

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

CHTHONIC INC.

PILOT EPISODE

Written by

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**(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)**

OVER BLACK

The sound of waves lapping on the shore.

Something like seagulls squawking, but lower, not of this world.

FADE TO:

EXT. RIVER STYX - BEACH - DAY

Whitish-gray sand all around. A dense mist obscures anything else.

Beat

ORPHEUS, finely-featured but pale, sunken, BOLTS UPRIGHT, trying to breathe.

He starts choking.

Reaches into his mouth.

Pulls out a soggy, crumpled twenty dollar bill.

Stares at it, bewildered, then surveys his surroundings.

Touches his neck. There is a scar all the way around, below it the skin is discoloured.

A look of realization spreads across his face.

He gets control of his breathing, lets out a heavy sigh.

Collapses backwards onto the sand.

ORPHEUS (O.C.)  
(breathing heavily)  
Fucking... finally.

CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

EXT. RIVER STYX - BEACH - LATER

Orpheus is hobbling down the shoreline towards nowhere in particular. His body moves stiffly, awkwardly, as if he's forgotten how to walk. The mist is still impenetrable.

ORPHEUS  
(under his breath)  
Fucking nymphs... Good riddance...  
Tree hugging morons...

Stubs his toe on a piece of driftwood.

Contains the rage.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
(between groans)  
Teach them to... keep my fucking  
head... as a trophy...

One of the 'seagulls' heard earlier is sat on the sand in front of him. About the size of a goose, with a scaly crest down its back.

It gives him a quizzical look.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
What are you looking at?

He tries to shoo it away. All arms and legs.

It doesn't budge.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
Fine. Fuck you too.

It watches him pass.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
(back to himself)  
What did they expect? I wasn't gonna  
sing for a... gawking audience... I  
just wanted to... get out of there...

Something catches his attention in the distance.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
That's new.

The silhouette of a SMALL BUILDING can be seen in the mist. No details yet.

Orpheus limps closer.

Closer, until:

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
What... the fuck?

The mist gives way to a KIOSK with a flashing neon sign above it reading "COMPLIMENTARY SWIMMING BANDS! OUR GIFT TO YOU!"

CLOSE ON Orpheus' face, a mixture of confusion and dismay.

EXT. RIVER STYX - ARMBAND KIOSK - MOMENTS LATER

Behind the counter stands the KIOSK ATTENDANT, dead stare, beyond bored. A wall of armbands stands behind her.

ORPHEUS  
Uhh... Hello?

KIOSK ATTENDANT  
(robotic)  
Hello and welcome to the River Styx,  
you're gateway to eternal life. We  
hope your passing was amiable.

Orpheus stands limp, mouth agape.

ORPHEUS  
(gesturing to kiosk)  
What is all of... this?

KIOSK ATTENDANT  
Here at Chthonic Incorporated, we aim  
to serve. These complimentary  
armbands will see you safely across  
the Styx, without having to wait for  
the boatman.

ORPHEUS  
The boatman? Charon? He's still here?

The Attendant is snapped from her stupor.

Looks at Orpheus inquiringly.

KIOSK ATTENDANT  
You... know him?

ORPHEUS  
Of course I know him! I've been down  
here before! All be it, quite a while  
ago.

KIOSK ATTENDANT  
Been here... before?

Orpheus rolls his eyes.

ORPHEUS  
(flippantly)  
Uh huh. Believe it or not I'm  
Orpheus.

She goes wide-eyed.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
Yes. That Orpheus. You know, mythic  
bard of legend, blah blah blah. You  
can have an autograph...

He raises an eyebrow.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
...If you like...

He follows her gaze. She's staring at the twenty dollar bill  
poking out of his chest pocket.

KIOSK ATTENDANT  
You were buried... with money?

ORPHEUS  
Seems like it. Isn't that what's  
supposed to happen?

KIOSK ATTENDANT  
Apparently it's out of fashion in the  
over-world. Like, thousands of years  
out of fashion.

ORPHEUS  
But... how do they pay Charon?

KIOSK ATTENDANT  
They don't.

She gestures to the armbands behind her.

ORPHEUS  
Oh, shit.

He pulls out the bill. Inspects it.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
Wait, Charon takes this flimsy trash  
now? What happened to the Obol?

KIOSK ATTENDANT  
He'll take anything he can get these  
days.

ORPHEUS

So... I don't have to swim?

KIOSK ATTENDANT

Nope. Charon should show up soon.

ORPHEUS

Good. I'll just go... wait over there.

He points to the shoreline.

KIOSK ATTENDANT

Oh wait, I have to do the finishing bit.

She points above her.

Orpheus leans in, looks above the counter inside the kiosk.

Another 'seagull' is roosting in the ceiling beams.

KIOSK ATTENDANT (cont'd)

(quietly, almost  
mouthing it)

They're watching.

His eyes go wide. Oh shit.

He nods in tentative, alarmed agreement.

KIOSK ATTENDANT (cont'd)

(back to robot voice)

Thank you for choosing Chthonic Incorporated. We wish you a pleasant journey to the afterlife of your dreams.

Orpheus smiles, waves goodbye awkwardly.

Sidles away.

EXT. RIVER STYX - BEACH - NIGHT

Orpheus sits on the sand, next to the lapping waves. The mist is still thick.

He shivers.

ORPHEUS

'Should show up soon'... My ass.

A 'seagull' strolls past him, not taking its eyes off of him.

He watches it with a newfound wariness.

A foghorn blares.

Orpheus snaps to attention, surveying the water.

The foghorn again.

