

DARK GOD

Episode 01:
"I'm Here For My Gold!"

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EXT. THE CITY OF NEW COLUMBUS - DAY

An industrial era metropolis. Sleek, steel buildings at its center, crumbling brick and stone at the edges.

EXT. THE SOUTHWEST SLUMS - NEW COLUMBUS - CONTINUOUS

Clouds of smog hang in the sky above.

NORMAN (10) and MALCOLM (12), scrawny, dirty, disheveled, and scared, huddle at the end of a dark alley. Norman holds a fully stuffed paper bag.

ROYCE 'ARR (26), chiseled body, serious demeanor, thick leather boots, and a cowboy hat on his head, stomps up to the boys. Four mafia-like goons advance with him.

ROYCE

(in a low, gentle voice)
Ain't nuthin' to be 'fraid of,
kiddies. I'm just a slum'dweller
like y'all. Now how's about you
give me all your food and all your
money, eh?

The boys back into a brick wall. Royce's men LAUGH.

ROYCE'S GOON #1

I'd do what he says...

ROYCE'S GOON #2

Last one who didn't is layin' with
the worms now...

Norman hugs the paper bag, hyperventilating.

Malcolm puts a hand on his brother's shoulder, looking scared too.

MALCOLM

Do as he says, Norm. It's okay.

NORMAN

But muh-mama, she needs...she
said...

ROYCE

Hurry it up now, I ain't got all
day!

Royce eyes widen, looking impatient.

Malcolm tries to take the bag from Norm, but Norm won't let it go.

MALCOLM
Just gimme the bag, Norm. Give him what he wants so he don't hurt us.

NORMAN
N-no, Malcolm.

MALCOLM
(pressuring)
Norm.

NORMAN
Mama needs to eat!

ROYCE
I've had enough waiting.

Royce CRACKS his knuckles. His goons CHUCKLE.

ROYCE'S GOON #1
Oh, you kiddos are in for it now.

ROYCE'S GOON #2
Show him, Royce. Show him what makes you the Lion of New Columbus!

Royce smiles wide.

ROYCE'S GOONS
(cheering)
Royce! Royce! Royce!

MALCOLM
Norm, just--

Royce throws a punch, connecting with Malcolm's face.

Malcolm CRIES OUT. His head CRACKS against brick.

As he goes down, Royce strikes Norman. Norman hugs the paper bag tightly, SCREAMING as his head CRACKS against brick.

Royce

NORMAN
Stupid kiddos! This'll teach ya.
(His goons CACKLE. He punches the boys over and over)
When Royce the Lion asks for sumthin', you give it!

He SCREAMS in fury, and the scream turns into a ROAR.

His teeth transform, growing sharper and longer, like the fangs of a lion. When next he punches Norman, his fist has grown golden brown tufts of hair.

Norman drops the brown paper bag. Royce pulls back his fist and flexes his fingers, which have turned to lion claws.

Royce's gang CHUCKLES. Royce picks up the paper bag, then steps away from the boys.

ROYCE

Alright, your turn, my cubs! Beat 'em up till they're unconscious. Or dead! I don't care which.

Royce struts away. His goons pounce, CACKLING and SCREECHING as they pummel the boys.

INT. AN EXQUISITE CATHEDRAL - DAY

The sounds are drowned out by the RINGING of church bells.

EXCITED CHATTER fills the air. The church is packed. A PASTOR stands at the front.

PASTOR

Ah-hemm. We are gathered here today, on this wondrous day, to celebrate the union of two families, forever drawn together through time. Will the groom, Mr. Robert Messenger, please enter?

WEDDING MUSIC begins.

MR. ROBERT MESSENGER (27), dressed in a sky blue tuxedo with an impeccable pink tie, walks the aisle. He is groomed to perfection, with a slick mustache and a short ponytail.

His parents walk on either side of him. He reaches the front and takes his place. They settle into the pews.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

And now, will the bride, Ms. Damea Truth, please enter?

MS. DAMEA TRUTH (24) walks the aisle in a brilliant white wedding dress.

Her parents spin little umbrellas over her head. She takes her place by the groom, and they take their places in the pews.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

On this harmonious day, we join together in holy matrimony the Messenger and the Truth...

