

CLARITY UNCONSCIOUS

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FADE IN:

EXT. DREAMLIKE WORLD - DAY

We look upon a vivid, dreamlike world. A utopia of nature both utterly alien, yet intrinsically human, as if hewn from mankind's strange innermost ideals of beauty and perfection.

Here in its clearing stand a man and a woman. They are beautiful, godlike creatures who possess no human flaw; their bodies shine with a spectral glow which can only be described as pure love.

They begin to kiss as all around, flowers sprout with accelerated life. As they pull away, we realize this kiss was a goodbye. They look upon each other for a moment, then nod "it is time."

The man pulls from his head a fiery glowing strand which congeals in midair into an inward glowing gem; his soul. He holds his hand out to it, then with an invisible force, the gem is shattered into pieces! These are the SOUL SHARDS.

The woman turns away, her face betrays only a twitch of sadness. She looks down to her wrist; on it is the TATTOO OF AN OLD KEY. She looks up; before her stands an ENORMOUS GATEWAY framed by 2 statues; a man and a woman reaching out towards one another, their fingers just out of touch.

INT. ART GALLERY (DOWNTOWN FLAGSTAFF, AZ) - NIGHT

CLARITY MILLER (Claire) stares at us. She is the very embodiment of the golden haired woman in the previous scene; young and beautiful, but very much human. Behind her people laugh and mingle but Claire doesn't notice; her bright blue eyes lost in the painting before her:

REVERSE ANGLE - PAINTING

A young man and woman stand apart in a vivid, dreamlike world. Their hands reach out towards one another, but are just out of touch. This is PAINTING #1.

CLOSE ON CLAIRE

She begins to smile.

INT. NEARBY STORAGE ROOM - SAME TIME

A man's silhouette hunches over an almost complete painting in a makeshift storage room, dimly lit by a single lamp. He expertly mixes paints on a paper plate; blue with white. The new color is applied to the canvas; the shimmer off a pair of bright blue eyes above a wide smile.

INT. ART GALLERY

Suddenly shaken out of her enchantment over the artwork, Claire looks up toward the clock mounted upon the wall. Surprised, she hurries away from the privacy of the painting and maneuvers into a thickening crowd, scanning for a face on the body of the showroom floor; a modest studio, it's walls displaying more large paintings (think Dali meets O'Keefe.)

INT. NEARBY STORAGE ROOM

Hands wash blue from the brush in a cup of water, then begin to mix yellow with white. They methodically apply the final touches to the small canvas; the golden sheen from an engagement ring on a pale hand.

This is DANTE ENASNI, a strikingly handsome man with the mad passion of a troubled artist (and the human embodiment of the man in first scene.) He is mixed between the races with some obvious Native American blood.

Finished. He looks over his work, becomes lost in it, falls in love with it... then looks down at his watch and mutters a curse aloud.

INT. ART GALLERY

Clarity spots someone with a knowing smile.

This is JAKE GALE; well groomed, late 20's, Native American descent. He is doing what he does best: flirting with the ladies.

JAKE

Although we'd probably want to stop  
by the bar first and get some  
drinks...

(slyly)

It'll help set the mood.

The 2 WOMEN both giggle.

Claire approaches.

JAKE

Ah, Ladies, let me introduce you to Clarity Miller, the lovely lady to whom we owe this wonderful evening.

CLAIRE

(rolls eyes)

Thanks Jacob Gale.

(to the ladies)

Please just call me Claire.

Claire politely shakes their hands revealing a tattoo of an old antique key hidden on the inside of her wrist.

WOMAN #1

Great to meet you.

WOMAN #2

I must say Claire, I love your tattoo, it's so... mysterious.

Claire briefly grabs her wrist as if she were slightly embarrassed.

CLAIRE

Thank you... Dante actually gave me this tattoo the day we met.

JAKE

Claire is Dante's girlfriend; perhaps the very muse of all this fine work.

WOMAN #2

Oh. My god, your boyfriend is very talented, you must be so proud.

CLAIRE

I am, he worked extremely hard to put this collection together.

CLAIRE

(looks to Jake)

Ladies, do you mind if I borrow Jake for a moment?

WOMAN #1

Of course not.

WOMAN #2

Just don't take too long.

JAKE  
(winks to girls)  
Don't worry, I'll be back.

They step just out of the crowd; Jake stops acting sophisticated.

JAKE  
Looking for Dante?

CLAIRE  
(worried)  
Do you know where he is? It's been an hour since doors opened and he's nowhere to be seen.

JAKE  
I'm sure he's around... I swear I saw him pull up...

CLAIRE  
You don't think he got cold feet do you? It wouldn't be unlike him to just leave...

JAKE  
I'm sure he's just getting ready.

CLAIRE  
Jake, Dante never takes more than 2 minutes to get ready!

JAKE  
Claire, relax, don't worry, Dante isn't going to disappoint anybody.

CLAIRE  
I know... It's just,  
(mimicking Dante)  
He thinks "these events are too fake" and "nobody is really here for the art; just to be seen" and...

JAKE  
(interrupting)  
I gotcha; tonight is his night and we'd best make sure he doesn't miss it.

CLAIRE  
Exactly.

JAKE  
OK, OK lets find him.

CLAIRE  
(starts walking)  
Great, sometimes he just needs a  
little kick in the butt to be  
social.

INT. NEARBY STORAGE ROOM

Dante hastily blows on his final brush strokes, makes sure they're dry, then throws a cloth over the painting. He turns to the door and pauses; gathers himself with a deep breath and straightens out his clothing. Finally, he opens the door; a flood of light enters the small room.

INT. HALLWAY TO ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

He emerges into the hallway and locks the door behind him; the CLAMOR of his PARTY can be heard muffled through the adjacent wall.

GEORGE GALE (O.S.)  
There was this story I used to tell  
you when you were a boy.

Dante at first startled, turns around with a "you got me" smile.

Leaning against the side of the wall is GEORGE GALE, Jake's father, Dante's Godfather; an elderly man dressed with hints of old Native American tradition.

DANTE  
Which one George?

GEORGE  
Within the heart of every man  
battle 2 wolves. One wolf is joy,  
peace, hope and love...

DANTE  
And the other is anger, greed,  
lust, and fear.

GEORGE  
Which wolf wins Dante?

DANTE  
(smiling)  
The one I feed.

GEORGE  
Ha, very good...

DANTE  
(interrupting)  
Although, I always believed there  
were more colors to one's soul than  
black and white.

George contemplates, then nods in impressed agreement as he follows Dante down the hall.

GEORGE  
(playfully)  
I must say, your paintings are a  
hit out there, but I have a feeling  
that you have even greater plans  
than an art show tonight.

DANTE  
(surprised)  
Did Jake tell you?

GEORGE  
Jake didn't have to, he's even  
easier to read than you are.

Dante pauses before the door to the show.

DANTE  
(can't hide smile)  
Well... you're right. I think the  
time has come, I think I'm ready  
for this.

GEORGE  
(joking)  
Your ready as you'll ever be.

DANTE  
Come on, lets go in.

Dante opens the door and walks into the show.

INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

CLAIRE  
There you are!

DANTE

Hey babe!

Claire runs up and gives Dante a huge hug and a flurry of kisses.

CLAIRE

I thought you ran away or something! Wait, where have you been?!

DANTE

Well, I...

Dante is speechless; Claire takes his breath away every time.

JAKE

(sarcastically)

I'm sure my Dad was just stuffing his ears with ancient wisdoms.

GEORGE

Hey, what else am I good for?

DANTE

Come on guys, don't I need to make a speech or something?

(playfully)

Give me that drink.

He grabs a glass of champagne from the CATERER walking by.

DANTE

I'm going to need it...

(re: crowd)

After all, I need to sell some paintings in order to pay for this open bar!

Dante takes a nervous sip as Jake grabs and shakes his shoulders playfully.

JAKE

Dante the business man! I never thought I'd see the day. Hey, where's he going with those!

Jake chases after the caterer.

GEORGE

I wish your parents could be here today; you would make them proud.



DANTE  
Thank you George.  
(shakes his hand, changes  
mind, goes for hug)  
Enjoy yourself won't you?

Dante and Claire start to walk towards the crowd as George looks on like a proud parent.

DANTE  
Well babe, the turnout is  
excellent, that article you got in  
the paper must have really hit its  
mark.

CLAIRE  
Come on, you're the talk of the  
town.

They get no more than 3 feet by the time DR. IRVINE runs into them. He is a balding man in his mid forties.

DR. IRVINE  
Dante! I was hoping I'd run into  
you soon! And Claire, your looking  
lovely.

CLAIRE  
Doctor Irvine, it's so great to see  
you, I'm thrilled you could make  
it!

DR. IRVINE  
I wouldn't miss this evening for  
the world. Dante, your work is  
truly fascinating, I am simply  
amazed...  
(sincerely)  
It looks like things are really  
coming together for you, well for  
both of you. What a difference a  
year makes...

DANTE  
Doctor Irvine, it's been too long  
since I've seen you without your  
scrubs.  
(awkward laugh)  
Thanks for the kind words, I'm glad  
you showed up.

DR. IRVINE

Well this is what it's all about...  
Well, hey don't let me keep you,  
you've got a room full of adoring  
fans!

DANTE

OK. Well I'll catch up with you  
after my speech.

Dante and Claire move along, Claire still smiling over the  
doctors words.

CLAIRE

So you're sure you've got this  
speech thing down?

DANTE

(looks around)  
Are you kidding... I don't even  
know where to begin.

Claire kisses him on the cheeks; she has an idea.

CLAIRE

Don't worry, I'll get their  
attention.

DANTE

No, no it's OK, I can...

She takes his champagne glass and blows him another tempting  
kiss. Next thing, she's on a table top, chiming the finished  
glass.

CLAIRE

Excuse me, Ladies and Gentlemen!  
May I have your attention?

The guests all turn to Claire as Dante tries to out-will his  
embarrassment.

CLAIRE

It is my honor to introduce the man  
whose vision we have all come to  
experience. A man whose recently  
explored talent has erupted into a  
love affair with paint and canvas,  
and has blossomed into this  
remarkable collection of paintings.  
(catches Dante's eye)

CLAIRE(cont'd)

I can tell you first hand, these paintings come from his heart, and so I invite you to share in his deepest, darkest secrets.

(beat)

So without further adieu, I would like to present... what did they call him...

Claire reads from a newspaper clipping pulled from her purse.

CLAIRE

"The up and coming local visionary"  
Mr. Dante Enasni!

JAKE

The man, the myth, the legend!

Dante, slightly embarrassed, helps Claire down.

DANTE

Mission accomplished.

CLAIRE

(with a "nothing to it"  
kiss)

Your turn babe, break a leg.

Dante awkwardly takes Claire's place above the crowd, looking rather silly on the table top as the audience claps approvingly.

DANTE

Well, I'd first like to thank you all for joining me here this evening. For a starving artist, this truly is a dream come true.

A few laughs, but the crowd has now calmed and looks upon him eagerly. Dante suffers a lingering moment, uncomfortable silence as the crowd stirs.

DANTE

Well...

His eyes fall upon one of his paintings on the wall beside him; two wolves, one white, the other black locked in a vicious battle; the composition of these figures almost resembles a Yin-Yang symbol. This is PAINTING #2.

DANTE

All joking aside, I guess I would simply like to talk a little about my artwork, about what it means...

DANTE(cont'd)

and I guess I should begin by admitting, that even I am not entirely sure.

Jake looks on confused. Claire listens ever intently.

DANTE

As an Artist, I can do no more than reach inside of myself, and pull from me, things I don't completely understand. Then I put them up there on the canvas, and try and make sense of it all.

(gestures to paintings around him)

For art brings me close to truth. Through it, I may no longer lie to myself; through it I must face my demons, and realize what I hold sacred.

Dr. Irvine walks up and stands next to George as Dante speaks.

DR. IRVINE

(whispering)

Hey there George.

GEORGE

(whispering)

Bill, good to see you.

DANTE (CONT'D)

I realize that my heart was once a battleground, and that I dealt with the pain which inevitably flows through life, by inflicting further pain upon myself; like fighting fire with fire.

DR. IRVINE

(whispering)

Looks like art set the boy straight huh?

GEORGE

(RE: Claire)

Among other things...

DANTE (CONT'D)

But I can also look upon these walls and witness a transformation. There is a new found passion within me. A new found love.

DANTE(cont'd)

And it is stronger than any pain I  
have ever felt.

(catches Claire's eye)

I guess what my paintings tell me,  
is that no matter how deep you find  
the depths of your pain to be,  
there is something, or someone out  
there... who can raise you  
infinitely higher.

The crowd is silent until...

JAKE

Cheers to that!

Immediately followed by a golden applause.

Dante sees only Claire. He steps down, looks into her eyes,  
then kisses her without a further care in the world.

INT. ART GALLERY - LATER

The showroom is quiet and vacant. Only one light shines over  
a sofa in the corner of the large room where Dante and Claire  
lay together, merrily sipping the last of the champagne.

CLAIRE

To the most successful night ever,  
and the last glass of champagne!

Claire raises her glass.

DANTE

Which was only possible because of  
you... and your unquenchable  
thirst.

They toast and finish the last of the glass laughing.

CLAIRE

Dante?

DANTE

Yeah babe.

CLAIRE

So I hear you love me?

Dante gives Claire a light kiss on the forehead.

DANTE

I love you so much.

CLAIRE

How much?

DANTE

I love you more than every other person in the world combined.

CLAIRE

More than yourself?

DANTE

Infinitely more than myself.

CLAIRE

Really, what would you do to prove it?

DANTE

Anything. I would even give my life. I would give it in a heartbeat.

CLAIRE

That's very noble, but if you died we would never see each other again.

Dante thinks for a moment, then gets up and playfully acts out his lines like a warrior poet!

DANTE

Death could not keep me from you. For as my body may succumb to darkness, my love for you will never die. I would make a new world, a perfect world. And I would wait there where time matters not until you join me, to live forever.

CLAIRE

(laughs)

But see, that's what I was worried about all along.

DANTE

Oh?

CLAIRE

Yes, because when I die, I shall do the same, and then we would have separate worlds and we would wander endlessly in search of one another.

DANTE  
Ah, but this is where you are  
wrong. The worlds we create would  
be one and the same.

CLAIRE  
They would?

Dante comes closer again.

DANTE  
Of course. Don't you know why?

CLAIRE  
I want to hear it from you.

Dante whispers in Claire's ear with all his heart.

DANTE  
Because we are soul mates.

CLAIRE  
I thought so. When was it that our  
souls first met?

DANTE  
We have always known each other. We  
created this very world so we could  
be together.

CLAIRE  
So that's why I felt like I  
recognized you the first time I  
laid eyes on you.

Dante and Claire stare into each others eyes, trying not to  
ruin the game until they both blink; then they topple over  
laughing.

DANTE  
(gets serious)  
I have something for you. I wanted  
to wait till the end of the night.

