

The Aresine Chronicles

Episode 4 "The Gate"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. JI-LA'S AKASHIC IMMERSION ROOM - DAY

Ji-La sits at her private memory dais wearing her visor. She is immersed in an Akashic Records session.

THE AKASHIC REALM [BEGIN AKASHIC RECORDS SEQUENCE]

Ji-La, in astral form, floats amidst the streaming energy of the Akashic rush.

JI-LA

Mother Akasha, for weeks I have tried every way I can think of to access the records of Zaiur, but nothing I do pleases you. Is there some other ritual? Some other method? I am at a loss. Please guide me.

Akasha, in her 50 meter tall goddess form draped in flaming robes, appears before Ji-La. With a wave of her flaming sword they leave the rush.

EARTH ORBIT

Ji-La floats in the sea of space. As she turns, she sees Akasha is beside her, now in her cosmic form. The Earth seems small enough for her to put her arms around it. They witness the Fleet assembled in Earth's orbit.

Akasha takes three steps. As she does, the entire universe pivots around them.

ARESINE ORBIT

Ji-La, floats above Aresine. She witnesses the Fleet, newly arrived, floating in orbit. When she turns around she sees that Akasha is no longer behind her. When she looks back toward Aresine, Akasha is there instead.

Akasha takes three more steps and, the entire universe pivots again.

ZAIUR ORBIT

Now Ji-La faces Zaiur with its beautiful striped blue and green cloud patterns. She looks behind her, but Akasha has disappeared again. When Ji-La turns back toward Zaiur, Akasha is there standing next it.

Ji-La enters the rush.

BACK TO SCENE [END AKASHIC RECORDS SEQUENCE]

Ji-La, still seated at the memory dais, removes her visor.

JI-LA

I don't understand, Mother. What
does this mean?

EXT. GREAT CAVERN, ZAIUR - THE NEXT DAY

Four shuttles arrive at the great cavern and land on an enormous plaza. An irregular arch structure made of huge stone blocks towers above them. It is, perhaps, sixty meters high and a hundred wide. Within the arch an energy field creates a shimmering, mirror-like surface.

The archaeology team members debark wearing spacesuits. They approach the Gate.

RITTER

Amazing! What is it?

CHASKI

We're not sure yet. Some type of
energy field. We're calling it the
"Gate".

JON

We're not even sure what its power
source is, yet.

Ritter raises his hand to surface and observes his reflection in it, but does not touch it.

CHASKI

Please be careful, councilmember!
We have no idea if it's dangerous.

RITTER

(lowers hand and nods)
Just looking!

He turns around to address the group.

RITTER (CONT'D)

This is an incredible find. Does the archaeology team have anything else to report?

GEOLOGIST

We've finished mapping the main tunnel systems. Although some of the underground caverns and tunnels are natural, the vast majority have been carved out of the rock over a period of thousands of years. Some type of "people" definitely lived here.

ANTHROPOLOGIST

But, no signs of an advanced civilization. The artifacts we have found are primitive. Their habitations were simple. There are only a handful of larger settlements. We estimate there may have been no more than a million of them.

CHASKI

The planet's biological profile is incredibly simple, too. No people, no animals, no fossils even. Just a small microbiome supporting a limited variety of bioluminescent plant species.

TRIANNE

Clearly, Zaiur's evolutionary path was nothing like Earth's.

RITTER

But we know they were intelligent. They were able to build a fusion drive spacecraft.

TRIANNE

So it would seem. We just can't find the evidence.

RITTER

Is it possible, the Gate builders came from somewhere else? Maybe Zaiur was just a stopover?

ANTHROPOLOGIST

That's the only working theory we have at the moment.

RITTER

Shafer, has the historical society been able make any headway?

SHAFER

I'm afraid not. We've got the whole team back on Aresine trying all sorts of ritual variations, but so far, no luck. We can't access Zaiur's Akashic records.

RITTER

Well, let's keep at it, everyone. There are answers out there somewhere.

JON

Shall we run the probe test?

RITTER

Yes, please go ahead.

JON

(to a crew member behind him)

Ready probe test.

At this point, a crew member using his wrist device pilots a drone probe to the fore of the group. The probe floats smoothly towards the energy field and then disappears into it. An instant later the Gate releases an energy pulse that engulfs the entire cavern.

The shuttles, which had been floating a couple of feet above the ground, drop and topple. The shuttle crews are knocked to the floor.

TRIANNE

(getting up off the ground)

Oh my goodness! Is everyone ok?

Jon rushes over to Trianne and helps her up. Chaski helps Ritter to his feet. Everyone is stunned but ok.

RITTER

What just happened?

EXT. FOREST TRAIL ON THE ELEGANT ELEPHANT - DUSK

Ji-La is jogging along a path through the woods. Maisie pedals a small, floating, fan-boat alongside her.

They reach a lookout where they can see the sun half way past the horizon. Ji-La takes a drink from her water bag. Maisie takes a drink from the sippy cup in her cupholder.

JI-LA

What do you think, Maisie? Will we make it home before dark?

MAISIE

Yes!

JI-LA

(smiling)

I don't know. We still have a couple more miles.

MAISIE

(looking dejected)

Aaaww!

Ji-La laughs and caps her water bag.

JI-LA

I guess we'll have to go faster then. Are you ready?

Ji-La takes off running down the hill with Maisie next to her. Although Maisie can pedal and turn the wheel of the fan-boat, it is signal-locked to follow a couple of meters from Ji-La at all times.

Above them on the hill, three wolves spot them. The leader, a large male sniffs the air.

INT. SHUTTLE ABOVE ARESINE - MEANWHILE

A shuttle, flying high above Aresine's north pole, approaches a large, cylindrical, space-station turning gently in sync with the planet.

Amant and Pikay are the only two aboard the shuttle.

PIKAY

Wow! It's much bigger than I imagined.

AMANT

It does a lot of things. North pole surveillance, communications, asteroid defense, weather monitoring....

PIKAY

So, we're going to run diagnostics on its anti-gravity generator?

AMANT

Yep. If you're going to be a gravimetric engineer, Pikay, diagnosing and tuning will be the biggest parts of your job.

The shuttle docks with the much larger space station. Amant and Pikay wait for the atmospheric check to conclude and the doors to open.

INT. NORTH POLE SPACE STATION - CONTINUOUS

They walk into the well-lit station hallway. Each carries an equipment bag.

They make their way to an elevator and step inside.

AMANT

Hit "down" please.

Pikay presses the lowest button on the panel.

AMANT (CONT'D)

Gravimetric engines are almost always at the bottom of a vehicle.

PIKAY

Because of the field flare dynamics?

AMANT

Exactly.

The elevator doors open and they find themselves in a cavernous hold. Below them, in the center of the space is a large, globe-like, structure several stories high. It's made of enormous titanium rings. Contained within the rings is a field of crackling, bluish, energy.

PIKAY

Where is everyone?

AMANT

Most of the time the station isn't occupied. Everything on board can be accessed remotely...except the G-engines. Because...?

PIKAY

Gravimetric interference. "You can't be there, unless you're in the flare."

AMANT

Right!

They climb down to the main control panel very close to the engine. Amant removes a diagnostic tool from his bag and connects it to a port on the panel.

AMANT (CONT'D)

Go ahead, connect yours too.

Pikay does the same. They both study the holographic displays projected by the tools. The images are an extremely complicated jumble of moving lines and curves.

PIKAY

Can I confess something, Amant?
I have a hard time remembering all the patterns.

AMANT

That's common. The trick is to remember that the hologram is just a three dimensional representation of a four dimensional field.

PIKAY

Like a 3D representation of a 4D tesseract, right?

Pikay presses a button on her screen and it displays a tesseract.

AMANT

Exactly. You see this?

Amant presses a couple of buttons on Pikay's holo-display and it goes back to the complex jumble.

AMANT (CONT'D)

It looks like a hundred and forty four different patterns, right?

Amant presses a couple more buttons on the screen which removes a lot of extraneous information.

AMANT (CONT'D)
But they all resolve down to the primary twelve field types.

PIKAY
So...it's like looking at the shadows of an object with twelve different spotlights on it.

AMANT
Great analogy!

Amant holds his display for Pikay to see.

AMANT (CONT'D)
Is this field in normal operating range or not?

PIKAY
(studies display)
It is!

AMANT
You're getting it.

PIKAY
Does that mean we're done?

