

Fate
1x03: "Conspired learning"

by

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Inspired by characters created by Joss Whedon

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. MUSEUM, OFFICE - DAY

The office is surrounded by shelves of interesting looking doodads and papers. A museum of the quirky and unusual.

A studious MAN peers boredly over an impressive desk. He looks human, but his almost NEON EYES tells another story. This is JURAK, the museum curator, late fifties and a little eccentric-looking.

Behind him, stands his assistant, also with neon eyes, FAHLAH (late forties and a knockout). She hovers unobtrusively, but watches with keen interest.

On the other side of the desk-

JASON

Look, there's got to be something
you want?

Devon watches with little interest.

Behind her-

INT. MUSEUM, WORK AREA - SAME

Nadya, Samuel and Dawn gaze at an incomplete exhibit of odd looking artifacts placed within a large movable display cabinet.

A museum INTERN, ZAEKON, Dawn's age, really cute, even with his bright eyes, stands atop a LADDER muddling with a SIGN that reads: TRANSDIMENSIONAL TRAVEL: OUR WORLD'S SAVIOUR!

DAWN

I'm so very impressed.

Nadya and Samuel say nothing, too engrossed in the exhibit's contents.

A small TINKLE directs Dawn's attention to Zaekon.

He looks away quickly as if caught doing something naughty.

Dawn returns her attention to the exhibit.

Zaekon peeks back at Dawn, with a small grin on his face. The boy has it bad.

OFFICE

Jurak shrugs indifferently.

JURAK

No. I don't think there anything
offouters could offer us.

JASON

Offouter- whatever. You have our
key.

(off Jurak's look)

Display trophy. Look, way I see
it, it belongs to our dimension
anyway.

WORK AREA

Dawn peers closely at one object in particular; it is
crowned by a large blue crystal. The others are very plain
in comparison.

SAMUEL

It is much prettier than the
others.

OFFICE

Jason is leaning forward in his chair.

JASON

It's part of a set. Our set. What
could you possibly need with it?
You've got hundreds.

FAHLAH

(helpfully)

Thousands.

Jason does not find her helpful.

His watch BEEPS.

WORK AREA

Nadya, Samuel and Dawn turn and look into the office at
the sound.

Devon moves out of the office and pulls out three small
VIALS for each of them. They take them begrudgingly.

Devon moves back to the office, where Jason and Jurak are
still in heated debate.

OFFICE

Devon makes her way over to Jason and shoves a vial in
front of his face.

He jerks back and glares at her, but takes the offering. Devon drinks her own vial dispassionately.

Fahlah watches all of this with much interest.

Jason downs the vial and grimaces for a moment, but his mind is on other things.

JASON

Okay, whose butt am I kissing?

WORK AREA

Samuel and Nadya drink theirs, wincing horribly. Dawn stares at hers, a grim look of intense dislike on her face.

DAWN

How much longer do we have to drink this stuff?

NADYA

(bad morning breath
taste)

Ask Devon.

Dawn tips her head back, hand holding nose, eyes closed, swallows it down.

Zaekon has an advantageous view from atop his ladder.

Dawn opens her eyes and makes eye contact with Zaekon.

He is completely flustered. She thinks it's cute and SMILES at him.

ZAEKON

Oh hello... hi. I'm- let me just...

He attempts to climb down from the ladder. He loses his FOOTING. In a mad grapple to balance himself, he TIPS the ladder.

Dawn freaks and rushes to the ladder.

Samuel and Nadya turn too late.

OFFICE

Jason, Jurak and Fahlah stop debating and turn around.

THE LADDER

Stands in mid-tip, perfectly upright and not supported by anything. Zaekon is holding onto it for dear life, and probably wondering why he doesn't have a broken neck. Dawn's smile widens at him. He smiles right back.

DEVON

flicks her head and the ladder rights itself. She looks away boredly.

Jurak looks at Fahlah and nods. He gets up and leaves the room through the side door.

Fahlah takes his seat. Jason quirks an eyebrow.

FAHLAH

I believe we can come to an arrangement.

Jason smiles.

FADE OUT.

END TEASER

ACT I

FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Jason rolls up a MAP. Samuel, Dawn, Nadya and Devon perch around the room. Fahlah sits at the desk.

FAHLAH

You understand that this is the only arrangement we are willing to make?

JASON

Yep.

FAHLAH

And that should you be caught...

JASON

We don't know nuthin' about no stinkin' museum.

Dawn and Nadya smile. Fahlah is confused. Devon tries not to let her impatience show.

JASON

(off their looks)

Yes, we can be discreet. We won't get caught.

Fahlah shrugs as though she is not sure. She gets up.

FAHLAH

I'll see what I can do about establishing an exchange rate for your world's currency.

She exits.

Samuel approaches Jason.

SAMUEL

What will you need from us?

JASON

Not much. I do this kind of thing all the time. I just need some backup. Have partner, will burgle the burglar. The rest of you can stick around here 'til we're done.

Nadya smiles and steps forward, more than willing to volunteer.

Jason doesn't notice, or pretends not to. He turns to Devon.

JASON

Let's go.

Nadya stops short.

Devon blinks at him.

DEVON

What?

JASON

We gotta get specs, stake out the place, do a little recon. The sooner we get in there, the sooner we leave here.

Devon points around the room.

DEVON

Why me? Take-

JASON

(abruptly)

We've done this before.

DEVON

That was a cave.

JASON

So's this. It's just got more rooms. Come on.

NADYA

(tentatively;
gauging Jason)

Fahlah said that we all had to wait until-

JASON

(taps watch)

Burning daylight Dev. Tick tick.

He swiftly moves off.

Devon squares her shoulders and her jaw and follows.

Nadya frowns, confused, somewhat bruised.

DAWN

Okay. So what do we do?

Nadya applies her confident face and turns around to see-

ZAEKON (O.S.)

Uhm sorry. I um...

The fellow nervously bounces on his heel. He's having a hard time keeping his eyes on Dawn for long stretches of time.

ZAEKON

Curator Jurak asked me to show you around the rest of the museum exhibits while Curator Fahlah sorts out your transdimensional visas. Once you have those you will be free to travel the city.

SAMUEL

Thank you.

Samuel eagerly starts forward. Zaekon has little choice but to look away from Dawn and lead the way. Neither Dawn nor Nadya look enthused to be given a tour.

INT. MUSEUM, DOCTRINE EXHIBIT - LATER

Nadya and Dawn trail boredly behind Zaekon and Samuel. Samuel is incredibly interested in every word Zaekon says. Dawn and Nadya are just trying to stay awake.