From below there comes a very quiet sound that goes *THUMP!* *SWISH!* over and over again.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

Across countless generations they have been together, and now the soulmates join once more. The Messenger, Mr. Robert, will you please recite your vows?

Robert nods, smiling.

ROBERT

Oh Damea, I shall forever be there for you. Through thick and thin, whatever happens, I will lend an attentive ear when you are in times of sorrow, I will share in your joy when the good times come.

(he takes her hands in his)

I will love you with all my heart every day, and when we grow old I will love you even more. At all times, I will speak the truth, and when it is hard to hear, I will be there to comfort you. Until death do us part, I shall be yours, and from one end of the Baklas Belt to the other, I will always communicate with you, so that you may know our love will never fade.

Damea smiles.

PASTOR

And now, the Truth, Ms. Damea, will you please recite your vows?

DAMEA

Robert, I will cherish you with all my heart.

(MORE)

DAMEA (CONT'D)

I will endeavor to make you aware of my every thought, and I will share in your times of joy and sadness as well, just as you share in mine. Together we shall be soulmates, united until death, and with me you shall never feel alone.

The sound from underneath the church is growing louder now. The crowd looks around, distracted. It's not clear where it's coming from.

THUMP! SWISH! THUMP! SWISH!

The priest hesitates, the next words caught in his throat. He eyes the people in attendance. Nothing is out of the ordinary.

He CLEARS HIS THROAT.

PASTOR

Ah-hem, everyone, please remain silent until the reception. This is a special time for Mr. Robert and Ms. Damea.

(beat. The noise hasn't stopped. The priest now speaks louder, over it)

AND NOW, IF YOU PLEASE, THE RINGS?

MUSIC plays, drowning out the mysterious sound. A young boy approaches with the rings on a pillow. The priest takes them, then distributes them to the bride and groom, who slip them on.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

Mr. Robert Messenger, do you take Ms. Damea Truth to be yours, to love and to hold, to cherish until death do you part?

ROBERT

I do.

PASTOR

And Ms. Damea Truth, do you take Mr. Robert Messenger to be yours, to love and to hold, to--

The floor between Robert and Damea bursts open, revealing the blade of a shovel.

The shovel is thrown into the air.

Everyone looks up. It could come down on either the pastor, Robert, or Damea.

Eyes wide, they all cover their heads and SCREAM LIKE SISSIES.

It hits the pastor and he collapses.

FREDDIE (17) climbs out of the hole in the ground and looks around in wonder.

The wedding guests GASP, taken aback. Freddie is dressed in casual attire, covered in dirt, and his clothes are wrinkled and his hair uncombed.

A moment of silence as both he and the wedding guests stare at each other.

Then...

FREDDIE
(screaming)
I'M HERE FOR MY GOLD!

A moment of stunned silence. He gazes around the room, grinning widely.

The wedding guests erupt into BICKERING and SHOUTING.

Freddie turns to look at the bride and groom, the big grin never leaving his face.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
Ooh, a wedding! Congratulations.

He strides up to the bride and groom. They stumble away from him, the bride cowering behind the groom as he grabs a broom to defend them.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
My name's Freddie. What's yours?

THE BRIDE
(whispering)
Oh my god, he's coming after us.

THE GROOM
Worry not, darling. I'll hold him
at bay.

THE BRIDE
Oh, you're so brave.

THE GROOM
 (waving the broom)
 Back! Back, dirt-man!

FREDDIE
 (frowns)
 Hey, that's not very nice. Is that
 what you call everyone who's got a
 little dirt on them?

THE GROOM
 It's what I call your kind. Now
 back, go back where you belong.

FREDDIE
 (confused)
 Where I belong?

THE GROOM
 Yes! Underground.

FREDDIE
 I can't do that! I moved out.

THE GROOM
 What?

FREDDIE
 (laughs)
 Well, it's a funny story, you see,
 ever since I was eleven years old,
 I really wanted to set out and
 strike it rich by discovering gold,
 only my grandma told me I wasn't
 old enough and my mom was just
 sleeping all the time and my dad
 was who knows where? So then I had
 to wait until I got older--

LOUD, SHUFFLING feet cut him off. A group of armed guards
 charge into the room.

