

Encapsulated Season 5 - Episode 4

FADE IN:

CUE AMAZING RACE THEME SONG.

Begin montage of different locations around the world. Cities, villages, waterfalls, forests, oceans...

Intercut with the fast-paced, dizzying imagery, we see introductory footage of the three teams competing:

- Jorge and Mike
- Savitri and Helena
- Ayano and Nate

Finally, the intro wraps up with an accelerated slideshow, before ending with the logo: The Cosmic Race.

EXT. GRASSY FIELD - DAY

The three teams are lined up on one side with backpacks, all of them ready and eager for the race. A few yards beyond them is a red/yellow/black clue box.

Behind them is a vast, dense forest, with mountain ranges even further in the distance. In front of them, just past the edge of the field, are the outskirts of a village.

Across from them is Gabriel, with windswept hair and a charming grin (he's imitating Phil Keoghan).

GABRIEL

Welcome back to The Cosmic Race, where teams will be competing for the ultimate prize of becoming God. We're here today in a fictional, constructed town, meant to simulate a typical town on Earth. Teams will-

NATE

Wait, this isn't Earth?

Gabriel is thrown off by the interruption.

GABRIEL

... No. It's too complicated. Too many ripples. This town will SIMULATE being on Earth though, but the humans are all actors played by angels. However, it'll be a realistic-

NATE

But wouldn't it just be easier to... I dunno... Have us compete on Earth?

GABRIEL

No, Nate, because here, we can have the angels speak a language none of you know. That's part of the challenge - how well can you interact with everyday people given a language barrier?

HELENA

But if we end up being God, then there won't be any language barrier, right?

NATE

Yeah. And why not just select a real town where none of us know the langua-

GABRIEL

Oh my goodness, just - can we focus? This is how we're doing the show. And you're putting angels to work, so, that's a bonus.

NATE

Just seems excessive... And why are we not doing the same reality show each round?

MIKE

For once, I'm glad you're being skeptical. Because while you sit around questioning how this competition works... Jorge and I will be busy winning it.

He and Jorge chuckle, then fist-bump. Gabriel smiles and nods in agreement.

GABRIEL

That's the spirit!

Nate rolls his eyes, Gabriel ignores him.

GABRIEL

Alright. Teams... Are you ready?

MIKE

(he and Jorge both nod)  
We're ready!

HELENA

Let's do this.

SAVITRI

I'm ready!

Nate looks at Ayano, who smiles back at him reassuringly. He sighs slowly and dramatically.

NATE

Fiiiiine. I'll be a docile little sheep.

GABRIEL

Good boy.  
(he turns to Ayano)  
Ready, Ayano?

AYANO

Mm-hmm. Ready.

GABRIEL

Okay. The race begins... NOW!

He waves his hand, and the six of them make a mad dash for the clue box. Everyone gets there at nearly the same time, and they scramble to open and read their clues.

MIKE

Make your way to Palm Plaza-

HELENA

The central hub of La Neuva Tierra.

NATE

The New Earth? Really?

Switch to a vertigo-inducing shot of the camera zooming through the village, while Gabriel narrates.

GABRIEL (VOICE ONLY)

Teams must now navigate through the village of La Tierra Nueva and find Palm Plaza, the hub and central marketplace.

The camera stops in front of a lush cluster of palm trees and a clue box.

GABRIEL (VOICE ONLY)

Once they've located the entrance to the plaza, they will find their next clue.

Switch back to the six contestants, who all run towards the village, but then branch off in separate directions.

Start with Mike and Jorge. They're jogging amongst the streets and houses. The village seems abandoned.

MIKE

Palm Plaza? Palm? Palm Plaza?  
(nobody responds)  
How are we supposed to find it if..

He pauses for a second, then has an idea and turns toward Jorge excitedly.

MIKE

Wait, palm. Palm trees. Right?  
(Jorge nods)  
Okay, here, get up on my shoulders.

He bends down briefly, and Jorge climbs on his shoulders. Mike hoists him up, and Jorge scouts out the area.

MIKE

Any palm trees?

JORGE

(he looks around, then spots the trees in the distance)  
Yeah! Over there!

He points in the direction of the trees. Mike lowers him, they fist-bump, then run towards the plaza.

