

DARKFALL

by
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FADE IN:

EFX. SPACE

STARS PIERCE ETERNAL, VELVET NIGHT. A VOICE, Oxford English, honeyed by years of good scotch, laughter and the occasional bellow; seasoned by thousands of wild lies, hundreds of bawdy jokes and dozens of fantastic stories told:

GRANT

But once every millennium, the sun awakes as if from a nightmare, and vents its wrath upon the Earth, charging the very heavens with unseen power...

A SLOW TILT DOWN reveals the broad, curved horizon of THE SUN, it's surface roiling with unimaginable violence.

GRANT

When the Conflagration comes to pass, this power may be drawn upon by a race of men known as *Summoners*. Rare of birth, they alone possess the ability to breach the veil between the *atrum terrae*, calling forth creatures that have inspired legends and scripture since time untold-- angels and demons, imps and fairies, dragons and platypi, Minotaur and manitou--

YOUNG DOUGLAS

(interrupts)

That is so much crap.

SLAM TO:

INT. AQUARIUM - PLATYPUS EXHIBIT - DAY

GRANT WOLFE, early-50s, handsome in the careless manner of a moneyed Brit, knits his eyebrows in consternation.

GRANT

Excuse me?

CLOSE ON DOUGLAS WOLFE, age 8 going on 88, his face stamped with an expression of utter disbelief. He heaves a dramatic, long-suffering SIGH.

YOUNG DOUGLAS

One, fairies and dragons aren't real.
Two, it's *platypoda*, not *platypi*--

GRANT

--I stand corrected--

YOUNG DOUGLAS

(continues stridently)

--and three, there is no such thing
as *Summoners*.

Douglas's declaration draws the attention of YOUNG EMILY PELLIGRINO, age 12, at an adjacent ELECTRIC EEL EXHIBIT.

GRANT

There most certainly are--

(corrects)

--well, were.

(corrects further)

--well...

(fishing)

... perhaps?

Despite matching uniforms, Emily stands out from the rest of the FIFTH GRADE CLASS of the St. Arilda School for Girls. Perhaps it's her vaguely goth insouciance; perhaps it's because her socks sag and she absolutely *refuses* to wear one of those absurd little burgundy berets.

YOUNG DOUGLAS

And they invented the platypus.

GRANT

Not invented. *Called*.

As the eel emits bio-electric pulses, the NEEDLE ON A SMALL VOLTAMETER mounted over the tank twitches, accompanied by a LOW CLICKING STACCATO.

GRANT (CONT'D)

The platypus did not exist in *our* world until the year 4025 BCE, when the first pair was called from *Oris* by the great aboriginal Summoner, Biggibilla. Ahh, *Oris*, the Garden world....

(waxes poetic)

... a glittering emerald, suspended in perfect stasis between two yellow stars, bathed in perpetual sunlight--

YOUNG DOUGLAS

(frustrated)

Biggibilla...? *Oris*...? Where do you get this stuff?

GRANT

From the *Accersitus Sceptrum*, of course. The fourteen volumes of the Summoner's Craft...

Emily looks stunned. She reaches down into her satchel, half withdraws an ancient volume, hand-tooled pigskin cover burnished with age, bearing the title: *ACCERSITUS SCEPTRUM, VOL. III of XIV*.

TEACHER

Emily!

Startled, Emily shoves the book back in her bag. The TEACHER, a stern-looking spinster, glares at her.

TEACHER

Eyes forward.

Sneering, Emily turns, immediately locking eyes with...

HER POV - A handsome young boy, PHILLIP WOLFE, 10, his arms crossed on the sill of the glass opposite her, chin cradled on his forearms. He gazes dreamily at her, the eel lazily undulating between them.

GRANT

I'd hardly scoff, Douglas. After all, you may very well be a Summoner yourself. You were born with the *membranula*--

DOUGLAS

--polyps. Doctor Swanson says they're just polyps.

Emily returns Phillip's gaze. A couple girls nearby notice, whisper maliciously among themselves.

PHILLIP'S POV - POP! The eel kicks out a hard jolt, THE NEEDLE ON THE VOLTAMETER LEAPING. On the opposite side of the tank, Emily ABRUPTLY SNEEZES. SIMULTANEOUSLY, in the DEEP BG, Douglas's head jolts as he, too, sneezes.

GRANT

Gesundheit.

Douglas SNIFFS, gives him an injured look.

DOUGLAS

Poppi, can we *please* talk about something else?

GRANT
 (smiles gently)
 Very well...
 (looks around)
 Where *is* that brother of yours?

Phillip clamps his open mouth against the glass like a sucker-fish and puffs out his cheeks. While the other girls express disgust, Emily suppresses a giggle. The Teacher scowls at Phillip, CLAPS her hands for attention.

TEACHER
 Come away, ladies.
 (adds, pointedly)
 Emily!

She snatches Emily by the wrist, pulls her away. Phillip watches, forlorn.

GRANT (O.S.)
 Phillip...?

Phillip turns. Grant and Douglas stand nearby.

GRANT
 What are you up to?

Phillip turns in time to see Emily throw a longing glance back at him as she's hauled out the main exit.

GRANT (O.S.)
 Phillip...?

Off Phillip's stricken, forlorn expression.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. WOLFE HOUSE - PHILLIP AND JENNY'S BEDROOM - DAWN

CLOSE ON - PHILLIP WOLFE, 26, as his eyes snap open to LOUD, OBNOXIOUS MORNING ZOO over the clock radio. He SNARLS, rolls over, pulls his pillow over his head.

SUPER: 16 YEARS LATER

SUPER: PRESENT DAY

Phillip's girlfriend, JENNY BENNETT, early-20s, blonde, effortlessly pretty, peeks under the pillow.

JENNY
 Wakee-wakee.

She kisses him. He kisses her. They begin heating up before she pushes him away.

JENNY
I'll be late for work.

PHILLIP
Work is highly overrated.

He kisses her neck. She arches like a cat.

JENNY
Shh. I think your brother's up.

PHILLIP
Then we'll have to be very quiet.

He pulls her down to him. GIGGLING, Jenny kisses him passionately.

INT. WOLFE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The distinctive CLICKING of someone TOUCH-TYPING a keyboard O.S. A SLOW CREEP moves us through a cluttered living room, classic Craftsman furniture, overflowing bookshelves, here and there, the detritus of a career in motion picture special effects--miniatures, props, creature maquettes, masks.

WE FIND DOUGLAS WOLFE, 24, seated in an alcove, dressed in sweatpants and a tattered Cal-Tech t-shirt, eyebrows knit in consternation, reacting to something startling on his monitor.

DOUGLAS
Whoa...

Douglas keys in a series of commands. The printer begins SPITTING OUT DATA.

INT. WOLFE HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nose buried in the printouts, Douglas walks down the hallway, places a hand on the bathroom door just as it's pulled open from the other side by Jenny. Both let out STARTLED YELPS.

JENNY
Douglas!

DOUGLAS
Oh, wow. Jesus. I'm sorry.

Hair still wet from the shower, clutching the front of her towel wrap, Jenny averts her eyes. The two do an awkward dance past one another. Embarrassed smiles.

Douglas stands aside, watching her as she moves down the hallway. At the bedroom door, she turns, catches him.

JENNY
Douglas? Are you staring at my ass?

DOUGLAS
(horrified)
No. God no.

INT. WOLFE HOUSE - PHILLIP AND JENNY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jenny enters, opens the closet and hurriedly begins getting dressed.

JENNY
Your brother almost saw me naked.

Naked, sheets twisted around his middle, Phillip sits up, rubs his face, raking fingers through his dark blonde mane.

PHILLIP
Lucky him. Can I see you naked?

She steps out of the closet, holds up a dark-blue men's suit.

JENNY
What do you think?

PHILLIP
That's way too butch, even for the bank.

JENNY
Not for me. For you.

She drapes the suit over the corner of the bed. Phillip looks at her, confused. She sits at a vanity, quickly draws a brush through her hair.

PHILLIP
You bought me a suit?

JENNY
For tonight.
(off his clueless gaze)
Matt Krause? Delmonicos on Pico?
Seven o'clock...?

PHILLIP
I hate suits.

JENNY
C'mon, Phillip. We talked about
this. Remember--

PHILLIP
(by rote, unenthused)
--I'm a landscaper, not a gardener.

JENNY
Right. Suit and tie.

PHILLIP
I don't know how to tie a tie.

Jenny tosses him a CHILD'S CLIP-ON. Phillip picks it up,
examines it.

PHILLIP
Where'd you find that?

JENNY
Boy's department.

PHILLIP
(holds it to his neck)
Look how short it is!

JENNY
Keep your coat buttoned.

EXT. WOLFE HOUSE - DAY

A craftsman bungalow hugging the hillside, steps meandering
down to the street. A battered BMW 2002 outfitted with a BIKE-
RACK mounted behind the trunk that holds a MOUNTAIN BIKE.

A TOYOTA pulls up. Behind the wheel, LOTTIE BREWSTER, middle-
aged, slightly overweight; owns six cats. She checks her make-
up, looks up at the house. HONKS.

INT. WOLFE HOUSE - PHILLIP AND JENNY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jenny reacts to the HONKING O.S., grabs her purse and gives
Phillip a quick peck on the cheek.

JENNY
Seven. Delmonicos. Suit and tie.

Before he can respond, she's out the door. He looks at the
tie, despondent, slumps back in bed.

EXT. LOS ANGELES CENTRAL LIBRARY - DAY

More than a few BUMS and BEGGARS in the courtyard out in front of the stately, deco-style Goodhue Building.

FORRESTER (PRE-LAP)

Miss Pelligrino, you are in charge of the Regina Kahl Collection, are you not?

