

DREAMNASIUM, episode 5: "Red/Shift," part 1

[Synthy Dreamnasium theme]

THE MUSE: Dreamnasium. Function: noun. A state of mind, marked by abstraction or release from consensual reality. "Red Shift," part 1.

[Dreamnasium theme continues, then fades out]

[Classical music in the background.]

[Crowd of people talking, schmoozing, etc.]

[Footsteps moving through the crowd, passing groups of people talking, laughing, etc.]

BREMINSKY: ...so one told them, no, of course not.

[Polite laughter.]

GIO: (slight gasp) You did not!

BREMINSKY: One did! You do not simply invite yourself to one's ball, Gio. One *is* a Breminsky, after all.

CYNDA: Ookan sur tel a stooree, Breminsky.

BREMINSKY: Cynda, one has asked you not to-

[The approaching footsteps, having reached Breminsky, Gio and Cynda, stop.]

RED: Wine?

BREMINSKY: One has wine, thank y- You're not among one's valets.

RED: My offer was for the lady.

GIO: I'm taken, but thank you...

RED: Not you. Her.

CYNDA: Oowud fer to mee?

RED: It is a scandal to see such beautiful hands so empty. And to force yourself to endure this boy's attempts at humor? A disgrace.

[Slight gasps.]

BREMINSKY: What? What did he say? Who- who *is* this- whoever he is?

CYNDA: Anka yu. I like yur redcoat.

RED: A family design. There are no others like it.

BREMINSKY: Sir! Yes, *you!* Remove yourself at once.

RED: Oh? And who will force me to go, boy? You? Your little friends? Best go to your games and leave this one to a more... *mature* suitor.

[Glasses tink together.]

BREMINSKY: Outrageous! One demands your name, sir!

GIO: Oh no. No no no.

BREMINSKY: And you, Cynda, this is not what one employs you for!

RED: Pay him no mind, Cynda. Come, dance with me.

CYNDA: (a little dreamy) I wud ver much, sir. I-

BREMINSKY: (so cold, so cruel) Cynda.

CYNDA: (sober again) I kant, sir. Breminsky –

RED: Oh. Oh, I see. He owns you? I had thought you people had done away with overt slavery of this kind.

GIO: WHAT? No! How dare you even!

BREMINSKY: Enough, Gio. Allow me. Since you are so uncouth as to say it, yes. For all intents and purpos, one *does* own her. And *her*. And *them*. And those over there. And five percent of *all* of Ares. And *you* are insulting my party, sir.

RED: If that's true, apologies.

BREMINSKY: Good. Now you understand who is who and what is w-

RED: To *Cynda*. I apologize to Cynda for being forced to whore herself for something as low as you.

BREMINSKY: Ahhh. Now *that* is an insult. Overt. Public. Intentional.

RED: And if it is?

BREMINSKY: Requisition! I have been insulted! I demand satisfaction! My Klef! Bring my Klef!

RED: Careful, boy. You might still walkaway from this.

BREMINSKY: Oh I see. Perhaps, *boy*, you have heard of one's prowess in duel, with the klef, the sharpest and most wicked of all weapons.

RED: A butcher's knife. The tool of peasants. No. No, no, no. *You* made the challenge. You give up the right to choose weapons and venue. Those go to me.

BREMINSKY: Well, yes, those are the rules. But-

RED: Rapiers. You know them? Aristocratic blades. Rapiers will carry our fight.

BREMINSKY: (trying to save face) Very well. Shall we say... at the omnasium, zero-G?

RED: Baldwin's Rest, Elysium Mons. Full G.

CYNDA: At ee ol draveyar?

RED: That's right. Tombs and all. Midnight.

BREMINSKY: Very well. Half-dark. Baldwin's Rest. One *shall* put this matter to rest.

RED: Yes. *One of us* shall.

[Computery, technical background sounds, but also warm and soothing.]

[Computer device blips on.]

COMPUTER VOICE: Greetings. How may I be of service to you?

[typing]

AMINA: I was pinged. My test results are in?

COMPUTER VOICE: Please verify identity. Retinal or palm print confirmation is acceptable. You have chosen, "palm."

