

2021-06

"This House Is Now" (Desert In, episode 1)

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Boston University

desert in

An opera miniseries in eight episodes

Conceived by

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Music by

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Libretto by

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Based on a scenario by

Ellen Reid, christopher oscar peña, and James Darrah

Commissioned by **Boston Lyric Opera**

Premiered by **Boston Lyric Opera** in June 2021

WHITE PRODUCTION DRAFT: 03/14/2021

FULL BLUE REVISION: 04/06/2021

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CHARACTERS

- Ion
- Federico
- Rufus
- Cass
- Sunny
- An Old Man/Derek
- The Old Man's Son/Derek's Son
- The Lounge Singer
- The Stranger
- Various other MOTEL GUESTS/VAPORS

NOTES

-All dialogue is sung except for when otherwise noted in **BOLD**.

-The Totems:

Rufus' totem is a seahorse.

Federico's totem is a camera.

The Lounge Singer's totem is an old-timey microphone.

The Old Man's Son totem is a pinwheel.

Chapter One

"This House is Now"

Written by

Kirsten Greenidge

Composer

Ellen Reid

Note: This episode is mostly SUNG, except for one line in BOLD.

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1-1 **EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY (DAY ONE)** 1-1 *

Expanse of desert. Lost in the middle of this huge landscape. Desolate. Off the map. This roadway is slightly off the grid. *

The sky is deep purple and red and orange. We are on a curve of EMPTY ROAD, far from town, where gravel meets decrepit asphalt. DUST billows in the wake of a -- *

A BRONCO winds its way down the narrow road: vintage. We watch the truck whiz down the road and then settle into a parking space outside the Inn, its side sign and garden oasis hidden from view. *

The SOUND of the truck's door opening and slamming. We go through a WOODEN DOOR GATEWAY into -- *

1-2 **INT. LOBBY/THE DESERT INN - DAY** 1-2 *

SUNNY, 50s but still appears a striking 25, stands at the Desert Inn's old fashioned REGISTER, preparing for the day. CASS, a bit older, but who also only looks to be about 30, leans with her back against the counter, the steam from her tea swirling up to her eyes. Cass smiles at Sunny through the steam. Sunny doesn't notice at first. Then she does, and when she does, she blushes. Big time. Cass grins. Sunny smiles back. Behind them, a KEY RACK is with a keychain missing a token and a VINTAGE TV sits in the corner PLAYING silent travel-mercials. *

CASS

'Morning.

SUNNY

'Morning.

Cass leans in for a kiss that almost seems like a steal, hugs her from behind. They gaze out of the plate glass window.

CASS

Sunny, my wife. My violet sky.
Twenty years together. This never gets old. Oh oh oh...

Sunny breaks.

SUNNY

Why should it get old? Oh oh oh...

Sunny swats Cass's ass. They kiss.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

Cass, my golden moon.

DING-DING. A handsome man with a disability, FEDERICO, early 30s, uniformed, complete with belt, cap, and industrial shoe-wear RINGS the front desk bell. Sunny pulls away from the embrace.

*

SUNNY (CONT'D)

Federico! Welcome home, darling.

Federico kisses Sunny on the cheek. Cass slurps her tea.

1-3

EXT. THE COURTYARD/POOL AREA - DAY

1-3

The SOUND of water rippling. Federico walks through courtyard, framed by BRICKS of glass. In the morning light, he carries a valise, with KEYS hanging off them (more on this later).

*

*

As Federico crosses, the surface of the pool STIRS and the SOUND of his footsteps mixes with what sounds like SYRUPY WHISPERING. Federico passes by Room 8, touching the number so that it becomes the infinity sign. Keeps walking.

*

*

*

OFF the door, we HEAR WAVES CRASHING. A jarring moment. But the MUFFLED SOUND of a lingering party in the next room catches his attention. Federico strides to the offending room, he gives a BANG on the door.

*

*

*

*

FEDERICO

*

(SPOKEN)

*

Shut up.

*

The party QUIETS slightly. Then, he breezes by Room 8. From inside we hear GIGGLES, VAPORS and other NOISES.

*

*

VAPORS (O.S.)

*

(moans)

(Oooo, Darling...) (Aaaaaaaah...)

(Rufus...) (Ion...) (My darling)

ION (O.S.)

Here. Here. Rufus.

*

He hesitates for a moment, but then continues. As he continues, WE STAY ON ROOM 8, the camera MOVING INSIDE THE ROOM...

*

*

*

1-4 **INT. ROOM 8/THE DESERT INN - DAY**

1-4

Golden surreal light. ION, early 30s, and RUFUS, early 30s, barely if-at-all clothed, under a glorious rumple of bedsheets. After each "here", Ion and Rufus find a new place on the other's body to touch or kiss. *

ION

Here. *

RUFUS

Here, Ion. Here, no. Here. *

Here. *

ION

Here. Here. *

RUFUS

Here. Here. *

ION

Here. Here. Here. *

RUFUS

No, no... Here. Don't you remember? *

The sheets billow around Ion and Rufus; they are engulfed.

FLASHBACK WITH ASPECT RATIO CHANGE to their first meeting: *

1-5 **EXT. BEACH - DAY (FLASHBACK 1)**

1-5

Ion writing in a notebook, on a blanket watching a SURFER catch a wave and then come up on shore. Tugging on his bodysuit, Rufus catches Ion's eye as he WALKS towards him. *

1-6 **EXT. BEACH - SAME DAY (FLASHBACK 1)**

1-6

Ion has snagged Rufus, as they lie on his blanket together. They smile at each other, charmed at finding themselves fitting into a perfect embrace. Their first kiss is magic. *

1-7 **EXT. BEACH - LATER THAT SAME DAY (FLASHBACK 1)**

1-7

Rufus surfs, while Ion sits on his blanket on the shore, watching. Rufus is pulled under and... doesn't come back up. Ion rises and approaches the shore, watching for him. *

END FLASHBACK.

1-8

INT. ROOM 8/THE DESERT INN - DAY

1-8

ION

Here? Here.

They giggle. They play. They rough house.

ION (CONT'D)

Here. Here.

Ion bites Rufus' ass cheek playfully and Rufus responds equally playfully, but Ion's next gesture is sharp, and Rufus gets riled up.

RUFUS

Here, here here here.

No, not there.

Not there, Ion.

That must have been

One of your others.

Rufus pulls away. Ion shrinks a bit, then reaches out to Rufus.

ION

We're here. In this place, let's
not ruin this place now -

*

RUFUS

This place now.

Ion's eyes plead with Rufus.

Rufus kisses Ion's forehead and Ion closes his eyes.

Rufus kisses Ion's mouth.

RUFUS (CONT'D)

Always here.

ION

Here.

Rufus kisses Ion's heart beneath Ion's chest. The two interlock fingers and we see their WEDDING BANDS shine. The bedsheets swell.

FLASHBACK TO:

1-9

EXT. BEACH - SAME DAY AS EARLIER (FLASHBACK 1)

1-9

*

Ion on shore, staring where Rufus went under water. Ion smiles as he has before, waits for Rufus to resurface.

*

VAPORS (O.S.)

(Ah...)

FLASH of Ion's hand like a visor shielding his eyes, watching for Rufus. Smiling. *

FLASH of Ion's hand like a visor shielding his eyes, watching for Rufus. Worried. *

FLASH of Ion's hand like a visor shielding his eyes, watching for Rufus. Frantic. *

As we **END FLASHBACK**, HEAR PRE-LAP of BANG BANG BANG on door.

1-10

INT. ROOM 8/DESERT INN - DAY

1-10

The light of the day has shifted, casting the room in a sad gloom. Awakening as if from a dream, Ion lies alone in bed, his legs and the bedsheets a tangled mass, his palm where Rufus might be, beside him. He peeks under the sheets, but Rufus has DISAPPEARED. Ion looks around and catches his reflection in the MIRROR opposite the bed. BANG BANG BANG. Startled, Ion opens the door to Room 8. It is Cass. *

CASS

Time's up, Ion.

ION

A little longer please?

She rubs her fingers and thumb together: "money".

His face is crushed. They share a look and he does not see any mercy there. He scrambles to find his pants. He is like a whirlwind around the room, peeking under things, flinging a cushion, lifting a chair. Finally, he gets his PANTS on the floor, then to his WALLET, but it's empty except for his ID.

ION (CONT'D)

Cass, please? My Rufus is the river that flows to my ocean. I'll give anything.

CASS

That's sweet, me and Sunny, we like sweet. Sunny is my wife, my sky. Don't cry, sweet Ion. Sweet Ion, don't cry. Sunny and I have a cabin in the woods, where mist rolls in every morning, cedars walk by our sides.

(MORE)

CASS (CONT'D)

Sunny and I (Sunny and I, Sunny and I) we have a saying: Do anything to keep love safe.

ION

Anything.

She smiles at him. He smiles back. They have an understanding.

Cass gestures and Federico appears in the doorway out of nowhere. She gives him a key with Rufus' token on it. He is unbelievably hot. Distractedly so. Ion cannot take his eyes off of him. Suddenly, his confidence is shaken.

*

*

1-11

EXT. WOODEN GATE DOOR/RTE. 66 - SUNSET

1-11

*

The wooden door of the Inn serves as a gateway portal to the outside world. We venture out to the curve of road. Desert quiet. The Desert Inn SIGN lights up as night falls. The SOUND of a neon light fritzing: BLACKOUT.

