

Marti's Hella Afterlife

by

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OPEN ON:

EXT. THE SKY - DAY

A pure blue sky, punctuated with cloudy wisps, moves past. The clouds fatten up until they are thoroughly, *spiritually*, cumulus. Gradually these clouds are everywhere. A soft golden beam filters through them, and radiates a golden mist.

VO

Since the dawn of Man, the afterlife has driven the duringlife. Humans are, by nature, a planning animal; the moment they grow old enough to pilot their lives, they ask "What's next?"

The golden mist becomes more concentrated, more yellow. It starts to become bordered by orange and light green. It flattens and angles down to reveal the top, purple stripe of a rainbow.

VO (CONT'D)

With this question in mind, they follow rulebooks and bucket lists, commandments and cardinal virtues. Striving toward Eternity's greater reward.

The clouds part to reveal a stately golden gate, roughly ten feet tall with hand-hewn rods and decorative filigree. Standing at a nearby podium is SAINT PETER, a distinguished Mediterranean gentleman, with a tightly trimmed beard and fashionable tuxedo. He is holding an iPad.

VO (CONT'D)

This story won't address any of that.

EXT. WASTELAND - DAY

Below a sheet of darkening clouds emerges a landscape like the one behind the Mona Lisa, familiar but unreal. Swamps bleeding into crags, gravel roads leading off to rolling rapids, the like.

Singular and defiant is a towering skyscraper cobbled together in all the architectural styles of humankind. It rises out of a threatening ravine. Through a 21st century glass window, a DATA ENTRY SPECIALIST is working inside a 21st century cubicle.

VO (CONT'D)

Our story begins with a typical workday in Purgatory's Processing Department, where millions of souls sort and dispatch millions of souls.

INT. PROCESSING DEPT. - PURGATORY SKYSCRAPER - DAY

Yep, there are a **million** cubicles on this floor. (And this is just one floor of this corporate campus.) The **EMPLOYEES** are from all periods of history. Their cubicles bear a corporate name plate and reflect the technologies, decor and temperament of their times.

A WWI SOLDIER (Walter Neufeld, 1896-1916) kisses a cameo photo of his betrothed and straps an interoffice communication to a carrier pigeon. A CAVEWOMAN (Guhguh, 30,033-30,000 BCE) has a small fire going at her desk and uses the ashes to paint symbols onto a red stone.

Next up, a dapper PIRATE (James "SLIM JIM" Black, 1660-1702), early-40s, scruffy, long, stringy hair with three-point hat and elaborate cassock. He is seen from behind (nothing below the elbows). He sways side to side as with the pitch of the sea.

He is writing on scrolled paper with a plume from an inkwell. He grabs an empty glass bottle, rolls up the paper, stuffs it inside and corks it.

Still swaying with the "sea", he pitches the bottle into the air; it is caught by a conjured ocean current above the cubicles and floats off.

Slim Jim stands up. He has been sitting on a balance ball chair. He leads his red macaw (CAP'N FEATHERS) from its perch and it climbs up Slim Jim's arm to his shoulder.

Slim Jim walks past a couple **EMPLOYEES** before approaching MARTI (Martine Delacroix, 1978-1999), a college-aged, Goth Lite type devoted to sarcasm and foment. (The "ne" in her name plate has been scratched out.) She is wearing a rock tee and knee skirt; her bare feet are on her desk. She has on a customer service headset. Her desk has a strawberry iMac. Random postcards are thumbtacked up.

INT. MARTI'S CUBICLE - DAY

She mutes her conversation, and swivels around to Slim Jim, and tosses him a plunger head.

MARTI
Bathroom's flooded again.
(accusingly to Kirstie Alley)
Thanks for that!

INT. KIRSTIE ALLEY'S CUBICLE - DAY

KIRSTIE ALLEY rolls her eyes and continues thumping away on her Blackberry. Her cubicle is cluttered with organic snacks and probiotic supplements.

INT. MARTI'S CUBICLE - DAY

Slim Jim works the plunger onto his pegleg.

MARTI
What in Jesus is that smell???

SLIM JIM
You already be knowin' about my
gangrenous limb here.

MARTI
Yeah, I do. It's revolting, but I'm
used to that. This smell is new,
James.

Cap'n Feathers flaps its wings, followed by the sound of its cloaca pouring out that avian mix of urine and feces. Gray goop accumulates around Slim Jim's peg and boot.

SLIM JIM
Oh, Cap'n Feathers got into Kirstie
Alley's kung pao pretzels.

KIRSTIE ALLEY (O.C.)
Next time we have commissary,
Jimbo, you need to get me some more
of those.

MARTI
(sotto voce)
Unh, she's the worst.

Slim Jim walks away toward the bathroom. He's got gray filth down the back of his cassock. Marti unmutes her conversation.

MARTI
(into headset)
Yes, I ran those numbers and
cross-checked with the Good
Intentions Bureau. It's just not
enough to keep her out of Paradise.

Marti stares up at a motivational poster that reads: "Heaven is the BEST, because of me".

MARTI
(into headset)
I've hit refresh on that date over
and over. It never changes. Trust
me. This is my job. It's all I do
eternity hours a day, eternity days
a week.

She stares at the clock on the wall. It's just a plain white plastic circle with one black hand that ticks once clock-wise. She turns back to her desktop and starts typing.

MARTI (CONT'D)
(into headset)
Of course, I'm willing to sequester
her. Shit, I'm willing to hold
anybody. But, the Big Guy and the
Little Big Guy...They are really
into their surprise parties. And
when people don't show up on time,
They feel like They got tricked.

Marti looks down at the script she should be reading from; none of this is on it. Heads are popping up around the neighboring cubicles. Murmurs circulate about how far off-script she's gone.

MARTI (CONT'D)
(into headset)
Remember at the beginning? No, you
don't sound *that* old. I meant, the
beginning of this call. I told you
it was recorded for quality
assurance. Yeah, well, that's for
you. It lets you know They--capital
T--listen to these calls. Good,
bad, now, then. It doesn't matter,
because it's all in the database.

More onlookers have assembled around Marti's cubicle. She flips it from headset to speaker.

MARTI (CONT'D)

So, I'm just going to write up that
Hold order you requested,
Angel-in-Training Jensen, was it?

A-I-T JENSEN

(over speaker)

We don't need to use names, do
we...

MARTI

I hope you have a nice day. Not
that you will remember **any** nice
days once you get damned. But, we
have to say that.

A-I-T JENSEN

(over speaker)

Oh, hunh. Wow. Look at that. I had
the wrong form in my hand the whole
time. So, we are all clear here.
Let's send the old bag to Paradise.

They disconnect and the group erupts with cheers and high
fives. Slim Jim squishes past to congratulate Marti. (Part
of his boot is soaked in toilet water.)

SLIM JIM

There be less water in the Gulf of
Mexico than yon tinkle town. Caught
the end of that call. Not quite to
the letter, but effective.
Management material, even.

MARTI

I don't want to be management. I
don't even want to be here. Back
when I was a person, I had
dreams...

Marti is abruptly and surreptitiously interrupted when YAZEMON springs up between them. Yazemon is an athletic Japanese Man, no older than 40, dressed in a midnight blue ninja uniform. His face is mostly covered throughout the film, except when eating or drinking.

YAZEMON

(to Marti)

I could have slit your throat.

(to Slim Jim)

I could have slit your throat.

SLIM JIM

Well, thank Heavens, we're dead.

MARTI

Hey, Yaz. How are things in Human Resources?

Yaz puts one hand on his harquebus pistol and the other on his katana sword.

YAZEMON

Justice for the bad guys. Justice for the good guys. They keep us busy.

SLIM JIM

Martine was going to tell us of the designs she had in her Earth life.

MARTI

Yep, whoops, moment passed.

EVE, an incredibly mannish-looking woman of 50 with a pronounced monobrow, wheels out of her cubicle. She's eating an apple.

EVE

I had dreams, too. And it wasn't so easy in my day. Adam had already named all the animals. Getting evicted from Eden was no picnic. I wanted to learn how to not be naked, do some basic agriculture, maybe reinvent myself with a career in tools...

MARTI

Ok, Eve, gotta get back to the souls and stuff...

(to Slim Jim & Yazemon)

Guh, these First Wave feminists, they'll talk your ear off.

SLIM JIM

(sotto voce)

Have a heart. She's been here a LONG time.

Slim Jim tips his hat to Eve and bows. She smiles and wheels back to her cube.

As the three are about to break back to their respective desks, a tone sounds, signaling a word from the MANAGER. (He has a thick French accent.)

MANAGER
(over PA)

Madames et Messieurs, please to
meet in the office cafe for some
refreshment...and one announcement.
Merci bien. This was me, your
manager.

Marti, Slim Jim and Yaz shrug and shamble toward the office cafe.

INT. OFFICE CAFE - CHAMPAGNE VERSION - DAY

Imagine a gigantic champagne bubble with several thousand people inside it, standing all over it, in full defiance of physics and architectural common sense.

The manager stands in his own champagne bubble, floating above the workers. He has the looks and fashion of a 1960s film star.

His bubble rotates and moves around, so he can address the employees somewhat personally. Because of this set-up, everyone has to crane their necks to catch sight of him.

Scattered between the attendees are cocktail tables and the odd catering station. Marti, Slim Jim and Yaz are huddled around their table, awkwardly trying to look at each other and the figure above them.

SLIM JIM
I hope he doesn't try to toast
everyone individually again.

MARTI
Remember the old office cafe?

YAZEMON
Hai! Iroquois longhouse. Much
better.

Meanwhile, the manager hovers over an EMPLOYEE, toasts, repeats. This will be a long affair. And the manager is nowhere near Marti, Slim Jim and Yaz.

MANAGER
A la tienne. To your health. To
you, mon ami.

SLIM JIM
Bloody exhausting, these company
events. And a little
nauseating...and that's coming from
a naval man.

MARTI
 (in hyperbolic swoon)
Well, I think he's a dreamboat.
 Let's get some juice to christen
 him with when he floats by.

They walk over to a catering station and help themselves to the flutes. The manager has floated around toasting the employees until he is directly above the threesome. From their POV, we could see right up his inseam.

MARTI
 Whoa, that's not the view
 advertised in the brochure.

SLIM JIM
 It could be worse; he could be
 Scottish.

The manager is suddenly struck with a sense of urgency.

MANAGER
 Madames et Messieurs. I received my annunciation angel, and I will be relocating to that window office in the sky.

Looks of shock and genuine sadness creep across the employees' faces. Like most charismatic leaders, he was deeply admired.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
 I want to spend my final moments with you and share the identity of my esteemed replacement.

A gasp of anticipation shuttles through the crowd. Slim Jim leans into Marti and bumps her with his shoulder. Yaz tries to rub her lower back. She elbows both of them away.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
 I began my tenure here with style, and the desire to help. In no time at all, I became...

His hand has begun to effervesce, changing from skin into many tiny bubbles.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
 Oh, I thought I would be able to stay longer. I am going. I am really going to go.

His body is now changing into bubbles.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

I'm going! I'm going! You're going to make me go. Oh, it feels so good. I'mgoingI'mgoingI'mgoing. Kirstie Alley is your new manager. I'm going! Ohhhhhh.

And, just like that, his entire body turns into a human-shaped fountain of bubbles, which at his final moan, explodes inside his bubble. That bubble pops, and the spume drizzles down onto Marti, Slim Jim and Yaz. A WAITER hands them a stack of cocktail napkins.

KIRSTIE ALLEY

Ok, you heard the man. Any set dressers or interior decorators, come with me.

They busily work over themselves with that motley stack of cocktail napkins. Slim Jim puts his arm around Marti's shoulder and gives her a "Hang in there" squeeze.

MARTI

Honestly, you guys, I didn't want it. It's not my style.

INT. MARTI'S CUBICLE - DAY

Marti is talking into her headset again.

MARTI

Oh, you want to send him *straight* to Hell? I didn't realize I was talking to *the* Joe Strummer. FYI, huge fan of both The Clash and The Mescaleros.

JOE STRUMMER (in a sleeveless tee, with a Fender strapped across his back) walks by and fist bumps Marti.

HELL REQUESTOR (OC)

I'm not Joe Strummer.

MARTI

OH! You're not the punk rock icon? I see. Well, only Strummin' Joe can greenlight direct flights to the Red Zone, so let me see...

Eve walks behind Marti and taps her on the shoulder. Marti mutes the call.

EVE

Kirstie Alley wants to see you. In
her new office.

Marti groans.

INT. KIRSTIE ALLEY'S OFFICE - DAY

It looks exactly like the set of **Veronica's Closet**. Two plush leather chairs face each other on top of a red Persian rug. Kirstie Alley is sitting in one. There are bay windows that look out on plastic trees.

There is a wall sconce in the shape of a fist holding a torch. Marti feigns lighting an imaginary cigarette off it, as she enters.

KIRSTIE ALLEY

There's no pretend smoking in here.

Marti sits and stubs out "the butt" on the sole of her Doc Marten's, then flicks it at an unfazed Kirstie Alley.

KIRSTIE ALLEY (CONT'D)

I've been going through your file.

Kirstie Alley pulls an accordion folder out from under her chair, and starts rifling through papers.

KIRSTIE ALLEY (CONT'D)

What are you in here for again?

MARTI

You know how when you go to get a lip ring, because all your friends are going to get lip rings, and your Mom says "Would you jump off a bridge, if all your friends jumped off a bridge?" My two college friends were in a suicide pact. I said I'd ride with them, because I wanted to stop them from eating a gun or poison or whatever they had in mind...then they drove off a bridge.

KIRSTIE ALLEY

That's accidental death. You should have been out of here ages ago.

Marti shrugs.

KIRSTIE ALLEY (CONT'D)

But, you seem to have a problem with authority. And neither the Prince of Peace nor the Prince of Darkness really know what to do with that.

Marti gets up and walks over to the false wall. She is behind the bay window above the plastic trees. She throws herself down on the ground, so it looks like she just leapt to her death. She stands up, and walks back to her chair.

MARTI

That was me trying to get out of the rest of this meeting.

KIRSTIE ALLEY

Look. I know we had our issues in the past. I want to move away from that. How can we get on the same page?

A CAMEROONIAN SOCCER PLAYER charges into the scene.

CAMEROONIAN

Sorry to interrupt, Madame Manager. This is a big one! A private jet full of pornography producers just crashed into a reality TV set on a cruise ship.