The sound of a sputtering motor in the distance.

THE SILHOUETTE of a small boat, a large person steering.

Gets closer, louder.

CHARON, a large, scruffy man in a tan suit two sizes too big, emerges from the mist in a dinghy. A small lantern sits at the front end of the dinghy.

He squeezes a small horn nailed to the railing. It blares once more.

Metres from shore, the engine chugs, sputters.

It dies.

The dinghy starts drifting toward the shore.

Orpheus looks on confused.

Opens his mouth to say something, thinks better of it.

Charon tries to control his rage, fails.

CHARON  
You've got to be fucking kidding me!

Slams his fist on the side of the dinghy. It cracks beneath the force.

EXT. RIVER STYX - BEACH - LATER

CLOSE ON the dinghy's outboard motor, now on the sand.

Charon yanks the starter cord furiously. It spits and sputters, but won't start.

Orpheus is stood next to him, watching on in resigned apathy.

Yanks again. Still nothing.

ORPHEUS  
I... I think we may have to try  
something else.

Charon yanks it even harder.

CHARON  
Fuck!

He slams the motor. The propeller falls off.

Orpheus winces.

CHARON (cont'd)  
Don't! Say. Anything.

ORPHEUS  
What happened to your paddle? Last  
time I was down here you got us  
across in minutes--

CHARON  
Please, don't remind me about the  
paddle.

Something clicks in Charon's head.

CHARON (cont'd)  
Hang on, last time you were down  
here? What d'you...

He looks at Orpheus properly.

CHARON (cont'd)  
Orpheus...?

ORPHEUS  
I was wondering how long it would  
take you.

CHARON  
The fuck are you doing down here?

ORPHEUS  
I died. Well, kind of. I've been  
living as a disembodied head for a  
few millennia, you know how it is.

CHARON  
You're havin' me on.

ORPHEUS  
No word of a lie, my good man.

Charon looks at him thoughtfully.

CHARON  
Sounds like a hell of a story.

He grabs a piece of driftwood that's floated onto shore.

CHARON (cont'd)  
This'll have to do.

ORPHEUS  
Do... for what?

He makes a rowing action with the driftwood.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
It's gonna be a long journey isn't it.

CHARON  
You can turn around and get some of those armbands, ya know.

ORPHEUS  
I'll take the boat.

Charon nods, bares a grin, a few teeth missing.

CHARON  
Good choice.

INT. RIVER STYX - CHARON'S DINGHY - LATER

The boat is surrounded by mist. The water that can be seen shimmers unnaturally.

Charon, slowly but surely, is rowing the boat with the piece of driftwood.

Orpheus sits at the other end, facing him.

CHARON  
So you're telling me, nymphs kept your head, to parade around?

ORPHEUS  
Yep. For two and a half thousand years.

CHARON

You must've seen a lot of change, in that time.

ORPHEUS

Unfortunately I wasn't in a position to see much of anything. Last thing I remember was... what are they called... bull...

CHARON

Bulls? As in cows?

ORPHEUS

No no, bull...dozers! They came and paved over the nymph's forest. I'd feel bad if it weren't for... you know... what they did.

CHARON

Bulldozers...

He scratches his chin.

CHARON (cont'd)

I should think Hermes would like some of those. Best keep that to yourself.

Orpheus tilts his head to the side.

ORPHEUS

Did you say Hermes?

CHARON

Oh my. I suppose you don't know, do you?

ORPHEUS

Evidently not.

CHARON

Big changes down here too. This isn't the underworld of the good ol' days. It's not the one you know.

ORPHEUS

How so?

CHARON

Hermes came here, maybe fifty years ago. Talking the big talk. Convinced Hades of a ridiculous scheme.

(MORE)

CHARON (cont'd)

A total overhaul. We all thought he was in over his head.

ORPHEUS

I take it Hades didn't? Fucking stupid old git...

CHARON

Aye. Hades may as well recast his throne in solid gold. They're filthy stinkin' rich.

He hawks up a gob of phlegm, spits it into the water.

CHARON (cont'd)

Completely made over the underworld, they did.

ORPHEUS

Hermes? Really? I didn't think he had it in him. Always seemed the toady type.

CHARON

That's what he wants you to think. That's how we got here. Now I'm stuck in this piece of shit, paddle-less, no less! What's a boatman without a paddle?

The boat hits something, rocks side to side.

ORPHEUS

What was that?

CHARON

Swimmer, I should expect.

ORPHEUS

A swimmer?

CHARON

One of the less lucky ones?

Orpheus timidly looks over the side.

A BODY floats along in the water beside them, suspended by brightly coloured armbands.

ORPHEUS

What the... shouldn't we pull him aboard?

CHARON

Oh, don't worry about them. What's gonna happen, he can't die again!

Charon lets out an ugly chuckle.

Orpheus isn't impressed.

The chuckles peters out with an awkward cough.

ORPHEUS

But--

CHARON

(flat)

Besides, if they make it ashore, it'll only be worse for 'em.

The mist thins a bit.

The boat is surrounded by FLOATING BODIES, bobbing along with the current.

ORPHEUS

Shouldn't we do something?

CHARON

Trust me Orpheus, if they make it on my boat without paying, it'll only be worse--

AN ARM grabs the side of the boat, rocking it. Water splashes.

CHARON (cont'd)

Oh for fuck... get back!

He tries slamming it with the end of the driftwood.

The arm grips on tight.

Another grabs the side.

A SWIMMER drags himself up from the water, head peering over the side.