INT. LIBRARY - OFFICE - DAY

The little girl we met in the aquarium, now grown up: EMILY PELLIGRINO, 28, glasses--a girl men don't notice right away, but once they do, can't take their eyes off her. Face a flawless, pale stone mask, she's given the third degree by her boss, DONALD FORRESTER, 50ish, balding.

EMILY

I am.

FORRESTER

And yet over your tenure, nine manuscripts--nine extraordinarily *valuable* manuscripts--cannot be accounted for.

EMILY

Have you checked the stacks? Perhaps they've been placed in general circulation--

FORRESTER

Oh. *Perhaps* they have. *Perhaps* Joe Lunch-bucket checked out...

(checks the list)

... Volume Six of the *Accersitus Sceptrum*, sixteenth century, author, anonymous, hand illuminated on parchment, bound in stamped and decorated Scottish boar-hide.

Emily shrugs.

EMILY

It's possible.

FORRESTER

No, Miss Pelligrino, it is *not* possible.

Forrester leans forward, a nasty smile pasted on his face.

FORRESTER

What would you say if I told you I checked with no less than three of your previous employers, and all of them reported similar thefts.

EMILY

(coolly)

I'd say I'd been slandered, and that you're singling me out for harassment because I've refused your revolting and persistent demands for sexual favors.

FORRESTER

(sputters, outraged)

That's--that's *ridiculous!* I never once...!

Now it's Emily's turn to smile. Forrester's eyes narrow with suppressed loathing. He regroups.

FORRESTER

There will be a *thorough* investigation. Until then, you will be reassigned.

EMILY

(incensed)

To what department?

INT. LIBRARY - CHILDREN'S READING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Scowling, Emily sits at a desk, posture ram-rod straight, hands folded before her, trying to maintain some vestige of her dignity.

A SLOW PULL REVEALS a DOZEN KIDS: Some seated, RECITING NURSERY RHYMES; others SHOUTING, GIGGLING, chasing each other through stacks. Their SCREAMS WIND UP to the WHINE OF A DENTAL DRILL.

TRUAX (PRE-LAP)

I've always found that modern civilization is like a tooth...

INT. DENTAL OFFICE - TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

DR. LES TRUAX, a dentist in his mid-40s, planes a PATIENT'S molar for a crown. On a small plasma-screen TV extending over the chair, DISCOVERY NEWS reports MOS.

TRUAX

... protecting its surface is a smooth white layer of enamel. Belief in God, justice and social institutions provides a measure of security for its citizenry, but...

The Patient, mouth packed with cotton, a clamp and one of those nasty little DROOL-VACS, eyes Truax nervously as he changes drill-bits.

TRUAX (CONT'D)

... once that enamel is weakened or breached, it allows bacteria into the *dentin* and, eventually, the pulp, rotting the tooth from the inside out...

He picks up a stainless steel pick, begins digging into the Patient's tooth.

TRUAX (CONT'D)

This results in pain or, as manifested in society, turmoil and decadence. You see it everywhere--in film, politics, music, social discourse. If ignored--

He catches a burr, scrapes it clear, the Patient wincing.

TRUAX (CONT'D)

--the root dies, and the tooth must be extracted.

He sees something of interest on the television. Behind the anchor, a GRAPHIC OF THE SUN. He TURNS UP THE VOLUME.

ANCHOR

... Marshall Flight Center mysteriously lost contact early this morning with its Solar and Heliospheric Observatory after logging a massive solar flare...

Truax stops drilling, positioning the TV so he can watch the story. His interest grows as it continues:

ANCHOR

Coronal Mass Ejections, or C.M.E.s, can disrupt television and radio transmissions.

ANCHOR (CONT'D)

In some cases, they may damage satellites and ground based power lines, resulting in widespread blackouts...

EXT. JET PROPULSION LAB (JPL) - DAY

A campus of modern buildings nestled in the lap of the Angeles Crest foothills.

DOUGLAS (PRE-LAP)

Both Marshall and Goddard reported unprecedented numbers...

INT. JPL - HOLST PROJECT BULLPEN

A WALL OF GLASS overlooks the MAIN ASSEMBLY FACILITY--a cavernous hall where spacecraft are pieced together before launch by TECHS dressed in white clean-suits.

DOUGLAS WOLFE, early-20s, presents data to the other three members of his team on the Holst Surveyor Project.

DOUGLAS

The data-set's incomplete. SOHO was mid-transmission when it was knocked out--

The team leader, MIKE "JELLYROLL" JELLICO, early-40s, doughy, interrupts:

JELLICO

Knocked out?

DOUGLAS

Toasted. Total bake-out. Final readings higher than the Carrington event--

JELLICO

No way.

MEGAN CHANG, mid-20s, a brilliant young mathematician-engineer, hold up her hands.

MEGAN

Whoa whoa whoa, I'm just a rocket scientist. Speak slowly for the astronomically impaired.

(to Douglas)

The Carrington-what?

DOUGLAS
September 1st, 1859. The sun
generated an exceptionally intense
coronal mass ejection--

JELLICO
(interjects)
--charged plasma was ejected from the
Sun and hit Earth.

MEGAN
So what happened?

JELLICO
(dismissive)
Practically nothing. Some telegraph
systems were fried--

DOUGLAS
--but that was pre-electricity.
Telegraph was only fifteen years old.
Today, the results could be
catastrophic.

JELLICO
(interrupts)
--if the data's accurate. And the
polarity's negative. And it's even
headed our way. SOHO *did* go dark mid-
transmission.

DOUGLAS
Lotsa ifs. *Tons* of ifs.

JELLICO
A *truckload* of ifs.

MEGAN
How long before they could restore
the grid, worst case scenario?

DOUGLAS
Worst case?

He and Jellico trade a glance.

JELLICO
Given current global manufacturing
capacity of commercial grade high
voltage transformers, decades maybe--

MEGAN
Decades?

DOUGLAS

--then again, in order to manufacture transformers, you need the grid, which you don't have, because, hello, *you don't have transformers.*

MEGAN

A new Dark Age. No phones. No lights...

DOUGLAS

(deadpans)

No motorcars. Not a single luxury. Like Robinson Crusoe...

JELLICO

(nods sagely)

... it's primitive as can be.

Beat. The two men grin. Megan gives them a hard look. Not funny.

EXT. BAYLOCK RESIDENCE - DAY

THE SUN burns brightly in a ruthless blue sky.

Phillip mops sweat from his brow with a bandanna. Leaning on his shovel, he gazes intently at something OFF SCREEN. His partner, SERGIO RAMIREZ, early-20s, former Reseda High star linebacker, steps up behind him:

SERGIO

S'perfect.

PHILLIP

I dunno...

The front yard is a Zen showplace--artfully placed stones, raked gravel, koi pond, trees, bamboo and shrubs create an island of calm in the oppressive banality of the burbs.

SERGIO

Whatchu talkin "I dunno," man. It's bootyful.

PHILLIP

That maple's throwing off the *qi*.

Sergio looks at it as if he knows what the hell Phillip's talking about.

SERGIO

No, man. Let it go. *Qi's* good.

PHILLIP
 (shakes his head)
 Needs to be oriented about a quarter-
 turn, north to south.

SERGIO
 Oh, *man*...

PHILLIP
 C'mon, Serge. How're you gonna feel
 three weeks from now when the thing's
 dead? It's a *Japanese maple*, man.
 Those things don't just--

SERGIO
 --grow on trees?

Phillip gives him a look. Resigned, Sergio sighs:

SERGIO
 Quarter-turn, north to south.

Phillip's cell RINGS. He smiles when he sees the number.

PHILLIP
 Hey, Jen.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CAL-WEST BANK - HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jenny is seated in her cubicle in front of her workstation.

JENNY
 I just wanted to remind you--

PHILLIP
 I know. Delmonico's on Pico. Seven
 sharp.

JENNY
 Give yourself time to shower and
 change. Oh, and Phillip...?

PHILLIP
 Yeah.

JENNY
 Baylock's check bounced again.

Phillip lowers the phone. Pissed. Pissed beyond words.

JENNY
Phillip...?

PHILLIP
Yeah.

JENNY
Don't do anything stupid.

Pissed, Phillip snaps his phone shut

SLAM TO:

EXT. BAYLOCK RESIDENCE - FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

The suburban Eden is gone, transformed into a no-man's land of TURNED SOIL AND UPROOTED PLANTS. Phillip pries a Japanese white elm from the ground with a shovel.

A graphite-gray PORSCHE TURBO screeches to a halt at the curb. PAUL BAYLOCK, a mid-30s Master-of-His-Own-Universe type wearing a \$3,000 suit, jumps out of the car.

BAYLOCK
Hey...! *Hey!*

Baylock rushes up to Phillip, grabs his arm.

BAYLOCK
What the *hell* is going on?

PHILLIP
Your check bounced.

BAYLOCK
Okay, let's just cool down, okay? It was a screw-up at the bank. The check's good. Just put it through again. It'll clear...

PHILLIP
That's what you said the last two times...

He jerks the tree up from the ground, drops it in a can.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)
... strike three. You're out.

Sergio steps up, hands Phillip a SET OF NYLON STRAPS, slides a dolly under the potted tree.

BAYLOCK
You can't just dig up my yard.

PHILLIP
Your yard, my plants. I'm taking them with me.

As Sergio loads the tree in the back of the truck with the rest of the plants and shrubs, Phillip begins wrapping the straps around SPRINKLER HEADS, the WATERING TIMER...

BAYLOCK
You're making a big mistake here, Wolfe. The law's on my side!

PHILLIP
(stammers)
Yeah? Well everything that's...
right and true is on mine!

Phillip hooks the straps to his trailer hitch.

BAYLOCK
Right and true? What're you? An idiot?

PHILLIP
Nope. I'm the guy who created a little corner of Paradise for you, Baylock. And in return, you screwed me. Then you lied to me...