*

*

*

*

END OF EPISODE.

Chapter Two

"Love Is Like the Sea"

Written by

Joy Kecken

Composer

Nathalie Joachim

Note: This episode is SUNG in its entirety.

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OVER BLACK:

Water SPLASHES. MUSIC swells. LAUGHTER. These are the delightful aphonial MARKERS of a wild party underway.

2-12 **EXT. GATE/POOL AREA/DESERT INN - GOLDEN HOUR (NIGHT ONE)** 2-12 *

Cacti, palms, agave and other desert fauna frame a dying sun. ION and RUFUS arrive, the darkness wrapping around them like a blanket. Ion is distracted by the pool party. On the gate a SIGN reads: No people in the pool after 10PM. *

ION
(re: sign)
Not much time.

A large BLOWUP FLOATIE drifts across the pool with our LOUNGE SINGER sipping on a steaming sugary yellow cocktail with those fun umbrellas in it. **INTERCUT WITH:** *

2-12A **INT. LOUNGE - DAY ZERO (LIMBO FLASHBACK 2)** 2-12A *

Our Lounge Singer performs to an empty room. *

BACK TO SCENE -- *

We cut between her singing here to where she's wasted in pool, a different color drink in her hand each time. *

LOUNGE SINGER
(drunk and slurry)
...And there's free cable, so sleep
til noon... *

2-12B **INT. LOUNGE - DAY ZERO (LIMBO FLASHBACK 2)** 2-12B *

Back in the empty lounge, we REVEAL Cass in the back watching her. And later, THREE WOMEN, dressed to the nines, look on too. *

BACK TO SCENE -- *

She sings on in pool, another drink in hand. *

LOUNGE SINGER
(drunk and slurry)
...Checkout time's never coming
soon *

(MORE)

LOUNGE SINGER (CONT'D)

When you're down here at the Desert
Inn...

[ALT TEXT: Warm sun for your faded
skin

All you're longing to see is here
Doesn't matter the time of year
They're all waiting at the Desert
Inn

They're here at the Inn...

They're down at the Inn!

The Desert Inn

Down here at the Desert Inn]

*

EVERYONE is having too good a time to notice how bad she
sounds. Drinks flow, the three WOMEN float in the pool or
sit around the FIRE PIT. A BLENDER mixes blended drinks of
many colors. DISJOINTED ECHOES of PEOPLE are vibrant and
strange, vibrating to their own beat, surreally crossing in
different dress, alive while energetically trapped in this
garden oasis. An OLD MAN, whom we don't quite know yet but
will, lays out moonbathing and a YOUNG MAN, toned, in a hot
yellow Speedo, slides next to him with one of the sugary
drinks and whispers in his ear to the Old Man's delight and
laughter. Ion and Rufus clock this and share a look. Is it
that kind of party?

*

*

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*

Up for anything, Ion holds the gate open for Rufus, like the
romantic enamored gentleman he is. They enter.

2-13

EXT. POOL AREA/DESERT INN - NIGHT (NIGHT ONE)

2-13

*

As soon as Ion slips past the gate, Rufus clutches his hand
to his heart. They only have eyes for each other and fail to
notice -

The STARS competing with the FAIRY LIGHTS hanging in the
willows, bouncing the lights around like a disco ball. And a
very vintage theme is on: Halston 80s big hair, loads of
feathers and sequins. Boleros and bikinis in desert sunset
colors from purple to dusty pink. Flower crowns braided into
the hair, and bright, painted faces. Lots of turquoise rings
and body art painted on the skin.

*

ION

Let's go for a swim, my love...

RUFUS

Wait.

Almost anything for you.

But that.

Not that, no.

Ion draws Rufus closer, chest to chest, nose to nose. Rufus looks in Ion's eyes, tempted but terrified. They share a look.

From where CASS and SUNNY stand, Ion and Rufus look completely besotted with each other.

CASS

...The two lovebirds I was telling
you about.

SUNNY

They remind me of us.

Cass and Sunny approach. Rufus turns, bashful, snug in Ion's arms. Ion extends his hand to Cass. Cass takes it, drawing her Sunny close too, Sunny's head on Cass' shoulder. The two couples are mirror images of each other.

ION

(to Cass)

Your wife?

(off her nod)

My husband.

Rufus and Sunny kiss on both cheeks, like the Europeans do. Cass and Ion watch them.

SUNNY

Just married?

(off Rufus' nod)

You're like Cass and me.

Our anniversary's tomorrow.

Someone overhears this and spreads the word. MURMURS ring around the party:

VAPORS (O.S.)

(Anniversary, anniversary!)

(Congratulations!) (A toast)

*

The three women raise their glass as a tinkling SPOONS hit champagne flutes and cocktail glasses. A TOAST to the happy couple, a la CHEERS:

*

VAPORS/PARTYGOERS (O.S.)

Cass and Sunny forever!

*

Cass and Sunny beam, and kiss to acknowledge the ritual. It really is a beautiful vibe, everyone happy for the hostesses of the party. Cass and Sunny pick up with Ion and Rufus after the interruption:

CASS
We'll renew our vows...

SUNNY
Balloons
and sparklers
and wedding cake...

CASS
Veils
and top hats
will be at the door
when you wake...

SUNNY
A renewal of vows
to each other
and the Desert Inn.

Ion is moved by this. Cass and Sunny surround him to comfort him, delighted.

ION
The things we can do here.

Sunny points out all the REUNITED COUPLES (various VAPORS) here, proud.

SUNNY
The Howards.
The Yorkes and Drakes.
Mister Yoshimura.
All can attest.
No rainy days.
No church or state.
We treat everyone the same here.

The VAPORS hum in agreement. A TOAST now:

VAPORS/PARTYGOERS (O.S.)
Cass, Cass, Cass.

*

CASS
You're part
of the family now, dear.

Cass is called away as a TOGA LINE has started (or some other party dance) and Ion looks after her as if to hang the moon.

SUNNY
Where did you get married?

ION

On the beach.
Rufus loves
where the sand meets the sea.

RUFUS

I would disagree.
Were we married?

Ion exchanges a look with Sunny that could be a full-body eye roll.

ION

Full of jokes tonight.
Is it alright, Sunny,
for us to get in the water?

Sunny looks at the clock outside the lobby. It's after 10 and the party is still going strong.

SUNNY

The water may be hot.
But it's not boiling yet.
Get in and Cass
won't be the wiser.

Ion moves towards the pool's edge and dips in a toe and then sinks down to his waist. It is hot, but bearable. He looks back at Rufus.

ION

Angel.
Come.

He extends his arm, expecting Rufus to take his hand. But Rufus has his arms crossed around himself. Sunny looks between them, worried. She puts a comforting hand on Rufus' shoulder, encouraging.

SUNNY

Go on...
Get in...

Rufus refuses. Ion pulls himself out, his feet stalking towards Rufus, leaving a trail of wet footsteps. Ion stands before him, glowering.

ION

You love the pool.

SUNNY

The water's not too hot.

ION
It's just right.

RUFUS
It's not...
(heated; sighing)
The water.
The water is not for me.

Sunny senses something is not right. She looks between them. The rest of the party notices too. As things heat up between them, the water is rising to a BOIL in the pool, picking up on their energy. People are rushing out, YELPING. The Lounge Singer has stopped singing. The vibe of the party changes, and we end the disco synth tone in a surreal way. Cass looks around, alarmed. She glares at Sunny, who has failed to do her job.

*
*
*

CASS
Everyone out --

SUNNY
(to Rufus)
Just get in --

RUFUS
(to Ion)
Have you forgotten already?

ION
(quiet fury)
I don't want to think about it.
It makes me too sad.

RUFUS
Was it a pool?
Was it the beach?
Do you remember
what happened?

ION
(done)
Let's go back to our room --

RUFUS
Don't you remember?
The undercurrent
ripped me right out of your arms
dragged me along the bottom
and dashed our chances
of ever marrying.

ION

That's not what happened?
Is it?
Can't be.

He looks at Rufus. His sad eyes confirm the truth.

RUFUS

You're forgetting.

ION

I don't want to remember, Ru'.
Not that. It makes me too sad.

That stings. All eyes are on them to see how Rufus will respond but --

PICK UP FEDERICO, snaking his way through the CROWD of alarmed guests, trying to clean up yet another mess. He hands Ion and Rufus drinks and gives Sunny a cheery, but pointed, smile. She looks away.

FEDERICO

Drink up, fellas!

Ion shares a look with him, relieved for the distraction. He tosses the whole steaming concoction back in one swallow. Everyone goes back to their own good times. ALL OF THE NOISE OF PARTY RETURNS. *

FEDERICO (CONT'D)

There's more where that came from.
Come with me.

Ion definitely considers that space is definitely needed between him and Rufus. Sunny and Rufus watch as Federico leads Ion away. Rufus exhales, shaking in the desert cold, and Sunny rubs his back, for comfort.

From a distance, Cass watches Ion too, uneasy about this new arrival...

END OF EPISODE.

Chapter Three

"Some day you'll know. They're calling to you too."

