

PROLOGUE TO ACT TWO

As the audience is coming back in after the intermission, yellow-coloured LIGHTS up dimly on the NUMINA stage.

We are 2 years in the past. The layout of the room is slightly different (but easy enough to put back to the standard look quickly) and there may be a different poster (from management) on the wall. WHITE is asleep in the cage. ULLR is sat at his desk, apparently watching over the dark Real World stage. His screen is on and providing much of the lighting. He checks the system and checklist diligently. The NUMINA begin arriving, like they're coming in to start a work day in an office, moving to their seats, turning on their screens, setting up their stations for the day.

As each comes in the LIGHTING gets brighter and closer to the normal hue.

The NUMINA are downbeat and ragged-looking, but in a routine and just carrying on. It's like a soulless, messy call centre. Not a word is said.

TYCHE spins a bottle listlessly, repetitively. LILITH does military-style checking of equipment, going through the motions blankly, not really thinking of anything. But she makes sure to knock ULLR's chair occasionally to annoy him. ULLR is clearly annoyed and ignores her in a way that shows his annoyance. OGHMA reads through her notes and makes more notes until sufficiently irritated by TYCHE's bottle. She stands up, grabs it, puts it in the bin, sits down again. TYCHE waits until she's sat down with her notes again and then grabs another bottle and starts spinning it.

TIW arrives, looking at each of them in turn with varying levels of dislike at what they're doing and the mess of the place. They all notice him and gradually stop what they've been doing. TIW stands staring at them until ULLR breaks, jumps up and starts to tidy. OGHMA then starts to help. TYCHE just sits and watches, feet up on the desk until TIW knocks them off. LILITH sits neatly, calmly, not flinching at all at TIW's stare.

VÖR strolls in then stands close to the door.

VÖR: Ah, good, you're all here. I've got some good news for you. We've been assigned a new red.

TYCHE and LILITH are immediately happy about this, OGHMA and ULLR watch for TIW's response and mirror it.

TIW: What?!

OGHMA: Why? We don't need a...

ULLR: (Over the top of OGHMA) Oh come on! We've been doing much better since the last one was... since she left.

VÖR: Well, we have a new one anyway. Come on in. (ERIS wanders in, calmly taking everything in) This is the team I was telling you about. And this... (sweeping junk off it)... this is your desk. You'll be our new red. Let's see now... introductions... this is TYCHE who runs the orange station (vigorous hand shake), LILITH who runs violet (formal nod), ULLR, yellow (small wave which stops at TIW's stare), OGHMA, green (slow dismissive shake of the head) and TIW, blue, your team leader (who ignores her, focusing on VÖR).

As VÖR talks, ERIS wanders around the room, calmly checking out the costumes, the props, the screens, the lights, the people.

TIW: (Steely anger) What's going on? We don't need a red. (VÖR shrugs) I will not ... I demand a formal review. (As he speaks, ULLR, OGHMA and LILITH form up behind him)

VÖR: Oh you do, do you? Well, I don't think that will get you very far - they just assigned her here. She is... (checking her screen) hah... an Eris. (To herself) Oh this will be fun.

ERIS: You know, I seriously thought the afterlife was going to be getting time to do a load of fun stuff with an awesome new body. A reward for having to deal with crap all your life, putting up with fuckwits like this. But no, it's the same but worse. I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

TIW: Afterlife? What are you... (talking about)?

ERIS: (At WHITE's cage) And what the hell is this?!

TIW: (Noticing ERIS's clothes) Why are you wearing that?

ERIS: Why on Earth do you have a girl in a cage? (To VÖR) You didn't say anything about this! I mean, that's seriously fucked up.

TIW: (Talking over ERIS) No... no, no, no! Not a chance. We're not having a first timer.

ERIS shakes the cage and then reaches through to gently shake WHITE.

ERIS: Hey, are you OK? What are they doing to you?

TIW: DON'T TOUCH HER! (To VÖR) Get her out of here!

VÖR: Can't, sorry. Out of my hands.

ERIS: Hey come on, wake up. Are they hurting you? I'll get you out of here.

TIW yanks ERIS away from the cage.

TIW: Never touch them! Never speak to them! (To VÖR) Didn't you tell her anything?

WHITE is stirring and a soft spotlight comes on on the Real World stage.

ULLR: Oh no... oh no. Sophia's awake.

TIW: Look what you've done! (To VÖR) Look what she's done. Get her out of here!

WHITE, still seemingly asleep gets up and out of her cage and makes her way over to the Real World stage where there is a nest of arty materials, fabrics, books. The back wall projection comes up dimly and is of a cosy loft space.

ERIS: What the hell is going on?

TIW: (About WHITE to team) Stop her. Now! (Shoving at ERIS, then to VÖR) I want her gone. Get rid of her! Now!

ULLR: (Checking screen) No... can't do anything. She's replaying a memory. It's a big one. Stations! (To OGHMA) It's us. I'm finding the scripts.

The NUMINA scramble into their positions. WHITE opens her eyes, looks around and picks up a couple of soft toys.

ERIS: What is going on?!