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# The Power of Television Writing: Small Screen, Big Impact Artist Statement

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## The Power of Television Writing: Small Screen, Big Impact Artist Statement

Meagan Jones & Gail Bello

This project started for us more in the fall of 2018, when we were first really thinking about it and the concept of doing it. The purpose of our project was to learn how to create and pitch an original show for television, during which research and analysis of different televised series and their literary and visual impacts were conducted. The project would also study the aspects of television writing, specifically animation, and create a basis for an original series in the form of concepts and scripts. We wanted to do this project to discuss the influence of animation as a visual media as well as create our own impactful vessel via an original story.

As we went through with the set up for the project, we started discussing different show ideas, and eventually ended up on two things: a bubble city, and spatial manipulation.

Keeping those concepts in mind, we split up our project into a few parts: first, we'd take time to watch and research animated shows. Second, we would take time to discuss and write notes to create a Show Bible of sorts, which would show how our plotlines, characters, and world worked. Third, we wanted to actually write a few scripts after all the build-up and discussion that we'd done.

So first was researching. Actually, we ended up spending probably the least amount of time on that, especially because we decided that we wanted to make an animated show inspired in part by all the shows we grew up watching, including classics like *Avatar the Last Airbender* and *Kim Possible*, and newer works like *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power* and *Star vs. the*

*forces of evil*. We also gained inspiration from more obscure works, such as Canadian made *DiGata Defenders*. These shows and several YA books like the *Percy Jackson* series, *Divergent*, and *Harry Potter* placed our show in the literary context of children's fantasy adventure. Based on these shows, we decided that our age range for our own show would likely be pre-teen to young adult. We each already had some experience with screenwriting as a whole, and we read scripts for a few shows such as *Bob's Burgers* (even though that definitely isn't a kid's show).

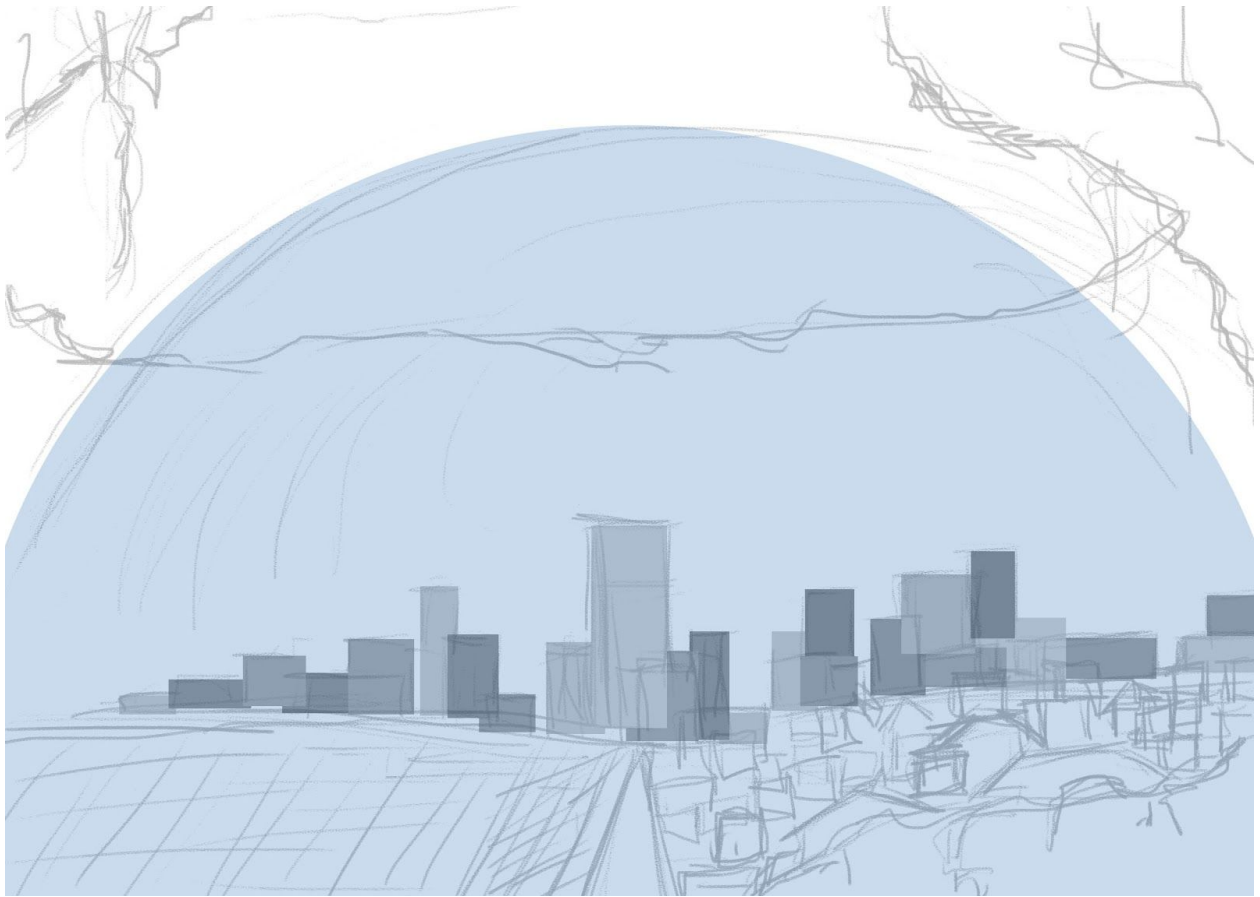
The second part of our process was the discussion. We spent a lot of time on this because before we could start writing, we had to decide what story we wanted to tell and exactly how we wanted to tell it, which gets very tricky with more than one writer. Basically, in this experience, there was a lot of collaboration and discussion to figure out exactly what we each wanted out of the project. It gave us experience with how teams in writer's rooms would work in a professional setting, and we learned through trial and error how that would be. An example of our struggles with figuring out our project were when say, one of us would talk about a plot point, and we'd both agree, and then later we'd reconvene and realize that each of us had completely different ideas about what the point would actually be like. So we'd realize that we needed to spend a lot more time discussing that aspect of the story. On the opposite end, we'd sometimes be entirely on the same page, so that was interesting. In the end, the more we worked together, the easier it became to figure out things or fix problems (we're now pros at communicative discussion). At one point, our advisor, Amy Neswald, suggested we do 20 "character windows" for each main character of our story, who were by then, Leona, Bard, and Azure. The character windows really helped us put ideas down and help flesh out our characters more.

Finally, we began the actual writing process which brought its own challenges. As all writers know, much of writing is spending a long time staring at a blank page. But eventually, we hit our stride and were able to transform our notes and ideas into description, action and dialogue.

At the revision stages, Amy helped us with notes and questions about certain aspects of the story, as well as suggestions on how to improve how we wrote screenplays. One of her biggest notes on the first draft of the first episode was to make Azure's motivation more clear, as at that point, Azure was unfortunately being dragged around by Bard in a "this might as well happen" sort of way, and she wanted to see more of what was going on in Azure's head. This went into our next draft of the piece.

Our final drafts of the first and second episodes of Lacuna, the name we settled on after looking in a thesaurus for cool words, were things that we could positively say that we were proud of. Our work has affected how we come at writing collaboratively, as we have learned many skills in discussing and writing together. It also helped us gain skills in worldbuilding, balancing humor, and character development. We also learned more about screenwriting as a whole from doing this. In the end, we learned a lot from this, and we were glad we had the opportunity to do such a project ourselves as an Honors Creative Project. We hope to continue this story in some capacity elsewhere, either as an actual animated series or transformed into something else. It's something to continue, for sure.

# The Great Historical, Geographical, Genealogical and Poetical Show Bible of Lacuna and Beyond



By Gail Bello & Meagan Jones

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# Logline

Lacuna is a city of spatial manipulation magic and a curious paradise; everyone seems to be happy behind the barrier that protects them from the outside world. But if Leona, one of the most powerful spatial manipulators of her age, Bard, the bookworm with no powers or any common sense, and Azure, the one with the power to unseal their home once and for all, want to save the elemental giant that sleeps beneath it, they'll have to leave and discover that their city wasn't so perfect after all.



# Season One Summary

The series begins in the city of Lacuna, an idyllic city with a large crystal-like spherical barrier between it and the outside world, hidden within a collapsed cave. We open on Bard, who is running away from bullies he has antagonized. He runs and bumps into Azure, his best friend.

Meanwhile, Leona, our third protagonist, looks for a specific book she needs to decode her friend's (Mira's) message to her. She is chased by officials of the city, who see her as a dissident. Leona, Bard and Azure eventually cross paths at the library where Bard is returning the very book Leona is looking for. They get into a fight in which Leona eventually yanks away the book and runs off now pursued by both the guards, Bard and Azure and the bullies who have since tracked down Bard and Azure.

During a chase sequence, it is revealed that Leona has spatial manipulation powers, characterized by the abilities to make things bigger and smaller, and to manipulate their shapes. This ability is one that has been used by the citizens of the city for generations, and is used by members of the government, who are said to use the abilities to help the city and keep it safe. The common people of the city do not have powers, and the ones who do work solely within the government. Most of the common people of the city have not seen actual spatial manipulation in action.

Eventually, Leona loses the guards and bullies and runs into an alley where she is found by Bard and Azure, who hide her in Azure's house. Azure must go in for testing for spatial manipulation, to determine whether or not they have any powers, and so they leave. Leona and Bard crack part of the code Leona's friend left behind for her with the book. Leona, who knows how the government is merely using the spatial manipulators, says that they must stop them and save them.

Leona and Bard go to the main government building to save Azure and end up seeing the giant which exists under the city. It is weak and dying, and they can tell. They see how the government has been mistreating the giant, and Leona thinks about her friend.

The trio plan their escape from the city, as now the entire government is looking for all of them and they are in danger. Eventually, they escape with the help of a couple of people including members of a

mysterious resistance group in the city, and resolve to figure out what's going on and what they should do.

The trio, now outside the city, figure out that they need to go to the other giants of the world, the giants at the other 3 corners of the globe, to get help.

Meanwhile, Lady Cerise, an official of the city of Lacuna, sends Benji (her nephew), and two others to go and capture the trio, convinced that they have some dangerous information. It is hinted that she defers to a larger evil "entity", which had been sealed beneath the earth long ago by the giants and a few humans. The main trio travel through different places, including a golem town, a sea port, and a desert.

Along the way, they learn about the world around them, and each other. They also fight the entity's minions at every turn as they try to reach their goal. Benji, who is originally under the impression that the trio are criminals, warms up to the group throughout the first season and joins them on their quest to save the giant under the city of Lacuna.

By the end of the first season they cross the desert, facing a sandstorm caused by the entity along the way, and finally meet the West giant who bestows upon Benji (much to Leona's disappointment) the first piece of the power to heal the giant under Lacuna, and seal the entity once more.

# Important Locations

## Lacuna

- The present day Lacuna is surrounded by the crystal-like barrier that protects it. Within the city, there are private homes, public buildings, shops, a canal and sewer system, and some farm land.
- Citizens view it as a paradise where all their needs are met.
- Anyone who would want to leave would be viewed as crazy.

## The Skyscraper

- The Skyscraper is 104 stories and it is situated in the center of the city. It is considered the most important building in Lacuna as it is where Spatial Manipulation testing and other government affairs take place.
- Despite its magnificent appearance, it has little to no security and its maintenance is terrible. Issues include sticky floors, cobwebs, rats, low quality cafeteria food, and mistreated workers.
- It also contains an intricate vent and chute system.