AMANT
Yep. If something had been off, we would've used the tuner to bring it back into range. So, short trip this time.

They disconnect the diagnostic tools and put them back in their bags.

Just then, a pulse of energy warps its way through the compartment and extinguishes the bluish ball of energy of the gravity engine. Amant and Pikay start floating up from the deck.

PIKAY
What's happening?

Amant reaches down to activate his grav-boots, but they aren't working.

AMANT
We've lost gravity! Grab hold of something!

As they float upwards they grab hold of one of the steel walkways. Out a large window, they can see that they are falling towards Aresine's north pole.

AMANT (CONT'D)
It looks like we've lost both
interior and exterior fields. We
don't have much time. Follow me!

EXT. FURTHER DOWN THE FOREST TRAIL ON THE ELEGANT ELEPHANT

Ji-la, with Maisie in tow beside her, continues running down the hill. Suddenly, the same pulse that hit the north pole station ripples through the air. Maisie's fan-boat drops to the ground. Before it hits, air bags deploy and break the boat's fall. Ji-La stops.

Ji-LA
Maisie! Are you OK?

MAISIE
What happened, Auntie Ji?

Ji-LA
I'm not sure.

She tries the buttons on her grav-belt. Nothing.

Ji-LA (CONT'D)
It looks like our anti-gravity
generators have stopped working.
(confused, to herself)
But that never happens.

Behind them, the wolves emerge from out of the tree line. Sneakily at first, then they break into a full gallop. Ji-La and Maisie see them. Ji-La overturns Maisie's fan-boat and helps Maisie hide underneath. It's not much cover, but it's some.

Ji-LA (CONT'D)
Maisie, this is very important...I
want you to stay right where you
are. Do not come out for any
reason, ok?

Maisie nods with her eyes wide open.

Ji-La reaches over her shoulder to grab a rod out of her backpack. In one quick shake, extensions spring from either end. The two foot rod is now six feet. Trembling, Ji-La faces the wolves holding the rod in front of her.

JI-LA (CONT'D)

Do not come any closer! I'm warning
you!

The wolves are wary seeing that Ji-La and Maisie aren't running. They stop three meters away and think for a moment on how best to attack. The pack leader makes the first move and leaps at Ji-La. In mid-air it is met with a sharp smack on the snout. It whelps loudly and shrinks back to the pack. It growls and the wolves regroup.

This time all three attack from different angles. With absolute speed and precision Ji-La delivers three more smacks to their snouts. They try again and again but Ji-La is a whirlwind of skill and speed. Every time a wolf tries to get close, it feels the sting of her rod. The last one to try cries sharply when hit and turns away, only to get another smack on its backside.

The wolves are confused and angry, but also afraid to try again. Defeated, they skulk back into the woods.

Still breathing hard and shaking from the encounter, Ji-La turns around and kneels next to the fan-boat.

JI-LA (CONT'D)

Maisie!

Maisie, with tears running down her face, crawls out from under the fan-boat and hugs Ji-La tightly. Ji-La heaves a sigh of relief.

JI-LA (CONT'D)

(reassuringly to Maisie)
They're gone. We're OK.

INT. NORTH POLE STATION, ENGINE CHAMBER

Amant pushes off the walkway railing and floats toward the outer wall of the chamber. Pikay follows. They then work their way around the outer wall pulling themselves along using emergency handholds. Near the entryway of the chamber, they arrive at a panel with the word "EMERGENCY" written in red on it. Amant grabs the safety latch and opens the panel. Inside, he grabs onto a red wheel.

AMANT

I'm going to try and manually
restart the engine. Hold on.

Pikay holds onto nearby grab bars. Amant rotates the wheel and the blue energy globe sputters and spits until it relights completely. Once it does, they float back to the floor.

Amant looks at his instrument.

AMANT (CONT'D)
Our orbit is re-stabilizing. Wow!
Whatever happened, that could have
been devastating.

He activates his wrist device.

AMANT (CONT'D)
(to his wrist device)
Authorization code 080868.
Attention all fleet members. This
is Amant of Life Support Systems.
We have experienced a gravity
engine failure after an unknown
pulse of energy. We were able to
restore engine function by
restarting the engine manually.
Anyone experiencing loss of
gravimetric services be advised ---
restart manually.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. READY ROOM AT TRIANNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Ji-La is sitting in front of a warmly lit mirror while RAYA, 25, puts some finishing touches on Ji-La's makeup and hair.

JI-LA

Not too much, Raya. I don't want to look unnatural!

RAYA

Just enough so that you look like a girl, Ji!

JI-LA

Isn't it enough to look like a person?

RAYA

(laughs)

Amant's going to be there tonight, right? There needs to be some polarity. You need to feed the attraction. At least a little bit.

Trianne enters and sits alongside the mirror so she can see Ji-La. Raya, satisfied that Ji-La looks OK, sets down her brush and palette.

RAYA (CONT'D)

I'll be back in a couple of minutes. I'm going to see if Neti needs anything.

JI-LA

Thanks Raya.

Raya leaves the room.

TRIANNE

I can't believe you're getting married next weekend, Ji-La!

JI-LA

I'm just focused on the family dinner tonight.

TRIANNE

Aren't you excited?

JI-LA
I'm a little bit excited...but more nervous.

TRIANNE
About the dinner tonight? The wedding? The marriage...?

JI-LA
All of it!

They laugh.

JI-LA (CONT'D)
Weren't you nervous before your wedding, Trianne?

TRIANNE
Oh, yes! I had huge performance anxiety. I was terrified that I would forget my vows in front of everyone.

JI-LA
Did you?

TRIANNE
Thankfully, no. But I had some notes in my pocket just in case.

They laugh again.

TRIANNE (CONT'D)
Is there anything in particular you are worried about?

JI-LA
(hesitantly)
The wedding night.

TRIANNE
(teasing)
Is your inner nun afraid of becoming a "fallen woman"?

JI-LA
That's a perfect way to put it!
(beat)
I mean -- everyone at the ceremony will be looking at us.

TRIANNE
And will know that you are going to be spending the night together?

JI-LA

Yes. My mom and dad especially.

TRIANNE

(laughs)

Ji! You don't have to be embarrassed. They're married and have kids! They know what happens on a wedding night. And have you ever known a parent that wasn't overjoyed at the prospect of grandkids?

JI-LA

Kids! Are you trying to comfort me or torment me?

They laugh.

TRIANNE

Seriously, though. You can take everything at your own speed. Amant loves you.

JI-LA

I know. Every time my nerves get wound up, I just remember how lucky I am.

EXT. ON THE SHORE OF AN ARESINE SEA - DAY

Amant and Jon, wearing spacesuits, stand at the base of a hundred meter tall atmosphere generator. There are many more stretched out along the coastline. Clouds of vapor rise up into the sky from each.

JON

That was quick thinking on the manual restart, Amant. A lot of people could've lost their lives.

AMANT

Yeah, but we lost the south pole station.

JON

Unoccupied, thankfully.

AMANT

I'm just glad it was an easy fix. Have you ever seen anything like that pulse?

JON

Never. I've got a feeling that once we figure out what it was, we may have to rewrite the laws of physics.

Amant is busy reading his monitoring tablet which is connected to a panel on the tower. He adjusts some of the settings on the screen, and, satisfied that the engine is tuned properly, disconnects and shuts the panel. Jon uses a special compartment sealing tool to secure it.

AMANT

How much longer do you think it will take until the air is breathable?

JON

Once we get all these atmosphere generators restarted? Six months, maybe a year? Trianne would probably know better than me, though.

AMANT

It's hard to imagine. Being able to stand on a world and breathe in the air. It'll be like this is really our home.

JON

And our children will grow up to be "Aresinians"!

AMANT

I hope!

JON

(chuckles)

You hope that Aresine works out? Or that you have children?

AMANT

Both.

At this point they get in their gravimetric transport cart.

SPEEDING ALONG THE COASTLINE

Just barely above the sand, the cart zips down the shoreline towards the next generator.

JON

Have you and Ji discussed the possibility of kids?

AMANT

Yeah. She loves kids and says she is willing, but there's definitely some hesitation.

JON

That could be tricky.

AMANT

I know. And I would never try and pressure her. I just couldn't do that.

(beat)

We're you and Trianne on the same page about kids?

JON

We were kind of like you guys -- except she was the enthusiastic one and I was the hesitant one.

