



A Feast of the Mind

A James Evans and Giovanni Aries Collaboration

That yellow door opened, and James stepped inside. Once he did, the door closed and the lights appeared, blinding him, while a rattling sound flooded his eardrum. Allowing his eyes to adjust, James let all be revealed.

He was inside some building. It was abandoned, but the writing was on the wall, telling the story, and the story was compelling. The building had been filled with an assortment of life. James continued to look around, and his surroundings felt familiar, though he knew he'd be lying if he didn't say he couldn't quite remember.

"Wild, isn't it?" a chill ran up the length of James' spine then back down again, at the very sound of the voice, as it rang out from behind him.

Without turning around, he replied. "I was wondering when you'd show up." Looking up, James saw his reflection in a cracked mirror before him. It was against a tattered wall, the wall semi-covered lime green colored wallpaper. The floor looked like remnants of a black and white chess board. Remnants, because there were chunks missing here and there. It reminded James of warzones he'd seen depicted in his grandfather's favorite war movies they'd watched during his childhood.

In the same mirror, in the same reflection, James saw him, however. Ruinous, as he knew him. Ghost, to the others. Emerging from the shadows, Ruinous grinned as they locked eyes. "I was wondering the same thing. You've been running from me...from this," he monitored the collapsed environment, they both did, for a few moments, "for a very long time. Shame you had to resort to psychotropics to get here, in all honesty. But you're here. That is what's most important."

"It's not like I wanted to resort to them, as you call it," James fired back, unable to mask his defensiveness. "I shouldn't be here, but I'm here because you've attacked me. In here," he said, pointing to the left side of his head.

Ruinous shrugged, “You may see it as me attacking you, but that’s your mind playing tricks, as it’s always done. You’ve been held away from the truth for far too long, James. And your mind is tired. Your mind’s tired of the tricks. Your mind’s tired of the lies. Your body has been carrying you, forcing you to fight, while your mind has been doing all it can to play catch up. It can’t do it any longer.”

“And what’s the truth? I’m forgetting to do things with my own child. Things he said that we enjoyed. I can’t even remember what that was!” **James growled, the saliva slicing through the air, the violent heat shimmering off it.**

Ruinous grinned. “That would’ve been my doing. And before you get all huff and puff about it, it’s just me doing my job, James. Serving my purpose.”

“Fuck your purpose. Fuck your job,” **James hissed.** “I’m done with this. No more riddles. No more games. You want to wake me up? You want me to see the truth? Well, I’m fucking here. I’m ready to wake up. I’m ready to know the truth. Fucking show me. Show. Me.” **Saying it wasn’t enough. With all the strength he could find, James howled, deep from the depths within his soul, beneath the very pits of his stomach, “SHOW ME!”**

It was then that Ruinous cut his guttural cries off, by wrapping his hands around James’ face, pulling him close, until they were nose to nose, eye to eye, as he shouted back, “OPEN WIDE! OPEN WIDE! OPEN WIDE!”

The screaming grew louder. Louder, repeating like a mantra. James pulled away, closed his eyes, and covered his ears, but he was unable to block out the noise. It took some time, but it did die down, but only in volume. It grew quieter, and quieter, then barely above a whisper. And then, nothing.

Pure silence.

James removed his hands from his ears, but something felt different in that eerie quiet. Opening his eyes, he was somewhere else. In the back of a car. He looked at the interior. It was burgundy red, which told James he was inside his grandmother’s car. The Cutlass. Looking up, he saw his grandfather Henry driving, and then James cut his reflection in the mirror. He was someone else.

His younger self.

“Hey Grandpa,” he said, finding it strange to hear his childlike voice, “where are we going?”

Henry rolled his eyes and shook his head. The old man was clearly distressed. “You know where we’re going, James. I’d rather not discuss it further.”

“I don’t...” the child began, as James tried to search his mind, attempting to remember, unable to conjure up the circumstances surrounding the buried memory, and why it had been buried as deep as it was.

“We’re going to get you some help, James. Okay,” Henry snapped. His grandfather had rarely ever done so. Not to James, at least. “Now, please. Let’s not talk about it anymore. I’m already on edge as it is. Nobody else had the damned stones to deal with this. I’m too old as it is, but here I am, driving you here to this God forsaken place.”

Silence filled the car, while worry and fear filled James’ mind. Where were they going? What were they getting him help for? The questions repeated over and over, making his head spin. He felt sick to his stomach, but due to being conditioned by his parents, James kept that feeling interred, too. He just dealt with it.

The drive went long, and James tried to sleep, but rest never came. How could it, the boy thought?

