

ALÉJO

S1 x E1: PILOT

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EXT. DESERT PLAINS, PERU 1810 - DAY

A sweltering day in the vast Nazca Desert; cacti bloom as the sun burns brightly. A baby LIZARD skitters into view. It stops, looks around with two lazy eyes, tastes the air-

Then a CONDOR swoops down, snatches the LIZARD up in its beak, and continues its flight. We follow it up into the sky.

Condor's-eye view of THE NAZCA LINES, enormous ancient glyphs permanently etched into the desert clay, in the shapes of various animals. We focus on the DOG, the MONKEY, the HERON, and the HANDS. A few clouds float by, obscuring them.

Faint sound of pistol shots, horses galloping and whinnying, men shouting. JOSIE and OLIGO (both male, late 20s) speed away from an unknown party on horseback.

OLIGO is SHOT and falls off his horse. JOSIE rears his horse and jumps off to go after him.

EXT. ROCKY CANYON - CONT.

Lugging a half-conscious OLIGO around on his shoulder, JOSIE spots the SHAMAN's living quarters: a cave near some low cliffs. They move towards it.

INT. SHAMAN'S CAVE - CONT.

The SHAMAN (30s, androgynous), emerges from the cave.

JOSIE

Please, you have to help us. Are you a Shaman?

The SHAMAN nods and gestures to the ornate rug on the ground. JOSIE lays OLIGO down gently and unbuttons his shirt.

The SHAMAN puts a hand on OLIGO's forehead, feels the pulse in his neck, and contemplates...

JOSIE (CONT'D)

You have to do something. Anything- I'll give you whatever you want.

SHAMAN

His spirit is fading fast. I'm not sure if I can do anything in time. We need to make an offering, have a ritual-

As they speak, JOSIE unearths an oddly-shaped GOLDEN STATUE FRAGMENT - a left shoulder, its an arm holding a staff - from a satchel at his side.

JOSIE

Would **this** help speed things up?

Astonished, the SHAMAN takes it and examines it carefully.

SHAMAN

Do you have the rest of it?

JOSIE

I don't know, it's his, not mine!
PLEASE just do something!

The SHAMAN contemplates, looks down at the STATUE FRAGMENT, then towards their workstation.

SHAMAN

Listen. The type of ritual I'd have to do could go **very** wrong without preparation. And in the presence of an artifact like this- broken, unfamiliar... I have no idea what kind of spirits we'd be invoking.

O.S.: The CLICK of a loaded revolver.

JOSIE

(aiming at them)

I don't care. There's no other alternative.

SHAMAN

(raising their hands
innocently)

All right, as long as you know that. Now please get that out of my face.

JOSIE lowers his gun while the SHAMAN grabs an old book and some vials from their workstation, then kneels before OLIGO.

As they begin, the STATUE FRAGMENT begins to glow eerily.

EXT. DESERT PLAINS - CONT.

The NAZCA LINES in full view again. An EARTHQUAKE begins.

Each animal's eyes flash ruby red as they awaken. Four individual glyphs - DOG, MONKEY, HERON, & HANDS - take shape and peel themselves off the ground, now gargantuan spirits.

They look around groggily, disturbed from their slumber... then march away in a single file line, footsteps shaking the Earth. They disappear into the horizon.

INT. SHAMAN'S CAVE - CONT.

The earthquake shakes up the SHAMAN's cave. Vials smash, tapestries fall, the walls around them crumble slightly.

JOSIE
What did you do?!

SHAMAN
WHERE IS THE REST OF THAT STATUE?

The earth's vibrations shift subtly... they begin to sound more like footsteps. Something enormous is approaching. JOSIE looks up in the direction it's coming from, terrified. One last, huge THUMP-

Blackout.

TITLE CARD

FOUR YEARS LATER

EXT. TOWN SQUARE, PERU 1814 - DAY

A small boy (RICARDO, 10) dashes through town, looking over his shoulder every once in a while. He wears a cowboy hat & holds a slingshot in his hand.