INT. PROCESSING DEPT. - PURGATORY SKYSCRAPER - DAY

It is mayhem! All variety of missives and communications are flying above the cubicles. Employees are shouting into phones, headsets, speaker phones. It looks like a Wall Street trading floor with everyone negotiating and researching their particular soul.

KIRSTIE ALLEY

Ok, everyone. I want this done by the books. I've worked on reality TV, and some of those conniving cocksuckers are the best people on Earth.

Marti ducks, weaves and jumps to her desk. Slim Jim and Eve are standing at their cubicles, hunched over their dossiers. Marti snags her files and hovers over Slim Jim.

INT. SLIM JIM'S CUBICLE - DAY

Slim Jim is composing an afterlife FOIA request with his plume and parchment set-up.

SLIM JIM
(Out loud while he writes)
...In pursuit of the life details
for one Jonathan L. Segal, cabin
master...

Marti peeks over the top of his cubicle to see HIPPIE CHICK.

INT. CUBICAL OPPOSITE SLIM JIM'S - DAY

Hippie chick is chirping into her princess phone, the cord wrapped again and again around her hand and wrist.

HIPPIE CHICK
Greetings. This is Bonnie Klein in
Processing. I have a fresh soul I
need vital data on. Bill Guzich, a
TV show biz guy.

She shoulder shrugs at Marti once she catches her eye.

INT. MARTI'S CUBICLE - DAY

Marti slumps into her workplace.

MARTI
Let's see who we have here.

Marti thumbs through the pages and photos.

MARTI (CONT'D)
Carla Prentiss.

Marti pauses on elements of the dossier: **Resident of Santa Monica. Line producer for Cruisin' for Seamen. Born November 8th, 1978.**

MARTI (CONT'D)
Same birthday as me. Funny. What's
my search date? 30th birthday. Fun.

She thumbs through a series of candid photos of CARLA. Marti clucks in Slim Jim's direction. He peeps out, and she fans the photos.

MARTI (CONT'D)
If you had to guess...Greed? Envy?
That weird kind of gluttony where
you eat like a snobby bird?

Slim Jim clears his throat, looks past Marti and gets back to his writing. Marti spins around to see Kirstie Alley.

KIRSTIE ALLEY
By the books means by the books,
Martine.

Marti bristles. She affixes her headset and clicks into the call center.

MARTI
(into headset)
Unceasing eternity to you too. This
is Martine Delacroix. I have a
request on a recently
immortalized...Carla Prentiss. No.
I'm with vice/virtue analysis.

Kirstie Alley walks off. Marti keeps an eye on her, until...

MARTI (CONT'D)
(into headset, shifting gears)
Don't tell me you were about to
fall for that one?! I'm an
Angel-In-Training with Vengeance
branch. Clearance??? How about I
clear a path to...

CLICK. Marti looks up startled. Kirstie Alley is twirling the plug to Marti's headset.

KIRSTIE ALLEY
Martine, take five. Let's grab a
cappuccino in the new office cafe.

INT. OFFICE CAFE - CHEERS VERSION - DAY

The new office cafe looks exactly like the set of **Cheers**. SHELLEY LONG is mopping down the bar with a rag. Marti and Kirstie Alley occupy a table and sip cappuccinos.

KIRSTIE ALLEY
Martine, I came on too strong
before. Let's relax and open up.
Just two girls having some
friendly, honest chit-chat.

MARTI
I can say honest things. I can say
friendly things. But, both...

KIRSTIE ALLEY

Let's put our cards on the table. I think we both have a problem with indulgence...don't we?

MARTI

Don't compare me to your food fetish. My job is thankless and dull.

KIRSTIE ALLEY

(Composing herself)

Ok, you don't have to lash out. I need to know you can perform your job, for HR purposes. You understand your assignment?

MARTI

Yep.

KIRSTIE ALLEY

Review all vice and virtue for the 24 Earth hours of her 30th birthday?

MARTI

Yep.

KIRSTIE ALLEY

All right, I saw the file. It looks like it was a pretty big day. Don't rush this one, but I want it done immediately. I'll see what I can do to make your job more interesting.

Marti nods, sipping her cappuccino. Kirstie Alley bites into a shortbread cookie.

INT. WATER COOLER AREA - DAY

This area is peppered with water features; Asian new-age music tinkles gently in the background. There is a long, wide table used for internal meetings.

The water cooler is a giant, contained cloud above a clear funnel. Next to this is FATHER TIM SABATO, fleshy and cordial, in sloppy priest clothes. He tosses some atmospheric salts into the cloud, and it rains. He motions the sign of the cross.

FATHER TIM

Oh, come to the water, all you who are thirsty. Do you know what that

FATHER TIM
 one is? It's Isaiah. Isaiah was big
 on the Suffering Servant and that's
 why I trot him out when I fill the
 water cooler.

Yaz fills his cup and sits with Marti, who has her water bottle at hand.

Marti has staked out a corner, her files spread out in front of her. She is switching back and forth between several pieces from Carla's file, making notes in a girlishly cute notepad. She is obviously having trouble concentrating.

Slim Jim is skimming through the logs of Cabin Master Segal, making notes.

SLIM JIM
 You aren't helping your cause any.

MARTI
 I can't believe I'm more pirate
 than you, *Slim Jim*. I thought
 pirates made authority their bitch.

SLIM JIM
 I'll have you know I penned a
 letter to no less a person than
 King James himself where I called
 him a scoundrel, a Catholic and a
 ne'er-do-well. Think on that.

MARTI
 Guh, you are so milquetoast. Why
 are you still here?

SLIM JIM
 I'm grateful I'm still here.

Slim Jim extricates himself from this line of questioning and goes back to his work.

YAZEMON
 (to Marti)
 Anything good?

MARTI
 Tons. She cussed out her father
 that morning. That's a double
 commandment break off Jump Street.
 She had Long Island ice teas served
 in dick-shaped drinkware. She did
 hand stuff with a guy she had no

MARTI

intention of calling back. Then it gets graphic, but that's for whoever has the next day.

YAZEMON

What kind of hand stuff?

MARTI

Gross! I hate when I have to analyze old ladies doing gross old... with the... Plus, I'm working here, Yaz. Go hang out with Manga girl.

Eve walks in.

FATHER TIM

Bone of Adam's bones, flesh of Adam's flesh. I hope you're pleased with yourself, fruit-giver. Because if you were, you'd be guilty of pride in addition to poor life choices. Ooh, you burn me up.

Exit Father Tim. Eve shrugs, lingers with the crew.

YAZEMON

I'm bored. Your Carla doesn't sound very bad.

MARTI

I'll go through the list: Jealous. Lustful. Self-important.

YAZEMON

Not really that bad though.

EVE

(thoroughly unbidden)

You wanna know a secret? I never condemn anyone.

MARTI

Really??? You haven't had any stinkers?

EVE

I don't know. Genghis Khan gave me some pause, but I think he was just having a rough day. Snacking off the tree of knowledge gives you a pretty radical POV.

MARTI

Girl power. I'm going back to my cube to wrap this one up.

INT. MARTI'S CUBICLE - DAY

Marti hovers her cursor between the choice of **Salvation** or **Damnation**. After vacillating between the two, she clicks **Damnation**.

Kirstie Alley walks over.

KIRSTIE ALLEY

So, remember how I said I was going to make your job more interesting?

MARTI

Oh, yes, Kirstie Alley, I remember that very well. Do I get to sit on the party-planning committee? Or order for the vending machine?

KIRSTIE ALLEY

No. You got final pass on your last soul. Carla Prentiss, she's damned.

MARTI

WHAT?!?! You can't do that without telling me!

KIRSTIE ALLEY

But, I am telling you. In fact, I just told you.

MARTI

What is wrong with you? You stood, watching over my shoulder, as I condemned Carla. Who I only condemned, because I was doing it by the books.

KIRSTIE ALLEY

Well, maybe I'll save you a seat on the pity party-planning committee. You didn't want to take your job seriously, so I made it mean something. Sue me.

MARTI

Unbelievable.

Marti storms off in a "so unfair" huff.

INT. OFFICE CAFE - CHEERS VERSION - DAY

CLIFF CLAVIN sits at the end of bar. He's a postman, but he looks nothing like the actor John Ratzenberger, who (FYI) is in a different part of Purgatory.

Marti, Yaz and Slim Jim are huddled around a table.

MARTI
Is that not some Kirstie
Alley-class bullshit?!?

YAZEMON
Strong leadership tactic. Made you
a prisoner to your caprice. Our
Shogun once made us fight with our
eldest sons. Ruthless, calculated.
Wise man. We chose our battles
discreetly after that.

MARTI
Not the answer.

SLIM JIM
Well, what can you do about it? I'm
willing to lend my pen to a strong
letter where I call her nothing
short of a "trickster."

MARTI
Also not the answer. We have to get
Carla out of H-E-hockey sticks.

SLIM JIM
Impossible. Inconceivable. Dumb.

CLIFF CLAVIN
No, not really. At least not the
first two. I read a white paper on
the structural integrity of, uh,
our Purgatory Tower. And it seems
that instruments of the, uh, divine
persuasion can have an adversarial
effect on the, uh, fabric of our
existence. Gotta be the divine
stuff though.

He throws his beer hard on the ground. It bounces back into his hand still full, proving his point. Marti's eyes zero in on Yaz.

YAZEMON

I will not lie. It has always been a fantasy of mine to join Vengeance Branch. Just to see how the experts do it...

MARTI

That's the spirit. James, are you ready to be the nautical version of a third wheel?

SLIM JIM

I could cash in some favors, find the point of egress.

CLIFF CLAVIN

Yeah, thanks for the invite, but I got some pretty important business to catch up on and this inter-office mail won't deliver itself.

The crew is not listening to that. Cliff, meanwhile, tosses a clump of manila office envelopes into the air, which soar off to their destinations, all on their own. He returns to his sipping.

INT. PROCESSING DEPT. - PURGATORY SKYSCRAPER - DAY

Slim Jim and Marti exchange furtive glances as they pretend to go through their routine.

SLIM JIM

(whispering)

Now we just wait.

Kirstie Alley thunders into the area with CYBORG LADY COP from HR.

KIRSTIE ALLEY

(to Marti)

The real Cliff Clavin tells me you are going to Hell. Which I could only assume was a euphemism until he told me about your little plan. It looks like I'll have to put you in "Fat Actress" jail.

MARTI

Guh, you're the worst. Can't you see I'm trying to do the right thing?

KIRSTIE ALLEY

Taking divine judgment into your
hands after being given control of
divine judgment is against policy.
Live with it.

A bottle floats onto Slim Jim's desk. He uncorks it and scans the archaic writing.

SLIM JIM

Oh, Providence. Martine, t'is here!

Slim Jim points to the window directly behind him.

Kirstie Alley gestures to Cyborg Lady Cop to apprehend Marti.

CYBORG LADY COP

Dead or different dead, you're
coming with me.

Cyborg Lady Cop menaces toward Marti. Suddenly, Eve wheels out of her cubicle and gets tangled up in Cyborg Lady Cop.

SLIM JIM

Pull up anchor! Man the cannons!

Slim Jim grabs his balance ball chair and pitches it at the window wall. It caroms off and narrowly misses WWI Soldier, busily writing pigeon-sized notes.

Out of nowhere, Yaz appears and shoots his antique pistol at the glass. It splinters out in all directions, but doesn't break. Slim Jim alternates between kicking it with his good leg and his pegleg.

Marti is gathering items (files on Carla, water bottle, lastly a favorite postcard: the 5th Ave Apple Store, circa 2006) from her desk, shoving them into her satchel.

Yaz throws his katana at the glass and it freezes for just a second before the entire window shatters. Slim Jim teeters on his pegleg before he falls sideways out the window. Cap'n Feathers flaps in place where he had been resting on Slim Jim's shoulder.

Marti runs to the open window, grabs her nose, tucks her knees and locks her ankles cannonball-style, jumps in.

MARTI

(Bart Simpson-ly)

Cowabunga, man.

Yaz leaps over the cubicle partition. He scoops up his katana, sheathes it, holsters his pistol (all in one gesture) and elegantly swan dives into the sky.

Cap'n Feathers is still flapping in the gap as our heroes plunge away.

EXT. PURGATORY SKYSCRAPER - DAY

The sky has layers of mists and clouds and stardust, in keeping with the surreal landscape Purgatory Skyscraper resides in.

And these three are falling FAST! Faster than Earth speed. Slim Jim can't find his equilibrium, and he is thrashing around like a netted fish.

Yaz bring his hands together and spear dives past Marti. He yells in Japanese to Cap'n Feathers, who halts mid-fall and flaps upward. Yaz gets to Slim Jim and helps him to even out his fall. They cling together while Yaz fetches a grappling hook from his outfit and hurls it at a gargoyle sticking out of the skyscraper's facade.

They slam into the building, crumbling some old concrete. Yaz snaps the grappling hook and they fall until they are pitched outward by the eave of a pagoda.

Elsewhere, Marti opens her eyes and looks out on the landscape and atmosphere. As she passes through a cloud layer, she sees her last moments on Earth.

INT. FALLING CAR - DAY

Marti is in the back seat of a mid-90's domestic. The car has just completed its crest over the bridge rail, and begins tilting toward the river.

She tries her hardest not to look down into the coursing waters. The couple in the front seat are wailing, grabbing at the doors. Marti starts to unbuckle her seatbelt, but then squares her back against the seat.

She exhales an inaudible "oh, no," as a sad smile inches across her mouth and eyes.

Suddenly, she is startled back to the here-and-now.

EXT. PURGATORY SKYSCRAPER - DAY

Marti is jerked from her fall as she realizes she is now being lowered down by a cord. Cap'n Feathers finishes tying her phone line to her leg to slow her descent. He flaps gleefully next to her and soars away to join Slim Jim.

As Marti is being lowered down, she creates a loop for her feet to go into so she won't have to be upside-down. When she finishes this move, she is in front of a lone residential-looking window.

INT. LITTLE GIRL'S ROOM - DAY

Inside, a LITTLE GIRL, age 9 and dressed from the 80's, is playing with dolls by a rocking chair. She has been staring out for who knows how long. The little girl waves quietly as if she'd been waiting for Marti at a crowded party.

EXT. PURGATORY SKYSCRAPER - DAY

Marti smiles and flaps her pinky at her.

Ssh-pack!!! Yaz's grappling hook stabs into the wood above Marti. He freefalls, tied at the waist, until he approaches Marti. Then, he clings to the facade Spiderman-style and climbs down headfirst past her. Slim Jim and Cap'n Feathers call up from the ground.

