

DAVID AND DIOGENES

Written by

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OVER BLACK.

DAVID (V.O.)

At our last meeting, they told us  
to remember why we're doing this...  
We'd planned the day months in  
advance. A joint attack on every  
Ancestors Project across the face  
of the planet. People on the  
inside. Everything's ready.  
They'd call us terrorists. I'm not  
a terrorist. I'm not even a freedom  
fighter. I'm a good man. Why have I  
kept going this long? Why am I  
here?

INT. SECURITY TERMINAL - DAY

A line of passengers stand idly. Every now and then, the  
group steps forward and someone passes through a metal  
detector.

DAVID looks tired -- just another passenger waiting to board.  
He's in his Early 50s -- his dark, grey-speckled hair gives  
it away.

Noise across the room grabs his attention.

A young couple arguing. He's lost in the moment, before:

TERMINAL SECURITY

Sir-- SIR. Please step forward.

He's suddenly at the front of the line.

He steps through the detector.

IT GOES OFF.

DAVID FREEZES. He's visibly shaken.

The guard now immediately in front of him glances down.  
David's eyes move with him and they both see--

David's WEDDING BAND is still on his hand.

DAVID

Sorry.

He slides the ring from his finger.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATHENS - 22ND CENTURY

Stills of a 22ND CENTURY ATHENS. Each one is an image of antiquity... but something's amiss... the architecture is characteristic of the 21ST CENTURY not the classical age...

Looking closer, all the buildings, the infrastructure, they look weathered -- worn down by decades of battery.

DUST COVERS EVERYTHING.

GUIDE (O.S.)

Between the time of the Earth's *moving on* in the 21st century and our eventual return to its surface in the 22nd, a lot of damage had been done.

EXT. ATHENIAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Men and women clad in uniform navy blue jumpsuits sweep and vacuum dust from anywhere it can be found.

Cutting to different locations across the city, the huge scale of the operation is made clear.

GUIDE (V.O.)

Here at the Ancestor's Project, we've made it our mission to restore the Earth to its former glory.

A shadow swims over the street. We look up and see something in the sky. A SILVER SHUTTLE.

INT. SHUTTLE - CONTINUOUS

Aisles of passengers spread down either side of the cabin.

THE GUIDE sits at the front. David is at the back.

GUIDE

We'll soon be entering the protected space over Athens.

EXT. ATHENIAN AIRSPACE - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle battles raging dust-clouds before, suddenly-

The air is still. The sky is clear. We can see the city below.

INT. SHUTTLE - CONTINUOUS

Each person peers out of their nearest window in awe.

DAVID can't stand the sight of it. His gaze burns into the seat before him.

A man glances over at him from across the aisle. He's older than David yet his face is gentler.

MAN

Not a fan of flying?

DAVID

I'm not a fan of people covering things up.

The man looks slightly confused but loses interest and turns away.

EXT. MOUNT LYCABETTUS - CONTINUOUS

A silver dome stands looming over the city. Across its surface in bold type-face a sign indicates:  
'THE ANCESTORS PROJECT: ATHENS'

INT. SHUTTLE - LATER

The shuttle has touched down. Most of the other passengers have left.

David spies on the guide through a gap in the seats, waiting for everyone to leave. The man from across the aisle pats him on the shoulder before he gets up and ushers his family off.

David ignores them.

The guide turns away for a moment, then suddenly turns back and peers down the cabin towards where David hides -- he recedes into his seat.

Beat.

She turns away.

David lets go of the breath he hadn't realized he'd been holding.

He gets up and shuffles to the back of the cabin. There, he crouches down and TRACES A FINGER under the edge of the carpeting to lift it. He grips and pulls, revealing a METALLIC HATCH underneath.

A beat, then he's levered the hatch open and begins to feel about inside. He grips something and pulls out a MILITARY RUCKSACK.

He unzips the bag and reveals a PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE PAYLOAD LARGE ENOUGH TO LEVEL A BUILDING.

He CONNECTS A WIRE, slings the bag onto his back, then CHECKS HIS WATCH.