AMANT

How did she end up convincing you?

JON

She said: "Jon, I want a baby and I'm not waiting."

They both laugh.

AMANT

So you caved?

JON

I did. But, you know, she's the one that had to do the hard part, so...

They laugh again.

AT THE NEXT ATMOSPHERE GENERATOR

They arrive at the next identical generator. Jon removes the panel so that Amant can connect his diagnostic tool.

JON

Once I saw little Maisie -- and I say this with absolute sincerity -- I immediately fell in love with her! I've been thankful for every moment with her since.

AMANT

So, you don't think I should be worried?

JON

Here's the bottom line. If she absolutely refused to have kids, would you still marry her?

AMANT

(thinks for a moment)
Yeah, I would.

JON

So what's to worry about?

EXT. RESTAURANT PATIO - NIGHT

On an outdoor patio, amidst strings of soft lights hung in the trees, Ji-La, her mom NU-LA, 52, dad Okio, and sister Neti sit at two tables pushed together. The restaurant is busy but the patio area is relatively secluded.

Amant, his mom AYA, 54, AUNT FERMI, 48, and UNCLE RICO, 50, appear at the patio entry. Ji-La jumps to her feet to welcome them. Amant gives her a light, affectionate, kiss on the cheek.

Ji-LA

(to Amant's family)
Please, join us everyone.

She leads Amant's family to their tables and everyone sits. Amant and Ji-La sit next to each other at one end.

OKIO

Greetings everyone! I'm Okio, Ji-La's father.

NU-LA

And I'm Nu-La, Ji-La's mom. This is Neti, our youngest daughter.

They all pranaam politely.

AYA
I'm, Aya, Amant's mother.

Aya pranaams.

UNCLE RICO
I'm Uncle Rico!

Uncle Rico waves.

AUNT FERMI
And I'm Aunt Fermi.

Aunt Fermi pranaams.

NU-LA
Fermi? Did you used to design
jewelry at a little shop on the
Cuyamaca?

AUNT FERMI
For five years!

Nu-La pulls out a necklace with a coyote carved out of
driftwood. At this point the conversation wanders off into
exploring the unexpected connection.

Ji-La leans to the side and whispers to Amant.

JI-LA
I told Raya, no makeup, but she
insisted.

AMANT
What can I say, you look
irresistible. I've hardly blinked
since you greeted us.

JI-LA
(playfully)
So, you're taking Raya's side? So
shallow!

AMANT
(smiles)
Let me clarify...you *always* look
irresistible.

JI-LA
A very diplomatic answer!

AMANT
Do you want to know how I really
feel about you?

JI-LA

Of course.

AMANT

Sometimes, when I'm very calm and centered, I feel that you and I are both made out of the same pure consciousness. That we are both beings of light. At these times, when I think of you, my heart is completely open and my love for you is completely selfless. I feel far above the concepts of male and female.

His eyes get a little glassy for a moment as if he is glimpsing a higher realm.

AMANT (CONT'D)

But when I am grounded -- when I'm fully aware of my body -- I feel drawn to your femininity like steel is drawn to a powerful magnet. In this state, I am enchanted by everything about you. The superficial things -- the way you look, the way you dress, the way you talk and act -- all the things that accentuate your feminine nature -- I find them charming and exciting and utterly attractive!

They are holding hands beneath the table. Without letting go, Amant brings up her hand to his mouth and kisses it lovingly. Ji-La looks into his eyes and then leans on his shoulder serenely.

A HALF HOUR LATER

The group is happily eating and talking. Robot server drones buzz about unobtrusively, placing and removing dishes whenever they are needed.

AUNT FERMI

So, Ji-La, we heard about your encounter with wolves!

JI-LA

Oh my gosh! It was terrifying. They attacked right during the pulse.

UNCLE RICO

We heard you fought off a whole pack by yourself.

Ji-LA

(laughs)

The tale has grown! Now its a whole pack! In truth, uncle Rico, it was only three.

UNCLE RICO

I'm still impressed! Where did you learn to fight off wolves?

Ji-LA

Believe it or not, my dad used to practice stick fighting with me when I was young.

She looks at her dad and pranaams. Okio smiles back.

Ji-LA (CONT'D)

When they attacked, all I knew was that I had to protect Maisie. Instinct completely took over and all of that practice came back to me.

AUNT FERMI

Aren't you afraid to go running out in their territory?

Ji-LA

Oh no, not at all! I run there all the time and often see the wolves. They've only ever tried to attack once before, but, that time, my grav-belt was working so...

Ji-La wiggles her fingers like she's floating away.

AYA

Well, we're all incredibly thankful you had your staff with you!

Ji-LA

Me too! Maisie was upset but she seemed to be back to normal by the time we got to the house. I told Trianne to keep an eye on her in case she shows any signs of trauma, but, it was over so fast...we think she'll be ok.

OKIO

Amant, we heard about you and Pikay
up at the north pole station.

AMANT

Yes! That was quite an adventure!

OKIO

It seems like a complete miracle
that nobody was seriously hurt!

AMANT

I agree. When you consider how much
we rely on our grav-tech....

NU-LA

I think we all owe you a big "thank
you" for figuring out the manual
restart fix!

Aya raises her glass.

AYA

(motions to Amant)
To quick thinking,
(motions to Ji-La)
and quick swinging!

The whole group laughs and enthusiastically joins in the
toast.

WHOLE GROUP

To quick thinking and quick
swinging!

AN HOUR LATER

Ji-La, Amant, and Neti are the only ones left at the table.
The restaurant has mostly cleared out as well except for a
few couples slow dancing together inside.

NETI

So that was it? That was the whole
vision?

JI-LA

Yes. The way she kept appearing and
disappearing...it felt like she was
playing a game with me.

AMANT

And other historians have seen the
same thing?

JI-LA
Yes, we're still trying to
understand what it means.

NETI
It seems kind of obvious.

Confused, Amant and Ji-La look at Neti.

NETI (CONT'D)
You're assuming there is only one
Akasha.

Ji-La looks at her, still puzzled.

NETI (CONT'D)
It sounds like she's trying to show
you that there are many Akashas.
It's something we see in
programming all the time. Different
instances of the same routine.

JI-LA
You're comparing Akasha to a
computer program?

NETI
I'm just saying, maybe "our" Akasha
isn't the only one.

AMANT
So, you're thinking there is an
Earth Akasha, an Aresine Akasha,
and a Zaiur Akasha?

NETI
Maybe every inhabited planet has
its own.

JI-LA
And the reason Akasha won't show us
Zaiur's past is because we are
asking the wrong Akasha!

AMANT
Ji, you need to go to Zaiur!

Ji-La gets up and walks over to Neti and hugs her.

JI-LA
I have a genius for a sister!

INT. JI-LA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ji-La sits in front of her desktop screen conversing with Shafer.

SHAFER

So, you believe every world might have it's own Akasha?

Ji-LA

It was my sister's idea, but, yes, I think it's possible.

SHAFER

But, we've travelled across the galaxy for a thousand years and we've been able to see Earth's history the whole time.

Ji-LA

Even though we were far from Earth, we were still Earthlings...up until we arrived at Aresine.

SHAFER

Hmmm, why would Aresine Akasha look the same as Earth Akasha, though?

Ji-LA

Instructor Sanford believed Akasha took on the appearance of a human being strictly for our sake.

SHAFER

I have to admit, it would explain why we can no longer see Earth's history. It would explain the visions.

Ji-LA

In order to access Zaiur's records, we need to go to Zaiur.

SHAFER

Zaiur is off limits since the pulse, but I'll call Ritter. If it means we might be able to find out more about what happened, I'm sure the executive council will approve. This could be the breakthrough we've been looking for.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. JI-LA'S HOUSE - EARLY NEXT MORNING

Ji-La waits for her toast to pop up. Her wrist communicator beeps. She answers.

JI-LA

Good morning, Instructor Shafer, is everything still on track?

SHAFER

Good morning, Ji-La. Yes, the entire archaeology team will be joining us, too. One of our historians can't make it, though. I know it's last minute, but, is there anyone you know that you would want to bring?

JI-LA

I'll check with my former students.

Ji-La terminates the call then types out a quick message.

JI-LA (CONT'D)

(texts)

History Society trip to Zaiur. Room for one more. Leaving in twenty minutes.

Her toast pops up and she barely starts to butter it when she receives a reply.