He spits up water as he tries to hold on

SWIMMER

Please! You have to let me on!

Charon jumps to his feet. The boat is swaying considerably from all the action.

CHARON

(growling)

What did I say! No fare, no passage!

He stomps on the man's hands with his boot.

CHARON (cont'd)

Fuck off!

Orpheus looks on horrified.

The swimmer's head plunges beneath the water, but he hangs on.

SWIMMER

(sputtering)

Please! I can't be in here any longer, I beg you!

CHARON

Enough!

With a final stomp, there's a crunch, and the man's grip fails.

He screams in pain.

The sound quickly disappears beneath the waves.

Charon stares over the side, making sure he's gone.

Satisfied, he sits back down, re-adjusts his tie.

Clears his throat.

CHARON (cont'd)

Sorry about that.

Orpheus is at a loss, just looks at him open mouthed.

Charon tries to focus on steering, but keeps glancing at Orpheus.

CHARON (cont'd)

H-Hey, don't look at me like that.

Silence.

Charon clears his throat again.

CHARON (cont'd)

We'll be there soon.

CLOSE ON Orpheus' incredulous face.

INT. RIVER STYX - CHARON'S DINGHY - DAWN

It's getting lighter.

Orpheus' face hasn't changed.

CHARON  
Look, I was just doing my job,  
alright! Give me a break.

A very uncomfortable silence.

CHARON (cont'd)  
(desperate)  
I s'pose you don't want to talk about  
Eurydice then?

Something clicks in Orpheus' brain. He's snapped from his gaze. He leans forward, gripping the boat on both sides - the most animated he's been since he woke up.

ORPHEUS  
Wait, Eurydice is still here?!

CHARON  
Well she couldn't exactly go far  
could she? Given what happened--

ORPHEUS  
You don't need to remind me. I  
remember what happened. I... I just  
gave up hope... Where is she?

CHARON  
'Fraid I don't know that--

Orpheus leans in closer. The small boat rocks slightly.

ORPHEUS  
You've got to know something!

CHARON  
Sorry, I'm just the boatman.  
(whispering)  
Shouldn't have brought it up...

ORPHEUS  
Well, paddle faster! I need to see  
her!

Orpheus turns around, plunges his hands into the water.

Starts paddling, splashing around.

CHARON  
That's not gonna help!

ORPHEUS  
We've gotta go!

Charon spies something up ahead.

CHARON  
(to himself)  
Oh, thank fuck for that.  
(to Orpheus)  
We're here!

Orpheus turns around.

The mist dissipates, revealing THE UNDERWORLD.

Huge white skyscrapers, lit up with garish neon signs.

The largest one, atop the gate, reads "WELCOME! TO THE REST OF YOUR (AFTER)LIFE!"

It looks more like a Las Vegas than an after-life.

ORPHEUS  
You're is still in there... I'm gonna find you.

INT. AFTERLIFE ADMINISTRATION - CORRIDOR - MORNING

The corridor is an eery, perfect white. CHTHONIC INC. EMPLOYEES walk up and down, immersed in conversations and reading paperwork, staring at clipboards. Everyone is dressed in well-fitted white or grey suits. Some are clearly centaurs, harpies and other creatures from Greek mythology.

CLOSE ON EURYDICE - wearing a white, tie-less suit, stands by a water cooler filled with a viscous golden liquid - ambrosia - drink of the gods.

She looks composed, but timid.

She holds a cup under the spigot, starts pouring.

MEGAERA - wearing a shoulder-padded power suit - severe and piercing.

She strides up behind Eurydice.

Bumps into her with deliberate force.

The ambrosia goes all over Eurydice and the floor.

Employees walking past look at her with disdain. Some scoff.

MEGAERA

Oh I'm so sorry! I didn't see you  
there Eurydice! I'm such a klutz!

Eurydice is fuming. Thinks about slamming Megaera's stupid  
head against the wall.

Manages to restrain herself.

EURYDICE

You... walked straight into me,  
Megaera.

MEGAERA

It's not my fault you blend so well  
into the background!

Eurydice starts wiping the Ambrosia off her jacket.

She folds her arms. Gives Eurydice a real shit-eating grin.

MEGAERA (cont'd)

Missed a spot.

Eurydice keeps wiping.

MEGAERA (cont'd)

(pointing at her  
skirt)

And there.

She doesn't rise to the challenge. Keeps wiping.

MEGAERA (cont'd)

Wow... You really made a mess, huh?

EURYDICE

Cut the shit, Meg. We both know why  
you're being even more of an asshole  
than usual.

MEGAERA

Yeah, maybe because you got my  
promotion! You don't even care about  
it. You didn't even try!

EURYDICE

I'm very sorry all your dick-sucking  
didn't pay off.

That one stung.

Megaera steps up to Eurydice, towering over her.

MEGAERA

Hermes only chose you because your  
his little pet. Spineless little  
bitch.

Eurydice steps back.

EURYDICE

Back off. You're one to talk about  
spineless--

MEGAERA

You're just a pretty little office  
ornament for Hermes to gawk at.

Megaera sees something over Eurydice's shoulder.

She gets closer.

MEGAERA (cont'd)

(quieter)

You don't belong here, never have,  
never will. Watch yourself.

She immediately straightens up, plasters a smile on her  
face.

HERMES (O.C.)

Ladies!

HERMES - Mr. Smarm himself - thin but well groomed. His hair  
has slightly too much gel in it. There is something  
unpleasant about how he carries himself - far too confident  
in himself.

He strides towards the pair.

Eurydice looks to the ground.

