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Chapter 35: The Chancellor

MUSIC: (FADE IN) BLIZZARD OF OSBORN THEME

NARRATOR

You're listening to The Blizzard of Osborn by Michael Sheen Cuddy.
Chapter 35: The Chancellor.

MUSIC: BLIZZARD OF OSBORN THEME (FADE OUT)

Scene One: The Retreat, Pinnacle of Aspire.

MUSIC: (Antonio Vivaldi, Concerto in C Major for 2 Trumpets,
RV537 - Allegro)

NARRATOR

When the SAPT—or “bubble” as it was called—returned safely to the Pinnacle of Aspire the Strangers were greeted with the royal treatment. Each was given a private suite with full bath, shower, hot tub, sauna, and massage facilities. The Emperor's own catering service was on call to prepare any indulgence they fancied.

Once her white dye and wig were removed—a process that took

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another 8 dura—Cassie soaked in a long hot bath. Memyselfandi, relieved of his burdensome Dr. John Chillykonkon disguise, ordered a brand new wardrobe: a hand-sewn vest, plus Velaysian trousers and matching suspenders because he wanted to look his best for the ceremony.

Assam, preferring the comforting natural aromas of clay, dust, sun and rain, declined a bath. He did however, request a bushel of his favorite foods: fresh carrots, apples and sunflower seeds. As for Sly, once he slaked his thirst on pure O, he curled up to rest in a specially prepared cool, dark hollow so he could think about what they'd been told.

After three days of rest a grand ceremony would be held where Cassie, Sly, Memyselfandi and Assam would each be granted their truest deepest wish. In the meantime, they were told to think long and hard about what they would ask of the Emperor because, an emissary cautioned,

EMISSARY

Once the Emperor grants your wish, it cannot be revoked or modified in any way. You shall take it with you to the very very end.

MUSIC: (Bach: The Art of Fugue - Contrapunctus 8, A3)

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Scene Two: The Great Hall, Pinnacle of Aspire

NARRATOR

The Great Hall was great indeed. On the outside, an imposing tower of ancient stone; on the inside, a vast cathedral-like space designed to memorialize the greatest Imperial events. Here, in rainbow light streaming through vaulted stained glass windows the slightest murmur echoed around spiral pillars of pink marble. Aspire's most prestigious dignitaries, even including the Grey Eminences, had all gathered for this occasion. A full Syntonion orchestra played as the Imperial Viceroy, looking noble and wise, stood before the select gathering.

Sitting side-by-side in the honored guest pew, Cassie, Sly, Memyselfandi and Assam looked humble and awed. Jet, sitting in Cassie's lap looked more curious than humbled. Cassie leaned into Memyselfandi and whispered:

CASSIE

When does the Emperor arrive? (*drier, then +>reverb+echo*)

SOUND: (crowd murmur)

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NARRATOR

The acoustics of the Great Hall made her whisper reverberate so everyone in the hall could hear. The Viceroy, looking regal in his purple cape and ermine collar, addressed the crowd.

THE VICEROY

The Emperor has expressed his deepest regrets that he cannot be here today to bestow his magnanimous gifts to you personally. Unfortunately, matters of the utmost gravity are occurring at this very moment in a distant realm which demand the Emperor's presence.

SOUND: (commotion, crowd disturbance)

MEMYSELFANDI

What? Is this some sort of joke?

SLY

I knew it was too good to be true.

ASSAM

You shoulda listened to me, assume the worst and you won't be disappointed!

CASSIE

We tried our best, what more do they want?

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THE VICEROY

(Louder, to quell the commotion) Not to worry. *(Normal volume)* The Emperor's word is law. And because you successfully accomplished your tasks you shall be rewarded. Now let us begin.

MUSIC: (Bach: Brandenburg Concerto, No. 4, G Major - Presto)

NARRATOR

From an antique bureau of highly polished wood the Viceroy withdrew a roll of parchment tied in red ribbon which he ceremoniously unfurled.

THE VICEROY

In the name of the omnipotent Emperor I call upon Memyselfandi to approach the Majestic Imperium.

NARRATOR

Memyselfandi rose from his chair, nearly stumbling as his anxious yolk sloshed forward. Having regained his balance Memyselfandi stood solemnly before the Viceroy. Cassie, Sly and Assam looked on. Assam leaned over and winked at Cassie; he wanted to say how dignified Memyselfandi looked in his new hand-tailored outfit but didn't want to be heard by everybody else. Cassie winked back, a big smile on her face. Sly didn't look so impressed.

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The Viceroy placed his hands on Memyselfandi's shoulders (or where his shoulders would be if he actually had shoulders).

THE VICEROY

By the powers vested in me through the munificence of His Majesty the Emperor, I call upon you, Memyselfandi, to state your deepest truest wish.

MEMYSELFANDI

(clears throat) It is with profound gratitude that I thank your Excellency for the opportunity to express my humble wish. You see, when I was stranded up on the wall of the Great Barrier in the Hinterlands for so long.... *(fade w/reverb/pan)*

MUSIC: (MMI's comic theme)

NARRATOR

Sly yawned. A great, jaw-unhinging yawn that must have alarmed anyone who saw it. As far as Sly was concerned he'd heard Memyselfandi's story before. Many, many times.

THE VICEROY

Yes but what is it now you wish for most?

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MEMYSELFANDI

(sheepishly) Well you see, for all my knowledge, I sometimes wonder what good is it if it's only stuck inside my head? After all, what good is all the knowledge in the world if it never gets passed on to anyone? That's the whole point of learning isn't it? To pass wisdom on to the next generation? Otherwise, everything I know will one day die with me, will it not?

MUSIC: (Bach: The Art of Fugue - Contrapunctus 12, A4)

THE VICEROY

Sadly, yes it will.

MEMYSELFANDI

...Sometimes I've found myself thinking...if I could be a teacher, a professor, a scholar, and pass along all my vast store of knowledge to the next generation, well...all my years of study and learning will have meant something, they will have helped others, not only myself.

THE VICEROY

I see... Well, that is something the Emperor can grant you. We shall set up an Institute of Higher Learning and appoint you as Chancellor and founding father. From this lofty post you can charter your own

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mission, establish curricula, formulate syllabi, recruit faculty and create research facilities enabling you to transmit every grain of knowledge and wisdom you have acquired over your years of diligent study.

MUSIC: (Bach: Brandenburg Concerto, No. 6, B Flat Major - Allegro)

MEMYSELFANDI

Why, that sounds marvelous! I won't be forgotten as the solitary crank who isolated himself up on a wall for much of his life. Instead, I shall be revered as the bringer and keeper of higher learning throughout the Empire!

AUDIENCE

Hear! Hear!

SOUND: (cheers, applause) FADE OUT

MUSIC: Blizzard Theme (FADE IN)

NARRATOR

Next: Acting in the Emperor's absence, the Viceroy makes good on their promise to Memyselfandi. Now who shall be rewarded next?

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MUSIC: Blizzard Theme (FADE OUT)

[end Chapter 35]