The exhibits are made up mostly of parchments, books, crystals and a myriad of objects that can hold forms of text.

ZAEKON

...which is why the largest collection of keys and dimensional magicks have been brought to this museum for the three-hundred year anniversary of dimensional travel. These collected works are the cornerstone of our society.

SAMUEL

It is magnificent. All the best laws and practices of a hundred worlds brought together for the sole purpose of peace. I am truly inspired.

ZAEKON

Your world sounds very much like ours was over two hundred years ago. Portals didn't solve all our problems overnight, but in time everyone realised that if we didn't choose peace, we would destroy ourselves like so many other worlds out there.

SAMUEL

Tell me more about this council
you mentioned.

ZAEKON

(smiles)

It's very exciting. We're forming
a collective with a triad of
dimensions that utilizes and
controls dimensional travel.
Together, we hope we can bring
peace to many emerging dimensions
and form a confederacy of
knowledge and resource sharing.

The group reach a large four-way crossing of sorts. The
corridor ahead seem to stretch on almost infinitely. The
one to the left is blocked by a CURTAIN.

DAWN

(staring)

How big is this place?

Nadya stares to the left. A large SIGN is above the curtain:
OUTERWORLDY MAGICKS

ZAEKON

Well, this is one of the larger
museums in the city, and most
definitely the largest mysticism
and occult depot in the Upposphere.

Zaekon turns right. Samuel and Dawn follow. Nadya stares
the curtain for a few more moments, then turns to join the
others.

WORLD WARS EXHIBIT

Nadya catches up to Dawn who stares at something ahead of
her in equal parts horror and awe. Samuel, too, is subdued.
Nadya looks at-

A PAINTING

It is a huge painting, as big in scale as its contents.
There is a tremendous army of demons on a battlefield. A
large mountain flanks them. All the warriors are decked in
armour, carry massive weapons and ride impressive beasts.

The sky is red and oppressive, and there in the centre of
it is a LARGE PORTAL, looking like someone had taken an
axe to the heavens. A GIANT DEMON, just one, seems to be
crawling through. It is huge, so huge it makes the mountain
look like a hill.

The warriors would have no chance.

ON THE PAINTED FACES

Frozen in TERROR.

DAWN

(whispers)

That could really happen?

ZAEKON

(quietly)

That's why we're forming the council.

(smiles

encouragingly)

To make sure it doesn't.

The group share a discomfoting silence-

Broken by A CLICK CLACK on the floor as Fahlah catches up to them. She waves some PAPERS.

FAHLAH

I've arranged temporary travel visas for you to explore our dimension. Unfortunately, I'm still researching your dimension to establish a currency, so you'll need to wait until you can pay for lodgings.

(quickly)

It shouldn't take more than a few hours, so feel free to further explore the museum or-

NADYA

(loops an arm

around Zaekon's)

Take a tour of the city. We'd love to.

(looks at Zaekon)

Tour guide?

He glances between Nadya and Fahlah. Fahlah nods.

SAMUEL

Aah if you don't mind, I think I'd prefer to stay here and learn more.

FAHLAH

That will be fine. In fact, I'm sure I can show you some non-exhibited information that would interest you.

NADYA

Excellent.
 (to Dawn)
 Shall we go?

Dawn gives the smallest bob of her head; she's still staring at the painting.

The trio start to go, but Fahlah stops them. She hands the two girls a sheet of paper each, and holds the other three in front of Samuel.

Zaekon and the girls smile and leave.

As if remembering something, Fahlah frowns and looks around the halls.

FAHLAH

Where are those other two? The loud mouth and the telekinetic?

SAMUEL

I suspect they are illegally traversing your city.

FAHLAH

I thought I made it quite clear that no one from another world travels without a visa.
 (shakes her head)
 Well, I suppose nothing they are doing is legal anyway.

Samuel takes the papers from her.

SAMUEL

I'll keep these safe. They'll be back for them soon.

FAHLAH

Hmm. As long as they know what they're doing.

SAMUEL

Oh of course.

OFF Samuel's too cheery smile.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

ARCHITECTURAL PLANS scroll on a monitor that resembles an organic work of art more than a piece of office equipment.

Jason leans back in his equally artsy chair, bored.

He looks over his shoulder. Devon stands at a table with her large bag open on it.

She mixes a glowing white liquid in a bowl, then reaches out and pours in a sludgy metallic mixture from a vial.

The duo are tucked away in a dark corner of the library. The glow from the screen is the only source of light.

There's no one about. Jason notices this, it's probably what prompts his next action.

He sighs overdramatically, gets up and walks over to Devon. He stares intently at her hands as she plucks another vial from a bag and pours it into a bowl of slush.

She's able to ignore him. Briefly.

DEVON
(without looking
up)
Don't you have plans to study?

JASON
(taps his head,
also not looking
up)
Photographic memory.

DEVON
(dubious)
Right.

JASON
Oh ye of little faith. I could
case this place in my sleep.

DEVON
I suppose all of your relic
hunting is just as legal and
above board. Figures.

He stoops lower, definitely in her space, as the potion begins to glow.

JASON
Case by case Dev. That's what
makes this fun.

Devon stops what she's doing and glares. He looks up.

JASON
What?

DEVON
This isn't fun.

JASON
Not if you're gonna be like that.

DEVON

That?

JASON

You know... like you.

She narrows her eyes, squeezes her mouth shut and casts her eyes back down at the mixture.

He doesn't look back at her work, but rather at her downturned face. He gives the smallest of grins.

EXT. CITY - DAY

The sun is shining. The sky is blue. It's almost exactly like Earth, but with some differences. There is no litter, no signs of decay, no beggars. The buildings are clean. The people all smile. Most people are walking, but a few people are using one-person platforms on wheels that are controlled by levers in their hands.

In the distance, large columns hold up bridges that carry, sleek and quiet train-like pods. Occasionally, there are more organic monitors showing changing pictures.

The trio walk close to one so that they can hear-

AD LADY

... knowledge is power. Share
that power today.

The ad ends with a perky twinkle of music, before the next begins. Some new images appear of DIFFERENT WORLDS.

AD VOICE

Ialiopia. Our world. Our future.
Use your voice to shape it.

The advert switches to a young girl with glowy eyes.

GIRL

My father loved to make money.
And now he works for trade and
acquisitions on the Bylar world,
making Ialiopia a better place
for us all.

The girl gives a cheese-wide smile.