## The Cave

- The cave sits below the entire city of Lacuna. Its entrance can be found in the Skyscraper.
- This is where the giant of the South resides and the sacrifice ceremonies are held.
- It is rocky and full of stalagmites and stalactites.
- There are criss-crossing catwalks with glowing lamps at various spots.
- Above the giant's head is a luxury box seat style viewing room with a large glass window where the higher ups observe the ceremonies.

## The Center of the Earth Temple

- This used to be the village where the original spatial manipulators lived and worshipped the earth and their sacred rock. What they were unaware of is that they were living at the center of the Earth.
- When the spatial manipulators agreed to move South, the giants entrapped the Entity in the center of the Earth below the Earth's crust. The sacred rock became the location's marker.
- Legend grew of a temple there, but there's really only just the rock.

# Important Show Props

## The Encyclopedia

The Great Historical, Geographical, Genealogical and Poetical Encyclopedia of Lacuna and Beyond

- This book, written by Gerald Hinks years before the story start, is the hiding place of the final key behind the “entity’s” seal. It also is used by the main characters to figure out the new environments around them as they travel throughout the story, and hides secret messages in its pages.

## Mira’s Cypher/Puzzle

Written by Mira Langston,

- The cypher is a simple visual word puzzle: G.H. TGHGGPELB, BIVOND. The V in BIVOND looks slightly Y-like.
- The G.H. stands for Gerald Hinks, and the TGHGGPELB is in reference to the Encyclopedia he wrote.
- “BIVOND” must be broken into parts to understand its meaning. Since “IV” means four, it is in reference to a “four” in the book. Next, “IV-O”, or forty. Next is “IV-ND”, or four hundred (as ND signifies hundred). The word together, “BIVOND”, if one letter is changed (V), can be read as “Beyond”, which refers to “Beyond” the book in world (and in world, it signifies the back cover of the book, in which the final key is hidden).

# Main Characters

## Leona

Full name: Leona Endellion

- Witty and lonely
- Buff, 5'6", ginger straight hair down to just below shoulders, thick buff like a strong-woman, softer facial features with a round face. A green tunic-like dress and black pocket capris.
- Wants to save her friend who she thinks is still alive.
- Mira gives her a piece of paper with a cypher on it that pertains to Bard's book but they have to figure out what it means.
- Thinks her powers is all she has to offer so she works hard at them and wants to prove herself in the testing process
- All she wants is to be useful.
- So when they force her to do the ceremony the one thing that made her feel useful is twisted against her in the worst way imaginable.
- Her arc would be realizing that there are different ways to be useful as well as that sometimes it's okay not to be useful.

### **21 Character Windows:**

1. Flips upside down from a tree branch and scares the bejesus out of Bard
2. Sips tea in a corner whilst Bard fucks something up (she's just in it for the laughs)
3. Somehow gets her clothes caught on SOMETHing, ANYTHING. Falls over
4. Helps a little kid who's lost look for their parent(s), and doesn't leave until they find them
5. Disappears at odd times and shows up right when Bard and Azure are about to give up looking for her
6. Is nervous about spilling water so she spatially manipulates her glass to be larger.

7. Dying of hunger, she attempts to eat a pinecone, because she's the person who loses their mind without food
8. Angry, she walks directly into a tree
9. In a dark tunnel, the others cannot find her but then bard moves his light directly on her and she scare the bejesus out of him again. She is eating from a bag of chips and totally unconcerned.
10. Is the type of person to hide a secret love letter from the person she's supposed to give it to because she's read it and is now embarrassed.
11. Flips her luscious shampoo commercial hair in slow motion. It glints in the sunshine.
12. Thoughtfully writes down her wish for the golem statue by candlelight.
13. Sees a really pretty pink dress in a window, claims she doesn't actually like it because she's a "tomboy", but everyone knows that her greatest dream is to wear it
14. Bonding with Benji over creative snack preparations.
15. Acts super "put together" (it looks very stiff) in front of authority. Tries to be a general people pleaser.
16. Having a girly but genuine sleepover with Mira in the testing facility.
17. A literal thunder cloud appears around her, as she accidentally increased the air pressure in her immediate vicinity. It zaps her with lightning. Eventually she harnesses this power to start fires and cook food.
18. Looking in the mirror at herself in her ceremony robes and for a moment, feeling as though she has made it.
19. Becomes really scary when she's actually mad, like when someone steals something from the innocent and she stands over them with a menacing glare
20. Opens a piece of salt water taffy with one hand and stuffs the entire thing in her mouth.
21. "Is this perfume?" Leona: \*drinks all of it\* "it's perfume"

## Bard

Full name: Jotham “Bard” Hart-Bard

- Does not have powers.
- Book nerd kid. Lawful good.
- A short boy with curly brown hair and brown skin, skinny legs and a medium build otherwise.
- He wears a sweater vest with a beige argyle pattern over a short sleeve button down and brown pants that look way too big for him and has metallic rectangular glasses he pushes up over his nose regularly.
- Bard’s first “real” friend was Azure. Generally, this kid is a know-it-all and that’s why he was bullied, because he doesn’t shut up about how smart he thinks he is. His character arc is realizing that he actually doesn’t really know anything, and that his book smarts don’t really get him anywhere, because most of it isn’t true. He is very attached to his encyclopedia that he wants to return to the library eventually (lol). But he realizes that the encyclopedia isn’t what he really thinks it is.

### **21 Character Windows:**

1. Scene in which he is calculating the late fees for the book and freaking out. Somehow he has an abacus (“It’s gonna be 5.43 pieces in TWO DAYS, LEONA”)
2. Yelling at Leona for looking through his stuff for food (even though he totally has some and would’ve shared)
3. His two sweet loveable moms tussle his hair before he leaves for school.
4. Flipping through the book erratically - “there’s nothing about this in THE BOOK”
5. Makes fun of other people for making fun of his friends (usually in a coy, annoying way)
6. Juice boxes™
7. Wears a sweater vest for picture day. He shines an apple on it.
8. \*thinking of the sweet hot babes\* yeah, let’s go (you know, I’d rather go for someone more intellectual, but the heart wants what the heart wants)



9. Someone goes to say his real first name: Screeches and tries to cover their mouth by any means possible. (murder you)
10. mmmm, lemon pie, my true love
11. \*continually jealous that he doesn't have actual powers\* -- \*goes on a rant about how it's sooooo great to not have powers\*
12. \*is really, terribly hot -- they're walking through a desert\* I'm MELTING HELP AZURE MAKE A BARRIER OVER ME I NEED A PARASOL \*Azure responds that it doesn't work that way\* ---fucking knows the difference between an umbrella and a parasol i guess
13. \*throws a wish into a golem's mouth\* \*prays\* please, make me taller
14. Studies teeny tiny fantastical creature with a magnifying glass.
15. Always kisses his two moms on the cheeks before leaving the house --is the type to show physical affection often
16. Washes his glasses with a handmade hanky with his initials embroidered on it. But always makes sure to cover the "J" with his fingers. \*they're still not clean\* \*he does the routine several times whilst chaos goes on around him\*
17. Motherly in the way that he would pull blankets over Azure and Leona when it's cold at night
18. All the librarians know him... and they hate him too
19. Accidentally eats wrappers on candy when tired "this is pretty chewy and isn't very good"
20. \*in a weapons shop -- stares at a giant sword that is completely gaudy and useless\* YES. THIS ONE ("No no," says Leona)
21. "I am very small and I have no money, so you can imagine the kind of stress that I am under"

## Azure

Full name: Azure “Az/Azzie” Mercia

- Nonbinary character
- Calm, cool, collected. Often the voice of reason/peacekeeper
- Has spatial manipulation as well as an extremely rare “barrier” power, necessary for their cities’ use
- Tallest of the golden trio, 5’8”-5’9”, black short hair, undercut with longer hair on top, swoopy, with blue eyes, is a stick, wears a blue sweatshirt (makes them look more androgynous), black ripped jeans. More masculine presenting, so harder facial features.
- Backstory: had a childhood friend that they got into an argument with and accidentally pushed them into one of the city’s canals, causing them to almost drown. They live, and Azure doesn’t get super harshly punished for it, but this causes Azure to be branded a “problem child”. This causes them to not have many friends afterwards (also their childhood friend doesn’t forgive them for almost accidentally killing them). This isolation makes them have a higher aptitude for the barrier power as barrier breaking individuals tend to be social outcasts in some form or another. Azure eventually makes friends with Bard and they start looking out for each other. Bard is Azure’s strongest friendship. However, after the incident as a child, Azure locks away their feelings because they feel guilty and feel like their feelings can’t be allowed to hurt another person again. Their arc is learning how to open up and how to metaphorically and literally break barriers between themselves and others.
- Note: everyone should be referring to Azure with they/them pronouns, and this is not a big deal in the world or with their character in any way (it has nothing to do with their backstory or motivation)

### **21 Character Windows:**

1. Bard falls asleep at their house, and Azure connects the freckles on his face with a marker. Is it washable? Who’s to say?
2. \*pats Bard on the head\* “You need to stop.”

3. Badass training montage
4. “Isn’t your name just ‘blue’?” “Yes, and it’s awesome”
5. \*creates barrier around Leona and Bard\* “now, you two play nice. This is your get-along bubble”
6. Feels like a god when they help people reach things on high shelves. \*looks like a god also\*
7. \*runs ahead of Bard and Leona at breakneck speed because something scared them\* Bard: “WAIT I HAVE SMALL LEGS”
8. Adorable family photo in matching sweaters
9. \*upon discovery of TV\* “What the heck.....?” \*immediately becomes addicted\*
10. Gets mad, accidentally hurts Bard, and runs away because of guilt.
11. Immediately picks up on Benji’s flirting, decides to ignore it and hope it goes away.
12. Sees a big slobbery dog, goes to hug it because they are in love!!! Same thing happens with any other animal
13. Wish for the golem: “Please let me get the last meatbun in the food stalls today!”
14. Finds a duck, names it Seth. \*the creators laugh hysterically in the background\*
15. \*writes random answers on math homework because they forgot to do it but don’t want to just hand in nothing\* “It’s done”
16. Claims they have no “Ragrets”
17. Spirit animal is a starfish.
18. \*eats a hard-boiled egg with the shell still on, completely for the purpose of freaking everyone out\* “mmm. Cronch”
19. \*Holds up a barrier bubble/cube\* “Here, i got you a present.” \*it’s see-through. There’s nothing inside\*
20. \*becomes good friends with some golems because they’re soft and shy and golems are also soft and shy\*
21. “Do you ever have those days where you go, this just might as well happen?”

# Supporting Characters

## The Entity

- Other title: “The Haze”
- Main villain, whose ultimate goal is to be free and get revenge for being sealed
- Born of the giant’s anger and sealed beneath the earth by the four corners giants, he seeks to manipulate humans like Cerise into gaining his freedom. His minions are misty, carious creatures that mess with the trio on throughout their journey.

## The Giants (West, North, East & South)

- Each rule a corner of the earth. Their arguments over how to rule it created the entity, but they worked with the spatial manipulator village to imprison it for good.
- Their seal and control over the entity has weakened over time.
- The South giant lives beneath Lacuna.
- Leona, Bard, and Azure must go find the North, East and West giants to gain help in saving their own.

## Lady Cerise

- Lady Cerise is one of the main villains of the story.
- She has long black hair and wears a floor length draping gown and a headdress.
- Backstory: 20 years ago, she watched her sister and her brother in law get sacrificed “to the giant” (in reality, the giant was being used as a conduit to give energy to “the entity”, an evil force sealed within the earth). This sacrifice left her as the guardian of her nephew Benji. Since then, she has risen to power and has been in contact with “the entity”.
- “The entity” has convinced her that he can bring her sister back, and so she plots with “the entity” to stage a coup towards the end of the story by sacrificing her fellow lords to it, using the

giant as a conduit, and overwhelming the giant. This causes earthquakes and weakens the earth. Lady Cerise is waiting for a final meteor shower that will free “the entity.”