Phillip gets in his truck, SLAMS the door. He REVVES THE ENGINE, throws the truck in gear.

PHILLIP
Say goodbye to Paradise.

He POPS THE CLUTCH. The STRAPS SNAP TAUT and the ENTIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM IS JERKED FROM THE GROUND, WATER GEYSERING from broken pipes. Enraged, Baylock dials 911 on his cell.

BAYLOCK
Get me the police...

EXT. DELMONICOS - NIGHT

Establish.

JENNY (PRE-LAP)

A small surcharge--less than two percent of the purchase price of the home--not only provides the buyer a custom landscape design, but upkeep on a weekly basis for as long as he owns the property.

INT. DELMONICOS - NIGHT

Jenny sits at a table with MATT KRAUSE, one of the biggest developers in Los Angeles, and SEVERAL OF HIS ASSOCIATES. Krause, mid-40s, golf-pro handsome, checks his Rolex as Jenny wraps up a Power Point presentation on her laptop.

JENNY

No dead lawns, no maintenance issues or headaches for the Community Association; no eyesores that bring down long-term property values.

KRAUSE

What if the owner sells the house?

JENNY

We continue with the new owners. Our service contract would be a value-added feature exclusive to Krause Homes. We call it *Lifescaping*.

Krause is unimpressed.

KRAUSE

Lifescaping. That's cute...
(again checks his watch)
Your partner's late.

Jenny gives him a discomfited smile. Her cell-phone CHIRPS. She snatches it up, checks the number. Stressed, trying not to show it:

JENNY

Phillip. We're all waiting for you...

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. COUNTY LOCK-UP - NIGHT

Under the watchful eye of a SHERIFF DEPUTY, Phillip speaks on a pay-phone. In the BG, SUSPECTS sit cuffed to a long bench on one side of the corridor.

PHILLIP
I know. I'm sorry. I'm not gonna
make it.

JENNY
Where are you?

PHILLIP
I'm in jail--

Jenny covers the phone, the color draining from her face. She
turns to the others at the table. Forced smile.

JENNY
Excuse me.

She steps away from the table.

JENNY
What'd you do?

PHILLIP
I just--I lost it, that's all. It
was Baylock--

JENNY
You didn't hit him!

PHILLIP
No! No. Of course I didn't *hit* him.
That would be crazy--
(falters)
I just took what was mine.

JENNY
What does that *mean*, Phillip? I
don't even know what that *means*.

PHILLIP
Mine. You know. The plants, the
trees, the stones. The sprinklers.
He *lied* to me.

JENNY
What is it with you and the lying
thing? It's the twenty-first
century. *Everybody* lies. It's just
business, not some kind of a... a
sacred *blood-oath*.

PHILLIP
I don't lie.

Jenny lowers the phone, drops her head. It's always the same...

PHILLIP
Jenny...?

JENNY
We've been living together six years.
Six years, Phillip. And you haven't
changed. You haven't--

PHILLIP
I haven't what?

JENNY
Grown up.

PHILLIP
(stung)
Okay, so I don't wear a suit and a
tie. I don't drive a BMW--

JENNY
That's not what this is about and you
know it. It's more than that. You
see the world in black and white.
It's not a black and white world!

PHILLIP
I know that.

Jenny looks toward the table. Krause and his associates have left. Another opportunity down in flames...

JENNY
No. You don't.

She lowers the phone, closes her eyes. We can hear PHILLIP'S VOICE over the receiver REPEATING HER NAME...

PHILLIP (O.S.)
Jenny? Wait, don't hang up! Jen--

... before she folds it shut and DISCONNECTS.

INT. JPL - HOLST PROJECT BULLPEN - DOUGLAS'S CUBICLE - NIGHT

Under a shelf cluttered with an impressive Major Matt Mason toy collection, a COMPUTER MONITOR displays A LIVE CORONAL IMAGE of the sun on a website headed "SOLARSOFT."

DOUGLAS

Assuming it's headed toward Earth,
average velocity of a coronal
ejection gives us three, four days
before it hits...

JELLICO

But?

Douglas shrugs. The lights are dim. Most of the staff has
gone home.

DOUGLAS

Velocity's a function of magnitude,
and estimations are all over the map,
from mild to wild.

JELLICO

Big numbers?

DOUGLAS

Bigger than Carrington; bigger than
any simulation or model. Plus we've
got conflicting reports about its
polarity and its trajectory. The
only thing we know--

JELLICO

--is that nobody knows.

DOUGLAS

You got it. All we can do is wait
and see. The closer it gets, the
harder the data-set.

Exhausted, Douglas SWITCHES OFF THE MONITOR, rubs his eyes.

DOUGLAS

It's weird...

JELLICO

What?

DOUGLAS

When we think of stars, we think of
these cold, distant, alien *things*.
But not the sun. The sun's like an
old friend, you know? Always there.
Warm, dependable. We forget...

(meets Jellico's eyes)

... it's a star.

A beat.

JELLICO

You're giving me the creeps, Doug.

DOUGLAS

I'm giving *myself* the creeps.

EXT. THE HOLLYHOCK - NIGHT

One of those old apartment houses above West Sunset. CANDLELIGHT flickers in one of the upstairs units. A MALE VOICE, deep and utterly devoid of emotion--an Italian Henry Kissinger--speaks under the POP AND HISS of an OLD RECORDING:

MALE VOICE (PRE-LAP)

(in Italian)

When calling the *Baalog*, the most effective means is to use a distress call followed by the name of the sect or tribe...

INT. EMILY PELLIGRINO'S APARTMENT - DAY

A '70S VINTAGE CASSETTE PLAYER runs a tape. Through the top-loading plastic shield, its LABEL READS: MSGR. ANTONIO PELLIGRINO-SOLARIO, S.J. - CHANTS AND CALLS - 02/17/72.

MALE VOICE (CONT'D)

(in Italian)

This is accomplished by the vocal cords in conjunction with the *sinus medea* as follows...

The MALE VOICE makes a CALL--in this case, a short series of WHISTLES AND CLICKS accompanied by a VACILLATING NASAL BUZZ.

MALE VOICE (CONT'D)

(in Italian)

Pause and repeat, *per favore*.

The "STOP" BUTTON is pressed. CANDLES illuminate walls lined with bookcases. Fresh from a shower, Emily Pelligrino sits cross-legged on the floor. A volume of the *Accersitus Sceptum* is cradled open in her lap.

Tucking in her chin to compress her vocal cords, she REPEATS THE CALL. The sound she makes is weirdly inhuman, but clearly sentient in its complexity, its chilling cadence.

She then presses "PLAY" to CONTINUE THE TAPE:

MALE VOICE

(in Italian)

Again, adding the name of the *Skritu* tribe. Present tense, distressed form, full voice. Pause and repeat, *per favore*.

Emily presses "STOP," closes her eyes and, taking a few deep breaths, tilts her head back, REPEATS THE CRY--sustaining it, the VOLUME RISING, gaining power and complexity. As it reaches its crescendo, her eyes snap wide open and we're...

OUT TO BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. WOLFE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sunlight struggles through the blinds. Phillip throws open the front door, CALLS OUT:

PHILLIP

Jenny?!

INT. WOLFE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Like the rest of the house, decorated in vintage Stickley. Phillip bursts in.

PHILLIP

Jenny, I'm--

He freezes. The suit is still laid out on the bed. On top is a folded note. He opens it, scans a few lines before he jerks open the closet door. Jenny's side has been cleared out.

He checks a couple of bureau drawers. They, too, are empty. Distraught, Phillip sits on the bed, the letter dangling from two fingers between his knees. He bows his head.

GRANT (O.S.)

A man who has nothing to lose is a man who has no heart.

Phillip looks up.

(NOTE: This is the first of a series of flashbacks that will be a signature component of DARKFALL. Whenever possible, these should be accomplished practically, relying on light-changes and off-camera set-changes rather than VFX.)

The changes to the room are subtle. Though much of the furniture is the same, the decor reflects the tastes of a man long accustomed to living alone. Phillip's grandfather, Grant, stands before him, regarding him somberly.

GRANT

It's not your fault, boy. God took her.

YOUNG PHILLIP, 8, is seated on the bed, deeply bewildered, tears in his eyes.

YOUNG PHILLIP

I hate God.

GRANT

Me too. Sometimes. But...

(shrugs)

... I'm afraid He's the only one we've got.

Grant pulls a handkerchief from his pocket, begins wiping the tears from Young Phillip's eyes.

GRANT

There, now. We don't want Douglas to see you crying. You need to be brave. We're all he's got left. Say, "Yes, Poppi Grant."

YOUNG PHILLIP

Yes, Poppi Grant.

GRANT

That's a soldier...

BACK TO:

INT. WOLFE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - PRESENT DAY

Phillip looks up, a glimmer of hope in his eyes.

PHILLIP

Douglas...

INT. JPL - HOLST PROJECT BULLPEN - DOUGLAS'S CUBICLE - DAY

Sipping his coffee, Douglas FLIPS ON THE MONITOR. Almost CHOKES when he sees

ON SCREEN - the same SOLARSOFT WEBSITE we saw previously, only the SOLAR IMAGE WINDOW displays STATIC SNOW.

DOUGLAS

Oh crap...

His PHONE RINGS, startling him. He snatches it up.

DOUGLAS

Yeah.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. WOLFE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Phillip is frantic, pacing as he speaks on the cordless.

PHILLIP

Douglas, I need a ride downtown.
Now.

DOUGLAS

I'm sorry. We got a situation--

PHILLIP

(shouts)
YOU gotta situation?!

Douglas covers his phone, tries to keep his voice down.

DOUGLAS

Listen, Phillip, I tried to talk her
out of it--

PHILLIP

You were here?

