



THE FALSE MESSIAH S01E03

"Believe"

Written by

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INT. REHABILITATION CENTER - DAY

Light from the large window enters through the white curtains, filling the silent room with light yellow tones.

There's a person in a wheelchair facing the window.

This is JONATHAN (53), african-American, bald, completely shaved, paralyzed.

The light shines on the golden competition medals hanging on the wall.

On the table, the Samsara box, The pill bottle and a glass of half-drunk water.

EXT. JONATHAN'S DREAM - ???

The disturbing, sharp, unpleasant sound of the friction of many things at the same time.

A hundred, a thousand, maybe a million hands reach forward, trying to grab something with force.

They are human arms, aggressive, violent.

They move like the relentless march of centipedes.

INTERCUT REHABILITATION CENTER AND JONATHAN'S DREAM

Closer and closer to the person in a wheelchair.

Refracted sunlight.

Echoes of a fight are faintly heard.

Hands cling to the skin, to the flesh of a standing body. They try to pierce the flesh, produce bleeding wounds.

Even closer to the chair, to the still man sitting.

Hands clutch the body of younger JONATHAN (21).

Eyes closed, focused.

The sounds of fighting are heard more clearly, it is the voice of a woman and a man fighting.

Even closer to the chair, an almost imperceptible movement in the wheels.

The curtains on the window move slightly.

The hands keep going up, tearing. They almost reach Jonathan's face.

Yet he's still, silent, serene.

Suddenly!

Jonathan opens his eyes, raises his left hand to the sky among the thousands hands.

Boom!

A shockwave is produced as Jonathan gets up from the wheelchair, which flies away.

The windows explode the curtains razzle and fly through the air.

Time stands still.

Amidst the hundreds of glittering shards of glass in the air.

Together with rays of green, blue and red light refracted in the crystals.

Jonathan stands smiling.

OPENING: DANCING WITH TEARS IN MY EYES BY AVANTASIA.

"Dancing with tears in my eyes, weeping for the memory of a life gone by. Dancing with tears in my eyes, living out a memory of a love that died"

INT. ANNIE'S SCHOOL GYM - DAY

(sad string melody)

Sound muted, gym teacher shows fist move in front of the class.

Annie hits the bag with her fists, without force, without interest.

EXT. TED'S WORLD/FLOWER GARDEN VR - DAY

Simone's eyes, furious.

She holds Ted's body in the air, impaled on the golden spear she holds tightly.

From the place of the wound, Ted's body catches on fire, advancing, covering his entire body.

Ted moves violently because of the pain, he screams in despair.

INTERCUT ANNIE'S SCHOOL GYM AND TED'S WORLD/FLOWER GARDEN

Annie hits the bag hard, moving it a good distance.

Ted's body is transformed into ashes that are scattered in the wind.

Annie hits the bag one more time, even harder.

Annie, on the garden floor, looks shocked at Simone.

Simone walks over to Annie, passes by without looking at her, and walks over to Robert, lying in agony in the grass.

Simone and Robert disappear, leaving a light blue trail in the air.

Tears fall on the gym floor.

Annie calmly walks among the students, toward the teacher.

The teacher sees the tears in Annie's eyes, she nods.

Annie leaves the room in silence.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACE TRACK GRANDSTAND VR - DAY

Jonathan (53 but his appearance is that of a young man in Samsara), sitting in the center.

Surrounded by a HUNDRED participants, all laughing, enjoying, sharing with him.

WOMAN PARTICIPANT

C'mon, tell me, how do you do it?

Jonathan smiles widely to the woman next to him.

(FLASHBACK)

EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY

Purple, green and red fireworks explode in the night sky.

A banner on the bleachers reads "Atlanta olympics 1996".

Participants get ready in their lanes.

Jonathan (18) crouches down, arranges his sneakers.

He reaches his hand to the ground and picks up some dirt. He rubs it between his palms.

JONATHAN'S FATHER (V.O.)  
Running? You crazy? you think we  
are a wealthy family? better find a  
job!

Jonathan brings his hands to his face, he takes a deep breath.

JONATHAN'S MOTHER (V.O.)  
Son, listen to your father. Focus  
on studying so you can take a real  
job.

Jonathan's chest rises slowly, serenely.

The referee raises the pistol to the sky, preparing to fire.

JONATHAN'S COACH (V.O.)  
Listen son, you can't run. In all  
my teaching years I never seen  
someone less qualified.

Jonathan stands up fully, he looks up at the sky.

A seagull passes through the sky, heading towards the sun.

BANG!

The race starts!

Jonathan's muscles tense and expand at the first movement that leads his body to propel forward.

He moves like lightning, leaving the rest of the competitors behind.

JONATHAN (V.O.)  
It was a dream.