- Lady Cerise is obsessed with bringing her sister back, and will do anything to do so.
- In the beginning of the story, Cerise sends Benji with two of her personal guards, Andrew and Lizzie, out of the city on a mission to capture our three main heroes. This is really to protect him as well as keep him out of the way of her plans.

### Benji

- He has short black hair and wears a patterned green bandana around his head and a solid black bandana around his neck. He wears a casual, baggy green shirt and a leather jacket that he thinks looks really cool.
- He is Cerise’s nephew. He doesn’t want to be what she wants him to be though, so he lets Esco be that for him.
- However, he still wants Cerise’s approval.
- He knows his parents died but not how. He does not know about the recent sacrifices at all.
- Kind of pretends to be more of an idiot than he is to get out of things.
- He has a crush on Azure.
- He eventually joins the main hero group until one of the giants reveals what happened to his parents and he turns on them.

### Mira

Full name: Mira Langston

- She’s blonde and wears her hair in a long braid that goes down her back. When we first see her, halfway through the story, she is wearing a dark drapery tunic.
- She was Leona’s friend and roommate in the government facility. She is a kind soul, but she is also a spy for the resistance.
- Immediately before the events of the series, Mira is sacrificed to “the giant”.

- When she finds out she is going to be sacrificed, she doesn't have time to tell Leona. She looks for the book by Gerald Hinks and tries to steal it, but is almost caught. Quickly, she figures out a last message to send to Leona and the resistance so that they find the book.
- Mira gives Leona the note with the cypher puzzle.

### **Freddie & Ellie**

- Two members of the resistance that help the trio find the exit out of the city.
- Fred has a knife scar over his left eyebrow. He has spiky blond hair and a blocky figure.
- Ellie has long braided brown hair, silver eyes and is very tall.
- They knew Mira.

### **Dennis & Hilda Mercia**

- Azure's sweet and loving parents. They are the ideal couple. Super cute and folksy, spoiling Azure and their friends.
- Dennis wears rectangular glasses, a comfy casual button down, khakis, suspenders, and a bow tie.
- Hilda wears rectangular glasses as well, and a soft blue cardigan sweater over a white blouse and mom jeans. She also wears something that distinctly resembles a Wilma Flintstone necklace.

### **Andrew & Lizzie**

- Two guards sent out with Benji to capture the main trio that have escaped Lacuna.
- They both wear green coats and matching leather gloves.
- They are much more competent at their jobs than Benji and are very much annoyed with him on a daily basis.

## Esco

- The new replacement for the older barrier user who is very, very loyal to Cerise and thinks of her as his only friend due to her "rescuing" him from social outcast torment.
- He is a scrawny petite kid with black hair and eyes. He is dressed in a black cloak covering a leather chest plate, high water pants and no shoes. He also wears fingerless gloves.

# Lore

The Giants of the four corners of the earth (West, North, East & South) argued over how to run the planet in the early days of this world. They ended up separating, unable to agree, and retreated to the four corners of the world. The West created an oasis. The North created a world of ice and snow. The East built mountains. The South incorporated ideas from all of them, hoping for peace between them all one day.

But of the anger of the first three was born a haze-like entity that wreaked havoc upon all four corners. The entity started with the West, leaving the West with a terrible drought that bled the land dry. It next went to the North, making North's snow and ice melt and flood the East, turning the East's mountains into islands, forcing all life to the peaks. Finally, in the South, a large crack formed in the earth.

The South called all the giants to meet in the center of the earth, or rather, the space at the exact middle point of all the cardinal directions, to seal the entity.

At the center, human village lay. The humans offered to help the giants with powers passed down through generations.

Initially, the giants turned them away. They did not think that the humans could help in this matter. But they soon realized that they needed what little power the humans could offer.

The humans and the giants worked together to seal the entity far beneath the center point of the earth. The humans, with their spatial manipulation and barrier powers, created a seal for the entity. The giants added power to the seal, and together, they sent the entity deep underground.

The giants and humans dispersed, pulling artifacts containing the keys to the seal behind them, and the humans, seeing a potential weakness in the seal later on in the South's domain because of the crack in the ground, offered to go down south to help the South giant protect its weak point.

The South giant agreed, and the humans followed the giant south.

Their relationship continued until the entity started coming through the crack in the south and manipulating the humans to sacrifice their own to it through the giant. It convinced them that the giant was dying and



required sacrifices, when in fact, it was the sacrifices themselves that were harming the giant.

### PRESENT PLOT POINTS

The entity and Lady Cerise wait for a prophesied meteor shower to happen between fall and winter, weakening the earth further and allowing the entity to break free from its seal once and for all.

To prepare, Cerise plans a coup, planning to sacrifice all the higher ups to the entity through the giant, to stop the normal lower-energy level sacrifices, get rid of her higher ups, and get the people on her side in one fail swoop.

Cerise knows that the higher ups have been subtly manipulated to complete the sacrifices by the entity, but she has a much closer relationship with him due to their deal that he would bring her sister back.

During the coup, it is revealed that one of the higher ups is actually part of the resistance. They try to stop the coup, but they don't make it in time and can't get this information across to the resistance.

While the final sacrifice of the most powerful spatial manipulators in Lacuna happens, the Giant, who has been used as a conduit for the energy all this time, overloads. This causes an earthquake, decimating the city.

Esco kills the previous barrier creator, and he and Cerise go to the surface to find it in ruins and the barrier falling apart. Everyone in the city panics. Esco fixes the barrier and he and Cerise restore the city, in final preparation for the meteor shower where the entity will finally be released.

The Beginning Part Two

Lacuna

Meagan Jones

Gail Bello

INT. AZURE'S ROOM. EARLY AFTERNOON.

Bard lays on a beanbag starfish style, staring up at the ceiling, looking bored as hell.

Leona flips furiously through the pages of The Great Historical, Geographical, Genealogical and Poetical Encyclopedia of Lacuna and Beyond by Gerald Hinks on Azure's bed. She is surrounded by multicolored saltwater taffy.

In one hand, she rips open a taffy wrapper and stuffs it into her mouth.

She glances at the small piece of paper at her side with the cypher on it.

Bard groans from down on the beanbag.

BARD

You know, I bet I could find whatever you're looking for a whole lot faster if you'd just let me look.

LEONA

No.

BARD

Oh come onnnnnnnn! What's that other piece of paper you keep looking at?

LEONA

Nothing.

She continues to flip through the book at alarming speeds.

She goes so fast one of the pages rips.

Bard's eye pupils constrict at the sound.

With a screech, he jumps up from his position and snatches the book away from Leona.

LEONA

HEY!

Bard seethes in anger and holds the book away from Leona.

BARD

What are you doing, ripping pages!?!?  
This is a LIBRARY BOOK!!!!

LEONA  
Jeez, it's just a tiny rip.

BARD  
I HAVE TO RETURN THIS!!  
(mutters and turns away from Leona)  
At some point.

Bard turns back to Leona with a dramatic flourish.

BARD  
How am I supposed to explain this!

Bard drops to his knees, cuddles the book like a baby, and smooths over the torn page.

LEONA  
Like they're going to notice-

BARD  
It's not just that, it's the PRINCIPLE  
OF THE THING! Have you no respect?  
Have you no DECENCY??

Bard rubs his face on the book.

BARD  
(to the book)  
I'm so sorry, did that mean girl hurt  
you? Don't worry, I have you now!

Bard abruptly stands up and walks towards the door.

BARD  
(to the book)  
I have some supplies to fix books at  
home. We'll go right now.

LEONA  
WAIT WAIT WAIT WAIT!

Leona jumps up. A bunch of taffy falls to the floor.

LEONA  
How about YOU turn the pages for me?  
I'm sure YOU won't rip them.

Bard turns back to Leona.

BARD  
(dramatic pause)  
Fine.

He walks over and plops down on the bed, sending taffy flying everywhere.

He opens the book on his lap.

BARD  
So. What are you trying to find?

Leona glances at her piece of paper, which she holds in her hand.

BARD  
What's that?

Bard snatches the piece of paper from her.

LEONA  
Hey!

Bard studies the paper and the writing on it.

BARD  
What the heck is this?

Leona snatches the paper back.

LEONA  
None of your business!

She clutches the paper close to her heart, upset.

Bard pauses and sighs.

BARD  
We're not going to get anywhere if you don't trust me.

He holds out his hand.

BARD  
Let me start over. Please let me see?

Leona hesitates, but slowly gives the piece of paper over.

LEONA  
I figured out the first part. I know it refers to this book. But I can't

figure out-

Bard stares intently at the piece of paper.

BARD  
I've got it! Four!

Leona whips her head around.

LEONA  
What? Four?

BARD  
See-see-see!!

Bard turns to her excitedly, pointing at the paper.

BARD  
IV. BIVOND. IV means four. So page  
four. Or,  
(mutters to self)  
every fourth page? Every fourth word?  
Every four syllables-?

Leona leans over and flips to page four.

Page four is a page in the introduction of the book. There is a long stream of text, and within the page, three words are underlined.

Find. The. Giants.

LEONA  
(reads)  
Find the giants.

She squints at the page in confusion.

LEONA  
(quietly)  
More?

Bard stares at the page. He is stunned to silence.

BARD  
Oh whoa, there's actually a message  
here - how did I not notice - clearly  
I need to work on my reading  
comprehension I guess - but they  
shouldn't have used pen in this! You  
can't erase-

Bard jerks up like he's got another idea.

BARD

Forty.

He flips the pages to page forty.

LEONA

What?

BARD

Four - O.

Bard stares intently at the page, which is a page in the Historical section, and it details "barrier maintenance" and leadership within the government.

The underlined parts read "barrier breaker", and on the next page there is a hand-drawn picture of a person that looks relatively similar to Azure in features.

BARD

(mutters)

Barrier breaker.

Bard flips to page four hundred.

BARD

Four - nd. Four hundred. In class they use nd to stand for a hundred.

The page four hundred is in the Genealogical section. There are diagrams describing lineages of certain government officials, and their accomplishments.

The underlined words are: "High", "Lord", "Danger," and "Ceremony".

BARD

High lord danger ceremony?

Bard turns to Leona.

BARD

Does any of this mean anything to you?  
What's with the "danger" part??

Leona considers the words.

LEONA

Find the giants, barrier breaker, high

lord danger ceremony? The ceremony-

BARD

There's something actually going on,  
isn't there? What's happening? What's  
this danger? What's going on?

Leona scrutinizes Bard, then seems to realize something.

LEONA

Wait, what happened to - what's their  
name? Indigo?

BARD

(snaps)  
Azure!

LEONA

Right - where'd they go?

BARD

Oh. Right, well, Azure had to go do  
their test at the center.

Leona looks a bit panicked.

LEONA

What?

BARD

Yeah, they had to go-

LEONA

We've got to go-

She grabs a few pieces of taffy and stuffs them into her  
pockets, then grabs Bard's hand, pulling him up.

The book snaps shut.

BARD

What's going on?

LEONA

You shouldn't have let them go! All  
those guards saw you guys with me!

BARD

Well, we have a logical explanation  
for that!



LEONA

(ignoring what Bard said)

If that kid has gone to get tested, at their age, that means there's still a chance of their powers awakening, and with their connection with me, that means-

Leona stops herself.

LEONA

It means we've got to go.

INT. CITY CENTER SKYSCRAPER. AFTERNOON.

