



NEIL GAIMAN
**DAY OF
THE
DEAD**

An Annotated Babylon 5™ Script
Introduction by J. Michael Straczynski

NEIL GAIMAN

DAY OF THE DEAD

A Babylon 5 Script



DreamHaven • Minneapolis

FIRST EDITION

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INTRODUCTION

by J. Michael Straczynski

A long time ago I decided that as a writer, one of my goals was to write faster than anyone who was better than me, and better than anyone who was faster than me.

So you will understand why Neil Gaiman bugs the hell out of me.

Bad enough he is prolific, writing his own TV series, features, comics, novels . . . worse still that he does this while remaining one of the most genuinely nice guys I've ever met . . . but sheer volume aside he is also one of the finest writers working in the field of . . . well, whatever it happens to be today. Essays, TV scripts, short stories, novels, comic scripts. . . .

Did I mention he bugs the hell out of me?

I've been an admirer of Neil's work from the moment I picked up my first issue of *Sandman* under his guidance, read it, and had my brains splattered against the nearest wall. He does things with words, simple yet elegant tricks that can explain an entire character in a few carefully selected words. It's the closest thing in the writing business to close-up magic . . . you see it right there in front of you, and you can't figure out how the hell he did it.

The man is a certifiable genius . . . and being no fool, when I got my own TV series, the first thing I did (well, after having a brief lay-down to gear up for a five-year journey that has become the writing equivalent to the Bataan Death march) was to try and get a script out of Neil for BABYLON 5. Every six months to a year, I would mention it to him in person or in email. I cajoled, hounded, chivvied, circled and bugged the hell out of him (which seemed only fair in light of paragraph 2 preceding) until he finally agreed to the task.

I have allowed myself the conceit that he did it because he genuinely loves the show, and the characters, rather than simply to get me to stop sleeping on his front lawn every night. The former is what he told me, and as an act of faith, I have come to believe it.

What follows . . . is what followed. This episode was a hit not only with the fans, but the cast and crew, who were charmed by him while he was on set. Of all the freelance scripts that came into B5, this was the most effortless, the most fun, and the most insightful. When Captain Lochley recites her password, and we learn that the keyphrase is, "Zoe's dead," we learn more about her character in that two-second phrase than in the multiple hour-long episodes that preceded it.

Close-up magic.

Bugs the hell out of me.

Enjoy

J. Michael Straczynski
Executive Producer/Creator
Babylon 5

DAY OF THE DEAD

BY NEIL GAIMAN

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. MESS HALL

Lochley in the mess, eating and reading at the same time. She's reading a thick book on RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS OF THE CIVILISED PLANETS *Volume 3 Borlons to Brakiri*, and has a folder of papers beside her. She looks up and sees Sheridan grinning down at her, like a kid before Xmas.

SHERIDAN

Zoot zoot. Zooty zoot zoot.

Lochley says nothing. Perhaps an eyebrow raises.

SHERIDAN (cont'd)

They'll be clearing customs any minute now. Excited?

LOCHLEY

No, Mr. President. I am not excited.

SHERIDAN

Not even a little? I mean, this is a pretty big day for Babylon 5, Captain.

LOCHLEY

With respect, sir, your inauguration was a big day for Babylon 5. The day that President Clark killed himself was a big day for Babylon 5. I'm afraid today doesn't register more than the tiniest blip on my pretty big day for Babylon 5 scale.

Garibaldi has spotted Sheridan and comes over.

GARIBALDI

It's the big day.

SHERIDAN AND GARIBALDI (TOGETHER)

Zoot-zoot-zoot!

Lochley looks at them like a woman watching men do a three stooges routine, and sighs and goes back to her book.

INT. CORRIDOR. TELEVISION MONITORS.

In the corridor a certain amount of bustle, although a number of aliens and humans are standing around watching the TV screens, expectantly. Several Brakiri are marking off the corridor, under the leadership of A (nonspeaking part) PRIEST, who has a large map of Babylon 5, with crayoned markings around a thin pie-wedge area of the station. One Brakiri is up a ladder. The Brakiri have chalks, and rolls of string and decorative tinsel—whatever they could find cheaply in the market. It's almost as if they're decorating for a very ramshackle Xmas. They all have comets pinned to their robes. On the TV an INS reporter is reading the news. We come in mid-broadcast, on the news recap:

INS REPORTER

. . . meaning that the 2268 Olympic Games will be the first to be held off Earth. But I think we can safely say it won't be the last.

(‘and on the lighter side’)

And finally, as all of you must be aware by now, it's a pretty big day for Babylon 5. And—yes, we can now take you live . . .

INT. CUSTOMS HALL.

STEADICAM. The words LIVE TRANSMISSION flash at the bottom of the screen, as into the customs area come REBO AND ZOOTY, both human. This is the substance of Rebo and Zooty's act, and their ‘stage’ personas: Rebo is an idiot who think he knows everything, and is thus a fool, Zooty is an idiot who knows nothing and is thus wise. Think Laurel and Hardy, Abbot and Costello, Groucho and Harpo. They bring anarchy with them. They wear hats.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Anything to declare?

REBO

I have nothing to declare, my good man, except my genius.

Zooty somehow got around to the Customs officer's side of the desk. He has a goofy and endearing smile.

ZOOTY

And I have nothing to declare except Rebo's genius, either.²

REBO

Thank you Zooty.

They grin delightedly at each other. The customs officer looks exasperated. Zooty raises one leg, in the old Harpo Marx routine, so that the customs officer finds himself holding Zooty's leg.

ZOOTY

Zoot zoot!

INT. CORRIDOR. TELEVISION MONITORS.

Lochley, Sheridan and Garibaldi walk past from off-camera, and we follow them. They pass the people we saw before. We hear the crowd laughing, human and alien. Lochley is carrying her book and folders.

GARIBALDI

Sounds like they're through immigration already.

LOCHLEY

Sir, what do you know of Brakiri Religious customs?

SHERIDAN

Er. They um. Nope.

GARIBALDI

All I know is that they hate comets. Even mentioning a comet to a Brakiri is some kind of awful taboo. Death. It's the symbol of death.³

A Brakiri is attaching a dangling comet to the tinsel.

SHERIDAN

Why do you ask?

LOCHLEY

They want me to sell them part of Babylon 5 tonight. For religious reasons.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE LONDO'S QUARTERS

A display of comets and skulls. From which we pull back to see Londo take a candy Brakiri-skull from the BRAKIRI SALESMAN, who has set up in the corridor.

LONDO

It reminds me of my senior ex-wife. What is it?

SALESMAN

Candy. Only for Carbon-based life-forms who can metabolise sugars.

Otherwise is decorative ornament.

LONDO

How much?

SALESMAN

You are Centauri Emperor-to-be? In *Universe Today*? Him?

LONDO

(preening)

I am Londo Mollari.

SALESMAN

Tell me, noble Mollari. Who would you meet? Of those who have gone before us.