Dawn and Nadya just breath it all in. Zaekon walks beside them, with some pride, just letting them approve of his homeworld. Dawn looks up at one of the buildings.

DAWN

Museum for the scientific
application of exploration.

(looks down the
hill)

Museum of geographical markers.
Wow. How many museums do you guys
have in his city?

ZAEKON

Uhm. I've never counted them
before. Close to a thousand I'd
think.

DAWN

You're kidding.

ZAEKON

(confused)

No.

DAWN

Okay, what's that building?

She points to the side.

ZAEKON

Museum of Universal languages.

DAWN

That one?

ZAEKON

Museum of Projectile weaponry.

Dawn pulls a face, impressed.

NADYA

Isn't that strange to have a
museum devoted to weaponry? I
thought this world had no wars or
crime. Surely the best way to
eliminate any future possibilities
of these happening is to keep
weapons out of sight and out of
mind.

ZAEKON

To us, knowledge is much more
powerful than any weapon. Knowing
about the weapon does not mean
that we will use it.

NADYA

Still, I know most cultures have tales of someone succumbing to darker impulses simply because the means were there. Eliminate the knowledge and means of destruction, and you eliminate the possibility of it.

Zaekon tilts his head thoughtfully.

ZAEKON

I suppose that would be true for most races, but we believe that not all destruction is bad, so we prefer to employ a more productive means to those darker impulses.

DAWN

How?

ZAEKON

Well, individuals that display a tendency toward destruction or other unpleasant behavioral patterns are placed in environments where those traits can be best utilized.

DAWN

You lost me.

ZAEKON

For example, if a person showed an inclination toward violence, they would be sent to a dimension where violence is favoured. Then if, after a specified duration, they have found some way to use these skills to contribute to our society, we allow them to return.

DAWN

(a little appalled)

So, the reason this place is so peaceful is because you get rid of the people who cause the problems?

ZAEKON

Doesn't your society?

DAWN

(thinks)

Well yeah but... what if these guys die out there before you let them come back?

ZAEKON

Then it would have been their choice.

DAWN

Not always. Maybe some people just lose their way.

ZAEKON

Would you forgive someone who took someone valuable from you if they simply claimed they had lost their way?

DAWN

(quietly)

No, I guess I wouldn't.

ZAEKON

We give people a chance to live the lives they choose. We find this preferable to execution or incarceration.

NADYA

(placating)

It is a very efficient solution.

Zaekon gives a small smile.

ZAEKON

Do you hate our world now?

DAWN

(smiles back)

No, it's just... I'm used to my world.

NADYA

Yes, but on the bright side, we're safe here.

MALE (O.S.)

Halt!

Dawn and Nadya turn toward the voice. It is an OFFICER, the uniform is different but the authority the same. The girls look at each other.

OFFICER

Remain where you are.

FADE OUT.

ACT II

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY - DAY

The girls remain absolutely still as the officer approaches them.

DAWN

What seems to be the problem Sir?

OFFICER

You're travellers from another dimension.

DAWN

(jokes)

Yeah, how could you tell?

She looks into his less-than-amused NEON eyes.

OFFICER

Visas please.

The girls fish them out and hand them over. The officer peruses them briefly.

OFFICER

It says you are unschooled travellers.

DAWN

Uhm it does?

ZAEKON

They're only here for a few days.

OFFICER

More than enough time.

The officer hands the papers back. He pulls out his notepad and begins to scribble.

Dawn grimaces at each pen stroke. He finishes and hands her the note.

OFFICER

Good day.

He leaves. Dawn stares at the note, thoroughly confused.

INT. MUSEUM - DAY

Samuel and Fahlah reach the end of a corridor. He pauses and leans heavily on his walking stick.

FAHLAH

Do you need a rest?

SAMUEL

Oh just for a moment.

(looks around)

There is a such a great depth of information here. I fear I will only see a fraction before we leave.

He leans back on a pillar.

FAHLAH

You could remain for the full duration of your visa.

She smiles genuinely.

SAMUEL

I would like that, but our business is quite urgent.

(chuckles)

Besides, I'm not sure how these young ones would feel about remaining in a world that is clearly devoted to study.

They share a laugh.

FAHLAH

Your companions do seem the impatient kind. It appears odd that you are with them. I imagine this is more your world than travelling to foreign dimensions on some perilous quest.

Samuel nods sadly.

SAMUEL

I am indeed more at ease in a place such as this. Books and learning have always been safer than a life of action.

From Samuel's faraway look, Fahlah seems to suspect there is something painful behind those words.

FAHLAH

I'd like to show you something.
(waving around
them)

If you are ready to leave all this.

SAMUEL

I am learning to be ready when it
is needed.

FAHLAH

Spoken like a man of action.

Samuel gives a small, self-conscious grin.

EXT. KROZLAF RESIDENCE - DAY

Devon stands next to the mansion's high wall that is covered with creepers. She bends down by a small gap in the wall and empties the contents of a vial onto the floor.

The trail of silver SLIME scurries through the gap.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Jason is a few houses away, hidden by a large tree. He watches Devon return.

As she rounds the tree, he moves to join her and hands her the bowl of slush she made earlier. She takes it and stares into it.

Jason leans an arm on the tree, shielding her from any passers-by. To the uninformed, they look like a couple sharing an intimate conversation.

Jason looms over her and looks into the bowl too.

ON THE BOWL

The liquid SHIMMERS and a picture begins to form. A picture of the side of a house. The picture moves as if it is a direct feed from a video camera. What they are seeing is at a low angle and moves fast.

EXT. KROZLAF RESIDENCE - SAME

The slime moves outside the side of the building. It finds a window that leads to a basement and squeezes through a gap.

EXT. STREET - SAME

The picture in the bowl shows a view of moving through the gap and into the house.

JASON

Man, you have the coolest stuff
in your bag.

Devon continues to concentrate on the bowl.

JASON

Now, remember, we're looking for
any deviation in the plans. A
vault that size can't be too easy
to hide.

Devon gives a loud, annoyed sigh.

JASON

(still over her
shoulder)

Security doesn't look that
complicated. Guess this world
doesn't expect a lot of crime.
Hmm. I bet this guy doesn't even
have lackeys. We could take this
place tonight. If you find the
vault.

DEVON

I'd be able to find it if you'd
just shut up and let me
concentrate.

Jason glances over her.

JASON

Well you're not really
concentrating all that much to
begin with.

(husky voice)

Am I too close? Is that the real
reason you're distracted?