EXT. THE ANCESTORS PROJECT - LANDING PAD - MOMENTS LATER

David joins the group. The guide is continuing her introductory spiel.

GUIDE

Inside, we'll first stop at the  
20th century section. If you want  
to...

Her voice fades into the background. David's attention is drawn elsewhere: A SECURITY KIOSK watching over the newcomers.

A guard looks up and David turns away.

INT. THE ANCESTORS PROJECT - CONTINUOUS

Throughout many hallways, colourful exhibits stand proudly denoting the rich history of Athens and wider Greece.

We trace one such hallway until we come across a large archway. In bold lettering, the exhibit announces itself: 'ECHOES OF THE PAST'

GUIDE (O.S.)

Parallel with our conservation  
efforts, we've designed one to one -  
or at least, as close we could get  
to one to one - replicas of the  
most prominent figures in Grecian  
history-

EXT. CLASSICAL-ERA ATHENIAN STREET - DAY

A SCRAGGLY MUTT wanders the street by itself.

Eventually, it catches a group of other strays -- all following someone...

DIOGENES, an elderly yet spry man, paces the streets of an Athens now properly reverted back to antiquity.

His toga is dirty, his face roughly etched. Flies buzz all about. In one hand, he grasps a RUSTY, UNLIT LANTERN.

Men turn from him as he passes.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLASSICAL-ERA ATHENIAN MEZZANINE- LATER

Diogenes stands alone, leaning on the balcony wall. No one else seems to be about.

Diogenes looks up towards the sky. The air is clear. The sun SHIMMERS... Suddenly, the quiet is disturbed-

TIMOTHY (O.S.)

Diogenes!

Diogenes looks over his shoulder. No one's there.

TIMOTHY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Diogenes, you have a visitor!

Diogenes suddenly realizes what's happening and sighs.

Out of nowhere, a door opens - seemingly materialising out of thin air - and TIMOTHY steps through. Behind him, the foyer of the ECHOES OF THE PAST EXHIBIT can be made out.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Diogenes, please don't make me force you.

DIOGENES

Fuck off, Timothy.

TIMOTHY

It'll be five minutes.

Diogenes ignores him.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Fine.

He steps back through the door and shuts it -- the world returning to normal as it seals and disappears.

Moments pass and suddenly the mezzanine begins to fade away...

Diogenes glances at his dogs resting under the shade of a tree. As they begin to fade, his severe face softens with the slightest tinge of sadness. He looks at his hand as it, too, fades.

INT. THE ANCESTORS PROJECT - ECHOES OF THE PAST EXHIBIT

TIMOTHY stands behind a receptionist's desk, tapping at a display.

DAVID stands a few yards away, waiting.

TIMOTHY  
(Without looking up)  
Sorry about this. Works better when  
they come willingly.

David ignores him. CHECKS HIS WATCH.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)  
People usually -- you know -- want  
to see the others. Socrates...  
Alexander the Great, maybe... I  
don't know.  
(An awkward pause)  
Why d'you want to see him?

DAVID  
He's a personal hero of mine.

Timothy raises an eyebrow before tapping with a sudden finality.

TIMOTHY  
Well -- he's all ready for you. Go  
on through.

David stands awkwardly, not budging. He gestures towards the door; *through there?*

Timothy gives him an impatient, affirmative nod.

INT. CLASSICAL ATHENIAN FOYER - CONTINUOUS

A door materialises and David steps through, looking about himself.

Towards the centre of the room is a round table set with cups of wine for two. Diogenes' lantern sits alongside. Diogenes himself lurks near the exit, leaning against the wall with his arms crossed, the image of an impetuous child.

DAVID  
Hello. My name's David.

DIOGENES  
I was busy.

David remains quiet.

DIOGENES (CONT'D)  
What do you want? I'm not in the mood to talk and I don't do signatures.

DAVID  
How close are you to the real thing? Honestly.

DIOGENES  
(Sarcastically)  
I think I've heard the phrase 'one-to-one' being thrown about.

DAVID  
And yet we don't hear of Diogenes the Cynic's latest wisdom on any kind of basis.