LONDO

Of the dead? I would talk to the First Emperor. I have several bones to pick with him.

The Salesman picks out a couple of the candies—a skull and a comet—and hands them to Londo.

SALESMAN

They are a gift. May the comet bring you wisdom this night.

Londo puffs up and nods a not-yet imperial bow to the man. He turns to his quarters, then hesitates, and asks:

LONDO

What is all this in aid of? Some Brakiri harvest festival?

SALESMAN

Tonight is the Day of the Dead. Tonight the dead return.

Londo stares at him, then he begins to chuckle, steps over the chalk line, which is a few feet from his door. The door opens. LONDO walks through, as we

FADE OUT:

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. BABYLON 5

Majestically rolling. The sun is shining out from behind the planet.

INT. ROTUNDA.—DAY

Various ambassadors are assembled together, along with B5 personnel and guards. Sheridan is at a podium talking, with Rebo and Zooty beside him. He's making a speech.

SHERIDAN

Humour is a truly universal element. Like hydrogen. The two people who have honoured us with their visit have brought joy to so many. They were born with other names, but they are known across the universe as Rebo and Zooty. It gives me enormous personal pleasure to confer upon them the Freedom of Babylon 5.

APPLAUSE as he hands them a scroll. Rebo gives it to Zooty who gives it to a security guard, who, flustered, gives it back. Rebo and Zooty are genuinely funny. The laughs begin immediately, and continue.

REBO

Ahem. I have written a speech, which I shall recite in English, and Zooty has translated himself—

ZOOTY

(a catchphrase)
without a machine

REBO

—Into his own universal language.

(Zooty mimes through this while Rebo talks)

Ahem. Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. President, alien races with ears, alien races without ears, and Zooty's friend Bingo the Invisible fish.

Then they bow to everybody. They bow, very low, to each other. Their hats fall off. They put their hats on, but have somehow mixed up hats, and Rebo's hat is too small for Zooty, Zooty's too big for Rebo . . . We PAN AROUND. Sheridan is laughing uproariously. So is Garibaldi, Corwin, G'Kar. A couple of Gaim are rocking gently back and forth, a laughing noise coming from their translators. End on Lochley, who is utterly impassive.

SHERIDAN

This is a moment to tell your children about, Captain.

LOCHLEY

Yes, sir. I'll get onto having some immediately.

SHERIDAN

(who didn't hear her. A beat, then,)

What?

LOCHLEY

I have an appointment with the Brakiri ambassador. If you'll excuse me.

G'Kar overhears her, and looks perturbed, and watches her go.

INT. LOCHLEY'S OFFICE (OR CONFERENCE ROOM)

The Brakiri Ambassador is waiting. He has a map of Babylon 5, and a bag containing skull candies.

BRAKIRI AMBASSADOR

Long life to you!

LOCHLEY

And to you, Ambassador.

BRAKIRI AMBASSADOR

Here. For you.

From the bag, he gives her a skull candy, and a jewelled comet pin.

BRAKIRI AMBASSADOR

The skull is for eating. The comet is a gift from all Brakir' on Babylon 5, for you. It is of great religious significance, and you must not refuse it.

LOCHLEY

It's very beautiful. Thank you. I will, of course, need to report the gift.

(beat, changing the subject)

I have taken your request under advisement, in my capacity as Captain of the Babylon 5.

BRAKIRI AMBASSADOR

And it is all okay? We can purchase Babylon 5 for Brakir? It must be ours by sunset.

LOCHLEY

It's certainly an unusual request. We can normally only rent space on Babylon 5 . . .

BRAKIRI AMBASSADOR

(agitated)

But we must buy it. If is rented, it is not Brakiri, is yours, not ours. We give it back, is yours again at sunrise.

LOCHLEY

I understand that, ambassador. I was going to say that, we normally only rent space, but in this case, I can understand why you would need an exception to be made. For my own curiosity: The day of the dead. But it occurs at night?

BRAKIRI AMBASSADOR

The Brakir' are . . . night-dwelling . . .

LOCHLEY

Nocturnal? I see. Well, it all seems to be in order. Do I need to give you a written deed for the marked area of the station?

The ambassador GRUNTS ASSENT, and begins to count out small, many-sided glass coins from a pouch. Lochley begins to scribble a note giving B5 to the Brakiri for the night.

The door opens, and G'kar enters, out of breath.

G'KAR

Captain, please, forgive this intrusion, I came as soon as I realised what was happening—

LOCHLEY

G'kar. I'm afraid I'm rather busy right now. You know Ambassador Kullenbrak.

The Brakiri Ambassador grunts and glares G'Kar.

G'KAR

That is why I came. I must strongly advise you against this transaction. It is dangerous and foolish and unwise.

LOCHLEY

Religious toleration is foolish?

G'KAR

This is not a matter of toleration. You do not know what you are doing.

LOCHLEY

Now, the declaration of principles of the Alliance—you are familiar with them, I trust—

G'KAR

I wrote the principles.

LOCHLEY

—state that freedom of religion and belief shall be sacrosanct, save where those beliefs endanger, exploit or infringe upon the established liberties of other sentient life-forms. You put it better than that of course . . .

G'KAR

If you are trying to make me angry, Captain, you are succeeding admirably. I repeat, you do not know what you are doing.

BRAKIRI AMBASSADOR

I believe that the captain knows exactly what she is doing, and I, and all the Brakir' on Babylon 5, appreciate it.

He pushes the coins to Lochley, who gives him the paper. They are both ready to leave the office.

LOCHLEY

I am sorry, G'kar.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE LOCHLEY'S OFFICE⁴

Lochley and the ambassador are walking down the hallway. G'kar is not willing to let this one go. There are a number of extras walking around purposefully. More Brakiri tinsel-hangers, and another candy-vendor.

LOCHLEY

There are eleven hundred Brakiri on Babylon 5. Their day of the dead comes around once every hundred and eighty years. It's their most sacred day. If they cannot be on their homeworld for it, they need to ritually purchase an area in the place they live to represent their world, and within this area they commune with the dead.

(to ambassador)

Did I get that right, Ambassador Kullenbrak?

BRAKIRI AMBASSADOR

Mm. Yes. But does not represent Brakir' home-world. For that night it becomes, is, Brakir. Is . . .

(fumbles for word)

. . . transubstantiation.

They reach a Brakiri chalk and tinsel border. Lennier, dressed in Anla-shok clothes comes through the crowd of extras—maybe he's initially buying a candy skull from a Brakiri vendor—and he walks past our three. He does not notice G'kar. Lennier is carrying a small overnight valise.

LOCHLEY

G'kar. On Earth one of our religions, orthodox Judaism, has a similar tradition, the Erev, where a boundary is created inside of which, metaphorically, one is always in one's home, allowing a freer treatment of the sabbath laws—

G'KAR

Metaphorically!

(then, distracted)

I could have sworn I saw Lennier.

