

SCENE 1

SFX: People chatter and a fountain burbles in the background. A chime sounds.

ANNOUNCER:

Welcome to Glasshouse, your Dome away from home. Here, you'll find all manner of comforts: our recently refurbished sky panels are solar enabled, so you don't ever need to leave to get your Vitamin D and our oxygen tanks are simply brimming! Why not enjoy our world-famous nightlife? Cryobar's theme tonight is rooftop. Experience what it was like to drink the night away under the stars! Don't miss the appearance of our greatest celebrities..

SFX: A car revs.

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

Glasshouse. Like a bubble, rising from the surface of Metropolis West. The outside: chromed up and shining. The inside: wrapped in perpetual twilight. It's the most beautiful parasite on this side of the coast and it takes everything it can lay its hands on. All that glitz takes a toll on the pocket—just never from the people who live in it. Somebody from the outside of their little world still needs to deliver on goods.

SFX: The car's engine cuts and the door opens. Thumping music plays.

CRYOBAR EMPLOYEE:

You from Dax's company?

CAINE:

As usual.

CRYOBAR EMPLOYEE:

You certainly didn't waste any time.

CAINE:

Well, I can't exactly afford to, can I?

SFX: Clattering of metal.

CAINE:

All yours.

CRYOBAR EMPLOYEE:

What, only three tanks?

CAINE:

It takes five weeks to purify one tank of water, unless you forgot how you run your own business. This? This was a rush job and I still delivered.

CRYOBAR EMPLOYEE:

Fine. Take your crypto and leave then.

SFX: Beeping.

CAINE:

30 cryptos?!

CRYOBAR EMPLOYEE:

Ten cryptos a tank, kid.

CAINE:

Your lousy bar uses up ten tanks a *day*, I deserve a thousand goddamn cryptos for this stupid quick run you've had me do!

CRYOBAR SUPPLIER:

Didn't you say you couldn't afford to waste any time?

CAINE:

Well, in that case...

SFX: Metal clatters.

CRYOBAR EMPLOYEE:

What the hell are you doing?

CAINE:

I won't. Thanks for the tanks!

SFX: Car door slams and the engine roars to life.

CAINE:

Aw, I could have just said tanks. Tanks for the tanks?  
Thanks for the tanks? Tanks! Ugh. Whatever.

CRYOBAR EMPLOYEE:

Security, go chase down that damn supplier!

SFX: Cars rev. Electrical beeping.

CAINE:

Come on, baby, come on.

SFX: Start up beeping.

JET:

Voice module activated! Status report start time, 2.4  
seconds! Hello, Caine!

CAINE:

Hiya, Jet!

JET:

What's the situation?

CAINE:

Well...I kind of decided to take the water tanks back because  
that guy pissed me off.

JET:

That is bad!

CAINE:

Thanks for the update.

JET:

My pleasure!

CAINE:

Anyways, Jet, can you optimize a route out of the way of  
these Cryobar goons? I'm faster but they've got more tech.

JET:

Sure! Calculating!

SFX: Metal scraping, then a thunk.

CAINE:

Well, there goes faster. I just got a grappling hook through my trunk; can we speed it up a little?

JET:

Calculating!

SFX: Two more grappling hooks shoot into the air. Tires screech. A crash.

CAINE:

Jet!

JET:

Calculating! And finished! Your route should show up on your overhead display!

CAINE:

Thank you! Now let's ride.

SFX: The engine revs.

JET:

Have a nice day!

SCENE 2

SFX: The engine rumbles to a stop. A car door opens and closes.  
A neon sign buzzes. Footsteps.

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

Dax's warehouse, right in the heart of the Tollbooth neighborhood. A lot more like the Metropolis West I'm used to. Neon superstructures from ante-incendian times hollowed and turned inside out, stealing from the bones of the past to try to make something for the forgettable faces of the future. And Dax, of course—the man behind the counter who'd just as soon sell you a plasma knife as bury it in your back.

SFX: Footsteps

DAX:

What the hell happened to my car, 86er?

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

86er. That's what they call you when you're nothing.

CAINE:

I had to make a quick getaway and it went a little sideways.

DAX:

I guess you think I should just let it slide that you wrecked one of my delivery cars.

SFX: Metal clunking.

CAINE:

Hey! Give him back!