Written by

A. Rey Pamatmat

Composer

Ellen Reid

Vijay Iyer (intercut)

Note: Before the intercut the text is SONG. Within the intercut, lines are **SPOKEN** throughout, marked in **BOLD**. After the intercut the text is SONG until the end, where the Vapors' parts are SPOKEN, as indicated in **BOLD**. *

3-14 **INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS/DESERT INN - DAY (DAY TWO)** 3-14 *

ION storms out of his room, past the pool, and down hallways in a furious rampage through the motel. GUESTS, STAFF, and VAPORS alike dodge out of his way, with their looks of anxiety, annoyance, dismissal, and disdain getting thrown in his wake.

VAPORS (O.S.)
(Ah na na.) (Nu nu why me?)

*

He is driven, fueled by ANGER, but also clearly hurt. Maybe even violated.

He makes it to the Lobby and despite the DESK EMPLOYEES protests, he marches behind the counter and into -

3-15 **INT. CASS' OFFICE/DESERT INN - DAY** 3-15

CASS, SUNNY and FEDERICO look up as Ion barges in. Sensing trouble, Federico springs up to block his path to Cass. But Ion is defeated. Ashamed.

ION
You chose me, out of everyone here?
Why me? Why me?

CASS
You misunderstand.
To that old man... you were a
friend.

ION
An escort.

CASS
A caretaker -

ION
A whore -

CASS
A companion -

ION
A murderer -

CASS
A saint -

ION
(full of self-pity)
Why me? Why me? Who must I be to
belong here with you?

Throughout the above, the office around them begins to DISSOLVE, as we enter a COMBINED DREAMSPACE that unites the current argument with Ion's retelling of the previous night.

INTERCUT WITH:

3-16 **INT. LOUNGE/DESERT INN - NIGHT (NIGHT ONE/FLASHBACK 3)** 3-16 *

The lounge is packed with REVELERS who drink, laugh, and hum with excitement for the show they're about to see. Cass and Ion stand as specters/observers of the evenings events.

At the best table in the center of the room sits the old man from the 102 pool party (let's call him DEREK) dressed in a fine summer suit. PAST-ION sits with him, handsomely dressed, but distant. He doesn't want to be there.

Everyone's attention turns to the stage as the LOUNGE SINGER appears. She's what they've all been waiting for. After an excited round of APPLAUSE, her enigmatic smile causes a reverent hush among the crowd.

The Lounge Singer steps to the mic and sings A SONG OF REMEMBRANCE.

LOUNGE SINGER

MY BOY
HAIR OF POLISHED EBONY
EYES STRONG AND STEELY GRAY
HIS BROW, HIS CHEEKS, HIS NOSE
FROM SANDSTONE HEWN, THEN POLISHED
AND HIS LAUGH
HIS SMILE
HIS SMILE

Derek reaches out and grabs Ion's hand. Ion tries to pull away, but Derek holds on and then states, emphatically:

DEREK
(SPOKEN)
You must remember.

Ion doesn't know what to say.

LOUNGE SINGER

MY BOY
SPIRIT OF BREEZY SPRING
A WINTER GALE'S STIFF STRENGTH
(MORE)

LOUNGE SINGER (CONT'D)
 THOUGHTFUL LIKE AUTUMN'S QUIET
 HIS LOVE THE SUMMER SUN'S KISS
 HIS KINDNESS
 HE'S GOOD
 HE'S GOOD

Derek now has tears in his eyes as he pulls Ion closer.

DEREK
 (SPOKEN)
 Please: remember!

PAST-ION
 (SPOKEN)
 I don't understand.

*
 *
 *
 *
 *
 *

Ion can't help laying a comforting hand on Derek's back. And then he notices a SHADOWY FIGURE emerging onstage behind the Lounge Singer.

LOUNGE SINGER
 MY BOY
 A HUSBAND ETERNALLY DEVOTED
 A FRIEND IN GOOD TIMES AND BAD

DEREK	LOUNGE SINGER (CONT'D)
HE COULD NOT HAVE COME FROM	HE COULD NOT HAVE COME FROM
ONE SO LOW AS ME	ONE SO LOW AS ME

LOUNGE SINGER (CONT'D)
 HE'S A MIRACLE

DEREK
 HIS LIFE

LOUNGE SINGER
 HIS LIFE

DEREK	LOUNGE SINGER (CONT'D)
MY BOY	MY BOY

LOUNGE SINGER (CONT'D)
 HE'S A MIRACLE
 HIS LIFE
 MY BOY
 HE'S A MIRACLE
 HIS LIFE
 MY BOY
 HE'S A MIRACLE
 HIS LIFE
 MY BOY

The shadowy figure emerges, and Past-Ion recognizes him as the MAN IN THE SPEEDO who whispered in Derek's ear at the pool party. He assumed it was a young lover, but now...

PAST-ION

And I understood.
The boy wasn't just a "boy".
He was his son. Derek's son.

Derek's son dissolves back into the shadows as Derek turns to Past-Ion.

DEREK

You must remember him:
My boy.
The Inn gave us a life together
After he was cut down so young.
Now I'll give my life to the Inn,
so he can live on.
If you see him at a party
Or the pool
Or when you need a friend
Please be kind to him.
Please remember him.
Someone must remember him,
When I'm gone.

PAST-ION

I will remember him.
Your boy.

As Past-Ion comforts Derek, Ion confronts Cass.

END INTERCUT.

3-17 **INT. CASS' OFFICE/DESERT INN - DAY (DAY TWO)**

3-17 *

Ion and Cass fight. Sunny and Federico now watch tensely from the sidelines.

CASS

I gave you a gift. Now honor my terms...

ION

A gift? For whom?

CASS

For all those who want a second chance at love. Like you. To swim again under the moonlight in your vast, bright sea... as long as you can pay.

They share a look.

VAPORS (O.S.)
(Na na na na... Nah.)

*

CASS
Leave. Leave this office,
And let this old man die for us.
Him or Rufus?
Who do you choose?

Ion's fury builds -- not because he'll keep fighting, but
because he knows that he's lost.

VAPORS (O.S.)
(whispered quickly;
SPOKEN)

*

My boy, my boy, my boy, hair of
polished ebony... My boy, my boy,
my boy, eyes strong and steely
gray... My boy, my boy, my boy, his
brow, his cheeks, his nose from
sand-stone hewn...

CUT TO:

3-18 **EXT. LOT/DESERT INN - DAY**

3-18 *

High noon. Many RESIDENTS of the Inn are gathered just
outside its walls, including all of its STAFF and Ion.

They surround Derek, who is dressed in a costume that's a
cross between Sufi robes and light resort wear.

The Lounge Singer stands nearby with the desert sun beating
down on her; the vast desert sands stretching behind her all
the way to the horizon.

She begins to SING a wordless version of the Song of
Remembrance that's more ritualistic sounding at first.

Meanwhile, Derek begins to WHIRL -- dancing to the memory of
his son. Bringing his love for him and all its energy to
this present moment.

The song builds in intensity. VAPORS manifest from the ether
as Derek WHIRLS FASTER AND FASTER AND FASTER.

The RITUAL SOUND becomes TRIBAL, enhanced by orchestral,
electronic, or choral sounds.

He whirls and whirls and whirls...

VAPORS (O.S.)
(whispered; SPOKEN)
HIS LIFE... HIS LIFE... HIS LIFE...

*

DEREK'S FEET CATCH FIRE.

The Lounge Singer's song becomes a WAIL. She keens.

DEREK BURSTS INTO FLAME.

The COLUMN OF FLAME stretches as high into the sky as the WAIL of the song.

Derek runs toward the Inn.

3-19

INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS/DESERT INN - DAY

3-19

Derek storms in, across the lobby, down hallways, and through to the inner courtyard as GUESTS who didn't attend the ritual dodge the man a-flame.

As he heads toward the pool, its waters begin to BUBBLE and RIPPLE WITH ENERGY.

He leaps into the air as a COLUMN OF POOL WATER reaches up to hold the FLAMING FIREBALL of a man up to the sun, before it breaks open and SWALLOWS him.

The water RUSHES BACK DOWN into the pool, which now GLOWS with new energy. The energy EMANATES OUTWARD across the grounds of the Inn, fueling it with Derek's intense love for his son. Ion is hit by water, drenched.

*

But will it be enough?

END OF EPISODE.

Chapter Four

"A Single Man"

Written by

Ryan J. Haddad

Composer

Emma O'Halloran

Note: Two lines SPOKEN throughout the sung verse are marked in **BOLD**.

4-20 **EXT. POOL AREA/DESERT INN - DAY (DAY TWO)** 4-20 *

Everything is more "normal" as ION sits by the pool, staring at the spot where Derek disappeared. He is shocked, furious, devastated. OMINOUS ENERGY remains from the self-sacrifice, moments before. *

VAPORS (O.S.) *
(Ah ooh.) (Ooh ah.)

Perhaps we see physical remnants of the event. Mess. Disarray. Or perhaps magic has erased any trace of trouble, and the environment appears pristine. SUNNY and CASS are mid-confrontation at outdoor table area. FEDERICO looks on. *

SUNNY
You killed him.

CASS
He chose.

SUNNY
You gave him no choice.
You killed him.

FLASHBACK TO:

4-21 **EXT. POOL AREA/DESERT INN - DAY - (70S FLASHBACK 4)** 4-21 *

QUICK CUT MONTAGE. Sunny, Cass, and DEREK laugh, embrace, and toast cocktails. Derek is in 70s-era clothing, decades able to shift easily here. The women are ageless. *

SUNNY (O.S.) *
Our friend, our family, all these years.