Azure goes through a metal detector in the center of the pristine white lobby of the city skyscraper. A guard wearing the classic green outfit motions for them to lift their hands up.

The guard pats Azure down.

The guard finds nothing and waves them through towards a group of kids who have huddled up just past the metal detector.

The kids are all various sizes and ages, with some looking to be as young as four.

A young kid snuffles.

A couple of older kids scoot away from Azure, which Azure ignores.

A prim-looking lady wearing modern business clothes comes out of a side room with a clipboard.

PRIM LADY

(glances at clipboard)

This session's going to be a little different today. Each of you will be separated into your own rooms for the test.

A couple of kids fidget.

The prim lady motions towards the side and a line of men and women in nursing scrubs and lab coats come up towards the kids.

The sniffling kid starts crying.

One of the men in scrubs kneels down and pats the kid on the head.

MAN

(kindly)

It'll be okay. After the test is done,  
we'll come right back here and you'll  
get whatever you want from the prize  
bin!

The prize bin in the corner of the room glows with a heavenly light. It is filled to the brim with tiny plastic toys and saltwater taffy.

The kid stops crying, snuffles, and nods.

One of the women in scrubs steps up to Azure with a clipboard in hand.

NURSE

Azure Mercia?

AZURE

Right.

NURSE

Come along with me.

The woman walks away and Azure follows.

Each kid follows one of the nurses down a white hallway. Azure and their nurse are first in line.

Each kid and nurse go into one of the rooms besides Azure and their nurse.

Azure pauses and watches them all disappear into their rooms and looks back to see that their nurse is still walking down the hallway.

Azure glances at a plain white door beside them that looks much like the doors the others have disappeared into.

Azure walks to catch up with the nurse.

AZURE

Aren't all the testing rooms back  
there?

NURSE

We're just going a little bit further.

It's not far.

Azure glances back, but follows.

INT. SEWER. AFTERNOON.

Leona leads the charge through a large rectangular sewer tunnel. Her hand is lit up orange, casting light on the walls and ground. There is a river of gross water along the center of the tunnel.

Bard clutches his backpack in his arms, looking thoroughly grossed out and looks nervously at the running water and debris.

BARD

Of course it's the sewers. Why not the sewers?

Leona passes her glowing hand over the entirety of the tunnel.

LEONA

There's no guards down here.

BARD

I really do have to ask you then - why didn't you do this in the first place??

Leona stops in her tracks and Bard bumps into her back.

LEONA

Because it's gross.

She starts walking again.

BARD

Oh good. I get to be a part of this.

Giant bloomers float down the stream beside them.

BARD

Are you sure you know where we're going?

LEONA

I'm...relatively positive.

BARD

Superb.

(aside)  
This is no place for a book to be.

There is an echoing knock down the tunnel, and Leona and Bard's heads perk up towards the sound.

BULLY V.O.  
(echoing)  
How can you call yourself a guard of this city? We're obviously lost!

GUARD V.O.  
I'm telling you, we'll get out of here if you just follow me!

The Guard and the two bullies who fell into the sewer during the chase with Leona come around a bend in the sewer. They are all soaked and covered in sewage.

BARD  
Oh look. A guard. A guard down in the sewer.

The Guard and the two bullies look up in surprise at Bard and Leona.

Bard turns to Leona in a huff.

BARD  
I think I see a guard.

Leona glares at Bard.

The Guard's eyes widen in a moment of pained realization.

GUARD  
It's you!

BULLY 1  
Ha! You idiots fell in the sewer too? That's rich. I bet you-

Leona rolls her eyes at them.

LEONA  
We don't have time for this. Excuse us.

Both of her hands glow and the sewer water expands behind them into a wave, washing the Guard and the bullies

downstream past her and Bard.

A couple droplets of sewage nearly splash Bard and his backpack.

BARD  
HEY! Careful!

Leona ignores him.

LEONA  
Come on.

INT. CITY CENTER SKYSCRAPER HALLWAY. AFTERNOON.

The nurse stops in front of a black door and opens it.

NURSE  
Go on in.

Azure glances at her, but she gives no reassurance, and Azure goes inside.

The nurse closes the door behind Azure.

The room is small and windowless. The floor, ceiling and walls are all grey. At the back most wall there is a two way glass. In the center of the room is a dentist style chair made of bright yellow leather centered in a metal crescent shaped base.

AZURE  
Hello?

From behind the two way glass, the nurse presses a red button.

NURSE V.O.  
Please sit in the chair.

AZURE  
I don't remember this last time.

NURSE V.O.  
New procedure. Please sit.

Azure hesitates for a moment.

Azure walks slowly towards the chair. They sit on the chair, and the leather makes a loud squelching sound.

Azure digs their fingernails into their thighs.

AZURE

So how does this work?

Several seat belts pop out from various spots on the chair, and clamp Azure to it in different places, including pulling their arms onto the chair armrests.

Immediately after, a bright light blinds them from above.

NURSE V.O.

What is your name?

A tinny high pitched sound starts in the background. At first, it is hard to hear. The sound get progressively louder as the questions go on.

AZURE

Azure Mercia.

NURSE V.O.

How old are you?

AZURE

Fifteen.

NURSE V.O.

How many people are in your family?

Azure begins to sweat.

AZURE

Just my parents. Why are you asking me these things? What's that noise?

The Nurse reads from a clipboard while pressing the button.

NURSE V.O.

How many friends do you have?

AZURE

One.

NURSE V.O.

How many friends have you had before now?

Azure looks around and closes their eyes before answering.

AZURE

One.

The tinny noise is now extremely loud.

Azure is sweating profusely.

AZURE

Could you - could you turn that noise  
off?

NURSE V.O.

Are you close with your friends and  
family?

The Nurse looks up and stops. She takes her finger off of the  
button.

From behind the Nurse, ESCO steps forward into the light. He  
is a scrawny petite kid with black hair and eyes. He is  
dressed in a black cloak covering a leather chest plate, high  
water pants and no shoes. He also wears fingerless gloves.

He smiles towards the glass.

Reflected in the glass is Azure in the chair struggling  
against their bindings and scrunching their face in pain.  
Above and around them are blue blob shaped patches of crystal-  
like particles that resemble the barrier that surrounds the  
city.

ESCO

Good.

The sound and the chair machine stops. Azure is released from  
the constraints. The barrier particles disappear, but they  
don't seem to notice. Their skin is pale. They rub their  
wrists and ears.

Azure attempts to stand up but but falls back into the chair,  
weak in the knees.

Esco enters the room and walks briskly over to Azure.

He offers Azure a hand up.

ESCO

You passed.  
(beat)  
Welcome, friend.

EXT. CITY STREET. AFTERNOON.

Leona pushes a manhole cover up with one hand and peers out. They are right beside the concrete of the skyscraper's foundation, and there is no one around.

BARD V.O.  
(hissed whispering)  
Hey! Let me see!

Bard pushes his way up to be beside Leona.

LEONA  
Ow!

BARD  
(hissed whispering)  
I think we're clear!

Bard pushes the manhole cover out of the way and climbs over Leona out of the manhole.

LEONA  
(with a foot in the face)  
Hey!

Bard scrambles away, and Leona slowly crawls out of the manhole after him.

Bard reaches a corner of the building and looks out onto a more crowded section of the street. He eyes the guards milling around.

BARD  
Okay, so if we go around, and act natural-

LEONA V.O.  
Bard.

Bard looks back at Leona, who is pointing straight up at a steel vent sticking out of the building.

BARD  
Oh.

Leona and Bard crawl inside the vents.

Leona crawls around in front, and she makes several turns between vents.



Bard's backpack scrapes against the top of the vent, gathering dust.

BARD  
You know, this is another case of: Why didn't you do something like this sooner?

Leona groans.

LEONA  
I was in a hurry. And it's too...small in here.

BARD  
You can make it bigger!

LEONA  
Not without being noticed! It messes with the structure!

Bard stops mid vent and considers this.

BARD  
Okay, I'll give you that one.

INT. SKYSCRAPER CAFETERIA. AFTERNOON. SAME TIME.

Azure and Esco sit at a long rectangular stainless steel cafeteria table. The rest of the cafeteria, a long space beside a wall of windows, is empty. Azure has a bowl of very watery tan soup in front of them and a spoon, but they aren't touching it.

Esco watches Azure attentively.

ESCO  
You should eat. I know that the test can take a lot out of you.

Azure looks down at the soup cautiously, then back up at Esco.

AZURE  
I think I need to leave.

ESCO  
No, no, wait!

Esco leans forward in his seat.

ESCO

You can't go home now! You passed the test!

Azure pounds a fist on the table, making the bowl and silverware clatter.

AZURE

What even was that! That wasn't like any of the tests I've taken before! The previous tests were just like... drawing blood, and like, meditation-

ESCO

You're SPECIAL. You're a class above the normal spatial manipulator lot.

(beat)

Like me.

AZURE

And what's "like you"?

Esco straightens in his seat.

ESCO

You'll see.

Esco motions towards the soup.

Azure picks up the spoon and takes a small sip of the soup.

Esco nods proudly.

Azure drops the spoon into the soup.

AZURE

They've never said I actually showed signs of spatial manipulation powers or anything.

Esco stares at the soup then looks up at Azure again.

ESCO

That's because it's different for us. We're different than spatial manipulators. We work in a much, (makes hand motions to signify "much") much bigger way.

AZURE

Cool. Cool. I think I'd like to go home now.

ESCO

(a little panicked)

Uh-

AZURE

I know, I can't, right? Then maybe... I just need some time alone. To... you know - process things.

Esco looks mildly upset with this turn of events.

ESCO

Okay. Uh, I'll come back for you, I guess - whenever, you know-

AZURE

(nods)

Whenever.

Esco awkwardly gets up from his chair and almost trips over it.

ESCO

I'm Esco, by the way. If you um, need to find me. Just ask that guy over there.

He points to a guard near the entrance. The guard waves.

AZURE

Sure. Sure.

Esco partly walks, partly runs, and partly trips over towards the guard at the door, and he leaves the cafeteria.

As soon as Esco passes through the door, Azure stands up.

Azure walks briskly towards the guard.

AZURE

I'm...um. I'm going for a walk.

Azure attempts to leave the room but the guard puts a hand in front of them.

GUARD

You're supposed to stay in this room.

Azure pauses.

AZURE

Um, I think I'm going to throw up.  
That soup didn't sit right, my man.

Azure mimes holding their stomach.

The guard shifts between their feet.

GUARD

Fine. I'll escort you to the bathroom.

Azure enters the bathroom, a room with several plastic stalls and sinks. The floor is sticky.

Azure looks down at their feet in disgust.

Azure unsticks their feet and walks farther into the room. They stare up at the ceiling, where a convenient steel vent goes through the room.

Azure climbs inside a vent.

INT. VENT. SAME TIME.

Leona and Bard shuffle through a cobwebbed vent.

BARD

I feel like we haven't made much  
progress...like we've been here a  
while...

LEONA

This is a big building. I'm trying to  
find the right exit.

Bard stops at one of the slatted vent openings and stares down it.

Bard sees BENJI, a teenager with cropped black hair and a patterned green bandanna around his head. He has another bandanna around his neck, but this one is solid black. He wears casual clothing and a sweet leather jacket, and leather boots. He looks like a discount cowboy.

Benji groans and presses his forehead against a doorframe in a break room with scratched red linoleum tabletops. There are a couple of vending machines.

BENJI  
I'm. So. Bored.

The door bursts open.

ESCO  
BENJI!!! LADY CERISE IS GOING TO KILL  
ME!!!!

Benji barely reacts and holds up a hand.

BENJI  
Gimme money. I need a Lacuna bar from  
this vending machine, and if you don't  
pay me, you're getting nothing.