He quickly exits.

Claire sits up curiously, trying not to smile too brightly.

CLAIRE  
Really, you got something for me...  
You really didn't need to.

Dante walks in with a painting on an easel covered in cloth. Claire gets up, suddenly excited.

CLAIRE

Oh my god, a painting, for me?!

Dante nods and motions for her to uncover it. She walks up and slowly pulls off the cloth revealing...

CLOSE ON PORTRAIT

Of Claire posing before a fantastic sunset. She wears the same white dress, but on her finger is a golden wedding ring. This is PAINTING #3 (The painting Dante was working on during scene 1.)

DANTE

I know I paint you often, but this one is special.

CLAIRE

Oh my God Dante, this is beautiful!

DANTE

Consider it your engagement portrait.

Shocked, Claire turns to Dante.

CLAIRE

What?!

DANTE

I would rather not give my life Claire; I would rather live it all with you.

Dante kneels to the ground and presents a DIAMOND ENGAGEMENT RING. The gem sparkles with promise and perfection.

DANTE

Clarity Miller, will you marry me?

Claire stands speechless for a single breath.

CLAIRE

Dante!

She tackles Dante into the couch, knocking it over! She kisses him again and again.



DANTE

Was...  
 (kisses)  
 That...  
 (kisses)  
 A yes?

CLAIRE

Of course I will marry you!

DANTE

Then this, along with every part of  
 me, is for you.

He places the ring on her finger and they continue to kiss passionately, then, hidden behind the upturned couch, we see hints and gestures of the intimate act of love.

EXT. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE ART GALLERY - DAWN

The sun is just peeking over the mountains. Dante silently carries Claire who is half asleep to their car, an old SUV.

He places Painting #3 in the trunk after helping her into the passenger seat.

INT./EXT. DANTE'S SUV - CONTINUOUS

Dante begins to drive.

Claire opens her eyes then stretches out her arm to grab Dante's hand, once again revealing her tattoo. Dante looks down upon it curiously.

DANTE

You asked me for this tattoo the  
 day we met... Maybe now you can  
 finally tell me what it means.

CLAIRE

(smiles)  
 I don't really know...

DANTE

It doesn't mean anything?

CLAIRE

(thinks)  
 Maybe I just thought it would come  
 in handy someday...

Dante leans over while driving to give Claire a quick kiss.

CLAIRE

I can't believe we're engaged.

DANTE

I can die happy.

Through the window, a short distance away, we see a renegade set of headlights erupt against the grain of the early morning traffic.

Dante and Claire catch a glance into each others eyes for one last timeless moment. They both crack a smile at something unspoken.

GLASS

Explodes.

DANTE'S SUV

Is thrust in obscene directions.

CLAIRE'S HEAD

Is smashed against the dashboard.

CUT TO BLACK.

DARK VOID

Everywhere is darkness and silence.

Claire floats weightlessly in this nothingness; her dress and hair ripple as if blown by unseen currents.

Before her slowly explodes the most brilliant light, as awesome as all the mysteries and forces of creation and as seductive as the promise of never ending peace. Claire is accepting of its gravity... until suddenly, she turns and sees a LONE WOODEN DOOR. It has an old single ring handle below a rusty keyhole.

The brilliant light behind her throbs for her attention, yet Claire looks at the door with curiosity and distant recognition. She looks to her wrist and pulls into reality a key from the tattoo upon her skin.

She fits it into the door and it opens. Whatever is on the other side brings a smile to her face, she steps through and into...

INT. FLAGSTAFF MEDICAL CENTER - HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - DAY

CRY OF SIRENS! Ambulance lights spinning through sliding glass doors! Panic and confusion!

Claire is being sped into the corridors of the hospital on a stretcher; eyes closed, neck braced, her face bruised, bloody and swollen.

Dante follows behind uselessly in a tearful, frantic daze as the EMT's are met with more medical staff as Claire is rushed deeper into the over-lit labyrinth of the hospital.

DANTE

Is she OK?! Is she going to be OK?!

The EMT's are too busy to answer.

Suddenly a balding doctor runs up from behind and catches up to the EMT's; he looks disheveled, as if he'd been thrust into the action before his ritual morning coffee. It's Dr. Irvine. He doesn't yet recognize Dante, who watches without a word.

DR. IRVINE

What've we got?

EMT

Car crash, she's been unconscious since we've arrived. Approximately 20 minutes.

Dr. Irvine swipes open a set of double doors.

DR. IRVINE

Through here.

As the hospital staff push the stretcher through, Dr. Irvine finally catches a glimpse of who's on it; time seems to slow as he gasps with harsh realization, then looks up and sees Dante staring back with a pleading, anguished look dripping with guilt.

DANTE

Bill... Is Claire going to be alright?

Beat.

DR. IRVINE  
(hardly able to speak)  
Dante, I hope so son...

Dr. Irvine backs away in shock and lets the doors close in Dante's face.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Claire's stretcher is set in place. Dr. Irvine rushes to her, takes a light pen from his pocket and lifts open her eyelids to check for any automatic response. We see her brilliant blue lifeless eyes and within them, the black void. The doctor lets them shut.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. TOP OF MYSTERIOUS TOWER - CLAIRE'S POV - DAY

Flashes of soft light as eye's flicker open. We see nothing but clouds.

DOWN ANGLE ON CLAIRE

Lying on a bed-like platform of white stone. She takes in a deep, long overdue breath then sits up slowly, as if her body last moved when time mattered not. She looks around curiously as she yawns, finding herself atop a mysterious structure amongst the clouds. She stands and walks toward the end of the floor which drops off to a looming sky.

WIDE ON MYSTERIOUS TOWER

Claire comes to stand at the top of the skyscraping white tower; an archaic looking structure built from sacred geometries. All around float crisp clouds larger than heaven as if this tower were the top of the world.

CLAIRE

Looks around with budding wonder and confusion; she can see no bottom as the clouds below her block any such view.

Suddenly a tiny blurry figure emerges from the nearest cloud below, ascending the long winding steps in her direction. Claire cautiously begins to descend the steps toward it.

A YOUNG BOY

Perhaps 11 or 12, merrily walks up the steps as he sings and whistles to himself aloud. This is GUARDIAN; awkwardly dressed in scrappy clothes as if made from the pelt of a fox; a glowing jeweled necklace hangs around his neck; we recognize this as a Soul Shard.

He masterfully juggles colorful balls of light in the air; they rise and fall to the tune of the song he sings.

CLAIRE

Cautiously peers down over the stairway upon Guardian below.

GUARDIAN

Looks up to catch one of the glowing balls and sees Claire's face quickly hide from his view. He stops singing and the glowing balls tumble around him, turning to dull rocks.

GUARDIAN

Hey who's there?! Nobody is supposed to be here! What are you doing?!

CLAIRE

Backs up flat against the wall, afraid to show herself.

GUARDIAN

Begins to run up the steps.

GUARDIAN

You will be in so much trouble when I find out who you are!

Guardian glimpses feet rounding a corner as he gains on her.

Suddenly in a bright colorful flash, he miraculously transforms into a swift fox without breaking his stride!

Clarity looks back and screams at the sight of the fox bearing down upon her! She rounds the last staircase onto the top of the monument; nowhere to go! She is suddenly knocked onto the bed she awoke on.

The fox sits atop her, his long sharp teeth inches from her face! Clarity fearfully looks away with a scream, as if facing the very moment of her death. Then the long teeth begin to recede, the long snout becomes a boyish nose and the red fox hair becomes the painted skin of the child's original form.

GUARDIAN  
Clarity! You're awake!

CLAIRE  
(out of breath)  
What the?!

Clarity jumps up and backs away terrified.

GUARDIAN  
I am so sorry, I did not know it was you!

CLAIRE  
What's going on?! You were just a fox, just now!

GUARDIAN  
I apologize, when I'm a fox my instincts tend to get the better of me.

CLAIRE  
What?!

GUARDIAN  
(can hardly contain himself)  
We were afraid you would never come back to us, but I knew it, I knew it all along!

CLAIRE  
OK, stop right there! What's going on here?!

Claire looks around again in disbelief, this strange place's alien nature suddenly dawning on her.

CLAIRE  
Where am I?!

GUARDIAN  
(tilts head)  
Huh?  
(beat)

GUARDIAN(cont'd)

Oh, you have been in an endless sleep! Nothing could wake you; not the will of Kings, or the strength of armies, nor the sum of all our prayers... you were laid here to rest.

CLAIRE

(interrupting)

Tell me something that makes sense!

GUARDIAN

(not paying attention)

But I knew that you would once again open your eyes; when the time was right. And here you are!

CLAIRE

Impossible... this is impossible!  
This isn't Arizona! I don't remember any of this! How did I get here?!

Overcome by frustration, Clarity lies back and holds her head as if it hurts.

Guardian tilts his head like a confused puppy.

CLAIRE

(to herself)

I can't even begin to understand...

GUARDIAN

(worried)

Do you really not remember anything?

Suddenly a memory flashes in Clarity's mind.

MEMORY FLASH - INT./EXT. DANTE'S SUV

Claire stretches out her arm to grab Dante's hand, once again revealing her tattoo.

Dante looks down upon it curiously.

EXT. TOP OF MYSTERIOUS TOWER

Claire looks down to her wrist at her tattoo.

CLAIRE

Dante... I remember Dante...

GUARDIAN

Who is Dante?

CLAIRE

(shakes her head, she  
clearly remembers very  
little)

Listen, I remember plenty! Just not  
any of this!

GUARDIAN

You don't even remember me?

CLAIRE

The last thing I remember was of a  
world where little children didn't  
turn into wild animals out to kill  
me!

GUARDIAN

Well in that case, I suppose I  
should reintroduce myself. I am  
Guardian, your oldest friend.

He offers his hand cheerfully. Claire considers it for a  
moment, too bewildered to refuse.

CLAIRE

Claire...

Clarity reluctantly shakes, then shakes her head and stands  
up again.

CLAIRE

It's just impossible...

Claire looks out to the epic sky again. Above her, clouds  
grow and die in a bewitching dance with the rays of the sun,  
both horrifying and beautiful.

CLAIRE

What... What is this? What is this  
world?

The boy walks up beside her, already her new companion.

GUARDIAN

Why, this is Eternity. Your home.

CLAIRE

(without looking away)

What... kind of name for a world is  
that anyway?



Beat.

GUARDIAN  
I don't know Clarity, it was you  
who named it.

CLAIRE  
Please call me Claire...

Suddenly the two are distracted by a sudden bright glow and a  
HEAVENLY DRONE from within a nearby cloud.

GUARDIAN  
(immediately distraught)  
Impossible... he already knows!

CLAIRE  
What do you mean? What's happening?

GUARDIAN  
He's discovered that you've awoken!  
I need to take you away from here,  
I need to protect you, I need to  
keep you safe!

Guardian looks back and forth desperately, searching for an  
escape.

CLAIRE  
Keep me safe... from what?!

The nearby cloud shifts in the wind, slowly revealing a hole  
in space opening to heavenly light. Out of the hole emerge  
one by one, strange silhouettes backlit by the light seeping  
from the other end!

Guardian ducks behind cover to avoid being seen.

GUARDIAN  
(to himself)  
It's no use, there's no way to  
escape...  
(to Claire)  
Listen, there is something that you  
must know before they take you. He  
is not himself!

CLAIRE  
He?! Where will he take me?!

GUARDIAN

His Land of Order. I must leave,  
but don't worry, I will find you  
again, when the time is right!

Claire peers back; the figures march down a crystal bridge that expands beneath their feet, the golden sun revealing them to be towering creatures composed of nothing but diamond and gold! These are the RESPLENDENT WARRIORS; faceless, beautiful, unstoppable.

CLAIRE

But... what do I do!

GUARDIAN

Do not trust him!

Guardian transforms back into a fox and runs back down the staircase and out of view.

CLAIRE

Wait, don't go!

Guardian is gone.

The Crystal Bridge connects to the Tower. The Resplendent Warriors fill the length of it, then split in half to stand at halt on either side of the path.

A last lone figure emerges in the light of the doorway and begins to walk down between the column of Warriors. This is PARAGON; dressed in the purest white, a Soul Shard hangs from his neck. We do not yet see his face; it is hidden beneath the head of a snarling white wolf whose hide drapes down the mans back like a cape.

CLAIRE

(backing up to the balcony  
fearfully)

If only Dante were here...

Paragon walks toward Claire as he begins to pull back the Wolf Hide, revealing his face; he looks exactly like Dante!

Claire looks upon him in utter disbelief...

MEMORY FLASH - INT./EXT. DANTE'S SUV

Dante and Claire catch a glance into each others eyes for one last timeless moment. They both crack a smile at something unspoken.

EXT. TOP OF MYSTERIOUS TOWER

Paragon has the very same look in his eyes as Dante. He cracks a mysterious smile of his own.

PARAGON  
Clarity, welcome home.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - DAY

Dante sits in one of the hospital waiting chairs along the hall. He looks like he's been hit by a train, his soul somewhere in hell, his body here.

A NURSE steps out into the hall.

NURSE  
Sir, were you involved in the  
accident earlier this morning?

Dante looks up then quickly stumbles to his feet, trying to pull himself together like a crack addict trying to pull together a score.

DANTE  
(croaks)  
Yes.

NURSE  
(looks at clipboard)  
Mister Dante Enasni?

DANTE  
Yes, yes, that's me.

NURSE  
Please follow me.

She leads him through the double doors then into the second room on the right.

NURSE  
In here. The doctor will see you  
shortly.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dante enters the room. He has a few scrapes on his face, a few stitches; he has already been treated. He paces back and forth, every passing moment another eternity.

Dr. Irvine finally steps in.

DR. IRVINE  
Hello Dante... How are you feeling?

DANTE  
Well. I'm...

Dante tries to give an answer but can only manage a sarcastic painful laugh; words escape him.

DANTE  
(with all of his courage)  
How is she doing Doctor Irvine?

The doctors expression tells it all. News is bad.

DR. IRVINE  
Dante...

DANTE  
No. No!

DR. IRVINE  
Clarity is...

DANTE  
Do not tell me she is dead!

Dante sounds genuinely threatening; the Doctor is careful.

DR. IRVINE  
Clarity is not dead. She is currently in a comatose state. Her situation is critical...

Dante steps back, speechless like the wind was knocked out of him.

DR. IRVINE  
...The comatose state is a complicated state of unconsciousness Dante, Claire's condition is no exception...

Silence until...

DANTE  
May I see her?

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DANTE'S POV

The door swings open to reveal Claire's frail figure amongst the DRONE of BULKY MACHINERY keeping her alive.

CLOSE ON DANTE

As he slowly allows his lines of sight to fall upon her face like a child inching into ice cold water...

DANTE'S POV

Her face is swollen, bruised and beaten. Hardly a vestige of her former beauty.

DANTE

Sits down beside her in a realm beyond pain.

DANTE

Claire...