SHERIFF BIEL (female, 30s), chases after him. The two run through alleyways and weave in/out of the street, Ricardo dodging, jumping, squeezing through small nooks & crannies to evade her. Above them, dark storm clouds gradually block out the sun.

BIEL
(reloading her pistol)
You little- You aren't getting away
from me this time!

BIEL fires several shots, missing horribly each time. RICARDO ducks behind a corner and launches a rock at her with his slingshot. It hits BIEL square on the forehead. He scurries away while she's distracted.

RICARDO climbs a stack of wooden crates behind a shop & scrambles onto the rooftop. BIEL tries to shoot, but the gun clicks blankly- she's out of bullets.

A sudden gust of wind rushes through the whole area. It knocks BIEL off her feet and flings RICARDO three rooftops over. He lands on the town SALOON, which also is part of his house.

The mini-twister rolls BIEL away like a tumbleweed in the wind. RICARDO brushes himself off and stands up tall, victorious.

RICARDO
 YEAHH! THAT'S WHY YOU HAVE COOTIES!
 (to himself)
 Stupid gringa.

He sticks his tongue out in her direction, then catches a glimpse of something in the sky.

Circling above town are several Nazca-creature-shaped storm clouds. THUNDER rolls in the distance. RICARDO gasps, slides down the roof and climbs through the window into his bedroom.

INT. RICARDO'S BEDROOM - CONT.

His walls are covered in pictures of cowpoke in boots, chaps and funky hats, as well as wanted posters, illustrations of men's haircuts, and some old-timey world maps.

RICARDO beelines to his desk. Atop sits an aged, thick book.

RICARDO
 (mumbling to himself)
 Animal-shaped doom clouds, doom-shaped animal clouds... Huh?

He lands on a page bookmarked with a wanted poster; JOSEPHINE "JOSIE" ALÉJO's mugshot stares right at him. RICARDO plucks the poster out and eyes it fondly.

For a moment, we get a glimpse of the page in the book: illustrations of those very clouds, as well as the arm fragment of the GOLDEN STATUE from before. The page is titled "EL PACHACUTI", subtitled: "APOCALYPSE EVENT".

RICARDO, however, is occupied with Josie's picture. He goes to tack it up onto his mirror... then takes a good long look at his reflection.

He takes off his cowboy hat to reveal long, wavy hair which falls over his shoulders. He sighs with dismay and blows his unruly bangs from his face.

BIEL (O.S.)
Slinging rocks at my head... that
little **devil** nearly killed me!

CARMEN (O.S.)
That's nonsense. My child has been
upstairs all day, reading.

RICARDO turns around and goes to peer out of the window,
spying BIEL and CARMEN (30s, the bartender of the saloon and
Ricardo's mother) out front.

INTERCUT: OUTSIDE THE SALOON / RICARDO'S ROOM

BIEL
...Caught in the act, digging HOLES
in the ground behind the bank! Not
to mention past offenses, like-
(counting on her fingers)
terrorizing other children with
that book of magic nonsense,
trespassing on Church property,
eating the communion wafers like
potato chips, and now chucking
ROCKS at LAW ENFORCEMENT!

CARMEN
Alright, listen- how about you come
inside, I'll fix you something on
the house, and we can just let this
allll go...

BIEL
I have let EVERYTHING go- I've
pardoned every damn crime the
little monster has committed-
I'm DONE playing nice. Next time, I
am locking that menace up!

RICARDO
(sneering, to himself)
Yeah, you wish. I'll just break out
again.

RICARDO steps away from the window and goes back to his
mirror, taking a moment to admire Josie's wanted poster.

CARMEN (O.S.)
C'mon, sheriff- Ricardo's almost
ten! That's the age kids start to
mature. This won't be happening
again.

BIEL (O.S.)
 You're damn right it won't be,
 not on my watch! And who the hell
 is Ricardo?

RICARDO grabs a pair of SCISSORS from his dresser, which had been left next to a few dolls with chopped-up hair and scribbled-on mustaches.