DAX:

And that you're still putting all these stupid modifications in them. Caine, I *really* thought you were better than this. Why are you even here?

CAINE:

Good question.

DAX:

What was that?

CAINE:

'Cause I have to be, now just knock the cryptos out of my account and call it a day.

DAX:

Oh, Caine. Just because you're my *friend* doesn't mean you get any special favors from me. No, no, I think you'd better pay me back somehow.

CAINE:

The man paid me 30 cryptos for what should have been at the very least, a 150-crypto job!

DAX:

Hm. Not really my problem, is it? *You* are. Make me some cryptos and then maybe we'll talk.

CAINE:

You're a real asshole, Dax, you know that? Have been ever since—

DAX:

Shut your mouth, 86er. And stop putting your goddamn junk in my cars. You take up enough space as it is.

SFX: Crash.

CAINE:

Jet!

SFX: Footsteps.

JET:

Voice module active—!

SFX: Glitch noises.

CAINE:

Ah, dammit. Come on, buddy...

SFX: More glitch noises.

JET:

V-v-v-voooooiiiiii...

SFX: Powering down.

CAINE:

No, no, no... Jet, come on back--!

SFX: Click. Clickclickclick.

CAINE:

Okay. Let's go get you to Rossum.

SCENE 3

SFX: Buzzing of computers. Then, a door buzzer.

ROSSUM:

Who is it?

CAINE:

Open up, Rossum, it's me. Caine.

ROSSUM:

Hmmm, don't think I know a--!

CAINE:

Caine Reyes.

ROSSUM:

*Thank you.*

SFX: Buzzer sound. Footsteps.

CAINE:

You don't have to do that.

ROSSUM:

Just checking. I know a lot of Caines.

CAINE:

Not too many Reyes around.

ROSSUM:

Right, right. Um, what'd you come in for today? More core pieces for that jettisoned all-purpose bot?

CAINE:

Hey, hey, hey, don't talk about him like that, alright? His name is Jet. And well, it wasn't anyone else's fault except Dax. He smashed him pretty hard up against the floor, as you can clearly see, because he's literally the worst person ever, and I really think I should just tear up one of his cars, but the thing is, I want to do it on purpose rather than, like-

ROSSUM:

Cut to the point, Caine.

CAINE:

Right. Well, Jet's...not turning on anymore.

ROSSUM:

Huh.

SFX: Unscrewing sounds.

ROSSUM:

Looks like damage to the core, but that was already there...obvious wear and tear from constant powering up and down and modding...

CAINE:

Hey.

ROSSUM:

...custom personality core is still running well, nicely done on that end, specs on the navigation are still up to date and retrieving information well...

CAINE:

Okay, your turn to cut to the point—how do I fix him?

ROSSUM:

Well, this is gonna need to be a retrieve and repair job since this is an all-purpose from the Dome. The power core's super old and I figure dropping it probably didn't help at all either. You'll need to get a new power core, model L0R-3NZ.

SFX: Beeping.

CAINE:

Awesome. (sigh) So where do I need to go to get this...what does that say? Lorenz core or whatever?

ROSSUM:

L0R-3NZ core. Well, it might be a little tough, since the part you need *is* a pretty high-tech power core, so...

CAINE:

Just...give me the coordinates.

ROSSUM:

Ookay, then, interrupt me. Let me pull them up on the Fontana!

SFX: Beeping.

ROSSUM:

That's a hundred cryptos, thank you very much!

CAINE:

Seriously? You know I don't have that right now.

ROSSUM:

Or, or, or we could always work out a deal.

CAINE:

Oh, this must be so convenient for you. You want me to nab you some other parts too, don't you?

ROSSUM:

Hey, pretty much everyone knows you're out of cryptos. And it's fast, I promise—you're good at that! Plus, you can pawn off any extra you grab. It's basically a perfect plan.

CAINE:

Except it's not because I'm sticking my head out for you and Dax. Not my favorite thing in the world.

ROSSUM:

And poor little Jet! Don't forget you're doing this for them.

CAINE:

Uh-huh.

SFX: Clank. Footsteps.

ROSSUM:

See you soon! Grab what you can get!

SFX: Buzzer. The door slams.

SCENE 4

SFX: Caine's car engine rattles.

