

## **DREAMNASIUM, episode 6: "Red/Shift," part 2**

[Synthy Dreamnasium theme.]

THE MUSE: Dreamnasium. Function: noun. A state of mind, marked by abstraction or release from consensual reality. "Red Shift," part 2.

[Dreamnasium theme continues, then fades out.]

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[Elzin as she walks through a futuristic city.]

[City fades just a little as some OONTZ OONTZ music and the sounds of revelers from inside a club fades up.]

[Hologram spritzes on.]

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: Come one, come all, to Castle, where we treat you like royalty! See: our many fine dancers! Imbibe: our many fine beverages! Enjoy: yourself more than you thought possible! And remember, our Castle is your castle!

[Elzin's footsteps stop in front of Liam.]

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: Welcome to Castle...

[computery accessing sounds.]

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: ...Officer Elzin! I'm Liam, your Castle holo host! To what do we owe the pleasure?

ELZIN: I'm tracking a duelist. Recent arrival, possibly illegal. This is his render.

[Bleep from Elzin's portable console, spritz of another holo coming on.]

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: He'd certainly stand out in a crowd! Does he always wear red?

ELZIN: Don't know. Maybe. Have you seen him?

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: I'm afraid I haven't, Officer!

ELZIN: Mm.

[Elzin's holo spritzes off.]

ELZIN: Well then I don't suppose you'd mind if I go inside, have a look around?

[Footsteps as she walks past the holo, not waiting for the answer.]

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: Oh, of course not! Come in! Enjoy! Our Castle is your castle!

[Just the city bg for a moment.]

[Computery blip as the advertising program resets.]

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: Come one, come all, to Castle, where we treat you like royalty! See: our many fine dancers! Imbibe: our many fine beverages! Enjoy: your-

[Footsteps up under the above line.]

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: Welcome to Castle...

[Computery accessing sounds.]

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: ...Amina Fisk-Okker! I'm Liam, your Castle holo host! To what do we owe the pleasure?

AMINA: I'm looking for someone.

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: Ooh, let me guess. Hm, eyes just slightly too far apart, pupils just slightly too large, fingers just slightly too tapery and long? Dresses in red?

AMINA: How did you know?

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: Ah! An APOL officer was just here looking for the very same person. Of course I said I hadn't seen him. Informing the constabulary of our clientele's whereabouts is rarely good for business.

AMINA: Well done. My thoughts exactly. He's in there, isn't he?

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: He is. Kwai Kazugi-Shepperton is hosting the clash poets tonight.

AMINA: (not a thrill) Thrilling. Of course she is. And what is the prize, a night in a porn VR?

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: Oh, no. Nothing so pedestrian. Tonight's winner gets to twist anyone they want.

AMINA: Anyone? What's that mean?

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: Ah! Anyone watching is fair game, house rules.

AMINA: Kwai loves scandal. Ah, well. Normally I'd not be caught dead with her, but...

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: Big plans later in the evening? Marathon twist session, perhaps?

[Amina ignores him and walks into the club.]

[We stay with her, the OONTZ OONTZ music rises as Liam calls after her.]

LIAM THE HOLOGRAM: Have a pleasant evening! Be sure to tip your bartender! I've been Liam, your Castle holo host!

[Castle club doors open automatically.]

[OONTZ OONTZ, dancing and revelers, as Amina walks through the crowd.]

[Music and dancing fade out as Amina moves to Castle's back room.]

[Quiet crowd murmurs.]

KWAI: Bravos to the ring.

[A few footsteps forward.]

KWAI: Choose your weapons.

BRAVO: I select rhyme.

KWAI: Form?

BRAVO: Riddle

KWAI: Challenger?

[A few booted footsteps forward.]

RED: I am ready.

KWAI: Accepted. Gather and witness.

[Slight crowd movement as everyone gets into position.]

[Comm blip.]

OCELANO: (on comms) Well? Tagged him yet?

ELZIN: I've got eyes on him. No tag.

OCELANO: (on comms) What's the stall?

ELZIN: The crowd. I can't get close enough to get a clear...

OCELANO: (on comms) Rache? You need to *talk* for me to receive your thoughts. You got eyes on him or not?

ELZIN: I've got eyes. He's...(a little transfixed) beautiful. Tall. Slender. Elegant. He seems almost... sculpted.