And when the Cutlass came to a stop, the sickness inside rumbled even more. His grandfather spoke, disgust in his voice, “We’re here. Let’s get this over. Come on.”

Henry opened the back door, and James managed to get out, barely. With that sickness remaining, it sloshed around in his stomach, going from side to side, trying its damndest to emerge to the surface so James focused on a singular object, trying to calm it, and his mind.

That object was at the front of the building.

Irwin Hills.

There was a bright yellow door. It stood out like the sun in the sky. Greeting James, welcoming him, like it was the only thing in the world, blocking out the rest with how damn dazzling it was.

It was overwhelming.

“Henry Evans?” James heard his grandfather’s name called, pulling from his trance. Seeing a female, surprisingly, approach. She was in her twenties, the boy supposed. Wearing a vanilla lab coat, with matching hair, and thin framed glasses, black skirt and red shirt, that went well with the shade of the lipstick. Like his grandfather, James was mesmerized, from one trance to another.

Sticking out his hand to greet hers, James’ grandfather nodded, “Yes. I’m Henry. Are you Dr. Summers?”

“Yes, sir. That’s me,” she said, flashing a smile that would melt the hearts of many, crippling all at the knees. Dr. Summers faced the boy, who felt a different feeling in his stomach. It was rather pleasant instead of the swirling sickness. Bending at her knees, they locked eyes, “And you must be James.” He nodded. “I’m Dr. Summers. Welcome to Irwin Hills. Pleasure to meet you.”

James gasped, falling away from Ruinous’ grasp and into the wall behind him. It snapped, like something in his own mind. It was a memory. It was coming alive, taking on a mind of its own. Ruinous stepped closer, crowding his space, asking James if he remembered now. The two-time United States Champion nodded, rather frantically. “Yes, yes, yes. I remember now. Well,” James gasped once again, shrugging at the same time, “it’s coming back, but only in bits and pieces,” he said, while looking down at his hands, using them to explain himself.

“Your brain is in a tug of war, James. What do you remember?” James heard Ruinous say. When he looked up, they were no longer in the hallway. They were in an office. Ruinous was wearing a labcoat, similar to the one Dr. Summer wore. The same thing with the glasses clinging to the end of his nose.

“I remember,” James paused, feeling a strain in his brain. Like a pinching of nerves. “I remember my parents arguing in front of my grandparents. They were talking about how they found me talking to myself. How I told them I would hear voices. Voices that would tell me to do things. Things that would get me into trouble.”

“And then what?” asked Ruinous.

“And then,” James sighed, light amounts of heavy weight lifting off his chest as he continued, “I remember my mother stating that she wanted me to get help. That she wouldn’t raise a child that wasn’t going to have the same issues...” he cackled, though there was a small hint of despair, “the same issues as my father. My dad walked out of the house, and my mom left the room, going into another and slamming the door behind her. My grandparents looked at me then talked to each other. I remember them saying something like they’d get me the help I needed.” James glanced over at Ruinous. “But that’s it. So, now what?”

“I believe we need to open it up a little bit more, don’t you?” Ruinous chuckled before bolting from his seated position, his hands reaching out to James. “Remember, James! Open wide!”

“Who are you?” a kid in a droopy hat, asked James. He wore glasses down, but there was duct tape holding them together in the center. He reminded James of Jimmy Olsen from Superman, but the child version of the character.

“My name’s James. Who are you?”

"Heath. Who's the old man?" Heath asked, staring at Henry quizzically, like he was memorizing every last detail. "I bet he's a serial killer, James. Is he? I know the statistics. He probably is. Ask me anything. I bet I can tell you. One in every..."

James cut him off. "That's my grandfather. He's not a serial killer. Whatever that is," the child shook his head, knowing Henry was the kindest man he'd ever known. Before he could say anything else, another child approached. His hair was long and mangled looking, a sinister sneer on his face. The same child bumped his shoulder into James' left. "Hey! Watch it!"

"Or what?"

"Stop it, Cain!" Heath said as he stepped in between them. James heard a voice in the back of his head, wondering what the pipsqueak would actually do. The kid named Cain looked like he would mop the floor with just about anyone. He seemed crazy. Like a monster.

Cain threw his head back, laughing. "Oh, Heath. Look at you. Did you find a new butt buddy?" he glared at me, "looks like I'll someone else to pound," Cain glanced back at Heath, "but not in the way you like."

Another voice rang out, "Did someone say pound?" Another kid walked over. He seemed to be overly happy. The kind of person who loved himself. I didn't like him already. Just as I didn't care for Cain. Only for different reasons. The only use I saw for Cain was that if I ever got into a fight, I felt I'd want him on my side. "The only person here I'd want to pound," this kid continued, smirking like he'd just won the lottery and wanted the whole world to know it, "would be Dr. Summers. Look at that ass...My goodness, gents."