BENERIKA

(via text)

Would love to go! I can meet you at the shuttle platform.

INT. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS - THE NEXT DAY

Ritter, Broka, TOMBAYA (a woman in her late 60's), Jereve, and OLBIOS (a man also in his late 60's) sit around a long curved desk. The room is formal and somewhat cold. In front of them Shafer, Ji-La, and Chaski stand at a set of three lecterns facing the council. There is one council staffer sitting at the far end of the council desk. The large audience seating area in the back of the room is empty.

RITTER

So this was the first attempt to
contact Akasha while on Zaiur?

EXT. ZAIUR, GATE PLAZA - LATER THAT DAY

The historical society shuttle, larger than a regular shuttle, and two others enter the grand chamber and touch down at the Gate plaza. There is a barrier set up around the Gate to prevent any contact with it.

The shells of the shuttles open up. In the first, Shafer, nine other members of the historical society, Ji-La, and Benerika seated around a memory dais. The ship's invisible energy shield surrounds both it, and its immediate vicinity.

Shafer and Ji-La hold their bell/chalices. They begin the familiar ritual.

SHAFER AND JI-LA

Mother/Father/Spirit...

BACK TO SCENE

The council listens closely to every word.

SHAFER

Yes. And our first confirmation
that there is, indeed, a separate
Akasha for Zaiur as historian Ji-
La's sister deduced.

EXT. IN THE RUSH [AKASHIC REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

Shafer and the group in their astral forms stand in front of Zaiurnian Akasha.

END AKASHIC REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE

BACK TO SCENE

The discussion continues.

JEREVE

This is an incredible step forward!
What happened after you made
contact?

SHAHER

We split up into three groups. One for each of the three main questions we sought to address.

TOMBAYA

And what were those questions?

SHAHER

Team one was assigned the task of finding out general knowledge about the Zaiurnians. What kind of beings they were, etc. Team two was assigned the task of finding out more about the disastrous flight from Zaiur to Aresine. Team three was assigned the task of determining what the "Gate" is/was.

RITTER

Let's start with team one then. Tell us what you discovered.

CHASKI

Greetings, councilmembers. I'm Chaski.

Her name tag glows briefly.

CHASKI (CONT'D)

I led team one.

EXT. A CAVERN WITH A SETTLEMENT ON ZAIUR [AKASHIC REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

Chaski, Trianne, and ten other team members appear in their astral forms outside a small Zaiurnian village made up of primitive adobe buildings and meandering pathways.

CHASKI (V.O.)

We started looking through the records about a year before the ship from Zaiur was destroyed on its way to Aresine. Each of the team members wandered through a settlement observing what we could.

Chaski and Trianne wander together while the rest of the group splits off into different chambers. There are Zaiurnians here and there. They look like people, but their bodies are made out of vines and roots that glow faintly.

They don't wear clothes, but they do wear infinite varieties of colored cloth and ornaments made out of crystal, gems, and metal.

CHASKI (V.O.)

First off, it was hard not to notice their outward similarity to humans despite a completely different physiology. We think this is an evolutionary topic that needs much more investigation.

Some are standing, some sitting, some walking through the streets like slow motion dancers making very deliberate and graceful movements. Some are alone, some in pairs, and some in groups. Some groups move in unison, some don't.

There are the sounds of strange musical instruments in the air. Some sing complex melodies. Their voices are a combination of high-noted trills overlaid on top of deep bass vibratos.

CHASKI (V.O.)

Although they could vocalize, we found no evidence of any type of written communication.

TOMBAYA (V.O.)

Any idea what they were saying?

CHASKI (V.O.)

Not yet. The translator is still trying to identify meaningful patterns.

INT. ZAIURNIAN HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Chaski and Trianne wander into what looks like a home. A figure sits cross-legged on the dirt floor in front of a candle. The Zaiurnian waves its arms slowly, playing serenely with the gentle stream of smoke.

Benerika points to one of the corners of the room where another Zaiurnian stands motionless with its feet buried in a soft section of the dirt floor.

CHASKI (V.O.)

We also saw no evidence of anything related to eating. No food, no refrigeration, no kitchens. They appeared to absorb their nutrients directly from the soil.

OLBIOS (V.O.)
Like plants. Fascinating.

EXT. ZAIURNIAN BIRTH PLANTER

Group One comes back together and makes its way to a central area. They discover what looks like a large raised planter formed of elegantly carved stone walls. Around the perimeter three Zaiurnians move in a synchronized, ritualistic, fashion. Another sits on a throne-like seat above the planter with all three of its eyes closed.

Trianne walks slowly around it closely observing its features. She is taken aback when the Zaiurnian opens its third eye and looks right at her. Its eye even follows her as she moves.

BACK TO SCENE [END AKASHIC REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

The Council looks perplexed.

RITTER
How can that be? The Akashic
records are fixed!

SHAFFER
Yes. They are just records of the
past, not the past itself.

CHASKI
I can't explain it. It's as if
twelve thousand years ago, the
Zaiurnian anticipated our presence.
It had to be coincidence.

RITTER
What did you do?

BACK TO ZAIURNIAN BIRTH PLANTER [RESUME AKASHIC REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

Chaski and Trianne bow with folded hands to the Zaiurnian.

CHASKI (V.O.)
(laughs)
We bowed to the figure...out of
habit, I suppose. After that, it
closed its eye again and we
continued our observations.

The group floats above the planter to see what's inside more clearly. Three baby Zaiurnians, each connected to a stalk coming out of the ground, appear to be sleeping.

CHASKI (V.O.)

We did not observe any sexual differences in the Zaiurnians. There were no males or females -- only individuals. We think they reproduced, if it's not too crass an analogy, like pumpkins on a vine.

BACK TO SCENE [END AKASHIC REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

The council members are paying rapt attention.

BROKA

Who led the team that followed the spaceship back to its launch point?

SHAFER

That was me, councilmember.

EXT. DEEP IN SPACE AROUND ARESINE [AKASHIC REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

Shafer and his team, in their astral forms, float deep in space. Off in the distance, Aresine looms. The ship that they were forbidden to follow by Zaiurnian Akasha before, hurtles toward them out of the darkness, backwards. It passes them by and continues receding towards Zaiur. This time they are able to follow.

SHAFER (V.O.)

Fortunately, we knew the exact coordinates where we could pick up the ship from our last session with Aresinian Akasha. This time we were able to follow it, as we expected, back to Zaiur.

The ship, still moving in reverse, falls through the atmosphere of Zaiur and finally comes to rest inside a deep underground launch silo. Its engines cut off after it is settled.

BACK TO SCENE [END AKASHIC REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

Shafer continues addressing the Executive Council.

SHAFER

Team two went backwards in the records from the launch point expecting that it would've taken them decades to build the ship. But in turns out, they only began building the ship three months before it launched.

BROKA

Three months! They must have had very advanced technology.

SHAFER

Councilmember, what we discovered shocked us.

INT. MIND-FORGE CAVERN [AKASHIC REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

In a warehouse-size cavern a group of twelve Zaiurnians sit cross legged on the floor in a large circle. Thirty or forty others stand around the periphery supporting their efforts by moving rocky soil to the center of the circle and removing the products of the mind forge after each transformation.

SHAFER (V.O.)

We're calling what we witnessed the "Mind Forge." Again and again we saw them focus on raw matter, and cause it to reform into an endless variety of shapes and materials. We watched them transform matter -- down to the atomic level -- using only their minds.

The seated Zaiurnians wait for the assistants to bring carts of raw material into the circle. Once they do and move back out, the seated ones extend their arms and touch finger tips. A couple of moments later, they bring their hands to their laps and close their eyes.

A large clear dome of energy encloses the pile of rock. The matter inside the dome rises off the ground and begins vibrating. Chunks begin spinning and shaking, splitting apart and melting together, and changing shape in a violent process of restructuring. Chaotic bursts of light and sound escape the shield, but the matter and energy remain contained within.

Once the process is complete, the dome disappears and the finished part lies ready on the ground. Two assistants lift in onto a wheeled cart and roll it into an adjoining cavern.

ASSEMBLY CAVERN

The assembly cavern is a rocket silo much larger than the mind-forge cavern. The ship is no more than a framework at this point but it is still eight stories tall. Fifteen (or so) Zaiurnians work on assembling various sections of the ship while another receives the new part from the assistants.

SHAHER (V.O.)

