

SONGS OF THE PRIMALIST

Written by

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ACT ONE

EXT. RUINS OF ARKON - DAY

Ash. Clouds of ash and dust coat the broken stone and wood of a barren medieval city, the once-towering CITADEL at its center snapped in two, a broken sigil of a J on STORM CLOUD.

STORM CLOUDS rumble and churn overhead, stalking after the enormous but obscured shadow of a fifty-foot tall CAT stomping over the lush forest miles away from the city.

In a CRATER at the center of the ruins, lies a lithe woman in a HIJAB, a RUNE-covered VIOLIN and a broken BOW beside her. Her hijab has a small tag childishly labelled ZERAH (20).

Her eyes crack open. Her head tilts and she sees the violin.

ZERAH (V.O.)

I awoke in the ruins of a dead city
with nothing but the clothes on my
back, a violin, and a... slightly
used fiddlestick.

Zerah scrambles up and grasps at the bow pieces before snatching the violin and clutching it to her chest. A torn flag of a SITAR flanked by TORNADOS floats into the crater.

An OWL perched on one of the broken houses draws Zerah's attention with a HOOT. The woman gazes at the city in horror.

GRRR! Zerah turns to see canine shadows stalking through the dust of the ruins, a pack of wolves emerging from the smog.

ZERAH

AAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!!

Zerah leaps to her feet and books it away. The wolves chase. The owl watches warily, *intelligently*, and flies after.

EXT. ARKON RIVER DELTA - DAY

Zerah dashes through the shriveled reeds of what used to be a wetland, the brittle plants cracking underfoot as she runs.

One reed's barb catches Zerah's hijab, arresting her dash. She flails as the plant threatens to rip her clothing.

ZERAH

AaaaHhhhh!!!

She uses her violin to SMASH the plant to pieces. She grins.

ZERAH (CONT'D)

Ha!

A wolf tackles her.

ZERAH (CONT'D)

Ah!

Zerah and the wolf tumble into a barren sandy river basin, the rest of the pack gathering at the top of the slope.

The wolf pins Zerah down by her shoulders, its jaws snapping at her throat. Zerah SMACKS it with her violin, once, twice--

Oh no, the wolf caught the instrument in its teeth! Zerah struggles with the beast as it bites down on the violin.

ZERAH (V.O.)

I was outmatched, outnumbered.
However, just when it seemed I was
doomed...

Zerah's fingers instinctively pluck the violin's strings in a short, unrefined tune. The instrument's runes GLOW and the wolf is blown away by a vicious blast of air.

ZERAH (V.O.)

... I discovered I had MAGIC!

Zerah's face lights up with relief, then joy. The wolves look down in shock, only for the entire pack to growl.

Zerah's joy vanishes. She glances perplexedly at her violin.

ZERAH (V.O.)

Magic that I had no idea how to
use.

Zerah books it down the river basin.

The wolves charge down the slope, only for the owl to swoop down and claw at the lead dog's eyes, knocking it down.

The owl leaps back, the wolves growling at it. The owl stabs its talon into the dirt, drawing a line. The wolves pounce.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - DAY

RIAN

One, two, three, four! One, two,
three, four!

RIAN HISAKO (17), a spunky girl in a beat-up MILITARY JACKET hammering a perfect march on a rune-engraved DRUM, sits in a wagon glaring at the donkey *slowly* pulling the vehicle.

RIAN (CONT'D)
 One, two, three, four! One, two--
 Maya, your stupid donkey can't keep
 time!

Laying in the wagon, MAYA MCRAE (29), blind and relaxed as a sage, pops off a tune on her rune-covered SAXOPHONE.

The song calls up watercolor paints from several bowls, the colors float over to a white paper, painting a vivid picture of Rian and the donkey. Maya smiles.

MAYA
 Positive waves, Rian, positive
 waves. It's a beautiful city, and
 its gonna be there. Enjoy the
 journey.

RIAN
 We should have reached the river an
 hour ago! We'd already be in Arkon
 by now if we'd just gotten a golem!

MAYA
 And who would pilot it if we had?

RIAN
 Me! I could totally--

ZERAH (O.S.)
 Help!

The wagon halts at a bridge across a dry river. Maya shoots up in back, suddenly alert.

RIAN
 What was that?

Maya plays on her sax, the tune vibrating the moisture in the air. The vibrations seep into her skin, feeling the 'sight' of Zerah running from wolves at the base of the river.

MAYA
 Below!

Rian leaps out of the wagon with her drum strapped on and runs for the river. Zerah and the wolves run towards her.

ZERAH

Hi! Nice to meet you! You should really run!

Rian smirks, twirling her drumsticks.

RIAN

Now why would I do that?