DOUGLAS

I was just pulling in last night when
she was on her way out--

PHILLIP

Why didn't you stop her?!

DOUGLAS

What'm I gonna do? Chain her up?
Duct-tape her to the sofa? She
wanted to leave, she left. I'm
sorry.

Phillip pictures the scene in his mind's eye. Sees something despicable, unthinkable, but perfectly plausible given his brother's affable, aidant character.

PHILLIP

You helped her carry her stuff out to the car, didn't you?

DOUGLAS

C'mon, Phillip--

PHILLIP

You did! Oh my God! Oh my *God!* My own *brother!*

Douglas speaks slowly, articulating each word as if speaking to a dim child:

DOUGLAS

There was nothing I could do to stop her. Okay?

The DOORBELL RINGS. Phillip crosses, looks out the peephole.

PHILLIP'S POV - DISTORTED FISH-EYE. Vacant porch. There's nobody outside.

PHILLIP

No. Not okay, Douglas. I want you in your car. Now.

(turns from the door)

Come home, pick me up and take me down to Jenny's work.

DOUGLAS

Where's the truck?

PHILLIP

Downtown. Mona's loft. Sergio took it after I was arrested.

DOUGLAS

Arrested?! What did you do?

PHILLIP

That doesn't matter, okay? I just need your help. Please...

Megan peers over the top of Douglas's partition.

MEGAN

Jellico needs you, stat.

Douglas holds up a finger: *One second.* Speaks urgently into the phone:

DOUGLAS

I'm sorry, man, I can't. I gotta go...

PHILLIP

No, wait--

DOUGLAS

Listen to me, Phillip. Do *not* go downtown. Stay at home. It's not safe.

He disconnects. Phillip looks at the dead phone, stunned. What the hell? He's about to redial when someone POUNDS ON THE FRONT DOOR.

PHILLIP

Damnit!

He jerks it open.

EXT. WOLFE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

For a moment, Phillip doesn't see anyone. Then he looks down. Standing on his porch is DAHLIA BLAKE, mid-50s, a smidge over four feet tall. A thick MANILA ENVELOPE is tucked under her arm, a TAXI idling out front.

DAHLIA

Are you Douglas Wolfe?

To call Dahlia's attire "eccentric" would be a polite understatement--a brutal car-crash between Isadora Duncan and Margaret Thatcher.

PHILLIP

No, I'm... he's at work.

DAHLIA

You must be Phillip. I was your grandfather's effects assistant on *Nemo*.

PHILLIP

(rattled)

Nemo? Oh you mean--

DAHLIA

Yes. *The Secret Life of Captain Nemo*. His last picture. Down in Costa Rica--

PHILLIP
 (remembers)
 You're Dahlia Blake!

DAHLIA
 (beams, pleased)
 He told you about me.

PHILLIP
 Oh, yeah! I mean, wow, uhm--wow...
 that's--
 (notices the taxi)
 Can I borrow that cab?

DAHLIA
 (confused)
 I don't... you want my *cab*?

Phillip gives her a brief hug, buttonhooks around her, CALLING BACK as he darts down the steps toward the waiting taxi.

PHILLIP
 Oh, god... thanks! You are a
lifesaver!

DAHLIA
 But how--?

PHILLIP
 Make yourself at home! There's beer
 in the fridge! Doug'll be home, five--
 six o'clock at the latest.

Before she can reply, Phillip is already in the cab. It rockets away from the curb.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD REGIONAL BRANCH LIBRARY - DAY

Establish. PRE-LAP the SOUNDS OF KIDS SQUEALING, GIGGLING.

EMILY (PRE-LAP)
 May I help you?

INT. LIBRARY - CHILDREN'S READING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

POV - A chubby LITTLE BOY, 5, stands before us. In the BG, SCREAMING, unsupervised KIDS play tag in the stacks.

LITTLE BOY
 Do you got "The Cat in the Hat?"

LITTLE BOY'S POV - Emily stares at us with smoldering, wholly inappropriate resentment. She's a scholar, not a baby sitter.

EMILY
Author...?

The kid just scrunches his features. Huh?

EMILY
Who wrote the book? Last name.

LITTLE BOY
Seuss.

EMILY
First name...?

Again, the kid is confused. She looks up at him.

EMILY
What... is... the author's...
first... name?

A beat.

LITTLE BOY
Doctor?

Emily glares at him. Hold, then

SLAM TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD REGIONAL BRANCH LIBRARY - REAR ENTRANCE - DAY

Emily bursts out the back door and leans against the wall, closes her eyes, taking deep, calming breaths. Suddenly, she VIOLENTLY SNEEZES.

Feeling a tickle, she raises a knuckle to her nose. It comes away with a SMALL SMEAR OF BLOOD. Troubled, she notices something odd at her feet.

POV - HER SHADOW seems to FLICKER on the concrete walkway.

Emily looks up, almost immediately shielding her eyes with one hand. THE SUN PULSATES ERRATICALLY, like a defective fluorescent bulb.

EMILY
Oh my God. Oh my God, it's
happening...

FORRESTER (O.S.)
Miss Pelligrino...?

Emily turns, startled. Forrester stands behind her.

FORRESTER

It's against policy for you to leave
your post unsupervised. I'm afraid
I'm going to have to write you up.

She just gazes at him for a moment, then VICIOUSLY STOMPS ON
HIS FOOT, turns on her heel and walks away.

FORRESTER

(enraged)

You--you can't do this!

She turns, levels a hard, unblinking gaze.

EMILY

Mr. Forrester, from now on, I can do
anything I want.

INT. DENTAL OFFICE - TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

Truax is busy casting an impression of an ELDERLY PATIENT'S
UPPER TEETH. Irritated, he CALLS OUT:

TRUAX

Debra! Can you get that, please?

It CONTINUES RINGING.

TRUAX

Ah, for Pete's sake...

He shoves wadded cotton into the Patient's mouth to hold the
casting tray in place, picks up on the wall-phone, ANNOYED:

TRUAX

Yeah.

His posture visibly straightens, taking on a military bearing.

TRUAX

Yessir. Right away, Major. I'll
report to the Armory immediately.

He hangs up, turns to the hapless Patient as he snaps off his
rubber gloves, eyes glittering with excitement.

TRUAX

My Guard Unit's been activated.
National Emergency.

He turns and walks out, leaving the Patient GARBLING
OBJECTIONS. The TV over the chair broadcasts a NEWSBREAK:

MSN ANCHOR

Anticipating possible blackouts, authorities are urging the public to remain in their homes and to stock up on drinking water in the event that the solar storm disables municipal pumping stations...

INT. JPL - HOLST PROJECT BULLPEN - MOVING - DAY

CODE RED. A whirlwind of activity, STAFFERS darting between cubicles, carrying on HUSHED BUT URGENT CONVERSATIONS over their dividers, sending out press reports. Douglas and Megan WALK through the chaos, shorthanding like crazy, machine-gunning it. This should fucking *snap*.

DOUGLAS

I got independent data from Yunnan. Polarity's negative, magnitude's off the charts. Neg-twenty-five-hundred. Minimum.

MEGAN

Jesus...

DOUGLAS

MSN bounces their signal off T-401. Twenty-four-thousand, three-hundred miles out. At the current velocity--

Megan does a quick calculation on her pocket HP.

MEGAN

--once it goes dark, we've got a hard thirteen second countdown.

They're joined by Jellico.

JELLICO

Just got off the phone with the FAA. They're grounding all air-traffic.

DOUGLAS

What about the hospitals?

JELLICO

FEMA's all over it, but there's only so much they can do.

MEGAN

What about patients on life-support, pace-makers, insulin pumps...?

JELLICO
 (helpless, horrified)
 I know. It's a nightmare. What's
 the revised ETA?

MEGAN
 Twenty-five minutes.

JELLICO
 (stunned)
Twenty-five minutes?!

DOUGLAS
 (frustrated, urgent)
*Everybody got caught with their pants
 down. There's just no known
 precedent for a solar event of this
 severity--*

MEGAN
 --no coordination protocol. Most of
 the utilities are in the hands of
 local authorities, and nobody wants
 to take responsibility for a shut-
 down in case it's a false alarm.

Jellico shakes his head, disheartened.

JELLICO
 Oh man. We are so screwed.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - CAL-WEST BANK BUILDING - DAY

The taxi pulls to an abrupt halt out front. Phillip gets out, throws a couple bills at the driver and dashes toward the entrance.

INT. CAL-WEST BANK - HOME OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The elevator PINGS to the floor. Phillip pushes his way out. Still wearing yesterday's clothes, unshowered, unshaven, he draws more than a few glances as he races down the hallway. He swings into Jenny's cubicle, only to find it empty.

LOTTIE (O.S.)
 Phillip? What're you doing here?

Phillip turns. Standing in the hallway is Jenny's car-pool partner, Lottie.

PHILLIP
 Where's Jenny?

LOTTIE
Is there something wr--

PHILLIP
It's an emergency.

LOTTIE
(rattled)
She and the girls took the Red Line
up to Hollywood and Highland for an
early lunch--

PHILLIP
When'll she be back?

She looks Phillip up and down, troubled by his frazzled, wild-eyed appearance.

LOTTIE
I'm not sure. You want me to tell
her you came by?

PHILLIP
No. No, that's okay. I'll wait.

INT. EMILY PELLIGRINO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Emily yanks an antique trunk from under her bed. Unlocks it, throws open the lid. It's packed with books. Old books. On top, bound in hand-stamped boar-hide, illuminated in gold-leaf: *ACCERSITVS SCEPTRVM, VOL. VI of XIV.*

Emily hastily begins hurriedly transferring the texts into a scuffed Samsonite.