Some of the parts were simple -- like bolts or metal hull pieces. Others were complex, like electric motors or circuit boards. As soon as a part was manifested, the support crew took it to the launch chamber and used it to assemble the ship. This went on uninterrupted for three months.

BACK TO SCENE [END AKASHIC REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

The councilmembers are incredulous.

BROKA

They just mentally manifested an entire fusion drive spacecraft out of rocks and dirt?

SHAHER

Yes. And there were no plans, only minimal communications between team members, and the parts were created in perfect order for ease of assembly.

BROKA

What about tools? Or safety gear? What about the fuel for the fusion engine?

SHAHER

Everything. All manifested out of basic rocks and dirt.

The room is silent.

JEREVE

Were you able to determine why they built this craft in such an apparent hurry?

SHAHER

Our group discussed this at length. Based on the timing and the fact that the Zaiurnians assembling the craft were the same ones who tried to fly it to Aresine, we think they were a splinter group trying to flee Zaiur.

JEREVE

Flee? What were they fleeing?

SHAHER

The cataclysm that wiped them all out.

There is another hushed silence.

TOMBAYA

What can you tell us about this "cataclysm"?

SHAHER

We believe it was an event similar to the pulse. Team three can speak more to this.

RITTER

Ji-La, you were the leader of team three, correct?

Ji-La looks briefly at Shafer who nods for her to go ahead.

JI-LA

Yes, councilmember Ritter.

EXT. THE GATE CAVERN [AKASHIC RECORDS REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

Ji-La and her team (including Benerika), in their astral forms, float above the Gate cavern. They witness similar odd behaviors with the Zaiurnians dance-walking through the streets, touching heads together, and sitting meditatively on the ground.

JI-LA (V.O.)

We made our way through the "Gate" cavern to the main plaza.

At the main plaza, a crew of a hundred or more Zaiurnians work together to assemble the Gate. A group of six approach a large block of stone carrying metal rods. They touch the stone with their rods and the stones begin vibrating incredibly fast.

After a few moments, the block spontaneously rises into the air. The crew then floats it into place.

After the block is put in place, another group of Zaiurnians place their hands on it, close their eyes, and bow their heads.

JI-LA (V.O.)

We watched them put the gate together block by block over the course of three months. Never more than one block per day. After each block was installed, they appeared to pray over it for around twenty four Zaiurnian hours.

BACK TO SCENE

OLBIOS

You say "twenty four hours"...any idea how they were able to tell time underground?

JI-LA

We discovered that their bioluminescent habitat brightens and dims in sync with the planet's surface. It creates a sort of biological clock.

RITTER

So the gate and the spaceship...they were constructed over the same three month period?

JI-LA

Roughly, yes. The spaceship crew finished and launched several days ahead of the Gate crew.

JEREVE

What happened when they finished the Gate?

JI-LA

(wipes away a tear)

Once the Gate was completed, a more elderly Zaiurnian -- whom we're calling the "Shaman" because of its unusual garb -- approached the Gate and touched it with what looked like a copper staff.

EXT. GATE PLAZA [RESUME AKASHIC RECORDS REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

The Shaman, unlike the other Zaiurnians, wears what we would consider clothing. Its body is almost completely covered in a robe made out of many strips of colored cloth.

The Shaman approaches the gate and touches the stone arch with its staff. This activates the Gate's energy field. It then reaches out with its little "finger" and barely makes contact with the field. The field ripples like water at the touch and a mild pulse spreads outward from the Gate into the chamber and into the tunnel system.

JI-LA (V.O.)

At that point thousands of
Zaiurnians began flooding into the
plaza.

Zaiurnians enter the cavern from all entrances and sit in orderly rows on the ground in front of the Gate. Some of them sit in silence. Others wave their left hands in the air above their heads in a distinctive series of graceful gestures.

JI-LA (V.O.)

And then...

The team floats above the Zaiurnian crowd as the Shaman stands and looks out across the multitude. It makes the same overhead hand gestures as a large segment of the crowd makes.

Then it approaches the Gate's energy field and walks through it. At that point a large pulse rocks the whole cavern and row by row, the crowd is dissolved into micro-tornadic swirls of energy that are immediately sucked into the Gate.

BACK TO SCENE [END AKASHIC REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

Ji-La has to fight to keep her composure at this point. She wipes away tears.

JEREVE

Are you sure you're ok to continue?

JI-LA

I think so.

JEREVE

When you're ready.

CAVERNS THROUGHOUT THE TUNNEL SYSTEM [RESUME AKASHIC
REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

All over the tunnel system, Zaiurnians sit down and begin waving their left hands in the air exactly like the ones in the Gate plaza.

JI-LA (V.O.)
From what we can tell, the first
small pulse served as an alert.

TOMBAYA (V.O.)
So, they knew what was coming?

JI-LA (V.O.)
They didn't just know it was
coming, they were welcoming it.

All over Zaiur, groups of Zaiurnians are caught by the pulse, resolve into energy swirls, and disappear just like the larger crowd on the Gate plaza.

BACK TO SCENE [END AKASHIC REMEMBRANCE SEQUENCE]

The council staffer presents Ji-La with a handkerchief. She accepts it graciously and uses it to blot her eyes.

JI-LA
(to the staffer)
Thank you.

TOMBAYA
(horrified)
The whole planet -- all the
Zaiurnians -- gone, just like that?

JEREVE
It sounds like they all just gave
up on life. The entire species!

SHAFFER
All except the crew of the
spaceship that fled to Aresine.

JI-LA
Yes, but spectacular as their
efforts to flee were, the pulse
caught them before they could
escape.

The weight of the testimony sinks in for a moment.

JEREVE

I just had a thought...what if the Gate is still active?

BROKA

Hmmm? That could explain the pulse we experienced. When the Zaiurnian walked through, it wiped out all the Zaiurnians. When our drone penetrated the field, it knocked out our gravity systems.

OLBIOS

We can only assume that if a human were to walk through...

The room is silent for a moment.

RITTER

We need to evacuate all fleet members from Zaiur -- immediately!

BROKA

And set up a defense perimeter around the whole planet!

EXT. ZAIUR ORBIT - THE NEXT DAY

Chaski pilots a historical society shuttle to Zaiur. On board are Jereve, Broka, Ritter, Ji-La and Shafer.

As it nears the atmosphere, an orb shaped drone, the size of the shuttle, approaches and blocks its path. On the front of the drone is a blinking red light. The arms on either side of it are actually moveable railguns pointed menacingly at the shuttle.

INSIDE THE SHUTTLE

The defense drone's electronic voice announces itself in a polite yet firm voice over the shuttle's speaker system.

DEFENSE DRONE

Due to a security emergency, the planet Zaiur is off limits to all personnel. Please be aware, I am authorized to prevent any such landing attempts with force, if necessary.

BROKA

This is chief engineer Broka.
Security protocol override.

DEFENSE DRONE

Chief Engineer Broka. Override
successful. Please proceed.

The defense drone's red warning light turns green. It moves out of the shuttle's way.

RITTER

I'm still not sure I'm comfortable
with going back. When I think about
how close we were to it and what
could've happened!

JEREVE

I'm not comfortable either. But, if
there's a way to deactivate the
Gate, Zaiur's Akashic Records are
our best hope of finding it.

EXT. SURFACE OF ZAIUR - MINUTES LATER

Amidst the raging storms on the surface of Zaiur, the shuttle lands and lowers its side panels. Its shields expand to form a bubble over the shuttle and its immediate surroundings.

The crew take their places around the shuttle's memory dais. Shafer and Ji-La begin the ritual.

SHAHER AND JI-LA

Mother/Father/Spirit...

EXT. GATE PLAZA [BEGIN AKASHIC RECORDS SEQUENCE]

They enter the rush until, suddenly, in their astral forms, they are at the plaza.

The Zaiurnian Shaman, sits beside the Gate in a stone chair holding its copper staff. Zaiurnian Akasha, in her two meter human form stands beside it. The Gate's energy field shimmers before them.

Ji-LA

(confused)

These are not the coordinates we
input.

Zaiurnian Akasha swings her sword above her own head and her flames and sword vanish.

Immediately, she begins getting smaller and smaller until, finally, she assumes toddler form and climbs up on the Shaman's lap.

Toddler Akasha and the Shaman look directly at the group.

CHASKI

They are aware of our presence. I
can feel it.

JI-LA

I don't think we are in the Records
anymore.

