

The door to the world

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. A STREET ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF OSLO - MORNING

On a small, suburban street, people are doing their morning shopping, chatting to friends and sitting at cafes. An old couple, with their dog on a leash, is walking slowly down the street.

In the distance, there's the sound of a horse's CLIP-CLOPPING on the road.

The old man is alerted to the sound and looks down the street to see where it's coming from. He taps his wife on her shoulder to draw her attention to it. They both stop walking and stand dead still.

All down the street, people begin to do the same, with solemn, respectful looks on their faces.

A man on scaffolding in front of a shop takes off his hard-hat and holds it to his chest. People enjoying coffee at outside tables stand up. A mother scolding her child who is having a tantrum sees what's happening and scoops up the child in an embrace.

A funeral procession heads up the street.

The funeral director, in top hat and tails and carrying his cane, walks slowly in front of a horse-drawn hearse.

A coffin is on display in the hearse. Flowers inside the windows of the carriage spell out the words: 'MATS FOREVER'.

Behind the hearse is a black limousine. Inside a man can be seen looking sad. Alongside him, sit his wife and daughter.

A few other cars drive slowly behind the hearse and limousine. Inside the cars, the occupants wear black funeral attire.

The old man starts to clap his hands slowly as the hearse passes by. Other join in the slow hand-clap. The man in the limousine sees the old man start the hand-clap and nods a 'thank you' from through the car window in his direction.

A little further up the street, a door looks out of place. It seems like a high resolution animation and shimmers ever-so-slightly.

It's suddenly kicked open violently, struggling to stay on its hinges. No one notices.

A huge ORC squeezes its way through the doorway, breaking some of the bricks off the wall in the process. It, too, looks animation-like. Hyper-real and colourful. Muscle-bound, powerful and imposingly scary. It lumbers into the street, just as the hearse is passing. The orc immediately becomes limp. It stops dead and assumes a passive, humble lurch. It just stares at the hearse and a single tear runs down its cheek.

The orc watches silently, unseen by the rest of the people in the street. The hearse passes the orc by, followed by the limousine and the other cars in the procession.

The orc makes to turn and go back through the door when it sees the final car in the procession.

Right at the back of the funeral procession is a minibus. It has an Oslo hire car firm logo on it. Inside are 5 people, 2 men and 3 women.

The orc seems to recognise them and it smiles, revealing a mouth with only a handful of teeth.

It raises its fist and thumps its chest twice.

The whole street shudders with the power of the thumps.

The orc then raises its fist to the air in a triumphant punch, looks upwards and ROARS into the sky.

BEGIN MAIN TITLES

'THE DOOR TO THE WORLD'

END MAIN TITLES

INT. THE STEEN HOME - NIGHT

It is DEAD QUIET in the house. At the end of a hallway, a light is switched off. ROBERT STEEN, a man in his mid-fifties with greying hair, emerges and walks down the dark hallway. He approaches a room with a light on and looks inside. His wife, TRUDE, blonde and early-fifties, is asleep on top of the bed, fully-clothed.

He goes over and pulls the duvet over her. She doesn't stir. Robert leaves the bedroom, and switches the light off as he exits.

He walks further down the corridor, stopping to switch on a light at the top of a flight of stairs. There's a stair-lift mounted to the bannister. He stops and looks at it for a second. Robert walks down the stairs and reaches a door. He stands still for few seconds, takes a deep breath and opens the door. The light from the stairs dimly lights the room, but not enough to make any of its contents visible.

Robert walks up to a desk with a computer and monitor on it. He switches it on and the screen lights up as it begins to boot up. He looks around the room at floor level until he locates a stool. He pulls it over to the desk and sits down on it. He takes a deep breath and begins to type. He swallows back a lump in his throat as tears slowly trickle from his eyes.

EXT. A CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND, OSLO - DAY

SUPER: OSLO, 1993

In a small, suburban playground, children play on the swings, slide and roundabout. Groups of parents stand and chat with each other. Robert Steen, in his thirties, relaxes on a bench, reading his book. He looks up for a few seconds, smiles to himself and returns to his book.

The children are queuing up for the slide. One by one, they climb the ladder and slide down.

A small blond-haired boy, MATS STEEN (3), begins to carefully and slowly climb the ladder. He suddenly stops. The CHILDREN in the queue bunch up behind him.

CHILD 1

Go Mats.

CHILD 2

Up, Mats!

CHILD 1

It's only a few steps.

Mats turns around, looking anxiously in his father's direction.

MATS

(shouts)

Papa!

Robert looks up and sees Mats on the ladder. He puts his book in his jacket pocket and walks over to him.

ROBERT
What's wrong, Mats?

MATS
I can't...

ROBERT
(confused)
What do you mean you can't? You've
done this hundreds of times.

MATS
I'm stuck.

ROBERT
Okay. Up or down?

CHILD 1
Go up, Mats.

CHILD 2
Yes, up, we're waiting!

Robert climbs a few steps, picks Mats up and helps him to the top of the ladder. Mats gets himself in position at the top of the slide, then slides down. Robert meets him at the bottom of the slide and picks him up in his arms.

ROBERT
(lovingly)
Don't worry Mats, we all freeze
sometimes. Wait and see, you'll be
fine next time.

MATS
Thanks papa.

Robert carries Mats through the playground gates and they head off home.

INT. THE STEEN HOME - DAY

15 year old Mats is propped up on cushions, on the couch in the living room. To the side of the couch is a wheelchair. His legs look awkwardly bent, his shoulders are slumped and his head is tilted and sunken into his neck. The television is on and his mother, TRUDE, a blonde woman in her early forties, is asleep on a chair with a book on her lap. Mats flicks through the TV channels on the remote but doesn't find anything he wants to watch. He looks incredibly bored and a little irritable.

He sits staring into space until the SOUNDS OF A CAR pulling into the driveway gets his attention and he perks up. The front DOOR OPENS and he switches off the TV and turns his head towards the living room door. Robert walks in, carrying his briefcase with a laptop bag over his shoulder. Robert looks over at Trude, shakes his head, and smiles at Mats.

ROBERT
(quietly)
Hi Mats. How was your day? Exciting
it seems.

Mats gives Robert a smile.

MATS
(whispering)
Okay papa, not too bad.

Trude stirs a bit, but doesn't wake up.

ROBERT
(whispering)
Good. There's something I want to
show you...

Mats makes as if he's going to try and pull himself up.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
No, stay where you are. I'll come
and sit next to you.

Robert takes the laptop bag off, puts it on the coffee table and sits down on the couch. He opens the bag and takes out the laptop.

MATS
(whispering)
I know it's your computer, papa,
I'm not stupid...

ROBERT
(excited, his voice rising
a bit)
Wait until you see this.

Trude stirs a little, turns her head and goes straight back to sleep. Robert laughs quietly and Mats smiles.

Robert switches the computer on and places it on his lap, facing towards Mats.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Some of the people at work were talking about it, and I thought it might interest you, so I got Jens to load it on here.

On the screen, THE SIMS opens up. Mats' eyes are full of wonder.

MATS

(softly, but excited)

What is it?

ROBERT

(quietly)

They told me it's like a real-life game of people, families, homes, I'm not sure what else... You can create characters and they live in a town. You can design their house, get a pet... look, I know spreadsheets on the computer, but that's about all. Why don't you see if you can work it out?

Mats looks really pleased.

MATS

(whispering)

Okay papa, thanks!

ROBERT

(quietly)

And if it's something you like, I can bring the computer home in the evenings and on weekends.

Robert gets up from the couch and walks towards the kitchen. Mats is completely engrossed in the game.

INT. THE DINING ROOM, STEEN HOME - NIGHT

Robert, Trude, Mats (4) and his sister MIA (3), sit at the table, ready to eat dinner.

Robert, Trude and Mia each serve themselves from the dishes on the table, but Mats doesn't move.

TRUDE

Come on Mats, if you don't hurry up, it'll get cold before you eat it.

Mats looks a bit embarrassed, but still doesn't move.

ROBERT
Okay, son?

MATS
I'm just... a bit tired.

Trude picks up Mats' plate, serves him some food and puts the plate down in front of him. Mats slowly picks up his knife and fork and begins to eat, aware that his mother and father are watching him intently.

MIA
You're not tired, you're dead!

They all begin to laugh, and Mats allows himself a smile.

INT. THE STEEN HOME - DAY

Robert knocks on Mats' (15) bedroom door and starts to enter.

ROBERT
Sorry to wake you Mats, I've got an
early start, do you have my...

Robert sees that Mats is sitting at his desk, playing THE SIMS.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
You're up early.

Mats smiles sheepishly at his dad. Robert looks at Mats' bed and sees that it's still made.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Mats! You haven't been up all night
have you?!

Mats tilts his head down a little.

MATS
It's so much fun, papa.

Robert frowns at Mats.

ROBERT
We'll talk about this later.

Mats closes the laptop and hands it to Robert, looking a little crestfallen.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
 Now get into bed and get some
 sleep!

EXT. THE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

A group of BOYS, aged 6-7, are playing football. Mats (4) is sitting off to the side on a step eating his lunch. The ball is kicked in his direction.

BOY#1
 Mats!

Mats looks up to see the ball coming towards him and stopping just in front of him. He looks up with an expression of fear on his face.

BOY#2
 Kick it back, Mats.

Mats gets to his feet, slowly and with some difficulty.

BOY#3
 (shouts)
 Come on, Matilda!

The boys start to laugh as Mats takes a few steps to kick the ball.

INT. SCHOOL MEDICAL ROOM - DAY

Robert enters the medical room and sees Mats lying on the bed with his leg on a pillow. The SCHOOL NURSE turns and smiles at Robert.

SCHOOL NURSE
 He took a bit of tumble playing
 football. I don't think it's too
 bad, thankfully.

Robert goes over to Mats and strokes his hair.

ROBERT
 How does it feel, my boy?

MATS
 Okay, papa.

ROBERT
 Can you walk?

Mats tries to sit up on the bed, but he can't.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Right, let's get you checked out.

Robert picks Mats up in his arms. The nurse smiles at Mats.

SCHOOL NURSE
Your dad's right, best to see the
doctor in case you've got a sprain.

Mats gives the nurse a little smile as his dad carries him from the room.

INT. DOCTOR'S ROOM, OSLO HOSPITAL - DAY

Robert wheels Mats into the doctor's room in a wheelchair. The DOCTOR is looking over Mats' x-rays. He looks up and smiles at them as they enter.

DOCTOR
Hello Mats. Grab a seat please, Mr.
Steen. Do you know what this is,
Mats?

The doctor holds up an x-ray of a leg.

MATS
An x-ray. It's a leg, I think.

DOCTOR
Not just any leg. Your leg. And it
looks fine. No fractures.

Mats smiles, but still looks uncomfortable.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
It's sore, yes? It could be a
muscle strain. Can you try and
stand for me?

Mats tries to lift himself out of the wheelchair, but his arms won't seem to support his weight. The doctor looks a bit concerned and addresses Robert.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
He seems a bit lethargic. He's not
normally like this, is he?

Robert smiles at Mats as he answers.

ROBERT
He's not the most energetic kid.

The doctor approaches Mats and holds out his arm.

DOCTOR

Mats, I want you to squeeze my arm,
as hard as you can.

Mats holds onto the doctor's arm and squeezes. The doctor
nods.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Good, thanks Mats.

He turns to Robert once again.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I'd like to run some tests, Mr.
Steen, just to be sure, if it's
okay with you?

Robert looks concerned.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Nothing to worry about at this
stage. Better safe than sorry. And
this is what you pay your taxes
for.

The doctor turns and smiles warmly at Mats.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

We're going to sort you out and get
you back on the football field as
soon as possible.

INT. THE STEEN HOME - NIGHT

Robert is lying in bed as Trude emerges from the bathroom in
her dressing gown. She takes it off and gets into bed next to
him. She slips into his arms.

ROBERT

I've been thinking...

Trude looks up at him.

TRUDE

Hmm...

ROBERT

He really seems to like playing
games on the computer.

TRUDE

I'm not sure how good it is for
him.

ROBERT
Trudes, he's not a normal kid. He's
never going to...

TRUDE
I know.

ROBERT
It makes him happy. And maybe he
forgets for a while.

TRUDE
I guess most parents are worrying
about smoking and drinking and
drugs, so it could be worse...

ROBERT
I think we should get him his own
one. You just don't know how
much... how long...

Robert takes a big swallow. Trude looks at him lovingly, but
with sadness in her eyes.

TRUDE
I know. I spend all day trying to
avoid thinking about it.

ROBERT
We should let him have as much fun
as possible... while he can...

Trude kisses him on his cheek. Robert leans over to the side
table and switches the light off.

INT. THE STEEN HOME - DAY

Trude and Mia are sitting at the dining room table having
breakfast. Alongside them, Mats (15) is in a wheelchair
eating his. Robert walks into the dining room. Mats is
surprised to see him.

MATS
Papa, I thought you were at work?

Trude and Mia smile knowingly.

ROBERT
It's surprise time.

Mats looks a little confused. He looks at Trude, then back at
Robert.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

It's your sixteenth birthday next month. But we thought, why wait? We told you that we were having some building work done on the garage...

MATS

It's been noisy as hell for the last week.

ROBERT

Might have been worth it. Come, let me show you.

Robert goes behind Mats, grabs the wheelchair handles and starts to wheel him out of the room. Trude and Mia follow them.

MATS

Papa, we'll have to go around to the ramp at the front.

Mia giggles.

MATS (CONT'D)

Yes, Mia, that's funny.

Robert wheels Mats down the corridor, around the corner and stops.

TRUDE

Da-nah!

Mats is silent. He looks at the contraption mounted to the bannister.

ROBERT

It's a chair-lift, Mats. Come on, let's get you plugged in.