EXT. THE BASE OF PURGATORY SKYSCRAPER - DAY

They are in a gray, gravelly swampland, where mists fall from the sky, then whoosh away.

Once gathered together, Marti yanks on the headset cord and it shrinks to a size that can be curled into her satchel.

SLIM JIM

I reconnoitered the area, and found
an odd locale that may be of
interest.

They walk through the mist until they are in front of a free-standing elevator port.

MARTI

Slim Jim! As lucky as you are
observant. This must be it, guys.

They enter.

INT. HELL-EVATOR - DAY

The inside is straight-up service elevator. No frills, functional within legality. There are three buttons on the panel: doors close, doors open and H.

Marti presses H and it lights up. After a while, she presses doors close. She presses it several times again until the doors actually close. Yaz and Slim Jim are intrigued by her actions, having no familiarity with elevator tech.

A version of taxi TV barks to life in the elevator. It can't be turned off or muted. And it is giving the traffic report for a very fluid day in the New York City Metro area.

TRAFFIC REPORTER (VO)

And, when we tilt our GoPro Jam Cam, at the Queensboro Bridge, we see both levels humming along smoothly, Manhattan-bound and Queens-bound, just a string of cooperative cars getting exactly where they want to go...

Etc. This cheery play-by-play mundanity goes on too long and then keeps going.

The group starts to fidget with no indication as to how much longer they will be in the elevator. Slowly, Marti starts to crinkle her nose as a terrible smell invades her space. She looks closely at the seam of the doors.

MARTI

I always heard Hell was the foulest smelling place imaginable. We must be getting close.

Yaz's eyes start to water behind his mask. The foulness is really cranking up. Slim Jim swallows hard.

TRAFFIC REPORTER (VO)

Across the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, a bridge so long building it factored in the curvature of the Earth, we see a steady array of vehicles moving in one direction. And those traveling in the opposite direction are also moving, steadily. Absolutely no chop on those concrete waters. Those folks are going to get there, wherever there might be.

Cap'n Feathers acks and expels some rude gray gunk. The crew suppresses a collective gag reflex.

YAZEMON

So, it wasn't Hell making that odor...

SLIM JIM

Methinks that soy cashew pizza never made it to Kirstie Alley.

Marti digs through her satchel for something to clean off the elevator wall with. Before she can find anything, the taxi TV telecast chops off and the doors slide open.

INT. TUNNEL - DARKNESS

It's dark. Cathedral echo is wedded to their stuttering steps, then voices. Marti, Slim Jim and Yaz gaze into the dark reddish tunnel. Yaz unsheathes his sword and takes lead.

YAZEMON

I expect there's plenty to be afraid of here, but have no fear.

MARTI

It's just a tunnel.

The tunnel is narrowing like a funnel and as Marti brushes the wall, she shrieks like a little girl. The group lines up single-file.

A low, muffled ringing gets progressively louder.

SLIM JIM

Martine, I believe someone is trying to communicate with you.

Marti rifles through her bag, retrieves her headset and puts it on.

MARTI

How's this even working? It's not plugged in. We're not even in Purgatory. Yes?

INT. MARTI'S CUBICLE - DAY

Kirstie Alley is flipping over desk drawers and scouring the contents of Marti's desk. Some OFFICE DRONES are taping cardboard over the massive hole in the wall window.

HIPPIE CHICK

(into her princess phone)

You gotta get back here. Kirstie Alley is losing her shit.

Start phone conversation montage between Marti in tunnel and Hippie Chick in office.

MARTI

I don't even know where I am. Much less how to leave here and get back there. What's Kirstie Alley's damage? It's her stupid fault we're down here.

Kirstie Alley heaves Marti's vintage iMac with the strength of an aerobicized actress. Cavewoman enters and hands her a wooly mammoth femur.

KIRSTIE ALLEY

Tell Martine that I have lost my patience and any promised advancements are off the table!

Kirstie Alley demolishes Marti's iMac with the femur.

HIPPIE CHICK

Did you get that? You're not getting a promotion. When can we expect you back?

MARTI

I don't know. Until I find Carla, Kirstie Alley can eat yogurt-sesame sticks and fuck off.

HIPPIE CHICK

I'll relay the message. Unceasing eternity, Marti.

Hippie Chick hangs up and swivels toward Kirstie Alley, who is somewhat astonished to see the demolished iMac back in pristine condition.

INT. TUNNEL - DARKNESS

The group sees a strip of light as it leaks from the bottom of a fire exit door. They race to the door and push it open.

INT. LIMBO - DAY

The crew fall into a vast, open and antiseptic area; the door disappears behind them. It is painfully overlit by industrial fluorescence. It is swarming with tablet-wielding glassy-eyed SURVEY TAKERS. They adopt aspects of the people they approach.

SURVEY TAKER 1

Do you have time for a quick questionnaire on what shape the Earth is?

SURVEY TAKER 2

Hey, you look like you like comedy. How about free tickets to tonight's Passion Play. Our Jesus is a hoot.

SURVEY TAKER 3

Which of these is more you? Kale cake or sushi cookies?

Marti is tapped on the shoulder. She turns and is addressed by a flannel-wearing dude with long stringy hair.

FLANNEL DUDE

Don't mind those guys. Total L7's. Speaking of, wanna answer a couple of questions about who your 90's rocker is?

MARTI

Nah. I'm David Gedge.

FLANNEL DUDE

No, it's a quiz. Look. Touch the options.

FLANNEL DUDE shows her his iPhone with the Cranberries on one side and Garth Brooks on the other.

MARTI

Your iMac is tiny.

Flannel dude cocks his head at her, eyes her up and down.

FLANNEL DUDE
I'm gonna say Cranberries.

He taps his device and shows her a picture of Biggie Smalls and Hanson.

Over Flannel Dude's shoulder, Slim Jim is engaged with his survey taker, a costume shop-dressed pirate, on "Which Caribbean Island Are You?"

SLIM JIM
This electrified picture book does
not keep my interest.

COSTUME PIRATE stares too long at Slim Jim, then returns to his iPhone.

COSTUME PIRATE
Well, hold on. Pineapples or
coconuts?

SLIM JIM
Pineapples.

COSTUME PIRATE
That's right. Conga or limbo?

Slim Jim's face lights up as he recognizes the situation.

SLIM JIM
(to Marti and Yaz)
This isn't Hell! We're not in Hell
yet!

Slim Jim scans the horizon. He takes out his pocket telescope and looks all over, seeing only tablet-wielding survey takers.

Slim Jim rushes to Marti and Yaz extricates himself from his GEISHA SURVEY TAKER.

MARTI
(frustrated, to FLANNEL DUDE)
Oh my God. Stop asking me.
(To Yazemon)
Guys, we need to get out of here.
Wherever here is.

Yaz vaults onto Slim Jim's shoulder, and looks into the distance.

YAZEMON
There are no doors.

Yaz flips off Slim Jim's shoulder. Slim Jim shifts his eyes back and forth.

SLIM JIM
(agitatedly)
We're stuck in Limbo!

Marti reaches into her bag and pulls out her water bottle.

MARTI
Father Tim's holy water.

She unscrews the cap, flicks some holy water at Yaz. Yaz disappears.

SLIM JIM
Ah, I think you...

Marti splashes Slim Jim and he disappears.

Marti shrugs and splashes herself. Poof.

EXT. SWAMPY GLADE - DAY

An opalescent stream riddled with garbage, spare tires, and busted bike wheels trudges toward us. Discarded fridges, furniture and decomposed masses of junk are piled along the banks of the stream.

A Chaco-wearing foot lands on a pile of fast food garbage. A swarm of cockroaches skitter around it.

We see CHUCK, early 30s, leading a pack of granola-loving-and-eating folk. They wear t-shirts that say "Earth First" and "Save Our Planet."

Chuck spears a filthy plastic water bottle and drops it into his rubbish bag. He looks across this shitty scene and beams with pride.

CHUCK
Feels nice to do our part.

The followers smugly nod in agreement. One of them lays out a picnic blanket. SUMMER, a late-20s granola princess, lights a patchouli stick. They circle up.

CHUCK
Okay, Earth Firstians, let's town hall about all the great things we did for the environment today.

SUMMER

Well, it's my time of the month.
Bless the goddess. And, I am using
my Diva cup and I pour my menstrual
blood out on my tomatoes.

CHUCK

How are those tomatoes, Summer?

SUMMER

They're dead.

CHUCK

Well, we're all dead, so that's
great.

Poof! Marti, Slim Jim and Yaz suddenly appear ankle-deep in detritus. You can really see what they're smelling. Even Cap'n Feathers is grossed out.

MARTI

Yeah, this is more like it.

CHUCK

Greetings, new members of our
Gaia-tastic commune.

Chuck bows pedantically.

CHUCK

Let's get you a t-shirt.

He gestures over to a near-by parking lot full of cars--each with an inspirational environmental bumper sticker.

CHUCK

And car. Welcome to Hell's Half
Acre. That's what they call it.
Even though I've never measured it.

The enviro-chumps laugh at this joke which gets rolled out for new arrivals.

CHUCK

And compared to the rest of the
place, this is Heaven on Earth. But
it's not. You know.

MARTI

And you are?

CHUCK

I'm Chuck. I carry the trash stick.

He waves his garbage spike like it's a fucking scepter or something.

MARTI

So, you're the boss. Maybe you can help us. We're looking for...

CHUCK

There are no bosses in Hell's Half Acre. God damn it, Summer! Our friends need those shirts! All are welcome. Join us.

Chuck gestures our team toward the enviro-chumps. Summer jumps up and clicks the electronic trunk on a Toyota mini-van. The enviro-chumps make room in the circle for our heroes. They sit. Chuck leans into Marti, close enough to kiss her.

CHUCK

You don't look like our typical newcomers.

Yaz reads this as a threat and exposes a couple inches of blade. Chuck goes wide-eyed, puts 2 and 2 together.

CHUCK

I don't believe it. Are you from Purgatory?

MARTI

Yeah. And--

CHUCK

Hey, I always wondered, does Purgatory recycle? Because if not, I'd be happy to set up some recycling bins.

MARTI

That's nice of you. But, not the business we're here on. We've, err, I misplaced someone and we're kinda here to get her back.

The granola-folks gasp.

SUMMER

(excitedly)

You're attempting a retrieval?

Chuck glares at Summer. He turns back to Marti and smiles.

MARTI

Yeah. Her name's Carla Prentiss.

Marti reaches into her bag and starts to pull out the file.

CHUCK

Sorry, we haven't met a Carla. Not here, at least.

SLIM JIM

Someplace the new arrivals go? An orientation she might attend?

Chuck shakes his head.

CHUCK

I don't know. Sorry. **But** I have friends in every region of Hell. Maybe they saw her. Last summer, I paired up with Beelzebub for trust exercises.

(to the enviro-chumps)

Meeting adjourned! Let's break out the Kashi Yum-Yum Balls.

Slim Jim groans. Cap'n Feathers freaks the fuck out.

EXT. CHERRIE'S DINER - NIGHT

An aluminum-plated 50s roadside diner. Neon piping exclaims "Cherrie's" in pastel glory. Outside, it looks about the size of a railroad car, but we all know things are not what they seem in the afterlife. An assortment of vehicles pepper the parking lot.

INT. CHERRIE'S DINER - NIGHT

A quizzical CARLA PRENTISS nurses a mug of coffee and works on a newspaper Sudoku, as CHERRIE, a bee-hived server of the post-war Era, flounces by with an orange-handled pot of coffee.

CHERRIE

Sorry, sugar. All we have is decaf.

Carla looks around the restaurant--it appears to go on forever. The interior hosts an impossible field of diverse dining tables, booths and counters. Cherrie is the sole waitress on the floor.

CARLA
Decaf's fine. Busy night.

Cherrie shoots her a withering look: part confusion, part tension and she pours Carla a cup of coffee.

CHERRIE
Just another Tuesday.

A bloated, walrus-faced plutocrat shakes a pinkie-ringed fist. This is JP MORGAN.

JP MORGAN
Where's my lobster thermadore, you bastard child of an Irish cobbler?

CHERRIE
You want cobbler, Mr. Morgan?
Coming right up.

Cherrie circles back to Carla.

CHERRIE
Okay, I just have to know. Are you one of those seems-pleasant types, but sends everything back? Or do you run out on your check and leave a penny tip?

CARLA
Uh, no. I can pay now if you're about to go off shift...

Cherrie stifles sincere surprise. She turns her back to Carla and waits on other guests, many of them red-faced and screaming.

Carla continues to work on her Sudoku and sip her decaf. She surveys the diner. Carla and Cherrie catch eyes. Cherrie scuttles back toward Carla.

CHERRIE
More coffee, already?

CARLA
No, thank you.

Carla, formulating a question, clenches her teeth.

CARLA
Where am I?

Cherrie rolls her eyes and sighs.

CHERRIE

Why, you are at Cherrie's Diner,
dear, where you're always just one
slice anyway from being satisfied.

CARLA

Sorry, if I seem confused. But, did
you see where I came from?

CHERRIE

You walked through the front door,
silly. Just like everyone else.

Carla nods slowly, clearly not processing the information.

CHERRIE

Let me take care of these Mongols
and I'll be right with you.

Cherrie turns around and to grab a Flintstones' sized rack of ribs. When she returns to the table, Carla is gone. The doorbell is still CHIMING.

Cherrie looks at Carla's unfinished Sudoku and half-empty mug of coffee. A few slightly damp crumpled dollar bills with pieces of seaweed attached are on the table.

CHERRIE

What is her deal?

Cherrie places her hands on her hips.

EXT. CHERRIE'S DINER - NIGHT

Carla walks in between rows of cars. There's a huge line of semi-trucks along the side of the building. She looks back at Cherrie's Diner before continuing to walk away.

Carla walks along a frontage road away from the diner. She passes a mile marker. Suddenly, she's in total daylight. Carla takes a step back. It's night again. She steps forward--daylight.

CARLA

Where the hell am I?

Carla wanders forward into the daylight section.

INT. CHERRIE'S DINER - NIGHT

A TRUCKER walks in and takes a seat at the bar. Cherrie pours him a cup of coffee.

CHERRIE
No more orders. I'm about to go on break.

TRUCKER
(under his breath)
Son of a biscuit! I'm starving.

Cherrie moves to turn away, but pauses.

CHERRIE
Say...did you see a woman out there? 30s, pretty, modern-looking?
Confused?

The Trucker shakes his head as he picks up a menu from the counter.

CHERRIE
(sotto voce)
I thought she'd come back inside by now.
(to the room)
Ok, y'all, I'm going on break. I got that manager's meeting thing.