[Palm being scanned.]

AMINA: Ooh, you're cold.

COMPUTER VOICE: My composite metals are good thermal conductors. They easily transfer-

AMINA: Don't need the science lesson.

[Quiet beep.]

COMPUTER VOICE: Identity confirmation. Amina Fisk-Okker. Test results confirmed on file. ReMech Manufactory is requesting you remit payment prior to release of requested information.

AMINA: Will deposit of privileged data be acceptable?

COMPUTER VOICE: Data deposit *is* preferred. Please proceed with payment.

AMINA: Entering Payment One: The identity of who Missy Jean-Pierre-Sax is twisting with after she drops her husband into VR for work.

[Slight processing noise.]

COMPUTER VOICE: Accepted.

AMINA: Payment two: Hmm. Oh, the original gender of Caruthers Mulky. Additional: Why and how many times that gender has been modified.

[Slight processing noise.]

COMPUTER VOICE: Accepted.

AMINA: Payment three: The encryptions Topper Wallace-Quayle uses to hide evidence of his *affections* toward his father's thirteenth wife.

[Slight processing noise.]

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COMPUTER VOICE: Accepted. This data gives you an advance credit of five-

AMINA: Yes, yes. Just... give me my test results. Please.

[Slight click, different whirring sound.]

[Quiet beep.]

[Whirring, quiet beep.]

COMPUTER VOICE: Test results for Amina Fisk-Okker: Diagnosis confirmed. Patient has presented with classic onset Prager's Disease.

AMINA: Symptoms?

COMPUTER VOICE: Primary phase; heightened sensory perception, increased neural connectivity, decreased need for REM sleep.

AMINA: That isn't what I was expecting. Is that all?

COMPUTER VOICE: Secondary phase: intermittent neural fugue, loss of fine motor control, heightened temperature sensitivity, inability to achieve REM sleep.

AMINA: (sigh) Prognosis?

COMPUTER VOICE: Prager's Disease fatality index: 99-percent plus. Medical Archive rating: Currently Incurable.

AMINA: But- but- there must be something. There's... some sort of treatment to hold it off at least?

COMPUTER VOICE: Approved medicinal cocktails *can* extend Phase One for up to one standard month, depending on patient's status at diagnosis.

AMINA: And Phase Two? Phase Three?

[whirring.]

COMPUTER VOICE: Prager's Disease fatality index: 99-percent plus. Medical Archive rating: Currently Incurable.

AMINA: No no no no, I'm not just accepting this. There's always a way. Always. Um. Alright, alright... maybe the approved cocktails won't do but I can make my own. There are street drugs, there's new nano...

COMPUTER VOICE: Use of illicit chemicals is contra-indicated in all cases. Minimum sentence for possession of red-listed chemicals is five years.

AMINA: Shut up. You've done your job. Now I must do mine.

[Light wind and dust blowing around.]

[Footsteps a small group approaching.]

GIO: *This* is the place?

CYNDA: Whyd ere istill draveyar eer?

BREMINSKY: A relic of decades long gone, one thinks. Burial in space, or even lowly cremation, are so much more... civilized. One would never stoop so low as to have his deceased body touch the ground.

[Footsteps hitting the ground from where Red leaps out from behind a tomb, his coat/cape billowing behind him.]

RED: Your forbears respected the grave. You would do well to emulate them.

BREMINSKY: One does not take advice from bottom-dwellers.

RED: As you like, of course.

CYNDA: I styl lyk oor red coat.

RED: And I still like your silver hair.

BREMINSKY: Let's get this done, shall we? Our arena?

[Laser device switched on, fired, cutting a line in the dirt, pans around in a circle.]

RED: This circle. Positions at opposite ends.

[The two men walk to opposite sides of the field.]

RED: Terms?

BREMINSKY: Terms, well, hm. Shall we say... *three*?

GIO: Breminsky, no!

RED: Third blood. Bold.

[Rapiers drawn.]

RED: We only stop after a mortal wound. Be sure, boy. I'll give no quarter.

BREMINSKY: One has never asked for quarter, and is not going to start with *you*. Three.