(Flash image of Jonathan in the middle of a thousand hands grabbing him down)

WOMAN PARTICIPANT  
A dream?

JONATHAN (V.O.)  
Running felt like that dream. Like  
tryin to break free.

One step and another, his legs lift gracefully, powerfully, propelling him further and further forward.

(END OF FLASHBACK)

EXT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - DAY

The train doors open, people enter. Among these people is Annie.

She sits by the window.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

It has been two weeks since the start of Samsara and the fever to be part of this virtual experience has not stopped.

Annie watches the orange sunset sun on the horizon, between the bodies of the buildings in the center of the city.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

Hundreds of people are currently lined up outside Samsara headquarters for a chance to participate.

The train enters the tunnel.

White, blue lights on the walls of the tunnel leave luminous trails because of the train's speed.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

Even more so after Thalia Silvergate announced the stellar competition and the promise of a prize for the winner...

The train pulls into the station, Annie gets up and walks to the opening doors.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

Anything your heart desires.

She gets off the train.

EXT. STREET IN COMMERCIAL AREA - DAY

Annie walks down the gray sidewalk, a line of cars stuck in a traffic jam on the street.

The chorus of honking horns.

People walk by talking on the phone, each in their own world.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)  
These are the statements that the  
CEO of Samsara gave at a press  
conference this morning.

Annie stops next to a group of people standing around  
looking at the huge screen on the front of a commercial  
building.

On the screen, Thalia can be seen standing at the podium of  
the press conference.

THALIA  
We are happy to report that one of  
our participants has already build  
a constellation of a hundred  
people!

A reporter gets up from his seat to ask a question.

REPORTER  
And what happens if someone asks to  
murder another person or drop  
atomic bombs?

THALIA  
Well, we'll go through that door  
when we get to it.

Reporters are surprised by the statement.

THALIA  
Listen, I understand your concerns.  
I assure you that our company has  
and always will have the future of  
humanity in its best interests.

THALIA (CONT'D)  
Also, I am glad to know that you  
are not a Stellar participant. Bye.

The press conference ends on the giant screen. The people  
gathered to watch disperse.

ANNIE  
(to herself)  
She IS reckless.

ROBERT  
Hi there, Annie.

Annie looks to the side, among the people walking away she  
meets Robert's gaze. She rushes effusively to hug a  
surprised Robert.

EXT. PLAYGROUND SQUARE - DAY

Annie and Robert, sitting on one of the benches in the square, children play with their parents on the playground.

ANNIE  
So that's how you find me.

ROBERT  
(nodding)  
You give way too much information  
on social network.

ANNIE  
I didn't realize people were  
actually looking.

Annie stops for a moment... then...

ANNIE  
Hey! Were you spying on me?

ROBERT  
Yes?

Annie gets up, she prepares her fist to strike Robert.

Evil eyes!

ROBERT  
Relax, it's just that I needed to  
find you.

ANNIE  
Why?

ROBERT  
Why? You haven't logged into  
Samsara for over a week.

Annie sits back down.

ANNIE  
I don't think I'm coming back.

ROBERT  
I figured, that's what she said you  
would say.

ANNIE  
Who?

ROBERT  
Who do you think?

Annie gets up again, this time she is really angry.

ANNIE  
That Simone, she thinks she knows  
me?

ROBERT  
She was right, though.

Annie sighs deeply.

ANNIE  
Robert... I...

ROBERT  
I know. I'm fine by the way.

ANNIE  
What happened? I mean after...

Robert looks to the side, he's uncomfortable.

ROBERT  
I thought I was going to die. Turns  
out, when I came out of Samsara the  
pain was over.

ANNIE  
I see.

ROBERT  
I want to know what is really going  
on at Samsara.

Robert gets up, walks over to Annie.

ROBERT  
What do you say.

ANNIE  
I want to know too.

ROBERT  
You know, there's a guy who already  
has a HUNDRED planets on his  
constellation.

ANNIE  
So I heard. We can't be left  
behind, partner.

Annie and Robert smile in the fading sun.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANNIE'S WORLD/LEAFY FOREST VR - DAY

Annie and Robert materialize in the middle of the forest.

ROBERT  
Okay! I'm ready!

ANNIE  
Wait, we can't pull the same  
nonsense of last time.

ROBERT  
Meaning?

ANNIE  
He kicked our asses I mean.

Robert stops, assumes a thinking position.

ROBERT  
Mmm, guess you're right.

ANNIE  
Dude, you almost died.

ROBERT  
Don't have to rub it in my face.

Conversation is interrupted.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Annie, a person has sent a friend  
request.

ANNIE  
What? Who?

FEMALE VOICE  
Jonathan Livingston is asking to  
join your world.

ANNIE  
Who?

ROBERT  
(shocked)  
It's that dude!