INT. DELENN'S QUARTERS—MORNING

Deleenn is trying to pick between two dresses. She is going to have to be a formal consort this evening and is trying to figure it out. The door chimes.

DELENN

Yes?

The Door opens and Lennier comes in.

DELENN (cont'd)

Lennier. It is you! I thought you were in deep space.

LENNIER

I am between training cycles.

DELENN

This is wonderful. Look at you! You look so good. Anla-shok training must agree with you. How long will you be here with us?

LENNIER

Not long. It is the Brakiri Day of the Dead, and I could not miss it.

DELENN

It is not a festival with which I am familiar.

LENNIER

I read an account of it when I was a young priest, and it has always haunted me. It occurs on one night roughly every two hundred years. The Brakiri contemplate, and honour those who have gone beyond. I had a few days leave coming. And Babylon 5 is easier to visit than Brakir. I came to learn.

(beat)

Your partner. He is well?

DELENN

My husband. He is very well. At this moment he is hosting a . . . cocktail party . . . for Rebo and Zooty. Later tonight, we dine with them, formally, as president and consort.

LENNIER

Rebo and Zooty are here? 'Zoot-zoot?' This is indeed a day of wonders.

DELENN

(dismissing him)

I am sorry, Lennier. I have to prepare for tonight. We can see each other tomorrow.

Lennier nods his head. He holds out the candy skull.

LENNIER

This is for you. I must return to the Anla-shok tomorrow.

INT. CORRIDOR.

The priest examines his map of Babylon 5. We can see a wedge-shaped area shaded in on the map. He points, and a Brakiri extra draws a chalk line along a corridor, marking off territory.

EXT. BABYLON 5

The sun is moving behind the planet. It's almost night.

INT. STATION CORRIDOR OUTSIDE GARIBALDI'S QUARTERS

Kullenbrak, the Brakiri Ambassador is talking to Garibaldi, who looks beat. The Brakiri Priest we saw earlier is standing next to them, holding an alien hand-bell. There are fewer people around now. They are standing beside a Brakiri chalk line.

BRAKIRI AMBASSADOR

You understand, there is only one comet in Brakir' solar system, and its arrival signals Day of the Dead. So the comet symbolizes death to all Brakiri. And the line we make here shows Brakiri territory.

GARIBALDI

(in a flat tone of voice that says 'please stop talking to me, I have to get to bed')

That's completely fascinating, Ambassador.

BRAKIRI AMBASSADOR

Fascinating. Exactly.

(he steps over the chalk line)

Now, I am on Brakir' homeworld. Until planetary sunrise.

(he hops back and forth over the line, saying as he does)

Now I am on Babylon 5. Now I am on Brakir. Now I am on Babylon 5 again.

GARIBALDI

So my quarters are on the Brakiri side of the corridor. With my bed in them. And a shower. And . . . I can hear them calling me . . .

He pushes past. As he does so, the priest looks at a timepiece on his chest, and begins to toll the bell, and walk away from us.

The Ambassador strides off, suddenly, calling in Brakiri, like a muezzin calling the faithful to prayer.

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. SHERIDAN'S QUARTERS.

Rebo and Zooty enter Sheridan's quarters, with Sheridan. Deleenn is there already, dressed in one of the dresses we saw her looking at before. She looks ill-at-ease. A table is laid for a (human) dinner for four.

SHERIDAN

This is Deleenn. My wife and the head of the advisory board for the Alliance.

REBO

Madam, we are Rebo and Zooty.

ZOOTY

(speaking Minbari)

N'trol ampurk'assi lecococ ornell.

Deleenn stares at him. We wonder if this is shock, and then she begins to laugh uncontrollably. Zooty keeps a straight face.

DELEENN

That is the funniest thing I have ever heard in my life.

SHERIDAN

Uh, what did you say?

From this point out, Rebo and Zooty completely drop the 'Rebo and Zooty' identities, and are a couple of very intense comedians, who take what they do very seriously. They take off their hats, and put them down.

REBO

Well, most Minbari humour is based not on physical danger or embarrassment—

ZOOTY

—or rejection, like most human humor—

REBO

—but on failure to achieve spiritual or emotional enlightenment.

DELENN

(Still fighting to keep a straight face)

You see, a *lecococ* means both a small fish and the pleasure you get meeting someone for the first time. So he . . . (then she starts laughing again.)

SHERIDAN

You've studied Minbari humour?

ZOOTY

Minbari humour, Narn humour, most forms of humour. So. What's for dinner? Something smells wonderful.

INT. STATION CORRIDOR.

We can hear the priest's bell bonging. There's a pounding of feet, and the Brakiri salesman who gave Londo his candy comes running breathlessly down the corridor

INT. LOCHLEY'S QUARTERS

Lochley's in her rather Spartan quarters. She turns on the vidscreen (we are shooting away from the monitor, seeing only changing lights in the room). The announcer has that awful voice they use to announce upcoming comedies.

ANNOUNCER 1 (MALE)

And now—more laughs in . . . the best of Rebo and Zooty!

Lochley changes channels.

ANNOUNCER 2 (FEMALE)

—return to the Babylon 5 Rebo and Zooty movie marathon, with *Sons of the New Desert!*

Lochley is about to change channels, then she realises that Rebo and Zooty are on every channel, and she leaves it on. She undoes her top button, and sits at the table, where there's a pile of papers. She's going to do an hour or so's work before turning in for the night.

CUT TO:

SHOTS OF THE CORRIDOR

A flickering, magical light has begun to glimmer along the chalk lines and the strung string and tinsel. INTERCUT WITH, in quick order,

INT. LENNIER'S TEMPORARY QUARTERS

Lennier, in a transient room as characterless as a mini-motel room. He now wears a white robe. He takes a small prayer mat from his bag, puts it on the floor and squats beside it.

CUT TO:

INT. LONDO'S QUARTERS

Londo is pouring himself a drink, and, alone in his quarters, looks thoroughly miserable, as if the weight of the world—or the Centauri worlds—is on his back. And

CUT TO:

INT. GARIBALDI'S QUARTERS

Mr. Garibaldi has showered, and is getting into bed.

COMPUTER VOICE

You have a message.

GARIBALDI

Play.

LISE (VO)

Hi? Mike. It's Lise. Just calling in. I love you. Be good. Don't work too hard. Get enough sleep. Love you.

COMPUTER VOICE

End of message. Do you wish to respond?

GARIBALDI

(sleepy)

In the morning.

And he's asleep.

CUT TO:

INT. OBSERVATION DOME

Corwin is on duty. G'kar enters, in an ornate sleeping robe, carrying a hard pillow.

G'KAR

My quarters are inside the Brakiri territory. Therefore I would like to sleep here tonight. I will not be in the way.

CORWIN

Well . . .

(hesitates, then)

Sure. It looks like a quiet night.

G'KAR

Looks can be deceptive. Do not wake me.⁵

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR. TELEVISION MONITOR.