HERMES

Friendly cooler chat is it?

He notices the spillage.

HERMES (cont'd)  
Oh no! Let me help.

EURYDICE  
No, no. I got it.

She turns her body away from him, takes a step back, starts wiping.

Hermes looks confused.

MEGAERA  
Just congratulating Eurydice on the promotion, sir!

An even shittier grin towards Eurydice.

HERMES  
(oblivious)  
Ah, very noble of you! Defeat is never easy, but you've taken it like a champ.

Megaera smiles at him through gritted teeth.

MEGAERA  
Thank you, sir.

HERMES  
Ah yes, emergency meeting later today. I can count on you to both be there?

Eurydice nods.

MEGAERA  
Of course, sir, happy to help.

HERMES  
Excellent! See you there! It's an important one! A new avenue of revenue!

He thinks for a second.

HERMES (cont'd)  
Hey, that had a ring to it, that'll be the new slogan!

MEGAERA  
It's great!

HERMES  
Yes, it is, isn't it?

He starts walking again.

HERMES (cont'd)  
(to himself)  
Avenue of revenue...nice.

Once he's out of earshot, Megaera's facade drops.

MEGAERA  
Watch--

EURYDICE  
Watch myself. Yeah, I get it.

Megaera's lips purse. She storms off.

Turns to Eurydice as she goes.

MEGAERA  
Be more careful next time yeah?

She turns around again.

Eurydice sighs heavily, part angry, part relieved.

Rests her head on the cooler.

EXT. GATES TO THE UNDERWORLD - MORNING

The gates are one of the few original parts of the underworld that remains - made of pure marble with gold filigree. They haven't escaped the neon onslaught however. The large sign seen before, reading "WELCOME! TO THE REST OF YOUR (AFTER)LIFE!" is even more gaudy and tacky up close.

A huge long line of people are queuing for the gates, snaking its way to the shore.

Orpheus and Charon step off of his dingy onto the beach.

Orpheus stares up at the gate, then to the line.

ORPHEUS  
I don't remember there being a queue last time.

CHARON  
Lot has changed. Under new management, after all.

ORPHEUS  
So, what happens now?

CHARON  
You'll be processed, at some point, I  
imagine.

ORPHEUS  
At some point?

Charon points to a sign at the start of the queue. It reads:  
"WAITING TIME AT THIS POINT - 3 YEARS"

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
Fuck. Shit. There's gotta be another  
way, right? I'm not waiting another  
three years to see Eurydice.

CHARON  
Well technically there is, but I  
don't think you have the...funds.

ORPHEUS  
I'm not getting any change out of  
that twenty I gave you, am I?

CHARON  
Yeah...No...

ORPHEUS  
Great. Just great.

As they converse a uniformed GATE GUARD runs towards them.

CHARON  
Ah. That was the third option. I just  
didn't want to get your hopes up.

The guard stops in front of them, panting.

GATE GUARD  
Orpheus? Orpheus of Thrace?

ORPHEUS  
Yes?

GATE GUARD  
You've been given special  
dispensation, fast-tracked entry to  
the afterlife! Come with me please.

ORPHEUS  
And I don't have to pay?

GATE GUARD

No sir, not on account of your...  
history with the place.

ORPHEUS

Good. Charon, I will see you round.

He holds out a hand.

CHARON

Aye. Good to catch up.

He shakes Orpheus' hand.

Orpheus grips it tightly, winks.

EXT. GATES TO THE UNDERWORLD - LATER

Orpheus trudges through the sand towards the gate, next to the line of people, cordoned off to the left gate. All types of people are in there - young, old, Christian, Hindu, Zoroastrian, you name it.

They all look at him with disgust, disdain.

Orpheus doesn't know where to look, or put his hands.

One of them pipes up.

EMACIATED MAN

What did he do what makes him able to  
skip the line?

Those around him murmur their support.

GATE GUARD

Ignore them.

Another person, further down the line, does the same.

NINETEENTH CENTURY NOBLE

It's not our fault we weren't told  
the condition of our charges before  
we got down here to this despicable  
place!

More agreement from the line.

The guard stops in front of the noble.

GATE GUARD

Quiet! The lot of you! Else you'll  
get put to the back of the line!

That shuts them up.

They are nearing the gates now.

A commotion can be heard from the front of the queue.

EIGHTIES ROCKER

Wake the fuck up you lazy asshole!  
I've been here for years!

Orpheus and the guard get closer. The GUARD ATTENDANT is  
fast asleep in his booth.

EIGHTIES ROCKER (cont'd)

He's pretending he can't hear me.  
Come one!

He starts slamming the side of the booth.

Still fast asleep.

GATE GUARD

Ah, jeez. Probably one of Hypnos'  
irreversible 'pranks'. Real funny.

Orpheus looks on at the commotion.

ORPHEUS

Charon told me the whole point of  
this new system was 'efficiency'.

GATE GUARD

Yeah, if you got the money.

ORPHEUS

Seems harsh.

GATE GUARD

I don't make the rules.

Orpheus looks him up and down.

ORPHEUS

Evidently not.

Lets that hang for a second.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
I would like to meet the people who  
do though.

GATE GUARD  
And you'll have your chance soon.  
Through here.

He gestures to the right gate.

They walk up to it, and it slowly swings open.

The line next to him starts moaning, shouting, heckling.

They start pushing against the barrier. The guards close in  
on them, batons in hand.

GATE GUARD (cont'd)  
(shouting over people)  
Head to processing, admin will show  
you the way.

Orpheus keeps his head down, starts walking through, stops.