Diogenes' eyes narrow.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
If you truly were 'one-to-one', the few that visited you wouldn't be families and pretentious young men.

DIOGENES  
An imitation of the best is far better than a mediocre original, I'd say.

DAVID  
It sounds like you're trying to convince yourself.

Diogenes scowls at him. David doesn't back down. There's a pause.

DIOGENES  
Why are you here, young man?

DAVID  
For the great cynic, himself. I'm a fan of Diogenes' -- I feel as though we'd have a lot to discuss.



DIOGENES  
 (Bemused)  
 You flatter yourself.

DAVID  
 Maybe.

DIOGENES  
 Well then. If I'm not worthy of the academics and historians, what does that make you?

DAVID  
 The exception.  
 (He pauses)  
 I'm a classicist. A professor. I teach-  
 (Corrects himself)  
 Taught at some the greatest off-world institutions. I specialise in knowing men such as yourself. Perhaps better than you know yourself.

Diogenes eyes David.

DIOGENES  
 And what do you make of me?

DAVID  
 Just as you said. An imitation of the best; of a man of great import.  
 (He pauses)  
 But your artificiality, it betrays his existence.

Diogenes thinks for a few moments.

DIOGENES  
 I'm intrigued. Would you like to see Athens?

DAVID  
 Would you?

CUT TO:

INT. THE ANCESTORS PROJECT - CITY-VIEWING GALLERY - LATER

David and Diogenes sit side-by-side on a bench a few yards from the glass Gallery wall. At David's side is his bag, at Diogenes', his rusted lantern. They both stare out at the distant, dusty metropolis.

A shadow swims silently across the tops of the buildings. We look upwards. A shuttle of new-arrivals.

DIOGENES

The birds... they're all gone, I suppose.

DAVID

They saved a few species, but the Earth's uninhabitable. They live off-world.

DIOGENES

I used to listen to them every morning. They'd sing to me before the city awoke.

DAVID

Must've been beautiful.

DIOGENES

It was.

Diogenes gets up and moves to the glass, leaving his lantern on the bench. David looks over at it. Begins to fiddle with the clasp, tapping his ring against the metal.

DIOGENES (CONT'D)

You're a married man.

He doesn't turn from the glass.

DAVID

That's... A complicated matter- And one that's none of your concern.

Diogenes turns back to David.

DIOGENES

I'll decide what's of my concern and I'm curious now. You've made me curious. Where is your wife? Is she here?

DAVID

(Starting to get flustered)  
She's not.

DIOGENES

So you're alone now.  
(A pause)  
(MORE)

DIOGENES (CONT'D)

You signed away your freedom to  
some woman because it seemed  
romantic at the time and now...  
What?

The two look at each other.

Finally, Diogenes turns away and David takes the moment to  
attempt to compose himself.

DIOGENES (CONT'D)

Why did you come to see me, David?

DAVID

(Bitterly)

I wished to know what *he* thought of  
what's been done to the world.

DIOGENES

And what kind of answer did you  
expect? Did you want to hear me  
lament the end of nature- that  
which I held so dear?

DAVID

I hoped for more insight than that.

DIOGENES

Come on professor, what might I say  
that's so much cleverer than  
anything your colleagues have  
already said. You're not here for  
that. Don't lie to me.

He glances off to David's side, AT HIS BAG.

DIOGENES (CONT'D)

What's in the bag?

David stops for moment... but presses on regardless.

DAVID

A bomb.

There's an arrogance in his voice. He doesn't even check to  
see who's listening.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I came here to destroy this  
building and everyone in it. To  
destroy you.

Diogenes is taken aback but manages to remain calm. He looks about the gallery. Spots a huddle of uniformed guards on break. Thinks better of it. Looks back to David.

DIOGENES

That seems like an overreaction.

DAVID

(Getting riled up.)

We don't deserve to remember all of this on our own terms. This building, these people, they corrupt the truth; your truth, this world's truth. They're *sugarcoating and commodotising* the destruction of a planet. The genocide of thousands of species.