OCELANO: (on comms) I'm showing a spike in your pulse. What's happening?

ELZIN: (steadying sigh) He's facing off with some bravo in the middle of the space.

OCELANO: (on comms) Another duel? In public?

ELZIN: No. It's some kind of poetry competition, I think.

BRAVO: (clears throat) My petal blooms in many rooms, in space it grows in splendor. Oh-two it needs to fill its greed, but fission makes it render.

RED: Fire. You are fire.

BRAVO: (defeated) Correct, sir.

[Beep of point scored.]

KWAI: Point. Second pass.

RED: As you say, Miss. (beat) Blood is lovely. Blood is life. A rolling boiling treasure. I walk in beauty, like a knife, to feed my hunger's pleasure.

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BRAVO: It's... I... (defeated again) Concession.

[Beep of point scored.]

KWAI: Point. You win the day.

[Applause from the crowd.]

KWAI: Time to choose a trophy.

[Comm blip.]

OCELANO: (on comms) What is happening?

ELZIN: He's picking his prize? I don't understand... I- I don't see what he's supposed to win.

OCELANO: (on comms) These baby 'ristos are so flexy it could be anything.

ELZIN: Oh my god he's— he's pointing at me? (excited, whispering) He's pointing at... (Can't hide her disappointment, though she tries to) Oh. No. (clears throat) Moved on.

RED: You.

AMINA: *Me?*

RED: You.

AMINA: Full flattered, I'm sure.

[Applause from around the room.]

ELZIN: It's the lady to my left. *She's* the prize.

OCELANO: (on comms) Got an ID on *her*?

ELZIN: Running a check.

[Computer accessing data blips.]

ELZIN: No visible body mod or tints, gene marks... primarily Negroid origin, some Polynesian. She's beautiful. Wait. Zeroing her signet.

[More computer blips.]

ELZIN: She's a Fisk-Okker. Family colors match too. I can't place her face. I can't see-

[Elzin bumps into someone in the crowd.]

ELZIN: EXCUSE me.

[Klef blade drawn across the room.]

[Crowd shock, murmur.]

ELZIN: No! Damn it!

OCELANO: (on comms) What now?

ELZIN: The Bravo didn't take kindly to losing. Got a klef.

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

ELZIN: If he gets to Red before I do-

[Rapier drawn, slicing through the air, cutting into flesh]

BRAVO: (gurgling as his neck's cut)

[Body slumps to floor.]

ELZIN: Jesu!

RED: Come, my dear.

[Crowd noise resumes, footsteps heading off.]

ELZIN: Damn it. Medicus! I need a medicus over here!

[Stunner re-holstered.]

ELZIN: Ocelano. You getting my ocular feed?

OCELANO: (on comms) Affirmative. That's at least one murder with proof of deed while we piece together the other duels.

ELZIN: Crowd's too thick, I'm losing him!

OCELANO: (on comms) You want infrared?

ELZIN: No, too cluttery with all these bodies. Give me mag rez.

[Computery blip heard across the comm.]

OCELANO: (on comms) Magnetic resonance is active.

[The world starts to sound muffled and swirly. Almost sounds like being underwater, without the liquid and with a bit more echo.]

OCELANO: (on comms) Got him?

ELZIN: Yeah. He's- something's off about his signature. It's almost rigid. Damn it. They're almost out the door.

OCELANO: (on comms) If we lose him now, who knows when we'll find him again.

ELZIN: Tag.

[Almost like a little electrical dart coming from Elzin, whipping across the room, thudding into Red unnoticed.]

[Computery beep heard through the commlink.]

OCELANO: (on comms) Locked. We got him! Wherever he goes, whatever disguise he wears, your tag will show him in the scans.

ELZIN: Track me too. Just in case. I'll keep eyes on him.

OCELANO: (on comms) Copy. Go get him, Rache.

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[The light chatter, footsteps and goings-on of an upper-class residential apartment building.]

RED: (true awe) This place. It's fantastic.

AMINA: Really? This is just the *lobby*. Wait until we get to my suites. Then you'll see real beauty.

RED: I see real beauty now.

AMINA: Flattery.

RED: (laugh) Truth.

AMINA: Accepted.

[They stand, walk over to a series of transpods...think the elevators in a large hotel.]

AMINA: All right. On the way up you can tell me things.

RED: Things?