Looks back at the line.

ORPHEUS  
I don't suppose this special  
dispensation has any other... perks?

The Gate Guard looks slightly perplexed.

GATE GUARD  
I mean... Yeah?

ORPHEUS  
Good.

He points to the Nineteenth Century Noble.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
You.

Points to the Emaciated Man.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
You.

Points to the Eighties Rocker.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)  
And you.

GATE GUARD

What are you...

ORPHEUS

You're coming in with me.

The Gate Guard has gone pale.

GATE GUARD

I... Ur... Sir you can't...

ORPHEUS

Oh I'm sure it'll be fine. Just tell  
your boss it was me.

(to the three he  
picked out)

Come on then!

They waste no time vaulting the barrier.

The line starts cheering, clearly realise they're all still  
stuck there, start booing again.

Orpheus, The Noble, The Emaciated Man, and the Eighties  
Rocker head through the gate, the latter three whooping and  
cheering, oblivious to the line.

The Gate Guard looks like he's about to collapse.

INT. HADES' BOARDROOM - DAY

The room is a pearly white, with all the trappings of a  
traditional boardroom. Stark, pointy design.

HADES, bulky, surly and authoritative, enters, walks over to  
his chair at the head of the table, sharing a laugh with  
Megaera, who sits next to him. Cerberus, a three-headed pug,  
follows closely behind. At the other end sits Hermes, with  
Eurydice at his side, waiting for him.

Hermes beams at Hades.

HERMES

Glad you could make it sir!

Hades nods politely.

Everyone looks at ease and comfortable, except Eurydice.

HADES

So then!

He opens a large binder in front of him with a thud.

HADES (cont'd)  
What's my number one innovator got  
planned now!

Hades gives him the finger guns.

Hermes grins.

HERMES  
You're gonna love this one, sir! So,  
you know we currently have a...  
complimentary policy when it comes to  
the swimming armbands?

HADES  
That I do.

HERMES  
Well, I was sat in my office,  
thinking hard, as always, and the  
thought came to me:

He stands up. Gestures widely.

HERMES (cont'd)  
What if, we started charging for the  
armbands.

No one looks particularly impressed.

Hades looks thoughtfully for a second.

HADES  
Surely though, the reason they have  
to use the armbands in the first  
place is because they can't pay the  
boatman?

HERMES  
Of course, you're so, totally right,  
sir. But, it won't cost them money...  
oh no...

Hades leans forward.

HERMES (cont'd)  
They pay off their debt...

He walks over to a covered whiteboard.

Yanks the cover off of it.

Underneath lies a diagram of an eight-laned road, next to a river labeled 'Styx'. It very crudely goes upwards towards a cloud labeled 'Olympus'.

HERMES (cont'd)  
With their labour! Building this  
road! A superhighway to Olympus!

Hades studies the whiteboard, tugging at his beard.

HADES  
That's... genius! I love it!

MEGAERA  
What a visionary idea!

Eurydice sinks into her seat, holding something in.

HERMES  
That way, they get the privilege of  
spending eternity here, and, we get  
to open trade links with our cousins  
up there! Plus, once the road is  
built, they can manufacture vehicles!

He points to the ceiling.

HADES  
This is beyond ambitious. I'm  
impressed!

Eurydice is shifting around, clenching and un-clenching  
fists.

Megaera looks at her, reveling in her suffering.

MEGAERA  
Got something to add to the pitch,  
hun?

CLOSE ON Eurydice's reddened face.

INT. AFTERLIFE ADMINISTRATION - PROCESSING OFFICES - DAY

A PEARLY WHITE OCEAN of small office blocks, bustling with  
employees and departed souls.

There's stacks of paper everywhere.

Everyone looks busy.

Orpheus is sat in one of the blocks, opposite an OFFICE CLERK working at a terminal.

Orpheus' leg bounces up and down.

OFFICE CLERK  
Okay so, name?

ORPHEUS  
Orpheus.

The clerk taps away.

OFFICE CLERK  
Place of origin?

ORPHEUS  
Thrace - how long is this going to take?

OFFICE CLERK  
Date of birth?

ORPHEUS  
A long time ago, look do I have to do this?

OFFICE CLERK  
Sorry, long time ago won't--

Orpheus slams his fist down on the desk.

The clerk jumps.

The general murmur dies down.

He realises his anger, looks a bit surprised.

ORPHEUS  
(hushed)  
Look, today's been a really, really long one. Could you just give me a free pass?

OFFICE CLERK  
Sorry I--

ORPHEUS  
Well what was the point of me getting special dispens-whatever!

The clerk perks up.

OFFICE CLERK  
Special... dispensation?

ORPHEUS  
That's the one.

The Clerk's eyes go wide.

OFFICE CLERK  
Oh... oh no...

ORPHEUS  
Is... it bad?

OFFICE CLERK  
Not for you... If they find out I  
held you back... my job...

ORPHEUS  
I see. Tell you what, if you go get  
Mr. Bossman and tell him I'm here, I  
won't mention you're little...  
mishap.

The Clerk nods nervously.

OFFICE CLERK  
Yes, right away, sir! I'll... I'll  
tell him to meet you in the waiting  
room!

He stands up, rushes away.

CLOSE ON Orpheus' smirk.

INT. HADES' BOARDROOM - DAY

Eurydice can't hold it in any longer.

EURYDICE  
This all sounds good and well,  
except, they don't get to spend  
eternity here, do they?

They all look over to her, genuinely shocked that she'd  
spoken.