CYNDA: Jang eit Breminsky!

BREMINSKY: Why Cynda, it sounds as though you care. Be calm, dear. One knows what one's doing.

CYNDA: Oy.

RED: Terms accepted. Rapiers ready.

[The swoosh of two rapiers being raised.]

RED: Proceed.

BREMINSKY: (yells as he attacks)

[Blades connect.]

[The sounds of the police station of the future.]

[Footsteps up.]

OCELANO: Evening, Detective Elzin.

ELZIN: Hey Ocelano.

OCELANO: You're in late.

ELZIN: Racking up overtime. Besides, these reports need finishing.

OCELANO: Or you could dump them in the holding file and go have a little life tonight.

ELZIN: Pretty sure having a life is outside my job specs.

OCELANO: Your job specs include comp time, yeah? Which you never take any of. (sighs) Really? The Aurora festival starts tonight. You're really going to rack OT instead of nighttime Fun?

ELZIN: Ooh, is that coffee?

OCELANO: Hey. Wait. I just made this- ah, fine, take it.

ELZIN: Mm, thanks.

OCELANO: Now if you'll excuse me, it seems I need a coffee. Because when *you* rack OT, comm support does too. But you knew that.

ELZIN: (smile) Did I? Hm.

OCELANO: (calls out as she goes) At least make time to see the sunrise. Give me *that*, at least!

ELZIN: (laughs) I give you a maybe. Best I can do.

[Footsteps stop, a few computery blips over where Ocelano is.]

OCELANO: Wow. Snitchboard's been dark for three days but, hey, Detective Elzin wants some OT on Aurora night so looky-looky.

ELZIN: Huh, what've you got?

OCELANO: New duelist in the Aristo set. A good one, it looks like. Multiple duels, multiple victories. Close to scoring a real social rating.

ELZIN: Name?

OCELANO: Cerise? Ruby? Nobody wants to lockdown on that. Looks like he's central in the disappearance of a few petty 'ristos. (low whistle) Five so far.

ELZIN: Then why haven't we pinned him to the ground yet?

OCELANO: Because no bodies have turned up. No ransom notes for their safe return. The latest one, Breminsky? Just vanished. And like all the others, our description isn't terribly helpful. "Not tall, not short, not dark nor pale, not a Spacer, not Aresian, but certainly nothing like the Earthers."

ELZIN: Okay so what *do* we know?

OCELANO: He likes... red? To wear, I mean. Just... red, neck-to-heel.

ELZIN: (small annoyed grunt) I've collared worse with less. Any idea where to start?

OCELANO: Snitchboard says the target's been moving through the nightclubs in the city... Basin, Plex, Flexy Gates. Last seen heading for Castle. Looks like you're off the desk tonight, after all.

ELZIN: (on the move) Hey. OT is OT, "Comm support."

[Small cafe terrace ambiance.]

[Teacup clatters as it's set down.]

AMINA: DAMN IT. Stage two. Already. *Fantastic.*

[Footsteps stagger in.]

GIO: (slight moans, in both pain/confusion)

AMINA: Gio? Gio Blythe-Tomsin! Over here!

GIO: (still confused) Amina? Oh my god, Amina!

[Footsteps stagger over.]

AMINA: Darling, you're a mess! Whatever has happened to you?

GIO: (still out of sorts)...What? I don't-

AMINA: Come, now. Sit, sit.

[Gio sits.]

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[Footsteps over.]

SERVER: Welcome to Brizzo's Cafe, miss. What can I get for you? (looking Gio over, worried)
Should I call the ReMech Medical Center or-

AMINA: Just get her a Breeze for now, would you?

SERVER: Yes, Miss. Of course.

[Server walks off.]

AMINA: Oh my, just look at you. You're in tatters, love. Your boots are caked with wh-... oh, what's that word? Wet dirt? It- mud! Mud? Where on Ares did you find enough moisture for that?

[Server returns, sets down a glass.]

SERVER: Your Breeze, Miss. Anything else?

AMINA: Privacy.

SERVER: Of course.

[Server walks off.]

AMINA: Drink. Slowly, darling. My, what has got into you today?