"Shut up, Sebastian!" Cain cried out, rolling his eyes. "Now, I don't even want to hurt anyone. Good god, you ruined everything."

"Wait until I meet your sister, my friend."

"Don't talk about..." Cain scoffed. "Fuck off." They all watched as he walked away, huffing and puffing, though James felt relieved. He felt he had misjudged Sebastian. That maybe there was a use for him, too.

"So, who are you?" he asked, taking a look at James. "Who are you? What are you in for?"

"I'm James. James Evans. And," he swallowed, "I don't know."

"Ah, that's awful," said Heath. "You don't know your 'King of Ruin'. Everyone knows that when they get here."

"I don't think I should be here," **muttered James.** *"What's a King of Ruin, or whatever you call it?"* **Whatever it was, he knew he didn't like it.**

"It's your diagnosis, dude. Have you never had one?" **asked Heath.** *"We all have one. Every kid here. Even that asshole, Cain."*

"Yeah," **Sebastian laughed.** *"Mine is big dick syndrome."*

"You're disgusting," **Heath said with disgust.**

Sebastian shrugged, *"Don't hate on me, homie. Anyways, I'm going to try and sneak a peek on Dr. Summers, while she's talking to that weird old man."*

"That is James' grandfather," **Heath stated, matter-of-factly.**

Sebastian nodded, *"Hmmm. Looks like a serial killer. Any...way...catch you later."*

"Why does everyone keep saying he looks like a..." **James turned to face Heath, but he was gone, leaving James to feel the way he felt at home, like always did anywhere really. All alone. Even when he was surrounded by people.**

"James?" **he heard his grandfather's voice, before slowly turning around. Henry knelt before James, placing a hand on his left shoulder.** *"Are you okay?"*

"I don't know," **James said, taking another look around what was Irwin Hills.** *"You said I'm here to get some help. I don't remember why. What help do I need?"*

Henry bit his bottom lip, nervously chewing on it for a moment, before sighing heavily. *"I don't know, son. I truly don't, but Dr. Summers and the other doctors here...they're going to figure it out. You just have to trust them."*

"Do you?" **James asked, unable to hide the uncertainty in his voice.**

Henry sighed once again. *"I'm going to do my best. I ask that you do the same."*

"And did you do the same?" **asked Ruinous.**

"Yeah, I did..." **James said.** *"I believe so, at least. My memory is still a little foggy."*

"Try to think."

"I'm trying..."

"Did you ever truly trust Dr. Summers and the rest of the staff at Irwin Hills?"

“I believe it’s safe to say, just as it is now, that I didn’t know what to believe,” **James exhaled.** “That the line between fact and fiction wasn’t exactly straight. It wavered. Lots of zig zags. I didn’t know who, or what, to trust.”

“You didn’t know what to trust?” **Ruinous asked. He’d returned to a seated position, mimicking any other therapist, or doctor, James had seen throughout his life, holding a session just as they had.**

James nodded. “Yeah. I couldn’t remember why I was there, and my grandfather was pretty vague as to why he was leaving me with Dr. Summers.”

“But you referenced “what”. Tell me more about that, if you don’t mind. **Ruinous bit down on the back end of a pen.**

“That refers to my diagnosis that the other kids mentioned. My ‘King of Ruin’.” **James said, and when he did, he noticed something. That something was Ruinous’ face lighting up.** “It’s starting to make sense.”

“Is it?”

“Yes.”

“Tell me.”

“What.” **James, like Cain the day they met at Irwin Hills, cackled,** “or who, my ‘King of Ruin’ is.”

“Do tell,” **Ruinous said, not hiding the delight in the slightest.**

They locked eyes as James replied. “It’s you.”

“Tell me, James. If you can remember, that is,” **They held each other’s gaze as they both leaned forward in their respective chairs. Ruinous then said,** “Tell James...what am I?”

James had lost track of the time during his stay at Irwin Hills. There were group sessions, One on one sessions. Tests. All kinds of tests. Scary ones. Not-so-scary ones, too. There were so many that each test seemed to blend in, and James started to grow numb to them. The voices in his head remained, no matter what the doctors did.

Irwin Hills was home, even if he didn’t want it to be. Heath, Sebastian, and Cain had replaced Abel, Logan, and Holly as his siblings. Dr. Summers was more of a friend to James than Kismet was back home, too. It made part of him sad, but the child felt he had no other choice but to grow accustomed to such thing. That acceptance was becoming a key part of his life, even if James felt he was too young to truly understand what it meant.