Robert pushes Mats' wheelchair onto the ramp and clamps his wheels. Mats inspects everything, trying his best to hide his excitement.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Right, the buttons are on your left. 1 for this level, 0 for down. Ready?

Mats allows himself a smile, then presses the button. The lift starts to descend.

MATS
(smiling broadly)
Awesome!

The family walk down the stairs and meet Mats at the bottom.

TRUDE
Now the real fun starts.

Mats looks at Trude quizzically. Robert wheels Mats forward a few metres and stops in front of a door.

ROBERT
So, we figured a young man needs
his own space.

Mats swings his head around excitedly to look at his mother and sister. They both smile lovingly at him.

MIA
Can I?

Robert nods at her. Mia opens the door and Robert wheels Mats into his new room. It's been decorated to suit a teenage boy with music posters on the walls, a hi-fi on a shelf and a TV positioned for bed-viewing.

Mats is incredibly excited.

MATS
Wow, I love it!

TRUDE
There's an intercom in case you
need one of us...

Trude points to the intercom, mounted to the side of Mats' bed.

TRUDE (CONT'D)
...connected to the living room and
our bedroom. And your dad has even
built you a bathroom...

Trude points to a sliding door on the other side of the room.

TRUDE (CONT'D)
...so you don't need to come
upstairs unless you really want to
see us!

Mats beams his smile at them all.

MATS
You're the best. I...

Mats' eyes catch something covered with a sheet on the desk.

ROBERT
Maybe there's something else?

Robert wheels Mats over to the desk.

TRUDE
Darling. We want you to know how
much we love you...

ROBERT
And although we don't want you up
all night...

Mia pulls the sheet off, revealing a new computer with a
large monitor.

Mats bursts into a huge smile.

MATS
Fantastic! Mama, papa, thank you so
much!

Trude and Robert wrap their arms around Mats in a big hug.

MATS (CONT'D)
Mia, come!

Mia joins in the hug.

ROBERT
Ah, there is one final thing. I
spoke to Jens about the best gaming
set-up, and he said that we had to
have an internet connection...

MATS
I can go online?! Papa, that's what
I really, really wanted.

Trude looks at Robert with pride and squeezes his hand.

Trude, Robert and Mia head for the door as Mats turns on the
computer.

TRUDE
Don't forget to come up for lunch.

Mats turns to her and gives her a mischievous smile. He motions his head towards the intercom and cups his hand over his mouth to mimic ordering at a drive-through restaurant.

MATS

Double cheeseburger, fries and a
coke. Supersize!

Robert and Mia laugh. Trude rolls her eyes and smiles.

INT. DOCTOR'S ROOM, OSLO HOSPITAL - DAY

Robert and Trude sit facing the doctor. Robert, looks at him with real concern on his face.

ROBERT

Mats has been in the hospital for
three days now. Is it bad?

Trude reaches out and grabs his hand tightly.

DOCTOR

It's called Duchenne disease.

ROBERT

So it's not leukaemia or some kind
of cancer?

DOCTOR

No, it's a muscular condition.

Trude and Robert suddenly look a little more relaxed.

TRUDE

So, you can treat it?

The doctor looks at them both, earnestly.

DOCTOR

It's a degenerative disease,
unfortunately. Mats is not going to
get better...

Trude stares straight ahead, trying to understand what she's just been told. She's silent. Tears begin to roll down Robert's face as he tries to keep control of his emotions.

ROBERT

But... it's not going to kill him,
is it?

DOCTOR

With the right care, Mats can be expected to live to about twenty. I'm so, so sorry.

Trude bursts out crying. Robert puts his arms around her. The doctor hands them a box of tissues.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You need to prepare yourselves. He'll lose all his muscle power and he'll need a wheelchair within the next few years.

Trude turns to Robert and holds his head in her hands.

TRUDE

Our poor, beautiful boy.

Robert stares into her eyes, tears running down his face. He looks at the doctor.

ROBERT

Can we take him home now?

The doctor smiles warmly at them.

DOCTOR

Of course.

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - DAY

Mats, aged 16, is sitting in his wheelchair in front of the computer. On the screen, WORLD OF WARCRAFT is loading. Mats sits completely still, staring at it. The loading bar reaches 99% completion and the screen goes black. A few seconds later, the title screen appears. Mats clicks his mouse on the NEW GAME button and doesn't break his stare at the screen as he waits for the game to load.

The game opens on the character generation. Mats cycles through some of the options--dwarf, druid, elf--before selecting a knight and beginning to design his features.

Fast forward through Mats' design of his character, changing hair colour, height, width, eyes, facial hair and clothing, until he has the character he's happy with--the face is square-jawed and strong, with blond hair flowing out from beneath a leather skull-cap and reaching his shoulders. The neck is wide, leading down to a broad chest covered in bronze armour. He stands tall and proud, with a magnificent silver sword, held strongly in both hands.

Mats smiles to himself as he thinks for a few seconds then types in his character name: LORD IBELIN REDMOORE.

He clicks the START GAME button and the game loads.

Outside his slightly open bedroom window, a robin lands on the sill and CHEEPS to get Mats' attention. Mats smiles at it.

MATS
Hello, little one.

The robin hops up and down excitedly. Mats breaks off a piece of a biscuit and throws it towards the robin. It hits the side of the window frame and falls through. The robin begins to peck at it.

On-screen, the magical fantasy Kingdom of Azeroth appears for the first time for Mats.

Mats is suddenly transfixed by the rich, colourful land that is on his screen. Green meadows. Glistening rivers. Snow-capped mountains. Thick, dark forests. A sparkling waterfall. Blue, blue skies. And a path that seems to lead all the way to a magnificent castle atop a hill in the distance. Mats stares in wonder and uses his mouse to make his character, Ibelin, look around at the scenery.

Suddenly, from behind a rock, a young maiden, RUMOUR, jumps out. She's waif-like, with long dark hair, wearing a white dress, a cloth waistcoat and without shoes. She dances around, giggling, and before Mats has time to react, she reaches forward, steals his skull-cap and scarpers off behind the rock again.

Mats is startled for a few seconds, then heads off after her. He walks behind the rock, but she's disappeared.

A message pops up, over the visuals:

[Note: In-game text messages are in italics.]

LIESL (TEXT)
*Rumour: Ha! Got you! If you're here
same time tomorrow, I might give it
back...*

EXT. A STREET NEXT TO A CANAL, AMSTERDAM - DAY

A beautiful young woman, LIESL (15), emerges from an art shop with a rucksack on her back and carrying a brown paper bag.

She has long, jet-black hair and she is dressed like a stylish goth - Doc Marten boots, black stockings, a black leather mini-skirt and a tight black polo neck. She stops for a minute, takes the rucksack off her back, puts the paper bag into it, and then puts her rucksack back on again. She starts walking down the street alongside the canal.

As she walks, she attracts the attention of the men she walks past. But she doesn't notice a thing. Her head is down, with her hair hanging over her eyes as she heads towards her destination, deep in her own thoughts and oblivious to the glances of others.

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Liesl turns the key in the lock and enters her apartment. Her cat meets her, rubbing up against her leg. Liesl strokes her.

LIESL

Bella! Hello baby, did you miss me?
I missed you too.

Liesl walks into the kitchen and puts the kettle on. She goes to the fridge and gets the cat some food, then puts it in a bowl and gives the cat some fresh water. She prepares herself some toast and cheese, pours herself a cup of tea and carries everything through to her bedroom.

She still has her rucksack on as she enters the bedroom. She puts her plate and cup down on the desk alongside her computer and then dumps her rucksack on her bed. Dotted around the room are canvases, finished and unfinished, of fantasy scenes - castles, dragons, princesses, knights. Liesl sits on her chair, switches on the computer, and as it boots up, she takes a bite of her toast and a long sip of her tea. She settles back in the chair, ties her hair behind her head and suddenly looks happy.

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Liesl, aged 15, sits in front of her computer, laughing as a message appears on her screen.

MATS (TEXT)

Ibelin: I am Ibelin, last of the great knights. A slave by birth, a warrior by design. Return my cap and bend your knee or your head will roll.

Liesl stares at the message for few seconds, rolling her eyes. She types a message back.

LIESL (TEXT)

*Rumour: Jesus, slow down Genghis,
you're new here aren't you?*

After a few seconds, a message comes back:

MATS (TEXT)

Ibelin: It's that obvious?

Liesl types back.

LIESL (TEXT)

*Rumour: Trying a bit hard. More
CRAFT, less WAR. Relax. I'll give
you a tour if you like. So you
don't make a fool of yourself!*

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - DAY

Mats, in the form of Ibelin, turns his head slowly and opens his mouth in a huge smile. A ridiculous sparkle zings from his teeth.

EXT. THE KINGDOM OF AZEROTH - DAY

A series of animated scenes of Rumour and Ibelin having adventures in the magical kingdom of Azeroth.

1) They're walking through a dark forest. Suddenly a large group of GOBLINS appears from behind the trees and they set upon Ibelin, as Rumour runs off and hides. The goblins tie Ibelin up and steal his sword while Rumour laughs.

2) The two of them are eating lunch around a campfire on a mountainside. A DRAGON swoops down and vaporises Ibelin with a huge fireball. Rumour laughs. As the smoke from Ibelin's scorched remains drifts into the air, a witch, CAS, watching from a distance, shakes her head and laughs.

3) They enter a tavern and approach the counter. Ibelin orders a couple of goblets of mead, but when he turns around Rumour has gone. CLOAKED FIGURES arise from the tables and encircle him, raising their wands in unison.

4) They're being chased by a gang of SOLDIERS WITH BOAR FACES and spears. Rumour tries to hide in some bushes, but gets discovered. Ibelin, at a safe distance, magics up a portal and Rumour jumps into it. Watching from the safety of clump of bushes, Cas smiles.

5) They stand side by side, facing off against a HUGE MONSTROUS CREATURE carrying a big pick axe.

Ibelin ushers Rumour behind him for safety and embarks on some intricate capoeira moves. The creature looks confused at first, then realises that Ibelin is a formidable opponent. It turns and runs off.

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Liesl, sitting in front of her computer, smiles to herself. She types a message.

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mats, sees the message come up. It reads:

LIESL (TEXT)
*Rumour: And so it came to pass that
the young Ibelin, born a slave,
became the master he was always
destined to become.*

Mats leans back in his wheelchair, flushed with pride. He types back.

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A message pops up on Liesl's screen:

MATS (TEXT)
*Ibelin: With the help of his wise
teacher, the smart, the funny, the
beautiful Rumour.*

She types back:

LIESL (TEXT)
*Rumour: Beautiful?! So says the
gallant, handsome knight.*

Liesl looks at her screen, excitedly waiting for the response.

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mats is staring at the message. He types back:

MATS (TEXT)

Ibelin: The handsome knight swept his hands through his long golden locks, his muscular arms glistening in the moonlight. Maybe one day he would take the maiden's hand and together they would rule Azeroth.

Mats waits for Liesl's return message, excited by the way the conversation is moving.

The message arrives:

LIESL (TEXT)

Rumour: It's time we take this to the next level...

Mats can hardly contain himself. He starts to type, then shakes his head, starts again. But he's not quite sure what to say.

Another message comes through:

LIESL (TEXT) (CONT'D)

Rumour: Headsets.

Mats looks deflated, annoyed with himself that his mind was running ahead.

A message appears:

LIESL (TEXT) (CONT'D)

Rumour: Gotcha! Maybe there is a future for Rumour and Ibelin in Azeroth. But first we must speak. maiden to knight, knight to maiden. Then, who knows?! But seriously. Get. A. Headset!

Mats smiles.

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - DAY

Mats adjusts his new headset to make it comfortable and moves the microphone so that's it's just in front of his mouth.

MATS

(to himself)

Testing, testing, one-two, ground control to Major Tom, commencing countdown, engines on...

(starts to sing with gusto)

(MORE)

MATS (CONT'D)

This is ground control to Major Tom, you've really made the grade, and the papers want to know whose shirts you we-e-e-ear...

Mats stops as he hears Liesl's hysterical laughter in his headset. He looks a bit embarrassed.

LIESL (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

So, not a singer then!

Mats goes increasingly redder in the face, not sure how to reply.

LIESL (V.O. OVER HEADSET) (CONT'D)

Not sure we can still be friends after that performance...

Mats looks a bit upset.

LIESL (V.O. OVER HEADSET) (CONT'D)

It's a joke, Mats. You have those in Norway?

Mats noticeably relaxes and allows himself a little grin.

MATS

Okay, your turn to make a fool of yourself.

LIESL (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Not sure you want me to do that.

MATS

Come on. It's only fair that you embarrass yourself as well.

LIESL (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Alright, you asked for it...

Liesl starts to sing 'Song to the Siren', in the manner of Elizabeth Fraser's This Mortal Coil version.

LIESL (V.O. OVER HEADSET) (CONT'D)

(singing)

Long afloat on shipless oceans, I did all my best to smile, 'Til your singing eyes and fingers, Drew me loving to your isle...

Mats looks astounded.

LIESL (V.O. OVER HEADSET) (CONT'D)

Shall we call it a draw?

MATS

Ten-nil, I think. That was amazing.

LIESL (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Everyone's good at something, I guess.

MATS

When I find mine, I'll let you know!

LIESL (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Oh, Mats. Well at least you've got a lovely speaking voice. And your English is good.

Mats looks pleased with himself.

MATS

So is yours. But a bit different to what I imagined.

LIESL (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

How so?

MATS

Softer.

LIESL (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Yours is not what I thought it would be either...

MATS

How did you think I would speak?

LIESL (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

More squeaky!

MATS

Thanks very much!

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Liesl gives herself a little smile.

LIESL

But, your voice is very...
(she pauses, deliberately)
... manly!