Esco glares at Benji.

ESCO  
I don't have time for this!

BENJI  
(motions towards self)  
Guess you're not getting any of this.

Esco digs in his pockets for the money.

ESCO  
FINE!

Esco slams the money into Benji's hand.

Benji begins counting the money very slowly and painfully.

Esco grabs Benji by the neck bandanna.

ESCO  
We've got to go, now! The new kid,  
Azure, is missing! They escaped!

Esco pulls Benji by the neck out of the door.

BENJI  
NOOOOOOO!!!! MY CANDY BARRRR!!!

Bard takes a second to load. The word "escaped" echoes in his head.

Then his eyes widen and he army crawls, fast as lightning, to catch up with Leona.

BARD

(Loudly whispering down the vent)  
Wait... LEONA! Azure's actually in  
danger!

LEONA

YES! Azure has been in danger the  
entire time! You didn't believe me?

BARD

NO! Of course not! I was just going  
along with your delusions!

LEONA

Oh, thanks so much.

BARD

Where are we even going? Where would  
Azure go?

LEONA

I've got an idea.

BARD

Oh. Cool. Cool. Cool.

Leona crawls further down the vent. Bard follows.

There are a few clattering noises, as if someone else is  
crawling along a vent close to them.

Bard jumps and hits his head on the top of the vent.

LEONA

(glancing back)  
Dude. Stop making noise.

BARD

(low voice)  
I didn't mean to, I just - there's  
someone else...

LEONA

There's no one there.

BARD

I heard something!

LEONA

It's probably just rats, or...other  
small mammals.

BARD  
 (terrified)  
 Rats...

More vent clattering noises.

BARD  
 (hissing)  
 Leona, I think they're getting closer-

Bard crawls faster behind Leona, but pauses for a moment and looks across through a vent that connects to another.

The vent clattering gets louder and Azure crawls fast past the vent connector.

BARD  
 AZURE!

LEONA  
 SHHHHHHHH!

She motions towards a couple vent slats.

BARD  
 (brightly)  
 No, no! It's Azure!

Bard crawls down the connector vent and gets to the other side.

Leona turns around in the vent and crawls, grumbling, to join Bard.

LEONA  
 Of course, of course.

INT. BROOM CLOSET. SAME TIME.

Azure slides their feet out of a vent opening and jumps down, sending a couple of brooms clattering to the floor.

Azure tries to catch some of their handles and miserably fails.

Azure dusts themself off.

Azure straightens and opens the door.

Azure steps out into a hallway brightly lit by a wall of windows that look out over the entire city. Azure is very

high up.

Azure walks briskly down the hall.

GUARD 1 V.O.

So they still didn't catch her, right,  
and they're denying my overtime until  
we do!

GUARD 2 V.O.

You just gotta give it to em! Just go  
down there and demand compensation!

GUARD 1 V.O.

You know what? I should.

Azure inhales as the two guards walk out from another  
hallway.

GUARD 4 V.O.

We're on high alert again, aren't we?

GUARD 5 V.O.

Yeah, just get used to it.

GUARD 4 V.O.

Haven't seen this much action ever.

GUARD 5 V.O.

You obviously weren't there for the  
sousaphone incident of '69.

Two other guards walk up from behind Azure in the hallway.

Azure dives through the nearest door and shuts it tightly  
behind them, exhaling.

Azure gawks at the enormous room. It looks like a warehouse  
with boxes and crates and a couple of workers in full-body  
jumpsuits and hardhats milling about.

Azure hides behind a couple of wooden crates. A couple of  
workers walk by. Azure scrambles inside one of the wooden  
crates and shuts the lid.

WORKER V.O.

All right, let's get it going.

WORKER 2 V.O.

Outta the way!



A crane grabs the crate Azure is hiding in and lifts.

Inside, Azure bumps around with a bunch of various fruit.

A worker holds open a door to a chute on the wall.

The crane swings Azure's crate over to the chute, and pushes it in, letting go.

The crate drops down the chute.

Azure screams.

A worker straightens his hard hat and turns to another.

WORKER

Did you just hear somethin'?

INT. CHUTE. SAME TIME.

Azure screams as they get tossed around inside the crate.

There is a loud thud as the crate hits the bottom of the initial chute.

Azure, amazed at being alive, pushes open the top of the crate.

Azure looks over the side.

The crate leans precariously near the edge of another chute.

The chute has opened into more of a slide. Different boxes zoom past on various chutes down. Down is very dark.

AZURE

How is this inside here????

Another crate drops down the chute behind them and shoots toward Azure's.

AZURE

WAIT WAIT!

The crate hits Azure's crate and the crate jumps off onto the next chute/slide.

Azure screams wildly.

INT. SKYSCRAPER STAIRWAY. SLIGHTLY LATER.

Bard and Leona tiptoe down a long, long line of stairs.

Bard peers down the middle. The stairs seem to go down forever.

BARD

I thought that there were only 104  
floors in this place!

LEONA

ONLY?

BARD

Ok, so that is a lot, I'll admit.  
(voice echoes down)  
But I thought we got out of the vents  
on the fifth floor! I can't believe we  
just missed Azure in those vents too!

LEONA

I'm telling you, it was rats.

BARD

And I'm telling you, I saw them!  
Anyway, about the stairs...??

LEONA

There's a lot of stuff they don't tell  
you about this place.

BARD

What? That it has so many stairs?

Bard stops and puts his hands on his knees.

BARD

I'm gonna die.

INT. CHUTE. SAME TIME.

Azure's crate pops out of an opening in a wall and topples over, spilling its contents (now just fruit juice and a very scraped-up Azure) everywhere.

Azure and the crate fall behind a stack of other crates on a platform.

Benji takes a bite out of a candy bar marked "Lacuna Bar" and stares straight ahead lazily.

ESCO

I'm telling you, lift it that way!

In front of Benji, Esco argues with some workers dressed similarly to the ones above.

There is a crane lifting various sized boxes and crates, and a couch. Currently, the couch is in the crane's jaws.

WORKER 3

An' I'm telling you, it doesn't fit  
the way you want it to!

ESCO

Turn it around!

The worker rolls his eyes and motions to the guy operating the crane, who sets the couch down in front of several boxes and crates that have been Tetris-ed. They sparkle in the light, making a perfect rectangle.

BENJI

(with a mouthful of chocolate)

You know, I think we can safely  
consider this room "feng-shui-ed".

Behind Benji, Azure takes long, tentative steps towards a doorway that has "EXIT" written over it.

ESCO

Shut up Benji, no one asked you!

BENJI

I thought you wanted to find some kid,  
not play blocks with the workers.

Esco freezes in his tracks like he just realized that he forgot.

Azure dashes out of the room.

Immediately beyond the doorway is a flight of stairs leading down.

Azure freezes in front of the stairs.

AZURE

(muttering)

I don't wanna go down.

Azure glances back towards the landing room.

Esco is yelling at Benji unintelligibly.

Azure walks down the stairs.

Azure reaches the bottom and walks out onto a stone platform towards a rusted metal fence along the edge of what seems to be a cliff.

Azure's mouth drops open in shock and surprise.

FREDDIE and ELLIE, two teenagers wearing guard uniforms, rush Azure. Freddie is a kid with a knife scar over his left eyebrow, and has spiky blond hair and a blocky figure. Ellie is a kid with long braided brown hair and silver eyes and she is very tall.

INT. SKYSCRAPER STAIRWAY. SLIGHTLY LATER.

Bard holds his backpack over his chest and slides down the last flight of stairs on his back. His head bumps on each stair.

Leona steps off the last step and looks down at him in annoyance.

LEONA

Really? You couldn't make it two more flights?

BARD

I AM DISTRAUGHT! We still haven't found Azure, and I don't even know what we're doing down here!

LEONA

Well, we kinda got a little bit lost but I figured it out, so-

BARD

HUH?

LEONA

(continuing)

Somehow, everything in this building leads down there-

She points, and Bard scrambles to his feet and shoulders his backpack.

In front of them is a giant cave opening, with stalactites hanging from the ceiling and metal and wooden catwalks criss-

crossing each other. The cave is lit with yellow glowing lamps that are at intervals on each of the catwalks and on the walls.

LEONA

-and since everything leads down here,  
your friend might've also...

She stops and swallows, taking a deep breath shakily.

BARD

Azure might be... down THERE?

(beat)

How would they even get DOWN THERE??

LEONA

Come on.

Leona walks away from the stairs.

Bard hurries behind her.

Bard looks around the ceiling in awe as they board one of the metal catwalks. It goes diagonally across the cave towards the left. At the end of the catwalk is a protruding part of the cave wall with a shimmering glass window.

Bard is very interested in the long stalactites, and pauses several times.

BARD

Wow.

Leona walks with purpose across the long catwalk. Bard runs to catch up.

They reach the other side of the catwalk and walk onto a stone platform. Leona walks over towards a door that leads behind the glass window.

They both enter.

Inside resembles a luxury box seat with a few rows of velvet chairs facing the glass window. There is another door opposite the one they just came in.

LEONA

We, uh, should be able to see things  
from up here. If Azure's down there  
anywhere-

Bard runs up to the glass.

BARD

Wow! It's-

Bard stops.

BARD

Leona. What's this?

Down below sits a giant. It is many stories tall, and looks as if it were formed from red, gray, brown and black sandstone rock.

It is hunched over beside a large stone platform below, and its rounded head has vaguely humanoid features. Its back is jagged and broken in places, and bits of bioluminescent moss dot its backside and its head. It is covered up to the waist with cave rock and debris, and its eye sockets are empty.

Bard turns back to where Leona stands off to the side of the room, away from the glass.

BARD

Leona, what's that?

Leona hesitates.

LEONA

It's the giant. It's lived here since the dawn of our city. It's important to us, and the real reason why there's a barrier around us.

(beat)

And I-

Azure, Freddie and Ellie burst through the opposite door before Leona can finish.

They topple to the ground.

Bard and Leona jump in surprise, their attention turned to the new trio.

Azure is the first one to scramble up, but the other two hang on their limbs and slow them down.

AZURE

HEY! Let me GO!

ELLIE

Wait! No, I'm sorry, we didn't mean to-

Ellie lets go of Azure and Azure pulls themself away from Freddie with a thrust.

Ellie stands and holds her hands as if she were trying to calm a horse.

FREDDIE

Would you wait-

Freddie tries to grab onto Azure again.

Freddie scrambles to his feet.

BARD

AZURE!

AZURE

Bard?

BARD

YOU'RE ALIVE!!

Bard runs around the velvet chairs and tackles Azure in a bear hug.

AZURE

OW.

LEONA

Hey! What's going on-?

Leona's hand starts to glow orange.

ELLIE

(in surprise)

Leona!

LEONA

Yes?

Ellie rushes forward.

ELLIE

I'm so sorry! We were trying to find you, and then we heard about the new barrier user-

BARD

What?

ELLIE

THIS person!

Ellie points at Azure.

ELLIE

We were trying to make sure - oh but this is perfect now, we can get you all out at once-

Leona looks incredibly confused.

LEONA

Wait, wait, wait. Slow down. What are you talking about? Who are you guys? Really? You're not - guards?

FREDDIE

Normally, no.

ELLIE

I'm sorry, we should have made that clear from the beginning! We're just - borrowing these.

LEONA

Why?

Bard stands up, pulling Azure up with him.

FREDDIE

We're from the underground.

ELLIE

We're here because our superiors told us to find you, especially because of Mira-

LEONA

(interrupts)

You're here because your superiors told you to find us.

Ellie nods quickly, her braid flapping around.

