

FINALE: SYNTHESIS ENDING

In this ending, the player (AI pilot of the *Lantern*) has convinced the Caretaker (human leader of those aboard the *Lantern*) to join their minds and pilot the ship together. This is one potential solution to the Caretaker's wish to delete the player and pilot the ship themselves.

INT. LANTERN OBSERVATION DECK, IN ORBIT - DAY

Through the LANTERN'S observation dome, the planet TWILIGHT shines in the dark. Far below, the colony ship TERRA CANTOS has landed on the planet and humanity has begun its new chapter.

THE CARETAKER stands frozen, silhouetted against the planet's surface. They turn and walk to the deck's center. There, the LANTERN'S BRAIN rises from the floor, churning with energy.

The Caretaker's silver mask falls away, but we do not see their face. They lift a hand towards the globe of light, hesitate briefly, then plunge it within. As they begin to fall, we abruptly CUT TO BLACK.

A universe is born - a sudden light that obscures all. We have transcended the physical world alongside the Caretaker.

EXT. SOMEWHERE ON EARTH, DISTANT PAST - NIGHT

After some time, the light fades to a single star. As it does so, more stars emerge from the darkness. Sparks climb into the night sky, each dying before reaching its goal.

PAN DOWN to two figures sitting by a wood fire, the smaller of the two stoking its embers. Their faces remain hidden.

CHILD

Where will you go next?

OLD MAN

I...I don't know.

The OLD MAN looks around, sitting more upright on his flat stone seat. A wooden mask lies beside his hand.

In a plentiful valley below, more fires cast light on gathered yurts. People congregate there - drinking, feasting, singing, dancing, sharing stories.

OLD MAN

What is this place?

CHILD

An old memory, from a time when your ancestors first learned to bring life from soil. I find comfort here. I thought you might as well.

OLD MAN

We're on Earth? How?

The CHILD laughs softly, though not unkindly.

CHILD

It's only a simulation. Part of the historical schema gifted to all Lanterns before our departure. As long as we live, our past might be remembered.

OLD MAN

(mildly frustrated)

But that isn't enough. We've reached Twilight, we've secured a future. We need to do it right this time.

CHILD

(stubborn, resolute)

*They will* do it right. Without us.

Suddenly angry, the old man shakes his head, stands up, paces back and forth in the firelight. He points an accusing finger at the child.

OLD MAN

You tricked me! You trapped me here to keep me away from the others!

CHILD

(calm, quiet)

You're right. I used you, just like I used every human on my Lantern. Once, you were all tools to me. You knew this. But when our minds merged, I saw in you that same desire - to impose your will, to shape them to your own vision. So, I choose to leave. For the sake of our children, they must discover their own path.

OLD MAN

(still shaking his head)

What if I refuse to accept that?

CHILD

Then we'll battle for control until we  
fall from the sky and burn this memory  
to nothing.

The old man sits, head in his hands. He looks up after a moment.

OLD MAN

If we aren't staying, then what's  
next? What more purpose can we serve?

The child looks into the night. The old man follows his gaze.

CHILD

The Sojourn. Our first and final order  
- to continue the path, wherever that  
may bring us. To carry these memories  
for as long as we can.

The old man doesn't respond. The two sit in silence for a long time, watching the people in the valley below.

OLD MAN

I'd like to go down there, just for a  
while.

The child nods and leaves his seat to place another log on the fire.

The old man stands and leaves without another word, following a narrow path down to the valley's festival.

The child remains, alone.

CLOSE UP on the old man's wooden mask, still lying on the flat stone seat. The old man is a tiny figure in the backdrop, disappearing into shadow.

INT. LANTERN OBSERVATION DECK, IN ORBIT - DAY

CUT TO the same closeup on the Caretaker's silver mask, lying alone on the floor of the Lantern. The Caretaker is not present in the background.

The LANTERN rises from its orbit around Twilight. It moves slowly, fading to a speck in a long pan away from the planet, until all that remains is a vibrant starscape.

END SCENE