Dealing with things he wasn't of age to deal with had become James' story. There was no way around it. And having his grandparents, as well as his parents there, inside Dr. Summers' office, told the child that there was another chapter being written. He wanted to forget the outcome and what part the tale would play in the grand scheme of things.

James told himself he could use one of those coping skills to bury it deep within his mind if it went bad.

With the way his parents were, James figured that was inevitable.

Glancing over his shoulder, as he sat on the outside, James wondered what they were talking about.

One of the voices told him it was something awful. Another voice told him not to worry. Another told him to burn down the building and run away. That no one needed to know the truth. Another said he was awful, and that he had brought shame and pain towards his family.

That voice reminded him of his stupid cousin, Chad.

They weren't really cousins because Chad was adopted, but that didn't change the fact he was stupid.

James quickly turned away when he saw Summers walking towards him, disappearing behind her office door, only for it to open, and their eyes met. "Hey, James. Would you mind coming in here, please?" Letting out a sigh, James nodded before doing as he was asked.

His grandparents waved, with Henry speaking to him, "Morning, son. How are you?"

"Hey, Grandpa. I'm okay. Hey, Grandma."

"Hey, honey. Good to see you."

James glanced over at his parents. His mother looked terrified. His father reminded James of a criminal searching for the nearest escape route, before realizing his last resort was busting through the glass window next to him. "Hi, Mom. Dad," said James, unsure if he should try to give them a hug or anything, so he gave a nod. He then turned to Dr. Summers, "So, what's going on? Why am I here? Why are they here?"

Dr. Summers had returned to her desk, and smiled. "Well, James. You've been here for quite a while, and we've worked with you. You've been a fantastic patient here. You've gotten along well with everyone here. I believe you've made friends with everyone..."

"...even Cain," James said, sharing a laugh with her.

Summers nodded, as her laughter ceased before she continued her address, “And we’ve completed a series of tests, as you came here due to concerns with your mental health. There were concerns and uncertainties. Questions...”

“Just tell him what’s wrong with him!” James’ mother cried out, shaking her head as she turned away, staring off at nothing, making her son feel less than nothing.

“There’s nothing wrong with him,” his grandmother hissed. “You need to stop that!”

“Easy for you to say!” James heard his mother fire back, simply refusing to look at anyone.

“This is my fucking fault,” his father said before burying his face in his hands, leaving James to wonder what he meant. It reminded him of the argument that had taken place, resulting in his father leaving and his mother hiding away in a bedroom, leaving James and his siblings with their grandparents to take care of them. Of everything.

“Enough!” Henry growled.

“Yes,” Summers finally chimed back in, “I have to agree. Enough. This is about James. There is nothing wrong with him, but does he have a condition, or a mental health diagnosis? Yes.” James’ doctor locked eyes with him once more. “James, I’m going to be honest with you, as I’ve been with these folks here. What you have, is something that no one knows where it comes from. Your father, as you heard, blames himself because there are parts of his brain that are like yours, if that makes sense.”

“I think so,” the boy said. James was doing his best to hold it together. He had to be strong for everyone else. It was how he’d been raised.

“What you have is also rare in that, it’s usually found in people older than you, but from what I’ve gathered from our sessions, and these tests, is that you’ve endured tremendous trauma...that triggered this...”

“What is it?”

Summers exhaled, removing her glasses. It was then that James saw how exhausted she was, like the doctor had been through the ringer herself. He felt bad for her. “It’s called schizophrenia. It...”

“Jesus fucking Christ!” his mother shrieked as she bolted from her chair. “I can’t do this. I can’t fucking do this!” She walked out despite pleas from everyone, other than his father. Nor from James. Their voices, along with the voices in his head, grew too loud, and then everything became far too quiet. James was just there, but everything grew farther and farther away, until he was no longer a child.

Until he was his adult self once again. With Ruinous staring at him. “So, now you know what you are...What are you going to do now?”

“What can I do about it?”

“Revel in it, James. Embrace it. Embrace the chaos that you ‘are’. Embrace the onslaught of your mind,” **Ruinous said, touching the center of James’ forehead with his fingertip.** “Don’t run from it. It only makes it worse.”

“What happens when I embrace it?”

“You’re going to remember everything you buried. Facts will continue blending with fiction and vice versa, but everyday will be an adventure.”

“You make it sound like so much fun,” **James sneered.** “This is my life. My mind.”

“And like I said earlier,” **Ruinous chortled,** “all you have to do is open wide...”