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - DAY

Mats punches the air. His headset flies off and lands on the desk.

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Liesl hears Mats' headset hit the desk, smiles to herself at the impact her compliment has made, and gives herself a fist-bump.

MONTAGE - MATS and LIESL CHATTING ON THEIR HEADSETS OVER A FEW MONTHS

-- IN MATS' BEDROOM -- Mats is talking with a serious look on his face.

-- IN LIESL'S BEDROOM -- Liesl laughs out loud.

-- IN MATS' BEDROOM -- Mats smiles, chuffed at her reaction.

-- IN LIESL'S BEDROOM -- Liesl is telling Mats something deep.

-- IN MATS' BEDROOM -- Mats listens intently, nodding his head in empathy.

-- IN LIESL'S BEDROOM -- Liesl is dancing around wearing her headset and singing.

-- IN MAT'S BEDROOM -- Mats is drumming with his fingers on the desk.

-- IN LIESL'S BEDROOM -- Liesl reads Mats an entry from her diary.

-- IN MATS' BEDROOM -- Mats listens carefully, smiling softly at being brought into Liesl's secrets.

-- IN LIESL'S BEDROOM -- Liesl is speaking softly and slowly into her microphone. She reaches for a horn on the desk in front of her, holds it up to the microphone and blasts it.

-- IN MAT'S BEDROOM -- Mats gets a fright and pulls his headset off quickly, grabbing his ears.

-- IN LIESL'S BEDROOM -- Liesl laughs and runs her hands through her hair.

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Liesl sits down at her desk, wakes her computer from sleep mode and puts her headset on.

LIESL
Hello, hello, Rumour to Ibelin...

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
Greetings from your humble servant.
And how is the ravishing Rumour?

LIESL
Em...

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
What? What's up?

LIESL
I've just been banned.

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
How do you mean 'banned'?

LIESL
By the parents. For neglecting my
schoolwork and getting shit exam
results.

Mats is silent for a few seconds.

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
How long for?

LIESL
Until my grades go up. At least a
few months.

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
Aw. That's not great. Promise me
you'll come back?

LIESL
Of course I will!

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
You'll be missed.

LIESL
You too. Before I go, I have
something to ask you. Can you send
me your address?

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
That's sounds ominous.

LIESL
I want to send you something. A
surprise.

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
Now I'm intrigued! There's just one
small issue...

LIESL
What?

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
We don't know each others' real
names.

LIESL
Ah, good point. Okay, here goes...
Liesl Berg...

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
Liesl? Love it. I'm Mats. Mats
Steen.

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mats has a sad look on his face as he listens to Liesl.

LIESL
Mats. As in I'm mad about Mats?

Mats breaks into a huge smile.

SERIES OF SHOTS - MATS ALONE AT HIS DESK IN HIS BEDROOM

-- Mats turns on his computer and stares blankly at it.

-- Mats looking at the 'FRIENDS ONLINE' window at the side of
his screen and seeing that there's no one there. He looks
empty.

--- Mats sitting in front of his computer. He puts on his
headset, stares ahead at the screen for a few seconds, and
takes the headset off.

INT. HEALTH CENTRE, NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND - DAY

A woman in her late fifties, MAGGIE MORRIS, emerges from her office carrying her bag. She closes the door behind her. A sign on the door reads: MAGGIE MORRIS - PSYCHOLOGIST.

She walks through the clinic to the reception area. A doctor, JOAN, is handing over some paperwork to the receptionist and sees Maggie leaving. When Joan spots Maggie, she starts to SING Kool and the Gang's 'Ladies Night' loudly and breaks into an energetic dance move.

JOAN

(singing)

Oh yes it's Ladies Night and the
feeling's right. Oh yes it's Ladies
Night, oh what a night!

MAGGIE

No can do tonight, doctor dance.

JOAN

Maggie, it's Thursday!

MAGGIE

Much as I hate to admit it, it does
sound appealing, but I'm busy
tonight unfortunately.

JOAN

Hot date?

MAGGIE

A goblin.

JOAN

You saucy tart!

Joan motions her eyes towards the 'Sexual Health Department' sign on the wall. Maggie follows her eyes, sees what she's hinting at and smiles.

MAGGIE

Ha very ha.

With Joan laughing at her own little joke, Maggie turns and leaves through the front doors of the health centre.

SUPER: CAS

INT. THE LIBRARY, COPENHAGEN UNIVERSITY - DAY

Students sit around working silently at tables in the large reading room. Some are on laptops whilst others are reading papers. A student in his late twenties, JESPER LUND, is working on his thesis on his laptop, deep in thought. The alarm on his mobile RINGS SOFTLY and vibrates. He switches it off. A young female student across the aisle from him catches his eye and gives him a flirtatious smile. Jesper sees her smile at him, looks embarrassed and averts his gaze, quickly packing his computer into his bag and hastily making his way towards to exit.

Once he's out of the line of sight of his admirer, he stops for a second, squeezes his fists in frustration at his shyness and slopes off, disheartened.

SUPER: NORG

EXT. A HOUSING ESTATE, HELSINKI, FINLAND - DAY

A 17 year old girl, SISKO SAARI, wearing her school uniform and carrying a satchel over shoulder, walks along the path that leads between large concrete apartment blocks on her way home. Washing is hanging on balconies and scruffy kids are playing football on a small patch of grass. A group of teenage boys are sitting in a doorway, smoking. One of them WHISTLES at her and she turns and scowls. It's enough to shut him up. She reaches a staircase and walks up towards her apartment.

INT. SISKO'S APARTMENT, HELSINKI - DAY

Sisko walks through the door and immediately hears loud GIGGLING. She rolls her eyes and walks into the living room. Her mother, HILJA, mid-forties and attractive but with the fading looks of someone who's lived hard, is stretched out on the couch wearing a pair of denim hot-pants and a t-shirt. Alongside her on the couch is a man in his forties, JAARI. He looks sleazy, grinning up at Sisko with a couple of missing teeth. On the coffee table in front of them are two glass tumblers and three bottles of wine, two empty, the last almost empty.

HILJA

Sisko, baby!

SISKO

(calmly, but with obvious
contempt, completely
ignoring Jarri)

(MORE)

SISKO (CONT'D)

You're pissed again. At 3 o'clock.
Congratulations.

HILJA

I'm happy!

SISKO

Fuck-sakes.

JAARI

Oooh, she's a fiery one, your girl.
I like that!

SISKO

(to her mother)

Who the fuck is this moron?

HILJA

It's Jaari, baby, you've heard me
talk about Jaari...

SISKO

(to Jaari)

Oh, 'Jaari'?!

Jaari looks pleased that she knows who he is.

JAARI

Affirmative.

SISKO

(cuttingly)

Nope, no recognition, less
interest.

HILJA

Sisko!

SISKO

Just make sure he doesn't stay
over. I don't want some old fucking
perv lurking outside the bathroom
door when I need a pee at 2am.

JAARI

2am? That's a date, ja!

Jaari gives Sisko a creepy wink. Sisko walks towards the
door, but stops just before she leaves and looks at back at
Jaari.

SISKO

You should be in jail. Again.

She walks into her room, closes the door and locks it. She kicks off her shoes, lights a cigarette and sits down at the computer on her desk.

SUPER: COLSA

INT. A PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO, BERLIN - DAY

A topless model, SOPHIA, wearing thigh-high black PVC stiletto boots and a steel chastity belt stands in front of a black screen that has been painted with a cosmic scene of small stars and planets. She is wearing a long, bright red wig that reaches to her thighs and her upper body and arms are covered in tattoos. A lighting technician is on a step ladder adjusting a light. A photographic assistant holds a reflector board.

The photographer, HANS SLIMBECK, is finishing a call on his mobile. He is in his early thirties, dressed like he's in the 90s - cowboy boots, tight hipster jeans, a belt with a big skull buckle, a tucked-in white t-shirt and biker's jacket. He has greased-back shoulder length hair and hooped earrings in both ears.

He finishes his call and approaches the crew.

HANS

Super.

He pulls a light meter out of his pocket, holds it in front of the model and takes a reading.

HANS (CONT'D)

Super. Klaus, there's a bit of a hot spot between her breasts...

The assistant adjusts the reflector board.

HANS (CONT'D)

Good. Let's crack out a few shots and see how we're looking.

Hans walks a few steps to Sophia and whispers in her ear.

HANS (CONT'D)

Sophia. You're the star. I want to feel that your tits are taking over the universe.

Sophia looks at him like he's completely mad, and manages a forced smile.

Hans steps back and takes his place behind the camera.

HANS (CONT'D)
(shouts)
Go with wind! Go with rain! Go
Sophia!

A wind machine starts up, blowing Sophia's hair wildly. Water drops from above and the wind sprays it against her. Hans clicks furiously on the camera.

HANS (CONT'D)
And cut! Beautiful!

Sophia is absolutely soaked and is now shivering. She doesn't look happy and glares at Hans.

SOPHIA
You told me it would be warm!

Hans laughs.

HANS
I needed that surprised, angry look
on your face, baby. Wait until you
see the shots!

Sophia storms off towards the changing room.

SOPHIA
Fuck you, fucking asshole. You'll
be hearing from my agent.

The lighting technician and the assistant look concerned.
Hans laughs.

SUPER: ZUTH

INT. THE STEEN HOME - DAY

The DOORBELL RINGS and Trude goes to answer it, opening the door to reveal the POSTMAN. He is holding a cardboard tube.

POSTMAN
Delivery for Mats Steen.

Trude looks a bit confused.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)
He does live here?

TRUDE
Yes, of course, I just wasn't
expecting anything for him.

POSTMAN

I'll need your signature...

Trude signs for the parcel.

TRUDE

Thank you. Have a good day.

She closes the door, holds up the parcel and looks at the postmark, which shows it was posted in Amsterdam. She looks even more confused.

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - DAY

Mats is lying in bed when Trude KNOCKS at his bedroom door.

TRUDE (O.S.)

Can I come in?

MATS

Of course, mama.

Trude enters the bedroom and smiles at Mats.

TRUDE

This just arrived for you...

She hands Mats the cardboard tube.

Mats looks suddenly excited and a bit embarrassed. He sits up awkwardly in bed.

TRUDE (CONT'D)

Anything I should know about?

Mats smiles at her.

MATS

That mothers should give their
teenage sons a bit of privacy?

Trude gives him a disapproving look and then a smile. She leaves the room, pulling the door closed behind her.

As soon as Trude is out of the room, Mats opens the tube and pulls out a big piece of paper. He unravels it to reveal a beautiful drawing of Ibelin and Rumour in an embrace.

He beams from ear to ear, then looks a little sad.

INT. A TAVERN IN AZEROTH - DAY

Ibelin sits alone at a table in the tavern, unkempt and dirty, with a goblet of mead in front of him. Around him, an assortment of characters are having a jolly time. A wench delivers a tray of drinks to a raucous table of goblins. Two wizards are playing cards by the open fire. An archer is shooting arrows at an apple on top of a dwarf's head. Ibelin seems oblivious to what's going on around him.

A friendly-looking witch, Cas, approaches him.

CAS

And a jolly time was had by all.

Ibelin looks up at the witch.

IBELIN

Don't suppose you have a spell for that?

Cas smiles at him.

CAS

I have a spell for everything my dear. Now, come on, spill the magic beans...

IBELIN

I've lost my friend.

Cas looks at him kindly.

CAS

Ah. Those damn orcs, no doubt?

IBELIN

Schoolwork. Parents.

CAS

Must be bad if you're breaking character. Right, let's get you cheered up. Come with me. I might just have an adventure up my sleeve...

Cas beckons Ibelin towards the tavern door. Ibelin sits for a few seconds, just looking at her. Then he decides he has nothing to lose and picks himself up and follows her to the door.

Cas reaches out and grabs Ibelin's hand. She looks him straight in the eyes.

CAS (CONT'D)
This, if you are ready to believe,
is where it all begins...

EXT. A FOREST, AZEROTH - DAY

Cas leads Ibelin through the trees and they emerge in a clearing. There's a fire with a pot cooking on it, and 3 characters are sitting around the fire on logs. They all stand up as Cas walks Ibelin towards them. A strong, good-looking warrior with long dark hair, ZUTH steps in front of Ibelin.

ZUTH
And who have we here?

Ibelin looks a bit nervous.

CAS
That's enough of the machismo,
Zuth. This is...

Cas looks at Ibelin.

IBELIN
I'm Ibelin.

Ibelin puts out his hand to Zuth.

Zuth looks at Ibelin's hand for few seconds, then grabs it in a friendly shake.

ZUTH
And I'm Zuth, leader of this bunch
of misfits. We call ourselves
'Starlight'...

A beautiful young maiden, COLSA, steps forward and offers her hand to Ibelin.

COLSA
Welcome. I'm Colsa.

Ibelin shakes her hand.

IBELIN
Pleased to meet you.

COLSA
Nice strong shake! Colsa likes.

Behind her, NORG, a centaur, shakes his head, disapprovingly.

COLSA (CONT'D)

Lighten up, Norg. Just trying to
make friends. Ibelin, this is Norg.
Half man, half beast. All fool.

Norg scowls at her.

COLSA (CONT'D)

Come on now, giddy-up over here and
welcome Ibelin...

They all laugh. Except Norg.

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - DAY

SUPER: "3 months later"

Mats is at his desk looking at his computer screen. He has grown some facial hair and looks like he hasn't had a shower in a couple of weeks. He opens a search engine, types '*Amsterdam school terms*' into the search bar and hits return.

He looks at the results and nods his head to himself a few times, trying to will himself positive. He reaches to switch off the PC, ponders it for a second, and then opts to turn down the brightness on the monitor.

