

SALTPETER BLUES

Pilot
"The Bottom of the Barrel"

Written by

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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 with webbed feet and massive eyes.

Fluorescent lights skip across Vitrea's blue body, its gemstone-like skin glittering dully as it weeps bitterly. Pearly tears trail down cheeks cratered with black pock-marks before getting sucked out of the tank into water drums connected by tubes.

VITREA

Pl...please.

Vitrea bangs a hand desperately against the glass. Its other arm is a blackened stump. Again, with feeling:

VITREA (CONT'D)

Please.

MASKED MAN (O.S.)

Do you ever shut up? I'm trying to work.

A GRAY MINERAL TAB drops out of a tube in the top of the tank and into the water, dissolving in Vitrea's face. It spasms with pain. The pockmarks spread.

Bubbles cloud the glass. In the reflection, a MAN half-bent over a work desk pinches the bridge of his nose, just under his raven-half mask. He nods approvingly at an attendant.

MASKED MAN (CONT'D)

Better.

He resumes his work. Vitrea chokes on the mineral water and paws feebly at the glass.

VITREA

Please...

MASKED MAN

For the love of -- shut that overgrown eyebooger up!

The attendant drops another tab in the tank. Vitrea seizes. More dark fissures infect its body. It labors to speak.

VITREA
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. You Aquamarines make extraordinary fuel -- and poor conversationalists.

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.
(looks at other tank)
I have higher hopes for the next generation.

Vitrea's glassy stare goes cold as it realizes. *He is growing more of me. To torture and use.* It snarls. An energy reader near the tank starts BEEPING FASTER.

MASKED MAN (CONT'D)
And now the beeps! If you can't be a quiet and grateful lab rat, you will be a silent one.

Vitrea's glare goes dark. The tank water blackens.

The man puts his things away and walks toward the exit. He does not acknowledge Vitrea as he snaps at the attendant.

MASKED MAN (CONT'D)
Put it to sleep for the night.

ATTENDANT
Is that... necessary?

The man gives the attendant a look. A very dangerous look. The attendant swallows and stares at his clipboard.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
Yes, sir. Of course, sir.

The attendant inches toward the tank.

MASKED MAN
And add a second vocal chord clipping in the afternoon. Its regeneration rate has increased.

The attendant drops another tablet in the tank. Vitrea spots it and bristles. *It's now or never.*

Vitrea shoves its arm-stump in the tablet-drop tube. The tablet withers its skin and it cries out in pain, but the minerals do not dissolve in the rest of the tank.

With a snarl, and all its remaining strength, Vitrea reels back its working arm and with inhumane force -- SLAM! SPLINTERS THE GLASS. The attendant drops the clipboard, terrified.

The mineral tablet's chemical reaction boils and withers and dissolves Vitrea's stump, but not as quickly as the stump regenerates. Every time it's dissolved away, it grows back faster. Longer. With a hint of pearly grey bone nestled amid the tendons.

The energy reader near the tank BEEPS RAPIDLY. *Situation critical!*

The masked man spots the bone and is momentarily shaken.

Vitrea raises its hand again, but this time, an inner strength wells within it. Whirlpools form around it, and the murk in the water begins to dim -- to be purified.

MASKED MAN (CONT'D)

Out, now!

Too. Late.

Vitrea ROARS with bloodcurdling rage. WHAM! The glass breaks.

Tank water and *mineral* sludge flood the room, short-circuiting electrical equipment, hurling the attendant against the back wall, and throwing the masked man on his ass.

ALARMS BLARE.

INTERCOM (O.S.)

Security personnel to L-34.

Security personnel to L-34.

Vitrea slams the SECURITY LOCK mechanism. Security bars seal the doors. It lunges toward the masked man sprawled on the floor but its sea legs are too weak to walk on land. No matter. Gurgling and clicking aquatic organs ominously, it drags itself toward him with its good hand.

The energy reader short circuits and starts crackling with electricity.

Vitrea flops on top of the masked man, gasping, tiny wriggling fin-like appendages on its spine and skull giving it the impression of a fish out of water, suffocating, until an air sac on its throat bulges with air.

Military boots STOMP above. Someone BANGS on the door.

GUARD #1 (O.S.)

