

EXT. K'VEER - BALCONY - NIGHT

Veovis and Suahrnir sit opposite each other at a table. Between them is a three-dimensional stone grid. This is the board for the game of Gemedet, a game in which small stones are placed inside holes in the grid with long tweezer-like instruments.

Veovis, very focused, places a stone.

VEOVIS

That is twenty to your six. I've blocked you again. Is this embarrassing for you?

SUAHRNIR

It is a strategy.

Suahrnir places a stone.

VEOVIS

Is it really a strategy to lose? At a game?

Another stone from Veovis.

SUAHRNIR

You will see. I am like a subtle wine. Without warning you will find yourself critically impaired.

Suahrnir takes his turn as Veovis sips wine from a glass.

VEOVIS

If so, it will be from the wine. Certainly not from your cunning.

Veovis examines the board with concentration.

SUAHRNIR

No, we shall leave the cunning to your friend Aitrus, I suppose.

Veovis breaks from his task, looking up at Suahrnir with contempt.

VEOVIS

What?

Suahrnir is stunned by Veovis defensiveness and does not respond.

Veovis grows more agitated, tossing his tweezers to the table.

VEOVIS (CONT'D)

What did you say? How dare you?

SUAHRNIR

Come now, I was merely joking.

VEOVIS

Do you think he defeated me? Do you not think I wished for him to succeed last night? Do you not think it was planned?

SUAHRNIR

Honestly, you're far too sensitive. I wasn't suggesting th-

VEOVIS

Perhaps it was "strategy".

Beat.

SUAHRNIR

Forgive me, Veovis. I was merely making a joke. He certainly presented a weak argument against you. I believe he simply knew how to manipulate the emotions of The Council. An argument of sentiment. He was cunning. That is all.

VEOVIS

He argued well. He served his role as he was asked to do.

Beat. There is a moment of tense silence between the two.

SUAHRNIR

In truth, I cannot understand why you are his friend.

VEOVIS

He saved my life, if you remember.

SUAHRNIR

That may be so, but he strikes me as a bit - naïve. What is it they say of bravery? "The foolish acts of fortunate men"?

VEOVIS

You may think what you will of
Aitrus, but he is my friend. I will
not suffer you speaking ill of him.

SUAHRNIR

Of course. My apologies.

VEOVIS

Perhaps I should retire. I've much
writing to complete tonight.

SUAHRNIR

Then I will take my leave. I hope
by tomorrow you will have forgotten
my words.

VEOVIS

And I will hope you have not
forgotten mine.