CARMEN (O.S.)
 Oh, in school the class read a
 story about a hero named Ricardo...
 the kid's obsessed, won't let us
 use any other name.

Using Josie's photo for reference, RICARDO snips away long pieces of his hair, leaving a choppy, chin-length bob.

More THUNDER outside. It begins to rain.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
 We all just play along. It's just a
 harmless phase, I'm sure.

RICARDO
 (to his reflection)
 Well, howdy-do, partner. I did
 pretty okay for my first cut,
 don'tcha think, cowboy?

LIGHTNING strikes outside his window, making him jump.

RICARDO (CONT'D)
 Oh, right, the apocalypse!

He LAUNCHES the scissors into the nearest wall, runs to his desk, grabs the book and is about to run out... but circles back to swipe JOSIE's wanted poster. RICARDO then climbs out the window from where he came.

INT. SALOON - AFTERNOON

A dusty saloon. Rough & tough-looking men and women gamble at cards. Most sit in groups, grumbling, murmuring, downing drinks. Cigar smoke lingers heavy in the air.

The saloon doors open politely. Tiny, cowboy boot-clad footsteps make their way to the bar... and a tiny hand reaches up to SLAM the countertop.

CARMEN, soaking wet from the rain, peers over the edge of the counter while drying off with a towel. It is RICARDO, also a little soggy, with his book tucked safely up his shirt.

RICARDO

Hi, ma. How's work? Oh, you GOTTA check out what I just found. We're probably all in horrible danger.

He climbs a barstool and slams the book onto the counter, gently placing the wanted poster down beside it.

CARMEN

Heard you got into some more trouble with Sheriff Biel today-

RICARDO

You ever heard of a PACHA-COOTIE?

CARMEN

Have you been digging holes behind the town bank? And what did you do to your hair?!

RICARDO

Oh, I cut it. With scissors this time. And I didn't dig those holes, they were already there- I just made them a lot bigger!

CARMEN sighs defeatedly.

RICARDO (CONT'D)

Come on Ma, a part of the legendary Inkarrí has GOT to be buried here somewhere! When the Spanish split him all up, his legs were sent here to Ayacucho- you know that!

Just then, another PATRON takes a seat next to RICARDO.

CARMEN

Ricardo, I'm serious. It's time you start showing more respect for your elders- and no more trespassing on public property either.

RICARDO

Hey, Biel is NOT my elder. She just showed up in town one day with some guys on horses, shot some people- and now we all have to listen to her, learn all this boring stuff in school about a country we don't even live in, and sit in Church

(MORE)

RICARDO (CONT'D)

...where the guy just tells us how we're all evil for being human for two hours EVERY WEEK? Come on!

CARMEN

(sighing, pouring a drink)
Mijo... things change. Leaders get... replaced. The Sheriff keeps us safe, and going to Church is good for people too. Keeps you out of **trouble**.

RICARDO

Biel smells like wet dog, I don't wanna respect her!

CARMEN

Mhm, that's nice- you know there's the full moon tonight? Have you been marking your calendar like we agreed?

PATRON

(grabbing his drink)
Of all the towns I could've lived in, it **had** to be the one with a monthly chupacabra problem.

CARMEN

Hey, it could be worse. At least it's not interested in people.

The PATRON notices Josie's wanted poster, picks it up and squints at it. RICARDO thumbs through his book frantically.

RICARDO

Wait, listen, this is important! We could all die, for real this time! Look, I saw these in the sky today.
(pointing at the Nazca drawings)
These are OMENS! We could all be barbecued by lightning if we don't do what the Gods want! Pachacuti means cataclysm- like the APOCALYPSE, the whole WORLD could-

The PATRON spit-takes all over CARMEN while slamming his glass down.

PATRON

The bounty on Josephine Aléjo's head is HOW MUCH?!

CARMEN
 (snatching the poster from
 him, reading)
 10,000 Intis.