GUARD #1
 Remain calm, everyone! Hurry and
 clear the area! We'll take care of
 the dirt-man!

The wedding guests make a beeline for the exit.

WEDDING GUEST #1
 Thank the holy Solus. Finally, the
 guards are here.

WEDDING GUEST #2

How did he even get in? I thought the city was supposed to be impregnable!

WEDDING GUEST #3

We should all lodge complaints with Flares! He's the chief of the guard. I won't rest until he starts actually doing his job, the slacker!

The rest of the wedding guests nod in agreement, MURMURING in discontent.

THE GROOM

Over here, guards! Help us!

The guards hustle over.

GUARD #1

Back, dirt-man! Leave those innocent people alone.

FREDDIE

(turning to face the guard)

Why does everyone keep calling me dirt-man?

GUARD #1

(raising a spear)

If you don't want a fight, I'd suggest you go back home.

Freddie CHUCKLES.

FREDDIE

You know, I used to do quite a bit of fighting down in the mines, we've got all sorts of carnivorous monsters we have to contend with, they're way bigger than you.

He CRACKS his knuckles.

The rest of the guards fall in line alongside guard #1.

GUARD #1

Careful. He's too confident. He has something planned.

Freddie grins.

FREDDIE

Ah! So you're smarter than you look, soapy guy.

GUARD #1

(confused)

Soapy guy?

FREDDIE

Yeah, you like? I figured you need a nickname since mine is apparently dirt-man.

GUARD #1

Look, dirt-man, I don't know what you think you're doing but there's no way you can infiltrate the city of New Columbus and live to tell about it. We'll strike you down right here and now. Men, get ready. On the count of three, we attack. Raise your spears and prepare to strike in a unified assault. Whatever he's planning, he can't possibly beat us if we work together. Now, one...

Freddie is standing by the hole he came in from with his shovel in hand.

FREDDIE

Okay, I get it, you don't know anything about gold. Bye-bye everyone, have a good wedding!

GUARD #1

Get him, guards! Don't let him get away!

Freddie jumps into the hole.

GUARD #1 (CONT'D)

I said get him! Get him, guards! Charge!

Nobody's moving.

GUARD #2

(yawns)

There's no point, he's already gone. Can we take lunch now?

Freddie SHOUTS IN JOY as he descends the tunnel.

INT. ROYCE'S OFFICE - DAY

A spacious room, lavished with light. Couches, tables, and a desk are filled with discarded food containers, beer cans, playing cards, unlit cigars, and papers.

The sound of someone PISSING comes from behind a closed door.

LAUGHTER comes from behind a different closed door. That door opens, admitting Royce and his goons.

ROYCE

Alright, my cubs! How much loot do I have? Count it up!

His goons CHEER, throwing open a bunch of paper and cloth bags, tossing the loot all over the floor. They sort through it.

ROYCE (CONT'D)

Anthony! Where you at? Hurry up and get out here!

Royce struts up to his desk. He looks around, curious. PISSING sounds come from behind him.

ROYCE (CONT'D)

(agitated, turning around)
Anthony, don't make me get...

WHIMPERING sounds come from the other side of the closed door. Royce grows silent, a curious look on his face.

The PISSING stops.

Roy's curiosity becomes fear.

ROYCE (CONT'D)

Anthony?

ANTHONY (O.S.)

S-sorry, boss! One second.

ROYCE

What's going on in there?

A big THUMP.

ANTHONY (O.S.)

Um, I, nothing.

ROYCE

Don't lie to me.

ANTHONY (O.S.)
Er, well, I spilled it.

ROYCE
Spilled what?

ANTHONY (O.S.)
My, um, my pee.

ROYCE
Anthony, you turd.

ANTHONY (O.S.)
Please don't be mad.

ROYCE
(through clenched teeth)
I'm. Not. Mad. Open the door.

The door opens.

Reveal: ANTHONY YIKES (14), big glasses, bowl cut, raggedy clothes, and tucked-in shirt.

ROYCE (CONT'D)
How many times have I told you not
to piss in there?