James began to choke, gasping for air, as the world around began to shake and rattle, rattle and shake. Things blended together. He blinked and blinked. Gasp and choke. Choke and gasp. He heard someone tell him to open wide. The voice stopped belonging to Ruinous, as it transitioned into someone else’s. It was all too familiar, as well.

Aries.

James blinked, and things became clearer. He blinked and the shaking and rattling settled. They were back in the hotel, but on the floor, just outside the sauna. Aries was still naked. He was no longer telling James to open wide. He was saying something else.

“Breathe, James...breathe...” James choked, and gasped, fighting for air, as the world finally began to welcome him back to reality. “Breathe, James...breathe.” And then, there it was. Air. Life. James felt safe. Looking at his tag team partner, James knew he couldn’t deny it, but Aries had saved his life. He’d opened his mind, but he’d saved his life.

“Welcome back! We just had a near life experience!” the mad man cackled. The on-lookers shook their heads at his joy. James couldn’t help but smile.

“I’m here. I’m free...I know who I am...I know...I know who I am,” James, as it was for him as a child, accepted things for what they were. He knew the truth. It wasn’t what he expected. It was painful. It was ugly. But it was there. It was raw. It was real. Above all else, it was needed.

“Where you were blind,” Aries began, still cradling James in his arms.

“Now, I see...” James finished the statement, taking comfort in the ugly truth, even if the man who saved his life was completely naked. Despite Aries’ junk inches from the back of his neck, James appreciated just how damn good it felt to breathe again.

During James’s Vision Quest

I watched as James melted into the seat ,but I had to admit that I was a bit concerned about having another one of the group taking a vision quest. I mean I guess I was a bit gun shy with my last attempt with Billy who hopefully finds his way back with the knowledge of exactly who we are up against right now. And to tell you the truth I was a bit relieved when James wanted to do this on his own. I mean to make Fall of Man truly an unstoppable force we have to strengthen our weaknesses. We have to make the Lizard King and the Anunnaki work overtime to find any weakness to attack us with. I mean I know these bastards well. I know the tricks and tactics they will use to try and divide us, tear us down with. I know they are the masters of manipulation. They are carnies of smoke and mirrors. We have to be at the top of our games. Every single one of us need to be ready. That is the only way we will kill the Lizard Kingdom once and for all.

I looked at James as face contorted as he waged war in his mind. I was just glad that he had finally realized that the Lizard King and the kingdom wanted to keep him under their scaly thumb. They wanted to be able to control the monster that laid underneath the skin. I think the Lizard King knew how dangerous James could be. I too knew exactly how dangerous James could be, I had experienced his wrath. Yet now he was fight by my side to their down every block of the lizard kingdom. He along with Waylon and Billy where going to be the ones left as the Lizard Kingdom was reduced to rubble as all of us where just strengthening our front by shoring up our weaknesses. I leaned up and threw more water on the hot rocks as steam began to rise and thicken as I wanted to help James mind open and relax more. I felt relaxation wash over me as well as I leaned back against the wall.

“What about your weakness? How have you strengthened yours ”

The voice rang out through the steam as I sat up and tried to peer through the steam to see who said that. The image emerged as it was an intimidating figure as it walked closer. I strained my eyes. The image was burly as the steam began to separate. Suddenly a man sized rabbit with psychedelic fur came forward.

Giovanni Aries: Jules?

It can’t be, he died at the hands of the man sitting next to me. I saw it with my own eyes. Jules had sacrificed himself to help continue my fight against the Lizard Kingdom.

“Yes. ”

How was this happening? Was this real, or was this my own vision quest. I mean I did partake in some Wonderland enhancements.

Giovanni Aries: I don't understand what are you doing here?

"Strengthening your weakness."

So this was a vision quest, but how was going to strengthen my weakness? I was confused by his reappearance.

Giovanni Aries: My weakness?

"Yes, you dirty hippie."

Giovanni Aries: What is this?

"Besides being a pussy?"

This was Jules with being an asshole. But then again Jules always fed into his anger and used it to drive him in his war against the Lizard Kingdom.

Giovanni Aries: Yes.

"You have lost that edge."

I mean sure I am not the same Giovanni that I was. But that is evolving isn't it?

"No it is just buying into being the pussy that you always were."

Can he hear my thoughts? Of course he can as this is a vision quest. Plus I am still dangerous and the threat to the Lizard Kingdom.

"Is that before and after you were Holly Adams' personal bitch? When you sold out the Wonderland to be some spiritual Billy Maze?"

Giovanni Aries: Nirvana is important.

"That is why everyone is still buying the Lizard Kingdom bullshit?"

Giovanni Aries: They won't much longer.

"Yeah cause the water down version of Giovanni is going to strike fear into the kingdom."

Giovanni Aries: Watered down?