She bangs out a kick-ass beat on her drum, the instrument's runes glowing. With each strike, boulders rip up from the ground and float in the air.

Zerah's jaw drops.

RIAN (CONT'D)

You might wanna move.

Zerah leaps to the side. Rian's tempo accelerates, the boulders rising.

MAYA

They're just animals! Don't bully them!

Rian pouts in frustration, but speeds up her rhythm. The boulders crumble into a mass of pebbles and shoot forward. The wolves whine as they're pelted by rocks. The pack flees.

Maya comes down to join Rian. Zerah looks at them in awe.

ZERAH (V.O.)

There I was, a woman with no history and no friends, pulled from the jaws of death by two of the most incredible, majestic--

RIAN (V.O.)

Stop! Stop!

EXT. OPEN ROAD - NIGHT

Rian shuts a JOURNAL, incomplete music on one page and an in-progress dictation of Zerah's voiceover words on the other.

RIAN

We were there for this part. No need to butter us up.

MAYA

I dunno. I kinda like the buttering. Nice to hear about you being heroic for once.

Rian rolls her eyes. The pair sits across a campfire from Zerah, who ravages a chicken drumstick without mercy. She leans back contently with a wide smile and a loud BURP.

RIAN

Look, Zerah--

ZERAH

Who? Wait, is that my name? You know my name? How?! I don't know my name! Oh crud, *I don't know my name!!!*

RIAN

It's what's written on your hijab.

Zerah finally spots the labelled tag, her smile growing.

ZERAH

I have a name! And I was responsible enough to label my stuff! Cool! Probably?

RIAN

Yes, wonderful, but are you sure you don't remember *anything*?

ZERAH

Not before I woke up in that crater. I don't even know where this thing came from.

(raises her violin)

Lucky I ran into you guys to teach me its magic!

Maya chuckles.

MAYA

Sorry, kiddo. No go there. Neither of us play violin.

ZERAH

Is that important?

RIAN

You really do have amnesia. Ow!

Maya flicks Rian's forehead and raises her saxophone.

MAYA

Percussion for earth. Brass for fire. Woodwind for water. Strings for air.

(MORE)

MAYA (CONT'D)

A properly-made instrument will let anyone control an element, *if* they can play the right song. Or your voice if you're a Primalist--

ZERAH

Really? I need to know how to play?

She looks down at her violin, gazing with confusion and loss at the hand that had plucked the tune.

ZERAH (CONT'D)

But then... how did I cast that wind blast when that thing jumped me? What did you call them? 'Wolves'? That's a weird name.

MAYA

I prefer to think of them as our canine little brothers. Eternally grumpy and trying to bite us in the butt.

ZERAH

The heck is a 'brother'? Heck, what's a 'Zerah'? Who am I? People don't just wake in craters with an instrument they can't play and no memories!... Do they?

Rian and Maya share a sympathetic look at the young girl.

RIAN

Look, Zerah, we'll give you a lift to civilization, see if we can dig up some info on who you are, but that's all we can do. We need to get where we're going by tomorrow or we'll miss our gig.

ZERAH

Gig?

MAYA

We play music, put on some pizzazz while we're at it. We're a band.

RIAN

Not just any band! We're the hottest band this side of the Republic: The Painted Regiment!

She leaps to her feet for a dramatic pose, yanking Maya up beside her. Zerah looks on with twinkling eyes.

ZERAH

Cool! ... do people come to see you do that?

RIAN

Well...

MAYA

Not really.

RIAN

They will! We've finally gotten a real gig in Arkon, the jewel of the Republic! And when we ace it, which we will, we'll get everything we've ever wanted. Recognition! Financial Stability! A donkey that can march faster than *Largo*.

The donkey SNORTS. Rian sticks out her tongue at it.

ZERAH

Wow! You can get all that from one gig in this Arkon place? It must be amazing!

Maya smiles at the girl's wonder. She starts leafing through a bag of her paintings.

MAYA

It has its perks. Here, this is a picture I made when we were there before.

RIAN

(proudly smiling)

I helped get the colors right.

Maya hands the picture to Zerah. The bandmates don't notice the hijab-wearing girl's brow furrow in recognition.

MAYA

There are no right colors, Rian. Just the ones in our hearts.

RIAN

Yeah, and the ones in reality.

MAYA

Sorry, but those don't mean too much to me. Blind and all--

ZERAH

This place looks familiar.

Rian and Maya turn to her, curious.

RIAN
You remember something?

ZERAH
No.

She looks intently at the picture, a bustling city filled with tall stone buildings, flourishing greenery, and a spire-like CITADEL as its center. There is no city more beautiful!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. RUINS OF ARKON - DAY

There is no city more barren! Its citadel is snapped in two like when Zerah first woke up. She stands with Rian and Maya while they gawk at the destroyed metropolis in horror.