She takes her attention off the bowl. The picture freezes,
as though the camera has stopped moving.

DEVON

What! God you're so... what do
you mean I'm not concentrating?

JASON

Your eyes.

Devon widens said eyes in question; aiming them at him
with vicious accuracy.

JASON

I figured it out. Your eyes only go all Ororo Monroe when you really concentrate. You'd fit right in here actually. All these glowy eyes give me the heebies.

DEVON

First, don't look at my eyes. Secondly, I don't need that much concentration to move a tracker-worm around.

Jason hold his hands up.

JASON

Okay.

Devon looks back at the bowl. Jason waits until she is back into it.

JASON

Sooo...

Devon's eyes flicker from the bowl. She waits for it-

JASON

Since that thing doesn't need your complete attention, the real reason you're pissed is because I've hit too close to the truth.

Devon rolls her eyes.

DEVON

And that is?

JASON

You want me.

His smile quickly turns into a grimace. He doubles over slightly as though someone just punched him in the stomach.

JASON

Ow. Okay. Yeah, I'm gonna go stand over there. Silently.

Devon turns her attention away from him and resumes her work. Slightly, very slightly, her lips curve at the edges, as though she were about to smile.

INT. MUSEUM, ARCHIVE - DAY

Samuel sits at a large desk, reading a book. There are a pile of other books on the desk.

Fahlah arrives with a tray of refreshments.

She places it on the first free space she can find. She sits in the chair beside him and takes two cups from it. She sets about making them both tea.

FAHLAH

Anything interesting?

SAMUEL

(laughs)

Well, I'm faster at deciphering your written language now, but as for shedding new light on my dimension... I've found nothing all that flattering about it yet. We have progressed past burning witches at the stake, and I am quite sure it isn't our custom to sacrifice our first child to slavery in the underworld.

FAHLAH

(smiles)

These accounts were written when we first began exploring. I'm afraid some of our first explorers weren't all that impartial or open-minded. I think one of the first things we'll do when the council is officially inaugurated is to revisit some of the worlds and update the records.

She hands Samuel his tea and a plate of exotic looking food.

SAMUEL

Thank you. Sadly, I wouldn't want you to be too hasty to return to my world. Some accounts are accurate. We are a violent, unforgiving world. Most people don't even notice the real demons there.

They sip their tea.

FAHLAH

You know what my favourite tale from your world is?

Samuel waits and takes some nibbles at the food. She gets up and digs out a book from the pile. She sits down again and flips through the pages.

FAHLAH

(reading)

And there is one girl in all the world imbued to protect their ignorance. Made of the same darkness, she is chosen and chooses to sacrifice her life for a world. A world only worth saving because of the people like her. They call her

FAHLAH

The Slayer.

SAMUEL

The Slayer.

FAHLAH

I suppose I shouldn't be too surprised that you know of this word.

SAMUEL

(chuckles)

Does that book tell of Watchers?

FAHLAH

(giddy)

The keeper of the line. You are one?

SAMUEL

Once, but no longer.

FAHLAH

Because you are now a traveller?

SAMUEL

No, I ceased my calling long before this. Being a 'Watcher' no longer appealed.

He displays the same sadness he displayed before. Fahlah's face is pulled in concern.

FAHLAH

Because to watch, to observe, is to be safe from a life of action.

(prods)

But someone else wasn't.

SAMUEL

(smiles at her

guess)

The Slayer. My Slayer.

Fahlah places a hand on his shoulder.

SAMUEL

It was against the rules to stand by a Slayer's side in their tasks. We were to give them our knowledge, our words, and let them perform the actions. My words got her killed.

Samuel is now lost in memory.

SAMUEL

She didn't die saving the world. Didn't die a noble sacrifice to the cause. She died because I failed her. I followed the rules, kept my distance, and wasn't there when she needed someone by her side. All she had was a man far behind her with words and no action.

(clenches his fist)

She was great. Her cause was just and still she fell. Alone. I will not allow it to happen again.

Samuel notices his surroundings and he soberly tries to put his poker face back on.

FAHLAH

I think...

He turns to her, perhaps fearful of her reaction.

FAHLAH

I think that if our worlds were to ever have relations, we would choose for it to be with a man like you.

She gives an understanding smile, and shows a little sadness of her own. Samuel relaxes and smiles too.

INT. SCHOOL, FOYER - NIGHT

A mass of PEOPLE mill around the foyer. Demons of all sorts as well as many people of this world. Dawn, Nadya and Zaekon look around.

Near the entrance to the main body of the school, there are SCANNER MACHINES. The OPERATOR flicks a switch and a florescent light comes on as someone puts their arm underneath the light. Invisible MARKINGS on their skin GLOW under the light.

The trio shuffle along with the flow of the crowd.

DAWN

What're those?

ZAEKON
Qualifications.

OPERATOR
Aah this is a new species. Papers
please.

The girls hand them over. The operator hands them back
after a quick check.

OPERATOR
(to Zaekon)
Why are you here? You're too old.

ZAEKON
I'm their tour guide.

OPERATOR
How strange. You know the drill.

Zaekon nods and pops his arm under the light. A long batch
of impressive looking markings glow. Nadya and Dawn study
them, impressed, despite not having a clue what they are
about.

OPERATOR
Class Two A O. That way.

The operator points down a hallway. The trio head off.

CLASSROOM

They enter into a large classroom, very reminiscent of a
university lecture hall. The PEOPLE in the room are largely
unrecognizable species.

Zaekon points toward some empty seats and they dodge and
bump their way toward them. Zaekon leads.

Dawn and Nadya are too busy trying to get to the seats
that they don't notice the demon standing in front of
Zaekon until it's too late.

Dawn slams on her brakes, causing Nadya to almost collide.
Dawn just points, trying not to make a noise, madly hoping
the demon won't turn around. Nadya's eyes widen in equal
shock.

The demon is a SAVORTE.

FADE OUT.

ACT III

FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL, CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Dawn stands absolutely still for a moment, then silently makes erratic "back-up" gestures to Nadya.

Zaekon, much to their chagrin, notices their escape.

ZAEKON

Uhm. Don't you like these seats?

The Savorte TURNS AROUND. Dawn and Nadya freeze like rabbits in the headlights.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

Welcome everyone.

Zaekon darts his eyes between VAHKNAH (upper thirties and giving off a hippy-wise-tutor vibe) and the girls. She stands next to a large circular table which has a dark glass circle within its centre.

The Savorte opens his mouth.