4-22 **I/E. POOL AREA/LOBBY/LOUNGE/DESERT INN - EVENING (FB4)** 4-22 *

FOLLOW Derek with a CAKE full of candles as he walks from pool area into lobby/lounge. His son (18) blows out the candles, dressed in his 70s-era clothing from above and Derek now wearing his son's clothes. We have to wonder - are these men interchangeable? Are the rooms? *

CASS (V.O.)
We are not his family.
I gave him back his family.

Sunny, Cass, Federico, Derek and his SON pose lovingly for a birthday photo. *

SUNNY (V.O.)
You didn't give, you took.

FLASH GOES OFF AND --

4-23 **INT. LOBBY/DESERT INN - NIGHT (LIMBO FLASHFORWARD 4)** 4-23 *

STATIC fills TV. Playing on the vintage TV is the briefest glimpse of a darker memory. Derek consoles Sunny, who sobs in his arms. We don't know why.

SUNNY (V.O.)
You took his life.

END FLASHBACK.

4-24 **EXT. POOL AREA/DESERT INN - DAY (DAY TWO)** 4-24 *

SUNNY
You're not the kind of woman
I made my wife.

Sunny storms off. Cass makes eye contact with Federico. She feels his disappointment. She turns to see Ion still frozen by the pool. Cass motions Federico toward Ion.

CASS
(SPOKEN)
Go.

Cass exits.

VAPORS (O.S.)
(Ah.) (Ooh.)

Federico approaches Ion, touches his shoulder.

ION
Did you know he would die?

FEDERICO
I was impressed
to see you
try to save him.
You gave me hope

ION
But you knew and didn't tell me?

4-25 **INT. DOORWAY/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS**

4-25

Federico unlocks Derek's door. Ion follows him inside and the door shuts.

4-26 **INT. DEREK'S ROOM/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS**

4-26

Federico unlatches a dusty trunk, which the Old Man brought to the Desert Inn years and years ago. It's empty and gloomy. As he sings, Federico fills it with the contents of the room.

*
*

FEDERICO
The story he told you
was all fabricated.
His son was estranged,
He manufactured memories
where there were none.
He spent a lot of money.
Money makes this place run.

Tracking shot of FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS on a vanity table.
Through the MIRROR, we see Ion peering down at them.

ION
But these photos...
They're all so... joyful.

VAPORS (O.S.)
(Ah.) (Ooh.)

*

FEDERICO
Pure invention.
He built a brand new life,
not an extension.
And if you're not careful,
it could happen to Rufus.
You'll begin to forget.

ION
That's ludicrous.

FEDERICO
No matter how happy
you once were,
with every new adventure,
truth starts to blur.

VAPORS (O.S.)
(Ah.) (Ooh.) (Oooh.) (Ah.)

*

Federico clears the photos off the vanity and puts them in the trunk.

Before he closes the lid, he sees himself in one of the photos. The "family" portrait from the birthday party. POV from inside the trunk, Federico looking down, pierced by the image. Sadness. The loss hits him. He lingers. Then closes the trunk.

Using one of the side handles, Federico tries to move the trunk, but it won't budge. It's too heavy and he doesn't have the strength or balance.

Ion takes the handle and pulls the trunk. He strains a little, but moves it. As he follows Federico toward the door, he realizes that the whole room is empty now. Federico strips the blankets, sheets, and pillowcases off the bed.

FEDERICO

We must always be ready
for the next guest.

4-27 **EXT. OUTSIDE ROOM/VARIOUS ROOMS/DESERT INN - DAY** 4-27

Federico exits room and carries the bedding under his arm.

4-27A **MAINTENANCE MONTAGE --** 4-27A

- He opens a laundry room, throws the bedding into a pushcart and crosses out of frame.

- He opens a storage room, grabs a mop, crosses out of frame.

- He cleans out leaves from the pool.

- He changes candy out of the lobby candy bowl and the lightbulbs out of fixtures and tries to tack on the 8 correctly for Room 8, which now is reflected as Room Infinity.

- In his utilitarian room of a bed and curtain, he has wood shavings and chips he's sweeping up from a stack of tokens, but also an Amazon box is nearby (so he might have ordered it). He puts tokens on keys. Stacks the new tokens next to an old pile.

*
*

4-28 **INT. STORAGE ROOM/ROOM INFINITY/DESERT INN - NIGHT (N2)** 4-28 *

From darkness, Federico flips ON a light switch to reveal a warehouse-like space. Metallic shelves are lined with BELONGINGS from former Desert Inn guests and residents.

ION

What is all this?

FEDERICO
Stuff people left behind.

Ion pulls in the trunk and Federico gestures for him to tuck it under one of the shelves. They are about to leave when Federico turns back abruptly. He returns to the Old Man's trunk, opens it, and takes out the group photo from the birthday party.

4-29

INT. ROOM INFINITY/DESERT INN - NIGHT

4-29

*

Federico pulls back an inconspicuous curtain. An entire WALL of curated photographs. In the center, in the largest frame, is a candid shot of YOUNG SUNNY and YOUNG FEDERICO from childhood. In all the other photos, they look the same as they do now.

ION
These are beautiful.

FEDERICO
My special secret.
My wall of mementos.

Federico removes a PORTRAIT of Cass, replaces it with the BIRTHDAY PHOTO, and puts the Cass portrait facedown in a drawer.

Ion does not notice. He is admiring Federico's ARTWORK on another wall. The whole room is filled with it, actually. Yes, SCULPTURES and PAINTINGS like his others around the Inn, but the style is very different than what we've seen before. These pieces are intimate, personal, vulnerable. Ion is focused on a painted self-portrait of Federico, proudly holding his prosthetic leg (or limb, depending on the actor).

ION
You're magnificent.
(catches himself)
A magnificent artist.

FEDERICO
Oh.
Thank you.

ION
These pieces are different
than the ones out there.

FEDERICO
Out there, I decorate.
Here, I create.

Ion glances at the painting of what appears to be Federico and an attractive man sharing a moment of intimacy.

ION

You're so captivating.

FEDERICO

(beat; deflects)

Have you forgotten about Rufus already? He taught you how to swim, remember?

ION

I don't... The water, my parents were afraid. They said it would take people away. I suppose I'm afraid now too.

Federico is transfixed. Enamored. Overwhelmed by ION and his expression of love and loss.

FEDERICO

The water isn't dangerous when you have someone near. Come swim with me.

4-30 OMITTED

4-30

4-31 **EXT. POOL AREA/DESERT INN - JUST BEFORE SUNRISE**

4-31 *

Beautiful desert roselight filters across the calm pool water. Federico and Ion enter, passing the sign: No swimming after 10pm. They wear speedos. Federico removes his prosthetic leg (or limb, depending on the actor). This is totally routine for him, a non-event. Ion watches with curiosity, care, and genuine attraction. Federico maneuvers his way to the pool in whatever way is comfortable. Once in the water, he extends his hand to Ion, who steps in.

Their hands remain LINKED, and they GLIDE through the water. Gentle, sweet, sexy. Federico is the caretaker here, a reversal of the typical disability trope. They find themselves in an early-morning slow dance. Federico spins Ion, dips him. He gives Ion a shoulder massage. Watches water drip down Ion's back. Then he kisses Ion's neck. Ion circles to face Federico, looks at him intensely, and kisses his lips. A MONTAGE of kisses. Erotic. Passionate. Liberating for Ion. No trace of guilt regarding Rufus.

4-32 **EXT. POOL AREA/DESERT INN - SUNRISE - LATER (DAY 3)** 4-32 *

ON Ion's backside as he climbs out of the pool. He turns back to Federico in the water, extends his hand. Federico hesitates to take it, and Ion gestures towards the room where they can continue.

Federico considers. Then he swims in the opposite direction, towards his KEY CHAIN. He retrieves RUFUS'S SEAHORSE TOTEM. *

FEDERICO
You're not for me.
You have to go.
Away from here.

Federico places the Seahorse in Ion's lap.

FEDERICO (CONT'D)
Take this.
A piece of Rufus.
Yours to reclaim.
(SPOKEN)
This is goodbye.

CLOSE ON the totems hanging off his keychain, now with one missing. WIDE ON Ion and Federico. *

4-33 **INT. LOBBY/DESERT INN - MORNING** 4-33 *

We PULL BACK to REVEAL Cass, who stands in middle of lobby staring at the lobby television, the travel-mercial now changed to a LIVE VIDEO FEED of Ion and Federico. *

She has been watching this whole time.

And she is not pleased.

END OF EPISODE.

Chapter Five

"i miss you more than i remember you"

Written by

christopher oscar peña

Composer

Wang Lu

Note: This episode is SING in its entirety.

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5-34

EXT. LOT/DESERT INN - NIGHT (NIGHT 3)

5-34 *

STARS everywhere. The blackest night almost makes us feel like we are lost amongst the cosmos. If you closed your eyes, just so, you could make yourself believe it. FLOATING THERE is CASS on a desert void. PULL BACK TO REVEAL Cass not at pool but the area where the old pool furniture is stored to die. Cass HUMS in sync with the universe. She is regal, stunning, but as we get closer to her face, her weathered skin lets us know that she is tired. Especially now. Is her lip quivering? *

As we PULL BACK, we realize, that no, we are not in space, but very much STILL IN THE DESERT. The bright, bright, NEON LIGHTS of the Desert Inn SIGN ground us here.