ZERAH
So, yeah. This is where I woke up.
Wanna see my crater?

She runs off, leaving the other two to talk.

RIAN
This... this is impossible. This
is... what could have done this? A
storm?

MAYA
No. It would have left moisture in
the air. And... there's barely any.

Maya kneels down and scoops some soil into her hand. She lifts it up, the wind blowing the dry dirt away.

MAYA (CONT'D)
The soil either. It's as if the
life has been... sucked out this
place.

RIAN
Sucked the life... you don't mean--

ZERAH
Hey, guys!

Zerah picks up the two halves of the broken bow she'd left behind and excitedly waves the others over to her crater.

ZERAH (CONT'D)

This is ma crater! Where I woke up!

Rian's eyes widen at the sight of pawprint crater.

RIAN

Maya... it's a pawprint. A giant pawprint.

Maya gulps in terror. A low RUMBLING echoes through ruins, growing closer by the second.

MAYA

A Primal.

ZERAH

A Primal? Is that another thing I should know but don't?

MAYA

We can explain later. Right now we need to get out of here--

The rumbling crescendos into a roar. Five fifteen-foot rock GOLEMS, bulky and angularly humanoid tanks covered in runes, roll into the ruins. They crush everything in their path as they surround Zerah, Rian, and Maya.

ZERAH

What're those?

RIAN

(fangirling)

Golems! Actual Republic golems! This is so cool! Or, you now, would be, if not for everything else.

A sixth golem, with a thin white sheen over its hull and its head sculpted like a wolf, rolls into the circle. The owl, now with a scar over one eye, circles over this new arrival.

The back of the white golem opens up. A FIGURE in a cowboy hat strides out the ramp.

ALCIDES JOHNSON (20), bulky teddy bear of a man, sits back from the drums and trumpets of the golem's cockpit, turning back towards the figure.

ALCIDES

No bogies in sight, commander. I don't think these folk are terrorists.

The figure doesn't respond. She WHISTLES. The owl lands on her hand and affectionately coos. She smiles.

She reaches up and climbs to the top of the golem, the owl lifting her hand to help her up.

Maya's ear twitches. She looks up to the top of the white golem, Zerah and Rian follow her blind gaze.

Commander MINERVA (46) stands atop the white golem full of confident swagger, cowboy hat on her head, skunk stripe in her hair, and HARMONICA in her holster. Her owl lands on her shoulder.

Her intelligent eyes find Zerah and she smiles.

MINERVA

Howdy! How y'all doing?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. RUINS OF ARKON - DAY

Rian and Maya look up at Minerva, worried. Zerah just smiles.

ZERAH

We're alright. I mean, I have
amnesia, but other than that things
are good. How are you?

Rian facepalms.

Minerva cocks a confused eyebrow and LAUGHS. She raises her
arm, the owl grabbing her wrist. She hops off the white golem
and the owl carries her to the ground.

ZERAH (CONT'D)

Pretty strong for such a small... I
wanna say 'bird'?

Minerva signals the golems with a hand. The golems kneel,
their cockpits opening as Minerva approaches the trio.

MINERVA

Commander Minerva, Republic Special
Research Division. I don't suppose
any of y'all can explain all this?

ZERAH

Sorry. This place was like this
when I woke up in that crater.

MAYA

Which she had nothing to do with,
Commander.

RIAN

And we most definitely didn't
either. We were heading here for a
gig. We're Painted Regiment. Maybe
you've heard of us?

MINERVA

Can't say I have. Williams!

One of the golem pilots, STEVE WILLIAMS (25), pokes his head
out from his cockpit. He's handsome, but with a thuggish air.

MINERVA (CONT'D)

Tell Dr. Bex it's safe to bring up
the convoy.

WILLIAMS
 (salutes)
 Ma'am.

Minerva turns to the Zerah's group with a snake-like smile.

MINERVA
 I'll need y'all to stay here while
 we figure all this out.

Maya scowls distrustfully.

MAYA
 Are we prisoners?

MINERVA
 Merely persons of interest. Y'all
 instruments are yours to keep and
 my best man will tend to your
 needs. Lieutenant Johnson!

Alcides climbs down from the white golem, a trumpet case in his arms. Minerva's call startles him and he lands with a *thud* on his rump. Zerah and Maya wince.

Alcides gets back to his feet and runs over.

ALCIDES
 Yes, ma'am?

MINERVA
 Make these three at home--

A bombastic but a eclectically offbeat MARCH interrupts her. A convoy of covered wagons pulled by powerful stallions parade into the city ruins, flanked by a marching band of TUBAS, TROMBONES, and SNARE DRUMS.