Switch to Ayano and Nate. Same as Mike, Nate is also calling out unsuccessfully for help.

NATE

Palm Plaza? Anyone? We started the show, you can come out now...

(he sighs)

So, is this supposed to be Latin American, or... Middle Eastern? What's the general motif here?

(he chuckles)

It's like somebody just watched every episode of The Amazing Race and then threw it in a blender.

He and Ayano both chuckle now. They walk for a bit more, then suddenly spot Mike and Jorge running past them.

NATE

Oh shoot, I think they found it! Come on!

He and Ayano race after Mike and Jorge. Mike sees them and jokingly calls them out.

MIKE

Hey, no tail-gating!

NATE

Try and lose me, old man!

They all laugh - Mike and Jorge pick up the pace, and Nate hurries after them. Ayano is just barely able to keep up.

Switch to Helena and Savitri. Helena is frantically searching for the plaza, but Savitri isn't in a rush.

HELENA

Is anybody even here? Hello? So what, we're just wandering aimlessly until we HAPPEN to find it? How is that a fair test??

Savitri continues walking deliberately ahead of Helena, and chuckles to herself. Helena is annoyed.

HELENA

Oh, forgive me for trying to win. I should just follow your example and not care.

SAVITRI

What you call not caring, I call not stressing. Because what happens will happen.

HELENA

That is a TERRIBLE mindset, especially if you're going to be God. Just saying.

SAVITRI

Maybe. Or maybe I know what I'm doing.

(she grins slyly)

I'm intuiting which way to go. I'm the mystic Indian woman, born with an innate sense of village navigation.

Helena stares at her incredulously.

HELENA

I can't tell if you're joking, but if you are, then that's incredibly offensive.

SAVITRI

You're telling me.

(she winks at Helena)

I'm actually just following the noise, because the plaza will be louder, I assume. But you are free to keep wandering aimlessly.

She smiles smugly. Helena stops, exhales, and listens to the sounds of the village. After a few seconds, they both resume walking in the same direction, towards the noise from the marketplace.

HELENA

Okay, I apologize. But can we maybe pick it up, now that we know where we're going?

Savitri sighs overdramatically, but then laughs and nods. The two of them start jogging down the road.

Switch to Jorge, Mike, Ayano and Nate, who have arrived at Palm Plaza - which is bustling with townspeople. They run to the cluster of palm trees and open their next clue.

MIKE

Road-tour. Punt It?

NATE

Or Hunt It? The fu-??

Cut to Gabriel explaining the two tasks, with the plaza in the background.

GABRIEL

A road-tour is our little twist on the show. It's a combination of a roadblock and a detour. It consists of two tasks - one for each member of the team.

Switch to footage of some kids and teens in town playing a game of football (i.e. soccer) on a dirt lot.

GABRIEL

In Punt It, the team member will have to score five goals against a local teen football player. The task could be physically demanding, but if the team member has fancy footwork, they could finish quickly.

Switch to footage of the crowded plaza. The camera goes rapidly from one bustling shop to the next.

GABRIEL

In Hunt It, the team member will have to locate five specific items from vendors in the plaza. There are no store names or maps, so unless they want to spend hours searching, they'll need to find a way to ask the locals for help.

Switch back to Gabriel.

GABRIEL

Only after BOTH team members have completed their tasks, will they receive their next clue.

Switch back to Mike, Jorge, Nate and Ayano.

MIKE

Well, buddy - I think you can handle 'Punt it'.  
(Jorge nods excitedly)  
And I will do 'Hunt it', and then we'll meet up  
back here once we're done. Sound good?

Jorge nods again, then runs over to the dirt lot, which is  
just a few yards away. Mike hurries into the plaza.

Meanwhile, Nate and Ayano are deciding on who does what.

NATE

So, I'm okay with either one. Do you have a  
preference for one or the other?  
(Ayano thinks it over)  
Are you secretly a world-class footballer?

AYANO

(chuckles softly)  
No, I'm not an athlete. I can do 'Hunt it'.

NATE

Works for me. Good luck!

He heads to the dirt lot, while Ayano nervously enters  
the crowded bazaar.

Switch to Helena and Savitri, who have slowed down and are  
walking through the village.