DR. IRVINE

(reads from file)

I wish I had better news for you Dante... Better news for Claire. I fear there is little we can do. Only time will tell us the full extent of the brain damage... Only time will tell us if she will make it...

DANTE

(without looking away from Claire)

What happens if she doesn't wake up?

DR. IRVINE

If that becomes the case, we will likely encounter some impossibly hard decisions.

Dante grabs Claire's limp hand and gazes upon her Engagement Ring with envy of it's promise.

DANTE

All I want from this world is to be with her...

DR. IRVINE  
 I know Dante... I will do  
 everything in my power to help that  
 happen.

Dr. Irvine nods to himself, wipes a tear from his face, then realizing there is nothing further he can say, he bows out of the room, leaving Dante alone.

Dante rests his head against Claire's hand, closes his eyes and remains there, silently, dreaming of her presence.

INT./EXT. THE GREAT HALL - DAY

Claire walks through the dark tunnel toward the source of the heavenly light. Paragon stands in the opening beckoning.

PARAGON  
 Clarity. Welcome back from your  
 slumber. Welcome back to Eternity.

Claire steps through as her eyes grow wide; a mix of beatific amazement and terrified awe.

We PULL BACK to reveal the GREAT HALL; a gleaming interior of fantastical proportions; everything sheens of spotless beauty as if built entirely of precious gem!

We SWEEP OVER rows upon rows of Resplendent Warriors, standing at attention; a grand reception. They descend to their knees in synchronicity as Claire steps into the Great Hall!

CLAIRE  
 (to herself)  
 My god...

Paragon passes by, gesturing to all corners of the massive hall.

PARAGON  
 Our Kingdom of Order, where all  
 points shall come together and  
 everything shall begin and end with  
 you and I.

CLAIRE  
 (total shock)  
 This is beyond my wildest dreams...

Paragon gestures down the long hall which ends at a balcony.

PARAGON

Come Clarity, you have been asleep  
for far too long. Come look upon  
your Kingdom once again.

He offers Claire his hand; she slowly reaches out to take it. He lifts her onto a pane of crystal that floats an inch above the floor and steps on himself. Claire gasps as it begins to move but Paragon holds her tightly as it transports them silently down the hall, past the rows and rows of Warriors and in but an instant they are at on the edge of the balcony.

WIDE ON THE KINGDOM OF ORDER

Below them spreads forth the vast KINGDOM OF ORDER; It's mighty architecture consumed with symmetry. Its monolithic towers unfolding into the endless distance; the epic facade of a perfect world, unearthly in it's grandeur.

ON PARAGON

One hand on Claire's shoulder, with the other he traces his finger across the skyline.

PARAGON

It is yours. All of it, as far as  
the eye can see and forever beyond.

With a wave of his hand, dazzling crystallin jewelry materializes around Claire's neck and wrists; she touches them with disbelief.

PARAGON

And all the riches imaginable  
Clarity, yours at your almighty  
whim...

He clenches his fist at the legions of bowing Warriors who immediately rise at his call.

PARAGON

At your fingertips lie all the  
power that exists to command!

He turns back to Claire; stoic, righteous, soulless.

PARAGON

With your return, our world is made  
complete; we may once again call it  
our heaven; we may once again call  
it perfect.

PARAGON(cont'd)

For within every moment our world  
shall bend for us, every  
imperfection shall vanish. Here, we  
shall be free of pain, and here, we  
shall live without end.

Long Beat.

CLAIRE

(trying to collect  
herself)

But... how did we get here? There's  
just no way...

PARAGON

Clarity, there has never been a  
time when you were not a part of  
Eternity; you have always been  
here, just as Eternity has always  
been.

Claire looks back to the legions of warriors, the colorless  
brilliance, the epic grandeur... all meaningless.

CLAIRE

No... This isn't right. I remember  
a much simpler world. It was  
nothing like this place... I  
remember, it was a hard world, full  
of twists and turns, ups and downs,  
and we had very little...

PARAGON

(interrupting)

Clarity, your mind is still  
entangled in the dreams of a  
dreadful slumber.

CLAIRE

(interrupting back)

But I liked it that way; none of  
that mattered; everything was so  
simple, because we had each other,  
and we were so in love!

PARAGON

No!

Claire jumps with fright and disdain.

PARAGON

Do not speak of Love! No matter  
spark or conflagration, its flame  
ultimately dies!



PARAGON(cont'd)

Always love leaves only darkness,  
only pain... But Clarity, together,  
here we can be permanent.

CLAIRE

(backs away, betrayed,  
disgusted)

You really aren't Dante are you? I  
thought somehow you were, but you  
are not; he would never say such a  
thing. Love is all we ever had. All  
this means nothing!

PARAGON

Clarity, my name is Paragon.

(scowls)

There is no Dante here.

CLAIRE

(to herself)

No...

Paragon manifests a Brilliant CROWN in his hands as he moves  
closer, offering it to her.

PARAGON

(soothingly)

Take your place by my side once  
more, be my Queen and you will be  
rid of worry, free from care,  
unburdened by loss, untouched by  
suffering. These dreams of your's  
will worry you no further.

Claire stares at the crown for less than a moment.

CLAIRE

I don't want any of that, I simply  
want my life back.

PARAGON

This is your life, there has never  
been any other.

CLAIRE

No! This is the dream! And I intend  
to wake from it!

Claire swipes at the CROWN; it falls to the ground and  
SHATTERS into countless CHIMING pieces!

Paragon peers at Claire, cold as ice, unreadable.

Claire, astonished at what she has done, turns to escape somehow, some way, but the legions of Resplendent Warriors move to close off every escape; she is cornered!

The shards of the Crown begin to bounce in reverse from the ground, collecting themselves into Paragon's hand as piece by piece, the Crown becomes whole once again.

PARAGON

Clarity. You may not abandon me, I can not lose you... I will not lose you.

Claire closes her eyes, dreading his impending grasp... Paragon sets the Crown on Claire's head. From it, Claire's skin TRANSFORMS into DIAMOND, freezing her from head to toe in the moment!

Paragon circles her with haunting adoration. She is his, forever.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Dante sits clutching Claire's hand to his tilted head; his eyes closed tightly to shut out this world.

The Nurse steps into the room loudly.

NURSE

Sir, we'll be needing to run some tests...

Dante finally lets go and opens his eyes.

NURSE

I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to ask you to leave the room for a while...

DANTE

(whispers to Claire)  
I will keep you here as long as it takes for you to wake. I won't let anything keep us apart.

NURSE

Sir...

Dante sits up as more hospital staff arrive, wheeling in heavy machinery. They quickly invade the space and shoo Dante from the room.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dante looks at Claire as he stumbles backwards into the hallway, the door shuts in front of him. He stands still, staring at the door for a beat, then turns and heads down the hallway alone.

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - SHORTLY AFTER

Dante exits from the hospital and stands at the entrance. The sun is low on the horizon and casts its orange glow upon the City of Flagstaff.

DANTE  
(to himself)  
Everything will be OK...

He takes a deep breath and closes his eyes. Everything will clearly not be OK.

INT./EXT. THE GREAT HALL - DAY

Claire is a Crystal Statue standing on the Great Balcony where she was crowned, her eyes frozen shut. Paragon turns from her and looks around; something isn't right. A DISSONANT HUM can be heard faintly growing louder.

WIDE ON THE GREAT BALCONY

Veins of darkness creep silently up the crystal walls below the Great Balcony where Paragon stands with Claire.

ON PARAGON

The DISSONANT HUM grows to an OMINOUS DRONE; wind begins to blow through the hall, sweeping past him.

PARAGON  
(to himself)  
Catharsis...

Paragon looks carefully over the balcony as the drone continues to increase...

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE

The OMINOUS DRONE surrounds Dante too. He clasps his hands to his scowling face and nearly collapses in the center of the walkway!

INT./EXT. THE GREAT HALL

Paragon jumps away from the balcony as dark tendrils sweep up from below and grab for him!

ROOTS AND VINES

Begin sprouting out from every corner, breaking through glistening surfaces, disrupting the order!

PARAGON

Conjures a DIAMOND BLADE in his hand as he backs away!

PARAGON

He's here!

THE SHADOWS

Beneath everything in the Great Hall creep unnoticed; becoming darker, more pronounced, into shapes of monstrous form...

PARAGON

(noticing the shadows)

The shadows! Destroy them!

Paragon's Warriors begin impaling their very own shadows as they pull themselves up and out of the floor, but it is too late, the monsters already equal them in ranks. These are the SHADOWED WARRIORS; faceless, nightmarish, unstoppable.

The two armies immediately collide! All around, CRYSTAL ERUPTS and SHADOWS BURST into dust and flame as opposing warriors fall!

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE

Dante slams his fist against the wall beside him in anger and despair; the DRONE continues to rage in his HEAD.

BYSTANDERS back away from him as they would a schizo on the street.

INT./EXT. THE GREAT HALL

Stealth Fox eyes peer out upon the madness of the Great Hall below. They quickly disappear.

PARAGON

Is suddenly attacked by a throng of Shadowed Warriors, drawing him away from Claire. He dispatches them with precision and tenacity.

GUARDIAN (FOX)

Emerges from his cover and swiftly runs unseen past the combat; jumping, dodging and slipping through the attacking and falling warriors which tower over him. Ahead is the Great Balcony where Claire stands glistening in the sun.

Guardian leaps high into the air and snatches the crown from atop Claire's head! He turns back into his childlike self, throws the crown off the balcony triumphantly, then watches as Claire transforms back into her living, breathing self and slowly opens her eyes...

Claire immediately SCREAMS in TERROR as all around her opposing forces annihilate each other in violent, surreal mayhem! She backs up against the balcony just as a Resplendent Warrior is hurled through the air and shatters upon the ground before her!

Guardian runs up to Claire.

GUARDIAN

I told you I would come for you!  
Lets go, I need to get you out of  
here!

Claire nods, takes the boy's hand and runs with him toward a hallway off to the side.

PARAGON

Impales the last Shadowed Warrior then turns to see Claire and Guardian fleeing.

PARAGON  
 (to himself)  
 Guardian!

Just as he turns to chase after them, the fighting suddenly stops...

In the center of the Great Hall, a last SHADOWED FIGURE emerges from a dark hollow, where a mangle of roots have grown thick through the ground.

PARAGON  
 Catharsis. How dare you defile my realm.

SHADOWED FIGURE  
 I did not come for you Paragon. I came for Clarity.

CLAIRE

Suddenly stops running and turns to see who just spoke.

THE SHADOWED FIGURE

Steps into the light; this is CATHARSIS. He looks like Paragon's shadow; dressed in black, a Soul Shard hanging from his neck. He wears the hide of a black wolf, his face hidden within it's snarling mouth. As he pulls it back to reveal himself, we see that he too looks exactly like Dante!

Catharsis looks fiercely at Claire, as if peering into her soul.

CATHARSIS  
 My love, do not be afraid.

CLAIRE  
 (confusion, longing)  
 Dante?

CATHARSIS  
 (holding out his hand  
 reassuringly)  
 Clarity, come with me. I know what it is that you desire.

GUARDIAN  
 (pulls on Claire's arm)  
 Claire, let's go!

Claire snaps out of her spell, shakes her head and turns to flee into the corridor.

PARAGON

(re: Claire fleeing)

No!

With Paragon's magic, Resplendent Warriors fabricate from out of the nearest gemstone walls and immediately begin to pursue her!

Claire glances back to see ROOTS SHATTER through the floor and overgrow in the opening of the corridor right before the Warriors can follow her through!

CATHARSIS

Peers at Paragon and shakes his head.

INT. CIRCULAR ROOM OF DOORS - CONTINUOUS

Claire emerges from the corridor into a dark circular room filled with more doors on every interval of its circumference.

At the opposite end, Guardian holds a door open, bright light seeping from it.

GUARDIAN

Over here! Follow me!

She slowly walks toward him, weighing her trust in the boy, in anything...

GUARDIAN

Come on, we need to get out of here!

Suddenly, she darts away from Guardian towards a separate door!

GUARDIAN

Hey!

Guardian turns back into a fox and chases after Claire as she opens up a door of her own, falling into its light!

Guardian barely follows her through before it slams shut!

INT./EXT. THE GREAT HALL - SAME TIME

Paragon and Catharsis face one another. Their Soul Shard Necklaces throb with light and gravitate towards one another as if magnetically attracted.

CATHARSIS

Our Queen has returned, more beautiful than ever.

Beat.

PARAGON

Your darkness must never touch her, your pain she must never know. I will see to it.

CATHARSIS

Her heart is meant for beating, her soul meant to feel. She must never share your hollow emptiness. I will see to that.

They remain still, eyes playing an unreadable game, issuing unspoken challenges.

PARAGON

So in her we wager our world.

CATHARSIS

In Clarity, we wager our very soul.

Catharsis sinks back into the ground with his roots and shadows and is gone.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DUSK

The home is small and rustic, furnished with traditional Native American craftwork.

Jake is hanging Painting #2 upon a wall while his father prepares dinner; painting #1 leans against the wall yet to be hung.

JAKE

Glad we grabbed these 2 paintings, he ended up selling every single other piece.

(sets frame on the nail,  
stands back)

These were my favorite though.



GEORGE  
Dante sure isn't as cheap as he  
used to be.  
(smiles)  
But he's still priceless.

The doorbell rings.

JAKE  
You expecting anyone?

GEORGE  
Yeah, it's probably Dante.

Jake heads over to open the door.

JAKE  
(loud enough to be heard  
outside)  
It probably is Dante, I wonder if  
he has any interesting news for  
us?!

Dante stands out in the rain, it is getting dark and we  
cannot tell if it is rain or tears which streak down his  
face.

JAKE  
Dante! Hey man, come in!

Dante walks in like a ghost.

JAKE  
So! How did it go?! Did she say  
yes?

George appears smiling from the kitchen, ready for the good  
news.

Dante wavers and looks at neither of them.

George's smile fades.

JAKE  
Did... she say no?

Dante stumbles to one knee and tries feebly to get back on  
both feet.

George and Jake rush to pick him up by the shoulders.

JAKE  
Is he wasted again?!

GEORGE  
No, something is wrong. He has  
stitches on his forehead...

They maneuver Dante to the couch.

GEORGE  
He is having one of his anxiety  
attacks... it's bad.

JAKE  
Dante, where is Claire?

Dante is pale, trembling, cold. He shakes his head  
feverishly.

DANTE  
I had to leave the hospital. I, I  
just didn't know where else to  
go...

JAKE  
The hospital?!

GEORGE  
What happened Dante?

DANTE  
We, we got in an accident...

Dante looks through everything in a thousand mile stare.

MEMORY FLASH - INT./EXT. DANTE'S SUV

Dante's truck explodes from within!

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE

Dante hides his face in his hands.

JAKE  
Is Claire OK?!

GEORGE  
Dante, what happened to Claire, is  
she OK?