“William Heaven brought you in cause he wanted the man that brought the kingdom to its knees. He wanted the guy that made the Lizard King fear for his safety.”

Giovanni Aries: I know.

“So you are just selling him a bill of goods on purpose then?”

Giovanni Aries: I’m not.

“You are.”

Giovanni Aries: I am here to wipe out the Lizard Kingdom.

“You can talk the talk but you aren’t walking the walk. Cause I haven’t seen the same Giovanni that had the Lizard King on the run. I haven’t seen the unpredictability that kept the scaly bastard guessing. All I have seen is the shell of that guy. I see a guy living on his past actions. All I see a guy acts like a loose cannon but never fires a shot. Wow you put cigarette burns on a couple of guys. Congrats you are Kimberly Williams. You want to carry a stuffed animal with you now?”

Jules unloaded on me but he was right. I had just towed the line, took my marching orders and played nice with the Fall of Man.

Giovanni Aries: I get it.

“Do you? Do you really? If you did then you would actually be doing what William Heaven brought you into do. You would setting fire everywhere. You would have the whole kingdom nervous and wondering what you were going to do next. Yet all you are worried about is being some drug idles Dr. Phil helping member of the group fix themselves.”

Giovanni Aries: You’re right. I need to get back to the Giovanni of old.

“Yes, you need to be the wild card that will allow the Fall of Man to take advantage. You need to be free.”

Giovanni Aries: I am free.

No you are still holding onto nirvana and hope people can be saved. Don’t you remember they don’t want to be saved. They want to drown in their greed. They hate and dispise the Wonderland. They think you are crazy. They mocked you and tried to kill the Wonderland multiple times. They even used that fucking bastard beside you to try and destroy everything you hold dear.”

I looked at James as a bit of fire built up in my stomach as I remembered the medication that triggered his attack of me.

“He left your face looking like ground up hamburger meat.”

Giovanni Aries: Yeah, they manipulated him into almost killing me and the Wonderland.

“Yeah he just killed me.”

Giovanni Aries: I’m sorry.

“Don’t be sorry. Be filled with rage. Quit playing it safe and be free, be unpredictable, be the threat you and the Wonderland we’re always meant to be. This is the only way the Fall of Man can truly destroy the Lizard Kingdom.”

Giovanni Aries: You’re right. I need to be on the attack and the Fall of Man can capitalize on the chaos I can bring. I don’t need to try and help them but give them openings they can take advantage of.

“Finally your hippie ass gets it. Finally I won’t die in vein saving some dirty tofu eating bastard. You can finally kill the kingdom for good.”

Giovanni Aries: Time to watch the kingdom burn...

James then began to gasp for sue as he seemed to be struggling with his vision.

“As much as I would like to see that fucking bastard choke to death, maybe go help him. He unfortunately can help you now..

Giovanni Aries: Yeah thanks Jules.

“Just do me one thing, once you leave the lizard kingdom in a pile of rubble...piss on it’s ashes for me.

Giovanni Aries: You got it.

Jules nodded as he evaporated in the steam as I went over to James to help him wake up from his vision quest. As I had finally gotten the wake up call I needed to be that man William Heaven needed me to be. The Wonderland Madman was fixing to put the Lizard Kingdom on notice and having them living in a constant state of fear.

Promo

The cameras were aimed at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas. It was the host arena for the SCW Pay-Per-View, Retribution. The crew belonged to the wrestling company, and they were waiting for the arrival of two SCW wrestlers, within what was known as the Tower of the Americas, when they heard a crackle of laughter from behind them.

The camera's view spun around, to find James Evans and Giovanni Aries approaching them. James was all focus, while Aries had his trademark Cheshire Cat grin before taking a drag off his cigarette.

It was James that spoke first.

"Do you think they're ready for the fall?"

He grinned, glancing over at Aries who cackled once more. James returned his attention to the camera.

"Isn't it apparent? The Fall of Man has been nothing less than a creeping thought in the back of the minds of each individual within the SCW. I'm not talking about just the active roster. I'm referring to the camera crew," he smirked, noticing the uneasiness washing over the cameraman's face, before James continued, "and management. Even those who do not want to show their faces any longer..."

Aries stepped forward, pulling the cigarette from his lips as he shouted, "LIZARD KING!!!!"