The Shaman waves his hand above his head and its form morphs into that of a human man/woman (it's unstable) in his/her seventies.

SHAMAN

Greetings members of the Earth
Fleet. We sense great confusion
and fear. We seek only to be of
help to you.

JEREVE

Shaman of the planet we call Zaiur,
we are looking for a way to
deactivate the device that killed
your people.

SHAMAN

We are alive.

Jereve and the others look incredulously at the Shaman who is playfully engaged with toddler Akasha.

JEREVE

We saw...in the records...the
suicide of your species.

The Shaman laughs and then speaks. Its words are like thunder.

SHAMAN

WE. ARE. ALIVE.

The plaza and the entire team are engulfed in blinding white light. As they stand shrinking from the brilliance, the shapes of thousands of Zaiurnians move in and out of existence all around them like a whirlwind of joyous ghosts.

CHORUS OF ZAIURNIAN VOICES

We are alive! We are alive! We are
alive!

Suddenly, the light recedes and they are back with the Shaman and toddler Akasha.

In awe, the group pranaams respectfully to the two. Jereve steps forward.

JEREVE

(to the Shaman)

We are glad to hear this. But,
please know that it is not our path
to live at this level of existence.
We cherish our lives as they are.
Will you reveal to us how to
deactivate the Gate?

The Shaman, stands holding toddler Akasha in his/her arms. It laughs again and motions for them to approach. Jereve looks at the others and nods for them to remain calm. The Shaman stops in front of each group member allowing toddler Akasha to reach out and touch them on the forehead with its forefinger. One by one, they enter the rush. The last is Jereve.

The Shaman holds out its copper staff so that Jereve can take it from him. She bows and toddler Akasha touches her forehead. She enters the rush.

BACK TO SCENE [END AKASHIC RECORDS SEQUENCE]

The group is seated back at the shuttle's memory dais. Still in an inward, dazed state, they whisper the same strange words over and over in unison.

THE SHUTTLE GROUP

Sha'aam, Shamanastis, Elang,
Omorote.

Amidst their stupor, they repeat the alien mantram until they are back to full consciousness. They remove their visors and sit in silence for a moment.

Jereve is still in a meditative state. Inexplicably, the copper staff lies on the dais before them.

JI-LA

Instructor, I am at a complete loss
as to what just happened.

SHAFFER

So am I, Ji-La. So am I.

EXT. GATE PLAZA - LATER THAT DAY

The shuttle is parked at the edge of the Gate. The crew, Jereve, Broka, Ritter, Chaski, Ji-La and Shafer, are all standing outside in their spacesuits. Jereve holds the copper staff beside her.

RITTER

(to Jereve)

You're positive we're doing the right thing?

JEREVE

The Friend has assured me. The Zaiurnians wish us no harm. The mantram they have given us is the mantram of dissolution for the Gate.

BROKA

Be very, very careful everyone.

Jereve approaches the stone perimeter of the arch.

JEREVE

Ready!

She touches it with the copper staff just as the Shaman had done. The energy field inside the gate begins warbling. The group begins repeating the chant.

THE SHUTTLE GROUP

Sha'aam, Shamanastis, Elang,
Omorote.

The whole cavern begins to shake violently like a massive earthquake.

THE SHUTTLE GROUP (CONT'D)

Sha'aam, Shamanastis, Elang,
Omorote.

The energy field inside the gate begins warbling faster and faster until it dissolves into nothingness.

THE SHUTTLE GROUP (CONT'D)

Sha'aam, Shamanastis, Elang,
Omorote.

The stones of the gate itself begin cracking under the pressure of the shaking.

CHASKI

Everyone! Get back!

The group moves back, away from the gate and towards the shuttles, just as the whole structure collapses. The huge blocks crash down upon each other into a gigantic pile of rubble and dust.

The group, safe but rattled, eyes the wreckage in awe and disbelief.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. ELEGANT ELEPHANT WEDDING GARDEN - MORNING

A hundred or so guests mill about a beautifully landscaped garden area chatting happily. There is a large covered patio at the entrance to the garden where a harpist plays gentle melodies that float through the cool, crisp, morning air.

On the lawn, white chairs are set up on either side of a brick pathway facing a central raised platform. There is another small seating section behind the platform. In the center is an archway bedecked in flowers.

Jon, Trianne, Maisie, and Kaleen are standing around a small table. Jon is holding Maisie and Kaleen is playing with her. Their wrist devices buzz.

JON

What is it?

TRIANNE

The naming committee has come up with names for our new moons. They want to know if everyone approves.

JON

What are they?

TRIANNE

How cute! They're anagrams of "moon". The moon that rises first they want to call "Mono". And the moon that rises second, "Nomo". Mono means one. I get that. But why "Nomo"?

KALEEN

Because there are "No mo'" moons after it!

TRIANNE

Oh, that's clever! How did you know that, Kaleen? Was that your idea?

KALEEN

(smiles)

It came to me in a dream. I didn't know the committee had picked it, though.

TRIANNE
 (pushing the approve
 button)
 I love it! What do you think
 Maisie?

MAISIE
 I think Mono is a girl moon and
 Nomo is a boy moon.

KALEEN
 Why do you say that?

MAISIE
 Because -- ladies first!

Jon, Trianne and Kaleen laugh.

Neti, dressed as a bridesmaid, approaches.

NETI
 Are you ready Maisie? It's time
 for us to get to our places.

Maisie takes her hand and waves goodbye to Jon, Trianne, and Kaleen.

Just then, the High Priestess wearing yellow robes enters the garden and begins slowly walking towards the altar. In one hand she carries a large knife in a gilded sheath, in the other, three ribbons -- one black, one red, and one blue.

She is followed by Ji-La and Amant walking side by side -- he to the right, she to the left.

Amant wears a sleek black and silver jodhpuri suit. Ji-La wears a copper, tunic-top over form-fitting white pants. In her hair, she wears an elegant gold and diamond clip that sparkles in the morning light.

Behind them, two at a time, walk the five bridesmaids to the left (wearing copper colored outfits) and five groomsmen to the right (wearing silver).

They in turn are followed by ten, orange-robed, acolytes also walking two at a time. The first eight keep a steady and simple beat on their drums.

Every few feet, the procession stops and the last two acolytes, including Verék, raise left handed conch shells to their lips. They blow them like horns announcing the beginning of the ceremony.

The wedding guests stand and the hum of their conversations gives way to respectful silence as the wedding party members make their way to the platform and take their places.

Under the archway, the HIGH PRIESTESS turns to face Amant, Ji-La and the audience. She holds her arms up above her head. On her right wrist is a black bracelet, on her left a white one.

HIGH PRIESTESS
(to the crowd)
Please, everyone, let us begin.

At this point, the women, girls, and a couple of men make their way to the High Priestess's right. The men, boys, and a few women, to her left. A few others move to the back of the platform and sit with the acolytes. After a quick kiss with Trianne, Jon heads to the High Priestess's left, Trianne and Kaleen to her right.

HIGH PRIESTESS (CONT'D)
Today is a joyous day! Today we celebrate the wedding of Amant and Ji-La. Today we bear witness to the eternal mystery of love. For, through love, life begets life, and generation begets generation. All that the play humanity may go on.
(she bows her head for a moment then looks up)
Please be seated everyone.

Once the crowd is seated...

HIGH PRIESTESS (CONT'D)
Let us first invoke the five elements to bless this union. Please bring forth the symbols of Earth -- sugar and sand.

The fourth bridesmaid and groomsman approach the couple. He hands Ji-La a glass bowl full of brown sugar. She hands Amant a matching bowl full of pure white sand.

HIGH PRIESTESS (CONT'D)
Please repeat after me: we invoke the spirit of Earth that, through all things, we may remember that marriage is a mixture, a blend, a fusion of our bodies, hearts and lives.

JI-LA AND AMANT
(together)
We invoke the spirit of Aresine...

The crowd laughs gently and the High Priestess smiles at the substitution.

JI-LA AND AMANT (CONT'D)
(together)
...that, through all things, we may
remember that marriage is a
mixture, a blend, a fusion of our
bodies, hearts and lives.

Ji-La pours her sugar into the pitcher and Amant pours in his sand. As they do, the High Priestess stirs the mix with a large gold spoon. The combination becomes a beautiful swirl of brown sugar and white sand.