Where the chalk lines were, and the tinsel, now blazes up in a glorious CGI colourful light. The chalk lines become lines of light. The tinsel becomes light.

INT. LOCHLEY'S QUARTERS

Lochley's still working at her desk. She's now wearing a robe and sensible Earthforce issue pyjamas. In the background, we can hear a Rebo and Zooty movie on the vidscreen, although we can't see it.

ZOOTY (VO)

But Rebo, the man in the store said that it was a special kind of carrot. That was why it whistled.

REBO (VO)

Ah. Zooty. For you, fifty thousand years of human civilisation was just something that happened to other people, wasn't it?⁶

And in the middle of this, the power goes off. There's a beat. Then red emergency lights go on, and there's a low humming. There's nothing on the vidscreen but electronic snow. She raises her hand.

LOCHLEY

Lochley here. What's happening?

There is no answer.

INT. OBSERVATION DOME

G'kar is asleep on the floor, head on his pillow, and snoring very gently.

Corwin is practically dozing off at the wheel. Then there's a low yellow-alert alarm-noise. He

wakes, slaps the console.

We see an image of Babylon 5. A pie-slice is taken out of it, and marked in red, flashing on and off.

CORWIN

That's impossible.

INT. LONDO'S QUARTERS.

Close up: Londo pours himself a drink. Pull back to reveal that he is sitting at a table, and opposite him is a portrait of The First Emperor, the Julius Caesar of Centauri.

LONDO

(drinking and talking)

So. When you were emperor, it meant something. Subduer of the Narn⁷ and the Shoggren. Now . . . anyone could be Emperor. Vir could be emperor.⁸

(beat)

Talk to me. It is the Day of the Dead.

(another beat. He pours himself another drink)

No? Nothing to say? Of course not. The dead stay dead.

There is a flickering buzz, and the red emergency power lights come on.

Londo gets up, leaving his glass and booze on the table. He opens the door, but makes no move to go out. We can see the tinsel glittering with multicoloured light.

Londo turns back into his quarters, and the door closes behind him. He looks down at the portrait of the first emperor.

LONDO (cont'd)

So. It looks like it will be another long night.

ADIRA TYREE (O.S.)

(nervously)

Hello, Londo. I came back.

Londo looks up, and sees her, standing a few paces from him. And a panoply of expressions runs across his face—puzzlement, recognition, delight.

LONDO

Adira? Adira Tyree? My Adira? But—you're dead. I saw your body. You were poisoned. But—

ADIRA TYREE

Shh.

She reaches out one finger and touches his lips. He realises that she is real, and his face crumples into a very un-Londo-like grin of mixed happiness and utter sorrow.

LONDO

(babbling)

It is you. I killed the man who killed you, you know that? But it did not bring you back. I am to be emperor, I am the saviour of my people, and I think, I would give it all away, to have you back, to be beside you, and then I wall off those thoughts, and I stand before the wall, and—

ADIRA TYREE

Londo. My darling. My poor, wonderful darling.

And she kisses him. And we, politely, pan up, and away, leaving them a little modesty. And it sounds as if Londo might almost be crying with joy as he says,

LONDO

I missed you so.

EXT. BABYLON 5—NIGHT

It rolls on. The sun is behind the planet.

INT. GARIBALDI'S QUARTERS

Garibaldi is asleep in bed. There are soft white night-lights on. The lights flicker—we hear a BUZZ—and now the red emergency lights go on.

He grunts in his sleep, then someone sits down next to him on the bed. We can't see her face yet.

DODGER

Aw, look at you. You got old. I turn my back on you for five minutes, and you got old.

Garibaldi opens his eyes, then he focusses on her.

It's Dodger, as we last saw her, when she was alive, in a dirty uniform, but looking pretty cute.

GARIBALDI

(a bit slow—half asleep)

Mm? Dodger? You're dead.

(then the penny drops)

I'm dreaming.

Satisfied with this, he closes his eyes again.

Dodger laughs and moves off camera.

We stay on Garibaldi, as he doesn't quite go back to sleep. Dodger's uniform top is tossed onto the bed. Then we hear a shower running.

Garibaldi sits up, rubbing his eyes, and climbs out of bed. There's a candle burning in the bathroom area, lighting everything with flickering candlelight.

DODGER

(out of shot, shouting over the shower)

Yup. I'm dead. But you're not dreaming. Hot water! Yes!

Garibaldi reaches under the pillow, produces his PPG.

GARIBALDI

Just come out of there with your hands up.

DODGER

Be easier if you came in with me, Michael. You could soap my back.

Garibaldi steps toward the shower area. He is not lowering the PPG.

DODGER (cont'd)

That feels so good. You don't know how much I missed hot water. You got a robe, cutie?

He fumbles with his free hand, tosses her a robe. She steps out of the shower.

GARIBALDI

Dodger?

DODGER

Pleased to see me?

GARIBALDI

But. I thought you were dead.

DODGER

Ah. The reports of my death weren't even exaggerated a little bit. But I

missed you. And well, how often do dead people get second chances?

GARIBALDI

What are you? A robot? A clone? Is this some kind of Psi Corps sting?

(louder)

Hey! Bester! Is this one of your dirty tricks?

Dodger, dressed in the robe, is now towelling off her hair.

DODGER

It's nobody's dirty trick, Mike. It's just me. Happy Day of the Dead.

GARIBALDI

(lowering the PPG)

And what does that make you? The walking dead?

DODGER

No. Flesh and blood. Here—

(she takes his free hand, presses it to her skin)

Feel.

He shakes his head.

DODGER (cont'd)

So I don't even get a kiss, huh?

Garibaldi shakes his head.

DODGER (cont'd)

Space! And you don't drink, so beer's out.

(beat)

You play scrabble?⁹

INT. LOCHLEY'S QUARTERS

Lochley is holding her link, in frustration.

LOCHLEY

Sheridan, then.

COMPUTER VOICE

(faint)

Sorry. That location is out of range.

Someone begins edging her way towards Lochley. It's a girl in her teens, thin, dirty. She coughs, tuberculously. Lochley looks up, and then the penny drops.

LOCHLEY

Zoe?

ZOE

Lizzie? Is that you? Where is this place?

And for the first time, we see Lochley's ultra-cool facade crack, deeply and utterly: fear and horror and grief.

LOCHLEY

Zoe. Oh my god. Zoe.

FADE OUT.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. SHERIDAN'S QUARTERS.

Rebo and Zooty and Sheridan and Delemn are having a pleasant time. They're up to dessert, which is fresh kreebish!. Sheridan's link breeps.

CORWIN (V.O.)

Can I talk to you privately, Mr. President?

Sheridan stands up.

SHERIDAN

(to his guests)

I won't be a moment. Enjoy the kreebish.

INT. SHERIDAN'S BEDROOM.

Sheridan stands in front of the vid screen. As he gets to it, we can see Corwin in the Observation Dome on the screen.

SHERIDAN

Shoot.

CORWIN

Mr. President? There seems to be a slight problem.