ANTHONY
(looking at the ground)
Uh, sorry.

ROYCE
C'mere, I'ma wring your neck!

Royce GROWLS, lion teeth revealing themselves.

Anthony SHRIEKS, runs around the desk while Royce chases him.

ROYCE (CONT'D)
That's my bedroom you pissed in,
you moron!

ANTHONY
I'm sorry! I'm sorry! Please don't
hurt me. Please boss.

ROYCE
Go in the outhouse next time!

ANTHONY
It's scary out there.

ROYCE
You're an idiot, you stupid idiot!

ANTHONY
I'm sorry!

ROYCE
You're gonna clean up that piss
after I kill you, you hear?

ANTHONY
AH!

ROYCE'S GOON #1
Hey boss, look at this! We got one
of those fancy things that go bang!

Royce stops in his tracks, turns to face his goon, who holds
up a gun.

ROYCE
A gun!

He rushes over, Anthony forgotten.

Anthony leans over, hands on his knees, breathing hard. He
nervously watches Royce and his goons as Royce takes the gun
in hand, gawking at it.

ROYCE (CONT'D)
Amazing. I thought the inner city
folk kept these locked up tight.

ROYCE'S GOON #2
Must be our lucky day.

Royce SNICKERS.

ROYCE
Ain't that the truth? With this gun
and my god powers, we'll destroy
damn Andre and take all his
territory!

Royce's goons CHEER.

ROYCE (CONT'D)
Now then, time to get to work.

Royce twirls the gun around on his index finger, turning on
his heel, and he struts to his desk.

ROYCE'S GOON #3
Need us to do anything, boss?

ROYCE

Yeah, I'm gonna need everyone.
Gather around, boys! That includes
you, Anthony, or I'll poke out your
eyeballs.

Anthony, who is admiring Royce's bookshelf, jolts to
attention.

He trudges over.

ROYCE (CONT'D)

Seriously, Anthony. I can't believe
you're trying to read books again.
What did I tell you about that?

ANTHONY

(sheepish)
Books are for losers.

ROYCE

Exactly right! Real men do things
in real life. Now, hand me my city
map and my special pen.

Anthony opens the desk drawer. He sets a folded map and pen
down on the desk. Royce unfolds the map.

ROYCE (CONT'D)

(drawing on the map)
This is where Andre is. This is all
his territory.
(he circles a huge plot of
land on the outskirts of
the city)
Tonight, it's up for grabs. I'll
kill him and we'll take what's
ours!

Royce's goons CHEER.

ROYCE'S GOON #1

So where do we come in, boss?

ROYCE

I'll tell ya. I'm going to do the
shooting. I need all of you to help
me distract his men. Anthony! You
listening?

ANTHONY

Yes boss.

ROYCE
Good. You're the bait.

Anthony shakes.

ANTHONY
Bait? What? I dunno, boss, I'm no good at this stuff.

ROYCE
You'll do it or I'll hang you upside down and stick your head in a bucket of your own piss.

ANTHONY
(nervous as all hell)
Oh no! Not that again!

ROYCE
The rest of you, accompany Anthony. He's going to do his nerd thing and pretend like he's the brains of the operation. Once you get everyone, and I mean everyone's attention, you run like hell. They will chase you. Then, I'll swoop in and kill that damn Andre!

ROYCE'S GOON #1
Damn Andre!

Everyone MUTTERS agreement.

ROYCE
(all serious)
We leave at sundown.

EXT. THE SOUTHWEST SLUMS - NEW COLUMBUS - EVENING

With the sun coming down, Royce's four goons march down the street. A nervous looking Anthony walks in the center of the group, with a suit jacket and sunglasses.

ROYCE'S GOON #1
Stop shaking, Anthony.

ROYCE'S GOON #2
Yeah, you're going to ruin the plan.

ANTHONY
Sorry, I can't help it.

ROYCE'S GOON #2
Stupid nerd.

ANTHONY
(taking deep breaths,
mumbling)
I can do this. C'mon. I just gotta
believe in myself.