INT. CAL-WEST BANK - HOME OFFICE - DAY

Phillip sits in the reception area, flipping through a copy of Fortune Magazine. Every time the elevator arrives, he perks up, checks to see if it's Jenny. Lottie peers over the top of her cubicle divider as she speaks on the phone in a LOW VOICE:

LOTTIE
He's still here. Should I call
security?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HOLLYWOOD/HIGHLAND METRO-RAIL STATION - DAY

Jenny speaks on her cell as she and several FEMALE COWORKERS board a SOUTHBOUND TRAIN.

JENNY

No. Don't. It's fine. Really.
Just tell him we're getting on the
train. I'll be there in twenty
minutes.

She closes her phone. One of her coworkers, TRISH NORTON,
well put-together, early-40s, has overheard the conversation.

TRISH

Phillip?

JENNY

He's waiting for me at the office.

TRISH

(shrugs)

Have them call security.

JENNY

It's not like he's a stalker.

TRISH

Give him time.

INT. THE STANDARD HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

Emily enters, looks around. A post-mod nihilist death-metal
type, KLEE, nudges his friend, GUNTER, speaks in a droll been-
there-done-that GERMAN ACCENT:

KLEE

Ooh look, Gunter. It's za runway
model for T. J. Maxx...

They smirk. Emily lugs her battered suitcase up to reception.
The Front Desk Manager, wearing a very snappy burgundy blazer
with a brass name tag, "NIGEL," gives her a once over.

NIGEL

Welcome to The Standard. How may I
help you?

His tone is decidedly chilly. Even the half-naked MODEL in
the aquarium behind the counter seems to be eyeing her
suspiciously.

EMILY

I'd like your best suite.

Emily snaps her AmEx green card on the counter.

NIGEL

That would be rooftop. Poolside.

Nigel picks it up as if it's infected, turns his back to her, furtively holding the card up for the Model to see and mouthing the word, "green" The Model smirks as he checks his computer for availability.

NIGEL

That will be six-hundred-and-fifty-three dollars a night...

(a smug smile)

... plus tax. Will you be staying with us the entire night?

Emily narrows her eyes. Reads his name-tag.

EMILY

Nigel. It is Nigel?

NIGEL

Yes.

EMILY

If I were you, Nigel, I'd be very, very nice to me.

INT. JPL - HOLST PROJECT BULLPEN - DAY

Controlled mayhem as STAFF FIELD CALLS, PROCESS DATA, ISSUE ALERTS. Douglas tracks data on his laptop. Megan sits in front of the TV, watching as attentively as a coal-miner might a canary one mile underground. A PRINTER SPITS READOUTS.

MSN ANCHOR

(on television)

... as a precautionary measure, Federal Aviation Administration officials announced that all commercial and civilian air traffic has been temporarily grounded...

Douglas is wired, tense. He slams down the phone, begins dialing another number as he updates Megan.

DOUGLAS

(gets off the phone)

It's confirmed. They're shutting down the grid in China.

MEGAN

Iran. North Korea. Now China. When
it comes to getting'er done,
oppressive dictatorships rock.

DOUGLAS

Won't make any difference. I'm
looking at projections out of the
Sayan Solar Observatory of negative
twenty-eight hundred nTs--

Jellico bursts in with a box, unpacks a few votive candles,
some Glade-type scented and half-a-dozen packages of birthday
candles, slamming them down hurriedly on the table AS HE ADDS:

JELLICO

--the Russians are conservative. They
got neg-three-grand out of Huntsville.

DOUGLAS

(re: candles)
That's it?

JELLICO

All we could find.

MEGAN

Flashlights?

DOUGLAS

Forget it. They won't work.

MSN ANCHOR

(on television)
... reports are conflicting regarding
the actual magnitude of the solar
storm and its expected effects on
ground based--

Suddenly, the picture BLINKS OUT TO SNOW. Megan turns to the
others, ANNOUNCES:

MEGAN

That's it! T-401 is toast! Wave-
front's thirteen seconds out!

Douglas marks it on his laptop.

DOUGLAS

(eyes on his monitor)
T-minus seven seconds... six...
five... four... three... two... one
and mark--

THE ELECTRICITY DIES, lights and computers blinking out, the white noise of air-conditioning, pumps, generators and fans WHIRRING DOWN TO SILENCE.

Hold a beat, then, IN THE DARKNESS, Douglas VIOLENTLY SNEEZES

INT. METRO-TRAIN - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Jenny and Trish are mid-sentence when the train JOLTS, SHARPLY DECELERATING and the LIGHTS FLICKER OUT, plunging them into total darkness. A`few passengers SCREAM.

EXT. CAL-WEST BANK - HOME OFFICE - DAY

(NOTE: From this point forward, all exterior shots should be A STEP OVEREXPOSED, THE COLORS FLASHED.)

Grand Avenue is choked with stalled traffic. Phillip, Lottie and a FEW OTHER CAL-WEST COWORKERS stagger out an emergency exit from the stairwell. Phillip looks around to get his bearings.

COWORKER #1
It's just a blackout...

PHILLIP
No, look. Everything's stopped...

COWORKER #2
(monkeys with Blackberry)
I can't believe this...

COWORKER #1
I'm telling you, no way is this deal sunspots. It's terrorists--

COWORKER #3
Nah. Chinese. Prolly one of those electro-magnetic bombs. I saw this whole thing on the Military Channel--

PHILLIP
(to Lottie)
Where's the nearest Metro Station?

LOTTIE
(unsure)
Pershing Square, I think.

A slight, middle-aged man, FRANK, approaches. Gives Phillip the once over, noting his seedy appearance

FRANK

Lottie! Are you all right?

LOTTIE

Yeah. Yeah, I think so.

(notes his concern)

This is Jenny Bennett's boyfriend,
Phillip. You know Jenny, in mortgage
credit?

Frank nods.

FRANK

Listen people, it may not be safe
down here. We should just go back up
and wait for the power to turn on.

COWORKER #1

What if it doesn't?

FRANK

Of course it will. I was in New York
during the last big blackout, and
everything was fine as long as you
stayed inside.

PHILLIP

In New York, they still had cars,
phones, police...

COWORKER #2

He's right, Frank--

COWORKER #1

It's not just power. My freaking
watch stopped. Everything's out.

COWORKER # 2

Hell, the toilets don't even work.
What if somebody torches the place?

FRANK

Nobody's gonna torch the building,
Hal. It's all gonna be good. We
just sit and wait and keep our heads
together. It's just a power outage.

PHILLIP

I don't think so. This is something
else. Best bet's to clear out of
downtown before the sun goes down.
Things could get crazy...

Frank glares at Phillip.

FRANK
 Nobody asked you.
 (to the others)
 C'mon...

Frank takes Lottie's hand and the small group turns and starts back toward the bank.

PHILLIP
 Hold on. *Lottie...!*

He catches up with them, grabs her arm.

PHILLIP
 When you talked to Jenny, did she say she was getting on a train, or just waiting for one?

FRANK
 We don't have time for this.

Phillip turns to Frank, holds up one finger.

PHILLIP
 Back off, *Frank*.

The Alpha-Dog has spoken. Frank blinks, takes a step back.

PHILLIP
 Lottie...?

LOTTIE
 She said she was *getting on* a train.
 I'm sure of it.

EXT. THE STANDARD HOTEL - ROOFTOP - DAY

HIPSTERS crowd the railing, fighting for turns at the nickel-binoculars. Gunter and Klee gaze down at the street:

GUNTER
 Groovy.

KLEE
 Yah. *Sehr* Groovy. We should video.

ON SUNSET - People move aimlessly between stalled cars. No sirens, no radios or loudspeakers--only the BUZZ OF FRANTIC HUMAN VOICES.

EXT. THE STANDARD - EMILY'S SUITE - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Wearing a hotel robe, sunglasses and a serene smile on her lips, Emily Pelligrino sits cross-legged on her balcony overlooking the pool, Volume IX of the *Accersitus Sceptrum* open on her lap.

She draws a few controlled breaths, opens her mouth and begins a BINDING CALL, an ULULATING ARIA that sounds as if produced by not one, but TWO CLOSELY HARMONIZED SETS OF VOCAL CORDS. As her call rises to a crescendo, the air around Emily--its very MOLECULES--SEEM TO BRIEFLY COALESCE AND SHIFT, followed by a LOUD CRACK like a rifle-shot.

Suddenly, Emily's face is BATHED IN GOLDEN LIGHT. She removes her sunglasses, gazes at something OS in naked wonder. Hipsters around the pool stare upward.

PRODUCER TYPE

Oh my God oh my God...

COCKTAIL WAITRESS

(blissed out)

It's beautiful...

HOVERING TEN FEET OVER THE POOL is a WINGED, ANDROGENOUS HUMAN FIGURE. Naked but for a diaphanous wrap, it RADIATES A NIMBUS OF GOLDEN LIGHT.

A few in the crowd prostrate themselves, covering their heads, BABBLING prayers. Gunter stares, grinning. Klee smacks the side of his inoperative video-cam.

KLEE

(frustrated)

Preiswerte mist...

The Figure SLOWLY DESCENDS, alighting with balletic grace atop the rail of Emily's balcony, deeply bowing its head. It's voice is like a clarion, formal BRITISH ACCENT:

FAXON

(playing to the house)

I am Faxon. Thou hast Called and Bound me to serve thee. Speak thy name, Summoner.

Astonished by the first manifestation of the craft she's so long practiced, the power she's so eagerly anticipated, it takes Emily a moment to reply.

EMILY
 Emily. Emily Pelligrino.
 (nods down at the others)
 They think you're an angel.

Faxon glances back at the mortals, gives Emily a wink,
 dropping into a markedly more COLLOQUIAL, URBAN BRIT DELIVERY:

FAXON
 They always do...
 (adds calmly)
 Shall I destroy them?

EMILY
 (startled)
 What for?

FAXON
 You need a reason?