RICARDO
 (suddenly starry-eyed)
 Oh man, Josie's the wildest cowboy
 on this side of the equator! He
 gave up farm life to be a
 revolutionary- now he's rough and
 tough and doesn't take nothin' from
 nobody! I heard that one time,
 Josie kicked a guy right in the
 crotch and stole his horse just
 'cause he looked at him funny. And
 he's never lost a showdown!

PATRON
 Oh, there's much more to him than
 just that, kid... he just wasn't
 the same after we lost the first
 rebellion. You know the kinda
 things a guy's gotta do to end up
 with a bounty like this?

RICARDO
 Probably a **whole** lotta crotch-
 kicking.

CARD PLAYER
 Josephine Aléjo is a menace! I've
 heard he kills in cold blood; he's
 an animal! No heart, no soul...

VOICE [OLIGO]
 You fellas don't know the half of
 it. Take it from an old companion.

All heads turn towards the VOICE. From the shadows emerges
 OLIGO - a hardened, rougher (and more intoxicated) version of
 his younger self. He makes his way towards the bar, sliding a
 few coins towards CARMEN.

RICARDO
 Companion? Wait, you KNEW him?

OLIGO laughs heartily and throws back his drink.

OLIGO
 Knew him? Oh, I knew him all right.
 Used to say I knew him better than
 he knew himself. Closer than
 brothers, we were. Much closer.

The PATRON raises an eyebrow at him, but RICARDO, beaming, forcefully shoves the PATRON off his chair and gestures towards the open spot. OLIGO obliges.

RICARDO

How'd you know him?! Did you guys go on adventures together? What's he like in real life?

OLIGO

(signaling for a refill)
I can tell you what he **was** like... Four whole years we were on the road together. That was after he'd made a name for himself fighting in the uprisings. That fool was relentless—you shoulda seen him in his prime! A brave, inspiring rebel, fighting off the Spaniards in the name of freedom. So fearless and confident... no one could tell ol' Josie who he was, except him.

Getting emotional, he pauses to take a shot.

OLIGO (CONT'D)

But Josie was more than just a fighter; he was caring. Sensitive.

RICARDO, and the PATRON (who's still lying on the floor), both place their hands on their hearts, eyes sparkling.

OLIGO (CONT'D)

Nah, I'm pulling your leg about that last bit. He was a pain in the ass! But even so, nothin' had ever come between us... up until his past caught up to us. I gave up my whole life, my entire career, all for him. Now he's a loose cannon...

As OLIGO monologues, RICARDO's mind starts wandering. He remembers that his book is still sitting open. He grabs it back.

RICARDO

WAIT, HEY! I forgot- we're all gonna die, look!

(shoving the book in
OLIGO's face)

Haven't you guys see the sky? The Gods are angry! No one's left to uphold the ancient traditions that keep them at bay, like-

PATRON

Kid, the world ain't gonna end over a little rain. You know what we should be worried about? The fact that this criminal's still on the loose, AND this town's got a chupacabra on top of that!

CARD PLAYER

You mean you ain't heard the talk? It's one and the same- Josephine Aléjo is a shapeshifting devil!

Gasps and frantic murmurs scatter throughout the saloon.

CARMEN

(to OLIGO)

Hey, you knew him- is it true? You know about that?

OLIGO

Wouldn't put it past him... I reckon he is, yes.

More dramatic whispering. Patrons down their drinks, crowd together, mumble amongst themselves.

RICARDO

Noo, you guys- c'mon, this is way more important!

CARMEN

It all makes sense- he's been spotted in town around the full moon before. The man needs to be stopped before he transforms again!

OLIGO suddenly notices the drawing of a familiar statue fragment in RICARDO's book. He takes it into his hands.

PATRON

If we hunted him down, we'd be free of these awful attacks... and 10,000 Intis richer.

OLIGO

Wait a minute, I've seen this before... this is Josie's loot.

RICARDO

JOSEPHINE ALÉJO HAS A PIECE OF THE INKARRI STATUE?!