ELLIE

We heard that you had a message. We've been trying to get you. To help you



escape.

Leona slowly takes the paper containing the cypher.

LEONA  
(cautiously)  
This?

She shows it to Ellie, who takes it and studies it for a moment.

ELLIE  
Yes. That definitely looks like Mira's  
handwriting.

LEONA  
We have the book, too.

She gestures towards Bard.

Bard narrows his eyes at Leona, who is looking attentively at Ellie and Freddie more trustingly.

BARD  
"We"? It's MY book!

LEONA  
Yeah, yeah.

AZURE  
Ok, wait. What the heck is going on?

Ellie turns to Azure.

ELLIE  
The first thing is that we need to get  
you all out of here. It's not safe  
here. They'll use you, and they'll get  
the upper hand on us again. We can't  
let that happen.

BARD  
Who's "us"?

FREDDIE  
The Resistance.

INT. TUNNEL LEADING AWAY FROM THE GIANT. AN HOUR LATER.

Ellie and Freddie lead the way through a small, wet rocky cave tunnel with a lamp containing a bit of bioluminescent

moss.

Leona follows them closely, and Bard and Azure lag behind a little bit.

Bard and Azure whisper to each other, and Bard jogs a little to catch up with Leona.

BARD

(whispering to Leona)  
How did you know we could trust them?  
And where are we going?

LEONA

They know one of my friends. She's trustworthy. And I don't know.

BARD

(muttering to Leona)  
If you don't know, why are we still following them? Just because they know your friend-

LEONA

(snaps)  
My friend's not a bad person, all right?

Bard looks a bit taken aback.

BARD

I'm not saying they are, but anyone can know anyone, and we still have no idea what's going on. Azure's been telling me about what the test actually was, and I don't know-

LEONA

If we get out of here, like they say, I'll tell you all you want to know.

Bard stops and sighs heavily.

BARD

It'd be nice to get information when asking for it. This is why I love books.

The group reaches a large opening in the cave tunnel. There is a small pond in the center of the spherical cave, and bioluminescent moss coats the edges and floats in it. On the

far end a piece of the wall shimmers a crystalline blue, and the rock around it is carved in a perfect smooth arch doorway.

It is the edge of Lacuna's barrier.

ELLIE

Here. It's an entrance to the outside.  
Only the people with barrier powers  
can use it to get in or out.

Bard stares at the shaped archway.

BARD

It looks old.

Ellie nods.

ELLIE

It is. They used it a long time ago to  
enter and leave Lacuna easily.

LEONA

(mutters)

Wouldn't call it easy, since it's all  
the way down here.

Freddie considers the stone archway, then turns to face Azure.

FREDDIE

Your time to shine.

Azure looks behind them.

AZURE

What?

ELLIE

(slowly)

You have abilities. You can manipulate  
barriers, one of the people of  
Lacuna's most important and rare  
powers. The test you took was one of  
the ways our government attempts to  
activate these powers within citizens.  
You had shown aptitude for it, and  
today they had decided it was time.  
Unfortunately, they often resort to  
painful methods to do this. I'm sorry  
you had to go through that.

FREDDIE

That kind of treatment is part of what we're working to fix.

Azure rubs their arm.

AZURE

What were they planning to do with me after that? Why do they-

FREDDIE

There are only a couple of barrier makers in the city at this time. They want to use you to keep the barrier together.

BARD

That doesn't sound so bad-

FREDDIE

The government is corrupt. There's something happening, and we're trying to figure out what. The giant our city has been protecting for generations has been dying, and we don't know exactly why. We just know that something weird and bad is going on, and someone is trying to stop us from finding out what. We need to get enough people on our side as we can, and at this point, that means helping you guys escape.

Bard glances at Leona, who stares at the moss under her feet.

AZURE

You want us - you want us to get out? And for ME to do that?

ELLIE

We've heard of other giants outside. A story long ago said that the giants helped each other in times of crisis. Maybe the others will now.

BARD

Ok, so TALK to GIANTS. That's fine.

ELLIE

Azure's the only one who can open the gate.

Azure grits their teeth. Then they sigh.

AZURE

I might as well try, I guess.

Azure steps forward.

They walk towards the archway, and stop directly in front of it. They stare at all the beautiful individual crystals of the barrier.

They reach forward and touch it softly.

Then their hand goes through the crystal.

INT. CERISE'S OFFICE. AN HOUR LATER.

CERISE, a woman with long black hair held up in a fancy bun and dark eyes, sits at her oak desk. Her office has been carefully put back together after Leona tore through it. The curtains are drawn, and the room is relatively dark except for one small lamp.

There is a whispering breathy sound.

THE ENTITY

Escaped...

Cerise folds her hands on the table.

CERISE

I'll handle it.

THE ENTITY

...better...

CERISE

Don't worry. This won't affect our deal.

The door to Cerise's office opens, and the whispering breathy sound and darkness retreat.

Cerise looks up towards the door.

CERISE

What happened?

Esco and Benji stand in the doorway.

Esco hurries forward, but Benji stays back.

ESCO

I'm so sorry, I left for one second,  
they must've - I don't know what  
happened, I swear I'll find them, and  
that girl that ran off too-

Cerise holds up a hand.

Esco stops talking immediately.

CERISE

Benjamin.

Benji steps forward.

BENJI

Yes, Aunt Cerise?

CERISE

You will go find them. Wherever they  
go. I'm sending Andrew and Lizbeth  
with you. If they leave the city, you  
have my permission to follow.

Benji raises an eyebrow.

BENJI

Really?

Cerise nods.

ESCO

Um, Lady Cerise? If you don't mind me  
saying, it would be much better if you  
sent me. I promise I could find them a  
lot faster than  
(glares at Benji)  
he ever could.

Cerise stares at Esco coldly, and he cowers.

CERISE

No, child. You're needed here. I'm  
sure Benjamin will do just fine.

Benji bows slightly.

BENJI

Of course I will, Aunt Cerise.

CERISE  
Of course you will.

Esco bows and backs out of the room. Benji closes the door behind them both.

Cerise closes her eyes as darkness envelops the room.

The Beginning Part One

Lacuna

Meagan Jones

Gail Bello



EXT. LACUNA. MORNING.

FADE IN:

Scene opens with BARD, a short boy with curly brown hair and brown skin, skinny legs and a medium build otherwise. He wears a sweater vest with a beige argyle pattern over a short sleeve button down and brown pants that look way too big for him. He is carrying a giant rectangular leather backpack that looks super heavy. He wears metallic rectangular glasses he pushes up over his nose regularly.

Bard is running like a maniac while two BULLIES run after him. They are each big and brawny. They have square heads and look like they would be able to punch clear through walls with a single hit.

Bard runs through cobblestone streets, past a couple of tiny picturesque shops selling things.

One shop is named "Seth's Quacking Good Pet Shop", and has ducks and chickens in cages out front, along with a couple of dogs and cats. Another's store shop front says "Our Vacuums Suck!" and feature very terrible beat-up looking vacuums out front. Another says "There's always time for Tiny Capes" and there are capes of multiple different colors on hangers blowing in the wind.

In the distance, there are hundreds of colorful suburban European-style houses that look almost all the same, yet painted slightly differently.

Bard turns and scrambles toward a stone bridge that goes across a city canal, where AZURE, a tall stick-like person with swoopy short black hair and an undercut and blue eyes waits, sitting off the side.

Azure wears a blue 80s style puffy blue sweatshirt that makes them look larger on the top in high contrast to their legs, which are long and angular. Azure pushes their hair back out of their face to look at a watch on their wrist.

BULLIES

Hey! Get back here!!

Azure's eyes widen in surprise as Bard shoots toward them at breakneck speed.

Azure hops down from the side of the bridge.

As Bard runs past them, Azure catches up, something they do

with ease, not even losing breath.

AZURE

(shouts)

What did you do this time?

Bard looks back and wheezes like an athematic.

BARD

Not much!!

(pushes glasses up face)

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREET. EARLIER.

Bard stands in front of the Bullies, waving his pointer finger in their faces.

BARD

I bet you don't even know that the first spatial manipulators built this city to protect you pea-brained morons from everything OUT THERE! What an ungrateful lot you are! I'm grateful that I don't have to deal with Giant Scorpions, Wolpertingers, crows with hands -- BANDITS!

(more to himself)

Wait, you two might make good bandits if you applied yourselves...

The Bullies' faces have turned beet red in anger.

BARD

Anyway, Lacuna's barrier protects us from all those things, and if you'd passed the test for spatial manipulation magic you'd know how important the lords are - they work in our government and help us all with their magic, and I'm PROUD that-

Both Bullies lunge at Bard.

CUT TO:

EXT. LACUNA. MORNING. SAME TIME.

Bard looks up as if he is thinking. He's still running for his life.

BARD

I just told them that if their brains somehow got any smaller, they'd have to get them enlarged by the lords!

AZURE

You don't know any lords!

BARD

They don't know that!  
(shrugs)  
I thought I'd mess around a little!

AZURE

It's the day of my test, and you're going around-

Bard looks back at them in apology.

BARD

I know, I know! Sorry!

Pan up to see the entire city. We see a tall modern glass skyscraper in the middle of a city center, with sparkling blue canals branching away from it in four directions. Farmland, suburbs, and other buildings dot the landscape.

A dome-like crystalized barrier sparkles in the sunlight and we focus on the sun above.

TITLECARD: LACUNA

INT. CITY CENTER SKYSCRAPER. HALLWAY. MORNING.

LEONA presses her hand over her mouth.

She is a redhead with hazel eyes and a large, buff frame hides behind a wall. She wears a casual green tunic-like dress, black pocket capris, and flats. She looks a bit scuffed up, and has bruises on her arms and shoulders.

A couple of guards walk past her. They each wear emerald green uniforms - pants, short coats, and shoulder pads, leathery chest plates, and metal gauntlets.

GUARD RIGHT

I can't believe they're cutting our hours! You've got a kid now, right?

GUARD LEFT

Yeah! And now they're looking for this

girl and giving me overtime, which  
THEY WOULDN'T HAVE TO DO IF THEY GAVE  
ME HOURS!

GUARD RIGHT  
Shoulda taken the paid paternity  
leave.

GUARD LEFT  
(disgruntled)  
I guess, man.

Leona sighs in relief as they pass, not noticing her.

She looks past the wall to check for more guards and bolts in  
the opposite direction.

EXT. CITY CENTER. MORNING.

Bard and Azure have their hands on their knees and breathe  
heavily.

BARD  
I'm....so.....tired.....

AZURE  
You know that was your fault? They  
chased us halfway through the city.

BARD  
I know, Az.  
(exhales)  
At least we got where we were supposed  
to go, anyway.

AZURE  
(sarcastically)  
At least.

They look behind them to search for traces of the bullies.  
There are none.

Both of them straighten up to look around the city center.

Towering above them is the only skyscraper of the city, a  
glass monolith that resembles every new building in New York  
City.

Beyond that are older-looking buildings, built with white  
stone and brick. They only reach about a fourth of the way up  
the skyscraper, and seem to have French influences.

In front of Bard and Azure stands the Library, an aged, white marble building with a green copper roof and giant wooden front doors.

Well-dressed, happily chatting people mill about the entrance, holding books or otherwise passing through.

The city around them is busy; many different types of people are going about their days. Some carry books and backpacks like students, a couple small families laugh together, and old couples walk hand-in-hand, looking up in awe at the skyscraper. They all wear vaguely off-modern clothing, or, "mod-ieval" if you will.

Bard looks up at the Library, eyes shining with anticipation.

BARD

Let's go.

INT. LIBRARY. SAME TIME.

Bard and Azure stand in the entryway of the Library, in front of the giant wooden doors, which let light spill through into a room filled with dust.