Faxon's snarky attitude tells Emily she's on the verge of
 failing an important test. She affects a contemptuous tone:

EMILY
 Of course I don't need a reason.
 (adds)
 Maybe later...

INT. METRO-TRAIN - DAY

PITCH BLACK. Passengers WHIMPER, a few CALL OUT in other
 cars. A SPARK. AGAIN. Then a FLAME and we see Trish,
 holding a LIGHTER. Jenny, Trish and a few other passengers
 huddle close to the light.

TRISH
 Aren't you glad you didn't talk me
 out of smoking?

Sheepish smiles. They start as the door from the next car
 SLIDES OPEN. The MTA driver, MILTON JEFFERTS, 40s, enters.

MILTON
 Everybody okay in here?

JENNY
 Yeah...

TRISH
 Nobody's cell phone works.

MILTON

Radio's out, too. All amounts to we're down here and the world's up there. Main thing's to remain calm; stay on the train. It's the safest place we can be until help gets here or the power's restored, okay?

TRISH

Don't worry, Jen. Your stalker'll find us.

JENNY

He's not a stalker!

MILTON

(smiles)

Whatever. There's plenty of people up there whose job it is to see us out safe. In the meantime, you gotta problem, you check in with me. My name's Milton Jefferts. I'm your driver. Okay?

Passengers answer "okay" and "yeah." Jefferts nods and moves through to the next car.

EXT. PERSHING SQUARE - SUBWAY ENTRANCE - DAY

The stairs descend into INKY BLACKNESS. Nobody sane would go down there on a bet. Phillip gazes down with trepidation, then turns, scanning nearby shop fronts.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - MOMENTS LATER

A frail, elderly Asian SHOPKEEPER, mid-80s, armed with a short double-barreled shotgun is just locking up when Phillip pushes the door open.

SHOPKEEPER

No, we closed. You go, now--

PHILLIP

It's okay. I just need a--

Sees a rack of PENLIGHTS marked \$1.99. Phillip pushes past him and grabs one, pulls out his wallet.

SHOPKEEPER

Fie dollar.

PHILLIP
Five! It says--
(frustrated)
Fine...

He digs a bill from his wallet, smacks it on the counter. As he starts out, he tries switching the penlight on. It's DEAD.

PHILLIP
Wait a sec. This doesn't work.

SHOPKEEPER
No refund! You go now or I call police.

PHILLIP
Yeah, right. Good luck.

Phillip begins rifling through the flashlights. NONE SEEM TO WORK. The shopkeeper levels his shotgun.

SHOPKEEPER
Go now or I shoot.

Phillip double-takes, seems to notice the gun for the first time. Holds up one hand in a calming gesture.

PHILLIP
Hey, whoa--

Terrified, the Shopkeeper pulls the trigger. CLICK. The two men stare at one another, stunned. Furious, Phillip wrenches the shotgun from the old man's hands.

PHILLIP
What's the matter with you?! Are you crazy?!

He cracks open the shotgun. Both barrels are loaded. The Shopkeeper trembles, looks as though he's about to burst into tears. Phillip softens, holds up the useless penlight.

PHILLIP
You were gonna kill me over this.
Think about that for a second.

The Shopkeeper averts his eyes, horrified that, yes, Phillip's words are true. Phillip sets the gun on the counter.

PHILLIP
You gotta family?

SHOPKEEPER

Wife.

PHILLIP

There's nothing here you can't
replace. She's probably scared. You
should go home.

Ashamed, the old man nods, gazes fearfully out the front
doors.

PHILLIP

Where do you live?

SHOPKEEPER

Yale Street.

PHILLIP

I got friends in that direction. We
can go together. Watch each other's
backs, right?

The Shopkeeper gazes at Phillip, overwhelmed with gratitude.

INT. THE STANDARD - EMILY'S SUITE - DAY

Lounging on a chaise, Faxon takes a bite of an apple, peruses
a GQ MAGAZINE as Emily forages through the books in her
suitcase.

FAXON

Do they believe in *anything*?

EMILY

Crop circles, the Loch Ness monster,
ghosts, psychic detectives,
conspiracies--all kinds of
conspiracies--

FAXON

But never the right ones, I reckon.

He comes across a photo of a model wearing a very cool urban
hip-hop ensemble--lots of buckles, straps and artful rips in
the fabric. He smiles, pleased.

EMILY

No. Just the silly ones. The
sillier, the better. They certainly
don't believe in Summoners. Most of
them have never even *heard* of
Summoners. You did say Volume Four?

She looks up at Faxon. Slight double-take. He's now attired in the EXACT SAME OUTFIT displayed in the magazine.

FAXON

Correct. Chapter two.
 (takes a bite of apple)
 So, am I to assume you're the only
 Summoner on Earth?

EMILY

Hardly. There's loads. According to
 medical journals, the *membranula*
 occurs in one out of every one-point-
 two million live births.

Faxon stops on another page in GQ. This one features a model wearing an impeccably cut, off-white double-breasted suit over a ribbed tank-top.

FAXON

Ahh. So the *doctors* are aware of its
 significance.

EMILY

Not at all. They see the *membranula*
 as a benign sinus anomaly. Polyps.
 Like a vestigial tail. No real
 purpose, just an odd, somewhat rare
 genetic curiosity...

She opens Volume IV, begins flipping forward in search of Chapter Two.

EMILY (CONT'D)

... can't blame them, really. The
 last solar conflagration was almost a
 thousand years ago.

FAXON

Nevertheless, these others may pose a
 threat.

EMILY

Only to themselves. Most are
 ignorant of their own abilities, much
 less The Craft. Without a mastery of
 the Binding Calls, they're like
 toddlers playing with live hand-
 grenades.

Emily looks up from the book. Faxon is now wearing the suit we just saw in the magazine.

EMILY
 (annoyed)
 Stop it.

FAXON
 (panicked)
 What?

Emily is caught short by the expression of naked fear on the *Etheorum's* face.

EMILY
 That thing you're doing. With the clothes.

FAXON
 (drops his eyes)
 Yes, of course... I'm sorry it displeases you. Please, forgive me...

Emily realizes that this astonishing creature is, in fact, her slave. The idea is both appealing and repellent. Discomfited, she returns her attention to the book.

EMILY
 Yeah. Fine. These, uhm... *nog*.

FAXON
 (obsequious)
 Yes?

EMILY
 You think they'd make good foot-soldiers?

FAXON
 Outstanding! Loathsome creatures. Ruthless and cunning. Absolutely *appalling* personal hygiene. Plus they're environmentally friendly.

EMILY
 How so?

FAXON
 They eat what they kill.

INT. JPL - HOLST PROJECT BULLPEN

Jellico lights his pipe with a BUTANE UTILITY LIGHTER. Megan struggles to light a candle with a book of matches. They DON'T FIRE UP.

MEGAN

Damnit...

JELLICO

Here. Try this.

He hands Megan the lighter. MUTTERING TO HIMSELF, Douglas works his SLIDE RULE, A SMALL TRICKLE OF BLOOD under his nose.

MEGAN

Your nose is bleeding.

DOUGLAS

Yeah?

Distracted, he wipes a small smudge of blood from under his nose, glances at it and finishes his calculations.

DOUGLAS

Got it. Negative thirty-eight-hundred, fifty nano-Teslas.

JELLICO

Thirty-eight-fifty. This thing's global. No question.

DOUGLAS

Every transformer, every capacitor--

JELLICO

--transistor, microchip. Fried.

MEGAN

What about spare parts?

The men look at each other, unsure.

INT. JPL - GENERATOR ROOM

Douglas holds the utility lighter as Jellico and Megan finish bolting in new spark-plugs and connecting them to the distributor of a large INDUSTRIAL GENERATOR.

JELLICO

Solenoid?

MEGAN

Swapped it out. We're good.

DOUGLAS

You guys set?

MEGAN
 (fastens a final wire)
 Yeah, hit it.

Douglas presses the starter-button. NOTHING--not a click or whir or whine. He tries again. Nada.

DOUGLAS
 So much for spare parts.

Jellico opens a box of Blue Tip wooden matches sitting on a supply shelf near the gennie, tries to relight his pipe. Again, the match doesn't light. Douglas notices.

DOUGLAS
 Gimme those.

Jellico hands him the box. Douglas strikes one. NO FLAME. Tries another. Nothing.

MEGAN
 What're you doing?

DOUGLAS
 Remember when you tried to light the candles with matches?

MEGAN
 They didn't work.

DOUGLAS
 Right...

He tries another. No dice.

JELLICO
 What're you thinking?

DOUGLAS
 I'm thinking the storm might have something to do with it. Some sort of atmospheric effect, maybe?

Jellico looks at him like he's crazy. Takes a second box from the shelf and opens it halfway up, setting it on the floor.

MEGAN
 Okay, guys, what're we proving here?

JELLICO
 (slowly realizes)
 The storm somehow--

DOUGLAS
 (finishes)
 --neutralized chemical combustion.
 Yeah.

MEGAN
 The lighter works.

DOUGLAS
 It's butane. Stored under pressure.
 No exposure to the atmosphere. It
 was shielded from the effect.

Jellico runs the open flame of the lighter over the sulphur tips of the matches. No effect. They might as well be paper clips. He looks up, incredulous.

JELLICO
 He's right.

MEGAN
 No. No, that's just way off the wall.
 How could a mag-pulse effect chemical
 reactions? What's the mechanism?

DOUGLAS
 I'm not--I don't know.

MEGAN
 (incredulous)
 You don't *know*? Think!

Douglas concentrates, trying to puzzle it out.

GRANT (O.S.)
 Careful, boy...

Douglas turns. We PAN, following his gaze and making a SEAMLESS TRANSITION into...

INT. WOLFE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Poppi Grant, wearing a JEWELLER'S OPTIVISOR, works on the delicate armature inside a miniature stegosaurus. He turns to us, raising the visor.