SHERIDAN

Go ahead.

CORWIN

It's kind of hard to explain, sir. We seem to be missing about a square mile slice of the station, We can't reach it, we can't communicate to it.

Over his face, or inset in a window, is a diagram of the station, with the Brakiri area marked on it.

SHERIDAN

You've spoken to Captain Lochley about this?

CORWIN

Captain Lochley's quarters are within the missing zone, sir.

SHERIDAN

I see. I'm coming right over.

INT. SHERIDAN'S QUARTERS.

Sheridan appears at the door.

SHERIDAN

Delenn? Can we talk for a moment?

REBO

Is anything wrong?

ZOOTY

Anything we can do?

SHERIDAN

Just today's crisis. Please. Don't let this interrupt your dinner. I won't be long.

EXT. BABYLON 5—NIGHT.

It's still there.

INT. LENNIER'S TEMPORARY QUARTERS

The red emergency lighting is in effect. Lennier has not moved since we last saw him. Morden steps out of the shadows.

MORDEN

Good evening, Ranger Lennier.

LENNIER

(recognition hovering)

I . . . know you.

MORDEN

I should hope so. When I was alive, I was known as Mr. Morden.

The penny drops for Lennier. In one movement, Lennier springs to his feet, pulling his pike out, extending it.

Morden raises his open hands, to show that he is unarmed and friendly.

MORDEN (cont'd)

It's always nice to be recognized.

LENNIER

You worked for the Shadows.

MORDEN

I did a lot of things. Yes. Looking back on it, though, I think I just tried to make people happy. Anyway, it's all just history, now. And I've paid for all my crimes. Eh?

(he gestures, a finger across the throat)

LENNIER

Why did you come back here?

MORDEN

I'm dead. It's my job. Why did you come back here?

LENNIER

I came here for wisdom.

MORDEN

You don't come to the dead for wisdom, Lennier. My head was cut from my body. Even now it rots on a pole outside the Imperial Palace. Birds have taken the hair for their nests, maggots ate my flesh. And you want wisdom?

LENNIER

Yes. I do.

MORDEN

Wisdom. Well, Delemn does not love you as you love her, and she never will.

LENNIER

(beat)

I know that.

MORDEN

No. You didn't. Not in your heart. That's the trouble, you see. No-one should ever want to talk to the dead.

LENNIER

Go away.

MORDEN

Sorry. Doesn't work like that. You've raised a ghost. Now you have to listen to what he tells you.

Lennier gets up, and the door to the corridor opens. Outside we can see the corridor, slightly distorted.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE LENNIER'S TEMPORARY QUARTERS. (BLUE SCREEN)

We see Lennier step into the corridor. And we see that he tries to move forward—that he begins to run—but he makes no perceptible forward motion. He shrinks against the background, and then he begins to cough, and he stumbles, and collapses, unable to breathe.

INT. GARIBALDI'S QUARTERS

Dodger's sitting on the bed. Garibaldi's standing. He's put away the PPG.

GARIBALDI

You know something, Dodger. I never believed in anything beyond death until now.

DODGER

Me neither. Still don't.

GARIBALDI

You're kidding.

DODGER

No. I don't believe in ghosts, or in reincarnation or anything. I figure that you get one shot at the golden ring, and when you're done, blammo, you're done.

GARIBALDI

But, Dodger, you're . . . I mean . . .

DODGER

(shrugs)

Maybe it's some kind of Psi phenomenon. Or a time thing. Or Technomancy. Look, I'm a marine. I trust what I can feel, or shoot, or . . .

(she doesn't say fuck)

GARIBALDI

Aren't you meant to bring back arcane knowledge from beyond the veil?

DODGER

Nah—all the arcane knowledge I got is what I started off with.

GARIBALDI

Such as?

DODGER

Well, okay, capers—those things they put on pizza—are pickled nasturtium buds. And you can sing any Emily Dickinson poem to the tune of *The Yellow Rose of Texas*². C'mon. I won't bite ya.

She pats the bed. Garibaldi sits down beside her.

INT. CORRIDOR.

Sheridan is walking down a (normal) corridor. He comes to an intersection, with a Brakiri chalk-mark down the middle. It's now glowing with light. On his side of the corridor there is full lighting, on the other side of the chalk line it's dark, emergency lighting. Sheridan looks at the space, then picks up a small wall trash can (or object of similar size) and tosses it, hard, towards the other side of the wall.

We see the arc of the object, but it's moving against a blue screen background of the corridor, and it gets smaller and falls to the ground without making any forward progress.

Sheridan looks down at it, on the other side of the chalk line. He strides off, keeping to his side of the corridor.

INT. LOCHLEY'S QUARTERS

Zoe is sitting on the bed, shivering slightly. Lochley's next to her.

LOCHLEY

Zoe. Do you know how you got here?

Zoe shakes her head.

ZOE

How long has it been?

LOCHLEY

Twenty years. I came back to the apartment and I found you in the bathroom, on the floor with cockroaches all over you. You'd choked on . . . you'd been . . . oh Zoe . . .

ZOE

Sorry. Well, you told me the stuff would kill me, huh? You want to say 'Told you so?' You can if you want.

Now it's Lochley's turn to shake her head.

ZOE (cont'd)

So then what happened?

LOCHLEY

After you died, I got scared. I called my mom at home. Ten hours later my father turned up with half a dozen off-duty marines from his platoon to take me back. And you know what?

Even after everything he'd done, I was pleased to see him. I enlisted in Earthforce Cadet Corps, and . . .

(decides to skip 20 years)

. . . now I run a space station and worry about the daily problems of quarter of a million disparate life forms.

ZOE

(awed)

We're in space? Cool.

LOCHLEY

Yes. Zoe . . . something I've wondered about ever since you . . . look . . . did you do it on purpose? Or was it an accident?

ZOE

I don't remember . . . you got any stuff around here? We could have a little party.

LOCHLEY

I stopped when you died.

ZOE

You don't party? Jeez, Lizzie. What did you grow up to be? We had such fun. Didn't we? Didn't we have such fun?

Lochley shakes her head.

LOCHLEY

We were cold and sick and we were hungry all the time. We did things to survive that I've done my best to forget. We lived in that burned-out hotel . . . I was scared all the time that my father would find me. It was bad.

ZOE

Yeah. But we still had fun.

LOCHLEY

Are you a ghost?

ZOE

I don't think so. I don't believe in ghosts. Anyway, I need to use the rest room.

LOCHLEY

Maybe you were transported here in time from before you died.

ZOE

Uh-uh. I died. I do remember that, a bit. It was bad, Lizzie.

INT. OBSERVATION DOME

The door opens and Sheridan enters. He looks down, and sees G'kar asleep. Sheridan looks at Corwin for some explanation.

CORWIN

He said he didn't want to sleep in the Brakiri territory.

SHERIDAN

I don't blame him.

(beat)

How long did Captain Lochley sell that area to the Brakiri for?