Dante looks up at George pathetically.

DANTE  
She's in a coma George.

Jake curses aloud and turns away to the wall.

DANTE

I don't think she is going to make  
it... I think I'm going to lose  
her... And it's all my fault!

EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE - DAY

Claire falls through thin air and tumbles onto the ground in a desert-like landscape brimming with strange cacti. As she sits up and pats herself off, every cactus instantly blooms all over with the most vivid desert flowers; from high we can see their many colors combine into patterns like those weaved into Native American tapestries.

CLAIRE

None of this is real, it can't be.  
I am just seeing things.

She closes her eyes, rubs them, then slowly opens them again as if the world will suddenly return to normal...

CLAIRE'S POV

Guardian (fox) sits in front of her loyally, tail wagging. He tilts his head curiously.

BACK TO SCENE

CLAIRE

(laughs desperately)  
OK, I'm still just dreaming... I  
just need to wake up, simple as  
that...

Claire slowly pinches herself... and flinches from pain. Then she slaps herself repeatedly!

CLAIRE

Wake up! Wake up! Wake up!

Guardian turns back into his usual boyish self and pulls her up.

GUARDIAN

Stop it, stop it! Don't do that!

CLAIRE  
 (pulling away)  
 No! Leave me alone!

GUARDIAN  
 Why?

CLAIRE  
 This place is madness! It's insane!

GUARDIAN  
 (still excited)  
 It's OK, we're safe, we've escaped!

CLAIRE  
 No, it's not OK! Both those men  
 back there looked just like my  
 fiancée; like Dante; but they  
 weren't him! They weren't him!  
 (desperately)  
 Who were they?!

Beat.

GUARDIAN  
 (deep breath, gets noble)  
 They are Paragon and Catharsis.  
 They are who I warned you about,  
 they are who I am protecting you  
 from.

CLAIRE  
 Well, what was all of that?! All  
 the fighting and mayhem and, and  
crazy talk!

GUARDIAN  
 Paragon and Catharsis have been in  
 a horrible war against each  
 other... for as long as I  
 remember... over you.

CLAIRE  
 Why?!

GUARDIAN  
 Because you complete them! You  
 complete everything here. Nothing  
 is whole unless it is with you,  
 nothing has meaning unless it is  
 with you. They fight with all their  
 soul for their other half...

GUARDIAN(cont'd)

and I fear they will destroy everything in their path in the process...

Beat.

CLAIRE

Well! I don't know how I got here or why, but I have had enough!

Claire realizes she still wears the jewelry Paragon had conjured on her. She throws it to the ground in anger, piece by piece.

CLAIRE

(tossing away jewelry)  
I am going to leave this land of impostors and forgeries and return to the life I was in the middle of living!

GUARDIAN

What? What do you mean you're leaving?!

CLAIRE

(starts walking)  
I may not be dreaming, but this certainly isn't reality either. So that's where I'm going, back to reality! Back to my home!

GUARDIAN

(starts following)  
OK, this place you keep speaking of, and this Dante; those are the dreams!

Claire throws the last piece of jewelry to the ground. All that remains is her engagement ring.

CLAIRE

If it was imaginary, then what's this?!

(holds up her ring)  
Where did I get this?!

Guardian looks at it confused, as if he can't find an answer.

CLAIRE

Dante gave it to me! It means he is real, it means my home is real.

GUARDIAN

Clarity, you have always worn that ring...

CLAIRE

(starts to break down)

Even more so, it means I made him a promise; I told him I would be with him forever! It means I need to go back to him!

Claire sits down and fights back her tears as Guardian looks on, anxious, but unable to help.

Claire looks at her ring, then miraculously begins to calm as if coming to a realization. She takes a deep breath, then stands again, only this time taller.

CLAIRE

I will find a way back...

GUARDIAN

But, that's impossible, there's no...

CLAIRE

(interrupting)

Nothing seems to be impossible in this place. I will find it.

GUARDIAN

I, I can't let you do that; it's futile.

CLAIRE

Then I will find it on my own!

Claire turns and begins to walk away. Guardian is stunned.

GUARDIAN

But what about Paragon and Catharsis! I, I can't let you go alone, I'm your protector!

CLAIRE

(still walking away)

I can take care of myself.

He watches her sadly as she continues to walk away.

GUARDIAN

(quietly, to himself)

But what about me?

Guardian turns back into a fox again and begins to follow her timidly. Claire turns to him immediately.

CLAIRE

Go! I command you! Leave me alone!

Guardian finally scampers off into the feild of flowers, his tail between his legs.

CLAIRE

(to herself)

I will find my own answers, I will  
find my own way home.

She looks off into the distance, into the mystery. The odds of a way back to her previous life are scarce, but if it is there, she will find it. She begins to walk; lost and alone... but finally in control.

AROUND ETERNITY - MONTAGE

EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE - DAY

Guardian (fox) comes to sit atop a small hill that is the end of the desert of cactus flowers. He peers down upon Claire who ventures alone into the mysterious world beyond.

CLAIRE

Walks confidently deeper into the fey-like realm; crossing iridescent streams, navigating surreal rock formations, down steep declines; with each step, the world becomes ever more lush, ever more alive; breathing with breath of it's own.

EXT. CITY OF ORDER - SAME TIME

We RISE UP and UP and UP through soaring crystal structures to where Paragon stands upon his balcony, looking out to the sky beyond. He closes his eyes as if reaching his mind out into the air's vast stretches in search of Claire.

EXT. ROAD THROUGH ETERNITY

Claire continues boldly onward; the sky above rich with clouds cast in every color. Behind her, one particular cloud seems to turn its phantom head in her passing direction.

EXT. CITY OF ORDER

Paragon, tightens his closed eyes. He has found her.

EXT. ROAD THROUGH ETERNITY

The Clouds shift their ambiguous vapors, transforming naturally into colossal lifelike forms!

Claire notices something out of the corner of her eye, then looks up with sudden amazement; all around, skyscraping CLOUD BEINGS begin to descend upon her. She tries to run away, but it is like fleeing from falling mountains. Up ahead are dense trees and possible cover.

INT. INMOST CAVE - SAME TIME

We SINK and SINK and SINK into the ground, past roots, mushrooms and soil, emerging into an enormous cavern; the INMOST CAVE.

Catharsis sits amongst shadow on a gnarled treelike throne. He closes his eyes and grips its arm rests, as if feeling through its roots for the heartbeat of Claire's footprints upon the world above.

EXT. GARDEN

Claire, fleeing from the looming Cloud Beings enters a psychedelic Garden of the likes of Eden; rank with ambrosial flowers and protected by a dense canopy of trees. Safe from the clouds, she begins to walk to catch her breath. Behind her, a lone vine turns in her passing direction.

INT. INMOST CAVE

Catharsis grips his Treelike Throne even harder.

EXT. GARDEN

The myriad of alien plant life surrounding Claire begins to lean, twist and grow in her passing direction. She tries to simply walk by but they are everywhere, reaching out with longing, impeding her way, wrapping around her. Claire rips herself loose with anger and budding fear. She keeps moving, but to where?!



The plants suddenly surround her with a collective embrace. She pries herself free again with tremendous effort and flees toward a CLEARING where she trips over a rock and falls to the ground.

She looks back toward the garden; plant life grows after her. She looks to the sky; anthropomorphic clouds once again descend upon her. She looks desperately to the clearing; a STRANGE STRUCTURE stands not too far in the distance. She gets up and runs towards it. Clouds shift to pursue her but are blown away by the winds that encircle the Strange Structure.

EXT. CITY OF ORDER - PARAGON'S EYE'S

Open with a flash!

EXT. CLEARING - SAME TIME

Clarity stops in the middle of the clearing, speechless with recognition.

REVERSE ANGLE - WIDE ON STRANGE STRUCTURE

An aged and crumbling stone structure composed of two opposing human figures reaching out toward one another. We recognize this as the Enormous Gateway from scene 1 as well as Painting #1 brought to life! This is the OLD GATEWAY.

CLAIRE  
(astonished)  
How is this here?

END MONTAGE

INT. GEORGES HOUSE - NIGHT

Dante sits on the couch, holding his face in his hands. George and Jake talk quietly outside.

JAKE (O.S.)  
(talking softly)  
I contacted Dr. Irvine.

GEORGE (O.S.)  
(talking softly)  
What did he say?

Dante lifts his head up and notices Painting #1 which sits leaning up against the wall across from him. He stares at it.

JAKE (O.S.)  
 (whispering)  
 He told me... in so many words,  
 that her chances are slim... Very  
 slim...

Beat.

GEORGE (O.S.)  
 Please get Dante, I must speak with  
 him.

A DOOR SLIDES OPEN and FOOTSTEPS approach. Dante doesn't take his eyes off the painting until a hand touches his shoulder, shaking him out of his trance.

JAKE  
 Dante, why don't we go sit outside.  
 My dad's made a nice fire.

EXT. GEORGES BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

The rain has stopped and George has prepared a large CAMPFIRE which illuminates the foot of the mountain that George's house is nestled into.

George is seated on a colorful rug before the fire. Dante sits down upon the rug placed next to him. Jake stays behind and listens on quietly.

GEORGE  
 Nothing is better for you than  
 fresh air and a bright fire.

Dante nods and stares into the flames.

GEORGE  
 Your parents would be proud of you  
 Dante, you have grown into a good  
 and deeply caring man.

Beat.

DANTE  
 (barely more than a croak)  
 Thanks George.

GEORGE

I see your father in you, so much passion. Things meant more to him than to other people.

DANTE

I'm sure he was a great man.

GEORGE

He was the greatest of men; he was my best friend.

Dante barely nods. George pokes at the crackling fire.

GEORGE

Dante, I am sorry this has happened... I can imagine what must be going through your mind.

DANTE

(Shakes head)

I can't even make sense... of what's going through my mind...

Long beat as both contemplate.

GEORGE

(speaks from obvious experience)

You were just learning to love life again, and suddenly, once more, you are forced to face death all too soon. Just as you lost your parents in that car accident, you now fear you will lose Clarity all the same... But you can not accept death this time; not with Claire; you will not let this world take away it's most beautiful treasure. And so you fight it. You're fighting it right here, right now... But death is a force of nature you may not control, and the more you fight it, the more it tears you apart; already, in your heart is nothing but conflict.

Dante nods silently; suddenly, tears squeeze out from his eyes.

DANTE

Everything I have ever loved has been taken away from me...

DANTE(cont'd)

Every time I find it, and I begin to savor it, and embrace it, and feel it's permanence, love is taken from me in the worst way... The thought of losing Claire breaks me...

GEORGE

Dante...

DANTE

(interrupting)

It does, it tears me apart! I can't survive this one! If I lose her, I, I can't survive that wound!

GEORGE

It's this conflict within us that makes us human. A man's Journey in life is to find the medicine for his conflict; to rid the pain of being a man; of being mortal.

George stands up as Dante tries to collect himself.

GEORGE

Dante, as your Godfather, I have passed on to you the old stories that are passed on from father to son.

Dante nods his head in agreement.

GEORGE

I like stories Dante. They have the power to make things real...

EXT. THE OLD GATEWAY - DAY

Claire looks upon the Old Gateway, shaking her bewildered head; something is coming together, letting itself be known...

GEORGE (V.O.)

I have another story for you; it is time you hear it; it is a story about love and about loss. It is one of the most important stories I may ever tell you.

CLAIRE

I have been here before...

EXT. GEORGES BACKYARD - CLOSE ON DANTE'S EYES

Flames burst in their reflection.

DANTE  
OK George, let's hear it.

EXT. THE OLD GATEWAY - DAY

Before Claire, rays of sunlight erupt as the sun passes through the spot the hands of the statue nearly touch, connecting the hands with fiery light!

GEORGE (V.O.)  
It takes place a long time ago...  
Before us, before man as we know  
him.

CLAIRE'S EYES

Grow wide, reflecting the exploding light, and within it, scenes from a distant memory!

DREAM SEQUENCE - EXT. ETERNITY - DAY

We SOAR ABOVE the otherworldly land of Eternity; SWEEPING OVER a great field of flowers, then FLOATING THROUGH what we recognize as the City of Order; only now it is endowed with color; lush and organic.

GEORGE (V.O.)  
The land was perfect and harmonious  
and had always been- It was ruled  
by a Man and a Woman who had always  
ruled.

Through the towers and the structures of the city we SOAR to the balcony of a Great Hall overlooking the land; here stands a Man and a Woman. The Woman looks like Claire, the Man looks like Dante; magnificently dressed with both black and white wolf hide.

GEORGE (V.O.)  
Everything was just and peaceful  
and had always been. There was  
nothing left to know, for the Man  
and the Woman knew it all; Except  
for one thing.

DANTE (V.O.)

What was that.

GEORGE (V.O.)

It was over the source of all things. One day when trying to come to a conclusion on the last great question, the Man and the Woman fell into an argument, for they both felt they found the answer.

The Man argues passionately, pointing to his heart, the sky and his head.

GEORGE (V.O.)

The Man argued that it was one's love that was the source of all things; that love gave rise to the power of life and the soul.

Now the Woman argues passionately, pointing to her head, the sky and her heart.

GEORGE (V.O.)

The Woman argued that it was one's soul that was the source of all things; that the soul gave rise to the powers of life and love.

The Man pulls out a magnificent glowing gem from his head.

GEORGE (V.O.)

The Man, so confident was he in love's command over his soul; that love was the source of all things; vowed to cut his own soul apart in order to prove that his love would mend him back together.

The Man smashes the glowing gem into pieces with an invisible force.

GEORGE (V.O.)

In doing so, he split himself into pieces.

The Woman stands before the Gateway.

GEORGE (V.O.)

The Woman, so confident was she that the soul was the essence of love, vowed to venture to another world, knowing that her soul would find its way back to its true love.

The Woman looks down at the key tattooed on her wrist, then steps through the Gateway.

GEORGE (V.O.)

In doing so, her soul left the land, leaving her body to wait for its soul's return.

END DREAM  
SEQUENCE.

EXT. THE OLD GATEWAY - DAY

The vision peels away into a smoldering blur as Claire blocks the light which slips through the statue's fingers.

CLAIRE

Oh my god! It's true! It's all true!

She struggles for breath, overcome with new knowledge. She cries out with painful laughter, then falls to the ground, staring to the sky.

CLAIRE

I'm back, my soul... found its way back!

EXT. GEORGES BACKYARD - NIGHT

George sits back down to the ground as Dante contemplates.

DANTE

So how does this story end?

GEORGE

(smiles)  
I don't know.

DANTE

(frustrated)  
How can you tell me this is your most important story if you don't know the ending?

GEORGE

I lost my wife in that same accident as your parents' Dante; this story helped me a lot... but the ending of course is different for all who hear it.

(pokes Dante in the chest)

Just as each man's medicine is different.

DANTE

(not playing along)

Death is not a happy ending George.

GEORGE

No it isn't. Not until you come to truly understand it.