AMINA: Where on Earth you're from. How you got here. Why I haven't seen you before tonight.

RED: Why should you have seen me if I did not wish to be known?

AMINA: (delighted laugh) Darling, it's my business to know things. Learn things. Understand things.

[Button pressed, doors open.]

RED: (curious) What is this?

AMINA: (delighted) Just the transpod up to my place. Come on.

[He follows her in, doors close.]

[Another button pressed, slight hum as the transpod rises.]

RED: How does it move? There is no fuel, no vibration...

AMINA: (trying to woo him, getting a bit sexy) Darling, who cares? It will get us where we need to go.

RED: Amazing. The city, it's like a field of stars.

AMINA: You're right. I sometimes forget to look. It's quite beautiful. Was it difficult for you to leave Earth?

RED: (mulling it over) I suppose Earth left me first. I no longer recognized it. The things I knew... the cathedral forests, the wine-dark seas, all gone now.

AMINA: I agree. So industrial. It's all corporate spires and flux metal railways.

RED: The sunsets, gone. The nights. The days. The little monkeys have made the world over in everlasting gray.

AMINA: The same people who did all that colonized the city in which you sit, dear. Is it really any better here?

RED: For now, if there's a heaven, Ares is it. Earth is a husk but here there are ample... diversions.

AMINA: Like dueling? I can't believe that's really a thrill. Not for someone like you.

RED: (laugh) It is becoming tiresome, I admit. None of these children have sufficient skill or creativity with a blade to truly entertain me.

AMINA: And that's all you're looking for, entertainment?

RED: I suppose. The dancing, the marathon- what do you call them? Twists? Even to this new bizarre ritual of combat-in-rhyme. They will distract for a time.

AMINA: Well, they've led you to me, anyway. And me to you. (beat) Penny.

RED: Penny?

AMINA: What are you thinking about?

RED: You, my dear. Only you.

[Elevator ping. Transpod doors open. ]

AMINA: And we're here. Arrived. My family owns this tower's Penthouse level. You could come in.... we could have a drink.

RED: Yes. Yes, we could.

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[The Aurora festival, very carnival-like.]

ELZIN: Damn it.

[Comm blip.]

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OCELANO: (on comms) Lost him?

ELZIN: Made it to the edge of the promenade.

OCELANO: (on comms) Sat-trackers aren't being terribly helpful. There's a lot of chaff from the festival activity, I- there! Got a hit on a magtag in the apex of Tower Two. Weird signature. That's *got* to be our guy. Riding up in a transpod.

ELZIN: On it.

OCELANO: (on comms) Top floor, Rache! Platinum caste.

ELZIN: Wonderful.

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[That all-too pleasant and calming warm technical background of Amina's place.]

AMINA: (Behind the door) That'll be all.

COMPUTER VOICE: (Behind the door) Confirmed.

[Computery blip heard behind the door.]

[Powered door opens across the room.]

RED: So many halls and rooms, you could lose yourself here.

AMINA: Never. This place is like my second skin.

RED: I thought you were changing into something more... *appropriate*?

AMINA: Whatever do you mean?

RED: You were in there for not a little amount of time.

AMINA: Just taking care of some last minute business. Want to be sure this evening goes... smoothly.

RED: Mmm. Do you know, in my youth... I dreamed of this place?

AMINA: Did?

RED: Yes, a place of stars above and below. A place of darkness and beauty. It terrified me.

AMINA: Really? I can't imagine *anything* that would terrify you.

RED: There was a woman among my people, a dark woman from a traveling clan. She knew many things. She told the future, she told the past. Hidden things which no one could know. Yet she would not tell me the meaning of my dream or why it should frighten me so.

AMINA: Wouldn't?

RED: Couldn't, perhaps. It is the same.

[Pouring two drinks, glasses picked up, Amina's footsteps cross to Red.]

RED: Thank you.

AMINA: What happened to her?

RED: What happened to *any* who displeased me in those days.

AMINA: That was?

RED: (nonchalant) I had her impaled on the gate of my father's castle.

AMINA: Unpleasant. (kisses him)

[A kiss.]

RED: (kissing her, then) You are not shocked by this.

AMINA: No. What else do you expect from a *vampire*?

RED: (a quiet sound of confusion)

[Red's footsteps toward the door, but they suddenly stop.]

AMINA: Block.