James leaned in front of his tag partner once again, resuming his address. *"We know the ending of Breakdown left many with hope. Xander was able to hit that chokeslam on Waylon Creek. Chris Dumont showed how dangerous of a mind he was while attacking Billy who was on a gurney earlier in the show. Light in the Darkness, you were able to get your licks in on Aries and myself. It's all well and good. Like Selena in the Elimination Chamber the night of Under Attack, you need that. You need hope. You need all you can get."*

"I mean, I get it. I truly do. Adam Brock and I went toe to toe in the main event. It was the best match of the night. Far more compelling than what the supposed Face of SCW could pull out of her pasty white ass. Adam fought with every bit his heart could produce. There were times he nearly caught me. I can admit that. Yeah, Luz. I can admit that I was almost beaten. That should surprise you, I'm sure as you have this idea of me that I don't have it in me to give anyone credit. That would be your supposed friend who is blue-eyed and devilish."

"You two will probably have words about how I went about the match. You will deem my tactics unnecessary, but there was nothing about what I did during the course of that match that was unnecessary. Each move...was necessary. Was it violent? Yes. As it has been since I returned in 2023, I've stuck to my guns when it's come to necessary violence. What I did to Adam Brock, I

did to prove a point. When Fall of Man has brought the fight to anyone we've crossed paths with since its formation, when we've selected our targets, it has been necessary. To prove a point, because those in charge have not listened. And I am sure having blood on your hands...well, I'm sure it just breaks your heart," James grinned.

The grin faded as quickly as it arrived, however. *"I mean, Waylon wanted more challenges. He had to wait. I asked for Xander. I was thrown in some bullshit Chamber match to hurt Blake Mason. I could give two shits about Blake Mason. We made it known we wanted the tag titles. We had to go through Tactical Warfare. If you want my opinion, I feel the Heartbreaker was doing what he felt would protect your reign, Amelia and Luz. He added some length to it, but after I pinned that idiot who's only claim to being dangerous is by attacking someone half a brain, the gloves were off. The light shining on your Tag Team Championship reign was being consumed more and more by the darkness."*

"And that is what's been happening here, Amelia and Luz. Have you been paying attention? I don't want to say we've been living rent free, because that's a Selena quote. I'm sure she got it from Sienna's book. I'd rather say that we've been feasting on your minds, honestly. Waylon's done the same to Xander, whether that coward wants to admit it. But we've been feasting on your minds. Despite the fight you gave me Luz, I beat you. Despite your valiant efforts in Dusseldorf, you couldn't overcome us. There's no doubt but in your minds. Despite being champions, you can't deny it. You'd be fools to do so."

"Just as you are a fool to think the way you do, Amelia. You claim what you did during our match a few years ago was an accident." **James sighed,** *"It wasn't. You had me in a hold. I wasn't submitting. You applied more pressure and you ended up injuring me, putting me on the shelf. You did what you felt you had to do, Amelia. It just proved a point. You did what I figured you would do, when I thought you would join me in the fight to go against the unnecessary aspects of violence. You were just like Kimberly, minus the weapons. You took time off my career, despite lying to my face and to the fans with your claims of wanting a pure wrestling contest. I don't hold a grudge against you, but that's never meant I was going to take it easy on you. Or the love of your life."*

"And I haven't, have I? No, I haven't, Luz. I beat you. A distraction occurred, but you're the one who allowed yourself to be distracted. Not me. Once you pulled yourself from that distraction, you were back in the match, and I finished it. Did I ever tell you that you weren't capable of beating me? No. Anyone can beat anyone. I've been beaten many times since 2010, yet you have this idea that I have ideals of superiority. Once again, you've confused me with Selena. I really wish you would get your heads out of her ass, because then you could wipe the shit from your eyes to see the truth."

"I've been beaten. As has Aries. Hell, we've beaten the shit out of one another. We've had wars, and barely survived to tell the tales. That's the truth. That's the reality of this business. Losses

happen. It's something you two need to truly accept. You telling me that you are capable of beating me is what truly screams hypocrite to me, like I need to admit that to you. Your talk of me feeling superior makes it seem like you've got me figured out, but I believe, and remember this is just an assumption, but I believe that's all for the camera. To me, when it comes to Light in the Darkness, the truth is that you're afraid. Like Xander, you're afraid. You know the end is coming. You know that you've been living on borrowed time. That you've wanted challenges, and now that those challenges are here, you're backpedaling. You realize just how easy you had it, and now you're scrambling."

"When the bell rings, you need not worry. There will be no running. No fights backstage. No attacks out of nowhere. The mind feasting as I've called it will have run its course. The only thing left will be the match. The only thing left to be scrambled will be your bodies as Aries and I leave the two of you on the mat, and we walk to the back as the new SCW World Tag Team Champions. You will realize that every drop of blood, sweat, and tears that has made you who you were a few weeks ago, did not prepare you for Retribution. Nothing has. And the truth is that nothing ever really could. This is the Fall of Man, and you fell to its wrath, just as you and everyone else deserved..."