HIGH PRIESTESS
Next: We invoke the essence of
water to separate the sweetness of
wisdom from the sands of
selfishness that we may always
speak and act with kindness to each
other, always.

JI-LA AND AMANT
(together)
We invoke the essence of water to
separate the sweetness of wisdom
from the sands of selfishness that
we may always speak and act with
kindness to each other, always.

As they say this, the third bridesmaid and groomsman each pour containers of water into the mixture of sugar and sand.

Amant lets the mixture settle for just a moment then takes a tiny bit of water in the spoon that the High Priestess gives him. He lovingly holds it up to Ji-La's lips that she may drink. She then does the same for him.

HIGH PRIESTESS
(smiles)
Beautiful! Now: We invoke air, the
element that binds all of us
together. From this day forward we
breathe as one.

They touch their foreheads together with their noses side by side, their eyes locked, and their lips nearly touching. The second bridesmaid and groomsman gently fan them with large green palm fronds.

JI-LA AND AMANT

We invoke air, the element that
binds all of us together. From this
day forward we breathe as one.

They close their eyes and breathe silently together. The crowd is completely still and quiet.

After a good long moment, they separate heads and smile with deep affection for each other. Ji-La wipes away a tear.

HIGH PRIESTESS

Ahh! Lovely! That brings us to our
fourth element, Fire.

Two acolytes come forward carrying a ceremonial fire pit on poles. On top of the burner is a large integrated pan blackened by the flames. They set the fire pit down and take the poles away while a third acolyte, Verek, pours oil into the pan which immediately begins to gently sizzle.

The first bridesmaid and groomsman give Amant and Ji-La green velvet bags from which they draw out several handfuls of corn kernels. Carefully, they sprinkle them into the pan. Verek then sets the top cover in place.

HIGH PRIESTESS (CONT'D)

We invoke fire, the energy of
digestion, circulation, and thought
that we may be invigorated with the
spirit of service to each other and
to the whole community.

JI-LA AND AMANT

We invoke fire, the energy of
digestion, circulation, and
thought, that we may be invigorated
with the spirit of service to each
other and to the whole community.

HIGH PRIESTESS

Let the children come forward, if
they wish.

All the children under ten in the audience, eagerly get up and form a line at the front of the platform. Almost on cue, the corn inside the pot begins popping.

JI-LA

(whispers to Amant)
This is my favorite part!

Verek transfers the popped corn into a large serving bowl and holds it between the couple. Another acolyte brings forth a large basket with small wrapped gifts in it.

One by one the children come up to the front and hold their hands out. Ji-La gives each some popcorn and Amant gives them a small wrapped gift. The children then rush back to their seats munching excitedly.

HIGH PRIESTESS

Lastly, we invoke the essence of space, our home for so many centuries. As it has blessed the Fleet with a safe journey, so may it bless us with a safe journey through life together.

The best man and the maid of honor (Neti), come forward and place a trail of rose petals on the ground in the shape of an infinity symbol with Ji-La and Amant at the intersection. Ji-La turns to her left and walks slowly around the trail of petals carefully positioning each footstep to avoid stepping on them. Amant follows right behind her.

Ji-LA AND AMANT

We invoke the essence of space, our home for so many centuries. As it has blessed the Fleet with a safe journey, so may it bless us with a safe journey through life together.

As they finish the invocation, and have walked both loops, they return to their spots in front of the altar.

HIGH PRIESTESS

The invocation portion of the ceremony is complete. Now, let us stand for the vows.

She raises her arms up and the audience stands.

All those on the "female" side, put their left hands on the shoulders of those in front of them connecting everyone all the way up to the bridesmaids and finally to Ji-La herself.

All those on the "male" side do exactly the same with their right hands all the way up to Amant. The parents of the smaller children hold them up and bigger kids stand on their chairs so that they can participate too.

Those in the section behind the platform, including the acolytes, put both hands on the shoulders of those in front of them all the way up to the high priestess.

Lastly, Ji-La and Amant join hands.

HIGH PRIESTESS (CONT'D)
Do you, Ji-La, enter into this
union with Amant free of any
duress, entirely of your own
accord?

Ji-LA
Out of love, I do.

HIGH PRIESTESS
And do you, Amant, enter this union
with Ji-La free of any duress,
entirely of your own accord?

AMANT
Out of love, I do.

HIGH PRIESTESS
Do you, Amant and Ji-La, promise to
honor, protect, care for, and hold
dear one another through sickness
and health, failure and success,
curiosity and contentment, and
trials and tranquility?

Ji-LA
I do, with all my heart.

AMANT
I do, with all my heart.

HIGH PRIESTESS
And do you, Amant, and you, Ji-La
vow to honor, protect, care for,
and hold dear any children that the
Friend entrusts unto your care
through this union?

Ji-LA
(Ji-La looks directly into
Amant's eyes)
I do.

AMANT
I do.

HIGH PRIESTESS
And do you, the friends and family
of this beautiful couple vow to
support their union and accept and
welcome them into the community as
husband and wife?

THE ENTIRE AUDIENCE

We do.

HIGH PRIESTESS

Please be seated everyone. Ring
bearers, please come forward.

As the crowd sits back down, the harpist begins to play a gentle melody. Maisie and a little boy about her same age, each carry a ceremonial cushion with a ring on it. They walk down the main aisle intently focused on their duty oblivious to the smiles of those all around them.

At the altar, the little boy presents his ring to Amant and Maisie presents hers to Ji-La.

HIGH PRIESTESS (CONT'D)

(whispers to the kids)

Very good job ring bearers!

Maisie and the little boy happily run back to their parents in the audience.

HIGH PRIESTESS (CONT'D)

Wonderful! Now, we ask the bride
and groom to share their own vows
and exchange rings.

She looks at Ji-La first.

Ji-LA

(a little nervously)

I never thought I would get
married. Marriage, to me, always
seemed like the beginning of the
end rather than the end of the
beginning.

The audience laughs.

Ji-LA (CONT'D)

But now...I feel so lucky to have
met you, Amant! I see so much light
in you. And every time we are
together I feel your light bringing
me peace and comfort and love and
laughter. It's scary to give
myself away so completely. But with
you I feel like my future is
expanding not contracting. I feel
like life is growing into something
more joyous than I could imagine
before I met you.

(MORE)

JI-LA (CONT'D)
Will you walk the path of life with
me? Will you wear my ring?

AMANT
Until my last breath.

She places her ring on Amant's left ring-finger.

AMANT (CONT'D)
Sometimes when I'm around you, Ji-
La, I get lost in my thankfulness
for having met you. You surprise
me, you fascinate me, you bring
beauty into my life. When you hold
my hand, I feel like I belong in
this world. I adore you, Ji-La.
Your happiness is my happiness,
your sorrow is my sorrow, and your
wonder is my wonder. Will you walk
the path of life with me? Will you
wear my ring?

JI-LA
Until my last breath.

He places his ring on her left ring-finger. They then turn
and cup their hearts to the audience. The audience returns
the gesture.

The High Priestess picks up the ceremonial knife and hands it
to Ji-La. She hands the black, red, and blue ribbons to
Amant.

HIGH PRIESTESS
These three ribbons represent the
forces of inertia, recklessness,
and self-satisfaction that prevent
our relationship with the Friend
and our relationships with each
other from growing deeper with the
passing of time. Let the couple
begin their new life together by
symbolically cutting through these
obstacles.

Ji-La carefully cuts through all three ribbons that Amant
stretches taut.

HIGH PRIESTESS (CONT'D)
Behold, the new couple! Amant and
Ji-La! Ji-La and Amant!

The audience bursts into loud applause and the acolytes blow
their conch shells.

AMANT
(whispers to Ji-La)
Shall we kiss?

Ji-La, a little nervous, nods and puts her arms around him. As they kiss, the applause, infused with many joyful whistles, grows twice as loud.

EXT. RECEPTION AREA - LATER

While the guests finish lunch, Ji-La and Amant go from table to table greeting and talking to everyone. Trianne approaches.

TRIANNE
Amant, can I steal Ji for just a moment?

AMANT
Of course.

Trianne leads Ji-La away from everyone where they can talk in private.

TRIANNE
How are you feeling?

JI-LA
Is it possible to feel incredibly lucky and incredibly nervous at the same time?

TRIANNE
Do you want me to tell you a secret that might make you less nervous?

JI-LA
Yes!