The obnoxious customers erupt in greater displeasure.

EXT. SWAMPY GLADE - DAY

Chuck looks up at the sun, partially shields his eyes. He licks his pointer finger and sticks it into the air.

Marti rolls her eyes. Slim Jim and Marti exchange a look of annoyance.

CHUCK
It's about that time.

He stands. Marti, Slim Jim, and Yaz follow suit.

SUMMER
You're leaving?

CHUCK
What does it look like we're doing, Summer?

MARTI
(to the group)
Thanks for sharing your noms.

Cap'n Feathers shrieks.

SUMMER
(patting the earth)
She shared first. Wait right here.

Summer runs to her garden, then back to the group and stops in front of Yaz. She grabs his hands and places something into them.

SUMMER
In case, you need nourishment on
your journey. Goddess-speed.

Yaz smiles and looks in his hands. It's a tomato; it's seen better days. Summer beams.

EXT. SWAMPY GLADE'S PARKING LOT - DAY

Marti, Slim Jim, Yaz and Chuck walk away from the "campsite" and toward the car lot.

CHUCK
So, I don't know if I mentioned I'm
friends with Beelzebub--

MARTI
Yeah, we heard that.

CHUCK
Beelz won't be where we're going,
but there are plenty of other cool
friends who might help you find
that missing lady. There's...

Chuck trails off to wave at a line of cars that are driving onto a stretch of road that pulls itself off the ground and half-twists into a Moebius strip; the cars are passing each other, overlapping, literally going nowhere.

CHUCK
Great team, those ones. The commute
home is surprisingly scenic.

Marti squirrels up her mouth. They approach Chuck's Prius; Marti puts her hand on the door handle.

CHUCK

Uh, my car kinda has a lot of stuff in it. Activist stuff. So, can you guys just follow me?

They look inside to find a sweater in the front seat and a small houseplant in the back.

MARTI

Sure.

They take the keys Chuck is dangling in front of them. And click the button until a dark blue Subaru chirps at them.

INT. SUBARU - DAY

Marti fires up the engine and they slowly follow Chuck, the only two vehicles on a vast stretch of salvage lots, chemical processing plants and sewage buildings.

MARTI

Ok, Hell smells like shit. But this isn't that different than Purgatory.

YAZEMON

No, Marti-san, Hell is a system of wasted effort. Look at how these land boats weave in and out. In Purgatory, we work for the entire universe.

MARTI

Says you, Karate Kid. When did we ever get confirmation that our souls got where they were meant to go? And from what Chuck says, Carla might not EVEN BE HERE.

In the distance, Chuck is beeping his car horn and pointing out his window at some unidentifiable point of interest.

MARTI

Well, Chuck's fucking annoying. He should hang out with Kirstie Alley.

Marti shudders at the thought. Slim Jim stares out the window.

SLIM JIM

Me thinks yon lies the Sea of Sands.

MARTI
And you know that how???

Yaz is about to cluck the question away, before Chuck starts honking and pointing at some new, undistinguished area.

EXT. ROAD TO CHERRIE'S DINER - DAY

Carla walks along this stretch of road until she sees a hazy figure standing by the side of this deserted area.

As Carla nears, she sees the figure is BILL "THE GOOCH" GUZICH, main executive on *Cruisin' for Seamen*. The Gooch is in his 60's, a "winner" in math teacher bifocals and show-embroidered track suit. He has his back to her.

THE GOOCH
(into his phone)
I can't tell.
(looking around)
Inland Empire? Did I get dosed at
Coachellamacallit? Hey, Stevie,
it's getting faint on your end.

CARLA
Mr. Guzich?

THE GOOCH
Numbers lady! Gimme your phone.

CARLA
I can't get a signal.

THE GOOCH
Hey, give it to me anyway.

She rifles through her handbag, hands the water-logged device to him. He starts texting.

THE GOOCH (CONT'D)
I think I had Stevie for a minute
there. Could barely hear him.
Sounded like he was saying "I'm
sorry. Forgive me." Jesus, what a
kiss-ass.

He stops and scans the immediate area, stares hard at Carla when he lands on her.

THE GOOCH (CONT'D)
Tell me you don't hear that?

CARLA

Hear what?

THE GOOCH

That voice. The one that's saying:
"I didn't mean it. I'm sorry."

CARLA

Mr. Guzich, maybe you should sit
down.

THE GOOCH

I gotta get back to fucking Santa
Monica.

He is hammering on the screen of Carla's phone. As he does so, his fingers seal up like flippers. He looks at them.

THE GOOCH (CONT'D)

Boy, don't that look like Hell? It
doesn't hurt though. Sure makes
typing harder...

He flaps his fin at Carla.

THE GOOCH (CONT'D)

And damn it with that voice
already.

With his newly fused flippers, he starts slapping at an ear. It folds in on itself, sealing up the earhole, becoming unrecognizable.

Carla blanches.

THE GOOCH (CONT'D)

Oh, that just made it worse.

He goes at the other ear with his gross hand. Same thing happens.

THE GOOCH (CONT'D)

You wanna hear something funny? It
kinda sounds like me. Like I'm
saying sorry...to me.

CARLA

I'm gonna go...look for help.

THE GOOCH

Oh, numbers lady, don't be a dummy.
You wander off and they'll never
find you. I'm gonna call somebody
and wait for the authorities.

Carla heads back the way she came, as The Gooch tries to get Carla's cellphone back into his "hands".

EXT. DOUBLETREE - DAY

Marti and Chuck's cars pull into a Doubletree parking lot. They all exit and Chuck waves his trash stick, so Marti and crew can find him.

Chuck, Marti, Slim Jim, and Yaz walk through the parking lot. As they approach preferred parking, they see a two-story tall, cinder gray pegasus matted in blood whose bridle is decorated with human skulls strung through the eye sockets.

CHUCK

Oooh, Valvethar's here.

They enter the building.

INT. DOUBLETREE LOBBY - DAY

A young RECEPTIONIST icily greets the group.

RECEPTIONIST

Hey, Chuck. You're gonna be in the Phlegethon Room, since Stygian is being redecorated.

She issues them visitor lanyards to get into the conference spaces.

CHUCK

(to the crew)

Well, you won't get a view of the Howling Pit of Sorrows from Phelegethon, but you'll still get to meet all the cool important people. And non-people.

They walk through the hallway. Chuck grandly opens a door for the crew.

INT. PHELEGETHON ROOM - DAY

Imagine a human slaughterhouse in absurd dereliction and it has NEVER been cleaned. There are half-alive people hanging from the walls, chopped in half people littering the corners, stray dogs growling as they fight over a half-dead carcass.

At the center of this scene of over-the-top suffering is a catalog-ordered conference table. It has the contingent A/V equipment and an assortment of beverages and snack foods. A couple pieces of trite wall art hang between the sufferers.

There are 13 REGIONAL MANAGERS around this table. Most notably, VALVETHAR, who is a gigantic demon so large he is sort of hunched against the ceiling.

Also notable are: ESCALADE, a semi-sentient Cadillac Escalade, the RIB-TICKLER, a b-rate version of the Joker, FRANK GLAZER, an 11-year-old quiz show prodigy, SEÑOR CUDDLES, the sexually insatiable guinea pig, and Cherrie the diner waitress.

As they enter, the Rib-Tickler is going through his numbers.

RIB-TICKLER

I just want to reiterate no one said he was electable this time five years ago, and now he has a second term...

All eyes pivot to Chuck and the heroes as they stride in.

Valvethar explodes in a menacing roar. Escalade's car alarm gets activated from the noise. Cherrie diligently hops up to get three extra chairs from against the wall. Frank Glazer peeks over his laptop where he is taking minutes.

FRANK GLAZER

Valvethar's email said this was a closed meeting, Chuck.

CHUCK

Big news, everybody. Allow me to introduce Ms. Delacroix, Mr. Black and Mr. Yazemon. They are from Purgatory.

The room rumbles with disbelief.

EXT. PHELEGETHON ROOM - DAY

Marti, Yaz and Slim Jim lean against the wall near the doorway. Slim Jim is feeding Cap'n Feathers. Human and non-human shouts can be heard from inside the room. Escalade's bass rumbles non-stop.

MARTI

When do you think they'll let us back in?

YAZEMON

It may take time. It's not everyday
they get visitors from Purgatory.

Slim Jim shoots Yaz a knowing look.

Marti stares at this oddly intimate exchange and squints at them.

INT. PHELEGETHON ROOM - DAY

Chuck is slumped in a chair near the head of the table. Everyone is turned towards him and PISSED. Cherrie pours a glass of water, sets it in front of him.

Valvethar bangs his fist-hoofs on the table, splintering part of the tabletop.

CHERRIE

Val...manners...

VALVETHAR

(growling)

Val-VETHAR. No outsiders!

RIB-TICKLER

I think I know that pirate. There's something about him...

Frank watches these exchanges and types continuously--documenting everything that occurs.

FRANK GLAZER

For the record, Chuck, why did you abandon protocol?

CHUCK

(shrugs)

I got caught up in all the action. A pirate, a ninja. And they're here on a...

(lowers voice)
retrieval.

RIB-TICKLER

(laughing hysterically)

Take my wife. That's a good one.

CHERRIE

(sternly)

Retrievals are no laughing matter. They're supposed to be impossible.

FRANK GLAZER

Point of order. All in favor of
allowing the Purgatorians to
present their case?

Everyone in the room raises their hands, except Valvethar. Frank Glazer lowers his. Escalade flashes his brights. Frank Glazer purses his lips and records the outcome of the vote.

Cherrie goes to the door, opens it, and ushers the crew in. Cap'n Feathers flies to the snacks and begins to help himself.

Marti walks across the room, positions herself directly in front of Valvethar.

FRANK GLAZER

Let the record reflect the
Purgatorians have been allowed to
speak. You may do so.

MARTI

Thanks or whatever. Ladies and
gentleman and things of the jury...

CHERRIE

Not a courtroom, sugar.

MARTI

Right. We're from Purgatory, and I
misplaced a soul. Her name is Carla
Prentiss. We're here to get her
back to Purgatory to be reassigned.

VALVETHAR

All those in hell deserve the fire
of thousands of earth suns hailed
upon them.

The managers roll their eyes.

MARTI

Sure - um - I'm not trying to stop
you from doing your job. We all
have our roles to play. I screwed
up, and I need to fix it. My
friends are helping me out.

Marti digs through her messenger bag and pulls out Carla's file. She throws it on the table.

MARTI

If you've seen her, let us know. If not, we'll be on our way.

The file is passed around. It elicits varied reactions. Frank Glazer passes it along with little interest in reviewing it. Steam shoots out of Valvethar's ears as he struggles with his goat hooves to flip through the file. The Rib-Tickler laughs at how dumb Valvethar looks.

RIB-TICKLER

He thinks he's people.

Valvethar tosses the dossier to Señor Cuddles. Without looking Señor Cuddles lasciviously rubs his face, then butt against the photos. Slim Jim ruffles.

Cherrie takes the file from Señor Cuddles. She flips out.

CHERRIE

She was just in my diner!

Everyone swings around to get more from Cherrie.

CHERRIE (CONT'D)

Sitting there, drinking decaf, working her little Sudoku...like she didn't know she was dead.

MARTI

Is she there now???

CHERRIE

Well, I don't know. She left. Which means she could be anywhere.

MARTI

Anywhere?

CHERRIE

Yeah. If she's not meant to be here, she could pretty much go from district to district. She's not bound to one punishment.

CHUCK

Sorta like you three.

Marti and Yaz ponder this. Slim Jim strokes Cap'n Feathers on his shoulder and glances toward the door. Cherrie gives him back the folder conspiratorially.

EXT. ROAD TO CHERRIE'S DINER - DAY

The mile marker and road are all that's in the frame.

Carla, panting, runs into the frame. As she runs past the mile marker, everything turns into night.

Carla collapses on the ground in exhaustion. She looks around at the night. The look of sheer terror on her face transforms into relief. She begins to laugh in disbelief.

INT. PHELEGETHON ROOM - DAY

Marti scoops all the papers from Carla's file back into the folder with real care.

MARTI

Thanks for your
time--seriously--but we better get
on our way.

Valvethar ROARS and rips a body hanging from the ceiling down and throws it across the room. Marti and the gang dodge.

VALVETHAR

Trespassing in Hell will be the
last act you commit before we own
you!

Valvethar opens his mouth; flaming vomit shoots out at Marti and the gang.

Cherrie raises her hands in the air and INCANTS until dozens of industrial mops work on the columns of flaming upchuck. A person dangling from the ceiling catches fire. Rib-Tickler pulls a giant whiffleball bat out of his hip pocket, and takes a swing at that person who promptly explodes all over Valvethar.

Chuck crawls underneath the table. Frank Glazer types frantically.

VALVETHAR

That chandelier was imported from
Sodom!

Valvethar gets on all fours and bull-rushes at Rib-Tickler. Rib-tickler turns to run and scurries into Escalade's rear door. Chuck throws a Chaco at Valvethar from under the table. Escalade performs a tight doughnut with booty bass rumbling the entire room. Rib-Tickler is shot back at Valvethar at the end of this arc; he pulls two cream pies

from his pockets and plants them right into Valvethar's eyes. Valvethar is stunned and blind.

CHERRIE
Order up.

With those words, cole slaw pours from a cloud above Valvethar completely engulfing him. Valvethar emerges from the cole slaw mountain and grabs onto an edge of the table to use it as a projectile. Frank pulls the laptop onto his lap.

FRANK GLAZER
Uh, Valvethar, you said you had a hard-out at 11:15 and we're past that.

All fighting ceases immediately.

VALVETHAR
(breathlessly)
Fine. Thank you, Frank. I know how hard getting this motley crew coordinated can be.

He lumbers toward an exit, thoroughly put-out. He shouts a last threat at the crew and disappears. Cherrie opens up one of Escalade's doors and motions to the gang.

CHERRIE
Let's see if we can't find Carla, now, all right. No, Chuck, you go back to the Half Acre.

Chuck shrinks dejectedly, and it dawns on him he might actually be a dipshit.

INT. CHERRIE'S DINER - NIGHT

Carla enters the diner and looks around. Cherrie is nowhere to be seen. All the patrons are various states of angry. There is no waitstaff present.

Carla turns to the hungry Trucker.

CARLA
We're dead, right? And, this is Hell?

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

Escalade is a speck on the road. We hear a small roar of booty bass. As Escalade gets closer, the volume gets louder.