GIO: Thanks. I... it's not me. It's Breminsky.

AMINA: Is it? See that I'm completely unshocked? What has that ass got you into this time? Has he hurt you in some physical way?

GIO: What? No! He never. No, no. Nothing like that.

AMINA: Then what?

GIO: It's some new bravo. He- he made advances. On Cynda?

AMINA: Ah. Breminsky's current favorite.

GIO: Mmhm. And the bravo publicly insulted him. He asked for a *dance*.

AMINA: Well, well. Bravo indeed. I presume the boys are all still agog with duels and "personal honor?" I don't know why we let them read books, they never get anything right out of them. But you're not generally so thick, darling. What prompted you to Breminsky's company?

GIO: They were going to fight over it. Over Cynda? I wanted to watch. I've never seen a duel before, you know? Breminsky likes the klef, but Red-

AMINA: Red?

GIO: The bravo. It's what we call him. From his clothes? Nobody knows his actual name. He demanded they use some blade I'd not seen before.

AMINA: Bet Breminsky didn't like that. And where did this opera perform?

GIO: Some boneyard out near Tower Seven for the venue.

AMINA: The settlers graveyard? How sparkly. Red's choice, I imagine?

GIO: It was- he said it would be quick, you know? Just some slashing and maybe a little blood. Just a little. And then after, we would celebrate with a twist. You know I like a twist.

AMINA: Darling, I'm sure half Ares knows how much you like a good twist. But not so quick for you, bit too much blood?

GIO: (freaking out a bit) There was SO MUCH, Amina! So much blood! He cut Breminsky up like- like he was like raw meat. It was so fast. So brutal. I was watching Breminsky- die, I guess- I didn't even realize... Red had moved on to the others.

AMINA: What others?

GIO: (losing it)The whole entourage! He killed everyone. EVERYONE. Cynda was just screaming and screaming. You have to know I tried, but she wouldn't come away.

AMINA: Red killed *her* as well? Like the boys? That's odd.

GIO: He KISSED her. He just looked at her. And she stopped screaming and she just... fell into him.

AMINA: Dear Gio, is it possible Cynda and this, ah, "bravo" planned the whole thing? Together?

GIO: No. He did something *to* her. Something mental. He looked at her, just *looked* at her, and then... I don't know. It was like she just...went away.

AMINA: I thought you said he was human, darling. That sounds like something xeno.

GIO: He *looked* human. He was... beautiful. Full macro.

AMINA: What else happened, darling?

GIO: I ran. His... his hands were on me the seconds that I turned. Fingers like steel vises. He told me to calm down. Told me to look at him.

AMINA: But you didn't?

GIO: I couldn't! Something inside... something animal told me if I did it would be the end of me. So I jumped.

AMINA: You... jumped?

GIO: Vault boots. Just click the heels and-

AMINA: Ninety feet straight up. I've seen the ads.

GIO: His fingers ripped my bodice on the takeoff.

AMINA: He tore that with his *hands*?

GIO: I angled away from him on the landing. Twisted my ankle, but he was still coming for me... faster than anyone I've ever seen. I jumped again. Again. I was a couple clicks up the side of Elysium Mons and he was still coming.

AMINA: (in awe) That's- no. No. How- how can that be?

GIO: I used the last charge to jump to the slide-rail station. There were people there, and I thought I'd be safe. I was almost there. But he caught me. He kept saying, "Look at me." And I did. And- (hyper calm, daydreaming) it was wonderful. Better than *any* twist. I mean it was like twisting but... on the *inside*. Like he was twisting my soul.

AMINA: Giovanna. Darling. This... person might have killed you. Did try to. If all this is so, why are you here and not off somewhere with "Twistmaster Red"?

GIO: He left.

AMINA: Huh! He left?

GIO: He said some words I didn't understand and then he just... ran off. I didn't know what to do, so I left a tip on the snitchboard and then I came here.

AMINA: What were the words? The ones you didn't understand?

GIO: My implant has them. I was going to purge them but-

AMINA: No! Oh. No, I mean, yes purge. It will give you peace of mind. But, dear, let me have the words and any images you stored in it.