TRIANNE
Jon and I have been talking...we're going to try for another baby! Just think! If you and Amant...if the timing works out.... We could go through everything together!

Ji-La immediately begins crying. She hugs Trianne tightly while, at the same time, bouncing up and down excitedly.

JI-LA
(wiping away tears)
That is wonderful news, Trianne!
(MORE)

JI-LA (CONT'D)
Just hearing that! I can't tell you
how much it means to me!

TRIANNE
Good! Now that we've got the
nervousness thing squared away, do
you need me to explain the "birds
and bees" thing to you? I am a
trained biologist, you know.

They both laugh again.

As they look out at the crowd, laughter erupts at the cake
table. Amant is encouraging the kids to eat with their hands
like little monsters. Maisie comes up and grabs Trianne's
hand.

MAISIE
Mommy!

TRIANNE
(to Ji-La)
I think the cake is calling.

Trianne and Maisie leave just as Ji-La's old class, except
for Aten, approach. Ji-La is overjoyed to see them. They cup
hearts and exchange hugs.

JI-LA
I'm sooo happy to see you all!

KALEEN
I can't believe it! You're
married, Instructor!

Ji-La holds up her hand to show off her ring as proof.

JI-LA
Where's Aten?

PIKAY
He is part of the performance so
he's with the dancers getting
ready.

JI-LA
(to Thorin)
Thorin! I haven't seen you since
class ended. Have you figured out
what you want to build yet?

THORIN

I have! I've been accepted as an apprentice on the project to rebuild the south pole station.

JI-LA

That's wonderful! I'm sure you will learn amazing things.

THORIN

Pikay is going too. To work on the engines.

Pikay nods that it is true.

JI-LA

Oh, that's perfect! I'm so happy for both of you! The project, and you, will be giving everyone hope -- hope that creation can triumph over destruction.

Verek looks closely at Ji-La's ring.

VEREK

Your ring is quantum entangled with Amant's, isn't it?

JI-LA

Yes, wherever we go in all the universe, we will always be connected.

(beat)

By the way, thank you for your help in the service today!

VEREK

I'm glad I could be a part of it even if it was just a small part.

JI-LA

(looks at Benerika)

You look a little down, Bee. Is anything wrong?

BENERIKA

I'm sorry! The wedding was wonderful. But, I can't stop thinking about the Zaiurnians. About how they gave up their lives so easily...so eagerly, even.

JI-LA

What did Jereve say about it?

BENERIKA

She says they didn't die the way we normally understand dying. She says they left for a higher dimension. Evidently, they were too pure to live on our level of physical reality.

Ji-LA

It's a lot to ponder, isn't it?

BENERIKA

I know! It feels a little unfair! I mean, I'm just starting out on the path to become an Ethicist, and now, I've got "higher dimensional migration" to figure out!

They all laugh. A soft, three-tone, alarm sounds on their wrist devices. Amant heads over to join them.

KALEEN

(to Ji-La)

The show's starting! You have to come watch.

They, and the guests walk through a beautiful, honeysuckle-covered, arbor back into the wedding area. The platform where the ceremony took place has been transformed into a stage closed off with ornate burgundy curtains. Once everyone has been seated, Aten steps through the curtains. He plays a fanfare on a tiny, flute-like, instrument to get everyone's attention.

ATEN

Ladies and gentlemen! We celebrate Ji-La and Amant today and wish them a life of happiness together.

Applause.

ATEN (CONT'D)

In that light, the students of the Fleet Dance Academy present an original performance entitled "Harmonious Journey".

Aten ducks back behind the curtains. A moment later the curtains open to reveal the student dance troupe in black bodysuits in front of a backdrop of Aresine's barren landscape. The dramatic intro to "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" plays. Ji-La and Amant cuddle together as they watch the dance begin.

INT. HONEYMOON COTTAGE - THAT EVENING

Amant enters the honeymoon cottage tugging Ji-La by the hand behind him. The room is bright and cozy with floor to ceiling sliding glass doors overlooking an empty beach on the rocky coastline.

BALCONY

They step out onto the balcony and let the warm evening breeze caress them. The setting sun colors the sky in dramatic shades of pink, orange, and red. Amant holds Ji-La close with his arms around her waist while they watch the waves crashing on the shore below and the gulls soaring above.

AMANT

Did you know there were honeymoon cottages on the Blue Beluga?

JI-LA

I didn't know there were honeymoon cottages on any of the pods! And so beautiful!

AMANT

Do you think we'll see any belugas? Maybe even some blue ones!

Ji-La laughs and laughs.

JI-LA

So dumb! But, somehow, I still love you!

They laugh until the peace of the moment returns. She turns in his arms and kisses him deeply.

AMANT

Are you ready?

Ji-La nods. He leads her into the bedroom with linked pinkies.

BEDROOM

On the large bed there is a shiny black and white gift bag.

JI-LA

Oh! What's this?

AMANT
(reading the attached
card)
It's a gift from the High
Priestess.

Amant sets down the card and pulls three gift-wrapped
packages out of the bag. He reads the tags to himself.

AMANT (CONT'D)
It looks like we're supposed to
open these two first.

He hands one with Ji-La's name on it to her and holds the
other.

Ji-LA
Together?

AMANT
(nods)
One, two, three.

They tear open the packages and discover that they are his-
and-her silk kimonos.

Ji-LA
How very thoughtful of her!

AMANT
The third package says to wait
until we are wearing the kimonos
before we open it.

She kisses him again.

Ji-LA
I'll go change.

She steals away to the bathroom.

BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Once the door is closed she looks at herself in the mirror
with wonder and a little apprehension. Just then she gets a
very soft notification from her wrist device. It's nothing
more than a heart emoji from Trianne. She smiles then taps
back another heart emoji plus a fingers crossed emoji and
sets her wrist device on the counter.

BEDROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Amant, already changed, looks out the bedroom window at the sun, now nearly set, awaiting Ji-La. The bathroom door opens and, shyly, she emerges wearing her kimono.

JI-LA
(a little nervously)
So, I assume you're seeing me as a
"being of light", right now?

Amant smiles.

AMANT
I confess, right now Ji-La, I am
thoroughly overwhelmed by your
beauty.

They embrace and kiss again.

AMANT (CONT'D)
Are you nervous?

JI-LA
(nods)
A little.

AMANT
Do you want to wait?

She shakes her head.

JI-LA
Are you nervous? Do you want to
wait?

AMANT
Nervous, yes. Do I want to wait?
(smiles)
No.

Ji-La laughs.

JI-LA
Shall we open the third gift?

They both sit on the bed. Ji-La hands the package to Amant and motions that he should open it.

AMANT
Are you sure?

JI-LA
You go ahead.

Amant unwraps the third gift. It's an ornately carved wooden box.

AMANT
(reading the inscription
on the lid)
"For the honeymooners".

He lifts off the lid and sets it aside. The box contains two items: a glass vial and a small pink scroll tied up with a blue ribbon. Amant inspects the vial while Ji-La examines the scroll.

JI-LA
What's inside yours?

The vial is filled with orange, dissolvable, tablets. He holds it near his eyes to read the small label.

AMANT
Ahh, they're conception preventers.
A surprisingly intimate gift
considering they are from the High
Priestess! How about yours?

Ji-La removes the ribbon and unfurls the scroll. She is a little surprised.

JI-LA
It's...the child summoning prayer.

Amant stands up and takes Ji-La's hand in his. She stands up with him. He gently takes the scroll from her then holds out the glass vial in his right hand and the scroll in his left. He looks her in the eyes. The mood is suddenly serious.

AMANT
Whichever one you pick will be the
right choice.

Ji-La steps between his hands to kiss him. Then, she steps back and takes both from him. She sets the vial down on the nightstand and opens the scroll all the way so they can both read it together.

JI-LA AND AMANT
"Beloved Friend, keeper of the
Fleet, source of all happiness --
we ask you to bless our lives with
a child full of Truth and Goodness.
Imbue us with Your love that we may
care for it as You care for us.
(MORE)

JI-LA AND AMANT (CONT'D)
May we be worthy of Your gift of
family. And, may our household be
rich in Your Spirit always."

As they conclude the summoning prayer they hold each other and kiss passionately. The room, sensing the mood, automatically dims the lights. In the warm romantic glow, the bride and groom loosen each other's silk waist sashes and embrace once again. As Aresine's sun makes its final dip below the horizon into night, their kimonos slip to the floor.

END OF EPISODE