Dante at first shakes his head fretfully, then gives up and is quiet for a beat.

DANTE

Do you think she'll make it?

GEORGE

(forces a smile)

Of course... Claire is the strongest girl I know. She will be OK.

DANTE

That's what I want to tell myself, but I am afraid to, because I am so often wrong...

(deep breath, stands up)

I should go; I should be by her side.

GEORGE

(stands, places hand on Dante's shoulder)

OK son... Be strong in your heart... It will help her find her way back to you.

Dante nods, pretending to understand, then walks past Jake and towards the house, a lonely silhouette as the fire roars behind him.

Jake steps out to his father once Dante has left.

JAKE

So, what do you think?



GEORGE

Dante is a warrior who wages his battles inward.

JAKE

Let's hope he doesn't declare war...

GEORGE

Every man's path to their medicine is different... Some men need even war...

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Dante stands in front of his paintings as Jake steps into the house from outside.

DANTE

I don't think I can ever look at these paintings again.

Beat.

JAKE

You don't mean that Dante... Come on, I'll take you to the hospital.

Dante looks upon his paintings with one last moment of contempt before following Jake out the front door.

EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE - DAY

A HEAVENLY DRONE continues to crescendo across the lonely desert.

A hand picks up one of a many pieces of DISCARDED JEWELRY that lie forgotten on the ground; Paragon examines it with a cold gaze, then crushes it in his fist!

He continues down the path through the field of cactus flowers that Claire had walked not long ago. As he moves, we see the flowers and all the land in his path transform to colorless crystal... only to be subsequently trampled by countless marching feet: an army of Resplendent Warriors!

EXT. THE OLD GATEWAY - SAME TIME

Claire lies against the base of the Old Gateway in an awe struck stupor. She glances around as if finally struck by the world's sheer, novel beauty.

She stands up, then closes her eyes and lets a breeze lift up her hair and flow through her fingers. Claire smiles.

She walks over to a patch of flowers and bunches them together in her hands to smell their fragrance. She plucks one of the flowers and places it in her hair then spins around as if in a dance with the world around her.

Something suddenly SHUFFLES in the nearby FOLIAGE. Claire turns to the noise; the foliage slowly parting. She backs up with fear.

Guardian (fox) peaks out of the grass; Claire let's herself fall back to the ground with a sigh relief and a hint of embarrassment. Guardian turns back into a boy and runs up to Claire desperately.

GUARDIAN

I'm sorry I followed you! I, I've decided to help you! To help you find a way back.

CLAIRE

It's OK... I'm glad you're here.

GUARDIAN

(shocked)  
Really?  
(tilts his head)  
Something is different about you...

CLAIRE

(smiles toward the sky)  
I had a vision.

GUARDIAN

(MORE)  
You had a vision? Well... that's amazing!

CLAIRE

Really?

GUARDIAN

Absolutely! Visions are very rare and special; they are a gift from within.

GUARDIAN(cont'd)

They show that which only the heart  
knows and the mind forgets; the  
unobscured, purest of truths...  
What did it show you?

CLAIRE

Well, it showed me the most  
remarkable world. A perfect world.  
A place that was everything I could  
possibly dream of. But I realized  
it wasn't a dream, it was as real  
as it gets. It is as real as it  
gets.

GUARDIAN

You mean... you mean you remember!  
You remember don't you!  
(jumping around excited)  
It's about time, I was beginning to  
think you were crazy!

CLAIRE

So was I! Although I still only  
remember bits and pieces. And, and  
I can only begin to grasp their  
implications...  
(laughs at Guardian)  
But I remember, I do!

GUARDIAN

So does that mean you'll stay?! You  
must want to stay!

Claire's smiles quickly fades, she hasn't thought of this  
yet, she looks to her ring finger for the answer.

CLAIRE

A promise is a promise Guardian. I  
still need to go back...

GUARDIAN

(stunned)  
But! But...  
(gives up)  
How? How do you plan to do that?

CLAIRE

(walking toward Gateway)  
Many answers came to me in my  
vision. I think I even figured out  
how to leave.

GUARDIAN  
(not excited)  
Really?

CLAIRE  
This is a Gateway Guardian; a  
Gateway for the soul, created to  
test the soul as the source of all  
things... I went through this,  
that's how I arrived in my other  
life.

GUARDIAN  
(shocked)  
Your soul took you somewhere else,  
to that place you keep talking  
about... Maybe you weren't dreaming  
after all...

CLAIRE  
If I left before, I can leave  
again... Maybe even back to the  
same time and place, maybe even  
back to Dante... I just don't know  
how to get it to work, but I need  
to try!

GUARDIAN  
(walking between statues)  
Well, these are more like ruins now  
than they are a Gateway. I doubt  
you will ever be able to use it  
ever again.

CLAIRE  
Hmm...  
(walks around them  
thinking)  
Who created these statues?

GUARDIAN  
(surprised at question)  
The Artist did...

CLAIRE  
(to herself)  
The Artist...  
(to Guardian)  
Well somebody must know how to make  
it work. Where is the Artist now?  
Can you take me to see him?

GUARDIAN

(laughs)

Impossible, there is no way to get to him... besides, he wouldn't be any help.

CLAIRE

Why not?

GUARDIAN

He has banished himself, to a placeless place. There's no way to get to him unless...

Guardian stops talking and stares at something behind Claire.

CLAIRE

Unless?

GUARDIAN

Unless he brings us to him.

Claire notices his gaze and turns with surprise to see a hole opening in thin air; through it, ominous darkness.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The door opens and hollow hospital light leaks into the dark room past Dante's silhouette.

Dante kneels beside Claire and gazes upon her motionless face for a time. She is lit just enough by the glowing indicators of her life support to tell that she on the brink of life and death.

DANTE

(whispers)

Claire, I don't know how our story will end... but I pray that you find your way back to me.

(beat)

I will be right here, waiting for you when you wake.

He kisses her upon the lips, then sits back on a nearby chair and looks upon Claire with emotional and physical exhaustion. Finally his eyes close and he sleeps.

## INT. ARTIST'S REALM

We see Claire and Guardian standing in a bright square of light surrounded by a sea of black. Guardian peeks inside, then takes the first step. Solid ground. He beckons to Claire and she follows through cautiously. The lone light behind them barely illuminates a vast domed space; this is ARTIST'S REALM.

CLAIRE

There doesn't appear to be anyone here.

GUARDIAN

No, he's everywhere...

Suddenly a RESOUNDING VOICE echoes from all directions!

VOICE (O.S.)

(insistent)

Come closer so that I may see you.

CLAIRE

(startled, looking all around)

Closer to where?

The VOICE begins to pinpoint itself, coming from the wall to their left.

VOICE (O.S.)

Oovverr heerre.

Claire and Guardian walk over to the wall; something enormous seems to shift in the shadow before them.

With the flash and smoke of a magician, Guardian lights an ornamental lantern attached to the wall in front of them, illuminating a large PAINTED MURAL of an old, white haired man... but nothing else.

CLAIRE

(looking in circles)

Where are you?

ARTIST (O.S.)

Why I haven't seen hair that golden and magnificent since...

Claire turns around again to see the mural speaking as if it were alive! This is the ARTIST.

ARTIST  
Clarity, it really is you! You have  
returned, your soul found its way!

The remaining lanterns magically ignite along the huge domed interior revealing walls painted with living murals; ever moving (Native American inspired) patterns weaving in and out of each other; they come out of Artist as if manifestations of his thoughts.

ARTIST  
(peering upon Claire  
wondrously)  
Somehow you are even more beautiful  
than I remember!

Claire reels in astonishment at the living art surrounding her.

CLAIRE  
You're a painting?!

ARTIST  
Ah, at the moment I am my dear... A  
mural actually. Ah Guardian, there  
you are, how do you do?

GUARDIAN  
Well... I at least have my third  
dimension.

Beat.

ARTIST  
Yes you do...

CLAIRE  
Artist, we were hoping you could  
help me with something...

ARTIST  
Help?

CLAIRE  
Yes, I need you to fix the...

ARTIST  
(interrupting)  
I don't see how I can possibly help  
anyone...

The towering mural shrinks in size a bit and curls up upon the wall as the lanterns dim a few degrees.

CLAIRE

Well why not?

ARTIST #1

I have no power... I have no purpose... I have nothing worthy to give...

Claire glances at Guardian who shrugs an "I told you so."

CLAIRE

Well...

(encouraging)

That just can't be true. You're an Artist...

ARTIST

Precisely! What good has art ever done? Art has no power over the material world; it can't heal a wound, it can't prevent a war, it can't save a life...

(sneers at Guardian)

Best I confine myself to my two dimensions.

CLAIRE

Art has done plenty of good!

ARTIST

(sinks further into fetal position, gets smaller)

I'm no more than an image on a wall.

Claire turns around to Guardian, confused and frustrated.

GUARDIAN

I told you he would be no help... I guess you're stuck here with us.

CLAIRE

(turns back around)

OK, well, art may not be able to heal a physical wound, but it can mend a broken heart, and no, it can't stop a war, but it can inspire peace, and no, it may not be able to physically save a life, but it can give one meaning.



ARTIST

(shakes his head)

All abstractions, all illusions...  
A painting cannot stop wolves from  
biting down upon each other's  
throats. And what good is a mended  
heart that stops beating? Art  
cannot save us here...

Claire, at first even more frustrated, calms down as she looks to the floor; the enormous round surface is decorated with a FIBONACCI SPIRAL MOSAIC, like that of a fiery Nautilus shell. Claire is silent for a beat as she gazes upon it.

CLAIRE

There is a man I love in another  
life... His name is Dante. He too  
is an artist, and he too was once  
much like you...

Artist lifts an eye from his fetal position.

ARTIST

Oh? And, and how is that?

CLAIRE

Tortured by the belief that he is  
powerless... That he can do nothing  
to quell life's tragedies...

ARTIST

(sitting up further)

Tell me more...

CLAIRE

I remember when I first met him...

FLASHBACK - EXT. CITY STREET (DOWNTOWN FLAGSTAFF, AZ) - DAY

YOUNG CLAIRE walks down the street alone, then stops in front of a small TATTOO SHOP.

CLAIRE (V.O.)

There was this painting that I  
thought was the most beautiful  
thing I'd ever seen in the window  
of his shop.

In the window is a painting of a Fibonacci Spiral, much like that of a fiery Nautilus shell, this is PAINTING #4. Claire stares at it with intrigue, then peeks inside the store.

INT. TATTOO SHOP - CONTINUOUS

A YOUNG DANTE sits alone in the empty shop, drawing a picture. Claire spies in at him with a peculiar sense of wonder as Dante crumples up the drawing, throws it into a trash can, then massages his head with frustration.

CLAIRE (V.O.)

(chuckles)

It was that moment that I first realized that I had always wanted a tattoo.

Claire steps in smiling, Dante looks up. She takes his breath away.

CLAIRE

I must have just been waiting for him to draw it for me.

END FLASHBACK

INT. ARTIST'S REALM

Claire looks down at her Tattoo and smiles.

ARTIST

Tell me about Dante, what tragedies troubled him?

CLAIRE

He was just a sad person, always in a dark place... You see, he and I had both lost our parents at a young age...

FLASHBACK - INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Claire and Dante lie in bed, Dante rests his head on Claire's chest.

CLAIRE (V.O.)

Dante just never accepted his loss. It killed him that he could do nothing to change what had happened... even though he never knew exactly what was killing him.

ARTIST (V.O.)  
 What became of him? Did he resign  
 to his fate?

CLAIRE (V.O.)  
 No, he embraced his talents.

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Dante begins painting #1; applying broad brush strokes with newfound vigor.

CLAIRE (V.O.)  
 Through his talent, he found his  
 passion, through his passion he  
 found his power; through his power  
 he found himself.

Dante turns from his completed painting to Claire, then with a huge triumphant smile stands and embraces her!

END FLASHBACK

INT. ARTIST'S REALM

The Artist and Guardian both listen intently as Claire finishes her story.

ARTIST  
 So art did heal his wounds...

CLAIRE  
 (still stares at floor)  
 Yes, and probably even saved his  
 life...

The Artist moves from the wall and glides upon the mosaic floor towards its center.

ARTIST  
 Of course, how could I not have  
 seen it before, how could I have  
 been so blind...

Artist follows along the Fibonacci Spiral, going around and around, realizing there is no beginning, it turns and turns forever.

ARTIST

The power of art is endless, it is not merely an image on a wall or a pattern on the floor... It is proof of the beauty in the world, it is proof of the beauty in oneself; it is a portal for the soul and everywhere that it leads is truth!

The Artist begins to arise from the floor, emerging from his 2 dimensions and into 3 as paint coalesces into the shape of a man.

He is dressed in feathers of every color with patterns tattooed across his exposed skin, a Soul Shard hangs from his neck; while older and grey, the Artist still shares the unmistakable face of Dante.

ARTIST

Clarity, you have the power to make one whole. How can I ever repay you?

CLAIRE

I only ask for one thing... The Gateway; I need you to make it work again.

ARTIST

(proudly)

Ah, the Gateway I created so that you may test the soul as the source of all things.

Artist grabs Claire's hand lovingly and turns her wrist upward, exposing Claire's Tattoo.

ARTIST

And it was I who fashioned this very key so that you may return to us... Although it was a very clever, and very effective story.

CLAIRE

Can you help me?

Guardian looks to Artist nervously for his answer.

ARTIST

Of course. Art is a portal for the soul to other places. No longer can I deny my powers.

Artist's eyes roll back into his head and he stretches his arms out. The domed walls begin to paint themselves into a vivid outdoor landscape; a clearing surrounded by trees, a vast sky full of clouds followed by a Gateway! The landscape fills the walls until there is no perceivable trace of walls at all!

EXT. THE OLD GATEWAY - CONTINUOUS

The painted world has become real! Claire, Guardian and the Artist now stand before the Gateway again! The wind begins to pick up strength.

ARTIST

Through this door that leads to no place, yet to everyplace, one's soul is given the power to choose anyplace!

The ancient stone surface of the Gateway begins to paint itself into a lifelike image of 2 lovers!

GUARDIAN

Are you sure you won't stay?

Claire watches the Gateway's towering Statues transform from stone into lifelike painted flesh as brush stroke hair blows through ever accelerating winds!

CLAIRE

(without taking her eyes off statues)

I am needed in another life just as much as this one; a life far more different, but every bit as important.

GUARDIAN

Then... can I come with you?

Claire looks down to Guardian. A triumphant, loving smile streaks across her face.

CLAIRE

I don't know if you will understand me when I say this, but... I believe you are already there, waiting for me.

In the center of the Gateway sprouts a tiny Black Hole that expands into a DARK VOID! WIND sweeps wildly into its vacuum with an extra-dimensional HUM!

The Artist lowers his arms and turns back.

ARTIST

It is time.

Claire walks closer and looks cautiously into it's blackness, the raging wind becomes silent before it.