INT. ESCALADE'S CAB - DAY

Escalade is in full rumble. The characters have to shout over each other to be heard. Cherrie is in the driver's seat. Marti in the passenger. The guys are buckled into the back still confused by engine-powered transportation.

CHERRIE

(to Escalade)

Drive a little slower, suge. You know it's always night at the diner and I'm trying to get my vitamin D.

MARTI

Can you turn down the volume?

CHERRIE

Unh-uh. Escalade is our modern-day ferryman. Whenever you have to get anywhere in Hell, he's your go-to-guy.

MARTI

Does he have a different, uh, station we could listen to?

CHERRIE

Sorry, hon. It's all this. Unless you're a rap impresario, then it's Sarah McLachlan.

MARTI

Are we actually going 35 on a highway? Shouldn't we go a little faster? I mean, for Carla.

CHERRIE

Well, we don't even know where she is. And, what's your rush? Forever minus an hour is still forever.

(interrupting her thought)

What are you gonna do when you find her? Do you have a way to get her back to Purgatory?

Slim Jim and Yaz look at each other. Marti arcs her eyebrows, soaks up the situation.

MARTI

Hey, no offense. You seem pretty cool, and that cole slaw trick was really neat and gross, but you ARE one of Hell's minions, and we are here under false pretenses. Let's just keep some things on a need-to-know basis.

CHERRIE

Oh, you poor thing, you must be getting hangry. We'll fix you up at the diner.

Marti stares off into the desert, contemplating what she has gotten herself and friends into.

INT. VALVETHAR'S OFFICE - DAY

Valvethar's office is a straight-up dungeon. Think Phelegthon Room on steroids.

Valvethar sits on a throne of skulls behind a desk of human body parts. All of his accoutrements are lavishly curated around pain and suffering, EXCEPT his desk is furnished with a somewhat outdated laptop (just noticeably not cutting-edge), a typical office inbox/outbox, and a normal desk lamp and conference call phone.

Valvethar flips up his laptop. It opens to a partially filled-in dating profile.

VALVETHAR

(sotto voce)

Oh right, need to finish this.
Beelzebub says I need to get out there. It's just so hard to meet the right people.

The first prompt reads "Describe Yourself in 150 Characters or Less". Valvethar slips his hooves into twin metal typing sleeves that give him a finger-like pointer to tap on the keys with. He mumbles to himself as he types.

VALVETHAR (CONT'D)

Uh, describe myself... Sower of discord, extinguisher of hope... That sounds like all I do is work. Textbook Gemini. Winky face.

Valvethar moves to the next section, "Interests".

VALVETHAR (CONT'D)
 Dismembering. Decapitation.
 Disemboweling. Vivisection.
 (significant pause)
 TopGolf. (Like I have the time.)

Valvethar bristles with optimism, clicks Submit (it takes a while, cuz older model), then shuts the laptop. Back to the grind. Valvethar rings his assistant through his phone.

VALVETHAR
 Lareetha, can you come in here a moment?

Enter LAREETHA, a stone-cold fox demoness--tall, boobly, leggy, partially on fire. She takes a seat in a human/alligator amalgam chair. She crosses her legs and directs her attention at Valvethar. He opens up like any office rap sesh.

VALVETHAR
 What do you know about retrievals?
 Did you ever experience any of those when you worked at Gehenna?

LAREETHA
 What were you drinking at the Doubletree? Retrievals? Retrievals are like Santa Claus, the fake one who brings people presents. They're made-up.

VALVETHAR
 That's what I thought! But, as we're trying to go through the quarterlies in walk three souls from Purgatory.

LAREETHA
 NO WAY! We get to punish people from Purgatory!!! I knew this transfer was the right choice.

Valvethar gets up to pace around the room.

VALVETHAR
 Ohhhh, not exactly. I sorta left them at the Doubletree. You know how I've been working on myself, and Reggie moved his spin class to 11:30. Anyway, we have some retrievers in Hell and I don't like it.

LAREETHA

Okay, we need to find them. I **want** to find them. I'll get on the horn with Aerial Dispatch. Maybe some of the flyers can track them down.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

Escalade has been pulled over by a OFFICER TEASBURY. Cherrie is going through all the requisite eye-batting and lady-charming to get out of it. Marti is stewing in a pot of impatience. Yaz is obsessed with the officer's arsenal.

CHERRIE

Oh my. Was I speeding? I don't think I was even driving.

YAZEMON

What does that one do? How many bullets go in that one? Where do you keep your sword?

Escalade is still rumbling.

INT. HANGAR FOR AERIAL DISPATCH - DAY

A fleet of drones, Decepticon knock-offs, pterodactyls, paper airplanes with googley eyes, etc. pour out of the bay doors. Valvethar and Lareetha are standing just to the side. Valvethar is in Pattonesque rally mode.

VALVETHAR

Fly! Fly, you masters of reconnaissance. Take to your wings and bring news that will rain destruction down upon the outsiders. We will crush them on the rack of despair and dry their hearts into jerky!

He turns to Lareetha.

VALVETHAR (CONT'D)

Ok, that's that. You wanna knock off early? I hear Eduardo's has started doing a margarita happy hour.

They head out.

INT. CHERRIE'S DINER - NIGHT

Carla sits at the counter, spinning back and forth in the stool. She looks around--little has changed. She fidgets.

Carla hoists herself up to peek behind the counter.

CARLA

Hello? Anyone here?

Carla gets up and walks through the restaurant toward the bathrooms. There is a fire exit there. She pushes it and no alarm sounds.

EXT. CHERRIE'S DINER - NIGHT

Carla looks around: dumpster, broken down cardboard boxes, and a shiny, bright red Vespa with a pie sticker on the side. The keys are in the ignition.

Carla grabs the helmet sitting on top of it, puts it on. She hops on the Vespa and drives into the night away from the diner - not passing the parking lot, making sure to go the opposite direction she went before.

INT. EDUARDO'S TEX MEX - NIGHT

Lareetha and Valvethar sit across from each other in a cheesy, over-decorated Tex-Mex restaurant, full of humans and non-humans.

VALVETHAR

(pointing to Leertha's salsa)

Are you done with that?

Lareetha pushes it towards Valvethar with little interest. She scans the room.

Valvethar shovels more chips and salsa into his mouth.

VALVETHAR

For a while there, I was worried that I might also have a corn gluten allergy. My gastro said it was probably nothing. But I need to watch my wheat gluten intake, so...

He gestures at the empty basket of chips and dregs of salsa.

Lareetha's hand shoots up in the air as she waves to a friend.

LAREETHA
 Gotta go, Val. Thanks for that
 drink.

Lareetha sashays off to meet her friend. A pair of more attractive male demons quickly approach them.

Valvethar hunches over in his booth, his eyes those of a disciplined puppy.

A WAITER brings out a plate of fajitas. Valvethar smiles somewhat. He holds up his empty margarita glass.

VALVETHAR
 I'll take another.

WAITER
 We're not on happy hour anymore.
 It's gonna be full price.

He waits while Valvethar counts some currency in his coin purse, finally giving half-hearted approval.

EXT. CHERRIE'S DINER - NIGHT

Escalade is seen and heard pulling into the diner parking lot.

Cherrie and the gang exit the vehicle and walk into the Diner.

INT. CHERRIE'S DINER - NIGHT

As soon as Cherrie walks in, the diner-goers CHEER loudly. Their cheers quickly turn to angry SHOUTS.

Cherrie stands on her tiptoes and looks around.

CHERRIE
 Let's fan out y'all and try to find
 Carla. Marti and I will cover the
 floor. Jim, you look in the
 kitchen. And, Yaz, you wait at the
 counter to see if she walks in
 again.

She tosses out aprons to the gang. Cap'n Feathers is pecking away at an apple pie without its glass topper on.

CHERRIE
 (to Slim Jim)
 And the feathery friend will have
 to stay outside. Even Hell has
 health codes.

Marti, Slim Jim and Yaz exchange looks and put on the aprons. They head out to their locations.

Marti stops at a table of angry men. She begins taking orders and filling up cups of coffee

CUSTOMER 1
Let me guess, only decaf?

Marti shrugs.

MARTI
Who knows?

All the men at the table roll their eyes. They begin to order food simultaneously.

Marti pulls out a notepad from the apron and tries to take it all down.

MARTI
Wait a minute...I'm looking for
someone. Have you seen her?

Marti pulls Carla's dossier from under her arm and slides it on the table.

Customer 1 puts his glasses on and picks up the picture.

CUSTOMER 1
What do I get if I tell you?

MARTI
Cup of non-decaf coffee.

CUSTOMER 1
(scoffs)
I'll believe it when I drink it.
(pauses)
Yeah, she was in here. Not too long ago.

MARTI
See where she went?

CUSTOMER 1
No, I didn't see where she went. I was looking for a half-decent cup of coffee.

Marti takes the folder back, pours coffee for the table, and walks off.

Customer 1 sips the coffee.

CUSTOMER 1 (CONT'D)
Hey! This is still decaf!

INT. CHERRIE'S DINER - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Slim Jim ties the apron around his waist, and pushes open the swinging doors to the kitchen. Everyone in the kitchen is an ex-slave, busying themselves with the countless orders.

SLIM JIM
Oh shit.

They all turn to size him up. All activity stops.

INT. CHERRIE'S DINER - COUNTER - NIGHT

Yaz throws a whole pie in the air, and slices it multiple times, Fruit Ninja-style. The pieces of pie land on the counter, barely missing the plates they are intended for.

CHERRIE
(over her shoulder)
Can I offer you a friendly
suggestion?

Cherrie waves a bread knife at Yaz. Yaz pulls a throwing star from his sleeve and pitches it at Cherrie, hitting the bread knife and knocking it from her hand.

YAZEMON
I don't need your suggestions.
Friendly or otherwise. But, I do
need more things to chop up.

Yaz is almost alarmed to hear these words pour out of his mouth. But clearly, he can't help himself.

YAZEMON (CONT'D)
Why are you still standing there
like a worthless sow? You must be
ready to be butchered and served.

Yaz draws his sword and crouches into an attack stance.

INT. CHERRIE'S DINER - NIGHT

Marti is sitting at a table of customers--Nazi officers, special interest lobbyists, pedophile Boy Scout directors--engaged in gossipy talk. Cherrie walks over, rattled from her exchange with Yaz.

CHERRIE

Shouldn't you be asking these folk
if they saw Carla and where she
went?

MARTI

Stick it in your piehole. The other
piehole.

The table laughs.

CHERRIE

What's gotten into you, young lady?
You are acting just like the
customers.

Cherrie grabs her by the ear and forces Marti to stand up.

CHERRIE (CONT'D)

Now, I am willing to help you, but
I will not tolerate this kind of
rudeness...from someone who isn't
supposed to be in Hell.

MARTI

Look, some people have seen her.
Some people haven't seen her. Some
people say she went that way, but
when I go that way, she isn't
there. It's exhausting. I just want
to sit down and converse with the
nice people. There is no one
interesting in Purgatory.

The table raises their mugs and cheers her.

CHERRIE

Something's not right here.

She looks back in the distance at the kitchen doors. She
shakes her head "Oh no" with immediate concern.

INT. CHERRIE'S DINER - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Slim Jim is pulling a butcher's knife off the hanging rack.
He tests the edge of the blade with his thumb.

SLIM JIM

All right, ye black-hearted,
black-faced monsters of Africa. I
need to find a white woman, fair as
the cliffs of Dover in every way
that God made her. If I get what I

SLIM JIM
need from you, you'll go back to
your miserable lives. And if I
don't, we'll see where that
leads...

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

Carla putters along the road at scooter speed. As she passes over a slight hill, she sees red-and-blue lights in the tiny, side-view mirrors.

The highway patrol car behind her barks into the PA system.

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN (V.O.)
Okay, Danica Patrick. That's about
enough of that. Just ease on over
to the shoulder and you can be on
your way.

The Highway Patrolman gets out of his squad car, and approaches Carla.

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN
Hey! You're not Danica Patrick.
Golly, sure could have fooled me
the way you were tearing the road
up.

CARLA
(scrunching her face)
I didn't see any Speed Limits signs
posted and let's be honest...
(gestures at the Vespa)
I couldn't have been going that
fast.

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN
Oh, this whole stretch is a school
zone. And it's under construction,
so that makes the offense triple.

Carla surveys the landscape. It is uniformly Kansas-flat with nary a building, nor construction vehicle in sight.

CARLA
Right...my name's--

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN
Just need your ID and registration.

CARLA

I don't have either of those...

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN

Oh, I see. You're not from the road region. That's fine. Just show me your inter-regional visa and I'll have your punishment forwarded to your home region.

CARLA

(searching through her pockets)

Uh, I guess I'm out of luck on that front, too.

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN

(scratching his head)

I don't quite believe you. I've patrolled this stretch since the Big One. And, no one has ever not had proper ID. Not that it amounts to much; I'm dyslexic. Guess I'll have to phone it in.

Highway Patrolman gestures her over to the squad. He reaches in and pulls out his CB.

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN

(into CB)

Darnell, I'm out here on Inter-Regional 12. And I have an outlander without the proper ID. I know! Just like they say 'Once every infinity, right?'

(to Carla)

What did you say your name was, jiggles?

CARLA

Uh, Gwen. Stefani.

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN

(into CB)

It's a Gwen Stephanie.

(to Carla)

You got a last name, Gwen Stephanie. And don't tell me they weren't invented yet, cuz I can tell you're modern. Maybe too modern...

CARLA

Yes, Beyonce.

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN

You got that, Darnell? Gwen
Stephanie Belancey. OK, I'll bring
her in for processing.

Highway Patrolman gives her a lingering pat-down and cuffs her.

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN (CONT'D)

Those too tight? Watch your head.

He helps her into the backseat. He gets behind the wheel and they drive off.

CARLA

I had a cousin with a learning
disability; what kind of dyslexia
do you have?

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN

The talking kind.

The car creeps along this desolate patch of road, lights still on.

INT. CHERRIE'S DINER - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The cooks are going about their routine.

Cherrie storms through the push doors with Marti and her resting bitch face and Yaz nearly foaming at the mouth with rage.

CHERRIE

Thomas! You didn't!

One of the cooks looks up from his prep work.

THOMAS

Oh no, missus, we weren't wrathful
in life. Just disobedient. This
isn't the first white fool we had
to suffer.

The kitchen lets out a self-satisfied laugh.

Thomas gestures over by the supply room. Slim Jim is bound up with cheese cloth. He has pig tripe stuffed in his mouth to keep him from talking.

