephyr, yer momma taught you better than that. You gotta communicate how she understands!" Here's my best try.

She steps on something. The husk doll. Zephyr pockets it.

Something moves in the rafters. Zephyr aims. Out of range.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
Down, Writ. Roll over. Good girl.

A metal glint, nearer now. Up in the rafters, Writ Gorgeous seeks a non-fatal shot on Zephyr, but she's too well covered.

Down below, Zephyr squeezes the trigger.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

Now play dead.

She FIRES. BANG! Gorgeous falls off the rafter onto a tube.

Zephyr shoots. Misses as Gorgeous hides. The bullet punctures a machine. Exhaust and steam blanket the room.

Zephyr stalks through it, hunting Gorgeous among the tubes.

WRIT GORGEIOUS (O.S.)

Turn yourself in.

BZZZZT. A low buzz behind her. Zephyr turns. Nothing's there.

ZEPHYR

Or what?

BZZZZT. Zephyr turns right. The fog's too thick to see.

WRIT GORGEIOUS (O.S.)

Or I will turn you out.

BZZZZT! Writ drops down, electric-fist aiming for Zephyr. Zephyr burns blue and disappears. Gorgeous smashes tile.

Zephyr reappears several feet away. She stumbles behind a tube to hide. Fresh blood drips down her nose.

THUMPTHUMPTHUMP. She clutches her chest.

WRIT GORGEIOUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

The salt will kill you before I do.

Zephyr sees her gaunt face in the glass. Through her reflection she sees Charlegmane carry Baby Doll to the hatch.

ZEPHYR

Maybe I'll put you down first.

The fog moves strangely ahead. She inches forward.

WRIT GORGEIOUS (O.S.)

Last chance to come quietly.

She clutches her chest. Her body thins, drying up from the inside.

ZEPHYR

I'm more of a screamer.

Zephyr charges.

What happens next happens very, very quickly.

BULLETS SCREAMS TOWARD HER. She phases through them and Gorgeous's cover.

WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! Lightning fast knock past Gorgeous's guard to land on her stomach. Gorgeous ducks. Zephyr's left fist embeds in plexiglass. Gorgeous grabs Zephyr's cornrows and slams her face into the glass.

Meanwhile, Charlegmane shoves vainly at the heavy hatch door. Baby Doll points at the doll in Zephyr's pocket.

CHARLEGMANE

I'll get you a new doll, okay?

BABY DOLL

Nooooo, MINE!

Across the room, Zephyr struggles to free her arm.

BZZZZZT. An electric fist flies at her --

Zephyr finally yanks free. Sludge spews out and blinds Gorgeous. Zephyr backhands her with Knuck.

FWAP! She holds Buck like a brass knuckles and catches Gorgeous in the side. Gorgeous tackles her. They grapple.

Across the room, Charlegmane gets the hatch open. Before he can get Baby in, they point at Zephyr insistently.

CHARLEGMANE

I want to too, but we can't. I'm bleeding to death and you can't even walk in a straight line.

Tears well in Baby Doll's eyes. They touch his hand.

BABY DOLL

Mine.

They point at Zephyr, fighting for her life. For *their* lives.

Charlegmane sighs and takes Baby Doll's hand.

CHARLEGMANE

Fine. If we die, I'm blaming you.

Across the room, Zephyr pins Gorgeous. Bloody and breathless.

ZEPHYR'S POV: The blue equations jumble. Struggling to focus.

WRIT GORGEIOUS

Your body is at its limit.

ZEPHYR

I'm not...one of them skinbags...

Gorgeous turns her head. Blood drips down her neck.

Zephyr's pupils dilate.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

Blood... *blood*...

She drops her guard to lick the blood off Gorgeous's neck.

BRZKKK! Gorgeous electro-punches her flank. Zephyr seizes. Goes down. Hard. The doll falls out her pocket.

Gorgeous sticks the doll in Zephyr's breast pocket.

WRIT GORGEOUS

We all have Paradises to go home to.

She throws Zephyr over her shoulder and moves to the exit.

CHARLEGMANE (O.S.)

Pardon us--

Gorgeous turns. Baby Doll stands beside a large sewage pipe. Charlegmane stands on top with the Ace of Swords in hand.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)

But that one is ours.

He stabs down. SEWAGE bursts out, slams her against a wall.

Zephyr sinks into the water. Her face gauntness recedes.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)

A nap sounds nice right about...

He sways, passes out, and falls into the water.

The doll floats in the sewage. Baby Doll gently picks it up; the sewage clears into clean water. Algae spawn in the water.

Baby Doll sits on top of the water. Eddies pull Zephyr and Charlegmane to them. They cradle the two's heads in their lap and stick the husk doll in Zephyr's arms. Baby smiles warmly.

Writ Gorgeous drags herself out of the water. Baby glares.

A BUBBLE forms around Baby, Charlegmane, and Zephyr. It WHISKS them down the broken sewer pipe, out of sight.

Gorgeous looks around. Where once was sewage is clean water. She chews a bubblegum. Taps her listening device.

WRIT GORGEIOUS

Baron. There is a new development.

INT. PRIORY OF THE DUSK MOTHER - DUSK - HOURS LATER

Rory and Wilkers embrace over a ruined Dusk Mother altar.

WILKERS

I almost lost you to wights and my own insensitivity. I'll change.

RORY

That plus 2.5 kids is all I want!

Before an idol, Prenderghast touches his eye bandage.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

I will not fail you again.

EXT. CLIFFSIDE SEWER DRAIN - EVENING - MUCH LATER

Far outside Barrel Town, a sewer drain juts out over a ledge.

The drain RUMBLES. The bubble rolls out. POP! Zephyr, Charlegmane, and Baby Doll land on top of each other.

Zephyr <GROANS> and rolls off Charlegmane. He flops over.

CHARLEGMANE

Could you club me to death with a rock? It's the humane thing to do.

Baby Doll lays their hands on Charlegmane's wounds.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)

Already fingerpainting with my blood. They grow up so fast.

Baby Doll looks at his wounds. Lower lip wobbling.

ZEPHYR

Shut up man, or the kid's gonna --

Baby Doll CRIES. Pearly tears land on Charlegmane's wounds.

The wounds heal instantly. Baby Doll's skin grays. Drained.

Baby Doll yawns and curls up in Zephyr's lap. She scowls.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
I don't like brats.

CHARLEGMANE
Too bad. This brat likes you.

He throws her a waterskin. She chugs it.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)
By the looks of those ashy elbows,
you need the moisture, *partner*.

ZEPHYR
Thanks... *pardner*.

He shakes her hand, mirroring her handshake attempt in Act I.

CHARLEGMANE
You're alright.

ZEPHYR
Yer hardly decent.

CHARLEGMANE
Then all's right with the world.

They gaze at the weird, wild desert spreading to the horizon.

CHARLEGMANE (CONT'D)
What do you think we'll find at the
End of the World? Riches? Risqué
nuns?

ZEPHYR
Somethin' worth dyin' for.

CHARLEGMANE
What do you think we'll find, Doll?

Baby Doll nuzzles against Zephyr and sleepily murmurs:

BABY DOLL
Home.

END OF EPISODE.