A tall woman in a lab coat with a frazzled mane leaps out of the lead wagon with a bright grin on her face, DR. BEX (30).

DR. BEX
 Minerva, I can't gather data on the
 Wolfgang's performance if you take
 it out scouting without telling me!
 (notices the ruins)
 Also, didn't there used to be a
 city here?

Minerva chuckles and heads off to the doctor. She pulls out a PITCH PIPE and blows into it, her owl sucked inside with a soft coo. Alcides turns to Zerah, Rian, and Maya.

ALCIDES

So, um, nice to meet you--

Zerah is instantly in his face.

ZERAH

Nice to meet you too! I'm Zerah!
Are you guys a band?

Maya yanks Zerah back. Rian wags a finger at Zerah.

RIAN

The army is not a band! You don't
get in their face just to introduce
yourself! Speaking of...

Rian is instantly in Alcides's face.

RIAN (CONT'D)

Hi, Rian Hisako, drummer of Painted
Regiment, golem enthusiast. I
couldn't help but notice your
lovely golem. Is that metal it's
coated in? How do the runes tune it
to the cockpit's drums--

Maya yanks Rian back.

ALCIDES

Uh, you mean The Wolfgang? Sorry,
that's Dr. Bex's project. Top secr--

Rian dashes towards Dr. Bex, kicking up dust in her wake.
Alcides looks to Maya and Zerah, the latter merrily waving.

Alcides notices Zerah's broken bow halves, looks concerned.

ALCIDES (CONT'D)

Your fiddlestick?

ZERAH

Yeah, it's slightly used. Don't
suppose you can fix it?

ALCIDES

Oh, sure! We got plenty of supplies
this way.

He turns but finds Williams standing in his way.

WILLIAMS

Wasting convoy supplies on a
civilian's bow, lieutenant?

ALCIDES

Commander said to take care of them, Williams. I'll handle my job, you take care of yours and help set up camp.

WILLIAMS

Yes sir.

Alcides nods and leads Zerah and Maya away. Williams scowls at his back when he's out of hearing range.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Mudman.

Maya frowns at the slur, the only one who hears.

EXT. RUINS OF ARKON, MILITARY CAMP - DAY

Drummers line the border of the ruin. As one, they beat a strong, steady march, their instruments' runes glowing. The ground in front of them rises into a thick wall of earth.

Crews pull out and assemble entire drum sets from the convoy's wagons. Complex rhythm solos ring out and construct impromptu barracks and warehouses from the rocky ground.

Dr. Bex examines the Wolfgang's runes with a magnifying glass. Minerva glares down at the pawprint crater.

DR. BEX

You were right about that Torn City boy. None of the test pilots handled my Wolfgang this well.

MINERVA

None of the test pilots survived.

DR. BEX

True. They couldn't manage the heat shift as well as I'd hoped.

RIAN (O.S.)

Oh! That's what the brass is for?

DR. BEX

Of course--

Dr. Bex realizes it's a new voice and walks around to the golem's back, where Rian joyously looks into the cockpit, a one man band of drums and brass horns.

RIAN

It looks like you just need drums to drive it, but if the brass can melt and solidify one of the armor layers, you could make it faster or tougher whenever you needed.

DR. BEX

Precisely! Always a pleasure to meet a fellow analytical mind. Drummer Boy Corps, ay?

Rian pales and smacks a hand over her jacket's insignia.

RIAN

Freelance now. So what runes do you use to get the drums to affect metal? Isn't that impossible?

DR. BEX

It usually is, but with my new compound of Mithril Silver--

MINERVA

Bex, stop revealing government secrets and help me check this out.

Dr. Bex rolls her eyes. She and Rian walk to the crater.

EXT. RUINS OF ARKON, WAGON TRAIN - DAY

Zerah cheerfully pets the military stallions' manes.

ZERAH

I want one.

MAYA

Say that when you're the one who has to wash'em.

Alcides digs around in the wagon the horses are attached to, audibly tinkering as his brow furrows with effort. A giant stationary TUNING FORK is upright on the last wagon.

ALCIDES

A bit of this, a bit of that, and, *presto!*

He holds out Zerah's bow to her, its wood taped back together with a new string strung. Zerah eagerly snatches it up.

ZERAH

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

ALCIDES

Heh, glad to help. Everyone should be able to play.

Zerah winces. She looks down at her violin, unsure.

INT. MILITARY CAMP, ALCIDES'S CABIN - DAY

Zerah sits back on a cot in a simple and sparse stone cabin, still staring at her violin and bow.

Across from her, Maya and Alcides joyfully cook a pot of soup over a small fire. Alcides's trumpet stokes the fire while Maya's sax keeps the boiling liquid from overflowing.