GRANT
 ... don't think too hard.

REVERSE - TEEN DOUGLAS, 14, sits across the work-table before an open calculus text, notebooks spread out, pencil in hand as he does his homework.

TEEN DOUGLAS
Why not, Poppi?

Grant responds with an enigmatic smile.

GRANT
You might break something.

TEEN DOUGLAS
Break what?

Grant CHUCKLES, shakes his head and lowers his optivisor, returns to his task. Teen Douglas looks at him, frustrated.

TEEN DOUGLAS
What...?

A SHARP, LOUD CRACK, like the sound of a rifle-shot.

JELLICO (O.S.)
Look out!

SLAM TO:

INT. JPL - GENERATOR ROOM - PRESENT DAY

A SMALL CREATURE streaks across the floor toward Douglas. Jellico intercepts it, trapping it under an upended pail. The animal emits a DEAFENING SCREECH, SLAMS violently against the galvanized steel.

MEGAN
What is it? A rat?!

Jellico shakes his head, eyes wide with fear; applies his full weight to the bucket. It slides an inch or so with each BLOW. Suddenly, IT STOPS.

Jellico grabs a crescent-wrench, presses his ear to the bucket. After a moment, he tilts it, peering under its edge. The others back away, ready to bolt.

DOUGLAS
Is it dead?

Jellico lifts the pail, prods the small, limp form with the wrench. They all look down at the dead animal.

THE CREATURE - Rodent-like and covered with coarse, black fur. No head, simply a large round, funnel-like mouth ringed with overlapping rows of curved, grey-black teeth that resemble canary-beaks. No eyes, ears or nostrils.

PRE-LAP: A HIGH-PITCHED HOWL accompanied by WHISTLES AND CLICKS that continues through to...

INT. THE STANDARD - EMILY'S SUITE - DAY

Seated on the floor, eyes screwed shut, Emily executes A COMPLEX BINDING CALL. Again, the MOLECULES OF THE ATMOSPHERE seem to BRIEFLY COALESCE AND SHIFT, followed by a THUNDEROUS, ECHOING CRACK. Emily sags, utterly spent, catching her breath. Faxon gives her polite golf-applause.

FAXON
Bravo. Well done!

Emily manages an exhausted smile, looks around as Faxon rifles through the mini-bar.

EMILY
Where are they?

FAXON
Who?

EMILY
The *nog*.

FAXON
Don't be silly, dear. You can hardly expect them to turn up here.

EMILY
Then where?

He turns, looks at her.

FAXON
Someplace dark.

INT. METRO-TRAIN - DAY

Huddled on the floor around the naked flame of Trish's lighter, Jenny and her COWORKERS are sweating and disheveled.

TRISH
How long has it been?

JENNY
I dunno. My watch stopped.

TRISH
God, it's so hot. I can barely breathe...

JENNY

It's okay. Someone'll be here soon.

TRISH

Can we at least open a window?

JENNY

Gimme the lighter. I'll check.

Trish releases the button, THROWING THEM INTO DARKNESS. She hands the lighter to Jenny.

TRISH

Got it?

JENNY

Yeah. Hold on...

She stands, kneels on one of the seats near a window.

JENNY

I think I feel some kind of latch...

She FLICKS THE LIGHTER, BRIEFLY ILLUMINATING the hideous face of a *NOG* outside, INCHES FROM THE GLASS--black eyes flanking flared nostrils and a snout filled with rows of needle-like teeth. It emits a HIGH PITCHED SHRIEK.

EVERYONE SCREAMS and Jenny DROPS THE LIGHTER, the sound of SHATTERING GLASS SLAMMING US TO:

INT. ARTIST'S LOFT - DAY

FRANTIC POUNDING ON THE DOOR. Arched windows, sixteen foot ceilings. Above the kitchen, an upstairs loft is carved into a modest living area, the rest of the space devoted to work.

High on a ladder, face hidden behind a WELDING MASK, THE ARTIST works with an OXYACETYLENE TORCH on a LARGE SCULPTURE--an oddly elegant amalgam of salvaged AUTO-SCRAP--completely ignoring the POUNDING ON THE DOOR.

PHILLIP (O.S.)

(shouts)

Hey! Sergio! Lemme in, man! It's Phillip!

UPSTAIRS - Sergio Ramirez staggers to the handrail. Half asleep, pillow-hair, wearing boxers and a t-shirt, he throws a balled sock, beans the Artist on the back of the head.

The Artist turns off the torch, raises the mask, revealing stunning features--dark, stormy eyes; cheekbones to die for. This is Sergio's older sister, MONA RAMIREZ, mid-20s.

As he speaks, Sergio SIGNS IN ASL:

 SERGIO
 Answer the damn door!

She SIGNS something back that will truly shock and appall our hearing-impaired audience.

INT. MONA'S BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Phillip, disheveled, shaken, breathless from his eleven-block run to the Arts District, POUNDS on the steel door, SHOUTS:

 PHILLIP
 C'mon, Sergio! Open up!

A HEAVY LATCH is thrown. Annoyed, Mona SLIDES the door open.

INT. ARTIST'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Phillip staggers in past her.

 PHILLIP
 Thank God. Jesus, Mona. Is your
 brother here?

Yawning, scratching his chest, Sergio looks down from the loft.

 SERGIO
 Why didn't you call me, dude...

 PHILLIP
 The phones don't work. *Nothing*
 works! What's the matter with you?
 Don't you guys know what's going on?

Mona and Sergio trade a clueless glance.

EXT. MONA'S BUILDING - PARKING LOT - DAY

Phillip and Sergio rummage through the back of the utility truck.

 SERGIO
 Maybe it was a misfire.

PHILLIP

No way. Old man tripped both barrels. Nothing. Then all the way down here, I've seen guys with guns. All they do is go click, and then somebody kicks their ass.

SERGIO

No way.

PHILLIP

Dude, it's L.A. We're four hours into a citywide blackout. There's looting two blocks up. You hear any gunshots?

He finds a hand-sickle, passes it back to Sergio.

PHILLIP

Here.

SERGIO

What'm I supposed to do with this?

PHILLIP

I dunno. Brandish it. Use it if you need to.

SERGIO

On people?

PHILLIP

Yeah, sure. Whatever. Where the hell's that machete--

Pulling aside a dirty tarpaulin, he sees something.

PHILLIP

Crap...

Several haphazardly stacked bags of RediCrete have burst open in the corner of the bed, contents spilled, exposed to rain and moisture and hard-set into a grey shapeless wad of SOLID CONCRETE. Imbedded in the mess is a MACHETE.

SERGIO

I got it.

Sergio grips the handle, pulls. The blade is stuck fast. He tries both hands, planting his feet. No go.

SERGIO

Man, this thing is stuck.

PHILLIP

Lemme try...

Phillip grips the handle, gives it a tug. The blade slides easily from its concrete prison. Phillip turns to Sergio.

PHILLIP

Pussy.

Stung, Sergio pouts, changes the subject.

SERGIO

What about flashlights?

PHILLIP

Huh?

SERGIO

Flashlights, stupid. We're humping, what? Four, five miles in a subway tunnel.

PHILLIP

They don't work either. Nothing electric works.

Sergio gives him a look.

SERGIO

Dude. I love Jenny and I really wanna help you find her, but those cats out there are crazy and...

(trails off)

Five miles in the dark?

Phillip finds a length of copper-piping and a box of sprinkler heads, a knowing smile on his lips.

PHILLIP

No. Not in the dark.

SLAM TO:

INT. ARTIST'S LOFT - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON - the nozzle of Mona's OXYACETYLENE TORCH as Phillip hacksaws the end off. Mona looks distraught, signing urgently to her brother.

SERGIO

What the hell you doing, brah?

PHILLIP
Improvising...

He finishes tapping a thread on the end-cut, screws on a TWO-FOOT LENGTH OF COPPER PIPE with a VALVE ON ONE END, A SPRINKLER-HEAD ON THE OTHER.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)
... water, gas--doesn't matter. The key to transmission is the rate of flow and dispersion control...

Phillip lights a PILOT FLAME on a thin copper tube bracketed to the nozzle, cranks the valve and KICKS OUT A SIX FOOT BURST OF FLAME, shuts it back down to a STEADY JET. Turns to Mona.

PHILLIP
Whaddaya say, Mone?

She gives him slow grin.

INT. THE STANDARD HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

GUESTS AND STAFF huddle together, peering fearfully out the front windows. Curled in a hanging Ovalia egg-chair, Faxon peruses VANITY FAIR. Emily appears, clears her throat. Faxon smiles, sets aside his magazine.

He steps up in front of the windows, bows his head solemnly, then quickly UNFURLS HIS WINGS TO THEIR FULL, MAJESTIC THIRTY-FOOT SPAN, eliciting a collective GASP from the crowd.

FAXON
Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls,
welcome to the end of the world as
you know it...

He raises an open palm that PULSATES BLINDING WHITE LIGHT. Some faint, fall to their knees, WEEPING, hands clasped.

FAXON
It is now my divine pleasure to
introduce to you your exalted, most
high empress, her majesty, Miss Emily
Pelligrino.

Silence. With a CLICK OF HEELS on the terrazzo floor, a clipboard in one hand, Emily strides across the lobby, stands in front of Faxon. He places his hand on her shoulder.

FAXON

You are free to remain here under her protection for as long as you wish, but only at the pleasure and in service of Her Excellence.

(raises his Faxon)

All Hail Emily!

The stunned crowd glances at each other, confused. The only two who respond are Gunter and Klee, pumping their arms enthusiastically.

GUNTER

Hail the Emily!

KLEE

Yah, yah! Emily!