CORWIN

I don't know, sir.

SHERIDAN

Check her log. She'll have noted all the details. Then get me the Brakiri homeworld. Someone there must be able to explain this.

CORWIN

Yes sir. Mr. President, we've lost contact with a large portion of Babylon 5. Shouldn't you declare a formal state of emergency?

SHERIDAN

We'll see. Right now I'm just marvelling at the way people tell us things, and we don't listen.

INT. LENNIER'S TEMPORARY QUARTERS

Morden drags the half-unconscious Lennier back into the room, half carrying him. He lets him go. The oxygen revives him.

MORDEN

Come on now. You won't get there by walking. The other side of that corridor is over 200 million light years away³. And the air is spread a little thinly in the middle.

LENNIER

Why did you help me? I know what kind of man you were.

Morden begins to potter in the small kitchenette unit, opening and closing things, seeing if there's coffee.

MORDEN

Give a dog a bad name and you can hang him with it. Of course, the real reason Sheridan isn't here is that he's dead. He died at Z'ha'Dum. Do you know if there's any coffee in here?

Lennier does not react. Morden finds a copy of *Universe Today* in the kitchenette.

MORDEN (cont'd)

Suit yourself. So, you like being a Ranger, Lennier? Would you like it any better, if I were to tell you that you will betray the Anla-shok? That your name will be used as a curse amongst generations to come? Like Judas, or Quisling, or—what was the Minbari one?—Flethor. The new Flethor.

LENNIER

You are lying.

MORDEN

I wish I were.

LENNIER

(beat)

You lie. Sheridan did not die at Z'ha'Dum. And if you do not know the present, how can you claim to tell the future? At least you have shown me that there is truly life beyond death.

MORDEN

Sheridan's alive? But.. that cannot be.⁴

Lennier sits down, beside his prayer mat.

LENNIER

I am Anla-shok. I shall remain so until I pass beyond. I could no more betray the anla-shok than my fingers could betray my hand. Our talk is done.

He closes his eyes, is meditating. Morden sits down to read his copy of *Universe Today*.

MORDEN

Your loss.

We PAN DOWN to the *Universe Today*. The Front Page story is Rebo and Zooty visiting Babylon 5.

FADE OUT.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. LOCHLEY'S QUARTERS

Lochley is walking around angrily. Zoe is sitting on her bed.

ZOE

You got any music here?

LOCHLEY

There are some crystals over there. But not too loud. I'm trying to think.
She toggles her link, for the umpteenth time.

LOCHLEY (cont'd)

(into the link)

Lochley to C&C.

LINK COMPUTER VOICE (V.O.)

Sorry. That location is out of range.

LOCHLEY

It's acting as if the rest of Babylon 5 were millions of light years away. But that's impossible.

ZOE

I don't see why. You said we were part of the Brakiri home planet. That must be a long way from Babylon 5.

Lochley considers this.

LOCHLEY

(realization dawning)

But that's crazy. I wonder . . .

Then she goes to the TV screen in her room.

LOCHLEY (cont'd)

(purposefully)

On, in link mode.

A shifting pattern appears.

LOCHLEY (cont'd)

Locate all backup and emergency systems currently active.

A cluster of lights with letters and numbers next to them appear.

LOCHLEY (cont'd)

Okay. Shut down units D3 to X11. Reroute power and communications through Epsilon Grid.

The screen blanks. The words 'NEED AUTHORIZATION' appear.

LINK COMPUTER VOICE

Protected routine. Passcode requested.

LOCHLEY

Captain Elizabeth Lochley. Passcode, two words:

(a beat)

Zoe's dead.

Zoe shoots her a look. The screen flashes with coloured lights, and then the room's lights flicker. We're not on full power, but we're off red emergency lighting from now on. Lochley looks a tiny bit pleased with herself.

LOCHLEY (cont'd)

Bingo.

INT. GARIBALDI'S QUARTERS

Garibaldi and Dodger are lying next to each other on the bed, on top of the bed-clothes. It's a bit tense, but they're talking.

DODGER

So this is the same Lise you told me about the last time I was here? She must be quite a woman.

GARIBALDI

She is.

DODGER

Did you ever tell her about us?

GARIBALDI

There never was an us to tell her about.

DODGER

I'm jealous.

He's not sure what to say.

DODGER (cont'd)

(edging closer on the bed to him)

She's so lucky. She's alive, and she's got you. Even if you did get old. And she gets to do this . . .

And she moves in for a kiss. We are never quite certain what his response will be, because at that moment the room is illuminated by a screen flickering to life. Lochley is on the monitor.

LOCHLEY (ONSCREEN)

I hope I'm not interrupting anything, Mr. Garibaldi.

Garibaldi sits up.

GARIBALDI

Nope. Uh. Just an old friend. Dodger this is Captain Lochley, and this is PFC—the late PFC—um . . .

DODGER

Durman, Elizabeth, 56927. Killed in action.

LOCHLEY

Mr. Garibaldi. I need to be put through to C&C. You'll need to route the call via Proxima using a Tachyon Relay.

Next to Lochley, Zoe leans into shot, grins.

GARIBALDI

You're asking me to hack from Babcom into Stellarcom and back again?
From my quarters?

LOCHLEY

Or to recommend someone else, more capable than you are, currently within the Brakiri boundaries.

GARIBALDI

You must be kidding.

LOCHLEY

You have half an hour. Now I'm going to patch through a general broadcast within the Brakiri bounds explaining that we have the situation well in hand, and that there is nothing to worry about.

INT. LONDO'S QUARTERS.

On the bed, Londo and Adira Tyree. They are naked but partly covered by sheets: we can see Adira's naked back, and the cluster of six irregularly-sized gill-like openings near the spine, at waist level.⁵ Londo is utterly happy, utterly relaxed, and 70% asleep.

ADIRA TYREE

Londo?

LONDO

Mm? Again? You make me feel so young once more, Adira.

ADIRA TYREE

And you make me feel alive.

But at that moment the wall screen comes to life, and Lochley says:

LOCHLEY

(on the screen)

This is Captain Lochley. I appreciate that all of you within the Brakiri boundaries are currently experiencing certain extraordinary phenomena. While I can offer no rational explanation for these events, I can assure you that we are doing all we can to restore normalcy—

LONDO

(over this)

What is she talking about. Idiot woman. Destroying my mood.

(to the screen)

Off! Off!

The screen goes off.

ADIRA TYREE

But she was right.

Normality will return soon, and when this night is done, so am I. And you will go on to become Emperor Mollari.

LONDO

I do not want to be an emperor. I want to stay here with you.

ADIRA TYREE

I'm a dream. In the morning, I will be gone. And you will rule forty billion Centauri, and not one of them will ever know you as I knew you.

And she kisses him, gently on the cheek.

INT. GARIBALDI'S QUARTERS

Garibaldi's hunched in front of a small keyboard, which he's plugged into his link, which he's plugged into the wall. Dodger's on the bed, reading a copy of THE ART OF WAR, which Garibaldi had beside the bed.