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mats is fast asleep in bed when his computer PINGS. He rolls over. It PINGS again and he buries his head in his pillow. Then it starts PINGING non-stop. Mats suddenly realises what it means and he does his best to quickly throw his covers off and haul himself to his seat at the desk. He turns up the brightness on the monitor.

A long series of messages runs down his screen. They all simple say, '*MMMMAAAAATTTTTTTSSSSSS*'

Mats smiles and sends an 'X'.

A message from Liesl comes back immediately: '*Miss me?*'

Mats replies: '*Oh, were you gone?*' He sits staring at the screen, awaiting Liesl's reply.

After a few seconds, her reply arrives: '*I've missed you too, you se... oops, too soon?*'

Mats beams when he reads the message. He thinks for a moment, types, deletes it, types again, deletes it again, then types '*I really have missed you. X*' and presses send.

Liesl sends a heart emoji back. Then another. And another.
Mats types another message: *'I have something to tell you.'*
Liesl types back: *'You've met someone else?'*
Mats quickly responds: *'No. Never. Not like that. You'll see.'*

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - DAY

Mats is sitting in front of his computer. He connects to the Starlight group chat. All the other members are online.

COLSA (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
Hi, Ibelin.

MATS
Hi, all.

ZUTH (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
Welcome!

NORG (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
Hello, Ibs.

CAS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
Nice, we're all here...

MATS
Guys, I know I told you all about my friend, Rumour...

CAS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
She's back?!

MATS
(excited) Yes, she is!

COLSA (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
(sounds worried)
And you're leaving us?

MATS
No, of course not, but...

CAS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
Guys, I propose we invite her in, to see if she likes us, and vice versa, if that's what you'd like Ibelin?

Mats smiles.

MATS

That would be great.

ZUTH (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

We don't accept new members lightly, so you need to be prepared that it maybe doesn't work out. All in favour...

CAS, COLSA, NORG (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Aye!

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Liesl is sitting at her desk when a message appears with a PING on her screen: '*Invitation from Azeroth. You are invited to join Starlight as a GUEST*'. Liesel smiles and hurriedly clicks the accept button.

Her computer screen shows her being loaded into the game. She materialises in Azeroth at a campfire in the woods. Around her are 5 characters.

IBELIN (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Rumour!

ZUTH (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Welcome, Rumour.

NORG (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Welcome.

COLSA (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Hi, Rumour.

RUMOUR

Hello, everyone. Thanks for inviting me.

CAS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

We've heard lots about you! You're most welcome. We're about to discuss some important business for Starlight, so it's good timing...

ZUTH (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Yes, thanks Cas, onto our plans. We need to decide what next. Are we just going to continue as a small band, living off the land, moving from village to village and sleeping in the forest, or do we have bigger ambitions?

NORG (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
I wouldn't mind being a ruler!

CAS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
Yes, we know that Norg!

ZUTH (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
We could always take the castle on the hill again? But you know how that ends...

ZORG (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
I know. It's fun while it lasts though!

IBELIN (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
How does it end?

CAS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
No group, small or big, has ever made it to the third moon. There's no way to restock the supplies you need for ammunition or spells. You can only protect yourself for so long and whoever is in the castle has a target on their back. Two moons is the most anyone's ever held onto it.

COLSA (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
We could just get the Fog.

Zuth, Norg and Cas laugh.

IBELIN (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
The Fog?

ZUTH (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
There is absolutely no proof it exists. It's a myth...

CAS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
A programmer up to mischief.

NORG (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
It was a posted on a thread a few years ago. Mix 6 ingredients to create a potion that wipes out your enemies and moves time 3 moons forward. Only problem is that one of the ingredients doesn't exist.

COLSA (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
That we know of...

IBELIN (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
What is it?

CAS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
Black lotus.

Liesl is suddenly alert.

RUMOUR
I might just know where to find
that...

NORG (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
(sarcastically)
Of course you do.

RUMOUR
Mats... sorry... Ibelin, remember
when we were being chased by those
goblins and we found a hiding place
in a hollowed-out rock?

IBELIN (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
I do.

RUMOUR
Meet me there.

Liesl disconnects from Starlight.

EXT. IN A FIELD IN AZEROTH - DAY

Rumour and Ibelin both materialise in the field at the same
time. Rumour looks around.

RUMOUR
This way!

Rumour runs behind a group of rocks. Ibelin follows her. The
area behind the rocks is substantially bigger than it looks
from the outside.

RUMOUR (CONT'D)
I came back here after we hid here,
as I thought there was something
weird about it. Turns out...

Rumour walks up to a small crack in a rock and, surprisingly,
she's able to squeeze through the crack.

IBELIN
Awesome!

Ibelin follows Rumour through the crack. They both emerge in a big dark cave. Both turn on their lanterns.

RUMOUR

There's not really anything in here. I spent a good hour looking around. But what your friend said reminded me of this...

Rumour holds her lantern up to the cave wall. There's a cave painting of what looks like a black lotus flower.

IBELIN

It's just a picture though. We need the real thing...

Rumour walks a few yards into the cave and holds her lantern up to the wall again. Painted on the wall is a big arrow, pointing deeper into the cave.

IBELIN (CONT'D)

Oh boy.

Rumour grabs onto Ibelin's hand and starts to lead him further into the cave.

EXT. AZEROTH - DAY

Starlight are engaged in a battle, defending a small castle atop a hill. Surrounding the castle, an army of dwarves, elves, wizards, orcs and giants lay siege. Boulders fly towards the castle from catapults. Fiery cannonballs hurtle at the walls. A battering ram is set in place in front of the portcullis. Cas, Zuth, Colsa and Norg are doing their best to hold off the hordes, sending off their own spells, but they are becoming overwhelmed.

ZUTH (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

It's getting close, guys! Some help now would be good...

COLSA (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Come on, you two, we need you!

INT. A ROOM IN THE CASTLE - DAY

Ibelin and Rumour are mixing a potion in big cauldron over a fire, hurriedly throwing in ingredients.

RUMOUR

Now just the...

Ibelin drops a black lotus into the cauldron and a deep purple mist begins to emanate from the liquid.

IBELIN

Done.

Ibelin catches some of the purple mist in a bottle and corks it. He grabs Rumour's hand and leads her from the room. They run through the castle corridors and up a flight of stairs, emerging at the top of a tower where the others are waiting for them.

Ibelin smiles confidently at the members of Starlight.

IBELIN (V.O. OVER HEADSET) (CONT'D)
Never in doubt.

CAS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
And they should be on their way...

All of the members of Starlight look to the hills in the distance. 5 enormous dragons swoop down over the hills and start to fly towards the castle.

ZUTH (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
Let's give it a few seconds, draw
them in... In three, two...

The dragons are almost upon the castle.

ZUTH (V.O. OVER HEADSET) (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Release the Fog of the Apocalypse!

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - DAY

Mats tries to push the enter button on his keyboard, but his arm has gone weak and limp and he misses it completely. Realising what he's cost Starlight, he slumps his head on his desk.

EXT. AZEROTH - DAY

The dragons torch the castle to the ground.

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - DAY

Mats still has his head on his desk, motionless.

NORG (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

(angry)

What the fuck, dude! Are you a fucking spaz! That's taken us months to plan!

CAS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Norg! Come on now. You know the rules on derogatory words, and that's hugely offensive.

ZUTH (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Dude, not acceptable.

COLSA (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Ibelin, what happened? It's not like you to mess up.

Mats slowly raises his head. He looks embarrassed. He reaches to turn the computer off, thinks for a minute, and decides against it.

IBELIN

Guys, I'm so sorry. I had a brain freeze and hit the space bar instead of enter. Norg is right, I am a spaz.

NORG (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Sorry Ibs. I didn't mean what I said. I got a bit too excited.

IBELIN

I would probably have said the same, so no worries.

CAS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Too much for this old dear for one night, I'm heading off. Shall we pick this up once we've all had time to calm down and clear our heads?

ZUTH (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Good idea. But before we go, remember that we're consulting over Rumour's membership tomorrow. Ibelin, you obviously can't be involved in the decision, but we'll let you and Rumour know as soon as we've deliberated, tomorrow evening sometime.

RUMOUR (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
 Thanks guys. Whatever you decide,
 I've had fun with you all. I
 promise to be big about it.

ZUTH (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
 Excellent. Until tomorrow everyone.

COLSA (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
 Adios.

IBELIN
 Thanks all. And sorry!

EXT. THE CHURCH - DAY

The horse-drawn hearse carrying Mats' coffin reverses up to the church entrance.

Robert, Trude and Mia watch from a short distance as 6 pallbearers lift up the coffin and carry it inside.

Hans, Maggie, Jesper, Sisko and Liesl walk slowly towards the church entrance.

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Soft ORGAN MUSIC plays.

The small church is quite full and the Steens are sitting in the front row. The members of Starlight sit a few rows back. A few of the other guests look at them quizzically.

Mats' coffin sits in the middle at the front of the church.

The PRIEST steps up to the lectern as the choral music grows quieter, then stops completely. He looks out at those seated in the church and smiles softly. He turns his gaze to Robert, Trude and Mia, nods at them and holds his hand to his heart.

PRIEST
 Good morning everyone. We've come
 together today to say goodbye to
 Mats and we're sad. We should be.
 What a boy. What a man. There are
 eulogies to come from those who
 knew and loved him. But I'd like to
 start with a story about the
 remarkable Mats Steen. His mother,
 Trude, asked me to have a chat with
 him.

(MORE)

PRIEST (CONT'D)

He was starting to lose the function in his arms and legs and was already bound to his wheelchair. Trude was concerned about how he was going to cope emotionally with how his condition would surely progress. I started my ministry with a gigantic error...

INT. THE STEEN HOME - DAY

The priest looks kindly at Mats.

PRIEST

Do you know the story of Job, Mats?

Mats bursts out laughing.

MATS

Really? You're going to lead with that?

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

The priest looks a bit embarrassed.

PRIEST

I was a bit taken aback. And I realised I had underestimated him, like many of us do with those who are different to what we regard as 'normal'. For those of you who don't know the story of Job, let me give you a quick layman's summary. God and the devil get into an argument over faith. God says that his true followers will never surrender their faith. The devil challenges him and they pick a man called Job as an example to prove their respective points. God starts to take the things Job loves from him to test his faith. His wife. His children. His home. His hearing. His sight. Everything that was important to him. Job never wavers in his faith as he loses everything that he holds dear and God proves to the devil the strength of his believers' faith. You get the picture.

INT. THE STEEN HOME - DAY

Mats looks at the priest like he's an idiot.

MATS

I'm not Job. I have more than you could ever imagine. I've lost some things and I'll lose some more. But those are insignificant.

Mats stares straight at the priest, challenging him to try again.

PRIEST (V.O.)

His look told me so much more than his words and I realised he didn't need me to try and inject any meaning into his life.

MATS

Father, just one question before you go?

The priest nods at Mats.

MATS (CONT'D)

So, in order for God to prove his point to the devil, he destroyed this Job guy's life, yes?

The priest smiles at Mats and nods again.

MATS (CONT'D)

Once he'd won his pissing contest with the devil, did he give Job everything back?

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

The priest, looking a little sheepish, continues.

PRIEST

I would normally have said something along the lines of: 'His reward lay in the Kingdom of heaven'. But I knew Mats was playing with me. I grinned sheepishly and shook my head. Mats looked down, thought for a few seconds, then looked up towards me, smiling from ear to ear and said: 'Your god, what a bastard!'

A RIPPLE OF LAUGHTER spreads across the congregation.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

I don't know if that's what Mats really thought, whether he believed in God, or a god, or not. And I don't care. I'm a man of God and I'm proud of it. But I'm not half the man that Mats was. That's what counts. Robert, Trude, Mia. I'm honoured to have known your beautiful Mats. Today we will honour him. Today we will tell stories of him. And finally, today, we will mourn him. But first! About two years ago, Mats contacted me. I think he was always aware that he could slip away at any time and typical to his mischievous nature, he wanted to leave us all with a little surprise. A song to be played for everyone today. Robert and Trude don't know about this but I'm sure it will bring a smile to their faces. Please would everyone be standing...

On the balcony at the rear of the church, an organist begins to play the first notes of *'He ain't heavy, he's my brother'*. A YOUNG MAN in a choristers's cossack begins to SING in a beautiful, melodic voice.

YOUNG MAN

(singing)

'The road is long,
With many a winding turn,
That lead us to who knows where,
who knows...'

He stops abruptly.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Nah.

He suddenly pulls his cossack over his head to reveal a black heavy metal T-shirt and tattooed arms. He picks up the microphone, smiles and reaches out his arms to each side of the organ. The curtains swing back to reveal a drummer, two guitarists, a keyboardist, a DJ on turntables and a big speaker stack. FEEDBACK rings out across the church. The young man holds the microphone up to his lips.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen. For one
morning only!

He holds his hand to his heart, kisses his finger and motions up towards the heavens. The band breaks into Prodigy's 'Firestarter'. The congregation looks more than little surprised and ever so slightly shocked.

Robert looks at Trude and Mia and they start to laugh. Smiles start to break out in the congregation.

Trying to set everyone at ease, the priest begins to move in time with the music. Robert reaches out his hands to Trude and Mia and they start to dance. The congregation, seeing that the Steen's are getting into the spirit of things, relax and start to join in. Soon, most of the people in the church are swaying and dancing to the music. The priest smiles and nods at Robert and Trude. As the song comes to its conclusion, the mood in the church has changed completely.

Everyone takes their seats again as Robert makes his way to the lectern. Robert stands silently for a moment. Tears slowly run down his cheeks as he laughs and cries at the same time.