ALCIDES

Woo-wee! You can play, Maya!

MAYA

You're not bad yourself. Been a while since I had the pleasure of proper Torn City soul food. What's a cook like you doing in the army?

Alcides chuckles, bringing out some bowls to the soup.

ALCIDES

My folks got sick a few years back.

Zerah wistfully looks to the wall, where several weathered painted photos are taped. One features a younger Alcides (18) smiling with AMANI (18), but Zerah focuses on one where Alcides is hugged by his PARENTS (40) in a homely pub.

ALCIDES (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Joined up to get health insurance for them. They taught me to play, taught me to cook. I owe them that much.

MAYA

No matter what the company call you?

Alcides hands her a bowl of soup. He frowns.

ALCIDES

I've dealt with worse. Williams can call me whatever he wants. I know who I am.

ZERAH

Must be nice.

Alcides and Maya look at her. Zerah winces.

ZERAH (CONT'D)
 Sorry. It's just... I've got
 nothing. Just this.
 (raises violin)
 And I don't even know how to play.

MAYA
 You said you held off the wolves.

ZERAH
 My fingers plucked a few strings on
 instinct. I have no idea what I
 actually did.

ALCIDES
 You don't necessarily have to.

EXT. RUINS OF ARKON, MILITARY CAMP - DAY

Minerva, Rian and Dr. Bex examine the crater.

DR. BEX
 A wolf howls to summon its pack. A
 Primalist sings to rip life from
 land, shape it into a War Beast.

Minerva glares at the doc. Bex holds up her hand placatingly.

DR. BEX (CONT'D)
 Right, right, shape it into a
 'Primal'. Sorry. But you don't need
 me for this, Minny. If that mess in
 the forest is any indication, this
 thing won't be hard to track.

RIAN
 So it's true? One Primalist can do
 all this if they know what they're
 doing?

MINERVA
 No. A Primalist that knows what
 they're doing isn't this sloppy.
 The voice needs runes like any
 other instrument and they didn't
 lay them down here. Probably sucked
 the life out of themselves with
 this stunt--

Minerva's eyes find something. She kneels down in the crater.

INTERCUT ALCIDES'S CABIN/RUINS OF ARKON

Alcides guides Zerah into a ready position with her violin.

ALCIDES

Alright. Now just play.

Zerah pales, her eyes shrinking with stage fright.

ZERAH

Wait, like, in front of people? And play what? I don't know anything!

ALCIDES

You can make a sound with it. You don't need to know an entire song. Just... play what comes to you.

Zerah looks nervous. Maya smiles reassuringly. Zerah gulps and glides the bow across one of the violin strings.

A NOTE! High and alone! Zerah flinches. Alcides smiles.

Maya brings her sax to her lips. *TOOT!* Another note. Zerah chuckles, a bit more comfortable. Alcides brings up his trumpet. *TOOT!* Colorful flames spurt from the horn.

Zerah smiles and moves the bow again. She chains a few more notes together, in time with her heartbeat. Maya plays an easy tune, watercolor paints rise from her belt pouches.

Alcides and Maya start to speed up, fire and water mixing in a beautiful improv collage. Zerah grins wide, starting to have fun making note after note. Wispy air rises.

Minerva dusts off the torn sitar flag. She frowns, furious.

Zerah closes her eyes. Her bow glides over the strings by instinct, crafting a beautiful melody. A strong but playful wind churns around the room. Her feet lift off the ground.

Minerva whirls towards Rian, who backs away in fear.

MINERVA

Zerah woke up here?! With no memory?

Zerah plays joyously until she suddenly spasms in pain.

ZERAH

Gah!

Visions flash through her eyes backed by discordant notes.

MONTAGE OF ZERAH'S VISIONS:

- Two women square off, one in armor and face-hiding helm modelled after an OWL, the other like a FALCON.

FALCON WOMAN

Amani, run!

- A man in an opulent turban, PRINCE IBRAHIM (28) glares down imperiously with a SITAR and TORNADO FLAG behind him.

- Zerah SCREAMS. Lush trees around Arkon's CIDATEL wither and die. Rainbow energy rises and forms into a giant primal - a CAT. The primal SMASHES the citadel and its J SIGIL.

END MONTAGE

MAYA

Zerah! Zerah!

Zerah's eyes shoot open, panting hard. Her body is sprawled against the cot and wall. Maya and Alcides kneel over her.

ALCIDES

Are you alright? What happened?

ZERAH

I... I saw things. Horrible things.

The cabin's door bursts open. Minerva and Williams charge in.

INT. MILITARY CAMP, BRIG - DAY

Zerah and Maya, their instruments taken from them, are thrown into a smooth earthen cell by Williams. He sneers at them.