SAVORTE

Grish na leck fiorkor ta.

It gives a toothy grin, no less terrifying than it's snarl, and takes a seat. It clasps its long pointy hands serenely and awaits the instructor.

Dumbfounded, the girls take their seats.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

Alright, for those of you who came here via a mystical key or talisman and can understand what I'm saying, please ignore the next announcement

Vahknaah gives a long-suffering sigh and picks a small BLACK SPHERE off her desk. She holds it up for all the demons congregated in the room to see.

Dawn notices a similar black sphere tucked into a cup built into the desk. She picks it up and examines it. It resembles starstone up close.

Instructor Vahknaah proceeds to speak briefly in several obviously-different DEMON LANGUAGES.

She makes a show of rolling the sphere in her hands several times until the sphere TRANSFORMS to an orange, sunstone hue.

Many demons in the room do the same, including the Savorte. Dawn, curiosity piqued does the same but her sphere REMAINS BLACK. She pouts at it.

DAWN

Mine's broken.

Zaekon gives a small laugh.

ZAEKON

You don't need one. One of your keys already acts as a translator for our world's language.

DAWN

It does? Really? Keys can do that?

ZAEKON

Yes, it's often one of their functions-

DAWN

But we're nowhere near the keys. Samuel's got them. Shouldn't we be gibberishing? And what do you mean one of their functions? How many are there?

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

Uhm. Excuse me.

Dawn turns and looks down to the main floor. Vahknaah and most of the students have their eyes firmly resting on Dawn and Zaekon.

Nadya pretends she's not with them by looking elsewhere.

Dawn gives a shaky smile, and a little wave.

DAWN

Hi. Guess talking is bad.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

(smiles)

Not if you've got questions. Do you?

DAWN

Oh boy. Do I ever?

Vahknaah sits on the edge of the round desk.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

Then I think you'd better start.

She gestures for Dawn to stand up, who does so a little sub-consciously. Zaekon gives her a reassuring nod. Dawn starts of unsure, but finds her voice quickly enough.

DAWN

We have keys, not here, but elsewhere. I can still understand you. Never really thought about how until now. Is that how these things are meant to work?

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

Good question...?

DAWN

Dawn.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

Dawn.

Vahknah gestures for Dawn to sit. She does so.

Vahknah then places a SLIM HEADPIECE on her forehead. Instantly, light emits from the glass of the table and a large HOLOGRAM forms above the centre of the table. An image of a perfect portal forming flickers from nothing.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

Keys or other such mystical objects have one, and just one, purpose in their creation.

DAWN

Making portals.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

No. Making someone's life easier.

Dawn quirks an eyebrow.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

Completely true. Beings that control portals without keys need centuries of training and patience. Those lucky few who achieve that level of power without caking of old age first, can bend the walls between dimensions like pieces of davat, but that still takes great effort and energy.

The hologram shows the portal MORPH into the image of a sun, with flames and sunspots spiking from its surface.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

One mistake, one lapse of concentration, and frizzle. They could open a door that leads somewhere they don't want to go.

Dawn stares in rapt interest.

Nadya... not so much.

Zaekon keeps glancing at Dawn with a goofy smile on his face.

Next, the hologram switches to a normal looking key.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

When forged, keys can be given the power to seek dimensions that their creators can survive. Key makers will often imbue keys with other functions too.

She looks up at Dawn. The images of the key melts into an aurora of colours, like a screensaver.

DAWN

Like translating the words from one dimension into something the minds of the travellers from the other dimension can understand!

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

Exactly. Usually a key needs to be in close proximity, but I've heard of powerful ones whose range can span a city or even an entire world. Those are very rare.

DAWN

So, in theory, some keys are able to do a lot more than just open portals?

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

Of course. But let us take a step back. Let us find out exactly why we travel.

Dawn leans forward in her seat expectantly; she's eating it all up.

INT. MUSEUM, ARCHIVE - NIGHT

Samuel stares into another book while drinking tea.

FAHLAH (O.S.)

Good news.

He smiles at her as she returns from the office and sits down beside him.

FAHLAH

With my research, an exchange rate has been set. You now have valid currency. If you'd like I can call the nearest lodgings?

He opens his mouth to agree, but then shuts his mouth as he comes to a grim realisation.

FAHLAH

What? What's wrong?

SAMUEL

I have absolutely no way of finding the others.

Fahlah BLINKS at him. then LAUGHS. He joins in.

SAMUEL

We're not very organised I'm afraid.

FAHLAH

It seems to me you have a lack of distinct leadership.

SAMUEL

I shan't disagree with you on that point.

FAHLAH

What about that young upstart you're with? Isn't he...

SAMUEL

(chuckles)

This expedition's leader. No, he has the potential, but I don't think that's his motivation for coming along. There is someone I hope will grow into the role, but we shall have to wait and see if circumstance allows her the freedom to learn.

FAHLAH

And you?

SAMUEL

I am no leader.
(points down beside him)
Keeper of luggage perhaps.

FAHLAH

So... I suppose you are staying here a bit longer then.

She does not seem displeased at the notion.

SAMUEL

I'm sure someone will turn up soon.

FAHLAH

There's no rush.

SAMUEL

Aren't you tired? Shouldn't you be going home?

She simply smiles.

INT. SCHOOL - NIGHT

The STUDENTS mill about the foyer again. They drink from cups and eat snacks. Dawn is completely enthused, smiling and nodding at a lot of the demons walking past. They acknowledge her too, as though part of some shared camaraderie. She talks quickly.

Zaekon is happy for her. Nadya is bored.

DAWN

I feel like my brain is super-gised. Don't you feel that?
(looks at her watch)
Woah. We're late.

Dawn sets her plate of food on a ledge and pulls a vial from her pocket. Nadya slowly does the same. They both drink the liquid, before Dawn takes her food back.

DAWN

Do you think Devon came to a class like this and that's how she knows about making sure we can't spread earth germs and die from the food and drink we eat on other worlds?
(takes a nibble on something)
Oh my god. This is fantastic. Have you tried one?

She shoves the food in front of Nadya's nose who recoils and shakes her head.

NADYA

As fun as this is, I think I'm going to bunk.

DAWN

But you can't. There's still lots of learning to be had. And dip. And little cakes. Besides, what are you going to do? And what if a police officer sees you?

Nadya smiles and lifts out her arm. She waves the other hand over it and MARKINGS like those on Zaekon appear briefly before fading.

NADYA

I'd say I'm quite qualified to be on this world.

DAWN

But- but that's cheating!