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

Two visits to Glasshouse in one day and seeing that high-class citadel rising in the distance made me sick. The only time I ever liked seeing it was when it was getting steadily smaller in the rearview mirror of my car. All that the Dome had going for it was its gear and the politicians knew it--POTEN Co. was branded on the side of every piece of tech that left its factories. Even Jet. But this job would be quick: in and out in a couple minutes, grab what I could get from this gigantic glorified shed, then I'd be on my way back and this whole mess would be over.

DOOR:

Access granted! Access granted! Access granted!

CAINE:

What the...

SFX: Bzzt! Footsteps.

CAINE:

Alright, if someone's hiding in here, I've got a plasma knife and I'm not afraid to--!

SU-JIN:

Hey!

SFX: Bzzt!

SU-JIN:

Whoa, watch where you're pointing that thing!

CAINE:

You're complaining about the plasma knife when you startled me?

SU-JIN:

I need you to be quiet for this to wo-

CAINE:

And you are also, for *some* reason, just like, hanging out in the shadows and for someone to walk by or something just to like, talk at them? From the shadows? I cannot understate how weird it is that you're just standing back there in *complete* silence--

SU-JIN:

Shh!

CAINE:

You shh!

SU-JIN:

Just get behind me!

SFX: Footsteps. Low beeping

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

I finally stopped to take a look at them, standing in the darkness, holding up a device that looked scrapped together, emitting soft pulses of blue light—a thermal sensor scrambler and a pretty solid one for being strapped on top of their comms. Their dark brown eyes scanned back and forth on the scrambler, barely paying attention to the sound of the people approaching us. But they kept me behind them, their sun-freckled arm pressed against mine, making sure I was behind their shield. I...didn't know what to make of that.

GUARD 1:

Security system must be busted or something. I didn't see anything. Heat sensor's not picking up anything either.

GUARD 2:

We'll just let the droids take care of it. Dunno why they have us come in and check on this stuff when they've got these bots to do it. Lousy high techies.

SFX: Footsteps fade. The scrambler powers down.

SU-JIN:

Sorry about shushing you.

CAINE:

It's...it's no big deal. You were just trying to keep us hidden. Which...thanks.

SU-JIN:

No problem!

CAINE:

I'm gonna take a wild guess and say you're not here to close up shop either.

SU-JIN:

Not in the least.

CAINE:

*Great.*

SU-JIN:

Sorry.

CAINE:

Whatever. It's not your fault. Besides, I'm only here for a power core.

SFX: Rummaging through metal.

SU-JIN:

Just a power core? You're not gonna find it just rummaging like that, this place is huge. Why come here of all places?

CAINE:

And what, exactly, is so special about here?

SU-JIN:

You're robbing a place and you don't even know where you are.

CAINE:

I know *exactly* where I am. Most expensive parts shop in Glasshouse.

SU-JIN:

...Which supplies POTEN Co.

CAINE:

Big deal, pretty much everyone does. That's kind of what happens when one company makes everything.

SU-JIN:

No, no, no, you don't understand. This is Celadon Carbonate. This is like, *the* place that supplies POTEN Co.

CAINE:

Well! Good to know. Rossum, I swear to god..

SU-JIN:

You okay?

CAINE:

How'd you get in here? That door's got a pretty high security system too.

SU-JIN:

Just asked nicely.

SFX: Su-jin laughs at their own joke. Caine can't help but snort at how funny Su-jin finds themselves.

SU-JIN:

No, but I definitely scrapped some tech to pass encryption.

CAINE:

And you've got that thermosensor scrambler...you're not from Glasshouse, are you?

SU-JIN:

No way. 'Sides, if I was from here, I'd just buy what I needed. But if I was from here, I wouldn't need it anyways.

SFX: Clunk.

CAINE:

Aha, found it. Looks like it's the last one, too. Why are you looking at me like that? What are you getting from here anyways?

SU-JIN:

The Lorenz core.

CAINE:

Hang on—you mean, the LOR-3NZ model?

SU-JIN:

Uh-huh.

CAINE:

The one *I'm holding*?

SU-JIN:

Yyyeah.

CAINE:

What do you need with it?

SU-JIN:

Well, if I told you, I'd have to kill you.

CAINE:

Try again.

SU-JIN:

Okay, okay. Tell you the truth, I promise. We--

CAINE:

*We?*

SU-JIN:

Oops.

SFX: Bzzt!

CAINE:

You've got three seconds to tell me exactly who you are, who you're working with and why you want this core or this knife's going straight through your chest.