ROBERT
My God we haven't danced in a long time. Thank you, son. Maybe this was the final lesson you wanted to teach us. The last of many. So many. We will miss you, Mats. What you went through in your short, beautiful life should have been too much for anyone to bear. The light in that boy's eyes! He was magical. He just glowed. He'll continue to glow for me through his mother's eyes. Through Mia's eyes. And, I hope, through mine. There are many of you here who will wonder how myself and Trude coped with looking after Mats over the last 15 years. Let me tell you. It was the best. And the best times for me were Saturday afternoons. As many of you know, Mats was a big football fan. A Liverpool fan. All thanks to the evening we spent on the 25th of May 2005...

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mats (16) is sitting up in bed reading. There's a KNOCK on his door and then Robert enters. He smiles at Mats.

ROBERT
Champions League final starts in 15
minutes...

MATS
Umm... not sure, papa, I'm kind of
enjoying this book.

Robert gives a little disappointed smile.

ROBERT
Okay, up to you. I'll be watching
anyway, come through if you feel
like it.

Robert turns and leaves. Mats goes back to his book, thinks for a moment, closes the book and starts to clamber into his wheelchair.

INT. THE STEEN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mats and Robert are sitting on the couch watching the football as AC Milan score their third goal.

ROBERT
Not sure it's worth watching the
rest, Mats, what do you think?

MATS
I've got a feeling...

Robert laughs.

ROBERT
I've got a feeling too. 5-nil at
least!

Trude emerges from the kitchen with a big bowl of crisps. Mats look at the crisps and smiles.

MATS
Maybe we could give it a few more
minutes?

SUPER: 96 minutes later

Mats and Robert are both on the edge of their seats watching the end of the penalty shoot-out. They stare at the television in front of them.

TELEVISION COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

...what it means is that Andriy Shevchenko, who scored the decisive penalty in the shoot-out at Old Trafford two years ago which won the Champions League for Milan must score, he must score. The weight of the world on his shoulders. Will be no second chances if Shevchenko misses... He's saved it!

Mats and Robert go crazy as Jerzy Dudek saves the penalty for Liverpool, bouncing up and down on the couch and hugging each other.

TELEVISION COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

The European Cup is returning to England and to Anfield! Liverpool are champions of Europe again! The most extraordinary night of football has the most extraordinary finish!

ROBERT (V.O.)

One amazing football match that started crazy Saturday afternoons in the Steen household. Mats became a nut about everything Liverpool...

INT. STEEN LIVING ROOM - DAY

Robert is sitting on the couch watching the build-up to the football match.

ROBERT

(shouts)

Mats, it's about to start!

Mats (18) wheels himself into the living room wearing a pair of John Lennon type round glasses as if it were absolutely normal. Robert gives him a wry smile, then looks at Trude who rolls her eyes. Mia walks in from the kitchen and sees Mats.

MIA

Mats, what are you wearing?

Mats holds his fingers up in a peace sign.

MATS

Give peace a chance, little sister,
give peace a chance.

Mia looks at Mats like he's lost his mind, Robert laughs and Trude rolls her eyes again.

ROBERT (V.O.)

This was also the time Mats made, I think, the only demand I ever saw him make...

INT. STEEN LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mats (18) is sitting in his wheelchair in a Liverpool shirt, next to Robert, on the couch, waiting for the football match to start.

MATS

(shouts)

Mama!

Trude walks in from the kitchen and looks at him.

MATS (CONT'D)

To enhance our viewing, we'll need football snacks...

TRUDE

I'll bring the two of you some crisps.

MATS

No, football snacks.

Trude raises her eyebrows.

MATS (CONT'D)

Pies. Sausages. Fish fingers.
Chips. Baked beans.

Robert laughs and Trude rolls her eyes.

ROBERT (V.O.)

(with a smile)

So that is what we've had almost every Saturday afternoon for last 8 years.

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Robert looks down from the lectern to Trude.

ROBERT

If it's okay, my darling, I'd like to continue with that.

Trude rolls her eyes and laughs.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Now as you know, Trude is quiet, and private. And she's the strongest woman in the world. As a parent, you want your kids to grow up healthy and happy. She was only allowed one of those for Mats, and she made it her life to make it so. Sure, there were tears, but never in front of him. Make no mistake, Mats' approach to life was totally because of his mother. She didn't allow him to get down.

INT. STEEN HOME - DAY

A series of shots of Mats and Trude over the years:

Trude helps Mats (age 9) get dressed, tickling him as she does so. He squirms and giggles.

Trude pushes Mats (age 11) through a gallery in his wheelchair.

Trude sits on a park bench, alongside Mats (age 14) in his wheelchair, and they both lick ice creams.

Trude enters Mats' (age 17) room carrying a stack of books and puts them on his desk alongside him. She kisses his forehead and he smiles up at her.

ROBERT (V.O.)

Of course, she looked after him all the times he was ill. And, on the one and only time I have ever known Trude to get sick, Mats did his best to look after her.

INT. THE STEEN HOME - DAY

Trude is lying red and sweating in bed with flu. Her bedroom door starts to open slowly and she looks up. Mats is reversing his wheelchair into the bedroom. Once through the door, he turns his wheelchair around.

MATS

Thought you might be hungry...

Trude looks at the tray he has on his lap. It contains a plate with baked beans and toast on it. She rolls her eyes and starts to laugh. Mats starts laughing too.

MATS (CONT'D)

There, I knew that was just what you wanted!

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Robert continues with his eulogy, looking directly at Trude.

ROBERT

Mats knew and appreciated how much you did for him. He knew how much you loved him because it was all over your face for every second he spent with you. He was never in doubt that he was your shining star.

Trude wells up but blows Robert a kiss.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

As you all know, Mats was a little guy. But he was always Mia's big brother. She looked up to him and he doted on her.

Mia wipes a tear from her eye and Trude grabs her arm.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Know, Mia my love, how much your brother loved you, how proud of you he was and how much he enjoyed hearing about how well you were doing at school...

Mia manages a smile.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Yes, we know he used to do your homework for you...

Mia gives Robert a 'yes-you've-caught-me-out' look of resignation and the congregation CHUCKLES.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

...and that you paid him in sweets...

Mia shakes her head at first as she tries to deny it, then starts nodding her head. Robert smiles.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

It's going to be tough, my love,
but we'll get through this.

Robert stops and takes a few seconds to compose himself.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I could spend all day up here
telling you stories of Mats. Trying
to explain how much we loved him.
But I won't. There is a part of him
that is ours and only ours. We'll
keep that close, always, and never
let it go. But, as I've discovered
in the last few days, there is also
a part of him that we never knew.
How could Mats keep his optimism,
his joyfulness, his positivity, his
ability to always be there and care
for others instead of sinking into
bitterness with a feeling of
injustice and hopelessness? This is
a question we have asked ourselves
many times, especially during the
second phase of his life, the last
10 years that Mats didn't get to go
anywhere. The truth is, he went
everywhere. Before I elaborate on
this, I would like to share the one
great pain your mother and I
suffered throughout your life.

Robert looks down at Mats' coffin.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

That you, because of the illness we
brought you into this world with,
would never experience falling in
love. That you would never
experience friendship.

Robert looks over at the members of Starlight. He shakes his
head a little in disbelief and gives them a knowing smile.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

And that you would never experience
playing a meaningful role in other
people's lives. You proved us
wrong. You proved us so wrong and
you proved yourself so resourceful.

(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

When your illness limited your ability to get around, and we had run out of ideas, you created your own community in the digital world. I am convinced that few people, if any, outside of these communities have a true understanding of the strength and the depth of the relationships that are built between the people who meet there. It has only been in the last week that we have really begun to understand the full impact that this digital world had on Mats' life. He experienced his first teenage crush. And it became a love affair that lasted throughout the rest of his life.

Liesl shifts a little in her seat and Maggie grabs her hand in comfort.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

It seems that Mats may also have been a bit of a womaniser! I must admit, as his father, I'm a little proud!

The congregation LAUGHS and Trude rolls her eyes and smiles.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

In this role-playing world, Mats was a major contributor and co-author of a fantastic community called Starlight. He built friendships and relationships with people all over Europe without leaving his apartment. He touched so many hearts, in so many different places around the world. There are some people here today who none of you will ever have seen or met before. We, in fact, met them only yesterday for the first time. Mats' friends from Starlight, Liesl from The Netherlands, Hans from Germany, Maggie from England, Jesper from Denmark and Sisko from Finland. They have travelled here to Norway to say goodbye to Mats. They knew a Mats we never knew, and to discover that is amazing. To know that boy was loved and admired by people all over the world.

(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

To the members of Starlight, we are honoured to have you here with us today. It's a sad day, but finding out about a side of Mats we never knew... I think you and your community helped give Mats the life that the physical world denied him. Thank you so much. Damn, that boy lived! To everyone who has joined us today to say goodbye to Mats, myself, Trude and Mia say a heartfelt thank you. Finally, Hans, the leader of Starlight, has asked if he could say a few words in tribute to Mats. Hans, we'd be delighted...

Robert bows his head, leaves the stage and takes his place in the front row with Trude and Mia.

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Hans gets up from his seat and walks towards the stage. His skull belt buckle protrudes slightly from the opening in his jacket. Hans takes up a position in front of the lectern. He fumbles in his jacket pocket, pulls out his notes and rests them on the lectern. He draws in his breath for a second, then looks up with a warm smile on his face and begins to speak.

HANS

While we are gathered here today...

INT. A SCHOOL CLASSROOM, THE HAQUE - DAY

In front of her watching class, a female teacher puts a candle down on her desk and lights it.

HANS (V.O.)

...a candle is being lit for Mats
in a classroom in the Netherlands.

INT. A CALL CENTRE, DUBLIN - DAY

A male telephone operator, wearing a headset is conducting a call with a customer. In front of him, a small candle burns on his desk.

HANS (V.O.)

A candle burns in a call centre in
Ireland.

INT. GOTHENBURG LIBRARY - DAY

In the corner of a quiet library, a librarian is packing books into shelves. At a reading table next to her, a candle burns.

HANS (V.O.)

In a library in Sweden there is a candle lit.

EXT. A NAIL SALON, HELSINKI - DAY

A candle burns in the window of the salon.

HANS (V.O.)

He is remembered in a little beauty parlour in Finland...

EXT. COPENHAGEN MAYOR'S OFFICES - DAY

3 stories up on the big grey building, a candle burns at a window.

HANS (V.O.)

...a municipal office in Denmark...

EXT. A TATTOO PARLOUR, MANCHESTER - DAY

A bearded, heavily tattooed man lights a candle and puts it in his shop window.

HANS (V.O.)

...and in England.

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Hans shakes his head in wonder.

HANS (V.O.)

All over Europe, Mats is remembered by many more than those who had the opportunity to come here today. I met Mats in a world where it doesn't matter a bit what kind of body you have, or how you look in reality. My name is Hans Slimbeck, and I'm the leader of a group called Starlight.

(MORE)

HANS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We are part of the worldwide community of online gamers, on a game called World of Warcraft. I know, we're nerds.

A little ripple of LAUGHTER spreads across the church. Hans nods, laughing.

HANS

We are! But for us it's fun. It's a chance to live another, completely different, life from our normal lives. Many of us have been playing online for years. We use different names and we exist in our fantasy world as much as we do in this one. And Mats was our friend. A good friend. A close friend. Very much loved by everyone in Starlight. We chatted almost every day. We shared time in a fantasy land called Azeroth. And as we all became closer, we shared time in the real world as well. A few years ago, we came to know what Mats was facing, but we didn't always know...

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Liesl is sitting on her bed reading when her computer begins to buzz. She jumps from her bed and sees the incoming call box on her screen. She clicks on the box.

LIESL

Hi, Hans.

HANS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Hi Liesl. I've tried to get in touch with Mats, so he could join this call, but he's not answering. I didn't want to wait until tomorrow to give you our answer...

LIESL

(sounds a bit anxious)

Okay?

HANS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Welcome to Starlight!

Liesl jumps in her chair.

LIESL

Really? That's awesome. Thank you,
thank you, thank you!

HANS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

It was an easy decision, to be
honest. We're looking forward to
having you with us.

LIESL

I'm so happy! Is it okay if I jump
off and try to contact Mats with
the news?

HANS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Of course. Congratulations, we're
lucky to have you.

LIESL

Thanks Hans, catch you all
tomorrow.

Liesl disconnects the call and immediately tries to call
Mats. It just rings without being answered.

EXT. THE STEEN HOME - NIGHT

An ambulance with flashing lights is parked in the driveway.
The front door of the house is opened and two medics wheel
Mats out on a stretcher. He's conscious and has an oxygen
mask on. Robert, Trude and Mia walk alongside the stretcher
as it's lifted into the ambulance. Trude gets into the
ambulance, sits next to Mats and holds his hand.

A text message appears over the picture: *Mats, are you there?*
I'm in!

EXT. OSLO HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The ambulance pulls into the emergency admissions entrance of
the hospital. The medics jump out and open the rear doors of
the ambulance. Trude gets out first and then the stretcher
with Mats on is lifted out by the medics. They quickly wheel
it through the hospital doors.

A text message appears over the picture: *Earth calling Mats!*
Check your messages!

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sitting at her desk, Liesl takes a final look at her screen then switches the computer to sleep mode. She gets into bed, tucking her covers tightly around herself. She allows herself a happy smile, then closes her eyes.

INT. OSLO HOSPITAL - DAY

Robert and Trude are at Mats's bedside when he comes around. He is hooked up to a ventilator and looks disoriented. Robert grabs his hand and Trude strokes his hair.

A text message appears over the picture: *Dude, where are you?*

INT. OSLO HOSPITAL - DAY

Mats is sitting up in bed when Trude and Mia enter his room. Trude lights up when she sees how much he's improved.

A text message appears over the picture: *Dude, it's been almost two weeks! Did I do something? Are you okay? XX*

INT. OSLO HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Mats is in the physiotherapy gym, being given a back treatment by a physiotherapist. He manages to pull himself up a little with his arms. The physiotherapist smiles and congratulates him.