Yaz runs over and slices Slim Jim out of his bondage. Slim Jim starts in with more invective to the ex-slaves.

CHERRIE

Thomas, I need you to defrost that holiday fruitcake.

THOMAS

But, that's only for holidays, missus, which we don't celebrate down here.

CHERRIE

Not the time for more disobedience, Tom.

YAZEMON

You think you can stay your imminent destruction if I slice up more pastries?

CHERRIE

Well, yes. And I think I can get you people back to normal.

Thomas retrieves a gross-looking fruitcake and pops it in the microwave. Once the oven dings (almost instantly), he hands it to Cherrie. She places it on a serving platter and Yaz gets to work on it with his sword. Slim Jim races over to it and devours pieces like it's his favorite thing ever. Marti turns up her nose.

MARTI

I'm not eating that congealed cat vomit. And frankly, between that slop, Pirate the Dixiecrat and Shogun Kill Bill, I can't decide what I'm more grossed out by... I'm going back to chat up those cute German boys.

CHERRIE

Just one bite, Marti.

The crew each eats from the fruitcake. Slim Jim quickly starts to evolve back into the character we have seen previously. Yaz becomes visibly less tense. Marti pats her clothes down, digs in the apron pocket.

MARTI

Where's Carla's folder? I don't have it anymore.

CHERRIE

It's out in the restaurant. Let's get back to work. Thomas, will you put the rest of this fruitcake in to-go boxes.

Thomas nods and smiles with alacrity. As he puts each piece in a box, he spits on it. The crew pretend not to notice. Everyone exits, save Slim Jim, who lingers a moment.

SLIM JIM

I, uh, really don't know what to say...

THOMAS

It's cool. You're just a shitty white guy.

SLIM JIM

But, that's not true.

THOMAS

Okay. By the way, you look familiar. Did you used to pilot slavers in the Caribbean? Yeah, you did. I know you.

Slim Jim looks across all the faces in the kitchen and slinks out of the push doors. The kitchen erupts in laughter, as the doors swish.

INT. VALVETHAR'S OFFICE - DAY

Sad, break-up music plays from speakers inside human skulls. Valvethar sits at his desk shuffling through paperwork. He finds himself singing along.

He stops and turns down the music. He presses the intercom on his phone.

LEERTHA (OC)

Yes?

VALVETHAR

(dryly)

Any news from the hangar?

LEERTHA (OC)

I said I would let you know when I heard something.

Valvethar GRUNTS and hangs up.

He hears a ping from his computer. He opens up his dating profile to see a new message. He smiles as he grabs his typing devices from the drawer and clicks on the message.

The message is from a bot. A literal bot. A demon bot from hell, whose interest in him is a farce. "Am Catastra. From your profile, I know we share many interests and could fall in love...."

Valvethar looks down. He sets his typing devices on the desk and closes out of the window.

INT. HELL JAIL - DAY

The jail looks like the sheriff's lockup from the Andy Griffith show. And everything is in black and white.

Carla sits in the jail cell, flipping through a magazine.

Officer Teasbury and Sheriff Darnell are rummaging frantically through file cabinets.

OFFICER TEASBURY
(to Sheriff Darnell)
And you're sure a region isn't missing a Gwen Stephanie Belancey?

SHERIFF DARNEll
Confirmed with all regions. Not a soul is unaccounted for.

They resume rummaging. Carla peers up from her magazine every once and a while to observe.

OFFICER TEASBURY
And what are we looking for again?

SHERIFF DARNEll
Protocol paperwork for missing inter-regional travel visas for unidentified persons.

OFFICER TEASBURY
There's a protocol for that?

SHERIFF DARNEll
Protocol for everything. Remember, once every infinity.

Officer Teasbury turns around and smiles at Carla.

OFFICER TEASBURY
Still working on it, Ms. Belancey.

Carla gives him a lukewarm thumbs up.

INT. CHERRIE'S DINER - NIGHT

The crew and Cherrie huddle around the counter.

CHERRIE
I don't think Carla's coming back
here, dears. Maybe it's time y'all
went on your way.

The volume of the diner is overwhelmed by the sounds of HUMMING and WHIRRING. The glass on the windows and doors shatter as Valvethar's drones smash into them.

Everyone looks up at the sea of drones above them.

CHERRIE
(shaking her fist in the air)
Valvethar!

These new openings allow Cap'n Feathers to flap in and join the mayhem.

Yaz jumps into the air, withdraws his sword and starts slashing through the drones.

Slim Jim jumps on a table and brandishes a knife. He rips the devices from the air and then stomps or stabs them into bits and pieces.

Customers wielding weapons do their part.

Cherrie, eyes closed, mumbles to herself and summons all the coffee mugs in the place. She levitates them and pours the contents on the electric drones.

MARTI
(looking around at the chaos)
Well, I feel worthless.

CHERRIE
(to Marti)
Go get Escalade then!

Marti walks towards the exit.

MARTI
(sotto voce)
Valet for a self-driving car.
Perfect.

INT. VALVETHAR'S OFFICE - DAY

Valvethar, wearing attachments on his hooves that have crochet hooks, works on a baby-blue balaclava. It's coming along nicely.

His intercom buzzes.

LAREETHA (OC)

Val?

VALVETHAR

Who?

LAREETHA (OC)

(sighs)

Valvethar. I have news. Can I come in?

Valvethar hurriedly drops the knitting and attachments on the ground. He tries to situate himself normally.

VALVETHAR

Sure.

Lareetha enters holding a folder. She hands it over to Valvethar.

LAREETHA

Bad news. Transmissions from some aerial devices were scrambled.

VALVETHAR

Unscramble them.

LAREETHA

We can't.

VALVETHAR

(whining)

Did you talk to IT?

LAREETHA

Yes.

VALVETHAR

Where were these aerials last in service?

Valvethar pouts. Lareetha starts to exit the room. She stops at the door.

LAREETHA
(quickly)
Cherrie's Diner.

Lareetha opens the door and jumps out of the room quickly.

Valvethar HOWLS with the ferocity of all the rush-hour freeways on earth combined. The volume of his sounds shatter a few decorative skulls.

EXT. CHERRIE'S DINER - NIGHT

The crew is piling into Escalade. Some more destroyed drones and flying spies litter the parking lot.

CHERRIE
Now, y'all, be safe.

MARTI
Cherrie, I can't tell you how much I appreciate this. Your help...was really helpful. If you don't mind my asking, you just seem so nice. Why are you in Hell?

CHERRIE
Oh. I was poor, and I voted straight ticket Republican in every election. Herbert Hoover, even. Ain't that just some deluded shit?

Marti gives Cherrie a reserved "there, there" and hops inside the Cadillac.

INT. HELL JAIL - DAY

Sheriff Darnell holds up a sheet of paper victoriously.

SHERIFF DARNEll
AHA!
(reading aloud)
In the event a person does not have the proper interregional travel visa, you first must confirm the identity and status of said individual.

OFFICER TEASBURY
Check.

SHERIFF DARNEll
In the rare event the soul is not in violation of the interregional

SHERIFF DARNELL
travel ordinances, the person
should be sent to the passport
office to file for the replacement
papers.

OFFICER TEASBURY
So, we just let her go?

SHERIFF DARNELL
(shrugs, turns to Carla)
Gwen, you strike me as the type of
woman who can pursue her own divine
retribution. Let's get you off with
that paperwork.

Sheriff Darnell grabs the cell keys off his desk and
releases Carla.

CARLA
Thanks. I guess so. Passport
office?

OFFICER TEASBURY
I hate to let her go just like
that.

SHERIFF DARNELL
Well, it's not your call, Teasbury.

Sheriff Darnell gestures to a closet in the corner of the
office. He grabs a sheet a paper and scribbles some notes on
it. He hands it to Carla.

SHERIFF DARNELL
Give this to Dolores. She should
speed things up for you.

Carla accepts the packet and walks to the broom closet. She
waves goodbye to the officers.

The pair begin to reassemble the mess they have made of
their office. They sort through papers and put things into
filing cabinets.

OFFICER TEASBURY
Did Gwen Stephanie seem like
your...typical Hell denizen?
Because she didn't to me. And we've
ticketed a lot of afterlife folk.

SHERIFF DARNELL
Yeah, something seems off.

OFFICER TEASBURY
(snaps his fingers)
Good golly and bad belly. I can't
believe I forgot...

SHERIFF DARNELL
What this time?

OFFICER TEASBURY
Well, ya see, I speed-trapped
Escalade earlier. And he was
cruising around with this feisty
teeny-bopper. Said she was looking
for a Carla Prentiss. See,
teeny-bopper was on a retrieval. I
told Cherrie I'd ring her if I saw
anyone who seemed...out of place.

Sheriff Darnell walks over to the desk and sits on the edge.
He picks up the phone.

SHERIFF DARNELL
(to Teasbury)
You're gonna be the death of me.
You know that.
(into receiver)
Sue Ann? Patch me through to
Cherrie's Diner.

CHERRIE (OC)
Cherrie's Diner, where satisfaction
is a slice away. How can I prevent
you from feeling fulfilled?

SHERIFF DARNELL
Cherrie, baby, when am I going to
get a taste of that pie?
(laughs)
Anyways, heard you where looking
for...
(trails off)

CUT TO:

INT. HELL'S PASSPORT OFFICE - DAY

There's a line. Boy, is there a line. Most of the newly deceased porno and reality TV types are here. So are several of Hell's most notables: CHARLIE MANSON, DICK CHENEY, TIM MCVEIGH, ELIZABETH BATHORY, etc.

The office has a giant digital number announcer displayed prominently in the center of this circular room. Most of the windows are tending to customers, but some agents are just talking amongst themselves. For example, the MINOTAUR and HABBA THE JUTT are going on like so:

MINOTAUR

Sure, I didn't get that PTO request in exactly on time, but you know, sitting here and dealing with this lot, you'd think they would want me to take some time for myself. See the Bottomless Well of Tears. Dip my toes in the Bay of Blood. Right?

HABBA THE JUTT

Reepah oohtah maksah. Khinshah wee lala.

MINOTAUR

Well, that's precisely what I said.

Carla Prentiss enters through a glass door into this scene. She takes a seat and begins filling out her paperwork. RASPUTIN creeps over to her.

RASPUTIN

Hello there. Where are you headed? I'm on my way to the Fountain of False Hope. Which, ironically, is in a drought. Hell, am I right? If you are traveling that way, I would love a companion.

Elizabeth Bathory leans in to Rasputin's pick-up pitch. She stands and walks over to him. Her ribs shoot out of her Renaissance garb and turn into bone knives, which filet Rasputin where he stands leaving only a skeleton. She eats a strip of his flesh. The skeleton walks off to the very appropriately designated Men's bathroom, teeth chattering in aggravation.

CARLA

Holy! Oh God! What did you do to that man?! Oh yuck.

ELIZABETH BATHORY

He was an insect. You must wait for
Errol Flynn. That man lights up a
room.

Carla tries to get back to her paperwork, when a window opens up and a placard reading "Dolores" gets slid into the name plate. Carla jumps in front of the mob, that is making their way toward Dolores's window.

CARLA

Hi. You have to get me out of here.

DOLORES

Don't take walk-ups, niña. You need
a number.

She points at the digital counter.

DOLORES (CONT'D)

Those will be the last two numbers
of your 10-digit numbers. Come back
when your colors match.

CARLA

How long will that take?

DOLORES

Eternity and some change? We try to
get to everybody, but...government
job. If you want to self-punish
while you wait...

CARLA

Sorry, the sheriff and Officer
Teasbury said I should go straight
to you.

DOLORES

Darnell, huh? How is that lazy
puerco?

CARLA

Uh, he didn't seem too busy.

DOLORES

Ha, I like you, niña. Let me look
at this paperwork.

(accepts Carla's packet)

Ok, I need to know the exact
regions you expect to visit and
travel through.

CARLA

Um, all of the ones that go from here to the exit.

DOLORES

Damn, girl, you funny como Carlos Mencia. He signed my tits at last year's Antichristmas party.

They girl-talk as the line behind them sighs with clinical loathing.

INT. VALVETHAR'S OFFICE - DAY

Valvethar is stomping around and trying to keep his anger in check. He is in the midst of trying to use a deep meditation technique.

VALVETHAR

And, in this memory room, I isolate all the wonderful smells I smelled today. Well, there was feces and charred bone... Arrrgh, all I can smell is Cherrie's stupid cole slaw. You can't get it out of your nose!

He returns to his desk and with his typing hooks starts composing.

VALVETHAR

(reading his typing)

To all Hellacious Bureaucrats and Officers of the Chaos, be on the...

CUT TO:

INT. HELL'S PASSPORT OFFICE - DAY

In an adjacent window, a humanoid salamander (MIKE) is helping a customer when he notices a pop-up on his monitor.

It reads: BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR AN ANNOYING GOTH CHICK AND A PIRATE AND A NINJA. ALSO, SOMEONE NAMED CARLA PRENTISSL

He slithers his head to catch sight of Dolores chatting away with Carla.

Dolores and Carla are getting into it, thick as thieves.

DOLORES

No. Stop. I know who Gwen Stefani is. "Esscuse me, meester." But, I

DOLORES
love your name. Mi sobrina, she was
Carla, too. She had a true light.

She stamps some papers, takes a photo of Carla. Mike squishes over to Dolores's station.

MIKE
Would you believe I'm out of
staples?

He makes a show out of looking around Dolores's area for those staples he just cooked up needing.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Hi there, I'm Mike.

He extends an amphibian three-fingered hand to Carla.

CARLA
Gwen Stefani.

Mike sees the drying laminate in front of Dolores. It reads CARLA PRENTISS.

MIKE
Oh. I loved when you made Blake
Shelton try sushi.

CARLA
(wearily)
Thank you.

Dolores grabs the card and gives it a couple of air flicks.

DOLORES
Ok, like I said, this won't get you
to the exit, because, like I say,
there isn't one. But you can go
anywhere with this. I've heard good
things about Cherrie's Diner.

CARLA
Been there. It's not all that.

Mike slithers back to his station and starts to write something on Valvethar's social media wall, as Carla smiles and exits through a different door.

EXT. IMPOUND LOT - DAY

Outside the passport office, there's an impound lot with an interesting array of vehicles. Carla walks up and down the rows looking for Cherrie's Vespa.

Booty bass from Escalade can be heard in the distance.

Carla turns the corner and she's greeted by Men in Black demon types: horns, scaly skin, forked tails, sunglasses. One flashes a badge at her.