The dramatic silence is SUDDENLY BROKEN, as FEDERICO comes rushing towards us. An ECHO by the VAPORS: *

VAPORS (O.S.) *

(Humm...)

FEDERICO

Here
Here
I'm here

Without turning around -

CASS

You are never late
I'd begun to worry
You'd vanished
Turned into a memory

FEDERICO

Put your mind at ease
I'm here now

She finally turns.

CASS

Let me take a look at you
(touches his face)
There it is
That face
I could never forget

He hands her a bright martini.

He has a drink as well.

Something sleek and colorless.

FEDERICO

Never forget

They cheer.

CASS

Oh, what did you find out

FEDERICO

Nothing useful
He's harmless
Useless

A harsh tone -

CASS

Are you sure

FEDERICO

Trust me

CASS

Trust you
Poor federico
So open-hearted
Poor federico
So quick to trust
So easily you forget
We are the only ones
The only ones who love you

*

They stand there amongst the stars.

CASS (CONT'D)

I'm tired

FEDERICO

Take a rest
Clear your mind
Clear your mind of its burden

CASS

Clear my mind

She smiles at him.

CASS (CONT'D)

I did this... this for us
I did this... for love
I did this for family
I'm exhausted

Cass puts down her drink.

She walks over to Federico.

She grabs his face.

Looks at it.

He has the most beautiful, warm, caring eyes.

Even now, he looks at her, with so much care.

This hurts her.

CASS (CONT'D)

Good night federico

She goes to kiss his forehead.

And as she does, something in the air changes.

In the distance, we see as the "N" in the Desert Inn sign
FRITZES OUT.

Federico opens up his mouth to say good night, but for some
reason, he can't find the words.

Cass touches his lips with her hands, almost like she's
saying "shhh" and walks away.

5-35

INT. LOBBY/DESERT INN - LATER (3AM)

5-35

*

From a first person perspective, we see SUNNY in the near
distance running around the back of the reception desk. She
is making a LIST OF THINGS. This lasts for a few moments, as
we just stare at her, TAKING HER IN. After a few moments,
she looks our way, catches us staring.

SUNNY

Oh there you are my love
Ready for our date
Let me just finish this
Two minutes... we'll be on our way

CASS

What are you doing

SUNNY

A list of things
Making a list of things for us
to remember
We are out of ham
The faucet's leaky
The drive needs clearing
The cow needs milking

(MORE)

*

SUNNY (CONT'D)

Just one more thing
I'm forgetting

CASS

We've made a place
We call it home
To watch you tend it
My heart
My heart
My heart
Slow down my honey

Cass takes a WHIRLING Sunny into her arms.

They hold each other.

It is loving.

It is beautiful.

And then:

Cass takes Sunny's face into her hands.

SUNNY

You and my brother
My universe

Cass kisses her on the forehead.

There's a FLICKER off the vintage TV from a **MEMORY** of
Federico -- a HOME VIDEO that is on its way to fading:

5-35A THE HOMEVIDEO PLAYS ONSCREEN -- (FLASHBACK 5 - DAY) 5-35A *

Federico smiles at Sunny's birthday party that will play in
Episode 6.

FEDERICO

(fading)
Happy birthday, sis...

BACK TO SCENE --

*

An ECHO of Federico's voice: (Happy birthday, sis..)

They hold each other. Cass, protective. Sunny, distracted.

Another ECHO: (sis...) (sis....) (sis...)

It's beautiful.

Cass pulls away.

SUNNY

But wait
I feel I'm forgetting

The DING-DING of the front desk bell from Episode One, as a door opens. Federico steps in, wearing a giant grin on his face. Sunny's across at the reception desk and he walks quickly towards her: *he must tell her all about his new crush on ion*. Just then, he notices Cass, standing just behind her. As he approaches -

FEDERICO

Hi!

Sunny turns and looks directly at him, taking him in. Nothing registers.

SUNNY

Hi there!
Welcome to the Desert Inn
How can I help?

As Federico takes in the new reality that his sister does not recognize or remember him, he looks past her at Cass, who smiles, and raises her martini glass in his direction.

CASS

Cheers.

Off Cass --

5-36 OMITTED

5-36

END OF EPISODE.

Chapter Six

"The Heart is a Lonely Hunter"

Written by

Quentin Nguyen-duy

Composer

Shelley Washington

Note: This episode is mainly SING. The line **SPOKEN** at the end is in **BOLD**.

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6-37

INT. HALLWAY/DESERT INN MOTEL - NIGHT (NIGHT 3)

6-37 *

Sunny, irritated, strides down the length of the hallway, followed by Federico and Ion.

FEDERICO
Don't you remember me?

SUNNY
No.

FEDRICO
I'm your brother.

She laughs. Silly joke.

SUNNY
Hilarious.

VAPORS (O.S.)
(Remember? Remember?)

*

FEDERICO
Have I been so easily forgotten?

VAPORS (O.S.)
(Forgotten? Forgotten?)

*

They share a look. They arrive at the Guest Room.

Sunny takes out her key ring.

Angrily, Federico snatches it.

Ion looks ready to step in, thinking that Federico will explode or snap. Sunny is frightened.

Before she can say anything, Federico aptly twirls around the keys, finds the correct one and inserts it into the lock. He opens the door. Sunny is taken aback.

FEDERICO
See?

SUNNY
I don't understand.

FEDERICO
Your wife
You know what she is

Startled, Sunny turns to Ion.

*

ION
Cass... she -

FEDRICO
Erased your memory of me.
She's a monster.

VAPORS (O.S.)
(She's a monster. She's a
monster.)

*
*
*

Sunny SLAPS Federico in the face.

SUNNY
You don't know what you're talking
about.

Federico is obviously hurt.

She sees the pain well up in his eyes; briefly, something
changes in her.

FEDERICO
If you're so sure
Come with me.

VAPORS (O.S.)
(Monster. Come with me. Come with
me.)

*
*

6-38 **EXT. POOL AREA/DESERT INN - NIGHT**

6-38

The three stand in front of the pool.

FEDERICO
You know what to do.
A simple swim
Will explain everything

SUNNY
She loves me
I would never go against her

ION
Here is where my love once lay.
One memory at a time, my life
taken.
Unsure of who I was,
Dying for love,
Federico, I owe my life, through
him I'm saved.

SUNNY

So mixed up you can't tell what is
real.
I know that my wife would never
betray me still.

She turns to leave.

Federico cries out, almost in pain.

FEDERICO

Sunny!

SUNNY

I'm sorry
You're mistaken

FEDERICO (CONT'D)

Wait, please
There's one more thing.
Come to Room Eight.
If after, you do not believe me,
I will leave you alone.

She looks at his pleading eyes. Nods, yes.

6-39 **INT. HALLWAY/DESERT INN - NIGHT**

6-39

The number "8" hangs on the room door in flaking gold
lettering (Federico touched in Episode One). The door opens,
revealing a rich, RED-LIT interior, decorated by DEVELOPING
PHOTOS strung up on the walls, POLAROIDs, CHARCOAL SKETCHES.

A TV is the brightest light in the center of the room. On
it: a technicolor loading screen.

Ion and Federico enter together. Sunny enters last, turns
around for a moment, DOOR SHUTS. SHARP INTERCUT WITH ALL RED
DARKROOM: *

*
*

6-40 **INT. ROOM INFINITY/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS**

6-40

Federico pushes the curtains away from the DARKROOM TUB.
Above the water hangs a series of developing PRINTS.

He takes one, shows it to Sunny. She examines it. The photo
is of them, days before, standing by the pool in the same
outfits they wore on the DAY OF THE RITUAL.

SUNNY

You could have made this.
This is fake.

Sunny starts to go.

Federico drops to his knees, frenetically sifts through a shoebox of memorabilia. Finding an untitled VHS TAPE, he inserts it into the VCR PLAYER.

6-40A **ONSCREEN:** AN OLD HOME MOVIE. (FLASHBACK 5 - DAY) 6-40A *

ASPECT RATIO CHANGES. Sunny is in her and Federico's parents' home. Federico looks physically the same age but, with a more youthful glow. *

BACK TO SCENE -- *

Ion, alone watching tape, clocks this, but it only affirms what he already knows: Federico is a vapor. *

6-40AA **ONSCREEN:** (FLASHBACK 5 - DAY) 6-40AA *

Federico sits beside a BIRTHDAY CAKE. We see Sunny CLAPPING, urging him to blow out the candles. He blows out all nineteen of them. Cass turns the camera toward herself, she smiles.

BACK TO SCENE --

SUNNY

Something in me breaks.

Sunny watches stoically. We see the resignation in her eyes.

ONSCREEN: A sort of compilation of home videos clips.

6-40B **FIRST:** (FLASHBACK 5 - DAY) 6-40B *

- Federico riding a kid's bicycle, across a lawn. He falls over; Sunny, laughing, helps him up.

6-40C **SECOND:** (FLASHBACK 5 - DAY) 6-40C *

- Cass shooting a BB GUN at bottles in the empty lot near the Desert Inn. Federico is in a chair. The camera ZOOMS. He is brooding. Screen turns BLACK.

BACK TO SCENE --

Sunny removes the VHS tape.

She tosses it into the water of the darkroom sink. It falls to the bottom as Federico leaps to save it but can't. *

SUNNY

I have to go.

FEDERICO

Sunny –

SUNNY

I'm sorry.

She's gone. Ion holds the wet videotape.