A text message appears over the picture: *I'm worried. I can see you haven't read any of these messages.*

INT. OSLO HOSPITAL - DAY

The doctor is in Mats' room, giving him an examination. He taps Mats' chest and listens through the stethoscope. He turns to smile at Robert and Trude and nods at them. They look relieved and happy. Mats smiles at them.

A text message appears over the picture: *Mats, please answer me.*

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mats turns on his computer and sees that he had over 100 missed messages. He begins to type.

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Liesl is checking her email when a message appears on her screen from Mats. It reads: *Sorry. Long story. Can we chat now?*

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Hans continues with his eulogy for Mats.

HANS

Of course, when Mats told us about his illness, we were shocked. We had not suspected it for a second. He had never even hinted at it before. But he was family, and family look after their own.

Hans gets a lump in his throat and stops for a moment to gather himself.

HANS (CONT'D)

And, so, we just got on with life in Azeroth. And we spent a lot of time with Mats in what he referred to as World 1.0. We all became closer because of Mats. We realised that life was fragile. That we shouldn't take each other, anything in fact, for granted.

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mats is having a video call with Hans, who is on Mats' screen.

MATS

There are lots of places, man! I'll probably never leave Norway, but I have a list...

HANS

Germany's not on it, is it!?

MATS

(hesitating)

Um...

HANS

(smiling)

Don't worry, I understand, we're not the sexiest country in the world. The history is dark, man, and it's embarrassing for us to think of our grandparents and neighbours. It was evil. But it's now so far away from the Germany in history books. Berlin is the best city in the world. It's just so supercool...

MATS

I can believe that... I think you may be the coolest guy I know!

HANS

Jeez, I can see you don't get out much! Sorry...

MATS

(laughing)

True!

HANS

I wish, Mats. I was cool once, for about 10 minutes. I was a fashion photographer in the late eighties. But to stay ahead in fashion, you have to be current all the time. I grew up, maybe not completely, but I started to think it was all a bit silly. And I might have said so to some editors! The work dried up very quickly and so I found a niche in doing fantasy photography. Hot girls for sad, lonely old men. It's more fun, honestly, no one's pretending to be anything they're not. It does walk a morally questionable line though, but it's what the market wants, and I need to make a living.

MATS

Fantasy photography? I've never heard of such a thing...

HANS

Specialist magazines mainly. Think of the type of magazine a Dungeons and Dragons fan would have at the side of his bed!

MATS
(laughs)
Okay, I'm getting a picture.

HANS
Give me a second...

A file appears in Mats' message box.

HANS (CONT'D)
Have a look. Just don't tell Maggie
I sent these to you! She really
doesn't approve.

Mats opens the file. There are 6 pictures of female models in various stages of undress, adorned in fantasy outfits against a painted backdrop. Amongst them is the topless model being surprised with a spray of cold water.

MATS
Shit! I want your job...

HANS
Make it to Berlin one day and I'll
give you a job as my assistant for
the day.

MATS
Maybe Germany is not so bad!

INT. SISKO'S APARTMENT, HELSINKI - NIGHT

Sisko is in front of her computer. She calls Mats on video chat. Mats answers immediately and appears on Sisko's screen. He is curled up in his wheelchair, wearing a headset.

MATS
Sisko!

SISKO
Hi Mats, I hoped you were there. I
need some advice...

MATS
(smiling)
If it's about Azeroth, I'm your
man. Anything else, well...

SISKO
No outside world experience
required, it's kind of an ethical
question.

MATS

Okay, happy to give you the benefit of my extreme wisdom!

They both laugh.

SISKO

You know that I've just finished my exams, and well, I got the marks I was hoping for.

Mats fumbles a thumbs-up sign to the camera. Sisko smiles.

SISKO (CONT'D)

And I've just found out that I got a bursary to study at my first choice university.

MATS

Sisko, that's fantastic!

SISKO

But, it means moving away. I could go to the university that's close, and still live at home, but it doesn't have the course I want. I really want to move and study this course, but if I do, I'm not sure my mum will cope. If I'm not here to cook for her, the only things that'll go down her throat are wine and vodka.

Mats thinks for a minute, then smiles softly.

MATS

What advice would your mother give you if she was sober?

SISKO

I don't know, Mats. I don't really know what she's like sober...

Mats looks a little sad.

MATS

You're 18 years old, Sis. This is an important decision, but it's your decision to make, not a bottle of vodka's. Do what's right for your future, not your mum's addiction.

Sisko nods.

MATS (CONT'D)

Now of course I don't have the emotions attached to this that you do, but this I think is the logical answer. And keep your fingers crossed that having to look after herself is the wake-up call your mum needs. Maybe this is what's best for her too?

Sisko allows herself a smile.

SISKO

Thanks Mats, you said what I hoped you'd say. I just needed a more objective view.

MATS

I'm always here, if you need to talk.

SISKO

I know, thanks.

MATS

I mean it, I really am always here. Yes, that's a self-deprecating handicapped joke!

Sisko laughs and then looks earnest.

SISKO

The thing you always do, Mats, is make us all realise that the problems we have are all relative.

MATS

Sisko, I really mean it when I say don't feel sorry for me. I have a great life. Fantastic parents. An awesome sister. Amazing friends and the most fun I can imagine. I feel lucky to be alive.

Sisko smiles a cheeky smile.

SISKO

And Liesl!

Mats blushes.

MATS

Yes, there is that. Which reminds me - Jesper - yes, no?

Sisko grins.

SISKO

Mmm. Maybe? Yes? I'm not sure. I really like him, but he can be a bit cold sometimes.

Mats nods to himself.

MATS

He's shy and he gets awkward around you. It's obvious why.

SISKO

You think?

MATS

~~This never-leave-the-house-never-had-a-girlfriend-spends-his-life-on-the-internet-while-sitting-in-a-wheelchair-guy~~ knows!

Sisko has a mischievous smile on her face.

SISKO

Never-had-a-girlfriend? Really?!

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Liesl is sitting in front of her computer wearing her headset.

LIESL

So, I've thought about this...

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mats is sitting in his wheelchair in front of his computer with his headset on.

MATS

Okay...

INTERCUT--CONVERSATION BETWEEN LIESL AND MATS

LIESL

I'd want to make a good first impression, so I'd spend some time finding the right outfit.

MATS

Mmm.

LIESL

Something stylish, not too trendy.
A little bit sexy, but not so much
that I look desperate. Maybe a long
skirt with boots. A little make up.
We'd go for dinner, then drinks
afterwards. Somewhere quiet so we
can talk.

Mats is quiet.

LIESL (CONT'D)

Still there?

MATS

Mmm.

LIESL

Okay, you go...

MATS

Jeans and a leather jacket. Biker
boots. A bit of stubble - I haven't
shaved for 3 days because I'm
supercool - hair in a ponytail,
rings on my fingers and wearing
earrings...

Liesl starts laughing.

MATS (CONT'D)

That's funny?

LIESL

Mats, you've just described Hans.
And Hans you are not.

Mats is completely quiet.

LIESL (CONT'D)

Dude, that's a good thing. If I
wanted to go on a date with Hans, I
wouldn't be having this
conversation with you, Mats Steen.

MATS

(sounding down)

You're probably more likely to
really go on a date with him..

LIESL

Mats, stop now. This is our date we're planning. You just don't get it, do you?

MATS

Get what?

LIESL

I love you, Mats, YOU! I don't give a fuck about Hans with his slicked back hair and his eighties earrings. And especially not his dodgy soft porn photos...

MATS

You know about that?

LIESL

Of course. I always google people. Not hard to find. But back to you...

MATS

Liesl, I'm in a wheelchair. And when I'm not in my wheelchair, I'm in bed connected to an oxygen tank. This date is never going to happen.

LIESL

(getting upset)

Don't say that. Don't say that. I believe it will happen. If I have to carry you up a flight of stairs and into a restaurant, I will. I'll fucking feed you myself if I have to. And I'll carry you back down. Don't you dare take away my dreams. I will see you, Mats Steen, and I will hug and kiss you like crazy. Don't you dare say otherwise...

Mats sits contemplating what Liesl has just said. The look of sadness on his face slowly turns to a gentle smile.

MATS

Okay, maybe.

LIESL

(exasperated but with regained humour)

Mats, I'm going to beat you!

END INTERCUT

INT. A TAVERN IN AZEROTH - DAY

Ibelin is sitting quietly at a table with a tankard of mead. He's a striking presence--tall, powerful and handsome. He looks up and smiles as he sees Cas standing next to him.

CAS
Some company?

IBELIN
Of course, sit down with me.

Cas takes a seat on the other side of the table.

CAS
Everything okay?

IBELIN
As good as can be...

A drunk DWARF stumble over to the table.

DWARF
I'll fight ye, ye big softie!

Ibelin looks at him and smiles.

IBELIN
Thanks for the offer but I'm kind of busy at the moment.

DWARF
Soft, I says. Like a big...

Cas turns to the dwarf and flicks her hand towards him, showering him with the particles of light from a spell.

CAS
Oh, just fuck off.

The dwarf turns to stone.

Ibelin laughs.

CAS (CONT'D)
Can't all be niceties. I am a witch after all. Now, back to you. Doesn't sound like you're full of the joys of Azeroth...

Ibelin has shrunk a little in his seat. He's physically smaller and looks less magnificent.

IBELIN

Just tired.

CAS

Come on, that's not going to wash with me. You do know that I'm also a... what's the Azerothian term... a mind reacher. I'm good at casting spells Ibs, but I'm also pretty proficient at undoing them.

Ibelin now looks even smaller. His golden hair looks less shiny and he's no longer sitting properly upright.

IBELIN

I'm a fraud, Cas. Everyone sees me as this strong, fearless warrior.

(starts to mimic voices)

'Ibelin will save us.' 'Call Ibelin, he'll know what to do.' But it's so far from who I really am. Which is really...

Ibelin has now become Mats, a 20-year old young man with Duchenne. He is crumpled up in the seat, his head slumped to the side. He looks absolutely miserable and he has lost every single bit of the sparkle of Ibelin.

Cas smiles softly. She reaches out her hand and grabs Mats' hand across the table.

CAS

Mats, Mats, Mats. I know you. We all do. You've let us in. And that took real bravery. But, let me tell you what I see. I see someone braver than I could ever be. The challenges you face are bigger than skies of angry dragons, Mats. You're a friend, but you're certainly not a normal friend. In Azeroth, Ibelin is a hero. But he is nothing, nothing, compared to the hero Mats is. I know you don't have much time for religion, and neither do I, but maybe you have your life because you're one of the few with the strength to handle it. You might not feel like Ibelin when you're not in Azeroth, but you are him in so many ways.

Mats has started to turn back into Ibelin. He's taller than a few seconds ago, his hair is starting to shine again and he is sitting up straighter and prouder. He listens intently to Cas.

CAS (CONT'D)

I like Ibelin. He's strong and handsome and good fun. But I love Mats. Mats is my reminder that there's beauty in the world. That in spite of everything wrong with it--racism, sexism, homophobia, war, poverty, greed, whatever--things can be beautiful and perfect. You are more than should be possible, Mats, in so many ways.

Mats is now back to being 100% Ibelin and he looks confident and happy.

IBELIN

Thanks Maggie, I've been spending too much time in my own head. Sorry for the downer.

CAS

Never. If you need to chat, I'm always here.

Cas looks at the stone-frozen dwarf next to them.

CAS (CONT'D)

What do you reckon?

Ibelin gives Cas an extremely mischievous grin.

INT. A BEDROOM, AZEROTH - NIGHT

The dwarf's eyes are wide and crazed as he turns back from stone and continues his aggressive challenge to Ibelin.

DWARF

...soft, girly-boy ready to get the punishment he deserves!

But the dwarf is no longer standing in front of Ibelin and Cas. He is in a big bed in a strange, dark room. He looks around the room, confused. A hand, big and brutish, suddenly slips out from under the covers next to him and scratches an ear on the head on the pillow next to the dwarf. The stranger in the bed lets out a GRUNT and starts to SNORE.

The dwarf freezes, trying not to make a sound or movement. He slowly opens the blanket covering him and peers in to see to what he's wearing. His eyes widen in horror.

INT. JESPER'S FLAT - NIGHT

Jesper is sitting in front of his computer monitor with a chess programme open.

JESPER

(speaks softly, pretending
he's a serious
commentator)

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the first session in this world championship final. From Copenhagen, current reigning and undefeated world champion, Jesper Lund is the firm favourite. Devastating good looks. The mind of a mathematical genius. And the killer instinct of a great white shark.

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Sounds true.

JESPER

His challenger. From some other country. Mats something. Wins: zero. Expected wins: zero. He's a no-hoper, ladies and gentlemen. Let the chess begin.

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Chess?

JESPER

Jesus, Mats, you have played before haven't you?

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

Of course, kidding. Just one question: how does the horse move again?

Jesper lets out a loud CACKLE.

JESPER

Like a lamb to the slaughter!

INT. JESPER'S FLAT - NIGHT

Jesper stares at his computer screen in shock, his mouth wide open.

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
 (mimicking a commentator)
 The boy wonder, Jesper Lund, stares at the screen, scarcely comprehending his humiliating defeat at the hands and mind of the nobody from Norlandia. Should he have listened to the voice in his head that told him to move his rook? Should he have taken that pawn when he had the chance? Questions that will keep him awake at night. But questions that will have to wait. For now, it's time to redeem himself. Game two.

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Liesl is sitting in front of her computer. She dials Mats on video call.

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mats answers Liesl's call.

INTERCUT--VIDEO CALL CONVERSATION BETWEEN LIESL AND MATS

LIESL
 Right, I've sent you some lyrics.

MATS
 For what?

LIESL
 We're doing a duet.