As he mumbles to himself, he looks down. Deep beneath the dirt, there is a sound. *THUMP! SWISH! THUMP! SWISH!*

EXT. UNDERGROUND - CONTINUOUS

Freddie digs with his shovel, moving rhythmically and effortlessly in a horizontal direction. He piles dirt behind him as he plows forward.

FREDDIE
Ah, there's nothing quite like a
good dig!

He smiles, looking up.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
But you know what? I think it's
time to come up for some air!

INT. ANDRE'S PENTHOUSE - DAY

Large four-pane windows look out on the city: it's a marvelous view.

Big, cushy, pristine couches sit to either side of a diamond-studded coffee table. Women with manicured toenails, scantily-clad and adorned with jewelry and tattoos, occupy the couch.

Between the women sits ANDRE SCHLUNK (61), with a built physique despite greying hairs. He smokes a cigar. Lets out a puff of smoke. Grins.

ANDRE
Nice view, ain't it, ladies?

A set of double-doors swing open, admitting a big HENCHMAN.

HENCHMAN
Sorry to barge in, boss, but it's
urgent.

ANDRE

Always with the interruptions when I'm having a good time.

(sighs)

Well, what is it?

HENCHMAN

Group of strange men headed straight for us. Looks like another gang, and they're out in big numbers.

ANDRE

Well, you go out and take care of them, then.

HENCHMAN

Course boss. There's just one thing, thought you would like to know...

ANDRE

What's that?

HENCHMAN

One of 'em is some nerdy looking guy. I reckon he's the one we been hearing stories 'bout. Y'know, the one who cracked the code for the big bank vault at Goliath Central.

ANDRE

(smiling)

The Calculator. So he's blessed us with his presence, eh? Maybe we should welcome him in politely.

HENCHMAN

Really boss? What for?

ANDRE

We could use a man of his talents in our gang. Have Franz meet him out front.

HENCHMAN

Franz and who else?

ANDRE

Just Franz. Tell him I'll see The Calculator in here, if he'll meet with me.

HENCHMAN

Right, boss. I'll do just that.

ANDRE

(smiling)

Good. And one more thing.

HENCHMAN

What's that?

ANDRE

If he turns me down, tell Franz to
kill him.

The henchman leaves. Andre glances out the window. It's
smoggy slums for as far as the eye can see.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

As I was sayin', ladies, I've got
the best view in the whole
southwest quadrant. Ain't that
nice?

EXT. OUTSIDE ANDRE'S DIGS - A SHORT TIME LATER

FRANZ (27), a wiry, frizzy-haired, eclectic man with glasses
grins.

Anthony and Royce's other goons stand across from him.

FRANZ

I'm Franz.

Royce's goons draw swords.

Franz jabs a finger at Anthony.

FRANZ (CONT'D)

Andre wants a meeting. Just you and
him. What do you say, nerd?

Anthony eyes widen with fear. He looks around, sheepish.

ANTHONY

Oh, uh, I dunno, hey guys, what do
I say?

The goons SNICKER, pointing their swords in Franz's
direction.

FRANZ

If you refuse, I'll kill you.

ROYCE'S GOON #1
 You? Kill us? We outnumber you four
 to one!

Anthony shakes, stepping backwards, all nervous.

FRANZ
 Numbers ain't everything.

ROYCE'S GOON #1
 (chuckling)
 Sure. Let's get him, cubs. Let's
 show him what makes us...Royce's
 lion pack!

Royce's goons CHEER.

Franz blanks.

ROYCE'S GOON #1 (CONT'D)
 Surely you've heard of Royce the
 Lion.

Franz shakes his head.

ROYCE'S GOON #1 (CONT'D)
 WHAT? YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF OUR
 BOSS?

FRANZ
 Clean out your ears, I said I never
 heard of any idiot lion.

ROYCE'S GOON #2
 C'mon, you must've heard his name
 somewhere.

FRANZ
 No.

ROYCE'S GOON #3
 He rules Dolph Street, and has
 expanded his territory into half of
 West 34th as well.

FRANZ
 That all?

ROYCE'S GOON #1
 No, it's not all! Soon, we'll kill
 your boss, and then the Lion will
 rule all of southwest New Columbus!