HERMES  
(gritted teeth)  
Eurydice, darling, what did I say  
about interrupting meetings--

EURYDICE

Am I the only one who can see how ridiculous this whole thing is?

HERMES

We can talk about this later--

HADES

Let her speak, Hermes.

Hermes sits down sheepishly.

EURYDICE

The whole armband thing to begin with, it's insane! Haven't you seen the amount of bodies floating in the Styx?

HADES

What do you suggest to remedy this then?

EURYDICE

Why don't you just let people in? You know, free of charge?

Silence.

Hades starts laughing. Heartily.

Megaera follows suit.

Then Hermes, awkwardly.

Eurydice goes even redder.

Hades wipes a tear from his eye.

HADES

Oh, Eurydice. I didn't know you had it in you. Who knew you were so funny? You should pipe up more often.

Hermes gives her a malicious look.

HERMES

Yeah. A real joker.

Megaera is loving this.

There's a knock at the door.

HADES

Come in!

The Office Clerk dealing with Orpheus peeks his head round the door.

OFFICE CLERK

Sir, there's a... special visitor to see you over in admin.

HADES

Ah yes, I've been expecting an esteemed visitor.

OFFICE CLERK

Yes, and he's very eager to meet you. If you could go and see--

HADES

Not to worry, I'll get on it now!

Hades starts packing up his binder.

The Clerk hovers by the door.

OFFICE CLERK

Oh and, Hermes, sir, front desk called. Charon... wants a meeting with you...

Hermes rolls his eyes.

HERMES

Again? I thought he'd already used his 'emergency meeting'?

OFFICE CLERK

I checked the records sir, and it's been a century, so he is entitled to another.

HERMES

Oh for... the things we do for our employees, eh? Tell him to meet me in my office.

OFFICE CLERK

Yes sir.

He nods politely and closes the door.

HADES

Well, it appears this meeting is adjourned. Schedule another one though Megaera, I like where this is going.

He smiles at Hermes.

HERMES

Pleasure as always sir.  
(to Eurydice)  
Oh, and can you get another round of ambrosia on the go?

INT. AFTERLIFE ADMINISTRATION - WAITING ROOM - DAY

The room is dimly lit, windowless, clinical.

Orpheus is sitting on a plastic chair, alone.

He is fiddling with a locket, opens it.

A sketch of him and Eurydice in ancient Greek dress. They both look very happy.

Closes it.

Rubs his temples.

Heavy, slow footsteps outside.

The door swings open.

Hades enters, beaming.

HADES

Orpheus! It's been too long! How are you?

Orpheus stares him down.

HADES (cont'd)

Well, how about somewhere... more private?

Silence.

HADES (cont'd)

If you're willing, come to my office and we can iron out any differences we have. How does that sound?

Orpheus stands up.

ORPHEUS

Lead on.

INT. HERMES' OFFICE - DAY

Hermes opens the door to his office, walks in.

The office is bursting with antiques, wall hangings, desk gadgets etc.

Charon is sat waiting opposite his desk, in a chair slightly too small for him.

Hermes turns on the charm.

HERMES

(sitting down at desk)

Charon, my man! What can I do for you?

CHARON

You know exactly what I want. What I need.

HERMES

You might have to elaborate.

Charon rolls his eyes.

CHARON

My boat! It's packed in. Again! You need to sort this out, or else--

HERMES

Or else what? Our... surveillance system showed us quite clearly that you broke it. Smacked it so hard the propeller came off--

Charon leans forward.

CHARON

Oh, cut the shit you greasy bastard! Why do you think I was wacking the damn thing! It broke down!

HERMES

Come now, Charon, no need to get worked up. I'm just telling you what happened.

(MORE)

HERMES (cont'd)  
Or rather, what will have happened if  
you keep acting like that.

CHARON  
H-Hold on--

HERMES  
(counting on his  
fingers)  
Destruction of company property. Late  
maintenance notice. Flat out refusal  
to use the company slogan upon  
meeting a customer. If I had to tell  
Hades about any of that...

CHARON  
You son of a bitch.

There's a knock at the door.

MAINTENANCE WORKER (O.C.)  
Maintenance, sir!

HERMES  
Ah, you're just in time. Come in!

INT. AFTERLIFE ADMINISTRATION - CORRIDOR - DAY

Eurydice is at the ambrosia cooler, a whole trolley of cups  
to fill. She fills a cup. She is tense, agitated.

She spots someone - a man sleeping on a bench.

She hesitates, puts the cup down and heads over to him.

She sits down next to HYPNOS - thin and permanently sleepy.

EURYDICE  
Hey... Hypnos.

Tries shaking him awake. Doesn't work.

EURYDICE (cont'd)  
Hypnos!

Looks around. Shakes him again.

EURYDICE (cont'd)  
Oh, come on...

Clicks her fingers in his ear.

EURYDICE (cont'd)  
(mumbling)  
Why are you in charge of the  
records...

Looks around again. No one there.

Slaps him on the face.

He jolts awake.

HYPNOS  
(bleary)  
No thank you, I just ate.

He comes to his senses.

HYPNOS (cont'd)  
Eurydice? What is it?

EURYDICE  
Do you know anything about this  
'esteemed visitor'?

He scratches his chin.

HYPNOS  
Maybe? Someone came through on the  
database this morning--

EURYDICE  
Can you show me?

HYPNOS  
Well the entry was blank...

EURYDICE  
Shit... Why would it be blank?

HYPNOS  
Well, might be that they didn't want  
to cause a stir. Could be that.

EURYDICE  
Hades said he was meeting someone in  
the waiting room.