NADYA

(grinning)

I never was a good girl in school either. Take notes for me.

She gives a little wave and leaves. Dawn gives a pseudo-pout.

DAWN

Some people just don't respect the sanctity of learning.

ZAEKON

Well, I'm sure that's not your problem.

He's smiling, but Dawn grimaces a little.

DAWN

Was I too enthusiastic with all the question asking?

ZAEKON

I'm sure Instructor Vahknah appreciates it. When I was in this class she used to open portals unexpectedly to make sure we were awake.

DAWN

When was that?

ZAEKON

Mmm I think I was seven.

DAWN

Wow.

(sober)

You must think I'm such a backward barely-evolved micro-cellular organism.

ZAEKON

(chuckles)

No. You'd be surprised at how far ahead you are. I mean, you're living it. I have another year of cataloging before anyone even considers allowing me to travel, and even then, it'll be to safe worlds we've already been to a thousand times.

DAWN

So you want to be an adventurer? Boldy go and all that.

ZAEKON

(shrugs shyly)

Not until recently.

The meaning of his words sink into Dawn. She opens her mouth in a small "o". He is saved by the GONG. A very new age sound.

ZAEKON

Break's over.

They shuffle into the class with Dawn passing small glances his way.

INT. SCHOOL, CLASSROOM - SAME

Dawn and Zaekon take their seats again. The Savorte next to Dawn smiles widely. She is no longer wary of it and gives a tiny wave.

Vahknaah stands from her desk and walks back and forth between the students, engaging them fully.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

Alright.

The room quiets.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

Now that we've discussed the why and how travel is possible, let's discuss how you actually made it here.

She flicks her eyes over everyone in the room.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

I mentioned earlier the need for a traveller's body chemistry to be altered. Statistically, most travellers die from another world's bacteria long before they are able to infect another world with their own diseases.

Dawn grimaces.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH
(cont.)

Now while this is a world's natural defense against invaders, it just isn't good enough. Ialiopia is one of the few worlds actively able to monitor travel within its realm. I can assure you, that had any of you not taken precautions to prevent the spread of your world's disease to ours, diplomatic papers or not, you would have been stopped from coming here. Conquering armies are dealt with in the same way.

Dawn listens intently; she leans forward on the desk and frowns in concentration. This is the stuff she's interested in.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH
(cont.)

We are the guardians of our dimension and I am quite sure, most of you are here in the hope of discovering how to do the same.

There are nods from all around the room.

INSTRUCTOR VAHKNAH

It is a cruel set of worlds out there. Control is the only protection. And control comes from power. We best get started.

INT. MUSEUM, WORLD WARS EXHIBIT - NIGHT

Nadya heads up it with a purpose. Ahead of her, the sign-

OUTERWORLDY MAGICKS

So intent is she on her destination, that she doesn't notice-

JURAK

Nadya YELPS and jumps back. He gives her a queer little grin.

JURAK

Can I help you look for something?

Nadya looks at the curtains and back at him, but gets distracted by the PAINTING above his head, the same as earlier. He notices her gaze.

JURAK

Penance demons. That's all anyone ever calls them.

(off her look)

Generally when people see them, they get on their knees and pray.

He smiles widely at her. She doesn't know what to make of him.

JURAK

But, you're not interested in THEM. Come with me.

He glides over to the curtain and draws it back.

Nadya takes a moment to think about it, purses her lips and follows.

OTHERWORLDLY MAGICK WING

Jurak meanders along. Nadya looks around with great interest.

JURAK

So what specifically are you looking for?

Nadya makes light of it.

NADYA

Binding spells or more specifically, how to prevent them from being cast on someone.

Jurak gives a sigh that sounds almost musical. He twirls his hand and motions for her to follow.

JURAK

Someone meaning you. I like magic. Our species can't perform it, sadly.

NADYA

Oh. Then how do you travel to other worlds?

JURAK

Oh I thought you were more than qualified to answer that.

She peers at him. He points to her arm. She startles at that; the markings are not visible.

NADYA

How did you-

He chuckles and carries on.

Nadya frowns, he's really getting to her. She hurries to catch up.

NADYA

So how do you stop things like the penance demons if you don't have any magic to control it all?

JURAK

We have many sophisticated methods of control. Nothing enters our dimension without our express desire for it to be here.

NADYA

I'm not sure how accurate your belief is. We made it here.

Jurak gives another musical hum.

Nadya stops.

NADYA

Wait. You let us through? You knew we were here before we came to you.

(arms crossed)

So what exactly is it you desire from us?

JURAK

You're very intelligent.

NADYA

(without humour)

Funny. You're not the first person to tell me that recently, but I still don't like being in the dark.

She pins him with an unwavering stare. He is not intimidated one bit.

JURAK

We are a very... civilized people. Crime is not looked upon favourably. The punishment is less than ideal for those who live for knowledge.

NADYA

So of course you get someone else to get what you want. Illegally if they have to. Someone who doesn't care if they get kicked off your world. Quite clever. Did you know the key belonged to us before we asked for it?

JURAK

Of course. We can identify beings and objects that originate from the same dimension.

NADYA

So my companions have been led into a trap?

Jurak smiles. He waves his arm dramatically at an exhibit and stops.

JURAK

Binding incantations, charms and potions. As well as every counter incantation, charm and potion we were able to acquire.

Nadya can't resist and moves up to the glass of the display cabinets, immediately dismissing him from her mind.

Jurak watches her, thoughtfully.

JURAK

Am I right in assuming you are the leader of this mission?

Distracted, Nadya looks at him.

JURAK

You lead the way to the next key.
(off her look)
Do not be too surprised or too humble.
We are aware these keys belong to
(MORE)

JURAK (CONT'D)

a set and that each is useless
without the other.

(scrunches his
brow)

Though one is different. Like
nothing we've seen before.

(waves the thought
away)

You are the seeker, without you,
the mission fails and your
companions will be adrift of
guidance, am I right?

Nadya nods slowly, as though it were the first time she's
thought of it that way.

NADYA

I would assume so.

JURAK

Then I have something for you.

Nadya bites her lip, unsure. His smile returns.

EXT. KROZLAF RESIDENCE - NIGHT

All the lights within the residence are off. It's deathly
quiet.

Jason, in a black catsuit and with the tools of the
clandestine trade strapped around his waist, DROPS DOWN
from the top of the wall, and lands silently within the
grounds. He looks up, waiting-

The gate beside him OPENS by itself. Devon walks through
with her hands clasped behind her back, as though she's
just taking a stroll.

