

EXT. THE CELESTIAL THRONE - DEEP SPACE

Dark. Silent. An endless stretch of radiant stars fills the void. At the center, a perfectly round, bright red sphere glows...nestled in the vast stillness.

INT. THE CELESTIAL THRONE - DEEP SPACE

White stretches infinitely in all directions. No beginning, no end, no up or down.

Three celestial beings sit on white thrones with a sign above them: GODS OF ALL. They orbit a translucent image of Earth.

MIDGE, red skin, green robe, white ponytail extends her hand.

MIDGE

39...you...him. He's the one.

OMEGA, red skin, green robe, white mohawk squints at the image of Earth.

OMEGA

Tell us, why did you choose...it?
Is it a Pope? A politician?
(glares at Midge)
Wait a millennium...you're joking?

MIDGE

No...he's - right for the task.

He points at Midge.

OMEGA

No, IT is the fortieth! We heard you count.

MIDGE

IT is a human. The one who I feel will save them all.

Omega frowns.

OMEGA

Awful creatures. They continue to sin and refuse their purpose as caretakers. Earth - our child, will be dead in a year. Let me drown ALL of them this time. No need for -

MIDGE

- Dramatics help pass the infinite time.

(MORE)

MIDGE (CONT'D)

Besides, you know my rule as the creator of souls. We must allow them a second chance.

OMEGA

Yeah, I know, but your Jesus fella was such a bore. Death and chaos, that's entertainment.

MIDGE

You wonder why they nick named you Satan.

OMEGA

Me...who says that? I'll smite them where they stand.

MIDGE

Relax. Give them hope and they'll see the errors of their ways.

ALPHA, red skin, green robe, bald, strokes his long beard.

ALPHA

Let us not squabble. Who do you choose as their savior?

MIDGE

I choose Cordell "Crispy" Jordan.

Alpha raises both arms and an open book materializes before him.

ALPHA

The soul creator has chosen Cordell - "Crispy" Jordan as humanity's healer. He has forty days. If he fails, all human souls will be destroyed. How say you, Midge?

MIDGE

I...

ALPHA

How say you, Omega?

Omega glares at Midge, annoyed.

OMEGA

Can I at least tempt IT?

Midge rolls her eyes and nods. Omega forces a smile.

OMEGA (CONT'D)

I...

ALPHA

It is written and so shall it be.

EXT. SR21 GARDEN APARTMENTS - NIGHT

The old Detroit building has a mustard-yellow façade and lime green doors. The parking lot is strewn with trash.

A green jalopy is parked ridiculously crooked.

In front of apartment #103, an old stove blocks the door. Curled up on top is CORDELL "CRISPY" JORDAN, 30s, Black, thin, short twists, asleep...peaceful as a baby.

INT. SR21 GARDEN APARTMENTS #103 - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The small two-bedroom apartment was last updated in the 70's.

TYREE JORDAN, 14, Black, bald fade, sits on a ripped pleather couch, hunched over a laptop. Sultry music and soft female moans drift through his wireless headphones.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. The front door rattles. Startled, Tyree quickly shuts his laptop and drops his headphones around his neck.

TYREE

Who is it?

KNOCK. KNOCK. He stands, draws his gun, and cautiously checks the peephole. Convinced it's safe, he slowly opens the door.

EXT./INT. SR21 GARDEN APARTMENTS #103 - CONTINUOUS

Tyree looks around, down and frowns. He leans out.

TYREE

CRISPY. Crispy, wake up!

He SLAPS Crispy hard across the face. Crispy jolts upright, staring down at the stove he's perched on. He rubs his cheek, dazed and confused.

CRISPY

What the hell. Why you hit me? Hold up...How I get home?

Tyree scoffs, eyes sharp with that same old shit glare, then slips the gun out of sight.

TYREE

Trash on top of junk. You spent the money on weed again.

CRISPY

Naw. I bought this. Nice, right?

Tyree shakes his head as Crispy jumps down from the stove.

TYREE

Orlando is looking for you. He said to tell you to pay the back rent in two days or he's kicking us out.