SAVITRI

So you said you have three boys and a girl?  
(Helena nods)  
Is she the oldest or youngest?

HELENA

Oldest. She's like our second mom.  
(they laugh)  
And your boy, is he the-

SAVITRI

He's the third oldest.

HELENA

And are they all grown? Married?

SAVITRI

Yes on grown, only two married so far - but I am working very actively to change that

HELENA

Ah, I see. Do you - well, I assume that they WANT to get married?

SAVITRI

Of course they want to get married. Why would-  
(it clicks)

Oh. Because I'm an Indian mother, so obviously, having my children married is more important than letting them 'follow their heart'.

HELENA

No, I didn't mean it like-

SAVITRI

I'm just toying with you.

(she chuckles)

They do all want to get married, yes, I was- MY marriage was forced on me, and while it's... TENABLE... I don't want that for them.

(she chuckles again)

That doesn't mean they can just marry ANYONE, and I'm very active in helping them find a suitable spouse if they WANT one. That said, the decision TO marry is entirely their own.

HELENA

I see. Again, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to-

SAVITRI

(brushes it aside)

Don't stress over it. What about your children? Are they at that age yet?

HELENA

No, the oldest is only 13. Although she is starting to date already, so...

SAVITRI

Ah yes, that's a fun age. Enjoy it.

They chuckle, then walk quietly for a bit.

SAVITRI

Will you be able to leave them? If you were selected for being God?

HELENA

I- I would-

(she pauses)

I mean, I'd have to. Right? Yes, I'd miss them, but think of all the good I could do.

SAVITRI

Mmm... I couldn't leave mine, not even for this.

HELENA

Oh? Then... Then why are you...

SAVITRI

(shrugs)

Why not? I doubt I'll be the last one standing. If I am, I'll simply decline. And if not, well, this has been a unique experience - not that I will remember it...

(she chuckles)

But no, it would be too much responsibility.

(she chuckles again)

I'll leave that to you.

HELENA

You're too kind.

(they laugh)

But, please don't purposely lose THIS round, because I'd like to stay in the running.

SAVITRI

Oh, of course not - I do too, I'll stay as long as I'm able. I've never done anything like it.

Helena seems reassured by her answer, and she has them go a bit faster now that the plaza is visible up ahead.

Switch to Jorge and Nate playing football. Jorge is having a blast - he's completely in his element, and the counter on the screen shows that he's already scored 12 goals!

Nate, meanwhile, has only scored 2. The kids laugh at him as he kicks another ball at the net and the goalie easily blocks it. Nate turns to Jorge and sighs.

NATE

You know you can stop after 5...

JORGE

I'm going to 20!!

He makes another shot. Nate sighs again, then goes back to trying (and failing) to fake out his goalie.

Switch to Mike. He's wandering through the plaza with a coconut in his hand and a parrot perched on his shoulder. The on-screen counter says: 2/5 items collected.

He's talking to a random guy, gesturing as he tries to explain what he's looking for.

MIKE

So I'm looking for a necklace...

(he traces the outline of a necklace)

And, uh, a RED one. Like-

(he points to the parrot's feathers)

Like this color. Red. Where can I?

The man nods understandingly, and leads him into the maze of shops and stalls. Mike nods his head appreciatively.

MIKE

Thank you, sir, thank you so much. I really, REALLY appreciate it. Thank you!

Switch focus to Ayano: 0/5 items collected.

She looks anxious, and every time she approaches somebody, she backs away at the last minute. She decides to just browse the stores by herself, but the crowd and noise are overwhelming, and she's struggling to find anything.

Switch to Savitri and Helena, finally reaching the plaza.  
They run to the clue box and open the clue.

HELENA

Shoot, only one left - guess we're last.

Savitri waves her hand dismissively.

SAVITRI

We'll be fine. Let's see. Punt it, or Hunt it...

(they both read the clue)

Well, I can certainly ATTEMPT playing football,  
though I'm hoping that you, being younger...

HELENA

(chuckles)

I wish, that would be my boys. But I think I'm...  
A little more competitive than you, so...

SAVITRI

I was going to say, I don't have a single  
athletic bone in my body.

(they laugh)

Just channel your aggression. Scare them.

HELENA

Will do. We can meet here when we're finished?

SAVITRI

Works for me. Give 'em hell!