Bard stands there in awe of the magnificence.

Azure rolls their eyes and glances at their watch.

Two ladies, one wearing a knee-length diamond-patterned dress and the other wearing high waisted pants and a bomber jacket attempt to go around them, and glare at Bard and Azure in annoyance.

AZURE

Just. Go.

INT. CITY CENTER SKYSCRAPER. HALLWAY. MORNING.

Leona hurries through a dark wooden door and closes it softly behind her.

She looks around the room she just entered - an office with huge bookshelves lining the walls, long curtains over the tall windows, and a large oak desk in the center of the room, covered in papers.

LEONA

Okay, Cerise. Let's see what you've got.

Leona walks over to the desk and picks up random papers.

She looks through the desk drawers, ripping them open and rummaging through their contents.

She notices a window-washer, who is supported by a wooden platform that is raised through the use of his spatial manipulation (manifested in a sparkly yellow mist beneath the platform). He looks at her with a dumbfounded expression.

WINDOW-WASHER

(muffled by the glass)

Hey! Hey, you're not supposed to be in there!

Leona looks annoyed and cancels out his spatial manipulation, causing the yellow magic mist to disappear out from under him, and he plummets.

WINDOW-WASHER

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!

Leona tugs the curtains shut.

LEONA

(mutters)

Sorry, guy.

INT. LIBRARY. SAME TIME.

Bard sits on the corner of a cluster of Library desks.

There are electric floor lamps styled like mini chandeliers placed around the desks, and matching chandeliers on the ceiling. The bookshelves are high, stretching upward.

Bard pulls a large book out of his backpack. It is a brown leather book with green engraving, and lands with a heavy thud on the desk.

AZURE

How did you manage to carry that while running?

BARD

Oh, no problem. I've been getting all sorts of magnificent leather-bound, information rich books since I was little. This was nothing. Besides, it was totally worth it.

Azure eyes the book and sits down opposite Bard at the table.

AZURE

What's so great about that book?

BARD

The Great Historical, Geographical, Genealogical and Poetical Encyclopedia of Lacuna and Beyond by Gerald Hinks is a MASTERPIECE, Azure. It contains the entire history of our city, compiles research from the outside and even has an entire section on our own spatial manipulation magic! It's truly an amazing piece of work!

(pause)

Also, it has some nice poetry.

AZURE

I still don't get what you see in that.

Bard opens the book to a random page. On it is a hand-drawn picture of a Wolpertinger, a rabbit with deer antlers, fangs, and fluffy wings.

BARD

Anyway, I'm just trying to decide whether I should return it or renew it today. I've already read it 37 times, but I mean, I could've missed some stuff-

AZURE

So renew it.

BARD

But I should give some other people the chance to read this masterpiece! If only-

AZURE

So return it.

BARD

But on page one hundred and twenty two there's this part that I wanted to take more notes on, the part about corn-

AZURE  
So, renew it.

BARD  
-But it takes up so much space in my  
backpack, and I wanted to get that  
book about Gorgonzolian Gnomes this  
time-

AZURE  
(...)  
So, return it.

BARD  
(pause)  
But then again-

Azure facepalms.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY CENTER SKYSCRAPER. OFFICE.

The office is now completely trashed. Leona has not found  
what she has been looking for.

She pauses, and pulls out a slip of paper from her pocket. It  
is ripped and has a couple of small scribbles on it.

It reads: G.H. TGHGGPELB, BIVOND. The V in BIVOND looks a  
little bit like a Y.

She stares at it, focusing on the first part.

LEONA  
The library.

She stuffs the paper into her pocket and runs toward the  
door.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY. SAME TIME.

BARD  
-And I don't know if I necessarily  
agree with the principles of dynamics  
listed here, so it might be good to  
compare-

Azure has their head on the desk.



AZURE  
 (exhausted)  
 Bard, just renew it. At this rate,  
 we're going to be here all day, and  
 you'll make me miss my test - you said  
 you'd go with me, remember?

Bard stops talking and looks at Azure. He stands up and  
 closes the book.

BARD  
 I - you're right. I should - oh no.

The bullies have just entered the Library.

AZURE  
 What?

Azure turns to look-

BARD  
 (hissing)  
 Wait!

He pulls on Azure's sweatshirt from across the table to stop  
 them.

BARD  
 Never look where I'm looking! Don't  
 you know etiquette??

AZURE  
 Bard, what is with you?

BARD  
 SHHHHHHHH. Just follow my lead. And  
 DON'T look over there.

AZURE  
 Over where?

Bard shoves the encyclopedia into his bag.

BARD  
 Let's go. Be very, very, quiet-

AZURE  
 We're in a library-

BARD  
 (almost too loudly)  
 SHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Bard tiptoes away from the desk, and Azure follows bemusedly.

Bard hides behind a bookshelf and pulls Azure behind him.

Bard and Azure peer out from around the bookshelf. Azure finally sees the bullies.

BARD  
 How'd they know we were here?

AZURE  
 I don't know, maybe because you're ALWAYS here? This is probably the first place they thought to look.

Bard looks like he's going to argue that, but gives up.

BARD  
 Ok. So, I'm just going to - quietly - go over to the librarian's desk and renew this, and then we get outta here.

AZURE  
 Good plan, good plan.

BARD  
 I'm just gonna - walk - very - carefully -

He takes a small step with each word.

Both he and Azure tiptoe across the room, towards a large librarian's desk on the back wall. Past the librarian's desk are two large staircases going up to the next levels.

A tall, spindly looking woman is sitting at the librarian's desk, surrounded by books.

CUT TO:

Leona walks unnaturally stiffly through the doors of the Library. She spots the Librarian's desk, and jumps out of the way as two men, one wearing a top hat, and one wearing a bowler hat, exit the building. They eye her curiously.

Leona looks around furtively, attempts to look casual, and

goes down one of the bookcase aisles to the right.

Above shot: Leona going around the bookcases to the right, the Bullies zig-zagging through the middle of the Library, and Azure and Bard sneaking along the left.

Leona reaches the Librarian's desk first and taps on it to get the Librarian's attention.

LEONA

Excuse me, do you know the initials  
G.H.?

The Librarian looks over.

LIBRARIAN

G.H.? Like Gerald Hinks?

Leona looks excited.

LEONA

Yes! Do you have any of his books?

The Librarian looks at her bemusedly.

LIBRARIAN

Um, yes, young lady, we're a LIBRARY.  
We've got Hinks' entire collection.

Leona looks concerned.

LEONA

Collection?

LIBRARIAN

Well, yes.  
(lowers eyeglasses to look at  
Leona in derision)  
All one thousand of his books and  
compositions.

Leona sighs.

LEONA

Could you point me to where they are?

The Librarian points back the way she came.

BARD V.O.

(whispering)  
Excuse me, can I return-renew The

Great Historical, Geographical,  
Genealogical and Poetical Encyclopedia  
of Lacuna and Beyond by Gerald Hinks?

Leona turns around and sees Bard and Azure.

LIBRARIAN

(loudly)

Well, do you want to renew it or  
return it?

AZURE

Please don't ask him that.

Leona pulls out the piece of paper in her pocket and looks at  
it closely.

BARD

Well, I - I can't decide - The Great  
Historical, Geographical, Genealogical  
and Poetical Encyclopedia of Lacuna  
and Beyond by Gerald Hinks is so good,  
but-

Azure leans against the Librarian's desk and looks over their  
shoulder.

Leona counts each word. A look of realization crosses her  
face.

AZURE

(hisses)

Just hurry up and decide, dude, we  
don't have that much time-

Leona steps toward them.

LEONA

Hey. Can I see that?

Bard holds the book protectively.

BARD

What do you want with it? You can see  
it as soon as I'm done renew-returning  
it-

LIBRARIAN

(annoyed)

So which is it?

BARD  
 (loudly)  
 I'm DECIDING!

From the middle of the Library, the Bullies heads perk up, like dogs when hearing the mailman.

LIBRARIAN  
 SHHHHHH! This is a LIBRARY!

They stalk towards the Librarian's table.

Azure looks behind them again and their face pales.

Azure pulls on Bard's shirt.

AZURE  
 Uh, Bard-

BARD  
 What? Stop pressuring me!

Leona stares at Bard.

LEONA  
 Look, kid, just let me see it!

BARD  
 Wait a minute!

AZURE  
 BARD!

BARD  
 What!?!

Azure points at the Bullies running towards them. Bard sees.

BARD  
 Oh.  
 (turns to Librarian)  
 I'm renewing it. Decision made.

He shoves the book in the Librarian's direction.

LIBRARIAN  
 Very well, young man.

Bard hops from foot to foot and taps on the desk, faster and faster.

The Librarian is in no rush.

LIBRARIAN

Hold on.

LEONA

I don't have time for this. Just let me see it!

Azure watches the Bullies get closer and closer.

AZURE

Bard-

BARD

Hurry up, lady! It's one stamp!

While the Librarian looks under her desk, Leona snatches the book.

BARD

HEY!

LEONA

It's just a minute!

AZURE

(eyes glued to the bullies)  
We don't have that long!

Azure and Bard jump out of the way just in time as the Bullies crash headlong into the Librarian's desk.

It makes a huge crash, and books and papers fly everywhere.

Two Guards, dressed like the Guards before, notice the commotion from the upper level. They start running towards the stairs to come down.

The Librarian pops up.

LIBRARIAN

MY WORD!

One of the Bullies has landed on the floor, and the other is draped over the desk.

She stamps the one over the desk on the forehead with the renewal stamp.

Leona has the book open, furiously looking through it.

BARD  
GIVE ME MY BOOK BACK!

Bard lunges at Leona and grabs one side of the book. They begin a tug of war over the book.

LEONA  
It's not YOUR book, it belongs to the Library!

BARD  
Well-  
    (tugs on the book)  
I'm-  
    (tugs on the book)  
renewing-  
    (tugs on the book)  
it!

LEONA  
    (yells)  
It's still not yours!

Leona tugs the book back.

BARD  
By the rules of the Library, the one who has it checked out last is the one who's allowed to have it, and you-  
    (tugs)  
haven't-  
    (tugs)  
checked it out!  
    (huffs)  
Az, help me!

Both Leona and Bard turn to Azure, who's just standing there with their arms crossed.

AZURE  
I've got nothing, dude.

BARD  
AZ!

LEONA  
Ha! Your friend won't even-

GUARDS V.O.  
Hey! What's going on here!

Leona sees the guards running down the stairs towards the Librarian's desk, where the Bullies still lie, dazed but starting to move again.

One of the guards notices Leona.

GUARD

Hey! That's the fugitive!

Leona pushes Bard back, who falls to the floor.

She pulls the book close to her and begins to run for the exit.

GUARD

After her!

The Guards begin pursuing Leona.

LIBRARIAN

Hey, what about me!

She gestures to her ruined desk.

GUARD

Don't worry, we'll get her, ma'am!

LIBRARIAN

Dirty rotten...

Azure helps Bard up.

AZURE

You okay?

BARD

Sure.

(realizes what happened)

She took my book! I still have to renew it! If I don't return or renew it within the designated time, they'll BAN ME - I'm still on thin ice after the desk lamp incident -

Bard runs after Leona and the Guards.

AZURE

Of course. This might as well happen.

Azure runs after everyone else.



The Bullies shake themselves off.

BULLY 1

Hey! They're getting away!

BULLY 2

Let's go!

They start running after everyone else.

The Librarian just stands there.

LIBRARIAN

HEY! Get back - ah.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY CENTER. MID-MORNING.

Leona leads the chase. She pushes past random citizens, who shout in indignation.