CRISPY

Orlando ain't gon' do shit. Yo, don't answer the door if he stops by again.

TYREE

He's the landlord. He got a key. Why can't you just pay the rent?

CRISPY

Don't worry about what I do. Help your daddy move this stove.

Tyree huffs and goes inside. Crispy fights the old stove into the apartment.

CRISPY (CONT'D)

Your momma home?

TYREE (O.S.)

No. She working the night shift.

INT. SR21 GARDEN APARTMENTS #103 - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Crispy removes a worse stove and preps the worn replacement but it is too wide for the space. Tyree exhales heavily.

TYREE

Wow. A smart person would measure their old stove before they buy new junk.

CRISPY

I got it. I'll make it fit.

Crispy kicks and shoves. Determined to force it into the tight space, nope, it won't budge. Frustrated, but he keeps at it.

Tyree flops on the couch and stares at Crispy's futile fight.

TYREE

You're an embarrassment. I don't know why my momma stayed with your clown ass.

Frustration and anger overtake Crispy. He quickly stands over Tyree with his fists clenched.

CRISPY

Call me a clown again. I'm your father and I'll beat that ass! You gon' show me some respect.

Tyree stands with his muscles tense. He doesn't back down.

TYREE

Go ahead, Clown. Do it! Hit me so they send your black ass back to jail.

Crispy closes his eyes. Breathes deep. He opens them, relaxes, and plops down at the kitchen table.

Tyree storms into his room. He returns with a backpack and marches to the front door.

TYREE (CONT'D)

I got us. We don't need you.

Tyree slams the door behind him. Crispy pulls out a vape pen and stares at the useless replacement stove.

CRISPY

How did I get this home?

He strolls to the refrigerator, opens it, and surveys his sparse options. Then, he hits a vape pen hard and...

...exhales while reading expiration dates, unaware that XYLA, in the form of KAYLA JORDAN, 16, Black, with afro-puffs, materializes out of thin air behind the refrigerator door.

XYLA

Damn, he hates your ass. I got us home by the way. You're welcome.

Crispy slams the door shut and backs away. He stumbles but regains his balance.

CRISPY

Kayla! Stop fucking with me.

XYLA

First off, calm down. I'm not your dead little sister. My name is Xyla. I'm a...

CRISPY

Naw. No. You're a guilt ghost.

XYLA

Ghosts ain't real. Like I was saying, I'm a symbiotic parasite permanently attached to your brainstem. I can project any calming form from your memories. Thank God your little sister is in here cause I like wearing clothes. Anyway, my purpose is to keep us alive until you select forty.

CRISPY

I must of hit my head real hard.

XYLA

You did but you still got to pick forty souls to heal their physically forms, dum-dum.

He rubs the back of his head.

CRISPY

Yep, I saw that little red lady. Must have been fumes in that church basement.

XYLA

You have been given the ability to physically heal one soul a day for the next forty days. Your mission is to find one soul truly worthy of a second chance.

Crispy takes a pull on his vape pen. Exhales.

CRISPY

It'll all fade if I get higher.

XYLA

I ain't finished. Souls belong to people, animals, insects, plants, yada-yada. If it got a soul, you can heal their physical form.

(MORE)

XYLA (CONT'D)

What you can't do is bring anything back from the dead. If you do not find a truly worthy soul in forty days, every human soul on Earth will die. Badass, right?

Crispy drops the vape pen and takes out his cellphone.

CRISPY

Nope. Bullshit. You're a hallucination. God ain't real and neither are you. One sec.

XYLA

Take a bazillion for all I care.

He makes a call. Xyla plops down on the couch.

CRISPY

Yo, what up?...No, my P.O. found it...don't worry about it...fall through, I got Henny...cool. Oh, bring yo grandma cat...Yeah, Tito...I'm sure!...I'll tell you when you get here. Later.

He pockets his cellphone. Xyla smirks.

XYLA

Really? I see what you're doing. How about we figure out how we're going to get Mint's five-hundred-k back.

CRISPY

STOP. You make me feel crazy.