HYPNOS  
Okay, well if he is... controversial  
enough to warrant a blank record... I  
imagine they didn't stay there.

EURYDICE

You reckon they could be in the penthouse?

HYPNOS

It's entirely possible.

EURYDICE

Okay, thank you. Thank you.

He is fast asleep, snoring again, instantly.

EURYDICE (cont'd)

Jeez...

An employee is coming down the corridor.

Eurydice quickly gets back to the ambrosia cooler.

Starts filling cups as quickly as possible.

INT. HADES PENTHOUSE - DAY

The penthouse is at the top of the tallest building in the underworld, overlooking it. It is decorated cleanly, not a single item out of place.

Hades is sat in a luxurious chair at his desk, Cerberus sleeping in his lap. Hades strokes his idly.

Orpheus is sat opposite, staring coldly.

HADES

Now, Orpheus, I know we have a... colourful past.

ORPHEUS

Don't try and dress it up. You tricked me. Forced Eurydice to stay down here.

HADES

I did no such thing. We laid out very clear rules, and you broke them.

ORPHEUS

That's not fair! You made it all up on the spot!

HADES

I remember it differently. But that's the problem wit ancient history.

(MORE)

HADES (cont'd)

It's ancient. And personally, I just want to forget it.

ORPHEUS

Easy for you to say. It's been millennia, asshole. Millennia without her!

HADES

Orpheus, let's deal with this--

ORPHEUS

And what the hell has gone on here? People floating in the Styx? Charon's shitty boat?

HADES

Those are simply... by-products of necessary changes to our operation. More people, more deaths, more paperwork. It's just the way things are. Look, I'm willing to let everything go. Including your conduct during this meeting.

ORPHEUS

I just want to see her.

HADES

And you can.

Orpheus doesn't buy it, scowls.

ORPHEUS

What's the catch?

HADES

There isn't one. I admit, maybe I was in the wrong all those years ago. I just want an agreement which puts all that to bed.

Orpheus leans back.

ORPHEUS

I'm listening.

HADES

We send you on your way to Elysium. No strings attached. You can be with Eurydice for the rest of eternity.

ORPHEUS

And in return?

HADES

Nothing really, just, don't speak out about the way we're running things. Simple, no?

ORPHEUS

That can't be it.

HADES

Oh, it is. I just want to forget this whole mess.

He almost sounds genuine.

ORPHEUS

If this is a trick... you know that massive line outside? I can rile them up good.

He points to his throat.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)

I could start a full on fucking revolution. I could have this place ripped apart stone by stone, neon sign by stupid fucking neon sign.

Hades gives him a sour glance, but keeps his cool.

HADES

Just think about it, okay?

INT. HERMES' OFFICE - DAY

The door opens and two uniformed maintenance workers carry in a wooden case.

HERMES

Ah, there it is! Perfect! Just up here boys, above my desk.

He points to the empty space on the wall above him.

They swing the case round to reveal CHARON'S PADDLE, beautifully decorated and filigreed, in a display case.

Charon is slack-jawed.

CHARON

My...Paddle...

The workers move it to the wall.

Place it.

MAINTENANCE WORKER

Like this sir?

HERMES

Perfect. Thank you.

MAINTENANCE WORKER #2

No problem, sir!

Hermes stands up, admires it.

The maintenance workers leave.

HERMES

A real piece of artistry, don't you think?

INT. AFTERLIFE ADMINISTRATION - CORRIDOR - DAY

Eurydice has all but filled up the entire trolley with ambrosia.

EURYDICE

Thank fuck for that.

She hesitates, looks around. No one there, except sleeping Hypnos.

She pushes the trolley next to him.

Grabs his limp hands, places them on the handlebars.

EURYDICE (cont'd)

Sorry, Hypnos.

Makes her way down the corridor.

Pads along, as quiet as possible.

Turns the corner.

Makes it to the elevator.

Mashes the button a couple times.

It dings, empty.

She enters.

INT. HADES' PENTHOUSE - DAY

Orpheus scratches his head.

ORPHEUS  
I just... why would I believe you  
after what happened?

HADES  
We've been through this! That was a  
long time ago. This is now.

ORPHEUS  
The way you run this place doesn't  
exactly scream trustworthy.

HADES  
That's a low blow. Look, if you like,  
I can send you back to processing and  
where they'll have to verify your  
date of birth, see if your story  
checks out... Oh, and don't get me  
started on the actual judgment of  
your soul thing.

ORPHEUS  
Alright, I get it. Can I just have a  
moment? Outside?

HADES  
By all means.

Orpheus nods, stands up, walks over to the door.

INT. HERMES' OFFICE - DAY

Charon is sat very still, staring up at his paddle.

CHARON  
You... You had it all this time...

HERMES  
It was in storage somewhere. You know  
how it is, things get lost all the  
time.

Charon grips the arms of his chair.

CHARON

You said it was gone. Destroyed.

HERMES

Well, that was what we thought I suppose. Can hardly keep track of all the relics in this place--

Charon slams his fists into his chair, stands up.

CHARON

Relic?! That's my fucking paddle! All of the bullshit with the motorboats, it was for nothing!

Hermes crosses his legs.

HERMES

Yes. It's a relic. Just like you. And you'd best sit down unless you want to be stuffed into a display case too.

Charon relents. Crashes down into his chair.

HERMES (cont'd)

Truth is, I would've gotten rid of you a long time ago, were it not for old Hades' soft spot for you. So don't give me an excuse.

CHARON

You've made a terrible mistake.