CLAIRE

(to herself)

All I have to do is step through...

She reaches her hand out into the void; it takes her breath away. Claire smiles; she is going home!

PARAGON (O.S.)

Clarity!

Claire, Artist and Guardian all turn to see Paragon standing behind them! Then, in every direction, an army of Resplendent Warriors emerge from beyond the clearing, the orange sun refracting through an ocean of gold and diamond!

PARAGON

Through that Gateway lies mortal pain, chaos and ultimately death. Stay here in Eternity, and I offer you heaven.

CLAIRE

It is tempting, such a promise... But I have chosen to brave a world of twists and turns for a while; for love.

(to everyone)

But I know that I shall return again. And when that time comes, I will be ready to fix what I leave broken here!

(looks to Guardian)

Trust me.

Claire turns back to the Gateway's ominous void, takes a last desperate breath and shuts tight her eyes as she jumps into the gateway!

PARAGON

(reaching out to her)

No!

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A SCREAM ECHOES and wakes Dante from his dream with a sudden start! He sits up in his chair, sweating profusely, breathing heavily; his eyes fall upon Claire; she still lies motionless.

Suddenly, Claire's eyes flicker open and closed!

Dante rushes to hover right above her; Claire's eyes flicker open again and roll around, trying to regain sight from the deepest of sleeps.

DANTE

Claire, Claire can you hear me, can you see me?!

Claire's eyes finally focus on him.

CLAIRE

(weakly)

D... Dante?

DANTE

Claire, you're back baby, you're alive! You're alive!

(ecstatic tears!)

I, I love you so much!

CLAIRE

(cracks weak smile)

Dante, I love you too...

Suddenly, with a small shiver of her body, her smiles fades, her eyes flicker again, roll backwards and close!

DANTE

Claire... Claire....

Stillness.

DARK VOID

Claire's eyes open again; confusion, panic! She is floating in the nothingness between worlds! Rays of light beam past her turning to stars and galaxies in the distance as her hair and dress blow in violent cosmic winds!

She looks to her feet and sees Paragon standing in a bright opening; the opposite end of the Old Gateway; he had caught her by her feet before she could slip all the way through!

INT. THE OLD GATEWAY - AFTERNOON

Paragon pulls Claire back into his reality with godly strength and holds her tightly before him!

PARAGON

I will do what I must Clarity, to  
protect you from your fleeting  
heart.

With a THUNDEROUS SWIPE of his fist he brings the gateway to an explosive ruin with an invisible force! It's falling debris violently begin to twirl like so many planets among a black hole.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Dante looks madly at Claire for any sign of life.

DANTE

Claire, stay with me...

Suddenly and ever so slightly, Claire's lifeless hands become even more lifeless, falling to their ultimate stillness like a light switch being turned off.

INT. THE OLD GATEWAY

Claire reaches out through Paragon's restraining arms to the Gateway as its remains are sucked in upon themselves and become no more!

CLAIRE

(weakly)

No...

Claire locks eyes with Guardian who looks on in disbelief.

CLAIRE

How could you have let this happen?  
I was so close...

Guardian is crushed. Paragon scowls at Guardian's attention.

PARAGON

Next, I shall bleed this world of  
everything that is unworthy of you,  
until it is but you and I.



## THE RESPLENDENT WARRIORS

Begin to march towards Guardian and the Artist from all directions.

ARTIST  
This isn't good...

Guardian finally snaps out of the shock of Claire's words with newfound resolve.

GUARDIAN  
Artist, take us as far away from here as possible!

ARTIST  
Yes, yes that would be most wise!

Artist runs his fingers through the air, green glowing lines of paint follow in their wake as the warriors descend upon them!

## CLARITY

Tries kicking and screaming to free herself from Paragon's grasp.

CLAIRE  
(to Paragon)  
No, it was all me! Spare them!

## RESPLENDENT WARRIORS

Collapse into a circle upon Guardian and the Artist! Their spears crashing, stabbing, obliterating everything before them!

## CLAIRE

Turns to face Paragon.

CLAIRE  
(disgust)  
You murderer!

GUARDIAN (FOX)

Stealthily crawls unnoticed between the crashing legs of attacking Warriors. He emerges from under the swarm of diamond and charges at Paragon who turns around just in time to be knocked over, freeing Claire!

Sharp little teeth snap violently at Paragon's throat until Guardian is thrown far against some ruins with ease.

CLAIRE

Is already running toward the new gateway; an image of a dark forest floating in the air.

ARTIST  
Go through Clarity!

The Artist is a mural painted on the ground, following along Claire's frantic footsteps.

CLAIRE  
Come with me!

He returns to his 3 dimensional self as he follows Claire through the image in the sky!

PARAGON

Gets back to his feet in time to see Guardian (fox) follow through the New Gateway before it closes and vanishes!

Beat.

Paragon throws his arms over in a rage, shattering all the Resplendent Warriors around him into galaxies of shimmering shards with a spreading concussion!

PARAGON  
No!

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

A Nurse walks in a near trot to a loud disturbance down the hall; a MAN madly CRYING out for help!

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She enters the room and witnesses Dante shaking Claire hysterically; pathetically trying anything and everything to wake her.

DANTE

No baby no, wake up, don't go, come back!

He turns quickly to the Nurse.

DANTE

Do something, get help, she's dying! We need to save her! Go get help!

NURSE

Sir, she is on life support, all her vitals are being sustained! What are you doing?!

DANTE

She was just awake, and then she was gone again! She died, she died, we need to bring her back!

NURSE

Calm down, you have no way of knowing that!

DANTE

I can tell, I felt her vanish from me!

Dante stops with a numbing realization.

DANTE

(to himself)

I felt her reject me... Then she was gone.

EXT. THE GREAT FOREST - DUSK

Claire lands roughly onto the only patch of soft grass in a dark gnarled forest, sunlight can hardly trickle through its dense twisted trees. This is THE GREAT FOREST.

Guardian and the Artist follow behind her, emerging from thin air.

CLAIRE

Artist. I want you to make me  
another gateway.

Beat.

ARTIST

I, I am sorry your Majesty.

CLAIRE

We lost him, now is my chance!

ARTIST

I am sorry but I cannot...

CLAIRE

I order you to make me that gate!

ARTIST

That is impossible, once a gateway  
is destroyed...

GUARDIAN

It is gone.

CLAIRE

What do you mean?! Just make  
another! Make a new one!

ARTIST

Your Majesty, no 2 works of art can  
ever be the same. A masterpiece can  
only be created once...

CLAIRE

But, you made it work just then,  
you made the gate come alive...

ARTIST

With the gateway destroyed, it is a  
forgotten work of art; it may no  
longer be experienced...

CLAIRE

But, I need to see Dante again, I  
need to be with him! I need to  
leave this place!

ARTIST

I am sorry my Queen...

CLAIRE  
(to herself)  
I can never go back?

She falls to her knees.

CLAIRE  
(something clicks)  
That means...

MEMORY FLASH - INT./EXT. DANTE'S SUV

Dante and Claire catch a glance into each others eyes for one last timeless moment. They both crack a smile at something unspoken.

GLASS

Explodes.

CLAIRE'S HEAD

Smashes against the dashboard.

EXT. THE GREAT FOREST

Hot tears stream down Claire's face.

CLAIRE  
I have died...

GUARDIAN  
(confused)  
What are you saying?

CLAIRE  
How could I have been so blind. How else would I have come here? To this impossible world? On Earth, I have died...  
(chokes up)  
And I may never go back.

Suddenly, a DISSONANT DRONE begins to emanate from a dark path in the depths of the forest, the sound of creeping shadows. Guardian and Artist notice it with a dreadful realization.

GUARDIAN  
Artist, why did you take us here?!

ARTIST  
You said to take us as far from  
Paragon as possible...

The DRONE creeps closer through the forest toward them, unstoppable.

GUARDIAN  
Well take us somewhere else!  
(tries to pick Claire up;  
she won't budge)  
Claire, get up, we have to go, it's  
not safe here!

ARTIST  
(afraid)  
It's no use, he surrounds us.

GUARDIAN  
Artist we can escape! We need to  
try! I need to protect her! I  
haven't come this far just to...

Guardian notices Artist's gaze and turns; The dark forms of Shadowed Warriors hauntingly emerge out of the woodwork in every direction.

Claire looks lovingly at her engagement ring, tears still streaming. She takes it off her finger.

CLAIRE  
It is from a world that no longer  
exists... Goodbye Dante.

Claire sets the ring on the ground before her.

Guardian and Artist stand petrified as the Shadowed Warriors hauntingly creep past, ignoring them completely. They slowly converge upon Claire like sensual nightmares, enveloping her in synchronized darkness. She does not resist.

GUARDIAN  
(too horrified to act)  
Claire...

Finally Guardian snaps out of it and desperately runs up to the dark shadow where Claire just sat...

GUARDIAN  
No! Don't go with them!

...Only To find an empty clearing and a sudden WISP of WIND. Claire has disappeared.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - MORNING

Stark reality. Dante walks silently with a nurse towards a door at the end of a hall.

INT. HOSPITAL CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Irvine sits at a desk in the small room studying papers with DR. NELSON, a large black Neurologist and MRS. CRANE, a female Social Worker. They stand as Dante is let in.

DR. IRVINE  
Dante, this is Doctor Nelson and  
Mrs. Crane.

Dante can manage no response.

MRS. CRANE  
Please Dante, have a seat.

Dante sits and waits.

Dr. Irvine takes a careful, painfully honest breath.

DR. IRVINE  
Dante... we have unfortunate  
news... Clarity's condition has  
regressed further.

DR. NELSON  
Following your request earlier this  
morning for an immediate EEG scan,  
Miss Miller was found to have a  
lack of any measurable electrical  
activity in her brain.

Beat.

DR. IRVINE  
Dante, it is presumed that the  
cessation of such electrical  
activity indicates the end of  
consciousness.

The doctors pause to allow Dante a response... He can say nothing; his millions of reactions written in his eyes.

DR. NELSON

Of course, the diagnosis of brain death must be rigorous in order to determine whether her condition is in fact... irreversible. Another test will be performed at least 24 hours from now to determine if this is the case.

DANTE

(weakly)

It is the case... I already know...

The doctors exchange glances.

MRS. CRANE

Dante, in leu of the absence of any medical directives, if Brain Death is the final diagnosis, Miss Miller's doctors will recommend that she be removed from her life support systems... However, given your engagement to her, Doctor Irvine has recommended that you be involved in this decision.

DR. IRVINE

At this time Dante, I would urge you to consider what you believe the best course of action for Clarity may be. We ask you, to prepare for the worst...

(sincerely)

I'm so sorry.

Dante stares through the floor. Through his eyes we are taken elsewhere, riding the rising DRONE of CREEPING SHADOW.

INT. DARKNESS

Claire lies motionlessly in the fetal position on a cave-like floor.

Catharsis emerges from the darkness and looms over her.

EXT. OUTSIDE DANTE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dante approaches his ruined SUV (which has been towed to the rear corner of the parking lot.) The passenger side door is a web of shattered glass amongst a pickup truck sized crater of steel.



INT. DARKNESS

Catharsis bends down next to Clarity and runs his hand along her sleeping chin and through her hair.

EXT. OUTSIDE DANTE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dante opens the bent trunk door with a a GRINDING SHUDDER and examines Claire's Portrait; a shattered wooden frame held impotently together by the canvas.

INT. DARKNESS

Catharsis picks Claire up lovingly and begins to walk.

EXT. STAIRS TO DANTE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dante carries the remains of Claire's portrait up the stairs to his apartment. He opens the door...

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

Catharsis steps into his vast underground sanctuary; the Inmost Cave. Resembling something like an underground Gothic cathedral of twisted earth eerily lit by strange phosphorescent plant forms and shallow pools of water.

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Dante walks into a modest, lived-in studio apartment. Half finished canvases dominate the far corner. To his side is his bed, the imprints of two bodies catch his eyes.

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

Twisting roots fabricate themselves into a bed and Catharsis places Claire lovingly onto it.

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Dante falls back into a chair and stares at the bed, still clutching the limp portrait of Claire in his hands.

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

Claire lies upon the bed of roots. She opens her eyes after some time, then slowly sits up and peers around the empty, dimly lit cavern. Silence.

CLAIRE  
I know you are here.

Her words echo, followed by more silence.

CATHARSIS (O.S.)  
Yes my love...

Catharsis steps forth from directly behind her, where but an instant ago, there was no one.

CATHARSIS  
I am here with you at last.

CLAIRE  
(refusing to look at him)  
What is this place?

CATHARSIS  
This is our Inmost Cave.

Beat.

CLAIRE  
(shivers)  
It's cold...

Roots grow straight up from the floor and ignite with a glance from Catharsis into blazing torches; Claire stops shivering. Catharsis slowly walks around the bed like a wolf stalking its cornered prey.

CATHARSIS  
(curiously stating)  
You are not afraid this time...

CLAIRE  
(feeling her naked ring  
finger)  
What do I have left to fear?  
Nothing further can be taken from  
me, I have already lost  
everything... I have died.

CATHARSIS

Clarity, here, death is powerless;  
for it is not our last heartbeat  
which kills us... it is our absence  
from one another.

CLAIRE

My death was the end for a great  
many things which I loved dearly.  
All that I desire has died with me.

CATHARSIS

You have merely been liberated from  
the burdens of your ulterior life.  
This is the world of our soul, our  
promised land. All that you desire,  
all that you love, lives here.

Claire finally glances at Catharsis for the first time.

CLAIRE

You are different than all the  
others... you speak of love... as  
if you might understand it.

CATHARSIS

(intensely)  
Yes, love...

Catharsis continues to circle Claire, with each sentence he  
comes closer, and closer.

CATHARSIS

Love is the passion that boils in  
my veins, for you. It is the hunger  
that aches within my core, for you.  
It is the infinite longing that  
drives my every thought, to you.

CLAIRE

Love is more than just desire...

Catharsis moves one last step closer, reaches out to touch  
Claire and look her directly in the eyes.

CATHARSIS

Of course; love is the road you  
traveled upon to ultimately arrive  
here; it is what brought you to me,  
for it is the very force that binds  
us together, you and I, whether we  
are worlds apart, or inches away.

Beat.

CLAIRE

What do you want from me?

CATHARSIS

I want you to complete your quest.

CLAIRE

But I have failed in my quest...

CATHARSIS

No; you have fought with all your heart, relentlessly; driven by the mightiest and truest of forces... And you have succeeded.

CLAIRE

You don't understand...

CATHARSIS

But I do. Your quest was to reunite with your one true love...

Now Catharsis practically whispers in her ear.

CATHARSIS

But you do not need to travel to another world to find me again. I have waited, here where time matters not, for your return.

Something clicks; Claire becomes speechless with realization. She studies his face, scrutinizing the look in his eyes, then slowly reaches out and touches his face.

CLAIRE

(gasps)

Is, is it really you?