MATS
 A what?

LIESL
 A duet. A song with two vocal leads, usually male and fema...

MATS

I know what it is, but it's going to sound like an angel sparring with a bull-frog!

LIESL

Whatever, we're doing it.

MATS

It's not Endless Love, is it?

LIESL

Much cooler than that. Give the song a listen, I'll give you half and hour...

Liesl disconnects the call.

INT. JESPER'S FLAT - NIGHT

Jesper sits in front of his computer screen playing a game of chess with Mats. He really doesn't look like he's enjoying himself.

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

(full of sarcasm)

He ponders his move for a few seconds. What would Kasparov do? What would Fisher do? He runs the moves over and over in his head. No, not the St. Petersburg Strangle. No, forget the Cincinnati Tunnel. Maybe the Oslo Wheelchair? And with a cool confidence coursing through his veins, he moves his Queen to King's Rook 2.

Jesper slowly bends his neck and puts his head on the desk in front of him. He SIGHS.

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET) (CONT'D)

What do you call that again, Jesper? Ah, yes, check-my-mate.

JESPER

You fucking dick. And don't you dare tell me...

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)

(laughing)

Little old me: one hundred and fifty one.

(MORE)

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET) (CONT'D)
 The young George Clooney of
 Copenhagen: yet to trouble the
 scoreboard.

Jesper lifts his head up from the desk laughing.

JESPER
 You got me dude.

MATS (V.O. OVER HEADSET)
 I thought maybe after the
 seventieth game or so that you'd
 realise that I can play chess.

JESPER
 Or have I been playing to give you
 a false sense of security?
 (begins to speak like a
 commentator again)
 ...as we reach this, the final to
 end all finals...welcome to the
 2014 chess championship of the
 known universe where the winner
 takes all! Young Mats-thingy once
 again arrives as the underdog...

Mats and Jesper both crack up at the ridiculousness of the
 notion that Jesper still thinks he can beat Mats.

INT. MATS BEDROOM / LIESL'S APARTMENT - SPLIT-SCREEN - NIGHT

Mats and Liesl sing The Jesus and Mary Chain's 'Sometimes
 Always'. Liesl's voice is beautiful and tuneful. Mats' is
 gruff and out of key. But somehow the combination works.

When it gets to the guitar solo, Liesl gets up from her desk
 and starts dancing.

Mats starts to bop in his wheelchair.

Once the song is finished, Liesl sits back down at her desk,
 a little breathless and red from dancing around. Mats is
 smiling brightly.

Liesl winks at him.

LIESL
 See! How good was that?

Mats starts laughing.

MATS

Did you really just wink at me?!
Dude, cheesy!

Liesl smiles naughtily.

LIESL

Okay then, how about this...

Liesl blows Mats a kiss, slowly, so that it seems like it's in slow motion.

Mats goes a little red, loving the attention.

LIESL (CONT'D)

One day, Mats. One day you'll get that for real.

END SPLIT-SCREEN.

EXT. LIVERPOOL JOHN LENNON AIRPORT - DAY

A KLM plane descends over green fields and sparsely located residential housing.

HANS (V.O)

A few months ago, after spending almost a decade together in the online world, we decided to get together for the first time face-to-face. Of course, we knew that Mats wouldn't be able to join us, so we thought that allowing him to choose the venue might make up a little bit for that.

The plane comes in to land on the runway, brakes screeching at it touches down. It turns off the runway and heads in the direction of the airport terminal.

INT. JOHN LENNON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, LIVERPOOL - DAY

Maggie is standing in the arrivals area of the airport terminal, watching passengers emerge through the doors.

HANS (V.O.)

He chose somewhere he'd always wanted to go, and we were determined that even if he couldn't physically join us, we would give him a trip to remember...

A warm smile crosses her face as she spots Liesl, with a rucksack on her back, pulling her suitcase. Liesl sees Maggie and the two of them walk quickly towards each other.

LIESL

Maggie!

MAGGIE

Hello, my darling, so nice to finally meet after all these years.

LIESL

I know! This is very exciting. I'm so looking forward to spending time with everyone.

MAGGIE

You're the last to arrive, they're all back at the hotel waiting for us.

LIESL

Great. And thank you so much for picking me up...

MAGGIE

My pleasure. Now let's get to the car and get going, we've got lots to see and do!

INT. ADELPHI HOTEL, LIVERPOOL - DAY

Liesl finishes up her check-in at the hotel reception desk and turns to Maggie.

LIESL

Should I drop off my bags in my room?

MAGGIE

Yes, do that, then come back down and meet us all in the café...

Maggie points to the hotel café on the other side of the hotel lobby

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Everyone is dying to see you!

LIESL

Okay, won't be long.

Liesl rushes off to the lift, pulling her suitcase after her.

INT. MATS BEDROOM - DAY

Mats is sitting in front of his computer when a video call comes in from Liesl. He answers it. Liesl is walking towards the hotel café.

MATS
Did you make it?

LIESL
Oh yes. I'm about to meet everyone.
I'm going to have you on video if
that's okay, so you can be a part
of it...

MATS
Cool!

Liesl holds up her mobile as she enters the hotel cafe, so that Mats can see everything. On his screen, he can see four people in the distance rise from their table and start to walk quickly towards Liesl. There are SHRIEKS of delight from everyone and then the only view Mats can see is the café ceiling. His friends speak in hushed, whispered tones and he can't make out anything.

MATS (CONT'D)
Hello! I'm here...

No answer comes for a few seconds, then the mobile is suddenly picked up with a hand over the lens.

HANS (O.C.)
One, two...

The hand comes off the lens and Hans, Jesper, Sisko and Maggie are standing in a row. They are all wearing matching t-shirts, and the wording spells out: WELCOME TO LIVERPOOL MATS. Liesl turns her mobile around to reveal the front of her t-shirt. It is covered in lipstick kisses.

Mats breaks into a massive smile.

LIESL
We so wish you were here, Mats! So,
we're going to act like you are and
take us with you everywhere.

MATS
Guys, I don't know what to say,
this is awesome, thank you.

EXT. ADELPHI HOTEL - DAY

Hans is shepherding everyone into a small minibus outside the hotel. Liesl gets in the front and she has Mats on video call on her mobile. Hans gets into the driver's seat. He looks at Liesl's mobile.

HANS

Now where we are, guys, is a very special place. And every special place has its own soundtrack.

He turns on the car and starts to fiddle with the CD player.

HANS (CONT'D)

(pretending he's a DJ)

Ladies and gentlemen, hang onto your hair, it's time, yes it's time, for...

He pushes play on the CD player.

The Beatles *'Magical Mystery Tour'* starts to blare out.

Everyone on the bus breaks into huge smiles and they start to move to the music. Mats can be seen dancing in his wheelchair on the mobile screen.

Hans puts the minibus into gear and begins to drive.

EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS ACROSS LIVERPOOL - DAY

A series of scenes of the members of Starlight exploring Liverpool, with Mats their constant companion via video on Liesl's mobile.

- 1) They walk past St. George's Hall and the Walker Art gallery.
- 2) They climb the steps of the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral.
- 3) They wander through Birkenhead Park.
- 4) They pose alongside the Penny Lane street sign, stand looking at the red gates of Strawberry Field, stand alongside the bronze statue of John Lennon outside the Cavern Club and drop money in the guitar case of a Beatles tribute band busking on a street corner.
- 5) They wander around Albert Docks and drink beer in an outside beer garden on the quayside.

6) They take a group photograph in Pier Head with the Liver Birds, on top of the Royal Liver Building, high above them in the background.

EXT. ADELPHI HOTEL - DAY

Hans drives the minibus up to the hotel entrance and everyone gets out. Liesl walks off slightly from the group so she can speak privately to Mats.

LIESL

Hope that was fun for you?

MATS

Awesome, just awesome! Thank you so much.

LIESL

We're not done dude! A quick shower, then we're going out for dinner. Watching us eat may not be too exciting for you, but be ready in 3 hours...

MATS

For what?

LIESL

You'll see.

INT. MATS BEDROOM

A video call from Liesl appears in Mats computer and he answers it. LOUD MUSIC blares out and he sees the Starlight gang are in a nightclub. They're all a little tipsy.

LIESL

(shouting)

Are you ready?

MATS

I guess.

Liesl starts walking through the crowd.

LIESL

Wait a second...

Mats watches as Liesl moves past people and makes her way to the centre of the dancefloor.

LIESL (CONT'D)

Right, Mats Steen, may I have this dance?

Mats is laughing.

MATS

Yes, you may.

Liesl starts to move backwards and forwards in time with the music, holding her phone up to face her, careful not to move too energetically so that Mats can't see what's going on. She gets some puzzled looks from the people around her. Something catches her eye on the other side of the dancefloor and she smiles at Mats.

LIESL

Wanna see something cool?

MATS

Cooler than dancing with you in Liverpool?

Liesl holds up her mobile. In the background, Jesper and Sisko are in an embrace kissing each other.

MATS (CONT'D)

Fantastic!

LIESL

I know, right? I'm a little jealous though... wish you were here.

MATS

You know what, I feel like I am.

Liesl holds up the mobile to her lips and gives it a kiss.

INT. THE MINIBUS - DAY

Hans is driving through Liverpool with the rest of Starlight in the minibus.

HANS

Two minutes away...

Liesl dials Mats. It gets answered and Mats appears on her screen.

LIESL

So we saved the best for today...

MATS

Dude, how are you going to top yesterday?

LIESL

This is how...

Liesl holds up the mobile to show the view down the street. Slowly the gates of Anfield Football Stadium come into focus.

LIESL (CONT'D)

Mats Steen, we would be honoured if you would accompany us on a tour of Liverpool Football Club.

Mats is beaming.

MATS

Oh my god, yes!

Everyone in the minibus begins to clap and cheer.

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Hans stops talking briefly and allows himself a smile before continuing.

HANS

He was happier than anyone I've ever seen. The crazy thing is that Mats wasn't sad that he couldn't go on the trip, he was excited that we could. That was only a couple of weeks ago. Once we were all home, we went back to our online lives as normal. And when Mats was offline for a couple of days last week, well, we had come to expect that.

(Hans' voice shakes a little with emotion and he pauses and gathers himself)

Not for a second did we think...

INT. AN OFFICE BUILDING, OSLO - DAY

In a meeting room, Robert is standing in front of a group of men and women in suits, presenting financial information on a large monitor. There's a KNOCK on the door and a YOUNG WOMAN comes into the room. She looks at Robert.

YOUNG WOMAN

Robert, Trude called. She said you
need to go now.

The colour rushes from Robert's face. He leaves everything behind, grabs his jacket and heads out of the door. The news has taken everyone in the room by surprise and they sit in shocked silence.

INT. THE HOSPITAL, OSLO - DAY

Robert races through the front doors of the hospital, past reception and heads to the lifts. He sees that all the lifts are high up and runs to the stairwell. He runs up four flights of stairs and emerges, panting, on the fourth floor at the end of a corridor. He begins to walk swiftly along the corridor. As he should be getting closer to his destination, the corridor stretches out even longer. He breaks into a jog. Again, the corridor gets even longer. He picks up his pace, trying to outrun the lengthening corridor, but it just keeps getting longer.

He starts to run as fast as he possibly can. At the end of the corridor, a door opens and a nurse emerges from a room. She holds her arm out. Trude and Mia walk out of Mats' room, heads bowed and broken. Robert slows to a stop as the corridor resumes its normal length. He is almost at the door. Trude looks at him with a look he understands.

INT. THE STEEN HOME - NIGHT

It is DEAD QUIET in the house. At the end of a hallway, a light is switched off. Robert emerges from a doorway and walks down the dark hallway. He approaches a room with a light on and looks inside. Trude is asleep on top of the bed, fully-clothed. He goes over and pulls the duvet over her. She doesn't stir. Robert leaves the bedroom, and switches the light off as he exits.

He walks further down the corridor, stopping to switch on a light at the top of a flight of stairs. There's a stair-lift mounted to the bannister. He stops and looks at it for a second. Robert walks down the stairs and reaches Mats' bedroom door. He stands still for few seconds, takes a deep breath and opens the door. The light from the stairs dimly lights the room, but not enough to make any of its contents visible.

Robert walks up to a desk with a computer and monitor on it. He switches it on and the screen lights up as it begins to boot up.

He looks around the room at floor level until he locates a stool. He pulls it over to the desk and sits down on it. He takes a deep breath and begins to type.

HANS (V.O.)

The message from Robert came as a real shock to us all.

On-screen, we see the message Robert is typing:

Our beloved son, brother and best friend left us this night.

Robert sits typing for a few minutes and then sends the message. He gets up, absent-mindedly forgetting to switch off the computer, leaves the room and closes the door.

A few seconds later, a message notification pops up on the screen. A second follows a few moments after. Then another. Then another.

INT. HANS' APARTMENT, BERLIN - NIGHT

Hans is sitting in front of his laptop when the message from Robert comes through. He immediately picks up his mobile phone and dials a number. It's answered almost immediately.

HANS

Maggie, I...

MAGGIE (V.O.)

(voice breaking)

I've just read it, Hans. That poor boy. His poor family. It's heartbreaking.

HANS

Liesl?

MAGGIE (V.O.)

Oh god. Let me try and get in touch with her. Better that she hears it from one of us than reads it in a forum. Will you call Jesper and Sisko?

HANS

Of course.

INT. LIESL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The mobile phone on Liesl's desk rings and flashes for 10 seconds then goes to her answer service.

Liesl is sitting up in bed with her knees up and her arms around her knees, sobbing. Her cat, sensing her sadness, rubs itself up against her. She scoops it up and gives it a big cuddle.

INT. THE STEEN HOME - DAY

Robert enters Mats' bedroom and sits down at the desk. He taps the keyboard and the computer wakes up. His eyes widen and he stares at a screen full of message notifications.