[Computer device blips on.]

COMPUTER VOICE: Defense matrix activated. Sealing all apertures.

[Heavy steel doors slide down across the door and all the windows around the room.]

RED: What is this? What did you call me?

AMINA: Vampire. It's what I think you are.

[A few footsteps as she plops down on a sofa.]

AMINA: And this? This is a negotiation.

[A tense moment, then Red walks over and sits next to her.]

RED: You surprise me.

AMINA: Did hope to.

RED: (a slight sigh) What do you want?

AMINA: Do you know that the Fisk-Okkers control 33 percent of all business concerns on Ares? And nearly a quarter of them on the Earth? Throughout the system, our name carries the weight of our combined knowledge and resources. *We rule*. Just like the kings and queens you remember. Just like *that*. And I am a princess in all *that*. Do you understand? *All* the power, *all* the influence, all of *everything* EXCEPT responsibility. It was heaven. Prager's Disease took it all from me. Is taking. I'm dying.

[Glasses tink together.]

RED: Everything alive is dying, child.

AMINA: Everything except *you*. And I'm dying *soon*. I'm dying *now*. At least, I thought I was. And then I had a *lovely* talk.

RED: (confused sound)

AMINA: Gio Blythe-Tomsin.

RED: Ah.

AMINA: Imagine my surprise when she told me about you and your antics. Nothing human could do what you've done. Be invisible to everything, and yet...

RED: And yet?

AMINA: You've got daggers in your smile. And that's no metaphor. I had to get a look at you to be sure. It was so crazy even to think it but once... IDID see. Once I knew-

RED: Enough. What do you want?

AMINA: Aren't you listening? I want to *live*.

RED: You wish me to infect you with the curse of my condition.

AMINA: Prager's can't kill me if I can't die.

RED: An interesting request. And, if I agree to do this... favor? What for me?

AMINA: You walk out of here *free* with me as your guide and consort for the next century, maybe two. Think about it, darling. Think it through. I'm offering you so much more than you're giving me.

[Red stands and walks a few paces away.]

RED: I will do it. *After* you open the doors.

AMINA: Before.

RED: (slight resigned sigh) As you wish. Just... one thing.

AMINA: Yes?

[Amina rises and walks to him.]

RED: (with power) Show me your neck.

[She attempts to set her drink on a table, it slides and falls, shatters.]

AMINA: (overcome by the command)... yes...

RED: (with power) Now. Tell me. The door. How does it open?

AMINA: (spacey) The... door? What... door?

RED: All right.

[He bites her neck.]

AMINA: (gasp of pleasure/pain) Ah!

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[Pacing back and forth.]

ELZIN: I've been waiting outside this door forever! Is Red even still inside?

[Computery blip heard over comms.]

OCELANO: (on comms) Sat-tracker confirms. He's in there.

ELZIN: With any luck he and the woman are passed out from... whatever. How about that warrant?

OCELANO: (on comms) Just came in. You're good to go.

[Computer beeps. Door whooshes open.]

ELZIN: Damn, this place is a maze. Okay, switching to infrared.

[Blip.]

ELZIN: Okay, I've got one heat trail winding along the floor.

OCELANO: (on comms) Just one?

ELZIN: What I said. And it's the girl's. I can see her after image.

OCELANO: (on comms) What about Mr. Red?

ELZIN: Guess I'm about to find out.

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RED: (a short, almost animalistic growl)

AMINA: (a wheezing gasp for breath) (death rattle)

RED: Nnn. Useless. I will do this myself.

[Computery beep across the room.]

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[Red walks over to it, presses a few buttons.]

RED: Some combination must raise the shutters...

[Computery beep again.]

RED: Yes, yes. Shut up.

[More button presses, nothing's happening.]

RED: (yell of frustration)

[Red slams his fist on the console.]

[Computery beep again.]

COMPUTER VOICE: Timed holographic message delivery commencing. Message begins.

[Hologram spritzes on.]

AMINA HOLO: (cheery) Hello there! Hi!

RED: (fearful whisper) Are... are you a spirit?

AMINA HOLO: I'm a *message*. If you're seeing me, I'm, well, dead. Most likely you've betrayed me.

RED: (soft, scared) Let me- let me out of here.

AMINA HOLO: For some reason you reneged on our agreement. The odds were against you being so *stupid* but, mm, well, what are odds, anyway, really? Just guesses. So, this message, I set it to trigger at three minutes before aurora.