Jason darts an annoyed glare at her. The gate CLOSES
behind her.

Eyes peeled, body tense, Jason uses stealth and finely-
honed skill to creep down the exterior of the house.

Devon walks along normally, unimpressed.

Jason stops at the door.

He pulls out a LOCKPICKING SET, stares at the door, frowns.
He places a hand on the doorknob and twists. The door opens.

JASON

(whispers; annoyed)

They don't even lock their doors.

Devon shrugs her hands at him; so what?

JASON

Nothing. It just reminds me of
Canada.

Jason shakes his head and quietly steps into the house.
Devon trudges after him.

UPSTAIRS

The duo make it to the top of the stairs and move over to
a large painting.

Jason SWINGS it on a hinge.

A HUGE SAFE is behind it. Jason sighs.

JASON

I almost feel sorry for this guy,
I mean, look at this thing.

He shakes his head. He presses his ear to the safe.

JASON

Okay start.

Devon concentrates. Her EYES TURN WHITE. There is an
audible CLICKING from within the safe.

JASON

Hold. Next. Hold. Next. Hold. And
hold.

He reaches up to the handle and brings it down.

The safe opens.

He snakes his hand in and comes out with a BOOK, one of
those dusty, worn-out tomes.

JASON

You think I should leave a note?
I know a guy who's really good
with safes. My safe at home is
one hundred percent impenetrable.
(off her look)

Really.

DEVON

Really don't care. Can we go
before something-

KRAZLAF (O.S.)

You're not leaving so soon?

DEVON

Never mind.

As one, Jason and Devon turn around.

FADE OUT.

ACT IV

FADE IN:

INT. KROZLAF RESIDENCE, UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

With a big grin on his face, Jason waggles the book in his hands.

JASON

Hi. We're from the municipal library. The date on this book expired and you're running up quite a late fee. Luckily, we're here to relieve you of that hefty fine. One time offer only.

KRAZLAF is a fatcat in a designer suit.

KRAZLAF

Mmmmm offouter humour. I always get so sick of it. Hand over my book.

JASON

Uh no. See, it doesn't belong to you. You stole it from the pretty little museum. Naughty. And since there's only one of you and well...

(points at Devon)

...one of her...

She whips her eyes at him; something tells him he'll be feeling the telekinetic burn soon enough.

KRAZLAF

Mmm but see, there's two of you, but one of these...

He holds up something that vaguely resembles a knuckle-buster with jewels on it.

KRAZLAF

And a few more of them.

TWO HEAVY-SET GOONS step out of the shadows and flank Krazlaf. They do not have neon eyes and have a few ridges on their heads. They smile at Jason.

JASON

I've seen bigger. Really think they stand a chance?

KRAZLAF

Oh no, they're just back-up. You know, formality. I'd rather just send you to a hell dimension.

Krazlaf thumbs some of the jewels. They LIGHT UP.

JASON

I'd like to see you try.

He lunges forward and is met almost immediately by the two goons.

Jason is smaller, but faster.

He gets in a few choice dings, but they aren't trying to fight him, merely keep him occupied.

Krazlaf presses another jewel--

-- A PORTAL OPENS beneath Jason's feet.

He wobbles backward, almost tumbling in, but with a one, two hop, rights himself and scrabbles forward, right into--

-- A goon who grabs him and tries to wrestle him into the portal.

Devon rolls her eyes. She steps forward.

DEVON

Okay, little boys, playtime is over.

She stretches her hand out and Krazlof's jewel device SHOOTS STRAIGHT INTO HER PALM. She tosses it through the portal as it CLOSES.

Jason smirks at the guy holding him. The heavy lets Jason go right before he and the other goon get psychically THROWN back into the shadows.

KRAZLAF

Doesn't matter. More are coming.

DEVON

We don't need lackeys to hold a discussion.

KRAZLAF

There's nothing to discuss.

DEVON

We're leaving with the book. That's fact. Your only choice is what you get out of it.

Jason's smile drops.

JASON
Dev, we don't negotiate with bad
guys.

DEVON
We're robbing him.

JASON
Right.
(to Krazlaf)
What do you want?

KRAZLAF
(hearty laugh)
You think there's anything you
have that I would want?

JASON
How about this pretty little lady?
Real bargain. Her eyes glow.

Devon whacks Jason in the stomach. He doubles over as his
watch BEEPS.

JASON
Urgh. Great timing.

KRAZLAF
(peering at Jason's
arm)
Let me see that.

JASON
My watch. No.

DEVON
Just give it to him.

JASON
It's a Rolex.

DEVON
You can afford another.

JASON
It's a limited edition.

Devon crosses her arms. Jason narrows his eyes, resigned
but not liking it. He hands it over to Krazlaf.

Krazlaf inspects it thoroughly.

KRAZLAF
You may take the book.

He gives Jason a smug stare.

DEVON

Come on.

It seems to take ever ounce of Jason's will to walk away. Krazlaf gives a deliberate laugh.

KRAZLAF

Tell Jurak it was nice doing business with him again.

Devon wraps an arm around Jason's and drags him along.

INT. MUSEUM, ARCHIVE - NIGHT

Nadya and Jurak are in a secluded area of the archive.

Jurak lifts up a box. He opens the lid.

JURAK

I believe you will find these helpful on your quest.

She peers into the box.

NADYA

Crystals?

JURAK

Linking crystals. They come from the dimension between dimensions. Sorcerors use them to wield keys with greater control and precision. They should keep you ahead of the beings that tried to enter this dimension after you. They were also from your dimension, but they lacked the necessary protection.

Nadya is shocked.

NADYA

You killed them?

JURAK

No. Merely sent them somewhere to wait it out.

He replaces the lid and hands the box over. She takes it, but not without some concern.

NADYA

Why would you give these to me? What's in it for you?

JURAK

Balance.

He hums and walks away.

Nadya is befuddled, but not about to turn away a gift horse.

INT. MUSEUM, ARCHIVE - LATER

Samuel and Nadya are sitting with Fahlah and Jurak laughing like old friends.

Jason and Devon walk into room. Jason is almost pouting like a kicked dog. He chucks himself into a seat.

Devon sits beside him and hands the book over to Fahlah and Jurak.

JURAK

Excellent! I'll go get your property.

Nadya tries to catch Jason's eye. He never seems to be looking in her direction. She bites her lip.

NADYA

So how did it go?

Jason glares at Devon and says nothing.

DEVON

It went well.

Samuel notices Jason's mood.