DIB 1

Ma'am, we need you to come with us.

CARLA

Oh, I have paperwork that gives
me...

Carla fishes the paperwork out of her pants pocket and presents it cordially.

DIB 2 takes it in his hands and belches fire on it. Then, eats the flaming garbage.

DIB 1

No. You don't.

Carla turns and tries to run. There are other DIBs behind her. They drag her back to the entrance to the Passport Office, as the booty bass gets noticeably LOUDER.

INT. HELL'S PASSPORT OFFICE - DAY

Marti and crew walk in through a door other than the one Carla just walked out of. They all scan the room for their lost charge. Yaz crouches, flips, and leaps around people in lines. Slim Jim pulls out his spyglass and looks about the office. Marti frantically speaks with some of the deceased TV crew.

Yaz bumps into a hell-dweller.

HELL-DWELLER

(loudly)

Hey! Watch where you're kung
fu-ing.

YAZEMON

Ninjutsu. Not kung fu.

At the words "ninjutsu," Mike's slithery body straightens. His eyes focus on Yaz as he lands a flip.

MIKE
(whispering)
A ninja...

He scans the room. His eyes stop on Slim Jim. Slim Jim is standing in Captain Morgan pose with his peg leg on a chair.

MIKE
A pirate...

He keeps scanning and finds Marti, as she grabs a passing JOHN WAYNE GACY and shoves Carla's photo under his nose.

MIKE
Annoying goth chick.

A human-faced bat (STAN) approaches Mike's station and flaps paperwork in front of him. Mike stares right past him to our heroic trio.

STAN
Hello? Earth to salamander.

Stan aggressively waves his claw in front of Mike's staring face. Mike grabs a CLOSED placard and hangs it in his window.

MIKE
Sorry. Lunch break.

Mike picks up the phone, turns away from Stan and the counter. Stan taps on the glass.

Mike dials and the phone starts to ring.

Stan is now flying into the window and rebounding off it.

Mike turns around angrily, points to the sign.

MIKE
(into phone)
Val?
(pauses, then iterates his full name)
Valvethar? Mike Salamander,
Passport Office. Those retrievalers. They're here.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Valvethar rides his skullface, blood-covered flying horse at full-tilt. He has a douchey Bluetooth thing hanging out of his over-sized ear.

VALVETHAR

Hold 'em. I'm on my way.

An entourage of demons, including Lareetha, ride along with Valvethar on an array of ridiculously obnoxious hellish motor and non-motor vehicles. At least one demon is riding a dragon. Or maybe there's just a dragon. Whatever. It's hellishly over-the-top.

INT. PASSPORT OFFICE - DAY

The crew is still harassing people in line about Carla. Marti taps a man's shoulder. He turns around. It's Chuck!

CHUCK

Marti!

MARTI

(unenthusiastically)

Oh. Chuck.

CHUCK

How the search going? Any leads?

MARTI

This is the lead, but so far no luck. What, uh, brings you here?

CHUCK

Well, you get on Valvethar's bad side, and there's Hell to pay. Literally. He canceled all my ID for bringing you guys to the managers' meeting. And you wouldn't believe the paperwork.

Chuck points at the horizontal hand truck next to him.

CHUCK

So wasteful. Our poor CO2-breathing friends...

Chuck mists over. Yaz and Slim Jim approach. They eye Chuck in disdain. Chuck brushes away a tear, smiles.

MARTI

Have you seen Carla here?

CHUCK

Nope, but let's put my ole activist
rally cry to work.

Chuck bounces over to a chair, steps up.

CHUCK

(shouting into his cupped
hands)

Anyone here met a Carla Prentiss?
Loose soul, not a real Hell type?

Scattered people raise their hands, including Dolores.

Chuck jumps off the chair, beams at the crew and dusts off his hands.

CHUCK

And, that's how we got plastic out
of Hellhole Foods.

As Marti, Slim Jim and Yaz are preparing to continue their quest, the DIBs enter, pushing Carla. Marti notices her instantly and rushes over.

MARTI

Ms. Prentiss, hi. Martine
Delacroix, Purgatory Processing
Dept. Omigod, it is so good to see
you, to meet you, to know you still
exist. Listen, so sorry about the
mix-up. Long story.

(to DIBs)

Well, fellas, we sure appreciate
your assistance on this one, and I
mean that. Promotions all around.
But, me and our crack team will
take it from here.

Yaz flaps his hand "Bye now." Slim Jim bows courteously to Carla. The DIBs confusedly make their way back out the doors they just walked through.

CARLA

So I did die?

MARTI

Yes. You did. Usually there's a bit
more to the onboarding, but you
are...an exception.

CARLA

Just tell me I didn't die in a
really dumb way. Please.

SLIM JIM

You died very honorably, lass. On
the high seas.

MARTI

No, your death was just...deathy.
And, uh, I'm the reason you're
here. In Hell.

CARLA

(aghast)

Yeah, I was wondering about that.

Suddenly, all doors burst open, pouring out the vilest of Hell's enforcers. One of the demons is so large, his shoulders break the doorway as he jams himself through. Valvethar enters dramatically behind Lareetha.

VALVETHAR

Everyone who is supposed to be in Hell, line up to get tortured. The rest of you are coming with me.

Valvethar, dismounts from his demon steed, jumping out of the saddle and slams his fist onto the floor as he lands. The ground starts to spiderweb.

The cracks cascade outward and eventually the entire structure of the floor gives. Valvethar, Lareetha, Marti, Slim Jim, Yaz and Carla plummet through the gaping hole of the Passport Office into a lava-spewing Hellscape.

EXT. HELLSCAPE - COVER OF DARKNESS

A fire beetle colony is going about the rigorous business of rolling volcanic ash pellets out of their mound. Right as the terrible rumble sounds, one beetle looks up from its chore and is instantly squashed by Lareetha's butt. She pulls herself off the ground, grins and brushes the fuming red goop off.

The colony skitters away, as several of them are stepped on. The squished beetles cause the humans' footwear to catch fire, and they have to stamp their shoes until the embers are extinguished.

Valvethar reaches into a lava floe and starts to sculpt a perfect fireball. Lareetha unsheathes a scimitar from her belt and plunges it into a different lava floe until it is fully on fire.

The crew has circled up with Carla in the center.

MARTI

My timing is probably
terrible...but do you happen to
know how to get out of here?

CARLA

Nope. I was hoping you were a
rescue team.

SLIM JIM

Me too.

Slim Jim draws his scimitar and sights down the blade at Lareetha. Valvethar pitches his fireball with such ferocity that it pulls itself apart mid-flight and heads simultaneously for Slim Jim--his back turned--and Marti.

Cap'n Feathers flaps in Slim Jim's face until he stumbles out of the fireball's way. Yaz aims his harquebus at Valvethar and fires. Marti is swung out of harm's way by Carla.

The harquebus pellet ricochets off the metallic, stony ground and chips off a flint that lodges in Valvethar's face.

VALVETHAR

(menacing Yazemon)

It goes without saying: you
will pay for this.

Valvethar's forked tongue leaps out of his mouth and laps up the rivulets of blood that are streaming from his wound.

With his mouth full of blood, he aerates the nearby beetle mound. The beetles instantly grow into ARMORED WARRIORS.

The armored warriors form a phalanx around Valvethar. Marti regains her balance.

MARTI

Can we agree anywhere is better
than here?

Carla nods vigorously. Yaz glances over his shoulder at the women, locks looks with Marti.

YAZEMON

Get the lost soul back to
Purgatory. To perish in your
service will be the highest honor.

Slim Jim is working through various defensive fencing stances against Lareetha.

SLIM JIM

Martine, do as as Yazemon says. You were as true a friend as a pirate could ever imagine. Go!

The women run up the side of a bluff. Several people from the Passport Office are peering down at them. Marti makes her hands into a stirrup.

MARTI

If only one of us is getting out of here, it has to be you.

Carla gives Marti a sad, concerned look.

MARTI (CONT'D)

I can't just leave my friends behind.

Carla climbs into Marti's hands and is hoisted up. She is grabbed by Dolores with the help of several onlookers.

Marti waves at her as Carla looks down.

DOLORES (OC)

OK, Carlita, you safe now.

MARTI

If you get back to Cherrie's Diner, send me a postcard. The mail's slow, but everything generally gets to Purgatory.

Marti steels herself for the raging battle below.

Valvethar has plucked a skull from his outfit. He holds it out and incants something demonic. He rolls the skull at Yaz. As it approaches, it gets bigger and bigger until it is a large as Yaz. Yaz barely somersaults out of the way. The skull collides with a rock face. Valvethar howls with anger when it misses its target.

Meanwhile, Lareetha takes a swing at Slim Jim; he parries.

Several armored warriors come to Lareetha's assistance. And Slim Jim is valiantly dispatching them in wicked swashbuckling style. Lareetha charges through the fallen warriors. She swings wildly and misses Slim Jim with her fiery sword, but catches part of his pegleg, which goes up in flames. Cap'n Feathers is flapping around Lareetha's

face. Slim Jim is having trouble keeping his balance, and tosses his scimitar to his opposite hand to steady himself.

Yaz jumps on the giant skull and starts running on top of it, sending it back toward Valvethar, who just narrowly steps away from being crushed by the skull.

Lareetha is locked in swordplay with a flagging Slim Jim. Cap'n Feathers is trying to scratch at her enough to distract her, but to no avail. With his free hand, Slim Jim grabs his spyglass and telescopes it out with such force, it smacks her right in the face. It leaves a stupid-looking lens-shaped dent in the middle of her forehead. Lareetha pushes him hard, sword to sword. Slim Jim loses his balance and falls on his back.

Marti reaches the battlefield and is frantically digging through her satchel for anything she can use as a weapon. She wraps the wire of her headset around her fist a couple times, then pulls the cushions off her headstrap, turning her headset into a kusurigama. She twirls her new weapon over a head a couple times as she charges into the fray.

A cluster of armored soldiers have now directed their attention at her. She lassoes them all and Yaz is making a defensive move against Valvethar when he sees the corralled demon soldiers. He somersaults into them, knocking them into a lava pool.

Marti pulls her headset out of the lava. It is undamaged.

MARTI

Cool.

She swings it over her head again and charges in with Yaz.

Meanwhile, Lareetha takes a few steps back, and flourishes her flaming sword, relishing the compromising position her opponent is in. A low rumble fills the air, and Cap'n Feathers squawks in fear as he flaps away from Lareetha.

LAREETHA

Looks like your little friend knows
when a fight is over.

The low rumble transforms into a booming booty bass anthem as Escalade--with Carla in the driver's seat--crashes into Lareetha. Escalade's rear tire lands on her face, and peels out turning it into a tire-treaded splatter. Her faceless body spasms violently. Carla reaches out and grabs Slim Jim's hand pulling him into Escalade.

Valvethar sees Lareetha's mutilated corpse, and howls in anguish.

VALVETHAR

Lareetha!!!

(double take)

Hmmmh. She's not as hot without a face.

Escalade does a tight u-turn to get to that side of the fight. Cap'n Feathers now flaps toward Marti, tugs at her satchel.

MARTI

Good idea, C-Dif. I'm gonna need all my mobility to get through this.

She disencumbers herself and drops the bag to the ground. Cap'n Feathers works at the flap and climbs inside.

Valvethar having moved on from his fallen crush, redirects his attention to the demolition and destruction of our crew. He HOWLS with rage!

Marti is stretching her headset and wrapping the cables around her fist. Yaz fans his fingers out, presenting six throwing stars. Escalade guns his engine. Slim Jim sits in Escalade's window well, scimitar raised.

As a unit, they charge. Valvethar sights down each of them, meticulously envisioning how he will abuse each of them. Flashes of Cap'n Feathers show he is in the vicinity, as Valvethar scoops the ground in front of him, hoisting a tremendous lava boulder over his head.

And, in that gap between this boulder and Valvethar's face, flies Cap'n Feathers with a slice of fruitcake in his claws. He drops the disgusting pastry into Valvethar's straining maw.

Valvethar pauses. He sets the fiery boulder down.

VALVETHAR

Uh. Does this have gluten in it? I can't eat gluten. I have a severe--

And just then, Valvethar is shrunk-transformed to a puny, normcore putz. He looks like he would get housed by Chuck. It's that pathetic. He gazes down at his tiny new arms and stupid Dad wardrobe, and trots away, shrieking.

VALVETHAR

No. No. No. No.

The team circles up and gazes in triumph as Valvethar disappears. Cap'n Feathers flies over them before alighting on Slim Jim's shoulder. And then, he shits a little.

MARTI

That's one less slice of fruitcake.
We seriously need to get out of
here before we become our worst
selves.

They collect themselves and pile into Escalade. Carla "drives". Slim Jim sits shotgun. As they race away, they pass a faceless, confused Lareetha. Slim Jim gives her the finger.

INT. ESCALADE'S CAB - INTERIOR LIGHT

MARTI

Escalade, maybe you can get us
close to Limbo, and...oh, I don't
know...

Marti stares at the headset she'd been using as a weapon and realizes that's not what it's for. She puts it on her head.

MARTI (CONT'D)

(into headset)

Is anyone there? Can anyone hear
me?

The sound of electronic switches click in her ears. She stares at Yaz with anticipation, makes eye contact with Slim Jim in the visor mirror. Suddenly, a familiar voice fills the earpiece.

A-I-T JENSEN

(OC)

Marti! Everyone, I got her!

MARTI

(into headset)

Angel-in-Training Jensen! I never
thought I'd be so happy to hear
your nasal voice!

A-I-T JENSEN

(OC)

Uh, mutual. And it's Angel Jensen
now. Everyone is gonna be so glad
we found you!

MARTI

Can you get us out of here? We're lost and trapped. And desperate.

A-I-T JENSEN

Just hold for a second. The next voice you hear will be--

Warbles and whirs feel her earpieces as Angel Jensen's voice is lost. Marti pulls the headset down to rest around her neck. Suddenly, the entire space is enveloped in pitch darkness!

In a beat, the sounds of a ferocious car crash are heard.

INT. VAST ROOM - FAINT LAMPLIGHT

Escalade has driven through a brick wall. He bass-rumbles and honks until the crew get out of him. Once they are out, Escalade throws himself in reverse and high-tails it out of Dodge.

MARTI

What's this place?

The wall seals itself up, and the crew find themselves in a large, open room. There is a magnificent desk lit by a classic hooded desk lamp. The high-backed leather chair is facing away from them, until it jauntily swivels around to reveal LUCIFER.