They chuckle, then part ways - Helena to the dirt lot, and  
Savitri into the plaza.

HELENA

Alright, boys, get those white flags ready!

Switch to Mike, who has added a necklace and a head-scarf  
to his collection: 4/5 items collected. He's talking to a  
flower vendor, who's wrapping up several lilies for him.

MIKE

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

He nods politely at the woman as she hands him the lilies, then he waves goodbye and sprints back to the entrance. He passes by Savitri, who grins at his get-up - he smiles, waves politely, and rushes past her.

MIKE

I'm one of the people now, apparently.

SAVITRI

You're fooling nobody!

They both laugh as he continues running. Focus on him as he returns to the clue box.

MIKE

Alright, Jorge. I'm all set.

(he looks around)

Jorge? Ah. Jorge!

He waves for Jorge. Jorge gives the 'one second' sign, scores one final goal, then fist-bumps the other players before running over to Mike.

MIKE

You get all five goals?

JORGE

I got thirty-one!

MIKE

Hoooo-ly cow. You're the man!

They fist-bump, then Jorge looks curiously at the parrot.

JORGE

Why do you have a PARROT?

MIKE

That is a GREAT question.

(they laugh)

So... Now what? Is there a- Do we go-

He pulls out the clue and re-reads it.

MIKE

Oh, here it is. Once both tasks are completed, make your way to the pit stop at the La Victoria scenic overlook.

Switch to Gabriel and Pearl standing on top of a hill, with the town stretched out below them.

GABRIEL

This is La Victoria, a popular tourist spot in La Tierra Nueva, and also the pit stop for this leg of the race. The last team to check in here... May be eliminated.

Switch back to Mike and Jorge, who spot the hill, which is only a few blocks away.

MIKE

That must be it. Come on!

He and Jorge sprint through the village excitedly and make their way up the hill. Gabriel and Pearl are patiently waiting at the top.

Mike and Jorge step on the mat - Mike is out of breath, but Jorge seems fine. The parrot squawks.

PEARL

Welcome to La Victoria overlook.

MIKE

Thank you.

(he glances at the parrot)

We have a stowaway.

They all laugh.

GABRIEL

Well, Mike, Jorge, I'm sure you already know, but you're the first team to arrive. So you both are safe from elimination. Congratulations!

Mike and Jorge fist-bump, then Mike sits on the ground to catch his breath.

GABRIEL

How are you feeling?

JORGE

AWESOME!

MIKE

What he said.

GABRIEL

That's great to hear. So, Pearl will take you both back to the green room, give you a chance to rest before the next challenge. Sound good?

Mike and Jorge both nod. Meanwhile, Pearl opens a door out of thin air - which is very trippy - and leads them both through it back to the main studio.

Gabriel turns to the camera dramatically as the door shuts and blends seamlessly into the background.

GABRIEL

Let's see how our other teams are doing.

Switch to Helena and Nate. Nate has 4 goals, Helena has 2. They're both playing intensely and aggressively, and not getting discouraged when the goalies block them.

HELENA

I'm going to have ALL of you grounded!

(the boys laugh)

Oh? You think that's funny? You think I'm just a weak old lady, huh?

(she kicks it in the goal)

Yeah! Yeah, that's right! Who's laughing now?

NATE

You know they can't understand you.

HELENA

Oh they understand me.

(she does the 'I'm watching you' gesture to the goalie, he rolls his eyes)

You're going down, you little punk!

Switch to Savitri, who already has the scarf, the parrot, and the lilies: 3/5 items collected. While a local woman guides her to the next vendor, she's taking her time and admiring the items on display.

Switch to Ayano, who's still overwhelmed, shy, anxious, and has 0/5 items collected.

AYANO

(softly)

Excuse me... Excuse me, sir...

(no response)

I need to find... Umm...

She gives up, and continues looking on her own.

Switch back to the football field. Nate is waiting by the clue box - he's scored all five goals - and Helena has just scored her fifth one.

She high-fives all the boys, then joins up with Nate.

NATE

Nice job, for a weak old lady. Which is ironic, because you're like, what, 30?

HELENA

37, but who's counting?

(they chuckle, then pause)

How do you think the others are doing?

NATE

I dunno... Are we allowed to help them?