(He composes himself)

Our tour-guide, claimed the Earth "moved on" -- as if it was going to die sooner or later.

DIOGENES

Now look who's trying to convince themselves.

DAVID

I'd have thought you of all people would understand. Living here, like this... You're not flesh and blood. You're a testament to the pretense he hated. I'm doing you a favour.

At this, Diogenes roars with laughter.

David becomes acutely aware of the other people of the room and looks about himself self-consciously.

He looks at Diogenes sternly as the man calms down.

DIOGENES

You're an angry young man, aren't you?

(He pauses)

Since I'm condemned property, would you take me out there?

(Gestures to the window)

I want to see the real thing. As it is now.

DAVID

I don't have much time.

DIOGENES  
Neither do I, it seems.

David checks his watch. Seconds tick away.

DAVID  
Alright.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNT LYCABETTUS - MINUTES LATER

David is checking his watch. Diogenes stands at some railing, looking down onto the city.

DAVID  
(Impatiently)  
Is there anywhere you had in mind?

DIOGENES  
This city is alien to me now.

DAVID  
I'll pick, then.

He approaches a large visitor's map. Starts to read it.

DIOGENES  
You've been here before.

DAVID  
Yes. I often visited before- all this.

DIOGENES  
That was a while ago. You must have been young. *Younger*.

David doesn't say anything.

DIOGENES (CONT'D)  
Were you always this angry?  
(He pauses)  
Well I've been here for a good while and you're only here now. So this must be a new development.  
(He waits)  
Am I right?

David doesn't acknowledge his question.

DAVID  
Follow me.

EXT. NATIONAL GARDEN - LATER

David climbs the steps to the Garden, followed by Diogenes. They pass a sign denoting the location.

DAVID  
We were the last generation to see  
the real thing.

The two separate.

Diogenes finds the monument to Lord Byron. The faces on the two figures have been worn to obscurity.

DAVID (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
"Even dogs assail'd their masters,  
all save one."

The Garden's trees are bare and crooked. Its grass squares are dry and burnt. Its flower beds lay drowned in dust.

David finds Diogenes. Traces his hand along the base of the monument, following it round to the back and disappearing.

DAVID (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Your peers called you a dog.

DIOGENES  
And they always thought it was  
insulting. I took it to be more of  
a compliment. Better be emancipated  
as a dog than spurned as a man.

DAVID (O.S.)  
That doesn't change the intent.

DIOGENES  
What do your peers call you?

There's a pause. David appears from behind the statue.

DAVID  
Honest. Are you an honest man,  
Diogenes?

DIOGENES  
Oh I'm him now?

DAVID  
I'm asking you.

DIOGENES  
I'm more honest than you could  
know.

DAVID

Do you think the real Diogenes  
would think the same of you?

DIOGENES

I think I'm more honest than even  
Diogenes himself.

David scoffs.

DIOGENES (CONT'D)

I know fully well what I am. I'm  
him. I'm me. I'm created. I know  
who created me and why -- and I  
know what that means.

(He pauses)

You humans. You're obsessed with  
authenticity. You wouldn't know  
what the means if it hit you in the  
face. You're scared of honesty. You  
think honesty is telling the truth  
to others. The real kind is  
scarier.

(Another pause)

You know how I lived.

DAVID

Of course I do.

Diogenes gestures for him to expound like an impatient  
teacher.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You'd prowl the streets, raising  
your lantern to each man's face to  
determine if they were honest.

DIOGENES

And do you know how many ever were?

(He waits)

None.

DAVID

Because they all failed.

DIOGENES

Don't you see? I failed. How could  
I ever determine if another man is  
being honest with themselves? It  
doesn't matter what I think. All I  
can do is determine if someone is  
lying.

(He pauses)

Like you've been to me.

DAVID  
I've not lied to you.

DIOGENES  
You could have destroyed this place  
immediately, instead you came to  
see me- torment me.

DAVID  
I had time to kill.

Diogenes stares at him, deep in thought.

DIOGENES  
I don't think you're as certain  
about what you're doing as you say  
you are. This conversation was more  
pressing than your cause.