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

I was on edge, sure. Not just because of this stranger and their need for the core *I* needed for Jet—something *felt*

wrong. Something was ticking down, and I couldn't say how long it would take before time was up. I wanted to be out of there before I found out.

SU-JIN:

Not so fast—

CAINE:

Two.

SU-JIN:

I'm not gonna—

CAINE:

One.

SU-JIN:

My name's Su-jin and the core is for Zero Zero.

SFX: Pulses of electricity grow louder.

CAINE:

What the hell are you talking about?

SU-JIN:

You've heard of them, haven't you?

CAINE:

You really think that pulling an old renegade group name's gonna convince me of anything? They stopped existing even before my brother—(THEY STOP, SUDDENLY EMOTIONAL) Never mind.

SU-JIN:

Zero Zero's still around. I can prove it.

CAINE:

Then do it, before I—

SFX: A loud buzz. Then, an alarm.

DROID:

Security breach detected.

CAINE:

Dammit.

SU-JIN:

I thought that—

CAINE:

Your tech must have been intercepted. Short-wave pulse beacon, right?

SU-JIN:

Well, yeah.

CAINE:

Thought I heard something. They must have an interrupter signal, five minutes of the security channel being off, and it zaps whatever's stopping it to oblivion.

SU-JIN:

I didn't think they'd go so low tech.

CAINE:

Pays to be prepared, I guess.

SU-JIN:

Man, Vic wasn't expecting that. I don't think he's gonna be too happy about this.

CAINE:

I mean, I don't think any of us are.

DROID:

Security breach in sector 6JA.

SU-JIN:

Think we'd better talk more about our feelings in a place not crawling with security, don't you agree?

CAINE:

Hundred percent.

SFX: Footsteps.

SCENE 5

CAINE:  
(NARRATING)

So, we ran. Past shelves of motherboards and sprockets, servos and motors, dodging between rows, running beside each other as best as we could. I tried my best to keep the core close to me. Didn't know if they would snag it from me the second I took my eyes off it and leave me in the drift. But Su-jin was just a second behind me—and a second was all a droid needed.

SFX: A droid flies in and shoots. Metal clatters to the ground.

CAINE:  
Su-jin, jump!

SFX: Thunk.

SU-JIN:  
Help me up!

CAINE:  
Almost...

DROID:  
Eliminate threat. Eliminate threat.

SU-JIN:  
Aaah!

SFX: Bzzt! Then, powering down.

DROID:  
Optics compromised. Return to docking station.

CAINE:  
Thank me later.

SU-JIN:  
O-okay.

CAINE:  
Buuuuut run right now.

SU-JIN:

Right.

SFX: Running.

CAINE:

Dead end!

SU-JIN:

Hang on. Let's double back.

SFX: Running.

DROID:

Protocol: Retrieve item and eliminate threat.

CAINE: We're trapped!

SU-JIN:

Okay. We're okay. We're fine.

CAINE:

How?!

SU-JIN:

I need you to give me the core.

CAINE:

Why should I?

SU-JIN:

*Please* just trust me on this.

CAINE:

Explain yourself first!

SU-JIN:

What do the droids want right now? The core. They said it themselves, priority is retrieve item and *then* eliminate threat. We're gonna jettison the core and come back and get it later. Please give me the core.

CAINE:

Take it.

SU-JIN:

Thank you.

CAINE:

Caine.

SU-JIN:

What?

CAINE:

That's my name.

SU-JIN:

Thank you, Caine. Now duck.

SFX: Whoosh

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

The core flew, end over end, shining even in the dull lights of the warehouse. And then, it disappeared over the railing, and the droids soared down after it. Su-jin, the person I barely knew, the stranger who had lied to me but then saved our lives, grabbed my hand and said:

SU-JIN:

Come on. Let's get out of here.

END OF EPISODE 0.

Hi, Eli Ramos here, creator and editor of Under the Electric Stars. If you liked this episode, please share it with your friends. You can find our social media in the episode notes. Our voice talents are as follows: Rhea Anne as Caine Reyes, Robin Guzman as Jettison, David McGuff as Dax, Fran Carr as Rossum, and Christine Kim as Su-jin. Additional voice talents were provided by yours truly, Zane Sexton, and Jason Junker. Thanks for listening and see you in Metropolis West soon.