In here!

Lungs heaving, it scratches at the man's face, puncturing an eye, and starts to choke him with its good arm. The man flails for a shattered beaker laying nearby. Vitrea bats it away with its regrowing arm, which has now regrown the skeletal bone.

GUARD #2 (O.S.)

Ballistics, get this door open!

Vitrea shoves the masked man against the foot of the tank full of BLUE SUBSTANCE and watches him choke, a lusty haze of hate in its big dark eyes. Wanting, waiting, to hear the words it deserves. To see its torturer as terrified as it is.

MASKED MAN

Puh-- Puh --

The man grabs Vitrea's skeletal hand and brings it to his throat to join the flesh one. He doesn't look scared. He looks delighted. The BLUE SUBSTANCE reflects in his dark-hyper-dilated pupil.

MASKED MAN (CONT'D)

Promise the next one will have your eyes and my mind.

Vitrea flinches back, unnerved, horrified, confused.

The man seizes his opportunity -- he grabs the broken beaker and plunges it through Vitrea's air sac. It fumbles back, screaming blood and unintelligible froth, and rips the beaker out. It rolls across the floor, too-bright blood inside it.

The crackling energy reader EXPLODES and sets off a domino of compromised tech. Part of the ceiling caves, revealing a makeshift tunnel leading into the industrial sewer drain where Vitrea's tank sludge was being funneled. Impenetrable smoke fills the room. Fire burns on top of the sludge like a flaming oil spill.

GUARDS BURST IN, locked and loaded.

GUARD #1

Fan out!

Vitrea clasps its hand over the throat wound -- its blue flesh already tangling around glass, trying to seal the puncture -- and leaps into the flaming sludge-water.

Guards pursue Vitrea with gunfire.

INT. WATER - CONTINUOUS

Vitrea dives quickly -- much faster in the water than on land. KSST! KSST! Bullets zing past. Vitrea descends into the tunnel.

And with a glint of dark blood and vivid blue, is gone.

INT. UNDERGROUND LABORATORY - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

The chemical fog and fire are suppressed. A guard kicks aside the attendant's body. Another spots the masked man hunched in front of the tank with the BLUE SUBSTANCE, doing something at the still-working console in front of it.

He pours the broken beaker into a new beaker then sets them in a centrifuge in the console. The centrifuge whirs to life.

The guard approaches and puts a gas mask on him.

GUARD #1

We need to evacuate you, sir.

MASKED MAN

Evacuate me? Why? <LAUGH> I'm right where I want to be.

The guards exchange a look. *Is this guy cracked?*

GUARD #2

How are you feeling, sir?

The masked man straightens his mask and touches the bruises around his neck. The centrifuge stops spinning. He lifts the beaker to the light. Vitrea's blood is gone, and in its place is the gray powdered substance. He blows it aside, revealing a gleaming BLUE PEARL radiating with light. He smiles.

MASKED MAN

Lovely. Just lovely.

END TEASER

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, the unholy cross between a zombie and a dehydrated human anatomy doll with all the flesh scraped off and the tendons exposed. AKA, this thing could really use 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 down on an overturned barrel and kicks the side of it. A panel pops loose, and a dead nun's legs plop out.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
 Oops. Didn't know this seat was
 taken. Apologies to you, Sister.

She shoves his legs back in and puts the panel back in place, then looks around. All around her are the remains of a wagon company. Arid wind blows hot red dust on limp figures, cracked axels, and corpses in habits just like hers.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
 And your congregation, all
 accounted fer. Except fer...

She pulls a BLUE GEM NECKLACE out of her shirt. Angles it at the road.

IN ITS REFLECTION: a COVERED WAGON trundles nearer. She sneers.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
 Took yer time, ya rat bastard.
 Five...four...three...

She kicks the barrel panel open again and the nun's upper body plops out into her waiting arms. Her irreverent demeanor transforms into evangelical fervor. She kisses her necklace as she "prays" over the dead nun

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
 May the Dusk Mother spread yer
 ashes across this desert, sweet
 Sister.

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.

He makes the sign of the Dusk Mother for the fallen nuns, but noticeably does not rise from his wagon seat.

ZEPHYR
 Prior Prenderghast, is that you?