GARIBALDI

Okay. Now, if this works, I'll be able to persuade our local information stream that it's actually originating on Minbar, and is streaming in to Proxima, and from there . . .

(to the computer, stabbing with fingers)

Override! C'mon, override!

DODGER

You know, there's guys would be flattered if some not entirely un-cute dame returned from the dead to spend a night of lust and passion with them.

GARIBALDI

(not paying much attention)

Yeah?

DODGER

Mm-hm. And they could find other ways to prove their masculinity than hacking into the interstellar phone system.

GARIBALDI

(who hasn't heard a word she said)

Yes!

(into link)

Captain Lochley? Your comm channels are now open. Took me seventeen minutes. Good night.

DODGER

I mean, it's some guys' fantasy. A love-hungry redhead who'll vanish in the morning, never to be seen again.

GARIBALDI

(finally noticing her properly again)

Sorry, Dodger. What was that?

DODGER

It's a good thing I'm only here for another hour or so, cute buns. Two weeks of this, and I'd kill you.

INT. SHERIDAN'S QUARTERS.—NIGHT.

The food has been put away. Rebo and Zooty are on one sofa, Delemn on another.

DELENN

He said he'd be back here any minute now.

REBO

We are so impressed by the way you're dealing with this. There's a real emergency going on and I feel so useless. I—we both—admire him so much. Well, that's why we—

ZOOTY

We want to give up showbusiness.

DELENN

You what?

REBO

We want to give it all up. We want to do something worthwhile.

DELENN

Worthwhile?

REBO

That's right. Like you people do.

The door opens, and Sheridan enters. He looks on edge, but he's come back, so some of this must be under control.

SHERIDAN

Sorry about running out on you. Well, I've done everything I can down there.

DELENN

John. Rebo and Zooty were telling me they plan to give up comedy. For politics.

ZOOTY

You see, making people laugh. Well, it's okay—always makes me feel good to get a laugh—but politics is important.

Sheridan shakes his head.

SHERIDAN

You two have a real gift. When things got bad under President Clark, you could get away with saying things on your show that no-one else dared to say . . .

REBO

We could say it because comedians don't matter.

SHERIDAN

If you don't matter, then nothing matters. The only reason politics exists is to ensure that people have the freedom to laugh.

DELENN

And to love.

SHERIDAN

(touching her hand)

And to love⁶.

(His link Breeps.)

Sheridan.

CORWIN (V.O.)

Sir. There's a call coming in for you on External relay. It's Captain Lochley.

SHERIDAN

Patch her through.

The Screen lights up, and we can see Lochley. The picture is **BADLY DISTORTED**: ghostly double image, lots of snow, and the **AUDIO** is **DISTORTED**—noisy and crackling.

SHERIDAN (cont'd)

Captain Lochley.

LOCHLEY

Yes, Mr. President.

SHERIDAN

Captain . . . Where are you calling from?

LOCHLEY

My quarters, sir. Mr. Garibaldi patched into Stellarcom. Right now I'm talking to you from two levels up and 27 light years away.

(suddenly v. tired)

Don't ask: I don't understand it either.

SHERIDAN

(genuine concern)

Are you all right, Elizabeth?

LOCHLEY

Yes sir. Thank you for asking, sir.

SHERIDAN

Well, Captain?

LOCHLEY

Sir, my hypothesis is that this will all sort itself out at planetary sunrise, when this area ceases to be Brakiri space.

SHERIDAN

That's what the authorities on the Brakiri homeworld assured me.

LOCHLEY

Sir. You're breaking up . . .

Her image starts to break up.

SHERIDAN

Well, later this morning you'll have to tell me all about it. 0800 hours, in my office. Goodnight, captain.

EXT. BABYLON 5

We're looking at the planet below B5, and the first glimmer of sunlight is beginning to CGI its way around the planetary disk.

INT. LENNIER'S TEMPORARY QUARTERS

Lennier is in the position we left him in. Morden stands fairly near him. Morden cocks his head on one side.

MORDEN

Well, time's nearly up. When you remember of me, Lennier, just think of me as a brief electromagnetic anomaly who told you some true things. For your own good. See you on the other side . . .

And he steps back into the shadows . . . and is gone.

INT. GARIBALDI'S QUARTERS

Garibaldi and Dodger are having a great, if apparently non-sexual, time, singing Emily Dickinson poems to the tune of the Yellow Rose of Texas. She's dressed in her marine uniform again. They're sitting around.

DODGER

No, it is true. Listen,

(sings)

*My candle burns at both ends, it will not last the night, but oh my friends
and oh my foes it gives a lovely light*⁷.

They laugh.

GARIBALDI

Okay, let me try one.

(sings)

Because I would not stop for death he kindly stopped for me—⁸

He stops. She's listening to something he can't hear. She gets up off the bed.

GARIBALDI (cont'd)

Hey. Dodger. I was raised a good Catholic boy.

(He thinks it's a long shot, but he'll mention it)

Maybe we'll meet up in Heaven.

DODGER

'Parting is all we know of Heaven, and all we need of Hell.'⁹

GARIBALDI

Huh?

But the room is empty.

INT. LOCHLEY'S QUARTERS

Zoe is sitting on the bed, and Lochley is sitting with her. We cut in while Zoe is slowly reciting a message she was given.

ZOE

"... return to the End of the Beginning." And that's the message I was given.¹⁰ Who is this Sheridan guy anyway? Doesn't matter. So, did you get married? Did you have any kids?

LOCHLEY

Married. Actually married that Sheridan guy. It didn't work. No kids.

ZOE

I wanted to have kids. Lots of kids . . .

She hears something that we can't.

ZOE (cont'd)

Lizzie? I do remember my death. I didn't want to hurt you. But yeah, I did do it on purpose. I just couldn't go on any more. Don't hate me.

LOCHLEY

I could never hate you.

But she's the only person in the room.

EXT. BABYLON 5

And the sun comes out from behind the planet, in all its glory, illuminating Babylon 5. It's morning.
And we—

FADE OUT.

END ACT FOUR

TAG

FADE IN:

EXT. BABYLON 5.—DAY

Illuminated by sunlight, reassuring and solid and normal once more.

INT. SHERIDAN'S OFFICE (OR CONFERENCE ROOM)

Lochley is at attention. Sheridan is walking around, head raised.

SHERIDAN

Captain . . . what do you think happened last night? Did you have one of these ghostly encounters?

LOCHLEY

Yes, sir.

SHERIDAN

Would you like to tell me about it?

LOCHLEY

With respect sir, it was intensely personal.

SHERIDAN

That's what pretty much everyone tells me. So, Captain. Let me get this straight. You sold Babylon 5 to an alien race for the night, who somehow transported a square mile of the station to their homeworld, while apparently filling it with people temporarily returned from the dead.

LOCHLEY

Yes sir.