He is a handsome, if slovenly, man of his early 40's. He has the mien of a tech CEO who got bought out at an exorbitant price, and has taken a permanent vacation. Think Bradley Cooper with an unkempt beard and an hangover.

LUCIFER

Oh, hi there. You. Are. In. Hell.

ALL

(stunned silence)

...gulp...

The crew look around and see that, while large in size, the room is in wanton disrepair. The ceiling sags. The carpet is threadbare from repeated pacings. There are floor lamps scattered around that make it hard to see anything without searching. There are some standing sculpture from the Babylonian period, coated in a patina of dust.

MARTI

This...is Hell? What's all that other stuff back there?

LUCIFER

Oh, that's Hell, too. I decided to spruce the place up. But, this is Hell 1.0. Do you like what I did out there?

MARTI

Not really. It's quite cruel.

LUCIFER

I don't follow. Pardon me if I'm dense; I don't get many visitors.

MARTI

Wait. Yeah, you do. Hell is filled with hordes of people out there getting tortured and punished!

LUCIFER

Ohhhh. They were all me. Each demonic jailer, each hapless prisoner. Sorry, if I don't remember you. I'm very Method. Inhabit the moment. React, don't act. All that.

SLIM JIM

Judge carefully what this Prince of Lies says, Martine.

MARTI

All of them were you? That's not possible.

LUCIFER

Oh, it is possible, actual even. I'm really pleased you were convinced by all my performances.

He stands and approaches them.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)

(Actory flourish)

They don't call me The Great Deceiver for nothing.

Yeah, the Big Guy banished me down here after unleashing knowledge on all you people. So, it's just me. Oh, and the guy who invented the concept of Hell.

A table lamp is clicked on in a corner revealing a nebbishy senior citizen, soon to be identified as DAVE. He is seated in a wooden rocking chair next to a tiered table. He grabs a folded newspaper and gets to work on a crossword puzzle.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)

(to Dave)

What's your name again?

DAVE

Seriously? I'm Dave. We've been together since the Dawn of Man.

Dave waves dully at the crew and returns to his puzzle.

LUCIFER

(to the crew)

Yep. Just me and Dave.

(getting Shakespearean)

From the Garden to Armageddon!

(Maniacal laugh, then back to normal tone)

Which, let's be real, ain't gonna happen. Can you imagine the two of us charging out of the jaws of Hell to attack the forces of light? It would be Little Big Horn all over again. I'm in no hurry for that.

MARTI

But, what about justice and retribution and the triumph of good?

LUCIFER

You don't get enough of that on Earth? Every time What's-His-Face here gets a new paper, I read about some new law or government or discovery or masterpiece. That's pretty neat. You guys are slow, but you're getting it done.

Marti circles him as he wanders down the corridors of his thoughts, looking for a tail or some sign that she isn't being bamboozled.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)

Then I flip to the wedding announcements; those are a bit dry. But. Obituaries, those leap off the page. You guys really miss each other when you're not around.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)

Honestly, what more do you need up there? Spend time with the ones you love. Defang the hostile. Work hard enough to pay down a house and fill it with joy...

Long story short, Hell's just for me.

Dave over-obviously crackles the newspaper he's marking up.

SLIM JIM

T'is falsehoods wrapped in platitudes, he speaks.

LUCIFER

Look, I don't know how things are done on the Lido Deck of the afterlife, but down here in steerage, it's just me. Doomed to know I put humanity in motion, but never allowed to see what you all made of it.

MARTI

Humanity's fucked.

SLIM JIM

T'was worse in my time.

YAZEMON

No, my time. So brutal.

LUCIFER

Look at me, sowing the seeds of discord. Let me tell you a fun story. In the beginning was the Big Guy. So, he made some marshals; that's me and the other angels. One day, He pulls us into the conference room, and says, "The concept is the universe. What have you got for me?"

Lucifer starts pacing on his track. He's been working on this story for a while. As he talks, the crew looks for an exit, any form of egress. There is none. In fact, as he spins this yarn, the room appears to get smaller.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)

So, we angels huddled up and put our heads together. I loved those

LUCIFER (CONT'D)

late night brainstorms! Just sending shit up the flagpole, seeing what got saluted. Wanna know my favorite moment? Michael flies in and says, "What if we made an 'animal' that has one thing and another type of that same animal has a different kind of thing? Then, when the one thing goes inside the other thing, it would make a little version of that animal...if they did it right." Well, the Big Guy perked right up, ordered thousands of 'em, sight unseen. After a while, Michael checks in and says some of the animals were rubbing their same things together. The Big Guy says, "I altered the prototype. Looked at my first creation: light. Sometimes, it's a particle; sometimes, a wave. I like options." That's how God made gay sex. The two of us, we've had our differences, but my words to His Ears, He knows how to rally behind a big idea. And, he gets way too much credit as a Creator; his real strengths lie in innovation.

Lucifer flashes a shit-eating grin, torn from the Eddie Haskell playbook. The crew stares at Lucifer, mesmerized.

Abruptly, they fall under Hell's influence the way they did in Cherrie's Diner.

Yazemon almost hulks up with wrath. Slim Jim blanches with prejudice. And, Marti slumps unto the ground from apathy.

Lucifer smiles at the effects he's having on his guests

SLIM JIM

Feathers, give us what's left of that fruitcake. FAST!

Cap'n Feathers springs into action, flying over to Marti to rummage through her satchel for the fruitcake. The parrot pecks Marti's casual hand away, and finally undoes the hasps.

He digs in and retrieves the cake.

It sits there on the ground, wrapped in napkins. There are only TWO PIECES left.

MARTI

Hunh. Well, that's a shame. I guess you guys better take 'em.

Slim Jim and Yaz look at each other dolefully. Like protective parents who want to put the air mask on the child first, but know that they have to have their wits about them, they gobble up the last two pieces.

The transformation is instantaneous. Lucifer harrumphs.

LUCIFER

Okay, so you two spared yourselves. But, uh, your little friend is gonna melt into inaction. And keep me and Thingamabob other there company.

Dave executes a "this guy" eye roll and goes back to his crossword.

YAZEMON

Not so fast.

He reaches into the folds of his costume and produces Summer's tomato from Hell's Half Acre. Slim Jim shakes his head no. Yaz kneels in front of Marti, puts part of the fruit in her mouth and pushes her mouth closed around it.

She stares at Yaz briefly in bewilderment.

Then she softly closes her eyes.

INT. FALLING CAR - DAY

Just like her flashback initiated by falling down Purgatory Tower, Marti is in the back seat, plummeting through the air toward the rapidly approaching surface of the water.

This time, she is frantic.

MARTI

God damn it, you two! You have no idea what you are making us miss out on. If I knew I was gonna have to sit behind a desk and smell Kirstie Alley's vegan snack farts for eternity... Shit, this is some selfish--

And with that, the car impacts the water.

The TWO LOVERS in the front seat stare sloe-eyed romance into each other as Marti clamors to do something.

She reaches into her satchel and produces her Purgatory headset. She puts it on.

The sound of someone banging on a table pours into her ears. Followed by the voice.

A-I-T JENSEN
Marti, open up--

The pressure from the depth eats up anything else she could hear. With charging willpower, she starts cranking down the mechanical car window.

Water pours in. Torrents of sound too.

EXT. UNDER THE RIVER - DAY, DARK

Marti passes awkwardly out the window. Her cheeks bulge with the last swallow of air she was able to capture.

The car settles upside-down on the bottom of the river bed.

Marti is hurtling toward the surface with a champion Australian crawl stroke.

But as she gets closer and closer to the surface, the ambient light starts to fade. It should be getting brighter. As this change in nature sinks in, she starts to panic.

Bubbles of air burp out of her frightened face.

She fights death, fear, struggles to get to the surface she can no longer see.

It might be over for our heroine. She pushes her arms up in stroke after stroke. Flagging, drained, her eyes widen completely. And, her body goes soft.

The darkness enshrouds her, illuminated from below solely by the car's blinking turn signal.

And gradually, she floats past the blinking lights. The darkness takes on a purple hue. And the purple gently evolves into a blue, that blue to a green, that green into a radiant golden.

It is now clear she is not floating in water, but the rainbow arc from the first scene.

EXT. THE SKY - DAY

She is standing on the side of a rainbow, slightly defying physics to adjust to how she had been floating through the color change of the past scene.

The VO voice is back, who we now understand is THE BIG GUY.

VO
Do you mind if I offer you some advice?

Marti spasms into cosmic alertness as the voice fills her head. And the entire space she occupies.

MARTI
(meekly)
No.

VO
You should wait an hour after eating before you go swimming.

The Big Guy howls hilariously at his own joke.

VO
But, in all seriousness, we should chat.

MARTI
Okay.

VO
Martine--

MARTI
I prefer Marti.

VO
You know, I let you people get away with a lot of things, but I'm kinda a stickler about names. Anyway, Martine...

Fade up the next music cue.

INT. 5TH AVE APPLE STORE - DAY

It's spring 1999. Marti is walking through the Apple Store. The floor is filled fruit-colored iMacs and iBooks. She has on foam-coated headphones, plugged into a Discman. Strains of something appropriately melancholic but cool from the time period creep into the sound bed. Think Mogwai, Braid, Helium. It increases in volume as the scene evolves.

She takes a second and soaks up the moment.

She strolls through the aisles looking at all the beautiful new technology.

She sits down at a lime iMac and opens up her email.

She reads the top message. It says "Hey. Drew and I can't take it anymore. His parents, my parents...they're such assholes about the whole thing. I love you, girl. You were always there for me."

Marti types: "Don't do anything rash. I'll be back on campus in 2 hours. Hang with me then?"

The song fades out.

VO

(immediately on top of music)

See that right there! If you hadn't had your stupid rock music blasting, you might have heard me.

Marti jostles back realizing she's in a flashback, not the present.

MARTI

Wait! You could have prevented my shitty end!

VO

Of course, I could have. I was warning you the whole while you were typing.

MARTI

Why didn't you shut off the computer? Or make my train late?

VO

Computer. Train. Those are people things. I'm a talker. "In the beginning was the Word."

MARTI

Huh, I guess you're right. Boy, is there egg on my face.

VO

I liked you. I mean I like everybody. But I really liked you.

MARTI

Sorry.

VO

No problem. Not entirely your fault.

MARTI

So, what can we do about it?

VO

Want me to retell your story?

MARTI

Nah. I liked my afterlife. Especially this recent part. I do have a couple alternatives to run by you. That cool?

VO

Of course, it is, Martine.

CUT TO:

INT. PURGATORY BATHROOM -DAY

Marti is squeezing out a big one. She looks over at some stall graffiti that reads "You are so full of it." She laughs.

Marti wipes her two-paper job and flushes the toilet. It instantly overflows.

She squeaks out an eek. And heads over to the sink to wash up.

Angel-in-training Jensen is pounding on the other side of the door.

A-I-T JENSEN (OC)

Marti, open up! Open up! You haven't even looked at--

She exits the bathroom. A-I-T JENSEN stands in front of her. He is a 21-year-old black guy wearing a Howard University sweatshirt, totally human except for two tiny wings sprouted from his shoulder blades.

She drinks him up.

MARTI

I knew you'd be cute.
(pointing, looking upward)

MARTI

Good one.

A-I-T JENSEN

Excuse me. I've been waiting on
your analyt--

MARTI

Here's the deal. Your subject's a
little on the grudgeful side. But,
that's it. Hard stop. Say. You
wanna grab holy water together some
time?

A-I-T Jensen drops his jaw as she walks away.

MARTI

(over her shoulder)

You know where to find me.

INT. PROCESSING DEPT. - PURGATORY SKYSCRAPER - DAY

Marti walks down the corridor of phone bank cubicles.

She looks over at Yazemon, who is perched above Manga-Con
girl's cubicle, gesturing a story at her.

She stops and stands on tip-toes to peer into Kirstie
Alley's cubicle. She's haranguing into her Blackberry.

KIRSTIE ALLEY

You just keep delivering those kale
chips until I let know I've had
enough.

Marti slides into the chair of her cubicle area. She undoes
the straps on her shoes and places those under her desk.

She looks at her name plate. The "ne" in her name are no
longer crossed out. And, oddly, her vital dates now read
"1985-2006".

She pulls her headset out of her satchel. Feels on the
earpiece, squeezes it. A little bit of water drools out of
it onto her desk. She wipes it away.

She places the set over her head.

Slim Jim walks past her. He hands him a plunger head for his
pegleg.

MARTI
 Bathroom's flooded again.
 (toward Kirstie Alley)
 Thanks for that.

Slim Jim just walks off. The suction sound of his plunger pegleg attachment fading away as he heads to the head.

Marti fishes into her satchel, until she finds a 1950's style postcard of Cherrie's Diner. She pins it to her cork board with all the other postcards.

She plugs into her phone bank. And a line instantly lights up.

MARTI
 (into headset)
 Purgatory, how may I direct you?

A woman's finger mashes down on the receiver cradle, terminating the call. Marti wheels her chair back and stands up.

Carla Prentiss beams at Marti.

CARLA
 Hey, birthday buddy. I never finished telling you about my trip to New Orleans...

MARTI
 Mardi Gras! Right. So, did you...

Marti pantomimes lifting her shirt up.

Carla gives her a stone-faced stare, communicating "Really?!" Then, she squirrels up her face, sloshes her head and nods "Yes."

MARTI (CONT'D)
 Ok, let's just take a quick break.

CARLA
 Father Tim is serving honey and manna in the cantina.

MARTI
 Mystery manna. Must be Saturday.

They head down the long corridor to the cantina.

Where there had been the monotonous one-handed clock, there is now a gorgeous Renaissance-style portrait of Eve. It reads "Supervisor of the Era."

ROLL MAIN END CREDITS.

CUT TO:

EXT. HELLSCAPE - COVER OF DARKNESS

Newly puny Valvethar is standing next to Lareetha. Lareetha gestures mutely at the pulp splatter where her face used to be.

VALVETHAR
(with higher pitched voice)
Yep. It's different. You traded in
seductive for revolting. But, it
works on you. I got a little messed
up in the fight too. Can you see
me?

Lareetha torques her shoulders side-to-side, indicating No.

VALVETHAR (CONT'D)
(with deeper voice)
Oh, I look pretty much the same.
Probably better. You wanna break
out for some margs?

Lareetha rolls her shoulders, shaking off the stress of the day, turns on her heels and walks away. Is she gonna have drinks with Val? We'll never know, but even faceless, Valvethar is out of her league. Hell indeed.

CONTINUE CREDITS

THE END