*

Federico collapses into Ion's arms, sobbing.

ION

Relax, dear. I'm here.

Federico pushes Ion away.

FEDERICO

Here, here
You shouldn't be here
It's because of you
I'll be lost forever

FEDERICO/VAPORS (O.S.)

In the ocean we created...
Deserted.

*

*

*

VAPORS (O.S.)

(Remember.) (Remember.)
(Remember.)

*

*

*

FEDERICO/ION/SUNNY

One memory at a time.

VAPORS (O.S.)

(Remember.)

*

FEDERICO/ION/SUNNY

Forgotten. Remember.

*

*

VAPORS (O.S.)

(Remember.)

*

*

FEDERICO/ION/SUNNY

One memory at a time.

*

*

VAPORS (O.S.)

(Forgotten. Remember.)

*

*

FEDERICO/ION/SUNNY

Forgotten.

*

*

SUNNY/FEDERICO *
 Forgotten. *

VAPORS (O.S.) *
 (Remember.) *

FEDERICO/ION/SUNNY *
 Forgotten. One memory at a time. *

VAPORS (O.S.) *
 (One memory at a time.) *

FEDERICO/ION/SUNNY *
 One memory at a time. *

VAPORS (O.S.) *
 (Remember.) *

6-41 **EXT. POOL/DESERT INN - NIGHT** 6-41

The water is boiling. Above the surface, the mist is rising to an uncomfortable pressure. Sunny runs down to the pool.

6-42 **INT. LOBBY/DESERT INN - NIGHT** 6-42

Federico's artwork wilts and falls off of the walls as the mist pours through the cracks.

6-43 **INT. ROOM INFINITY/DESERT INN - SAME TIME** 6-43

The photographs and drawings which were strung along the walls begin to peel off. All around Federico and Ion, the artwork - like Sunny's memories - fall apart.

6-44 **EXT. POOL/DESERT INN - NIGHT** 6-44

Sunny falls to her knees in front of the boiling pool.

Defiantly, Sunny dips her arm into the boiling water. It hurts. But when she draws it out, she realizes that there is cool water beneath the surface.

She dives in.

6-45 **INT. POOL - NIGHT (UNDERWATER)** 6-45

Silence. Sunny is falling beneath the boiling surface of the pool. AS SHE FALLS DEEPER: *

6-45A **EXT. LOT - DAY (FLASHBACK 6)** 6-45A *

- FLASHBACKS occur of her, Cass, and Federico when they were beginning to build the Inn. *

In ALL OF THE MEMORIES, FEDERICO'S FACE IS BLURRY, mid-motion, or we only catch the back of his head, a crevice in his palm, whereas Cass is crystal clear.

FLASHBACK TO:

6-46 **INT. SUNNY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY (FLASHBACK 5)** 6-46 *

Sunny blows out a birthday candle.

She looks up and sees Federico sitting across from her, his face blurry and indiscernible.

END FLASHBACK.

6-47 **INT. POOL/EXT. POOL AREA/DESERT INN - NIGHT (UNDERWATER)** 6-47

Sunny's eyes shoot open. The water has stopped boiling. She ascends to the surface. Sunny leaps up on to the poolside edge, GASPING for air. She stands up, dripping wet, in complete shock and pain.

Just out of her eyesight, someone stands, watching her. The figure stands there, blurry, but slowly comes into focus. It's Cass.

SUNNY

(SPOKEN; stage whisper)

Tell me what you've done to me.

OFF Cass, CAUGHT.

END OF EPISODE.

Chapter Seven

"The Sun Also Rises"

Written by

Jesse J. Sanchez

Composer

Nico Muhly

Note: Multiple lines are SPOKEN throughout and are marked in **BOLD**.

7-48

EXT. POOL AREA/DESERT INN - NIGHT (NIGHT 3)

7-48 *

DIRECT PICK-UP from Episode 106. SUNNY's face is blank, then she has a slight smile as she looks at CASS. No one else is around. Sunny is soaked, but Cass is dry and shivering as if she's wet. Sunny walks towards Cass with a calm manner. Sunny is not angry in the slightest. The pool water reflects Sunny's feelings. Cool. Collected.

SUNNY

My love... my love... my love... my
love... my love... my love... my
love...

Sunny gently touches and caresses Cass's face. Sunny's hands are cold. The mood changes to something fiery.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

Tell me, tell me what you've done
to me. Tell me, tell me, tell
me...

The VAPORS are not seen, but more like the sound from inside Cass's head.

VAPORS (O.S.)

(Don't leave... don't leave...
don't leave...)

Cass clearly has something to say, but can't. Lights shift. *

SUNNY

Give me what you took from me
Give me what's mine

VAPORS (O.S.)

(Don't leave... don't leave...
don't leave...)

CASS

I can't give it back
I don't...

VAPORS (O.S.)

(...don't leave.) (My love, don't
leave.)

SUNNY

So you admit you did it?
You said you'd never 'cause you
love me.

CASS

No, not me.
Blame him.

Cass points in the direction of Ion's room. The light in the room turns ON and we can see two people standing behind the window's curtain.

*

7-48A **INT. ROOM 8/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS**

7-48A

*

More DRAMATIC OMINOUS LIGHTING. Sunny can see Cass' manipulation.

*

*

SUNNY

(SPOKEN)

Ion's not the problem.
You are.

*

The Vapors are still speaking from inside Cass's head. Almost like it's her conscience.

VAPORS (O.S.)

You.
You.
You.

Sunny starts to walk away.

CASS

(SPOKEN)

My partner.
My sky.

Sunny stops. Cass moves closer.

*

SUNNY

(SPOKEN)

My porcelain heart is shattered.
Look what you've done.

7-48B **EXT. POOL AREA/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS**

7-48B

*

Sunny sits. Cass touches Sunny's hand and looks at her RING. Sunny looks at the ring and closes her eyes. The MUSIC changes to a softer, more love-like feeling. There's a GLIMMER of light shining through the middle of the pool.

A FANTASY BEGINS:

7-49

EXT./INT. MOUNTAINTOP CABIN - DAY FOR NIGHT

7-49

The light baths Cass standing in their fantasy in a kitchen with no wall. Domestic. Loving. An intimate moment in the kitchen. Cass prepares tea on the stove while Sunny circles around her. It's sweet and a much simpler time. Sunny collapses.

SUNNY

Forgive me. Please. I'm begging you. All those blurred years in the Desert Inn. Our universe. Our sanctuary. A refuge for misfits against prejudice. But it's a mirage. A cage. This old place here -- Paradise. Peace. Quiet. Us. The smell of something other than sand. These flowers, these trees; take my hand.

Cass takes Sunny's hand and pulls her flush against her.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

I beg you. Forgive me. Strike me. Rip off the mask.

Confused, Cass releases her.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

We can start again. Brand new. My love. Punish me. Blame me.

Cass drifts away from Sunny. Sunny chases after her.

Sunny kisses Cass. The same motif as in Episode One begins.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

Don't deny where we belong. Here.

The fantasy is interrupted by the Vapors.

VAPORS (O.S.)

(Not here not here not here not here!)

*

Cass breaks a teacup. It shatters between them, breaking the spell.

END FANTASY.

7-50 **EXT. POOL AREA/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS**

7-50

CASS
(SPOKEN)
The Desert Inn is my home.

SUNNY
(SPOKEN)
You were expected to be my home.
Don't expect me to remain here and
continue on this way.

CASS
(SPOKEN)
Sunny!

The Vapors begin to CHANT and the scene shifts rapidly to:

7-51 **INT. ROOM 8/ION'S ROOM/DESERT INN - NIGHT**

7-51

ION and FEDERICO stand on opposite sides of Ion's bed.
Federico begins to rush Ion to the exit, clutching Rufus'
totem.

ION
(SPOKEN)
Stay. Please.
Explain to me what is happening.
Something is happening.
Let me stay. We could be happy
here. I can't just leave this love
behind.

VAPORS (O.S.)
Here.
Here.
Here.
Here.

*

Ion hugs Federico. Federico kisses Ion on the forehead.

FEDERICO
This old place here - these sheets,
that bar, these people, the pool -
it's always belonged to Cass. All
of it. And I belong to Cass. I
never belonged anywhere until one
day, in my old hometown, Sunny
screamed: "Our parents are dead.
Those cruel bastards are dead."
Feelings streamed around my body.
I could feel the energy in my leg -
the same as when I met you.

*

*

(MORE)

FEDERICO (CONT'D)

Sunny and I were free, but nowhere to go. Cass appeared. Strange, but like it was fate. She brought us here to the Inn and I remember the smell of the old carpet; the smell of home. I finally belonged.

Federico takes a beat.

FEDERICO (CONT'D)

(SPOKEN)

But then I died. I died in a crash thanks to Cass.

ION

(SPOKEN)

But you're here.

FEDERICO

(SPOKEN)

I'm only here because of her love for Sunny. Is that the life you want?

Federico acknowledges the totem.

FEDERICO (CONT'D)

(SPOKEN)

Someone in control of whether you make memories or become a memory?

ION

(SPOKEN)

Control? What do you mean?

There's a distant SCREAM.

7-52

EXT. PATHWAYS TO POOL/GARDEN/DESERT INN - NIGHT

7-52

Cass SCREAMS as she steps on something. It is a MOUNTAIN TOTEM. Cass finds Sunny's RING inside.