Franz bursts out LAUGHING.

Royce's goons grow angry.

ROYCE'S GOON #1 (CONT'D)
You think that's funny?

Franz can't stop LAUGHING.

ROYCE'S GOON #1 (CONT'D)
(angry as hell)
I'll show you what's funny!

Royce's Goon #1 lunges at Franz with his sword. Franz stops laughing, sidesteps the sword. The rest of the goons close in on him.

FRANZ
(calmly)
Burn.

Steam pours out of every inch of Franz's body.

The steam envelopes the charging goons. It's hard to see. Barely visible, Franz crouches low to the ground. The swords swing through the air above his head.

The goons CRY OUT in pain, stumbling backwards. Their skin turns red as the steam curls around them. The swords fall and CLATTER against the stony road.

Franz stands up. Royce's goons fall on their butts, GASPING, COUGHING, and CRYING.

FRANZ (CONT'D)
And, I think that'll about do it.

Anthony's face is filled with horror.

Franz SNAPS his fingers.

FRANZ (CONT'D)
Cool.

The steam floats away. The goons GROAN, rolling around, eventually stilling their badly burned bodies. Franz eyes Anthony with commanding eyes.

FRANZ (CONT'D)
So do you work for this Lion fellow too, Mr. Calculator?

Anthony trembles. He opens his mouth, but no words come out.

FRANZ (CONT'D)

Whatever. I don't care a lick 'bout it, long as you agree to meet with Andre, we're cool. So, you ready to come along?

Anthony spouts GIBBERISH. He backs up, then trips, landing butt to cobblestones.

ANTHONY

I'm nobody! Please! I'm just a nobody! Don't hurt me.

FRANZ

Nobody? Don't play dumb with me. Boss Andre says you're The Calculator.

ANTHONY

What?

FRANZ

I don't know what he wants with you, but there's no use pretending you ain't him.

ANTHONY

The, um, Calculator?

FRANZ

That's right.

ANTHONY

Oh, that guy, Royce was talking about him, he was in the paper.

FRANZ

As I already said, no use playing dumb with me.

ANTHONY

I, uh, er, well...

Franz LAUGHS.

FRANZ

Just come along. Make yourself useful, and I promise Andre--

One of Royce's goons is up on his hands and knees.

ROYCE'S GOON #1

(shouting)

Royce! ROYCE!

(MORE)

ROYCE'S GOON #1 (CONT'D)

(crying)
Help! Your cubs need your help!

FRANZ

(eyeing the goon)
Oh, for crying out loud.

Franz takes a knife off his belt. Still in its sheath, he throws it at the goon. Hits him in the head. The goon collapses and doesn't make another sound.

FRANZ (CONT'D)

(turning attention back to Anthony)
So then, where were we?

A LION'S ROAR interrupts him.

Feet POUND against cobblestones, and a figure shapeshifts, growing powerful legs, thick with fur, a well-built chest, and a mane around his face.

Royce rushes towards his goons, Franz, and Anthony, anguish painted on his face.

ROYCE

My cubs! What did you do to them?

FRANZ

(rolling his eyes)
Ah, you must be The Lion.

ROYCE

(roaring)
You'll pay!

FRANZ

Don't waste my time. I'm here for The Calculator, and if you value your life you'll turn around and head back to your little hideaway, unless you want some steam burn.

Royce BURSTS into tears.

ROYCE

How could you? You burned them all!
You monster!
(crying)
I told them to run, not fight! I told them to run, damn it!

FRANZ

Let's hurry along, Calculator. It ain't good to keep Andre waiting.

Franz offers his hand to Anthony. Anthony hesitates, looking at Royce, as if for permission.

Royce's tears become anger, and he hurls himself at Franz, GROWLING and SNAPPING huge lion teeth.

Franz darts out of the way. Royce changes direction, SNARLING with determination.

FRANZ (CONT'D)

Very well. Burn.

Steam pours out of Franz's hand, hitting Royce head on.

Royce HOWLS. Pushes through the steam. Fangs SNAP down on Franz's arm.

FRANZ CRIES OUT. Slams a fist into Royce's face. Royce WHIMPERS, backing away. Bruised cheek. Scorch marks from the steam.