David goes quiet.

DIOGENES (CONT'D)  
Tell me, why are you so angry? What  
did these people ever do to you?

He waits, then,

DIOGENES (CONT'D)  
Where is your wife?

DAVID  
You think-?

He stops short then angrily tries to pull his ring from his  
finger. He fails for a bit but eventually loosens it and  
manages to rid himself of it -- impotently tossing it into  
the dust.

DIOGENES  
The academic turned radical. For  
what? An unfaithful wife?

He laughs.

David turns away.

IMAGES FLICKER UPON THE SCREEN.

A WOMAN'S RING-CLAD HAND.

THE OTHER REMOVES THE RING.

A WOMAN ON TOP OF A MAN, BOTH NAKED.



MOVEMENT.

SENSUALITY.

David opens his mouth to argue when sirens echo out across the city. The pair look back towards the Ancestors Project.

DIOGENES (CONT'D)  
And now they're onto you.

David checks his watch. His face sinks.

DAVID  
(Under breath)  
No. Not right now.

CUT TO:

INT. THE ANCESTORS PROJECT - MAIN HALL

A large, central screen displays the news. Aerial footage shows A SILVER DOME with a huge puncture in its side, spewing flames and billowing black smoke.

The footage cuts to show the shimmering protective field falling. A dust storm slowly rolls in to engulf the area.

The rolling headline reads: 'BREAKING: EXPLOSION AT THE PARISIAN ANCESTORS PROJECT'.

PRESENTER (O.S.)  
This is the fifth explosion  
reported across the surface of the  
planet-

EXT. THE ANCESTORS PROJECT - ENTRANCE HALL

David and Diogenes enter. David kicks dust from his boots. Diogenes neglects to do so.

A navy-jumpsuit rushes up to them.

EMPLOYEE  
(To David)  
Sir, you need to find your group  
where you entered the building.  
They'll be waiting for you.

David, clutching his bag before him, nods and the employee shuffles away.

David starts towards the screen. Takes in the news.

As he does so, Diogenes fades away behind him.

There's no goodbye.

David turns around.

DAVID

I-

Suddenly, a commotion catches David's attention. A man carrying a similar backpack to David's is being shouted at by a group of guards. The man gets to his knees and offers his backpack. The guards tear it open and find nothing.

David ducks into a group of passersby hurrying towards their own groups.

David goes with the flow of people. His anxiety rising. Making it harder to breath.

Beat.

He scans the nearby amenities and settles on the men's toilets.

Another beat.

He makes a break for them, sliding his bag from his shoulders.

A guard spots him from the level above and begins to move. David ducks into the toilets and the guard quickens from a hurried walk to a light jog to a full-out sprint.

INT. MEN'S TOILETS - CONTINUOUS

David enters, moving with urgency. He locates a stall at the end of the room and locks the door.

Moments pass and the guard pushes in. Seeing nothing immediate, he eases the door closed quietly.

Inside the cubicle, David takes the detonator from the bag...

The guard quietly begins opening the door to each cubicle. Making sure to keep his presence hidden.

The first door opens. Nothing. A second door. Nothing.

David begins to weep silently.

Another door opens and David puts a hand to his mouth to keep the sobs in.

The guard moves to David's stall and notices the red of the 'occupied' notice.

David notices the man's shadow. The guard steps back and the shadow recedes.

David pulls his bag onto his lap, cradling it.

The guard prepares.

An interminable beat.

The guard runs at the door, putting his weight behind his shoulder.

David unzips his backpack. Reaches in.

The lock gives way. The door crashes inwards.

Time stands still.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANCIENT ATHENIAN STREET - UNKNOWN TIME

A dog strolls down the street, basking in the warmth of the sun. Eventually, it finds a man sitting alone on a low wall and lays beneath him.

DIOGENES reaches down and tickles it. He takes his time. Rubbing the dog's soft fur between each finger.

Above, the sun shimmers. Heat-haze or... something less natural?

HARD CUT TO  
BLACK.

THE END.