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
 That is the name the Mother gave me
 before returning me to this
 faithless world, yes.

He pats the open seat, pleased by her admiring gaze.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST (CONT'D)
Who calls upon it?

ZEPHYR
I'm Amal. Sister Agatheia sings yer
praises at the convent, sir. Sang,
I mean.

She joins him, then digs into his waterskin and food. She
BURPS. He frowns, suspicious.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
Agatheia never mentioned an Amal.

Zephyr's bottom lip wobbles as she gestures toward the dead.

ZEPHYR
I just met her. Now I have to bury
her. Wights got us.

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

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
'Us?'

ZEPHYR
Not me. I hid in the latrine trench
first sign of trouble. Our salt-
slinger left us fer dead.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
<DISAPPROVING SNIFF> I did wonder.

He cracks his whip. The cart lurches into motion.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST (CONT'D)
Unlicensed salt-slingers. Immoral
confidence artists. I'd see them
all hanged.

Zephyr's lip twitches. She looks back at the carnage.

ZEPHYR
Shouldn't we bury the dead first?

Shadows flick over head. They look up to see reptilian
vultures circling. The Prior smiles a terrible smile.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
The Mother provides.

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 taste
in chewing 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

Come on, Fluffy.

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

EXT. OUTSIDE OF 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)

Damn 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 unholy witchcraft. Salt evened the odds.

He nods toward the window.

Outside a MERCENARY takes a salt tab with red flecks. Her body SWELLS with muscle; 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 while hootin' and hollerin' like a bumpkin. Her face thins like she's lost water weight.

ZEPHYR

The licensed and the unlicensed
seem pretty similar to me.

He scowls, then calls down to the mercenary:

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

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? Sorry for all the
questions, I never was much for
book learnin'. Aside from the Dusk
Mother's *Good Book*, that is.

The Prior lays an approving hand on her shoulder.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

"Booklearning" is for heretics and
whores. You are a righteous girl.

An ATTENDANT approaches and pulls the Prior aside.

ATTENDANT

The mage is in the dungeon.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

Very good. Commence.

(to Zephyr)

You'll see tonight. You wouldn't
believe the sewage that spills from
a so-called 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).

CHARLEMAGNE (O.S.)

Piss. Shit. Fuck. Poo.

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

CHARLEMAGNE (CONT'D)

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

Cock.

RORY

I knew mages could read minds!!

CHARLEMAGNE

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

RORY

Read my future CHARLEMAGNE!

CHARLEMAGNE

I'll need my cards.

WILKERS

Don't even think about it, Ror.
It's a trap.

CHARLEMAGNE

Trap? *Trap?* 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

C'mon, Wilkers.

WILKERS

No.

RORY

Come ooooooon, Wilkers. Could be
funny. And if it ain't, we could
gut him like a fish.

CHARLEMAGNE

That would be hilarious.

WILKERS

No way. We get caught, the Prior's
cuttin' our heads off.

(MORE)

WILKERS (CONT'D)
 'Sides, the ceremony's in 5
 minutes. He can die then like all
 the rest.

Rory gives Wilkers puppy dog eyes. Wilkers huffs.

WILKERS (CONT'D)
 Bah! Fine. Don't say I never get
 you nothing.

RORY
 You didn't for our anniversary.

WILKERS
 I told you I got the dates wrong!
 When are you going to quit bringing
 it up?!

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

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

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

CHARLEMAGNE
 I see... wedding bells!

RORY
 <GASP> Wilkie, is that true?!

WILKERS
 And -- time's up.

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

WILKERS (CONT'D)
 Way to ruin the surprise, dick.

CHARLEMAGNE
 <GASP> Now you're reading my mind.

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 CHARLEMAGNE: 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.

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

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

CHARLEMAGNE (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

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

CHARLEMAGNE
Why do they call her Zephyr the
Blue?

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

RORY
That's not correct grammatical.

CHARLEMAGNE
Either way, blue isn't her color.
She looks like a burnt blueberry.

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 CHARLEMAGNE and the guards. Prior Prenderghast holds a CEREMONIAL KNIFE and CHARLEMAGNE'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 and looks at her kindly.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

It's not murder if they're subhuman.