GIO: Why?

AMINA: Someone will want to have SOME record. In case the police do become involved which they must if this Red or yours is staggering around murdering us all. And if the police come to talk to you...

GIO: Oh my god. Daddy's head will split if I get in any more trouble.

AMINA: My thought exactly. So let me protect you, let me help you. You give me your implant data... go to one of the stalls in the back of the cafe. I'll have clean fabs sent over for you.

GIO: Thank you, Amina. I don't know what I would have done without you.

[Gio stands and walks off.]

AMINA: Thank you, dear. (louder) Oh, Gio? Data transfer, please, love.

GIO: Yes, yes, of course.

[Gio's implant activates- little string of "blips".]

GIO: Access. Six hours, retro. Link.

[Amina pulls her computery device out of a bag, it blips on.]

AMINA: Link. Download. Go.

[Two Bleeps - Gio and Amina – finishing the download.]

GIO: Good?

AMINA: VERY, good. Go on, darling. Fabs await.

GIO: Good. Yes. Yes. Good.

[Gio's footsteps, moving off.]

AMINA: Playback, full AV, go.

[Super fast sound of people talking, the swordfight, the screams. Too fast to pull out anything distinct.]

AMINA: (delighted) Oh, my. Oh MY, he's beautiful. And SO quick... Wait. Stop.

[Computer beeps.]

AMINA: Playback from 65622. Clip at 74555.

GIO: (on the recording, terrified) No! Please, no!

RED: (on the recording) Look at me, morsel. Look at me and- What? Soarele nu este departe! Oaltă dată, iubito!

AMINA: Translate that.

[Computery blip.]

COMPUTER VOICE: Language ID. Archaic. Romanian. Translation: "The sun is not far. Another time, sweetheart."

AMINA: The sun? That's queer. Why should it bother him so? Unless... no that's just silly. But, what if? What if he *is*? Social map.

[More computery blips.]

COMPUTER VOICE: Map accessed.

AMINA: List sites Romanian has been detected by incidental audio monitoring stations in the past... two hours.

[More computery blips.]

COMPUTER VOICE: Point two five hours ago at nightclub: Castle.

AMINA: Oh. Lovely. It's been ages since I went dancing.

[A passenger car humming along through a giant tube, as heard from inside the car.]

OCELANO: (on comms) You know you work too much, right?

ELZIN: Hey. Stop mothering me.

OCELANO: (on comms) Stop being a big fat baby lady. Sending our best composite render of the target's appearance to your holo.

[A computery blip.]

ELZIN: Got it. Thanks. Wait. This is it?

OCELANO: (on comms) I told you, the accounts wouldn't confirm. The AI had to approximate. Notice the duds though.

ELZIN: Well I hope he keeps the dress code.

OCELANO: (on comms) You just remember to keep *yours*.

[Weapon withdrawn from holster, switch flipped, slight electric zap.]

ELZIN: Stunner's lit. Trackers set.

[Soothing bing over loudspeakers.]

TUBE ANNOUNCER: Now arriving at the downtown entertainment district.

[Car comes to a halt, tube opens, futuristic city bg sfx come up.]

ELZIN: This duelist has sliced his last risto.

[Elzin steps out, others step in, tube closes and car hums off.]

[Dreamnasium theme plays.]

THE MUSE: Geoffrey Thorne's "Dreamnasium", episode five. "Red Shift," part one.

Featuring the voice talents of:

Channe Nolen as Amina Fisk-Okker

Joe J. Thomas as Red

Kristen Bays as Gio

Pete Milan as Breminsky

Darian Lindle as Cynda

Barbra Dillon as the Computer Voice and the Tube Announcer

Kathryn Pryde as Elzin

Jessie Moore as Ocelano

Jack Calk as the Server

and Melissa Autumn Hearne as The Muse

Written by Jeffrey & Susan Bridges, based on the original short story "Red Shift" by Geoffrey Thorne

Dreamnasium theme by Vincent Morrison

Music by Josh Molen at TheTunePeddler.com

Directed by Landon Beall

Produced by Pendant Productions

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Thanks for listening

[Dreamnasium theme fades out.]