Crispy digs a bottle of Hennessy from under the sink. He sets it on the table and stares at it. Xyla sits up on the couch.

XYLA

You really think that'll help?

Crispy considers, rolls his eyes, and puts the bottle back.

INT. JIMMY'S CHICKEN SHACK - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: SIX HOURS EARLIER

Jimmy's is dimly lit and dingy, yellow grease-stained walls. The outdated furniture sags in disrepair. A line of customers waits at the counter.

Behind a worn, homemade wooden counter, BRENDA JACKSON, 20s, Black, braids, and long nails, mans the cash register.

BRENDA

Next.

Crispy, earbuds in, stares into the fryer...lost in thought.

JIMMY RAY JR., 60s, White, pudgy, balding, waddles out of a small office with two white envelopes. He hands one to Brenda.

JIMMY

Here you go. Don't spend it all on more claws.

He giggles. Brenda snatches the envelope, tucks it in her purse, and rolls her eyes.

He waddles over to Crispy.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Hey, convict.

Crispy stays lost in the fryer. Jimmy plucks one of Crispy's earbuds from his ear. Crispy spins around.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Didn't I say no electronics while on duty?

CRISPY

You said no cellphones.

JIMMY

Cellphones, earphones, they're all electronics. Shut it down - NOW.

Crispy takes out the earbud. Jimmy tosses him the other one.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Now that you can hear me. Here's your pay.

Jimmy hands Crispy a white envelope and waddles to the counter. Crispy tears it open, counts the cash, frowns, then counts again.

BRENDA (O.C.)

I need a number four fried hard.

CRISPY

Four-hundred-fifty-three dollars.
Nah, this gotta' be a mistake.

He turns off the fryer and meets Jimmy at the counter.

CRISPY (CONT'D)
Jimmy, my money ain't right.

JIMMY
It's right, convict.

CRISPY
Man, I worked thirty hours of
overtime. This is less than my
regular forty. You're cheating me.

Jimmy looks him over and gets in Crispy's personal space.

JIMMY
My drawer was short by three-
hundred-dollars. There ain't but
one ex-con I employ.

CRISPY
I work the fryer. I didn't take it.

JIMMY
Who story your P.O. gonna believe?
Now get outta' my face and back to
work.

Crispy bites his lip, nods, and turns on the fryer.

Jimmy winks at Brenda. She rolls her eyes. He shrugs his
shoulders and waddles back into his small office.

BRENDA
That ain't even right. White devil.

CRISPY
Damn. I promised Gigi I'd buy a
stove and pay rent. I should rob
his ass.

PASTOR MALVEAUX, 60s, Black, tailored suit, gold rings, pats
the countertop.

PASTOR MALVEAUX
No, you shouldn't, brother. God's
got your back.

Triggered. Crispy spins around. Mean mug fixed on his face.

CRISPY
Ain't no God. I got my own back.

Pastor Malveaux leans on the counter. Grin fixed on his face.

PASTOR MALVEAUX
 He's real, brother. He's here,
 there, and everywhere. Amen.
 (cups his ear)
 What was that?
 (points to Crispy)
 He just told me to bless you.

CRISPY
 Ain't nobody told you shit. Go con
 somebody else with that invisible
 miracle man in the sky nonsense.

BRENDA
 Crispy, you need to listen and stop
 blocking your blessings.

Crispy twists his lips at Brenda and folds his arms.

CRISPY
 Okay, holy man. How is the fake man
 in the sky gon' bless me?

PASTOR MALVEAUX
 Well, my church just got a new
 kitchen so I'm gon' bless you with
 our old stove. Can I get an Amen?

CRISPY
 What's wrong with it?

PASTOR MALVEAUX
 Nothing. Top of the line in its
 day. Made many a Sunday dinners.

CRISPY
 What does this miracle cost?

Pastor Malveaux does a holy dance, stops, and points at
 Crispy.

PASTOR MALVEAUX
 Real living is living for others.
 Amen. It's free if you come ova to
 the church and give a small
 testimony about your good fortune.

Crispy searches Pastor Malveaux's face. Considers.

CRISPY
 When can I pick it up?