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

CHARLEMAGNE

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 CHARLEMAGNE.

ZEPHYR

Psssst. Yer a real mage, right?

He uncurls his right palm. The tattoos glow. *Proof enough.*

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

Heard of "Rainbow Bridge"?

CHARLEMAGNE

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. Nod yes
to live, shake your ass to die.

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

CHARLEMAGNE

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.

CHARLEMAGNE

By the way, *Prior*, *this* is why
teens are leaving the faith.
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.

CHARLEMAGNE

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

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

Sister, what are you doing?!

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

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.

CHARLEMAGNE

Right. The sigils locked *it* up too.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

You have sullied a perfectly good harbinger of darkness! Faithful, seize them!

ZEPHYR

Aight, time to scoot.

Faithful (and burly) believers rush CHARLEMAGNE and Zephyr.

CHARLEMAGNE

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 believer in the face then shoots him in the ass.

CHARLEMAGNE

I only have pre-loaded spells left.

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

CHARLEMAGNE (CONT'D)

Come on sweeties, give daddy something to work with!

The cards finish shuffling and land on...

CHARLEMAGNE (CONT'D)

The Ace of Wands?! Ugh!

CHARLEMAGNE dodges a believer's attack.

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

BELIEVER #1
It ain't much to look at.

CHARLEMAGNE pulls the Ace of Wands (a club) from his palm and bludgeons the believer. He kisses the card and the club.

CHARLEMAGNE
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. Their bodies and weapons power up with low-level energy. They fire white-hot bullets that explode into ash. Zephyr shields CHARLEMAGNE.

ZEPHYR
That ash'll paralyze you.

CHARLEMAGNE
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 CHARLEMAGNE to barrel past them. They slide behind a pew and front door. The Shadow Beast blocks the door.

ZEPHYR
Exit'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. CHARLEMAGNE fingertuts intricate magic seals.

CHARLEMAGNE

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 believer'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 believers making for CHARLEMAGNE. The rest take cover -- and get attacked by the raging Shadow Beast. Zephyr poses smugly on 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 Charlemagne'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.

Zephyr checks Buck's chamber. SPECTRAL BULLETS form inside.

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

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

WRIT GORGEOUS
 Dead or alive. Your choice.

She locks eyes with Gorgeous, intrigued, challenging --

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST
 I prefer dead!

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

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

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. Down.

We're now 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 CHARLEMAGNE 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.

CHARLEMAGNE finishes the spell and activates the circle.

CHARLEMAGNE
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. CHARLEMAGNE 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, Reeve. Eyes on the prize.

She squeezes the trigger. Wanting to disobey. She doesn't.

WRIT GORGEIOUS
Understood, Baron.

MASKED MAN (O.S.)
Good girl.

Her jaw clenches. She heads for the door, marching past --

The seething Prior, watching the Beast drag a believer to the portal. The believer grasps for the Prior.

SCARED BELIEVER
Prior, please save me!

The Prior steps on the believer'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:

CHARLEMAGNE (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...

CHARLEMAGNE
CHARLEMAGNE the Charlatan. The pleasure, I'm sure, is yours. 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.

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

CHARLEMAGNE
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.

CHARLEMAGNE holds out a dowsing rod. It points left.

CHARLEMAGNE
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. Fuckin' foul.

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

ZEPHYR
You believe in the Blues? Dogshit.

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

Zephyr splutters.

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

ZEPHYR
What's down there?

CHARLEMAGNE
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.

She helps him down the walkway and they disappear. Neither 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, who he eats candy from a candy dish while shooting 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 background, 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 GORGEIOUS

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 GORGEIOUS

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

CHARLEMAGNE leads Zephyr down a narrow turn off.

CHARLEMAGNE

Why Rainbow Bridge?

ZEPHYR

What's it matter to you?

CHARLEMAGNE

(pressing on)

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.

CHARLEMAGNE

So you're a treasure hunter.

ZEPHYR

Guess so. Stories say the Bridge only appears for Aquas.

CHARLEMAGNE

Which you don't believe in.

ZEPHYR

Damn right I don't. But since y'all mages worship them or water or whatever, yer my best shot at finding it. Whatever it is.