ANNIE  
What dude?

ROBERT  
100 planets dude!

ANNIE  
Oh, this should be interesting,  
okay, let him in!

A red door appears in front of Annie and Robert.

The door opens.

From inside, JONATHAN (20) enters Annie's world.

He's smiling widely, serene, but strangely imposing.

CUT TO:

(FLASHBACK)

EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY

Jonathan crosses the track at high speed.

His gaze fixed on the horizon.

His arms give air-cutting strokes.

Jonathan closes his eyes for a second.

Darkness.

A trail, barely visible, becomes more intense.

They're lines separating from an imaginary horizon, some horizontal, some vertical.

The lines form a tunnel of light in front of Jonathan.

Eyes open.

One false step.

Jonathan presses on his right eye, trying to bear the pain.

He loses speed, his breathing short, fast.

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

The clean room, sterile, x-rays laid out in front of the light, no windows.

Jonathan, sitting in front of the doctor reviewing examination reports.

JONATHAN  
Just tell me doc, whe can I go back  
running.

DOCTOR  
 Look Jon, there's no easy way to  
 say this.

Jonathan settles into the chair, brings his right hand to  
 his nose, prepares himself.

JONATHAN  
 Shoot doc.

DOCTOR  
 We have strong reasons to believe  
 that you are in the early stages of  
 ALS.

Jonathan tries to hold back tears, his breath hitching. He  
 clears his throat.

DOCTOR  
 This weakness you feel in your  
 legs, the cramps... with time it  
 will get worse.

JONATHAN  
 No...

DOCTOR  
 I'm sorry Jon, but you won't be  
 able to run anymore.

That last sentence echoes.

EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY

Jonathan's body decays, almost falling to the ground.

EXT. JONATHAN'S DREAM - ???

The disturbing, sharp, unpleasant sound of friction.

Thousands of hands go up, clinging to Jonathan's body,  
 pushing him down.

(END OF FLASHBACK)

EXT. ANNIE'S WORLD/LEAFY FOREST VR - DAY (CONT'D)

Jonathan in front of Annie and Robert, the wind picks up  
 leaves from the ground.

Tension in the air.

ANNIE  
 What did you just said?

JONATHAN  
You heard me, I'm challenging you.  
If you touch me even once...

Robert is tense, he looks at Annie, then back to Jonathan.

JONATHAN  
All of my one hundred planets will  
be yours.

ROBERT (V.O.)  
Something's wrong, I don't think  
his intentions are wrong, not like  
that other guy...

(Flash image of Ted with wings in the air, mad)

ROBERT (V.O.)  
But why I can't stop shaking?

Annie breaks the tension.

ANNIE  
And if I lose?

JONATHAN  
Oh, you'll join me.

ANNIE  
Why me?

JONATHAN  
Why not?

Annie frowns at the answer, annoyed.

JONATHAN  
Just a hunch.

ANNIE  
Is this the way you got so many  
people?

JONATHAN  
No Annie, all of them joined me  
willingly. This is my first fight.

Robert walks to Annie, while moving he can't move his eyes  
away from Jonathan.

ROBERT  
Listen Annie, I think I have a  
plan.

ANNIE  
Okay, let's do it.

ROBERT  
What? No complaining?

Annie looks Robert to the eyes.

ANNIE  
I just want to kick his ass so bad  
right now.

ROBERT  
(smiling)  
Glad to hear it.

JONATHAN  
You decided?

Robert and Annie face Jonathan, they prepare for attack.

JONATHAN  
I see... Come.

Action!

Action!

With a quick movement, Robert puts both hands together,  
concentrates!

The trees of the forest gather, forming rows behind and on  
either side of Jonathan, enclosing him.

Trapped!

ROBERT  
Now Annie!

Before Robert finishes the sentence, Annie jumps forward.

She runs forcefully straight towards Jonathan.

Reaches out to grab his hand.

ANNIE  
Got you!

Surprisingly, Jonathan disappears!

Annie can't stop, she crashes into the logs.

JONATHAN  
You have to do better than that.

Robert freezes, shocked.

Jonathan is behind him.

Annie gets up from the floor, beaten. She notices the nearby grass burned, crushed by enormous friction.

JONATHAN

"Lightspeed". It allows me to move really fast. You like it?

Jonathan puts his hand on Robert's shoulder.

A translucent, iridescent bubble covers Robert's body.

He starts shocking, he puts his hands on his throat.

JONATHAN

"No air", it's quite self explanatory, don't you think?

Annie looks up from the grass, still in the same position, her gaze showing increasing desperation.

JONATHAN

This is the second time you find yourself in this position, right Annie?

Annie presses the grass with her hands.

JONATHAN

Well, you're going to do something? your friend is going to die and...