ION

(SPOKEN)

Don't let me go.

FEDERICO/ION

(SPOKEN)

If this is our last time together, just remember we had something that will last forever.

CASS
Stop hiding from me, my Sunny.
It doesn't have to be this way.
Stop hiding from me. Stop hiding
from me. Let's...

VAPORS (O.S.)
Go go go go go...

7-53 **INT. ROOM 8/DESERT INN - NIGHT**

7-53

Federico sees something strange with the totem. Over the following, Ion begins to walk towards the door, carrying only his small bag and jacket. Ion smells something.

VAPORS (O.S.)
Go go go go go...

FEDERICO
(SPOKEN)
Hurry. Come on.

ION
(SPOKEN)
What's that smell?

Federico smells the air, then feels something inside.

FEDERICO
(SPOKEN)
It might be too late.
Get out! Now!

END OF EPISODE.

Chapter Eight

"Tell me how all this, and love too, will ruin us."

Written by

Roxie Perkins

Composer

Michael Abels

Note: (This episode is mostly SPOKEN. The SPOKEN line is in **BOLD**.)

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8-54 **INT. CASS AND SUNNY'S ROOM/DESERT INN - NIGHT (NIGHT 3)** 8-54 *

OPEN ON CASS from behind, sitting on a bed. SMOKE RISES in front of her, but we can't see what it's from. As we PAN AROUND, we see that she is holding Sunny's RING. Cass's face is clenched with shock, in disbelief that Sunny has left her.

PANNING DOWN we see that the smoke is coming from... Cass herself. Physicalizing her pain, Cass's dress has caught FIRE. We PAN OUT to reveal that we're in Sunny and Cass's room. The walls are covered in MEMORABILIA of their life. As Cass's shock gives way to anger, the FIRE slowly spreads onto the CARPET. Meanwhile, the CLOCK on the wall begins VIBRATING...

Then the rage hits. Cass shoots up off the bed, RIPS the door off its hinges, and FLIES out of the room. Instantly all their MEMENTOS go up IN FLAMES, the clock SPINS in overtime, and the ground SHAKES with the weight of Cass's fury -

8-55 **INT. ROOM 8/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS** 8-55

ION and FEDERICO are in the same room we left them in, except now it is falling apart around them. Ion stares in terror at the CHAOS, confused at what's happening. Federico, on the other hand, isn't confused at all.

FEDERICO
(exhausted, amused)
Cass is mad.
(a little impressed)
Maybe Sunny finally...

The room violently shakes -- screams are heard from afar. Suddenly panicked, Federico violently grabs Ion's collar.

FEDERICO (CONT'D)
WHERE-IS-IT? WHERE-ARE-YOU-HIDING
IT?

Almost choking, Ion shoves Federico off of him.

ION
(sputtering, half-SPOKEN)
What?

FEDERICO
(accusatory, knowing)
You know what!

Frightened, Ion assumes that Cass's anger must be over Rufus' stolen totem that he's been hiding.

Drowning in guilt, Ion pulls out key from a hiding place. *

Assuming that Federico is asking for the totem back to appease Cass, Ion hesitantly hands it to him -

But Federico refuses to take it. Instead, he presses it into Ion's hands. Ion doesn't understand.

FEDERICO (CONT'D)

(commanding)

Break it.

Free him.

(softening)

Free yourself.

Suddenly the room TILTS. Federico pulls Ion to the door. Ion runs out, still holding Federico's hand - *

8-56 **INT. HALLWAY/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS**

8-56

However, once Ion is in the hall, Federico SLAMS the door shut on him -- trapping himself in the room -

8-57 **INT. ROOM 8/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS**

8-57

Federico anchors his body against the door as Ion tries to break it down from the hall -

ION (O.S.)

(unseen, half-shouted)

FEDERICO!

8-58 **INT. HALLWAY/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS**

8-58

In the hall, Ion is in shock that Federico has tricked him. However, before Ion has a chance to bang on the door again, another SHAKE occurs, sand falling everywhere as if the Inn was being swallowed by the desert. Ion jumps out of the way just as THE LIGHTS START TO STROBE - *

In a frantic, heart-racing MONTAGE, Ion clutches Rufus' totem and runs down the strobing hall. As Ion runs, the doors to the rooms fly open -- exposing what's happening in EACH ROOM he passes. Ion glimpses: *

8-58A **INT. ROOM 7 - CONTINUOUS**

8-58A

- (VAPOR) OLD MAN/DEREK attempting to pull his SON out of the room, as the Vapor calmly watches TV - *

8-58B **INT. ROOM 6 - CONTINUOUS** 8-58B *

- (VAPOR) LOUNGE SINGER gets crushed by a FALLING CHANDELIER
as she tries to escape - *

8-58C **INT. ROOM 5 - CONTINUOUS** 8-58C *

- A (VAPOR) FAMILY lovingly get the water ready for their
child's bath, ignoring the chaos around them- *

8-59 **INT. LOBBY/LOUNGE/DESERT INN - MOMENTS LATER** 8-59 *

Ion races to lobby and rounds corner and is in the lounge.
How did this happen? Trapped, Ion moves away from the
ominous DUST AND HAZE filling the room. The LOUNGE SINGER,
however, doesn't mind as she continues to CROON over the
sounds of destruction. *

LOUNGE SINGER
(cheerful as ever)
Down here at the Desert Inn
Love tossed in the desert wind
Those you've lost are embraced
again
All it takes is one trace of them
And there's free cable, so sleep
til noon
Checkout time's never coming
soon... *

VAPORS (O.S.)
(Woe, woh-oo, woh oo, woh-ooh.) *

Ion sits with martini and then a column of SAND falls into
the glass. Bottles are sliding off the wall and BREAKING. *

LOUNGE SINGER
When you're down here at the Desert
Inn
Warm sun for your faded skin
All you're longing to see is here
Doesn't matter the time of year
They're all waiting at the Desert
Inn
They're all here at the Inn...
They're down at the Inn...
The Desert Inn

VAPORS (O.S.)
(Woe, woh-oo, woh oo, woh-ooh.) *

Desperate for a way out of the motel, Ion stumbles into the smoke -- suddenly someone grabs him.

Ion sees that he's walked into the OLD MAN'S SON, who is lounging at the bar in his speedo -- sipping his father's favorite drink. The Old Man's Son calmly offers an extra drink to Ion. Unnerved, Ion backs away -

Accidentally KNOCKING into a wall of colorful liquors. The alcohol CRASHES down, causing the FLAMES TO JUMP HIGHER.

Falling to the ground, Ion CRAWLS blindly through the SMOKE -

8-60 **EXT. COURTYARD/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS**

8-60

Ion emerges out of the bar and into the garden pathways, stumbling through its maze of nooks and streams. Exhausted, he uses his last ounce of strength to press open the EXIT WOODEN GATE, before collapsing into the outside world.

8-61 **EXT. MOTEL ENTRANCE/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS**

8-61

As soon as Ion is over the motel's threshold, all the SOUNDS of destruction CEASE. The truck is in view. Shocked by the quiet, Ion looks back. Behind him the Inn BURNS and CRUMBLES DOWN IN SILENCE -- as though it was a world away. Clutching Rufus' totem, Ion is determined to be done with this place -- for good. *

Trembling, Ion finds a ROCK on the ground. Standing over the rock, Ion slowly raises up the totem -- planning to smash it down. He HEARS Federico's words re-play in his mind:

FEDERICO (O.S.)
Break it. Free him. Free
yourself. *

Suddenly a FIGURE appears at the wooden door of the motel... Federico. The movement catches Ion's eye and stops him from breaking the totem. Looking at Federico, Ion feels a stab of guilt at the thought of leaving him trapped there. Forever. *

Just then Federico vanishes from the doorway, leaving it open. *

8-61A **INT. LOBBY/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS**

8-61A

Federico grabs all the keys. *

- 8-61B **EXT. FIRE PIT/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS** 8-61B *
- Cass stares down at the fire. *
- 8-61C **INT. POOL AREA/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS** 8-61C *
- Looking down at Rufus' totem in his hands, suddenly an idea gleams in Ion's eyes. Fuck this. He's not leaving anyone. *
- 8-62 **INT. ROOM INFINITY/EXT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS** 8-62 *
- Back in the motel room, Federico has stepped through the portal of his doorway so as not to give Ion a reason to stay. Praying that Ion has really left, Federico peers back out... Ion is nowhere in sight. Federico breathes a sigh of relief - followed instantly by a wave of sorrow as the reality of what's left for him at the Desert Inn washes over him... *
- Depressed, Federico looks out over the BURNING courtyard. He sees Cass kneeling by the fire pit. Just as he starts to turn away, suddenly someone enters the courtyard... Ion. Federico watches in shock as Ion approaches Cass. *
- Fed up, Federico wildly waves his arms and silently urges Ion to stop... But it's of no use. Panicked, Federico runs out of the room to stop Ion from... Whatever stupid, selfless thing he's about to die trying to do.
- 8-63 **EXT. COURTYARD/POOL AREA/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS** 8-63
- Meanwhile, holding Rufus' totem, Ion cautiously approaches Cass. Cass remains bent over, unresponsive. *
- ION
(fearfully antagonizing)
I have it, Cass.
The one thing you're so livid
without, you'd destroy your own
world
Just to get it back. *
- Ion holds out Rufus' totem and steps towards Cass, who doesn't respond.
- ION (CONT'D)
(growing bolder)
I'll make a deal with you, Cass.
You can have it back,
if you promise...
(bluffing)
Not to destroy this place. *

Ion lies, performing gratitude as he nears her.