He stands up, stomps over to the door, swings it open.

CHARON (cont'd)

Mark my words.

Slams the door shut behind him.

Hermes sits still for a moment.

Then relaxes, leans back in his comfy chair.

Cracks his knuckles.

Presses the button for the intercom on his desk.

HERMES

Hello? Yes, send a cleaner up here, a...guest has left a rather unsavoury smell.

INT. PENTHOUSE CORRIDOR - DAY

The elevator reaches the top floor, dings, opens.

Eurydice steps out warily.

The corridor is made entirely of marble. It's garish.

The elevator is called down again.

It's silent.

She creeps down the corridor, pokes her head round the corner.

She gasps.

Orpheus is stood down the hall, outside Hades' office, facing away from her, head in hands.

EURYDICE

(whispering)

That's not...

The elevator dings again.

Eurydice turns around.

Out steps Megaera, shaking her head.

Eurydice freezes.

MEGAERA

Tut, tut, tut.

EURYDICE

Not now Megaera!

MEGAERA

You don't have clearance to be up here. Either you come with me or I'm telling Hermes.

EURYDICE

...Shit.

Megaera beckons her with a finger.

Eurydice hardens.

EURYDICE (cont'd)

You know what? Fuck off. You don't have clearance either!

Megaera's eyes go wide, then she smiles, almost impressed.

MEGAERA

You're right. I don't. But I'm pretty sure I know who Hades will favour if it comes to it... And it's not gonna be you...

She steps up to Eurydice.

EURYDICE

What are you gonna do? You can't lay a fucking finger on me.

MEGAERA

Is that right?

EURYDICE

Hermes will... Will kill you.

Megaera grabs onto Eurydice's arm, quicker than she can react to, and hauls her to the elevator.

Eurydice plants her heels into the smooth floor.

No use.

EURYDICE (cont'd)

Hey! Get off! Me!

Orpheus hears the shout, looks around, wide-eyed, catches a glimpse of someone turning, moving around the corner.

Goes to investigate.

The penthouse door opens.

Hades exits.

HADES

So, have you made up your mind?

ORPHEUS

Who... Was that?

HADES

Who was who?

ORPHEUS

There was someone around the corner...

HADES

Probably just a cleaner or something.  
So, have you decided?

ORPHEUS

I...

He shakes off the thought.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)

Yes, I suppose. It's a deal. Although  
it's not like I had much of a choice.

HADES

Good man! I'll show you to the  
elevator.

ORPHEUS

You have an elevator for that too?

HADES

Innovation is all the rage!

ORPHEUS

Of course. Lead on.

They head to the other end of the corridor.

Megaera has dragged Eurydice into the elevator. She presses  
a button. The doors start closing.

Eurydice studies her carefully. Waits.

Wrenches her hand free, darts out of the elevator before it  
closes.

MEGAERA

Bitch!

The elevator closes, Megaera inside.

Eurydice runs up to the corner, peers around:

They're gone.

INT. AFTERLIFE ELEVATOR - LATER

The elevator room is lavishly and classically decorated, the  
top half with light, heavenly scenes, the bottom half with  
dark, hellish scenes.

Orpheus walks in behind Hades.

HADES

Here we are!

Orpheus looks at the elevator. At the ceiling theirs a sign that reads 'Elysium', on the floor a sign that reads 'Tartarus'.

HADES (cont'd)

Have everything you need?

ORPHEUS

I... I guess?

HADES

Well then, step on in! You'll be with Eurydice soon.

Orpheus walks tentatively towards the elevator.

The doors open. The inside is just as decorated.

He steps in.

HADES (cont'd)

Have fun up there!

The doors close. The elevator clunks into action.

It starts moving DOWN.

ORPHEUS

Hang on, wait!

He smacks the glass doors.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)

You fucker!

Hades waves through the door.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)

Let me out!

He disappears out of view.

Hades sighs.

HADES

Poor guy. Didn't really deserve that. Oh well.

Hermes enters behind him.

HERMES

Is it done?

HADES

We won't be hearing from him again.

Hermes smirks.

HADES (cont'd)

Why did you want him down there so bad?

HERMES

He would've been a nuisance, gotten in the way of everything we have planned.

INT. TARTARUS - DAY

The elevator comes screeching to a halt in a green-lit room.

The doors open.

Orpheus tumbles out.

Picks himself up.

ORPHEUS

You've got to be fucking kidding me!

He slams the wall.

Takes in his surrounding.

Pipes line every wall. No windows to be seen. Steam and leaks every where.

ORPHEUS (cont'd)

No, no, no, no, no!

He walks towards a balcony/viewing platform in front of him, revealing:

Endless office blocks, fading into the dark expanse all around him, much like Afterlife Administration, but dim, grimy.

Ghoulish, sallow people sit unblinking at their desks, tapping lazily on keyboards.

Orpheus hears a commotion below.

He looks down.

SISYPHUS, shirtless, bearded, muscled, is fighting of ghostly guards, swinging his fists wildly.

SISYPHUS  
Fuck off! I'm not filling in one more  
fucking spreadsheet! I've had enough!

He dodges a guard's baton lunge.

SISYPHUS (cont'd)  
Just give me my boulder back! I'll  
take it over this shit! The myth was  
about a fucking boulder, not  
spreadsheets!

Sisyphus looks up.

Notices Orpheus.

Does a double take.

SISYPHUS (cont'd)  
Who the fuck are you?

In the second he isn't concentrating, the guards beat him down.

To the floor.

ORPHEUS  
Sisyphus?

**END OF EPISODE**