WILLIAMS

Knock if you need to go tinkle.

He beats a quick tune on his drum to slam the cell shut.

Rian slumps against the cell wall and glumly looks to Zerah. She helps Maya sit up.

RIAN

I would like to point out that, for once, I didn't get us into this.

MAYA

Like we were gonna be 'honored guests' forever.

RIAN

We wouldn't even have to be guests
if it weren't for her! Arkon would
still be here if it wasn't for her!

Zerah rubs her head and looks up at Rian.

ZERAH

What are you talking about?

RIAN

According to the commander--

MAYA

The commander who just threw us in
prison?

RIAN

We are not dealing with your issues
right now!

(to Zerah)

This place had the life sucked out
of it to make a Primal and then
that monster killed everyone who
lived here. All those lives because
you summoned it!

Zerah wilts. The image of the giant cat destroying the city
flashes through her mind.

ZERAH

That... that doesn't make any
sense. If I was responsible for all
this death, why would I just stay
here? Why can't I remember it?!

RIAN

Apparently you didn't know what you
were doing. You sucked up some of
your own life force into that
thing. Your own memories turned
into fuel for a monster of death--

ZERAH

No! No, no, no, no! She lied to
you! I'm not that kind of person!

She sees the primal cat ROAR towards the sky. Zerah wilts.

ZERAH (CONT'D)

... all that destruction, I would
never... I would *never* do that!

RIAN

How do you know that?! You don't
even know who you are!

Zerah reels back as if she's been slapped. She looks down at her hands as if they were covered in blood. Her eyes tear up.

A flicker of sympathy crosses Rian's face, but she shoves it down and scowls as she turns away from Zerah.

MAYA

Rian, what the heck?

RIAN

Excuse me for being upset about
being thrown in jail as a
terrorist's accomplice--

Zerah KNOCKS on the cell door.

ZERAH

Hey! Angry guard guy! Open up!

RIAN

What're you doing?!

A small slot in the stone slides open.

WILLIAMS

You can't possibly have to go this
quick, ya freak--

ZERAH

Tell the commander I'm ready to
talk. Just let these two go. They
just found me on the road. They had
nothing to do with this.

Williams scowls and runs off. Rian and Maya look at Zerah.

ZERAH (CONT'D)

If I'm a monster, you guys need to
get away from me.

She slumps down against the cell wall, despairing utterly.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. INTERROGATION HUT - DUSK

Zerah sits across a table from Minerva, her hands tied behind her back. Williams glares at her from the corner, his drum ready. Minerva places the tattered Sitar flag onto the table.

MINERVA

Do you know what this is?

ZERAH

... a flag?

WILLIAMS

Don't play dumb, ya freak--

Minerva cuts him off with a pissed glare. She turns to Zerah.

MINERVA

The flag of the Sons of the Sitar, a group quite displeased by some of the Republic's recent actions.

ZERAH

And you want to use me to get them? I keep telling you, I don't remember anything!

Minerva smirks. She pulls out her pitch pipe and blows into it. Her owl flows out and perches on the table. Zerah gasps.

MINERVA

Let's see what we can do about that.

Minerva sets the pitch pipe on the table.

EXT. RUINS OF ARKON, WAGON TRAIN - DUSK

Alcides helps Rian and Maya onto their wagon. He has Zerah's violin and bow on his belt.

ALCIDES

I'm sorry for all this. I wish it'd gone different.

MAYA

Thanks, Alcides. Watch out for her.
(glances at Rian)
She'll need a friend.

Rian frowns and looks away, conflicted. She cracks the reins and the donkey slowly trots out the gates.

Alcides looks forlornly after them. Dr. Bex comes up to him.

DR. BEX
Shame to lose such capital company
so quickly.

BRRING! The tuning fork in the back of the wagon train rings and vibrates. A J over a STORM CLOUD buzzes into existence between the fork's arms.

Alcides and Bex turn to it. The doctor frowns.

DR. BEX (CONT'D)
And now some *capital* company.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - DUSK

The donkey slowly trots the wagon down the road. Rian disgruntledly rests her head atop her drum as Maya mopes.

RIAN
I know what you want to say, and no. We've got our own problems. Nonexistent financial security, remember? We don't even know who she is!

MAYA
You didn't know who I was when we first met. You still saved me.

Rian frowns, slowly being convinced.

RIAN
What if you're wrong? What if she's everything she's afraid she is?

MAYA
What if she's not?
(she grins)
Positive waves.

Rian glares at her, then sighs and takes the donkey's reins.

RIAN
What the heck? Not like this bag of molasses will get us far anyway.

The donkey BRAYS. Maya smiles proudly. Rian turns the wagon.