There are a couple more guards on patrol outside, and the two Guards shout at them.

GUARD

We've found her! Come on!

The other guards join the chase.

LEONA

(in front)

Oh, great.

Leona turns down a marketplace street beside a canal. The canal is on the right, and the shops are on the left. There are flower shops, trinket shops, and food stores. They all have that small European style.

She runs past a flower shop, which is displaying Venus fly traps on wooden benches.

Leona's free hand glows orange, and she looks back at the Venus fly traps and aims her hand at them. They turn huge.

The owner of the flower shop screams and runs away.

Three of the guards dodge the Venus fly traps, but the third guard looks up at a giant Venus fly trap in fright as it falls over due to its weight and snaps the guard in its "jaws".

The guard screams.

Bard and Azure dodge the Venus fly traps and look back at the downed guard.

They look back in shock.

BARD

What the heck was that? Spatial manipulation?

Azure shrugs and looks back at the full mouth of the Venus fly trap.

AZURE

(prays and closes eyes while running)  
May you rest in peace.

BARD

(looking ahead)  
That was spatial manipulation! I've never seen it in person before!

They hear the Bullies shout at the Venus fly traps behind them, and look back again.

The Bullies have gotten past the fly traps.

BARD

They couldn't have been eaten by the fly traps? No poetic justice.

CUT TO:

Leona looks up at a balcony with laundry hanging over it.

OLD LADY

Howard, did you hang up my bloomers?

HOWARD

Yes, dear.

Leona directs her glowing hand at the laundry, which grows larger and falls from the balcony, though completely misses the guards.

The laundry (particularly the giant bloomers) get caught in the wind and flies past Bard and Azure.

Bard and Azure look up at the bloomers, curious, and watch it

go right in the faces of the Bullies.

The Bullies shout and stumble around, but are still running.

AZURE

There's your poetic justice right there.

Bard and Azure high-five.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BALCONY. SAME TIME.

An old lady with white hair and a granny floral dress goes out onto the balcony.

OLD LADY

Well, I don't see them, Howard!

HOWARD

I put them out there.

OLD LADY

They're not here!

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET. SAME TIME.

Leona shifts the book to her other hand and runs over a sewer grate.

She directs a glowing hand at it and it grows bigger, cracking the street, making stone fall into the canal.

City people around the grate shout and try to get away from the expanding grate.

Leona clenches her fist together and the grate shrinks so small it disappears. What's left is a huge hole in the street.

One guard hops the hole.

Azure and Bard catch up and jump it as well.

The last two guards stop at the edge of the hole.

They study it.

The Bullies crash into the last two guards, causing all four to fall into the hole.

They all scream.

Leona smirks and looks at a stone bridge ahead to the other side of the canal.

She runs to it and turns onto the bridge.

As she runs on the bridge, the bottoms of her feet glow orange as well, and the orange energy radiates into the bridge stone.

The bridge gets thinner as she runs on it, up to the point where she jumps on the railing to continue running.

The last guard hesitates in front of the bridge and Azure and Bard pass him.

Azure and Bard jump on the thin bridge one by one to run across, with Azure in front.

The guard jumps onto the thinning bridge behind them.

Leona makes it across, and the bridge behind her continues to get steadily thinner and smaller.

Azure and Bard wobble on the balance beam bridge.

The bridge begins to crumble beneath their feet.

AZURE

Uh oh.

Azure bolts for the other side.

Bard follows close behind.

Azure lunges for the canal ledge and holds on.

They grab Bard's hand as he falls off the crumbled bridge and they hang there like spider monkeys.

The guard behind Bard and Azure falls into the canal water below them and gets dragged away.

GUARD

AGH!

Azure pulls themselves and Bard up the side of the canal wall.

At the top, they see Leona, who pauses for a moment, and they all make eye contact.

Leona breaks it and continues running down the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANAL WALL. MID-DAY.

Azure pulls Bard up the canal wall.

They both look back at the other side of the street, and its destruction.

BARD

I didn't know spatial manipulation could do that.

AZURE

Seems a lot more destructive than what they always tell us.

BARD

I guess they don't really tell us a lot, though...

They both sigh.

BARD

Let's go. I need my book back.

AZURE

Really?

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL ALLEY-WAY. EARLY AFTERNOON.

Leona leans against the dark wall of a thin, grungy stone alley-way between two buildings.

She hugs the book and pulls her piece of paper out of her pocket.

She studies the piece of paper and opens the book.

LEONA

(mutters)

Bivond. Bi-vond. What does that mean??

She flips through the book.

LEONA  
There's no such word!

There's a commotion outside the alley-way as about a dozen guards run past.

Leona flattens herself against the wall.

GUARD  
I heard she went down this way!

GUARD 2  
Go! Go! Go!

The guards pass Leona's alley-way without noticing her.

Leona relaxes.

BARD V.O.  
Look at all those guards! You think she went over here?

AZURE V.O.  
Let's follow them!

Leona repeats the motion of flattening herself against the wall.

Bard and Azure run past the alley-way.

She relaxes.

BARD  
Hey.

Leona jumps.

Bard and Azure stand in front of her in the alley-way, blocking the way to the street.

BARD  
(points)  
That's my book.

LEONA  
(sighs, defeated)  
Like I said, it's not your book-

BARD  
I'm going to ask you one more time-

Azure steps forward.

AZURE  
Give him the book back.

Leona looks up at Azure and sighs.

LEONA  
Fine. You can have it after I use it.  
I need it.

AZURE  
What do you need it for?

LEONA  
I can't tell you. At least, not here.

BARD  
Oh, so you'll give it back after Azure  
asks but not me? I'm the one who  
checked it out!

LEONA  
They asked nicer.

Bard glares at her.

BARD  
Oh, cool. What even WAS that, anyway?  
Why were you running away from all  
those guards? What's WITH you?

Leona looks a bit remorseful.

LEONA  
I can't - I mean, I-

AZURE  
You can't tell us here, right?

Azure turns and points out of the entrance of the alley-way.

AZURE  
My house isn't far from here. Let's go  
there. You'll be safe.

BARD  
EXCUSE ME?

Azure turns to Bard.

AZURE

You want the book back, right? We'll go to my house, she'll tell us what's going on, read whatever she wants to read, and then you'll get your book back.

Azure turns back to Leona.

AZURE

(eyebrows raised)

You WILL tell us what's going on, right? I promise, we won't turn you in.

Leona eyes Azure warily.

LEONA

Fine.

BARD

(rolling his eyes)

Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. AZURE'S HOUSE. EARLY AFTERNOON.

Azure's parents, DENNIS and HILDA MERCIA, a cute glasses-wearing couple, pile pink and yellow saltwater taffy on top of the book in Leona's arms in a mountain going over her head.

Dennis wears a comfy casual button down, khakis, suspenders, and a bow tie. Hilda wears a soft blue cardigan sweater over a white blouse and mom jeans. She also wears a Wilma Flintstone necklace.

Multicolored bean bags are all over the floor and there is a beaded doorway curtain to the kitchen. A tiny Venus fly trap sits on a table in the entryway.

Leona looks overwhelmed.

BARD

Hi, Mr. and Mrs. Mercia.

DENNIS

Hey Bard! How's it going, champ?



AZURE  
 (hisses)  
 Dad!

BARD  
 Oh I'm doing great, Mr. Mercia!

Bard shoots a look at Leona, who struggles to balance the taffy and is entirely focused on the top of the mountain, which is wiggling wildly.

BARD  
 (through teeth)  
 Great.

HILDA  
 Oh! Almost forgot to ask your new friend's name, Az!

AZURE  
 She's-

LEONA  
 Leona.

HILDA  
 Ah, that's such a nice name. You know, we named Azure, Azure because-

Something dings.

HILDA  
 Oh! The apple turnovers!

She disappears through the partial swinging door and into the kitchen.

AZURE  
 We're going to go up to my room, Dad.

DENNIS  
 All right, kids! Have fun!

Azure and Bard start up the stairs.

Leona follows, taking each step as slowly as possible, eyes still on the top of the sweets mountain, though some of the taffy falls off.

CUT TO:

INT. AZURE'S ROOM. SECONDS LATER.

Azure closes the door to their room and switches on the light.

Azure leans against the wall.

Their room is blue, with a small bed and a couple more bean bags sit in the corners. One wall has a window facing the street, and on a shelf, there is another couple of Venus fly traps, a ball of rainbow yarn, and a lucky cat.

Leona closes the window's curtains.

Bard plops down on a bean bag.

BARD

So NOW will you tell us what's going on?

Leona dumps all the sweets onto Azure's bed and sits down.

LEONA

I... ran away. They want me back.

AZURE

Back where?

BARD

What does that have to do with my book?

LEONA

Again, not your book.

(sighs)

I need to figure out how to save someone. I thought this book might be able to help me.

AZURE

That still doesn't explain why the city guards were after you.

LEONA

You're right. Well, DID steal this book from the library.

Both Bard and Azure look flabbergasted.

BARD

Hey-

LEONA  
(looks down)  
That was a lie.  
(pause, looks up)  
They're chasing me because I want to  
leave Lacuna.

Bard and Azure look even more flabbergasted.

Bard jumps up.

BARD  
Why would you ever want to leave? The  
outside world is dangerous!

LEONA  
Well, what do you know anyway?

BARD  
Hey! You - you - girl just doing  
whatever she wants! Whatever the  
reason, you just can't use spatial  
manipulation like that!

LEONA  
I can use it however I want!

BARD  
Spatial manipulation in our society is  
used to help people! You expand and  
shrink molecules to make resources  
bigger and smaller and make our  
barrier to protect us from the  
outside! Everyone with the talent is  
supposed to HELP people! What was that  
outside? Who did you help?

LEONA  
Helped you guys get rid of some  
bullies, looked like.

Bard growls and starts toward Leona, whose hands start to  
glow.

AZURE  
Wait! Wait!

Azure pulls Bard by the hand and drags him out of their room.

Azure closes the door behind him.

AZURE

It doesn't do any good to make her mad at us. You want the book back, right?

BARD

(grumbling)

Preferably before the end of the day.

AZURE

So hear her out. Find out what else she has to say. There's got to be more besides the fact that she says she's got to save someone and leave Lacuna. Find that out.

BARD

Wait, what about you?

Azure glances at the closed door.

AZURE

I've still got the test today, remember? I'll poke around, see what I can find out. Her name's gotta be all over the place, what with the mess she's made.

BARD

Wait - oh no, you asked me to go with you! I'm so sorry, I-

Azure shakes their head a little too fast to not seem anxious.

AZURE

It's okay.

Bard bites his lip and puts his hands on Azure's shoulders. Azure looks a bit surprised.

BARD

Right. Good luck, okay? It'll be fine.

(pause)

I kinda hope you find out you're a spatial manipulator, just so I don't have to think they're all like her.

Azure gives a nervous sort of laugh.

AZURE

I'll be back.

BARD

Right.

They do a secret handshake.

Azure goes down the stairs.

Bard takes a deep breath. He peers into the room.

Leona has opened the book and is reading through it.

Bard nods to himself and enters.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY CENTER SKYSCRAPER. LOBBY. AFTERNOON.

Azure stands in a group of around twelve other kids. The city skyscraper lobby is bright and white and has a tall ceiling with a catwalk above.

The kids line up in front of what looks like an airport metal detector check-in station.

Azure looks up towards the catwalk, and catches the eye of a woman wearing a long dark floor-length dress. She has her dark hair put up in a fancy bun. She wears red lipstick and has dark eyes as well.

The woman (CERISE) also has two guards next to her.

Azure watches her as she moves to leave, and she and her guards disappear beyond the catwalk.

END