RED: (a couple terrified breaths)

AMINA HOLO: My offer was sincere, you know. I would have given you the worlds. Was it so much to ask for you to share your immortality with me?

RED: It doesn't work like that. There *are* no others like me. There never could be. It's not something I could share even if I wished to. That's what it means to be *cursed*.

AMINA HOLO: (with genuine regret) It doesn't matter now, I guess. I'm already dead. But I'm still a Fisk-Okker and I'm afraid we don't deal very well with betrayal.

[Computer alert.]

COMPUTER VOICE: Aurora in minus two minutes.

RED: (sounds of panic)

[Red furiously punching buttons, trying to get the door to open to no avail.]

AMINA HOLO: I did my research. I know some of the rules. There's no wood on Ares to make stakes. And... I couldn't bear to set a fire inside my family's suites. I don't even know what "holy water" *is*. So, if you betrayed me, I only had one option available. One punishment.

[Computer alert.]

COMPUTER VOICE: Aurora in one minute.

AMINA HOLO: I really do hope you had time to enjoy the view. That's why my father had these suites built here, you see.

RED: (panicked breaths)

AMINA: For the *sunrise*.

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[A few footsteps as Elzin walks.]

ELZIN: Still following the thermal trail. I think they're...

RED: (screams of utmost agony heard behind a steel door)

ELZIN: What the hell?

[Footsteps running, stop after a moment.]

ELZIN: Ares Police! HEY! Are you all right in there!?

[Fist banging inside the steel door.]

RED: (screaming in agony, murmuring words we can't quite make out) Sunnnn...

[Fist banging again.]

ELZIN: This is Officer Elzin with APOL! Please-

[Flames heard from behind the door. The screaming abruptly stops.]

[A click as the door unlocks, steel panel withdraws.]

[Door slides open.]

ELZIN: (in pain) Ahh, too much light! Dumping infrared!

[Blip heard over comm.]

OCELANO: (on comms) Could have told you. Better?

ELZIN: (shaking it off) Ugh. Yeah. Much. Ugh. What in the hell?

[A few footsteps forward into the room, walking around.]

OCELANO: (on comms) All we show is you standing in an empty room.

ELZIN: It's not empty. I mean. The furniture's here. Top shelf stuff, of course. Two glasses of wine... one spilled, one not.

[A few footsteps.]

ELZIN: Now *that's* weird. Massive dents in the inside of the door. Vaguely, um... fist-shaped? Oh, hell.

OCELANO: (on comms) ...care to elaborate?

ELZIN: Body on the floor. It's the Fisk-Okker princess. Looks like she's been... *mummified* somehow. Completely dried out.

OCELANO: (on comms) I'll call in the forensic bots, let them determine the modus. No sign of our duelist?

ELZIN: None.

OCELANO: (on comms) How can that be?

ELZIN: There's no other way out of this room but the windows. And with those, there's nowhere to go but down. Miles and miles of down.

OCELANO: (on comms) Maybe... he landed on a lower floor outcropping? Or-

ELZIN: Checking.

[A few footsteps, door opening.]

[Aurora festival sounds filter in from below.]

ELZIN: Nope. Tower's sheer on this side. Who the hell was this guy?

OCELANO: (on comms) Great. We're going to get weekend shifts for a month.

[Fireworks launched from the ground, popping in fizzy sparks in the sky.]

ELZIN: (a pleasant sound) Mm.

OCELANO: (on comms) Elzin? We're going to have to call this in, get the wheels rolling, file the first of the ten thousand reports that-

ELZIN: Eh, that can wait. (beat) I'm enjoying the sunrise.

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[Dreamnasium theme plays.]

THE MUSE: Geoffrey Thorne's "Dreamnasium", episode six. "Red Shift," part two.

Featuring the voice talents of:

Channe Nolen as Amina Fisk-Okker

Joe J. Thomas as Red

Kathryn Pryde as Elzin

Jessie Moore as Ocelano

Philip Weber as Liam the Hologram

Marte Brengle as Kwai

Perry Whittle as the Bravo

Barbra Dillon as the Computer Voice

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](http://TheTunePeddler.com)

Directed by Kathryn Pryde

Produced by Pendant Productions

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[Dreamnasium theme fades out.]