SAMUEL

Did something go wrong?

JASON

Devon owes me a watch.

DEVON

Which would you prefer? A watch or being trapped in a hell dimension with me?

JASON

(mumbles)

I liked that watch.

FAHLAH

Krazlaf took something of yours?

JASON

Yep. Limited edition. Had a compass and everything.

FAHLAH
 (couldn't care less
 about his watch)
 Tragic. Excuse me. I must remind
 Jurak to fill in some forms.

She leaves.

JASON
 Where's Dawn?

SAMUEL
 School.

JASON
 Bummer. Guess everyone had a bad
 night.

Samuel looks away; not quite sharing the sentiment.

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

Dawn is using up all her giddy points. She is practically
 bouncing next to Zaekon.

DAWN
 Watch this. Watch this.

She runs up to the officer from earlier. She holds out her
 arm.

DAWN
 Hi sir. Please scan me.

He looks over her head to Zaekon, who smiles and shrugs.

The officer pulls out a small light and runs it over her
 arm. MARKINGS GLOW on her skin. She giggles insanely and
 gives the officer a huge smile.

DAWN
 Thanks.

She runs back to Zaekon.

DAWN
 These are so great. They're like
 sister-proof tattoos.

She takes a deep breath and forces herself to calm down.

MUSIC: THE PIERCES - BEAUTIFUL THING

She spots a bench and pulls Zaekon toward it. They sit
 down and just soak in the world around them. Dawn pulls
 out one of the black STARSTONE SPHERES.

DAWN

I can't believe Vahknah let me have this. Oooh I wanna test it out on some incoherent babbling demon.

ZAEKON

I think she was impressed with you. You're probably the first to take the test early and get full marks.

Dawn bobs her head, modestly proud, and puts the sphere back in her pocket.

DAWN

I like the learning.

ZAEKON

You know, these qualifications mean you can come back to Ialiopia whenever you want, for as long as you want.

DAWN

I know. Just think, in another year or two, you can travel around the cosmos looking for adventure too.

He shrugs shyly.

DAWN

You won't find anywhere more adventurous than my home dimension. We've got fiends. Rows and rows of them. They're practically flowers.

ZAEKON

Are you inviting me?

DAWN

Sure, if you think you have time for such a backwater-

He KISSES her. It's chaste and it's sweet. She smiles and kisses him back.

MUSIC FADES

INT. HOTEL, CHECK-IN DESK - NIGHT

Everyone looks wiped out.

Samuel is at the desk making arrangements with a DESK CLERK.

Nadya leans against a pillar watching a door.

Devon sits on a couch, with her legs curled under her, watching something that resembles a television news broadcast.

BROADCASTER

Prominent businessman Vargo Krazlaf was detained tonight for possession of uncleared offouter artifacts.

The screen shows Krazlaf being escorted off his property by a crew of officers. He looks angry.

BROADCASTER

The sentence commences tomorrow at nonin. He will be exiled to a commerce world, and his review for return will be in ten years, dependent on trade acquisition...

ON JASON

Exiting the door Nadya was watching.

Nadya starts forward but Jason sees Dawn entering through another door.

JASON

Hey Sunrise. Were you the teacher's pet?

Dawn grins and walks straight past him to go join Devon on the couch. She excitedly launches into a run-down of the night's events. Devon looks like she could take it or leave it, but forces herself to sit up straight and listen.

Jason makes an about turn and sidles next to Samuel, who is waiting for the desk clerk to return.

JASON

Problem?

SAMUEL

No, not really. They're just not used to someone renting five rooms for less than a day.

JASON

Welcome to our life.

NADYA

(takes her chance,
taps his shoulder)
Can we talk?

There's no avoiding her this time. Jason looks to the side and nods slowly.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

They exit the door and stand at a SMALL WALL lining the roof. Jason sits on it. Nadya leans on the wall beside him.

NADYA
 (tentatively)
 You know this is the first time
 we've been alone since... well,
 we've never been alone until now.

Jason shrugs without looking at her.

NADYA
 You've been avoiding me.

She dips her head trying to make eye contact with him

JASON
 Have I?

NADYA
 Yes. Ever since you tried to
 rescue me from Vaaj'n.

JASON
 Oh, was that his name?

He shrugs it off, but she's onto him.

NADYA
 I know I told him you weren't...
 important, but that was just so
 that he wouldn't see you as a
 threat.

JASON
 He didn't have a reason to see me
 as one.

NADYA
 Of course he did. I couldn't risk
 him doing worse.

Jason looks at her.

JASON
 Did he?
 (shakes his head)
 You looked pretty tight with him.
 To fool him like that... But it's
 okay. We're not, you know,
 anything anyways. Still, I'm
 thinking with the trouble we get
 into, situations like that could
 happen again.

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)

Next time it could be me having to protect you from a princess or a mermaid. Probably a good idea to be upfront about what we can tell our psychotic captors about us.

(quickly)

Us as a group I mean. Less chance of any ego bruising.

NADYA

It won't happen again.

JASON

You don't know that.

NADYA

Yes I do. I've made sure of it.

She turns away and sits on the wall. She takes a deep breath.

NADYA

I'm sorry if my deception hurt your feelings or lowered your opinion of me. I wish, I do wish, that I could afford to think that someone is going to come and rescue me when I'm alone.

(quietly)

But I'm always alone and I can't let myself think any other way. I lose too much when I'm wrong. It hurts.

JASON

I'm sorry. I guess I was expecting... I don't know what I was expecting. It threw me. I'm not that good at pretending.

NADYA

Sometimes it's the only way to keep safe.

JASON

I thought that was what I was here for.

(off her look)

To make things safe. Safer. I've got a really big sword.

He gives a wicked grin. It's a little false. She appreciates the gesture and moves closer to him.

NADYA

I am sorry, but please don't expect me to be perfect. I'm just a girl.

(smiles)

But I'll try to be a better damsel and let you save me from time to time.

(off his look)

Without insulting you to keep you alive.

JASON

Good. That's the way I like my life and death situations. So, what do we do now?

NADYA

We wait. And we see. Maybe down the road, or portal, it will get easier.

JASON

Maybe.

NADYA

Oh and while I have you here...

FADE UP MUSIC: THE PIERCES - BEAUTIFUL THING

He blinks in surprise as she moves her hand along his face and leans over for a lingering kiss.

She moves away seductively slow; a mischievous grin on her lips.

He remains at the wall, watching her go. His face is unreadable.

FADE OUT.

END SHOW