CHARLEMAGNE

Fifty five.

ZEPHYR

Huh?

CHARLEMAGNE

My cut of the treasure. 60 percent.

ZEPHYR

You said fifty five just now.

CHARLEMAGNE

You misheard. I said sixty five.

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?!

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

CHARLEMAGNE

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

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

CHARLEMAGNE (CONT'D)

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

ZEPHYR

The first one's fun and the second
one's dumb?

CHARLEMAGNE

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..

CHARLEMAGNE (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.

CHARLEMAGNE (CONT'D)

*That is why I'm worth seventy
percent of the treasure.*

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

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - SOMETIME LATER

Writ Gorgeous leads the Prior and his believer-guards. She
nods to the bent grate. The Prior purses his lips.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

After you, Writ.

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 CHARLEMAGNE kneels
to collect water, Zephyr looks around, stunned.

ZEPHYR

Fresh water did all of this?

CHARLEMAGNE

Mhm. Spring water is full of
minerals. Minerals and magic.

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

CHARLEMAGNE (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.

CHARLEMAGNE sees the Aquamarine. He goes still. Awed.

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

CHARLEMAGNE

(reverently)

It's...an Aquamarine. The thing you didn't think existed. They're not all gone. There is hope.

He notices its dull skin color. He saddens.

CHARLEMAGNE (CONT'D)

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

ZEPHYR

That is not an ancient magic-water-creature. It looks like an old man. Or a dead baby. An old dead baby.

(realizing)

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

CHARLEMAGNE snatches her wrist, stopping her dead.

CHARLEMAGNE

We're not desecrating a grave.

She wrenches her arm free with a dark glare.

ZEPHYR
It won't mind. It's dead.

Charlemagne's cards float behind him in warning.

CHARLEMAGNE
It is a sacred creature.

ZEPHYR
Was a sacred creature.

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

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

She shoots the first two blades and kicks the third back at CHARLEMAGNE. 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.

CHARLEMAGNE
It's my duty, Zephyr. Mages 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.

CHARLEMAGNE
It *is* alive.

ZEPHYR
And puny.

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

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
Get this weird water abortion off
me or so help me--

The Aquamarine wraps a hand around Charlemagne's finger.
CHARLEMAGNE blinks back tears and puts away his cards.
Zephyr's unnerved by his genuine emotions.

CHARLEMAGNE
Zephyr. Truce?

ZEPHYR
Does Truce mean you and your ugly
baby are getting me to my Bridge?

CHARLEMAGNE
Yes.

ZEPHYR
Then yeah, truce. I guess.

BABY DOLL
Toooooose. <HAPPY GIGGLE>

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

Zephyr and CHARLEMAGNE cover each others' and Baby's mouths.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAVE - MOMENTS LATER

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

ZEPHYR
Shut that thing up.

CHARLEMAGNE
Hush darling.

BABY DOLL
Hasharling. Hasharling! Hashhaaaaa!

Zephyr points her guns at Baby Doll.

ZEPHYR
Shut up, you big drip!

CHARLEMAGNE
 You are not helping!
 (to Baby Doll)
 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.

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

BABY DOLL
 Bay-bay dawlll.

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

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

CHARLEMAGNE
 It. Is. A. *Baby!*

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - SIMULTANEOUS

A wight ravenously licks Charlemagne'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 cave. Nothing.

WILKERS
 Just an old sewage pipe. Clear.
 (over radio)
 Babe, we on for dinner with your
 parents this week?

Wilkers moves on.

CHARLEMAGNE
 (whispers, to Zephyr)
 If they make it a year I'll give
 you my eighty percent 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.

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

ZEPHYR
Can't you?

CHARLEMAGNE
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.

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

CHARLEMAGNE (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!

CHARLEMAGNE gets the grate open.

CHARLEMAGNE
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!

BELIEVER-GUARDS swarm in, weapons drawn.

CHARLEMAGNE
(whispers)
Zephyr.

Zephyr clutches her chest. Her heart beats thunderously.

ZEPHYR
Can't. Too much salt -- heart
trouble. 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!

BELIEVER-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 CHARLEMAGNE 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 CHARLEMAGNE and Baby Doll up. Finger to her lips.