Franz takes DEEP BREATHS. Blood drips from his arm.

FRANZ (CONT'D)

Damn Lion. You'll pay. You'll bur--

A blast of dirt flies up from the ground, hitting Franz in the mouth, shutting him up.

FRANZ (CONT'D)

Ack! Gah!

He spits the dirt out. A shovel is thrown into the air.

Royce, Anthony, and Franz look up. The shovel could come down on any of them.

Anthony SCREAMS like a SISSY.

The shovel hits Royce in the head. He passes out.

FRANZ (CONT'D)

What the hell?

There's a hole in the ground. Freddie leaps out of it.

FREDDIE

WOO HOO! I'M HERE FOR MY GOLD!

Franz looks confused and annoyed. Freddie's eyes sparkle with wonder.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
Hey, why's everyone lying on the ground? Are they taking naps?

Freddie checks one of them out.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
Damn. Looks like they got burned. Was there a fire here?

FRANZ
Who the hell are you?

FREDDIE
(laughing)
Oh, I'm sorry, where are my manners? Name's Freddie. Nice to meet ya. Hey, that guy there is a lion.

FRANZ
You knocked him out with your shovel, dirt-man.

FREDDIE
Oh, did I?
(laughs)
Well, he'll wake up. Let's see, hey, you have steam coming out of you. You might want to get that checked on. It looks painful.

FRANZ
It's not.

FREDDIE
What? Really? But you have blood dripping down your arm.

FRANZ
(annoyed)
I don't have time for this. Step aside.

FREDDIE
Oh. Okay.

Freddie steps aside. Franz glares at Anthony.

ANTHONY
 (freaking out)
 No, please! Just leave me alone.

FRANZ
 You want to die, Calculator? If
 not, keep quiet and do what I say.

FREDDIE
 Hey, that's not a very nice way to
 speak with someone.

FRANZ
 Keep out of this and scram, dirt-
 man. It ain't none of your
 business.

FREDDIE
 Call me dirt-man all you want, but
 I draw the line at kidnapping.
 Wait, are you kidnapping him?
 That's what it looks like.

FRANZ
 (rolling his eyes)
 Why in the great Lune's name does
 everyone keep getting in my way
 today?

Franz raises his hands.

ANTHONY
 Careful, man, he has these weird
 steam powers. I think he's a god.

FREDDIE
 (confused, incredulous)
 What?

ANTHONY
 You're no match for him, we have to
 run.

Freddie's eyes bulge out of their sockets.

FREDDIE
 YOU'RE A GOD!?!

He rushes over to Franz, examining him from every angle.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
 My dirt! I've never seen a real
 live god up close.
 (MORE)

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

I've got so many questions. First off, do you pee and poop like us mere mortals?

THUMP! Franz whacks Freddie across the nose. He stumbles backwards, looking hurt.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Ow. That hurt.

FRANZ

Stay out of my way, dirt-man.

Franz twirls his fingers, building up steam.

ANTHONY

Dirt-man, run!

Franz releases the steam. It curls towards Freddie...

Freddie runs. He grabs Anthony by the arm, drags him along at high speed.

FREDDIE

(running, panting)

What in the dirt is that guy's problem?

Freddie weaves around a bend, coming up on empty streets. Steam sails through the air behind him, barely grazing his shoulder.

He glances over his shoulder. It's singed. Franz is in pursuit.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Ah, shit, this isn't good!

Franz launches more steam. Freddie zigzags to avoid it. Anthony SCREAMS as he's dragged along on the ground like a piece of heavy luggage.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

So what the dirt is this about him being a god? The hell does that mean?

ANTHONY

(shocked)

Y-you don't know?

FREDDIE

Course not, that's why I'm asking.

ANTHONY

(nervous)

Oh, must be because you're a dirt man.

FREDDIE

Do they all shoot steam like that?

ANTHONY

N-no, I don't think so. Um, there are many different types of gods, each with a unique power. All of the inner city folk are gods, it's how they rule over us, us normal humans are nothing compared to them.

FREDDIE

So you're saying he gets to walk all over you just because he has some steam powers?

ANTHONY

Um, well...