HELENA

Let me check...

(she reads the clue)

No, it says, each team member may ONLY complete one task. And then we can only move on after both tasks are completed.

NATE

Got it. Got it... Well, guess we can enjoy the not-Earth Earth. This is all just so...

HELENA

It's a dream?

NATE

Nah, I'm pretty sure it's real at this point. My dreams are never this vivid. Or complicated.

HELENA

Mmmm.

(there's a pause)

So do you think they'll let you be God, as an- what did you call yourself, a 'devout' atheist? What does that even mean?

NATE

(chuckles)

In the words of John Corvino - I take religion very seriously, which is why I'm an atheist.

(Helena is confused)

I just mean, I'm not the sort of atheist who casually doesn't believe in anything out of ignorance or laziness. I've actually studied and done a lot of research, and this is where my 'spiritual' journey has led me. So...

HELENA

And yet, God is real, and there's a Heaven.

NATE

True. It is a bit of a shock, not gonna lie.

(they chuckle)

Then again, we're competing on a fake episode of The Amazing Race, as part of a game show to replace God, because apparently he's retiring. So... This is a wrench in EVERYONE'S theology, and not just mine.

HELENA

Fair enough. But do you want the job?

Nate chuckles to himself as if it's obvious.

NATE

Who wouldn't?

Switch focus to Savitri, who's laughing as a shop owner tenderly places the parrot on her shoulder.

SAVITRI

Oh my, he tickles!

The parrot squawks with delight. 5/5 items collected!

SAVITRI

Thank you so much. Have a great day!

She walks briskly back to the entrance. Switch focus to Helena and Nate. Helena's face lights up when she sees Savitri emerging, and Nate's face drops.

NATE

No... No no no no no...

He heads into the plaza.

NATE

Are you KIDDING me?

As he disappears into the crowd, Savitri and Helena hug and smile excitedly.

HELENA

The parrot looks good on you.

SAVITRI

He does! His feathers match my robes!

(they chuckle)

Now then, where to next?

HELENA

It's a scenic overlook, which I'm assuming is that hill over there. Come on!

They move at a quick pace through the streets, waving and smiling as they pass people.

Switch to the top of the hill, where Gabriel and Pearl greet them warmly.

PEARL

Welcome to La Victoria overlook.

GABRIEL

Savitri, Helena... Congratulations, you are the second team to arrive, which means you are both safe from elimination.

HELENA

Thank goodness...

SAVITRI

That was quite the experience. You went to a lot of effort to make it seem real.

GABRIEL

Hey, no expense spared when it comes to finding a new God, right?

(they laugh)

So, Pearl will take you back, let you both rest before the next challenge. Sound good?

They nod - the door opens up in the middle of nowhere, and the women are taken aback (but impressed).

PEARL

Great job, you guys.

She leads them through the door. It seals shut, vanishing into the background again. Gabriel smiles at the camera, then heads down the hill.

Switch to Ayano, still with zero items. Nate finds her and is both annoyed and disappointed.

NATE

There you are... How many items did you get?

AYANO

None... I'm sorry...

NATE

Jesus... How hard is it to ask people for help? You didn't even get ONE?

Ayano is ashamed and avoids his gaze. They're intercepted by Gabriel and the camera crew.

GABRIEL

Ayano, Nate, I'm sorry to tell you - you are the last team.

NATE

No, really?? So are we both- wait, no, you said that only one person would be-

GABRIEL

Correct. And Nate, since you completed the task, you'll be moving on to the next round.

NATE

Heck yes...

GABRIEL

Ayano - unfortunately, one of the requirements for being God is an ability to interact with and engage with humanity. Unfortunately, you don't have the skills we're looking for.

(Ayano nods understandingly)

What's going through your head right now?

AYANO

I am... I'm very disappointed, and I wish-

GABRIEL

(cuts her off)

Okay, well that's too bad, but hey - you won't remember anything, right?

(he chuckles and walks away)

Alright, let's get a move on. We're on a very tight schedule, people.

Ayano looks at Nate as if to say, 'that was abrupt', but Nate just shrugs dismissively as if to say, 'that's how the game works'. Ayano hangs her head in shame, and they silently follow Gabriel to the hill.

FADE OUT.