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

Zephyr notes old lab equipment. Grimaces and sidles on. CHARLEMAGNE 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 CHARLEMAGNE 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 CHARLEMAGNE and Baby Doll to safety as -- ZING! A bullet headshots the husk doll. It falls by a plexiglass pipe.

WRIT GORGEOUS (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 GORGEOUS (O.S.)

How ever do you live with yourself?

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

WRIT GORGEOUS (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 Charlemagne'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.

BZZZZZT! 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 GORGEOUS (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 CHARLEMAGNE carry Baby Doll to the hatch.

ZEPHYR
Maybe I'll put you down first.

The fog moves strangely ahead. She inches forward.

WRIT GORGEOUS (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, CHARLEMAGNE shoves vainly at the heavy hatch door. Baby Doll points at the doll in Zephyr's pocket.

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

CHARLEMAGNE

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.

CHARLEMAGNE sighs and takes Baby Doll's hand.

CHARLEMAGNE

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... joinin' them skinbags...

Gorgeous turns her head. Blood drips down her neck.

Zephyr's pupils dilate. Dart wildly. She licks bone-dry lips.

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 GORGEIOUS

We all have Paradises to go home to.

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

CHARLEMAGNE (O.S.)

Pardon us--

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

CHARLEMAGNE (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.

CHARLEMAGNE (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 CHARLEMAGNE 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, CHARLEMAGNE, 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 in the pews, nursing their wounds.

WILKERS

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

RORY

That, kids, and for my mother to move in with us, is all I want!

Before a Dusk Mother idol, the Prior touches his eye bandage.

PRIOR PRENDERGHAST

Mother, 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 and Baby Doll land on top of CHARLEMAGNE. Zephyr gets up. He does not.

CHARLEMAGNE

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

Zephyr grabs a rock as if to hit him, then holds a hand down for him instead. He takes it and shakes it without standing, mirroring their handshake when they met.

CHARLEMAGNE (CONT'D)

You're alright.

ZEPHYR

Yer hardly decent.

CHARLEMAGNE

Then all's right with the world.

He trips her back down to the floor, and they start tussling while Baby Doll <GIGGLES AND CLAPS>.

EXT. CAMP SITE - LATE EVENING - AN HOUR LATER

The trio's made camp and a fire some distance from the drain. They wear clean clothes and recover from their injuries.

Baby Doll lays hands on Charlemagne's hastily wrapped wounds.

ZEPHYR

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

Baby Doll looks at Charlemagne's wounds. Lower lip wobbling.

CHARLEMAGNE

Shut up or the kid's gonna --

Baby Doll CRIES. Pearly tears soak through the gauze.

CHARLEMAGNE (CONT'D)

Oh! That itches!

Zephyr rips off the gauze and points a gun at the wound -- only to see Charlemagne's wounds heal instantly.

ZEPHYR

What. The fuck. Was that.

CHARLEMAGNE

The fuck's with the gun? Are you going to shoot tears? And, by proxy, *me*?

ZEPHYR

Don't use fancy words. How the fuck did the kid make the bleeding stop?

CHARLEMAGNE

I told you. Kid's the real deal.

ZEPHYR

But you were *bleeding*. And now you're *not*.

CHARLEMAGNE

You were *dying* and now you're *not*. Girl, you pop pills and get powers. Don't think too hard. You might hurt yourself.

Baby Doll yawns and curls up in his lap, instantly asleep.

CHARLEMAGNE (CONT'D)

Kid's got the right idea. Bed time.

Zephyr and CHARLEMAGNE settle in separate bedrolls across the fire, Baby Doll asleep in Charlemagne's.

CHARLEMAGNE (CONT'D)

What do you think we'll find? At the end of Rainbow Bridge.

Zephyr watches the last bit of sun slide below the horizon.

EXT. DUSTBOWL FARM - DAY - FLASHBACK

THE MYSTERIOUS WOMAN holds a dark hand to her warm cheek, lips quirking and playful, and says a single word:

MYSTERIOUS WOMAN

Home.

EXT. CAMP SITE - LATE EVENING - PRESENT

ZEPHYR

Night.

Zephyr puts out the fire and rolls over, haunted by memory.

END OF PILOT