FREDDIE

What's he want with you anyway?

ANTHONY

He thinks I'm the Calculator.

FREDDIE

The what?

(ducking to avoid steam)

Oh dirt, he's gaining. Hang on tight!

Freddie pumps his legs faster, rocketing way ahead of Franz.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Thank god for all those years I spent chasing deer.

ANTHONY

What? Why were you chasing deer?

FREDDIE

Oh, it's a long story.

(he laughs)

Let's see. All started with my grandma, when she asked me to do it.

EXT. THE TUNNELS OF BAKLAS BELT - DAY - FLASHBACK

A withered old woman, DENISE (86) stands in front of 10-year old Freddie with a shovel. The tunnel is dark, with only dim lights from a few torches throughout.

DENISE

Sweetie, I'm going to need you to go and hunt for us, please.

FREDDIE

But doesn't papa usually do that?

DENISE

(shaking head)

I told you, your father isn't coming back.

FREDDIE

But grandma, I'm too young to hunt.

DENISE

I know sweetie, but my legs are weak, your mother isn't fit to help, and your sisters are even younger than you are.

FREDDIE

Are you sure papa won't come back?

DENISE

(frowning, serious)

I'm sure. I'm sorry, Freddie.

(she hugs him)

Now, you just have to find a deer. Chase it down, and hit it really hard with this shovel.

Denise hands Freddie the shovel.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Hit it in the head, okay? If you hit it hard enough, you will knock it out. Then you carry it back here, okay? Don't rush. It will be heavy, so take your time, and whenever you get back we will celebrate, okay?

Freddie nods, looking scared.

EXT. FOREST - A SHORT TIME LATER

A deer stands near a patch of grass. Freddie watches as it leans down, takes a bite, and chews.

FREDDIE
Gotcha, deer.

He adjusts his grip on the shovel. Charges after the deer.

The deer hears his POUNDING FOOTSTEPS, looks, then runs.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
Hey, come back here! Hey! Hey! Ah,
damnit! I gotta run faster!

EXT. FOREST - A FEW YEARS LATER

Freddie (now 12), shovel in hand, spies a deer, darts after it.

The deer turns, sees him.

FREDDIE
Gotcha!

The deer runs. At first it puts some distance between itself and Freddie. Then, Freddie pumps his legs harder, closing the gap.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
You can't outrun ME!

Freddie leaps onto it, WHACKS it with the shovel. Once, twice. It bucks and knocks him off, runs away.

EXT. FOREST - A FEW YEARS LATER

Freddie (now 14) chases down a deer, but this time as he leaps onto it, he WHACKS it good with the shovel. It collapses onto its belly, going still.

EXT. FOREST - SOME TIME LATER

Freddie (15) chases yet another deer. This time he runs right past it, circles back around, then calmly SLAMS the shovel into its head. It passes out.

EXT. THE SOUTHWEST SLUMS - NEW COLUMBUS - BACK TO PRESENT

Steam shoots out of Franz's outstretched hand, whirling towards Freddie. Freddie veers left, dodging it.

FREDDIE
Ah, shit! Too much steam. Hey
Anthony, you sure I can't fight
this guy?

Silence.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
Anthony?

Anthony has passed out. Freddie stops.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
This is hardly the time to take a
nap.

Freddie turns around. He positions himself in between Franz and Anthony.

FRANZ
Tired of running, dirt-man? Ready
to give him up?

FREDDIE
(laughing)
No way, soap-man.

Freddie glares at Franz, turning serious.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
I just decided I'm sick of all your
steam.

Freddie runs toward Franz.

Franz grins. Lifts a hand, palm facing Freddie.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
Burn.

Steam whirls toward Freddie.

A DARK FLASH, and Freddie disappears. The steam rushes through empty air. A shadow races along the ground, toward Franz.

LAUGHTER. It sounds like Freddie.

FRANZ

What's going on? Where are you?
(eyes widening as he spots
the shadow that's almost
upon him)
Oh no. You're a--

Freddie shoots out of the shadow, shovel in hand.

WHACK! He nails Franz in the face with the back of his
shovel.

END OF PILOT SCRIPT.