INT. INTERROGATION HUT - DUSK

Zerah reaches out for the owl. A heartbeat, maybe its, maybe hers. Her fingers touch it. *CRACKLE!*

Zerah's eyes go wide, a voice in her ear.

FALCON WOMAN (O.S.)
Amani, run! Run now!

Zerah rips back her hand, clutching it as if it was burned. Williams ties her hands behind the chair.

MINERVA
Primalists can use our voice, our instrument, to form Primals. We can also sense the memories they're made from and, in the case of those we make personally, reabsorb them.

ZERAH
Why would I want my memories back? So that I can be a horrible person who destroys cities again?

The owl hops to Minerva. Minerva smiles, almost motherly.

MINERVA
The easiest way to get rid of a Primal is to reabsorb it. You sacrificed yourself to save two people you just met. Are you willing to help us save more?

Zerah looks at the owl, the pitch pipe, and the commander.

ZERAH
'Our' instrument... you're a Prima--

Alcides bursts in the door, Williams in his face immediately. Dr. Bex calmly follows the lieutenant. Minerva remains cool.

MINERVA
Lieutenant. Doctor. An explanation if you would?

ALCIDES
Sorry, ma'am. But a call from the capital came in for you. Something called 'Project Jupiter'?

Minerva's eyes narrow, actually concerned.

MINERVA

What did the director want?

Dr. Bex points to Zerah.

DR. BEX

Her. No chasing the kitty-cat I'm afraid. They want to cut her up back at the capital.

Zerah pales with terror. Minerva leaps to her feet and SMASHES her chair against the wall, livid.

Zerah's eyes spy one of the sharp shards of the chair.

MINERVA

I will have a word with them--

Zerah rolls out of her chair, snatches up the shard, and cuts the ropes binding her wrists. The other four whirl towards her, but she's already rushed forward.

She snatches the pitch pipe from the table and her violin and bow from Alcides' belt in her dash, dodging Williams' lunge and escaping the room. Williams runs after her.

Alcides reluctantly makes to follow, but Minerva holds him back. She whistles and the owl flies after Zerah.

EXT. MILITARY CAMP, WALL - DUSK

Rian and Maya park outside the wall. Rian taps a soft but intricate beat on her drum to make an eyehole in the wall.

RIAN

Alright, we're not making any quick getaways on this thing, so this is a convenient chance to--

MAYA

You want to steal a golem?

RIAN

Nope. I want to steal *that* golem.

She points at the Wolfgang. Maya blinks, completely unamused.

MAYA

Blind, remember? I assume you're overdramatically pointing?

RIAN

I'm not overdramatic!

ALARM drums and horns sound out. Rian looks in to see Zerah running into the Golem Assembly Field, dodging thrown rocks.

MAYA

I take it from the alarms--

RIAN

Subtlety is out, yes.

She raises her drumsticks.

INTERCUT MILITARY CAMP, GOLEM ASSEMBLY FIELD/THE WOLFGANG

Zerah is smacked by a flying rock and knocked to the ground. William beats his drum quickly, another rock hovering threateningly over the violinist. Other soldiers gather.

BOOM! BOOM! A section of the wall explodes, the massive rubble scattering the soldiers. Rian and Maya rush in.

MAYA

Get to the golem! I'll get her!

Maya and Rian split off. Maya brings up her sax, globs of paint rising as she starts to blow.

The soldiers beat their drums to fire rocks at her, but she hears every beat and dances through the stone. Her sax's melody is fast and free, turning on a dime as her paint globs hit troops in the face, knocking them down and blinding them.

Rian leaps into the Wolfgang's cockpit, scuttling about the instruments. She raises her sticks and gives an evil cackle, beating out a complex rhythm on the wide drum set inside.

The cockpit closes. The golem rolls backwards into the wall.

Rian winces inside, rocked by the vibrations.

Minerva, Dr. Bex, and Alcides come to the edge of the field.

DR. BEX

My Wolfgang! That brilliant girl is stealing my Wolfgang!

Alcides flips his trumpet and blasts out a long, powerful note that sends him flying over the field on a fire jet.

Minerva spots Maya approaching Zerah. Minerva draws her harmonica, her owl flying overhead.

Maya fires paint bullets at Williams. He jumps back, beating a frantic rhythm to muster rocks to shield him.

ZERAH

Look out!

The owl dives for Maya. Maya's moisture sense gives her fair warning and whirls with a smooth melody, paint bullets ready.

BRRINNNGGG! A harmonica cord cuts through the sax noise. One of the paint dots goes rogue and knocks Maya's sax from her lips. The owl SLASHES through Maya's blindfold. She falls.

ZERAH (CONT'D)

Maya!

Zerah runs to Maya, a 'J' SCAR on the bridge of the blind woman's nose. Williams and a ring of troops close in.