ION (CONT'D)
(falsely flattering)
Think of what you built here, Cass!
All the lost ones you found,
all the found ones you lost...
I would rather lose Rufus here,
for the last time,
than lose this place all together.

Ion is right behind Cass, he holds out the totem to her.

ION (CONT'D)
(begging softly)
Please, Cass.
Take it,
and stop this.

Cass slowly sits up, seemingly having heard him. Betraying his true violent intent, Ion's fingers clench around Rufus' totem as he prepares to make his REAL move...

Suddenly, Federico runs into the courtyard to prevent whatever war is about to break out between them. The SOUND of Federico's entrance makes Cass turn. Ion takes his chance...

With all of his strength, Ion hurls Federico's keychain of totems -- CRASH! -- with an enormous commotion, sending all of the totems FLYING down into the BOILING POOL.

As soon as the totems hit the pool, the water CALMS and morphs into a SUNSET OF COLORS. Instantly the motels' destruction STOPS.

In the pool, the FREED TOTEMS BEGIN TO MELT -- releasing the LAST BREATH OF THE VAPORS that they held...

Ion watches in awe as the three women VAPORS' IMAGES EXPOSE AND RIPPLE LIKE WAVES, finally free of Cass' hold. Their skin turns TRANSLUCENT as they GLIDE UP like untethered balloons into the night sky. Amongst these vapors are the two from the hallway montage: the Lounge Singer and The Old Man's Son. The Lounge Singer continues to dance as she floats up. The Old Man's son smiles down at Ion, happy to soon be reunited with his late father.

LOUNGE SINGER/OLD MAN'S SON
(a last exhale, relieved)
...What was lost... Is found
again... Sleep... Coming soon...

VAPORS (O.S.)
(Ah... ah... ah...)

*
*

Across the courtyard, Federico stares at his feet in amazement as he begins to FLOAT -- finally free of Cass' entrapment. Beside him, RUFUS's VAPOR appears as well, smiling down at Ion as he RISES.

Ion runs to them for one last embrace. However, he just misses them, leaving Ion grasping the air/himself.

FEDERICO/RUFUS
(a farewell kiss)
Here, here,
here.
Always.

Devastated and relieved to see them go, Ion watches Rufus and Federico float away. A brief moment of peace RINGS out -

However, it's soon cut short by the SHATTERING SOUND of heartbreak. Sounding partially like an ANIMAL DYING, partially like a CAR CRASHING, partially like BONES SNAPPING - the SOUND STRIKES ION TO THE GROUND. Ready to fight off whatever attack Cass may hit him with, he stands to face her.

Yet... when Ion looks back at Cass he sees that she hasn't even noticed that the vapors have been freed. Instead, she is only focused on an OBJECT in her hands.

Carefully stepping closer, Ion sees that Cass is... Crying. Clutching... Sunny's RING.

Ion's heart drops as he realizes his mistake. The fire, all this, had nothing to do with Rufus' stolen totem. It only had to do with Sunny leaving Cass...

Suddenly, Cass lets out a HOWL even more forceful than before. The ring in her hands starts to SPARK. Above it a VAPOR of SUNNY briefly FLICKERS -- before EVAPORATING. Cass can't hold onto her.

Pained to see Cass embroiled in the same heartbreak that he once was, something changes in Ion. Ion gently helps Cass up.

ION
(apologetic)
Cass, I didn't know...
(gently encouraging)
You aren't trapped here.
You can go!
Go find the real Sunny!
Fix -

Cass shoves Ion off of her and returns to her conjuring, ignoring him. Ion watches, disgusted by her delusion.

ION (CONT'D)
You're better than this...

Cass suddenly rises and descends on him with acidic fury.

CASS
Why should I have to be?
Can't I want it all back too?
Just like you did!
No, I don't get to want things, do I?
Because. It's. All. My. Fault.
(melodramatic)
I trapped the vapors here!
I stopped them from being at peace!

Cass creeps closer to Ion. Terrified, Ion freezes as Cass leans in as though she was going to kiss him.

CASS (CONT'D)
(venomous, soft)
If you live to be my age, you will learn.
If you live to be my age, you will learn that peace is just another word for silence.
Peace is just another word for silence, which is just another word for death.
(just above his lips)
Fuck peace. Fuck peace!

Cass violently shoves Ion, sending him flying across the courtyard. Turning away, she sits back on her rubble throne.

CASS (CONT'D)
And don't be too proud of yourself!
(points at broken wall of totems)
I was going to discard them anyway.
I'm looking forward to having some private time,
for my new Sunny and me!

Cass returns to conjuring as the motel's destruction ROARS back to life. Stung that he played into Cass' hands, Ion starts to walk away. He can barely feel the heat from the flames this time...

8-64 **EXT. RTE. 66 - MOMENTS LATER/DAY FOR NIGHT**

8-64 *

Ion numbly staggers up the highway, away from the Desert Inn. Step. Step. Step. Step. Step. Breath by breath, he begins to enjoy the feeling of being in motion again.

VAPORS (O.S.)
(Ooh, ooh, ooh.)

*
*

His pace picks up, until suddenly he looks down and realizes that he's RUNNING and the motel is just a FLICKERING LIGHT behind him.

Overcome with relief, Ion stops and catches his breath. He's free -- safe -- alive -- and alone. Yet still... Ion looks up at the STARS. And it's not peace that he feels, but... War. Hastened by the fight to survive, Ion takes off running down the empty highway, FASTER AND FASTER into the unknowable dark -

8-65 **EXT. FIRE PIT/POOL AREA/DESERT INN - NIGHT**

8-65 *

Cutting back to the courtyard, we are instantly assaulted by a WALL OF VIOLENT SOUND as the FIRE BURNS IN A RING around Cass. Desperately trying and failing to conjure Sunny, death seems imminent for Cass as the FLAMES LICK AT HER HEELS -

DING-DING. Suddenly, the sound of the front desk bell RINGS out, LOUDER than ever before.

Instantly all the FIRES FREEZE and the SOUNDS OF DESTRUCTION STOP. Reverberating in the air, the BELL PLUCKS Cass's heartstrings with a CHORD of "What if"...

In a hopeful trance, Cass floats through the courtyard. "What if... What if... What if..."

8-66 **INT. LOBBY/DESERT INN - CONTINUOUS**

8-66

Approaching the front desk, Cass sees a SHADOWY FIGURE silhouetted already inside. She stops.

CASS
(SPOKEN; vulnerable,
yearning)
Sunny...?

*
*
*
*
*

The figure turns and steps into the light -- revealing that it's... A STRANGER. Something in Cass' face breaks in that moment, humiliated by her own romantic hope. Cass doesn't want to do this -- any of this -- anymore.

*

Crushed, Cass starts to turn away. The Stranger grabs her.
(The Stranger's lines sung by Derek always comes before
Sunny's by a second or two; she echoes him.)

*
*
*

THE STRANGER(S)
(sung by voice of Derek;
timidly)
Hey, do you work here?
(echo seductively; sung by
voice of Sunny)
Hey, do you work here?

THE STRANGER DEREK
(sung by voice of Derek)
I couldn't tell if you guys
were open. Sorry! It's been
a really long drive. I'd
like to check in... Oh,
right! I know you guys have,
like, a special! I have it,
I swear! It's... This guy,
cute, missing a foot... Ah!
Here it is! He left this at
the bar where my girlfriend
and I used to go before
she... we used to go before
she... Look, I've never tried
to use some weird-ass magic
to bring back my dead
girlfriend before. So I'm
sorry if I'm doing it wrong,
sorry if I'm doing it
wrong... But are you gonna
fucking help me, or not? Are
you gonna fucking help me, or
not? 'Cus I would really
love to hold her again.
Really love to hold her
again. I'd do anything to
hold her again.

THE STRANGER SUNNY
(sung by voice of Sunny)
I couldn't tell if you guys
were open. A really long
drive...
(remembers)
I know you guys have, like, a
special!
(searching belongings)
I have it. I swear! It's...
(still searching)
This guy, cute, missing a
foot...
(produces TOTEM)
Here it is! He left this at
the bar where my girlfriend
and I used to go before
she... before she...
I've never tried to use some
weird-ass magic to bring back
my dead girlfriend before.
So I'm sorry if I'm doing it
wrong.... sorry if I'm doing
it wrong... Are you gonna
fucking help me, or not? Are
you gonna fucking help me, or
not? Really love to hold her
again. Really love to hold
her again, anything to hold
her again.

*

Torn, Cass doesn't know what to do... Small beat. She's
back.

*
*

Cass grins --

BLACKOUT.

OVER CREDITS --

LOUNGE SINGER

Down here at the Desert Inn
Love tossed in the desert wind
Those you've lost are embraced
again
All it takes is one trace of them
And there's free cable, so sleep
'til noon
Checkout time's never coming
soon...

VAPORS (O.S.)

(Woe, woh-oo, woh oo, woh-oo.)

LOUNGE SINGER

When you're down here at the Desert
Inn
Warm sun for your faded skin
All you're longing to see is here
Doesn't matter the time of year
They're all waiting at the Desert
Inn

VAPORS (O.S.)

(Woe, woh-oo, woh oo, woh-oo.)

FIN.