HANS (V.O.)

From what Robert told me, there were over 300 messages by the morning. And the news just kept spreading...

INT. A SMALL PUB IN AZEROTH - DAY

A TOWN CRIER sits alone at a small table, drinking from a flagon of beer. A young boy enters the tavern, walks up to the town crier and hands him a scroll.

The town crier unravels the scroll and reads it. A solemn look comes over his face. He leaves what remains of his beer on the table and walks out the tavern door.

EXT. A VILLAGE IN AZEROTH - DAY

The town crier walks across the street from the tavern, RINGING A BELL as he walks. Townsfolk, alerted by the sound of the bell, begin to walk behind him. He reaches the front of the town hall and steps up onto a raised area. The assembled townsfolk all look at him in anticipation as a hushed silence descends on the crowd. He unravels the scroll and begins to speak.

TOWN CRIER

(loudly)

Hear ye! Hear ye! Lay down your swords, your clubs and your axes. Cork your potions and pocket your spells. Stop the rivers. And open the skies. For today, in the land of mortals, a warrior has fallen.

(he pauses for a second)

All hail Ibelin of Starlight!

The shock of the announcement spreads across the crowd. The townsfolk look surprised and suddenly deflated.

A beautiful young maiden reaches out her hand to a goblin. Two old, bearded wizards hug each other. A large orc lets out a roar.

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Standing at the lectern, Hans looks over at Robert, Trude and Mia.

HANS

The members of Starlight decided that we wanted to come and say goodbye to Mats in person, and I'd like to thank Trude, Mia and Robert for allowing us, a group of people you didn't know existed until a few days ago, to be here today. The welcome and the embrace you have given us, in a time of great sorrow for you...

Hans looks towards the Steen family and smiles at them.

HANS (CONT'D)

...well, there's so much of Mats in all of you. Robert and Trude have lost their son, Mia has lost her brother, and at Starlight, we have lost our dearly loved friend. I think we've just found our real Starlight. Mats, we love you, we'll miss you, and we know that, maybe as it was always meant to be, you'll show us the way.

As Hans finishes, tears run down his face. He walks back towards his seat and as he passes the Steen family, Robert stands up and grabs him in an embrace. The two men stand holding each other silently for a few seconds.

Trude turns to Liesl, hugs her and whispers in her ear. Liesl nods then holds her arms out to Mia and they hug. Behind them, Maggie, Jesper and Sisko put their arms around each other, overcome with emotion.

The priest walks back up behind the lectern.

PRIEST

Beautiful words from Hans for a beautiful soul. Mats, on behalf of everyone here today, I thank you.

(MORE)

PRIEST (CONT'D)

For the lives you touched and changed forever, we wish you peace until the end of time. I would ask you all to stand as we prepare to commit Mats to his eternal rest. Please join us as we walk the short journey behind his coffin to the cemetery.

INT. MATS' BEDROOM - DAY

Mats (24) is sitting in his wheelchair at his desk. He looks thoughtful as he types.

MATS (V.O.)

Have you ever tried breathing into a plastic bag? If you have, you might agree that it's not exactly comfortable. The air is trapped, you struggle and then panic kicks in and you hyperventilate. Finally, you get the bag off and you can once more breathe freely. Now, you may ask why on earth this guy opens his first blog by writing about plastic bags! I was born with a muscular disease known as Duchennes Muscular Dystrophy. It slowly reduces my muscles, making me gradually weaker. I could walk once, but now I depend on a wheelchair. I can of course talk and live a relatively active life, but still, my body is starting to feel more and more like a prison, holding me back. There, good, we got that out of the way.

A SERIES OF SHOTS OF MATS, IN HIS ROOM, WRITING HIS BLOG:

1) Mats is sitting at his desk, more animated than normal, typing as quickly as he can and LAUGHING to himself.

MATS (V.O.)

When I was young I was sent to summer camp with other handicapped kids. I trusted nobody. It was like some twisted handicapped version of 'Prison Break' to me. I was dropped off, hugged my mother and then I started thinking of ways I could escape!

(MORE)

MATS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My roommate was... well, he was a teenage boy with only one thing on his mind. He also had Duchennes, but back then we were stronger. We couldn't walk but the rest worked just fine. So, every night our assistants would put us to bed, say goodnight, turn off the lights and leave the room. This was when my roommate would ask if I was asleep. Why did I even answer? The following thirty minutes I had to listen to him go on in detail about girls and how much sex he was going to have once he got home. Yeah, sure, you're 14 and handicapped-- good luck there!

2) It's pitch black outside with the sparkling of a few streetlights through the window. Rain PITTER-PATTERS on the window and drops of water run down the pane in little rivers.

MATS (V.O.)

I was invited to a family barbecue by my uncle and my grandfather was there as well. He's about 85 years old now. He made his way towards me, on short, unsteady steps and gave me a hug. I could see the tears in the old man's eyes, he misses his grandson. For the last 10 years, he's been telling people: 'We have an agreement, him and I... if he dies first I'll speak at his funeral, and if I die first he'll speak at mine'. We find it funny, but no one else does.

3) Mats is leaning forward, struggling to type but refusing to give up.

MATS (V.O.)

I sometimes think about fate. Why do children die? Why do some live and others don't? Why was I born with this condition? Is everything in this universe truly as random as some say? Are we guided by something unseen, by fate? If so, I'm not sure I understand the concept. I do know one thing though, I was born and here I am.

(MORE)

MATS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I've been here for 24 years now and I intend to stay for many years to come. Fate willing.

4) Mats is scrunched in his wheelchair with his keyboard on his lap. He types single finger by single finger. He looks extremely uncomfortable.

MATS (V.O.)

Sometimes we all want to escape our ordinary, tiresome lives and just be. We find escape routes in various places. Books, movies, music, sports. You can imagine my need to escape the hard facts of life. I'm trapped in a shell that can't sustain me very well. My armour is broken. Luckily, I have found my escape, and it's not too uncommon today. My great escape is gaming. I boot up the computer, get into position and then I leave this world. It's not a screen, it's a gateway to wherever your heart desires. A door to the world. In there, my handicap doesn't matter, my chains are snapped and I can be whoever I want to be.

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Four men in black suits take their places at the sides of Mats' coffin. Hans walks forward carrying a small cloth embroidered with the Starlight coat of arms. He places it carefully on top of the coffin. Behind him, Robert, Mia and Liesl take their places at the side of the coffin. The priest nods at the pall-bearers and together they raise the coffin up. Robert smiles at Liesl and she gives him a sad smile back as tears begin to stream down her face.

EXT. THE RAINBOW WATER, AZEROTH - DAY

At the side of a lake with a bright rainbow of 300 colours emanating from its centre, thousands of World of Warcraft characters have assembled. Knights, soldiers, cardinals, kings, princesses, queens, dragons, orcs, elves, ogres, pixies, men with bulls heads, maidens with cat heads, wizards, witches, goblins, angels, demons, fairies, giants, gnomes, hobgoblins, unicorns, vampires and zombies. A beautiful coffin is resting on a wooden cart, surrounded by bright flowers and a single black lotus.

There is soft murmur of chatting going on and everyone looks sombre and respectful.

A vampire calls a drunk-looking dwarf closer.

VAMPIRE

You knew him, didn't you?

DWARF

Those are fighting words! Fists up, boy...

The dwarf is cut short by the sound of the town-crier's BELL RINGING. The town crier gets up on top of a rock and addresses the crowd.

TOWN CRIER

Friends. Today we are here to honour Ibelin. To witness the journey of his fantastical remains to his eternal resting place in the Hills of a Thousand Wonders. Where, as is the way of Azeroth, he shall live above us forever.

THE CROWD

(as one)

Forever!

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

As the pall-bearers begin to carry Mat's coffin down the church aisle, the organist begins to play the opening chords of *You'll Never Walk Alone* (Gerry and the Pacemakers version). A little smile crosses Robert's lips.

EXT. THE RAINBOW WATER, AZEROTH - DAY

A small musical band of a wizard on accordion, an ogre on mandolin, a giant on flute and a queen on a side drum begins to play in complete sync with the church organist.

The orc begins to sing the words to the song, with a beautiful voice.

ORC

(singing)

When you walk through a storm,
Hold your head up high...

EXT. THE CHURCH - DAY

The pall-bearers exit the church door and begin to carry Mats' coffin down the steps.

ORC (SINGING OVER)
And don't be afraid of the dark

EXT. THE RAINBOW WATER, AZEROTH - DAY

The cart carrying Ibelin's coffin starts its journey towards the Hills of a Thousand Wonders with the thousands of characters following behind it. Many of the crowd start to sing along with the orc.

CROWD
(singing)
At the end of a storm
There's a golden sky
And the sweet silver song of a lark

The characters hold hands and put their arms around each other.

EXT. THE CHURCH - DAY

The funeral procession crosses over the car park and enters the cemetery gates. Trude holds Mia to her for comfort. Hans has his arm around Maggie's shoulders, giving her support. Jesper and Sisko walk hand in hand.

CROWD (SINGING OVER)
Walk on through the wind
Walk on through the rain

They reach the graveside and the pall-bearers place the coffin above the grave.

EXT. THE HILLS OF A THOUSAND WONDERS, AZEROTH - DAY

The wooden cart reaches a memorial garden at the top of a large hill. A group of characters take the coffin from the cart and carry it towards the grave.

CROWD
(singing)
Though your dreams be tossed and
blown

EXT. THE CEMETERY - DAY

With his family and friends standing around the grave, Mats' coffin is lowered into the grave. Robert holds tightly onto Trude's and Mia's hands.

CROWD (SINGING OVER)
 Walk on, walk on
 With hope in your heart
 And you'll never walk alone

EXT. THE HILLS OF A THOUSAND WONDERS, AZEROTH - DAY

Ibelin's coffin is lowered into the grave. The crowd holds onto each for support, overcome with emotion and singing with everything they've got.

CROWD
 (singing)
 You'll never walk alone

EXT. THE CEMETERY - DAY

Trude picks up a handful of soil and drops it into Mat's grave. Mia does the same and goes to hug Trude. Robert grabs a handful of soil and drops it into the grave. Liesl drops a single red rose into the grave.

CROWD (SINGING OVER)
 Walk on, walk on
 With hope in your heart
 (the music and singing
 stop abruptly)

The thousands of World Of Warcraft characters who were attending Ibelin's funeral in the Hills of a Thousand wonders are suddenly at Mats' graveside at the cemetery in Oslo. They are not seen by the people who are attending Mats' burial, but they fill the cemetery, the parking lot and surrounding area as far as the eye can see.

They bring the song to a crescendo with the final two lines sung loud and from the heart.

CROWD (CONT'D)
 (singing)
 And you'll never walk alone
 You'll never walk alone

INT. THE STEEN HOME - DAY

The reception after Mats' funeral is taking place in the house where he grew up. Many of the people who were at the funeral are there, standing talking amongst themselves. Robert and Trude are doing their best to be gracious hosts. The members of Starlight are together in a group. Everyone is trying to be light and upbeat, but there's a gloom that hovers over everyone.

Liesl is sitting on the sofa where Mats used to watch football with a plate of snacks and a drink. She looks really down. From across the room, Mia spots her, recognises that she's struggling and walks over to her. She holds out her hand to Liesl and pulls her up. Mia leads Liesl from the room, along the corridor and down the stairs.

They reach the door to Mats' bedroom. Mia smiles at Liesl.

MIA

Welcome to my crazy brother's lair!

LIESL

I don't know, Mia, would he have wanted me to go in?

MIA

He would have loved it. His adored Rumour in his bedroom? Come on!

Mia opens the door and motions for Liesl to enter.

LIESL

You first.

Mia shakes her head.

MIA

This is your alone time. It's what he would've wanted.

Liesl realises that Mia is right, nods her head and enters Mats' bedroom.

She looks around, taking in the personal space of someone she spent so many years with, but yet never met. She steps over to Mats' desk and stares at the blank computer screen. She picks up his headset and smiles to herself. She moves over to the bed and sits down on it, then lies back closing her eyes. Tears begin to run down her cheeks. She turns to the side, holding up Mat's duvet to wipe her eyes and sniffing it a little. This makes her chuckle to herself and she sits upright in an attempt to regain her composure.

She finds herself looking straight at the picture she drew of Ibelin and Rumour in an embrace. It's framed and hanging on the centre of the opposite wall. She becomes truly aware in that moment of the impact she had on Mat's life and of the love they shared. From behind her tears, her face transforms and seems to glow with everything they meant to each other.

Liesl stands up, looks around the room once more, then takes a final look at the drawing. She know this is the end of hers and Mats' story and whilst she's sadder than she's ever been, the sadness is not as strong as the love she feels.

She leaves the room and closes the door.

It's getting dark, but a small ray of sunshine still shines outside Mats' window. An animated robin flies down to the window and taps on it. The window frame turns into a slightly shaking animation. The robin CHEEPS and hops up, hovering just outside the window. It moves its neck as if to say 'follow me'.

The robin flies off slowly, looking back every few seconds to check that it's still being followed. As it flies down the street, the scene begins to change into Azeroth. A house becomes a barn. Another becomes an inn. A postman becomes a highwayman. A little old lady becomes a princess. A tiny boy holding his mother's hand becomes a giant.

As the robin flies higher, a road becomes a river and a car becomes a wooden rowing boat. The cityscape completely transforms to become a magical, fantasy kingdom of mountains and forests and rainbows and lakes and castles and valleys, where anything is possible.

Taking one last look behind, the robin turns into a dragon. It flies into a small cloud and then emerges with Ibelin sitting majestically on its back. The dragon spreads its wings wide, flaps them into overdrive and accelerates into the sky.

FADE OUT.

THE END.