Alcides lands on the Wolfgang's top, a blowtorch flame ready.

ALCIDES

Ms. Rian! I know the Wolfgang's weak points. Please don't make me cut you out of here!

Rian looks at the horn section of the controls with panic.

Zerah kneels next to Maya.

ZERAH

Why'd you come back? You don't know me. I don't even know me.

MAYA

I don't.

Maya presses Zerah's violin into her hands.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Show me. And yourself.

Zerah looks afraid, but steels her face. She rises and glares down Williams. The soldier smirks cruelly.

WILLIAMS

Give me a reason, freak.

Zerah shuts her eyes and puts her bow on the strings. She instinctually plays the song from the improv. Wind churns around the encirclement. Williams's troops smack their drums.

Rocks fly at Zerah, but gusts push them out of the way. The violin's music accelerates, the wind rushing into a tornado. Williams and his men are thrown away.

Alcides is ripped from the Wolfgang by the wind. He looks at Zerah, his eyes widening in shock... and recognition?

Winds lift Zerah and Maya up and carry them to the Wolfgang.

MAYA

Zerah, what's happening?

ZERAH

No clue, my eyes are closed--ep!

The pair plop onto the Wolfgang. Rian hears and looks up.

RIAN

Maya?

MAYA

Go, go, go, go!

Rian bangs out a killer drum solo and guns the Wolfgang away, bursting an even bigger hole in the camp wall.

Williams groans on the ground. Alcides runs for a new golem.

MINERVA

Don't bother, lieutenant.

Alcides halts. Minerva steps over Williams. Dr. Bex runs up.

DR. BEX

You're letting them get away!?

MINERVA

Can any other golem match the Wolfgang's speed? Even without Mithril shifting?

(to Alcides)

Get this cleaned up, lieutenant. I have to update the capital.

Alcides salutes and helps Williams up and away. Minerva and Dr. Bex walk out to the hole in the wall. Dr. Bex pets the left-behind donkey.

MINERVA (CONT'D)

Thank you for alerting her to the danger. I'm sorry it cost us the Wolfgang.

DR. BEX

I figured you wouldn't want her on Project Jupiter's lab table.

(MORE)

DR. BEX (CONT'D)
 Besides, if the director's afraid
 of a Primalist in the wind, that
 means more funding for the Bach.

Minerva smirks fondly, only to look forlornly as the Wolfgang
 charges off into the sunset. Her owl perches on her shoulder.

MINERVA
 Always running away from me...

INT. MILITARY CAMP, ALCIDES'S CABIN - DUSK

Alcides rushes in to his picture wall. He grabs one of Amani
 and really looks at it.

Amani, massive long hair flowing around her, gracefully
 floats within a swirling cyclone, playing her violin.

MINERVA (V.O.)
 ... Amani Zerah.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - DUSK

Zerah looks at her reflection in the Wolfgang's metal sheen.

ZERAH
 Huh. So that's what I look like.
 (gladly patting her hajib)
 Wicked.

Rian COUGHS and ties a new blindfold on Maya.

RIAN
 So, now that we'll have to stick to
 underground gigs from now on, any
 ideas what you want to do next?

ZERAH
 You guys still want to help me?

MAYA
 Even if you had done what they
 think you did, no one deserves to
 be Project Jupiter's guinea pig.

RIAN
 Whatever that is. Plus, our hat's
 already in the ring. Might as well
 stick with the person who can
 summon fifty-foot tall monsters.

Zerah brings out the pitch pipe. Her gaze hardens at it.

ZERAH

If we find the Primal that
destroyed Arkon, I think I can use
this to stop it. No more cities get
wrecked and I get my memories back.
I can find out who I was. Who I am.

Maya rises and comfortingly claps a hand on Zerah's shoulder.

MAYA

No clue who you were, but I got a
pretty good picture of who you are.

Maya walks away and heads to the Wolfgang's cockpit. Rian
hands Zerah one of her journals. Zerah tilts her head,
confused. Rian looks away with a blush.

RIAN

Maya has her painting. I write
music. You can use this as a
journal. Figure out who you are.

Zerah smiles, touched.

ZERAH

Thank you, Rian.

RIAN

Yeah, well, get on. We need to get
as much distance as possible.

She gets in the cockpit. Zerah climbs up to the top of the
Wolfgang and stares into the sunset. She opens the journal.

She stares at the page, unsure. She looks to her violin and
then her bow. She frowns, but grows determined as she writes.

ZERAH (V.O.)

I awoke in the ruins of a dead city
with nothing but the clothes on my
back, a violin, and a... slightly
used fiddlestick.

The Wolfgang's drumbeat roars and it drives into the sunset.

END OF EPISODE