He helps her hand along his face.

CATHARSIS

It is me.

CLAIRE

This is real?

CATHARSIS

This is forever real.

CLAIRE

You love me?

Catharsis takes her hand and places it on his heart.

CATHARSIS  
I love you so much.

Beat.

CLAIRE  
How much?

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Dante stares fiercely at his empty bed.

DANTE  
I love you more than everything  
else in this world put together.

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

CLAIRE  
More than yourself?

CATHARSIS  
I love you infinitely more than  
myself.

Claire lets out a deep, wet sob and clings to Catharsis. Her hands clench tightly to his robes. Catharsis lifts Claire's head back up, forcing her to look into his eyes again.

CLAIRE  
I, I thought I would never be with  
you again.

CATHARSIS  
Clarity, not even death may keep us  
apart.

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Dante walks toward his bed feebly, reaching out before him to someone who isn't there.

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

Claire's defenses are collapsing; finally they erupt into a rapturous kiss; the purging of restrained, swelling emotion.

They fall upon the bed, roll around each other, overflowing in the moment! The root bed erupts with blooming flowers.

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Dante lies on his bed alone, madly absorbed in the scents from Claire's pillow, clutching passionately to her sheets as if they are her body.

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

Claire's legs wrap around Catharsis's waist. She kisses him deeper and harder, becoming more and more unrestrained with every moment of contact. Claire suddenly pulls back to see his face again; something in his eyes excites a memory...

MEMORY FLASH - INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Dante acts out his lines like a warrior poet.

DANTE

I would make a new world, a perfect world. And I would wait there where time matters not until you join me, to live forever.

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

Claire thrusts herself back into his kiss and he tosses her onto her back wildly! This time Catharsis pulls back and Claire watches as he sheds the Black Wolf Hide from his shoulders; eliciting a second memory...

MEMORY FLASH - INT. ART GALLERY

Claire watches Dante as he makes his speech before the crowd. He stalls for a moment of uncomfortable silence; Claire follows his line of sight to Painting #2 which hangs upon the opposing wall; two wolves, one white, the other black, locked in a vicious battle.

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

Claire spots the Soul Shard hung around Catharsis's neck as he tosses aside the Wolf Hide. He thrusts himself back into Claire's kiss again as a third memory flashes...

MEMORY FLASH - EXT. DREAM SEQUENCE

The Man pulls a fantastic Glowing Gem from his head, then shatters it into 4 pieces!

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

Claire's eyes open as Catharsis's passionate kiss continues to intensify. She stops kissing back.

CLAIRE

No...

She suddenly pulls away. Catharsis stops like a wolf told to stop feeding mid meal.

CATHARSIS

No?

Claire stands up.

CLAIRE

This is not right...

CATHARSIS

Why?

CLAIRE

You. You are not right... You are not whole...

CATHARSIS

Clarity, with you I am complete...

He tries to embrace Claire again, but she shakes him off once more. Anger suddenly flares in Catharsis's eyes.

CLAIRE

No, you are not complete... You are but a fragment of him; just one of his many dimensions...

(to herself)

You split your soul apart to prove love would mend you back together...

(looks back to Catharsis)

You and the others; you are meant to be one!

CATHARSIS

(turns away in anger)  
The others are the parts of me I  
cannot live with.

CLAIRE

But you are wrong, they are the  
parts you will not survive without!

CATHARSIS

No! They are weak, they are  
worthless, they are lifeless! They  
do not know love as I do; I will  
never let them be a part of me!

CLAIRE

Then I will not be a part of you!  
(pauses, becomes  
heartfelt)  
I need to love all of you, not just  
the piece of you that stands before  
me.

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Something Clicks; Dante looks into his empty hands; at his  
empty bed; at Claire's tattered Portrait. He is all alone  
and entirely crazy, and he realizes it.

He backs away from the empty bed and catches a glimpse of  
himself in the mirror across the room. He moves closer,  
peering into his reflection, into his insanity... then  
screams as he smashes the mirror with his fist!

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

Catharsis stands still, a RISING SCREAM erupts in his head.

CATHARSIS

(to himself)  
I will destroy them! I will rid  
this world of every other...  
(looks up to Clarity)  
To be with you again.

CLAIRE

(shakes head in dismay)  
Guardian was wrong all along... It  
is not me who is in danger. It is  
not me who needs to be saved. It is  
you...



Catharsis picks up the Black Wolf Hide he had just taken off and looks at it as if it were his reflection.

CATHARSIS

Clarity, the only thing that can possibly equal my love for you, is my hatred of myself.

CLAIRE

What do you mean? No...

Roots and Vines creep from all over and wrap themselves around her in a consuming embrace. Catharsis pulls the Wolf Hide over his head once again.

CLAIRE

(trying to free herself)  
Stop! What are you doing?!

CATHARSIS

When I am finished, it will just be you and I left.

Catharsis turns to leave.

CLAIRE

This isn't the right way! You will only destroy yourself!

Catharsis disappears into darkness.

CLAIRE

Dante!

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DUSK

A HEAVENLY DRONE rises across the land once more.

The surface of the world looks to have been melted to glass; nothing organic thrives, just a surreal ocean of colorless crystal; anything that once flourished, now a frozen skeleton left to be trampled along the path of an endless army of advancing Resplendent Warriors. Paragon stops his march before the Great Forest, the last refuge of living things.

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Dante stands before his fractured reflection in the broken mirror; hand bleeding from shattered glass. He turns and looks madly out of his window to the setting sun;

just a blood red sliver peeking over the rim of the mountains surrounding Flagstaff, Arizona.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

At the peak of the mountain high above the Forest, Eternity's sun casts it's final rays upon the crystal world that opposes it; the enormous shadow of the mountain and the forest beneath it creeps toward Paragon's army like an unstoppable black tide.

EXT. THE GREAT FOREST

Guardian sits sulking on a rotten tree trunk. Nearby, Artist picks up Claire's Ring which sits sparkling on the forest floor. He contemplates it pensively as it casts spectrums of color across his face.

Suddenly, the OMINOUS DRONE returns from the depths of the forest; a great wind sweeps by; trees bend and crack; throwing Guardian from the stump; blowing the ring from Artist's hand!

They immediately take refuge from sight under the gnarled roots of a HOLLOWED TREE. Throngs of Shadowed Warriors pass by, marching towards the end of the Forest.

ARTIST

(whispers)

It has finally begun...

GUARDIAN

What? What's going on?

ARTIST

We finally declare war...

Guardian spots Claire's Engagement Ring on the ground where it just landed. He dives to grab it in between trampling footsteps, then is back under the hollowed tree in an instant, barely avoiding the sight of passing Shadowed Warriors.

GUARDIAN

(holding up Ring)

Now is our last chance! She'll be alone; we need to save her!

ARTIST

(nods)

I fear, it is our last chance for her to save us.

Artist traces his fingers through thin air, neon black tendrils follow in their wake, outlining a glowing hole before them. They jump through just before their cover is crushed and trampled by a stampede of Shadow!

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Paragon watches with electric anticipation; above him, his clouds storm with turbulence and lighting.

With an OMINOUS DRONE the approaching shadows become darker, more pronounced, into shapes of monstrous form! The Shadowed Warriors pull themselves up and out of the ground and spill endlessly from the mouth of the Great Forest!

CATHARSIS

Emerges from his front ranks and stands before his army; directly across from him, Paragon stands the same. They exchange glances, issuing their final unspoken threats.

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Dante lifts his hands to his head and pulls at his hair as his world spins out of control!

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

The two endless armies collide in the most violent contrast imaginable! The entire WORLD CREAKS and GROANS with the clash of these opposing forces!

DIAMOND SPEARS

Plunge through Shadowed hearts!

DARK TENDRILS

Rip apart gleaming carcasses!

SHADOWED WARRIORS

Spit flaming blood as diamond swords cut them open!

## RESPLENDENT WARRIORS

Shatter like glass as they are crushed by torrents of Shadow!

## INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Dante turns and smashes himself into the already shattered mirror again; pounding at it over and over with clenched fists! He picks up a chair and throws it into his WALL OF PHOTOGRAPHS! He punches a hole into the wall; throws a vase to the ground; tosses over his coffee table! His rage grows with every sip of destruction; like a wolf tasting warm blood!

## INT. THE INMOST CAVE

Guardian and Artist walk through thick darkness.

ARTIST

This is the deepest pit of our world...

GUARDIAN

All the more reason to save Clarity from this dead place.

Artist looks around the surrounding darkness with fear; unseen things can be faintly HEARD SHIFTING.

ARTIST

As long as we don't join her here.

GUARDIAN

(points)

Look...

Up ahead is the opening to the Inmost Cave; as they move closer, we can make out a human figure in the center of the cavern...

## CLAIRE

Hangs suspended in the air, as if lovingly crucified by an alter of thick roots which sprout beautiful, vivid flowers. She lifts her drooping, tear-stained face toward the HUSHED SHUFFLE of FOOTSTEPS.

WIDE ON OPENING

Guardian and Artist carefully emerge from the darkness and hide behind a stalagmite to survey Catharsis's lair.

GUARDIAN  
(worried)  
Clarity!

Guardian gets up and runs headlong toward Claire.

CLAIRE

At first looks relieved, then vigorously shakes her head!

CLAIRE  
Look out!

GUARDIAN

Immediately heeds Claire's warning and ducks just as Shadowed Warriors collide into the ground where Guardian would have been an instant later!

The Shadowed Warriors fall back to surround Guardian; there are 3, all monstrous creatures who tower over the small boy.

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - UP ANGLE ON DANTE

Towering over his broken picture frames much like the Shadowed Warriors over Guardian.

DOWN ANGLE ON PHOTOS

Images of Dante and Claire together; one picture clearly stands out, the PHOTO OF CHILD DANTE WITH PARENTS; everyone he has ever lost.

UP ANGLE ON DANTE

As he bends down to pick up the photo. He is barely able to face it, holding it as far away as possible; still he can't peel his eyes off it, so he crushes it in his fist.

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

The FIST of Shadowed Warrior #1 CRASHES upon the ground directly over Guardian! As it lifts, Guardian is nowhere to be seen!

CLAIRE  
Guardian!

Artist looks on in horror as if he just lost his friend, then finally runs into the Cave to join the fight!

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Now Dante turns to his wall of unfinished artwork, the photograph still clutched in his fist.

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

Shadowed Warrior #3 turns to confront Artist with a bone grinding growl!

ARTIST  
(stops, backs up  
apologetically)  
No, don't look at me, I mean no  
harm, I'm just an artist!

The beast charges, and Artist only barely dodges it with the sheer clumsy luck of tripping and falling at the right moment! He gets up and runs toward a cave wall as the monster rears back!

SHADOWED WARRIOR #1

Looks around ferociously for a sign of his kill; as it turns, we see Guardian desperately clinging to it's back. Shadowed Warrior #2 sees this and charges at #1; Guardian jumps off just in time as the 2 monsters careen into the ground together, then segue into a fight of their own!

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Now Dante stands in front of his artwork; too many canvas's displaying too many memories, too many hard truths...

On the ground before him lies Claire's Tattered Portrait; with her portrait ruined, all his other art must suffer the same fate.

He goes to the first, picks it up and smashes it into another! Pounds them into each other repeatedly until they are both pitiful shambles of cloth and wood. He continues to destroy the remaining paintings in any and every manner possible!

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

Shadowed Warrior #3 charges at Artist! Artist stands backed up against the cave wall and melts into a mural the instant before the monster careens into it, sending chunks of stalagmite and rock flying!

CLARITY

Screams as she witnesses Artist disappear behind the cloud of debris. She tries even harder to pry herself away to no avail.

CLAIRE

Damn it!

Then to her temporary relief, SHE SEES:

ARTIST'S IMAGE

As it moves along the wall, barely dodging the monster's subsequent attacks! Suddenly, Artist dashes along the wall to another corner of the cave; the monster follows it; this time Artist turns his painted self into a doorway and opens just as the beast plows through it, then it closes, shutting it in for good! The mural door paints itself back into Artist, who then emerges from the cave wall, looking rather exhausted and queasy.

ARTIST

(feeling his stomach)

That felt much stranger than I ever could have imagined.

GUARDIAN

Backs away from Shadowed Warrior #1 and #2; 2 hulking masses rolling around, each tearing, biting and digging into the others throats with teeth and claws;

flaming blood flooding out upon the ground. Their struggle slows as each monster gives its death blow. The fighting stops, and both finally lay still.

Guardian looks on horrified, then soberly turns and runs toward Claire.

CLAIRE

Guardian, I'm so glad you're here!  
Hurry we don't have a moment to  
spare.

Guardian starts ripping off Claire's living bindings.

GUARDIAN

I choked last time, I failed to  
protect the one thing I live to  
protect.

(smiles)

But I would never leave you alone  
in this dark place, even if it  
killed me.

As Claire is finally freed, Guardian hands her the Engagement Ring.

GUARDIAN

This is yours, I know it means a  
lot to you.

Claire is speechless for a beat.

CLAIRE

You have never failed me, don't  
ever forget that.

Artist joins the others as Claire is finally freed.

ARTIST

Well, I never imagined I had it in  
me.

(patting off the dust)

So... Now what?

GUARDIAN

Now we get as far away from this  
insane war as possible.

CLAIRE

No.

Guardian and Artist both look surprised.



CLAIRE

We go to it. We confront them, and we stop this madness.

GUARDIAN

You really are crazy! No; we let them destroy each other; we let them put each other out of their own misery and we never let them trouble us again!

CLAIRE

Guardian, there is no running from this; just as there is no hiding from yourself.

Guardian and The Artist sober at Claire's words.

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Dante tosses another ruined canvas to the ground; it lands among many others; only one painting now remains.

PAINTING #4

Hangs brilliantly upon the wall, bold and powerful; the Fibonacci Spiral; the first painting Dante ever created.

INT. THE INMOST CAVE - CLOSE ON MUTILATED SHADOW WARRIORS

One of them begins to twitch with life.

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Dante picks up a large SHARD OF BROKEN GLASS from the floor and walks towards Painting #4 slowly, painfully; to destroy this would be like taking a life; his own.

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

ARTIST

Guardian, Clarity speaks the truth.  
We must...

Suddenly from out of nowhere, monstrous claws tear straight through artist, splitting him in half in a shower of neon paint blood!

The glowing blood splatters across Guardian's aghast face; he looks up at the enormous beast he once thought dead. In but an instant, rage spills over him as he transforms into a fox and leaps at the monsters jugular, claspng down with his small but sharp teeth!

The Shadowed Warrior flails around wildly to shake the small fox from his throat but finally falls! Guardian lets go only after it take it's last breath.

He transforms back into his human form, looks upon his kill, at what he has done; his once indomitable innocence suddenly lost forever.

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Dante backs away from Painting #4 with the glass shard still in his hand. The painting has been sliced apart mercilessly.