ANNIE

(faintly)  
Leave him...

JONATHAN

What? I didn't hear you...

ANNIE

(faintly)  
Leave him...

Robert collapses inside the bubble.

JONATHAN

I don't think he has more time...

ANNIE

(angrily)  
Leave him alone!!!!

Annie's hair rises skyward following the force of her scream.

Her eyes giving off a bluish glow, a trail of light following every movement of her eyes.

The floor cracks completely open and separates into many pieces.

Jonathan stays in the same position, floating in the air.

He looks to the side, toward Robert.

Robert is no longer there.

Behind Jonathan's back, Annie holds Robert's body, placing it on one of the pieces of floor floating in the air.

JONATHAN

How did you...

Annie growls like a wild animal. Her eyes glow bright blue.

JONATHAN

Is she... unconscious?

Annie puts her palms together quickly.

All the pieces of floor are projected toward Jonathan.

JONATHAN

Lightspeed!

A flash of light, the sound of thunder.

To one side and the other, Jonathan moves at great speed between the pieces of floor.

Ascending to escape being crushed by them.

He succeeds and jumps into the sky.

However!

An enraged Annie launches herself at him in mid-air.

Impossible to dodge!

Annie throws a series of punches and kicks to Jonathan, who manages to dodge them with quick movements of his whole body.

JONATHAN (V.O.)

She is attacking me with all her  
might while keeping that rock  
floating to protect her friend. Her  
concentration is admirable.

Annie raises her fist, but stops midway through and raises  
her hand, her ring and index finger up.

The cluster of pieces of floor separates underneath Jonathan  
and Annie.

JONATHAN

You're not gonna make this easy for  
me, uh?

The pieces rise up and now surround them both.

(FLASHBACK)

Annie continues to relentlessly attack Jonathan, who can  
only evade each of her strikes.

One of the pieces of floor is shot toward Jonathan.

Lightspeed!

He moves quickly and manages to dodge it with a jump.

But Annie jumps up and continues to throw punches and kicks  
at him.

A second piece rushes at Jonathan, a third follows.

The smile on Jonathan's face fades. He concentrates.

INTERCUT RACE TRACK JONATHAN'S DREAM AND ANNIE'S WORLD VR

Jonathan's foot presses hard into the gravel. It pushes  
forward with force in the race track.

JONATHAN (V.O.)

I'm not done yet...

Jonathan's body almost disappears amidst the thousands of  
hands pushing him down in the dream.

Annie returns to the charge in mid air.

The rest of the floor pieces hurl themselves at him!

Jonathan raises his eyes to the horizon, to the end of the  
track, grips his hands.

JONATHAN (V.O.)  
I'm not done yet!!!

In the dream, Jonathan's arm is raised amidst a sea of human arms.

The finish line at the end of the track is visible, Jonathan accelerates once more.

He closes his eyes.

The light trails appear again, forming a tunnel of light in front of him.

Jonathan accelerates even more, accelerates so much that the race track and everything around him disappears, until only light surrounds him.

In the dream, Jonathan is propelled upward toward the sky, leaving the arms that take him behind.

In the present (Annie's world) pieces of floor surround him.

Annie attacks him!

Boom! An intense light escapes from Jonathan's body.

A big explosion.

FADE TO BLACK.

EPILOGUE

(FLASHBACK, RACE TRACK)

Jonathan, dressed as a runner, wrapped in light, passes through reality as if he were passing through a mirror with his whole body.

The whole reality, the racetrack, the people in the stands, the blue sky, everything is shattered like shards of glass floating in the middle of an immense empty space.

Darkness.

Jonathan falls uncontrollably, frightened in the middle of the void.

His body crashes to the ground, it is a viscous surface, like a swamp.

All covered in darkness. He tries to get up.

However.

From the floor, one, ten, a hundred, a thousand hands black as oil rise.

The hands grab him, hold him, try to bury him in the darkness.

                  ???

Stay...

                  ????

Just stay...

                  ?????

Be still...

Jonathan moves his arms trying to free himself from the dark hands covering his body.

                  JONATHAN  
                  (angrily)  
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaah!

Jonathan raises his arm to the sky, concentrates.

Whoosh!

His body lifts off the ground at high speed, leaving the dark hands behind.

However, the dark hands propel themselves upward, stretch out following Jonathan, try to cling to him.

Suddenly, an intense golden light descends from above.

The light frightens the dark hands, disintegrates them.

Jonathan looks up, his eyes dazzled by the intense glow of millions of golden feathers escaping from the light.

But.

Amidst the light, he catches a glimpse of a figure reaching out to him.

Jonathan stretches out his hand to reach for it.

This person's eyes glow an intense blue, is a woman.

Jonathan's hand grabs the woman's hand.

Light.

(to be continued...)