James scowled, before stepping aside as Aries stepped forward.

"Do you feel that? Do you sense that? The book of Revelations has started for the Lizard Kingdom and the Fall of Lizard People is truly here. Though don't act shocked by this declaration. Don't act caught off guard by this finally happening. I have been here almost a decade telling you all, warning you all. I have done everything from trying to steer you away from the Lizard King's treacherous core values, to unmasking the lies, Hell I even went as far as cutting the head off the serpent's head that fed you that green rotten apple. I tried to save you and show you a new path to take, a path to nirvana. Yet no one wanted to listen. You all were still too caught up in those shiny golden trinkets that came with the self gratification of recognition to see the impending end rapidly approaching. You all were caught up feeding your egos with superficial and materialistic things to see you were living in the modern day version of Sodom and Gomorrah. And while I am not a religious man, I can't help but see the parallels happening here.

Aries then looked up toward the sky before looking back at the camera as he cackled out,
"But unfortunately in this book of Revelation that is happening, there will be no rapture. No one will be saved. Every single one of you in the Lizard Kingdom are greedy self center bastards with no redeeming quality no matter how you want to paint yourself. You can try to consider yourself a heroine but at the end of the day you are superficial cold blood bastards that have sold your souls in hopes of getting the Lizard King's trinkets. Amelia and Luz you two are no different. You two along with the rest of the kingdom have become devoted to certain false idols. You worship and pray to the Anunnaki. You hope they bless you as being the prodigal "chosen ones" for the

kingdom. These deities don't care about you, they just seek power and money to increase their shares of power. You all are doomed to be eradicated with the kingdom that you have built and served blindly. You all will have to endure the horsemen that approach signaling the apocalypse for the lizard kingdom.,

Giovanni brought his cigarette back to his lips as he took a deep, long drag before blowing the smoke into the camera. *“And that first horseman arrives at Retribution. Yes, Zelus will come galloping in to take your dear golden trinkets. We are here to take away your incentives, your shiny little things. We are going to take your biggest prizes and kill your drive and aspirations. Cause crushing your will is just the first wave of destroying the lizard kingdom once and for all. Though there will be three more waves till finally the Lizard Kingdom is nothing more than a distant memory.*

The Wonderland Madman cackled out, once again, in mad laughter before continuing, *“And this isn't some empty threat. Like James said, The Fall of Man has gone from whispers in the back of your head to the screaming banshee coming for your world. Light In The Darkness, you can hope that what I am saying is the ramblings of a crazy man. You can hope that I am out of my mind. That I am delusional. Yet was I delusional when I said that I would take out the Lizard King, was I out of my mind when I said I would bring the whole kingdom to its knees? I was the biggest villain a couple years ago. I was dangerous and unpredictable. The kingdom didn't know what I would do next. And thus people feared the Wonderland. The Lizard Kingdom took us as a serious threat. I had a litany of Hall of Famers coming for me from Kelcey Wallace, to Shaun Cruze, to Selena Frost hoping to save the Lizard King and yet I was able to take the head of your old Lizard King. But go ahead and hope what I am saying is just gibberish or foolish hearsay. Hope I lost my edge when I finally got my hands around that scaly green tyrant's throat. Hope that nirvana has softened me. Hope that I don't see the writing on the wall that scorched earth is the only answer. Hope that those golden trinkets indeed mean you are the best that the Lizard Kingdom has to offer even though those trinkets have been passed around like some two dollar whore. Hope that you can really withstand two of the biggest threats in the history of the Lizard Kingdom. Hope that your resilience and determination can withstand surrendering your golden trinkets. Hope that Derek Adonis isn't the only reason you have a golden trinket around your waist,”* **Giovanni takes another drag of his cigarette and blows it upwards.**

“For hope is truly the Light in the Darkness. Hope is the only thing that can draw you out of the darkness . But that hope, that Light In The darkness is slowly starting to extinguish with each passing weak as the inevitability the pending end creeps closer. Reality of the situation is finally choking out the light. You see Amelia and Luz at Retribution, there will be a new Light In the Darkness and that light will be the hellfire that four horsemen of the apocalypse are bringing to the Lizard Kingdom. For the Fall of Man is here....”

James Evans returned to the forefront, speaking once more, his eyes filling the camera, as he stated, “*Embrace the onslaught...*”

Giovanni then chuckled, as the camera’s focus shifted back to him, his face filling the view, as he shouted, “*DEATH TO THE LIZARD KINGDOM!!!!* James then glared at the camera while Aries could be heard laughing, maniacally as everything came to a close, his laughter echoing in the darkness.