INT. THE INMOST CAVE

Claire approaches Artist in shock, Guardian follows behind her, afraid to look.

DOWN ANGLE ON ARTIST

His torso lays upright in a pool of rainbow blood, separate from the rest of his body parts which lie scattered about in various places, far and wide.

ARTIST

(struggling to speak,  
coughing up paint)

You are right Clarity; you must  
save us from ourselves, lest we  
destroy what little beauty that  
remains in us.

(to Guardian)

Guardian, you must not run or our  
troubles will never end. You must  
face them, and find our harmony...

Guardian stares into nothing for a beat, then kneels down beside Artist.

GUARDIAN

I will Artist, I will...

The various colors in Artist's pool of blood begin to move about;

reds and yellows become the glow of the sun behind a mountain, blues and whites become the crystal wasteland of eternity. This is the FINAL GATEWAY.

Guardian and Claire look at each other and nod in unspoken agreement. Guardian descends into the pool of blood and becomes part of the image.

Claire kneels before Artist one last time, holding his hand.

CLAIRE

You will be reborn as you are meant  
to be... I promise.

Artist smiles at her words as his body melts away into paint. Claire picks up his Glowing Necklace that remains where Artist's head just was and takes it with her as she descends into the puddle.

CLAIRE'S POV

As her eyes sink below the surface, the world of paint morphs and swirls; brush strokes multiply and refine into more and more detail until Claire finds herself standing beside Guardian in a place all too real.

EXT. ABOVE THE BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Claire and Guardian look over the battlefield from a small hill on it's fringe. Below them, a scene from an otherworldly apocalypse; dead and dying forms extend as far as the eye can see and forever beyond; fires smolder over piles of dark ash; everywhere else lie mounds of shattered glass and mangled gold. Clouds of lightning mix with rising smoke and glow red from the dying rays of the set sun.

CLAIRE

Are we too late?

Beat.

GUARDIAN

No. We're right on time.

Below them, in the center of it all, 2 figures stand facing each other.

PARAGON AND CATHARSIS

Square off; their armies in ruin, their defenses collapsed, their flesh exposed, their wills finally ready to clash!

## PARAGON

Your pain, I will allow to spread  
no further, your hate must finally  
die; in Clarity's honor, I will  
purge your disgrace from this world  
and we will finally know peace.

## CATHARSIS

(shakes his head)

No longer will I let you strangle  
the life force from us; no longer  
may you smolder our passions; in  
Clarity's honor I will ensure you  
bury our love no deeper and we are  
finally set free from your  
emptiness.

## INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Dante still stands before Painting #4, now sobbing  
uncontrollably. He places the sharp end of the glass shard  
to his wrist, then SCREAMS ALOUD as he motions to plunge it  
in!

QUICK CUT TO:

## EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Paragon and Catharsis run toward one another and clash with a  
THUNDEROUS EXPLOSION!

QUICK CUT TO:

## INT./EXT. JAKE'S CAR - HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jake sits halfway inside his car, leg tapping anxiously,  
phone to his ear.

## JAKE

(waiting impatiently as  
phone dials)  
(MORE)

Yeah, dad it's me.

(interrupting)

Hey has Dante shown up to your  
place today?

(beat)

I've been lookin for him at the  
hospital all day; he was supposed  
to be here... Listen... I have bad  
news...

JAKE(cont'd)

(difficultly)

Claire probably isn't going to make it...

(extra long beat; nods painfully)

Honestly, I'm really worried about him, I have a bad feeling.

(closes car door; starts driving)

Will you just come wait at the hospital; I'm going to check his place.

Jake hangs up as he pulls out onto the street.

FADE TO:

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - SHORTLY AFTER

Jake pulls up behind Dante's SUV, the trunk is open, he must have been here. Jake jogs up the steps to Dante's apartment. The door is locked. Jake knocks on it.

JAKE

Dante, you there?

(knocks harder)

Dante, you there buddy?!

Jake tries to look through the windows but can only tell that a light is turned on.

JAKE

(pounds)

Dante, it's me Jake, you OK?

Silence. Jake turns around, confused and frustrated and starts to walk back to the car. Then he turns around suddenly and kicks at the door! It doesn't budge. Jake turns around again; he is probably just overreacting...

JAKE

Screw it.

He turns again and kicks into the door harder this time. It doesn't move. He kicks again with all his might and falls through as the door thrusts open!

INT. DANTE AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jake nearly falls onto his face. He gets up in disbelief; a miniature graveyard of mutilated artwork; picture frames and every manor of household item lie strewn about!

JAKE

Dante!

Jake runs to Dante who sits up against the wall beneath PAINTING #4, his head hanging low. Jake gets on the floor with him and gathers Dante in his arms desperately.

JAKE

Dante, you OK?!

Jake lifts Dante's head; it is bled of color.

JAKE

Buddy, buddy are you here with me?!

Dante's unconscious head moves slightly and he GROANS WEAKLY. Jake notices he has blood on his hands; he lifts up the wrist Dante still clutches onto revealing a bleeding laceration!

JAKE

Shit! Dante, what have you done?!

Jake lies Dante on the ground and takes off his own shirt, rips off a thick strand and starts to wrap it around Dante's wrist.

JAKE

Dante, I'm not my Dad, I'm not wise or full of experience. But when you need me, I'm here for you buddy.

Jake keeps applying pressure to Dante's wound as he dials 911 on his cell.

JAKE

I'm not gonna let this happen, not this way, not now, I'm not gonna let it.

CLOSE ON DANTE'S FACE

Cold beads of sweat dripping feverishly, eyes shifting beneath his eyelids in REM sleep. His face flinches.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DUSK

Paragon swings his Diamond Blade wide, Catharsis ducks under it and the blade strikes the ground with concussive force! Catharsis kicks Paragon who slides many meters away into a mound of his own warrior's remains!

Catharsis follows Paragon calmly as he pulls out an OBSIDIAN TOMAHAWK from beneath his Wolf Hide cape.

PARAGONS POV - UP ANGLE ON CATHARSIS

As Catharsis descends upon him wildly with the weapon!

PARAGON

Barely avoids the blow by pulling a fallen warrior's carcass over himself; he rises as his cover crumbles around him and swings blindly with his own blade knowing Catharsis will do the same; the 2 weapons catch; this time Paragon kicks Catharsis, sending him flying!

Catharsis recovers quickly and the 2 are right back at it!

ON CLAIRE

As she runs with Guardian (fox) across the ravaged battlefield toward the fight in the distance.

CLAIRE  
Stop fighting! Please, you have to stop!

ON CATHARSIS

His blow is deflected by Paragon but he continues his forward momentum and charges into him sending Paragon sprawling!

CLAIRE (O.S.)  
This isn't the way!

Catharsis looks up toward the noise.

CUT TO:

INT. DANTE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY MORNING - DANTE'S POV

White light slowly floods over darkness as his eyes open. This must be heaven. All he can see is blurry white light as his eyes slowly adjust.

DANTE

Looks as weak as someone who has just returned from the brink of death, but he still manages a slight smile as if thinking he is no longer part of Earth.

DANTE  
(softly)  
Claire?

He looks around with budding confusion; Claire is not here; he is in a strange white room. Suddenly he cringes in pain.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Catharsis, temporarily distracted by the sight of Claire, is pulled to the ground by Paragon and back into the fight!

INT. DANTE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Dante begins to notice the bandage around his wrist; the I.V. plugged into his hand; the gurney he lays on.

He tries to move his bandaged hand but only a few fingers work. He looks around in a panic, tears beginning to drip from his face. He isn't supposed to still be here! He gathers himself, nodding his head, planning his next move; then rips the I.V. from his vein!

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dante walks out his door quietly and shuts it behind him, then with extreme effort and pain, attempts to blend in as just another patient; each successive step a life-span too far.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Catharsis throws Paragon off him and they continue to clash!

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

Dante limps further and further, rounding a couple corners until he arrives at a room he knows all too well. He rests on the wall and looks around one last time before entering; he spots George and Jake far down the end of the hallway; they are talking to Dr. Irvine and do not notice him.



Dante looks upon them for a time and breathes in the moment; the only 2 men he calls family.

DANTE  
Goodbye my friends.

Dante enters the room.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Before Dante lies Claire; still kept alive only by the HUMS, BEEPS, WHEEZING and DRONES of her life support.

Dante grabs a chair and violently wedges it sideways into the door so it won't easily be opened.

He slowly approaches Claire, then kneels down beside her to look upon her face once more.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Claire arrives at the fight just as Catharsis has Paragon by the throat!

CLAIRE  
Stop, I command you, don't do this!

Catharsis refrains from punching Paragon and looks to Claire again.

CATHARSIS  
I can't stop.

Paragon grabs Catharsis as he looks away and reverses him to the ground!

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Tears flow freely down Dante's face.

DANTE  
Claire, I have come to join you...  
I cannot live here, with myself any longer...

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Paragon mounts Catharsis and right as he begins to stab downward, Guardian catches his arm, stopping the blade just before reaching him!

GUARDIAN

We must not destroy ourselves!

PARAGON

You fool!

Catharsis hits Paragon so hard it sends both he and Guardian flying!

INT. DANTE'S HOSPITAL ROOM/ HOSPITAL HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

Jake opens the door to Dante's room and steps in.

JAKE

Dante...  
(glancing around)  
You here?

Jake realizes not only is the bed empty; the I.V. is dripping onto the floor.

JAKE

Damn it!

He turns back into the hallway and nearly runs into George and Dr. Irvine who were following just behind.

JAKE

He's gone!

DR. IRVINE

That can't be, he wasn't supposed to be moved...

Dr. Irvine looks into the room confused. Jake and George look at each other as if coming to the same conclusion.

JAKE

Claire.

GEORGE

Where is her room?

Jake quickly starts down the hall.

JAKE

This way!

George follows as Dr. Irvine is just managing to put 2 and 2 together.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Dante kisses Claire's cold cheek; a goodbye to his mortal companion; a temporary goodbye to his soulmate.

He turns to the large WALL LENGTH WINDOW that connects Claire's room to the outside world. He throws open the curtains and looks outside.

He is on the 5th floor which looks out to a view of all of Flagstaff. Beyond the mountains in the distance, the glow of the sun is just rising.

Dante grabs another chair and with his final strength slams it against the large window, instantly cracking a spider web across the entire pane of glass!

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

Jake runs up to the door to Claire's room and tries to open it; it's wedged shut.

JAKE

(reassuringly)

Dante, come on man, I know you're  
in there... It's going to be OK,  
just let us in...

George and Dr. Irvine arrive and stop at the door, both a little out of breath.

EXT. ON CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

From outside, we see Dante through the spider web of glass charge TOWARD US with the chair! He swings hard, this time the chair CRASHES through the WINDOW sending sparkling shards and glass dust falling!

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

Jake and the others hear the CRASHING GLASS, and immediately try to force themselves into the room, but the chair continues to hold! Passing hospital staff stop at the commotion.

DOCTOR IRVINE  
(to hospital staff)  
Call security!

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Dante kicks out the remaining glass then leans his torso out into the sky, only hanging on by the window frame! He closes his eyes and welcomes the rush.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Catharsis starts toward Guardian and Paragon. Suddenly Claire grabs his arm holding his tomahawk and with all her strength tries to hold him back!

CLAIRE  
Please! This isn't the way!

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Dante turns his head from the window and looks back at Claire, face full of rapture!

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Catharsis looks down to Claire, absolutely exhilarated!

CATHARSIS  
My love! Can't you feel it?! This is the moment, we are about to be together! You and I forever!

CLAIRE  
(pleadingly)  
Not like this!

PARAGON

Gets up once again, furious that Claire holds on to Catharsis. He starts toward them but is held back!

Guardian (fox) tugs desperately at Paragon's foot with his teeth!

PARAGON  
You pathetic child!

Paragon reaches down and furiously grabs the fox by the throat; Guardian transforms into himself still in Paragon's grasp, struggling to get free as Paragon raises his sword!

CATHARSIS

Forces Claire off of him.

CATHARSIS  
(reassuringly)  
This is the only way, just one last gesture and it is but you and I.

PARAGON

Is about to skewer Guardian, but turns with surprise to see Catharsis in mid swing toward him!

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Dante turns back from Claire and looks down to the world below again. BANGING and YELLING issue from behind the door!

EXTREME CLOSE UP - DANTE'S FACE (SLOW MOTION)

We see Dante leaning forward out the window, then with his eyes closed he gestures to jump! WIND suddenly RUSHES upward, his hair blowing towards the sky! Is he falling?!

EXT. BATTLEFIELD (SLOW MOTION)

Catharsis's weapon descends toward Paragon. Paragon turns his blade from Guardian to Catharsis.

Claire suddenly steps directly into the path of both weapons, sacrificing herself, arms open wide to welcome the blows!

Her face suddenly goes numb, eyes open wide, mouth exhaling!

INT./ EXT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CLOSE ON DANTE'S FACE

His eyes open suddenly with inner change! The wind stops blowing and we realize he had not yet jumped! He pulls himself back into the room in disbelief.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Claire falls to the ground, the Diamond Blade stuck through her back, the Ebony Tomahawk thrust into her chest.

Catharsis and Paragon both look upon Claire in disbelief; nothing else matters anymore. Guardian is released and he immediately runs to Claire and holds her limp body in his hands.

Claire looks to the sky peacefully, still barely alive.

Catharsis and Paragon both join Guardian to hold Claire, there is no longer any differences between them; they share the same grief, but the same love, and it unites them.

The Soul Shards around each of their necks begin to pulse brilliantly; Claire still holds Artist's in her hand. The gems all begin to gravitate towards one another; converging into a single white light that consumes everything.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Suddenly the door is thrust open; the chair holding it toppling end over end.

Jake rushes into the room, followed by George, Dr. Irvine and more hospital staff.

They find Dante holding Claire's body in his arms on the floor; he cries with immense happiness; laughing between tearful sobs, staring in amazement up through the ceiling towards an unseen sky.

Jake, confused, moves to grab him, but George holds him back.

George looks upon the smile on Dante's face and happy tears fall across his own smile in understanding.

Jake notices his father's reaction, then looks back to Dante in wonder.

CLOSE ON DANTE

Holding Claire tightly, he looks down at her with all his love.

DANTE  
I know how the story ends.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Paragon, Catharsis and Guardian are no more; now only Dante holds Claire. He lovingly pulls the weapons from her; she weakly opens her eyes and looks at him.

CLAIRE  
(Smiles)  
Your love made you whole again.

DANTE  
(nods)  
I am truly complete, you saved me.

CLAIRE  
(embraces him)  
Together again.

DANTE  
We will never be apart Clarity; our  
love is creator; our souls are  
forever, and we are one.

They look into the vastness of each others eyes; come together in a kiss; stand still kissing as Claire's wounds are healed; the world glowing with the power of God. The Battlefield sprouts lush, green life; the clouds part; Eternity's sun showers it's rays upon them.

FADE TO WHITE.

THE END.