SHERIDAN

Do you have any explanation for why you did this, Captain?

LOCHLEY

Yes sir. I thought it was a metaphor sir.

SHERIDAN

I should chew you a new—

LOCHLEY

Yes, sir. You should. Sir, I was told to give you a message. It's from someone called Kosh.¹¹

SHERIDAN

What's the message?

LOCHLEY

“When the Long Night comes, return to the End of the Beginning.”

Sheridan says nothing. He seems distracted. There's a pause which goes on almost longer than is comfortable. Then Sheridan breaks it by saying,

SHERIDAN

Thank you, Captain. That will be all.¹²

INT. CORRIDOR.

Lochley comes out into a crowded corridor. G'Kar has been hanging around to talk to her.

G'KAR

Captain Lochley.

LOCHLEY

Say it, G'kar.

G'KAR

Say it?

LOCHLEY

‘I told you so.’ You warned me, and I didn't listen and you were right.

G'KAR

No. You were right, and I was wrong. The people who were within the Brakiri bounds last night. They seem . . . deeper. More at peace. I wonder what I would have seen, if I had slept in my own quarters last night.

Lochley has the wind knocked out of her sails. This was not something she was prepared for.

LOCHLEY

Oh . . . I hadn't thought . . .

G'KAR

But there is no profit in might-have-beens. We learn from our mistakes.

And then Londo comes past, in full regalia, medals gleaming on his chest, flanked by Rebo and Zooty, and we follow him. Walking in front of them are an INS camera crew. Londo is beaming, and playing up for the camera crew.

LONDO

You boys. You are so funny. I always watch you.¹³ Zoot zoot. Very funny. I thought perhaps you could perform at my inauguration. But to make the Centauri laugh, you must take my advice . . .

Meanwhile Zooty slips behind him, and puffs out his chest and walks a couple of feet behind Londo in an uncanny imitation of Londo's strut. Londo doesn't notice.

Back to G'kar, watching this impassively. He corrects himself.

G'KAR

Sometimes we learn. Let me buy you breakfast, Captain . . .

FADE OUT¹⁴.

THE END

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IT WAS YESTERDAY, with this book a few days away from going to press, that I realised that I had not written this page. I thought I had, but I hadn't, and if I did it's on my computer at home and I'm writing this on a laptop in a small hotel in Denmark, and I think this is one of those times when I meant to do something so hard and well I thought I actually had. So, in haste and in Copenhagen, I want to say my thanks:

To all the cast, who did such a great job of making my words work.

To Doug Leffler, who directed it, and who added so much flesh to the bones.

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Writing for Babylon 5 felt less like writing an episode for a show, and more like becoming part of a huge extended family, which includes the people who make it and the people who watch it. Thank you all. You've been very gracious.

Neil Gaiman
Copenhagen July 14th 1998

- 1 Like a few of the scenes in the beginning this was filmed, but not used, due to the episode being a bit too long.
- 2 Rebo and Zooty were played by Penn and Teller, who are my two favourite magicians in the whole world. I danced around the room when I heard they'd been cast, only I danced very quietly, as it was a hotel room in Lucca in Italy and my wife was fast asleep. The only trouble was, as JMS e-mailed me to point out, Teller doesn't talk onscreen. (Off-screen he's chatty as anything, and a real gentleman.) The episode was going to be filmed in little over a week, so JMS rewrote the Rebo and Zooty scenes, giving Zooty a voice-box that talked. I thought it would probably be more interesting, in a behind-the-scenes sort of way if you got to see the original script, with a talking Zooty and no voice-box.
- 3 By an odd coincidence the only other episode in which this was referred to, 'A Day In The Strife' was repeated on TNT the night 'Day of the Dead' aired, so lots of people who would otherwise have thought I was making this up instead found themselves wondering whether there was in fact some sort of conspiracy afoot to remind them of Babylon 5 Trivia.
- 4 This scene wasn't useable as filmed, which I thought was a bit of a pity, as it was the place where I stopped, cleared my throat, and explained the plot. Also, how many times do you get to use the word Transsubstantiation on television?
- 5 For some reason, people who had no problem at all with the idea of dead people turning up on a space station for the night had problems with G'Kar announcing that he would sleep in C & C, and then sleeping there. "Couldn't he have gone to a hotel?" they asked me. Of course he could. But G'Kar seemed to want to make a Statement, and to Register a Protest through a Grand Gesture, so I let him.
- 6 A small tip of the hat to my friend Richard Curtis, who wrote, amongst other things, *Black Adder* . . .
- 7 In the interests of continuity JMS changed this to Xon. Which Peter Jurassik read as "Exxon" so later they overdubbed it to the correct pronunciation. The Shogren were my tip of the hat to my friend John Sjogren, who played the part of my "As a rabid Babylon 5 fan is this cool?" tester from the beginning on.
- 8 "And if Vir can be emperor, a small Earth Cat can be emperor!" added JMS to this scene, improving it no end.
- 9 Getting the actors who had appeared in the previous episodes was, I was told, an organisational feat up there with the D-Day Landings. If I knew who to thank, I'd thank them here.
- 1 I discovered when I was on set that Kreebish is pink. I never got to try it, so I don't know what it tastes like.
- 2 I don't know who first told me this, but I recall a long discussion of it on the GENIE bulletin board. It's one of those 'everybody knows' things, and thus isn't actually true. You can't. But capers really are pickled nasturtium buds.
- 3 He's exaggerating. In reality it was barely 30 million light years away.
- 4 An astoundingly awful line which Joe sensibly lost when he tightened this scene—he tweaked it elsewhere, too. I prefer his version of the Lennier/Morden scene to mine.
- 5 No, we can't.
- 6 One of my favourite TV moments is here, as Teller took Sheridan's other hand and gazed soulfully into his eyes.
- 7 Which isn't actually by Emily Dickenson, but it seemed too appropriate to miss—and you can sing it to the tune of The Yellow Rose of Texas'. It's by Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Dodger misquotes it slightly. But she's a marine, and all she knows of poetry is stuff she remembered from school and learned from other marines in bars. Most of the latter is too filthy for television.
- 8 Really Emily Dickenson..
- 9 See footnote 15.
- 10 The original draft of the script said "Joe—give me a message for here". And he did. And yes, I knew what it was about when it arrived.
- 11 Did she know who Kosh was? Yes, of course she did.
- 12 When I told Joe about this episode on the phone, I mentioned a bit at the end to him where a number of different theories were proposed to account for the events of the night before. I didn't write it though, due mostly to forgetting to, and he felt the end needed to be slower, so he wrote it.
- 13 He was lying. In the broadcast version this was amended so he's now telling the truth.
- 14 And omitted is the final scene, which was Joe's, where Zooty breaks his silence of many years to whisper "Because it tells me to" to Sheridan.

“Of all the freelance scripts that came into B5 this was the most effortless, the most fun and the most insightful.”

—J. Michael Straczynski



The author on the set of Babylon 5

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