The Model in the aquarium sneers derisively. Faxon points his finger at her, discharging a CRACKLING BLUE ARC that strikes the aquarium with a FLASH OF BLINDING PLASMA.

The crowd stares in silent horror. SMOKE seeps out from behind the glass, which is SCORCHED OPAQUE, CLOUDED BY A GREASY RESIDUE. Faxon scans the room.

FAXON

There, then. Shall we take another whack at it?

He cups a hand to one ear. The crowd responds enthusiastically.

ALL

Hail Emily!

INT. JPL - HOLST PROJECT BULLPEN - DOUGLAS'S CUBICLE - DAY

Douglas studies various texts and journals, writing down notes. Megan peers over the partition.

MEGAN

Looks like you're right. Jellyroll's been trying everything--sulphur, ammonium nitrate, solid rocket fuel. No combustion. Totally inert.

She sounds a little off-kilter, like someone who's fairly sure she's in the middle of a very gnarly dream.

DOUGLAS

Weird.

MEGAN
Weird? Ya think?

She laughs. It's not a nice laugh. Incipient hysteria.

DOUGLAS
What.

MEGAN
That rat-thing we found in the
basement? Me and Heckler just
finished a post-mort and we think we
figured out what killed it.

DOUGLAS
Yeah?

MEGAN
It has no lungs.

Douglas just looks at her.

DOUGLAS
I'm sorry--I'm not sure I got that.

MEGAN
No lungs. No gills. No respiratory
system. Plus it bleeds yellow and it
has no eyes.

A beat.

DOUGLAS
Wow.

MEGAN
Yeah. Wow.
(a beat)
I'm kinda hungry. I was thinking I'd
break into the candy-machine...

She wanders off. Douglas leans back in his chair, closes his eyes, concentrates. SNARLS to himself, frustrated:

DOUGLAS
What is *happening*...?

A brief COALESCENCE OF THE AIR, A LOUD SNAP. Douglas opens his eyes, looks down.

A SMALL LIZARD-LIKE CREATURE crouches motionless on his chest. About six inches long, pebbled skin, neon-yellow with a scarlet gradation to the tail and webbed feet.

Douglas lowers two fingers toward it. The lizard tamely scampers up onto the back of his hand. He raises it to eye level. It flicks a robins-egg blue tongue, calmly returns his bewildered gaze with large, BRIGHT PINK EYES.

DOUGLAS

Hello.

LIZARD

Hello.

The lizard's voice is SIMILAR TO A PARROT'S. Douglas stares at it, stunned.

INT. JPL - HOLST PROJECT BULLPEN

Douglas, Megan and several other STAFF MEMBERS stare in fascination at the TALKING LIZARD, now imprisoned in a glass beaker. Jellico flips through a ZOOLOGY TEXT he cadged from the library. Frazzled, chewing a fingernail, Megan stares at it.

JELLICO

There's some frogs in here that kinda have the same coloration.

DOUGLAS

It's not a frog, Jellyroll.

LIZARD

It's not a frog, Jellyroll.

Everyone reacts, astonished.

MEGAN

(brittle) (MORE)

I swear to God if that thing mentions auto-insurance, I'm gonna start screaming and I don't think I'll be able to stop.

TRUAX (O.S.)

Doctor Jellico?

They all turn. TRUAX, now in spit-and-polished weekend warrior mode, steps up to Jellico, hands him a folded document containing his orders.

TRUAX

Lieutenant Lester Truax, United States National Guard.

TRUAX (CONT'D)

By standing order of the Department of Homeland Security, I am hereby authorized to take command of this facility.

The Scientists look past Truax at the FOUR SOLDIERS behind him armed with CROSSBOWS, BASEBALL BATS AND A SPEARGUN. Several have SLINGSHOTS tucked into their webbed belts. Price-tags hang off some of the weapons.

DOUGLAS

I'm guessing guns don't work anymore.

Truax gives Douglas hard eyes.

LIZARD

Guns don't work anymore.

Truax looks at the lizard, furrows his brows. What the hell?

EXT. PERSHING SQUARE - SUBWAY ENTRANCE - DAY

Phillip and Sergio carry their blades tucked through their belts. Mona wears a JURY-RIGGED PORTABLE FLAME-THROWER SET-UP on her back--one small tank of acetylene, a second of oxygen.

Phillip studies the subway map with Mona. Sergio gazes pensively down into the pitch black entrance to the subway. A GUST OF HOT WIND rushes up, tugs at his clothes.

SERGIO

You guys smell that?

PHILLIP

What?

SERGIO

Wet dog. Funky. And something else...

Mona moves to Sergio's side, takes a step down, sniffs, looks troubled. She turns, SIGNS something to Sergio in ASL. His eyes widen in trepidation.

PHILLIP

What'd she say?

SERGIO

Barbecue. Smells like *carnitas*.

All three peer down into the darkness, hesitating. Disquieted but determined, Phillip pulls his machete and starts down. Sergio and Mona trade a look, then follow.

INT. THE STANDARD - LOBBY - DAY

STAFF and GUESTS perform tasks, some entering with shopping carts loaded with salvaged supplies and food, others barricading the windows with plywood and sandbags. Nigel reports to Emily as Faxon stands by.

NIGEL

I've sent foraging groups out to Ralphs, Pink Dot and a number of the liquor stores nearby.

EMILY

(refers to her clipboard)
What about water?

NIGEL

(checks notes)
There's a Sparkletts truck stalled out on Cherokee. I've got people headed down there now.

EMILY

Candles, kerosene lamps...?

For a moment, Nigel looks like a kid whose dog ate his homework.

NIGEL

There's really no stores around that carry--

Gunter and Klee pass by with a loaded shopping cart. Gunter perks up.

GUNTER

Zer is the Supply Sergeant on the Hollywood Boulevard!

KLEE

Und a Home Depot over on Western!

NIGEL

Excuse me--

GUNTER

Yah yah. Und da Hustler Store! They have *many* candles--

NIGEL

Excuse me! We are *trying* to have a *conversation*, here--

EMILY
 (sharp)
 Nigel.

Emily doesn't look happy. She looks at the two Germans.

EMILY
 What're your names?

GUNTER
 Gunter--

KLEE
 --yah, und I am Klee!

EMILY
 Gunter, Klee, you are now the hotel
 managers.
 (to Nigel)
 Give Gunter your blazer. Help the
 others with the barricades.

Outraged, Nigel's mouth opens to frame an objection until Faxon begins raising his hand. Furious, he strips off his burgundy blazer, shoves it into Gunter's hands and stalks off. Emily turns to them.

EMILY
 Carry on.

She and Faxon walk away as Gunter, thrilled, slips on the blazer and poses for Klee

FAXON
 How delightfully capricious.

EMILY
 Not really. This is my world, now.
 And in my world, there's no room for
 any Nigels.

INT. JPL - HOLST PROJECT BULLPEN - DAY

In a cubicle, by CANDLELIGHT, Douglas sits with Jellico, surrounded by periodicals and texts on Quantum Physics occasionally referring to hand written notes. The Lizard watches them affably from his beaker.

DOUGLAS
 I think we're seeing a physical
 manifestation of Schrödinger's Cat.

JELLICO

Nah. I'm pretty sure it's a lizard.

Douglas looks impatiently at Jellico. Ha ha.

DOUGLAS

Okay, assume that a number of dimensional planes, each with it's own distinct ecosystem and life forms, can coexist in the same place simultaneously--

JELLICO

(impatient)

Quantum mechanics is not gonna turn on the lights.

DOUGLAS

(re: the lizard)

No. But it might explain our friend, here. What if the C.M.E somehow altered the vibrational states between dimensions and allowed these creatures to cross over?

JELLICO

Then we'd be looking at an open door. We'd be up to our nuts in talking lizards and weird...

DOUGLAS

Rat-things.

JELLICO

Yeah. Rat things. Whatever. My point is that, Schrödinger's Cat describes the requisite factors to *allow* for the event. You gotta closed room full of kerosene soaked rags. A *potential* fire. What makes it--

DOUGLAS

(realizes)

--a fire. Right. What's the flash-point?

MEGAN (O.S.)

Guys?

They look up. Megan stands at the door, pissed, flanked by TWO SOLDIERS.

MEGAN

Generalissimo wants us down in
Assembly.

INT. JPL - MAIN ASSEMBLY FACILITY - MOMENTS LATER

SEVERAL DOZEN dispirited STAFF and SCIENTISTS stand in groups.
Scrounged candles provide MEAGER LIGHT. Truax addresses them.

TRUAX

As you know, this facility has been
locked down. Reinforcements have
arrived, and we have established a
perimeter. You will remain under the
protective custody of the National
Guard until civil order has been
reestablished--

MULTIPLE QUESTIONS are shouted at once. Truax BELLOWS:

TRUAX

Quiet, please! I'm not finished--

JPL EMPLOYEE

We can't just stay here! We've got
families!

TRUAX

As do we all, sir. And as soon as we
have the resources, we'll bring your
families in to join you--

JELLICO

Any idea when that'll be?

TRUAX

(MORE)
(ignores him)

--in the meantime, your nation is
depending on each and every one of
you to help restore the *status quo*.
You will be working in round-the-
clock shifts to ascertain the nature
of the damage and develop and remedy
the current technological disruption--

A number of Employees GRIPE AND GROUSE. Guardsmen begin
distributing hand-written copies of a schedule to the
employees printed on blue, pink and white paper.

TRUAX

Cots have been set up in the Main
Assembly Facility.

TRUAX (CONT'D)

You will be sleeping in shifts, color-coded blue, pink and white. That is all.

He turns and exits the room. Douglas and the rest of the Holst team draw BLUE SCHEDULES.

JELLICO

Great. We're supposed to have been asleep for the last two hours.

MEGAN

Is this even legal?

DOUGLAS

I think our civil rights went out with the lights.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL

Phillip leads Sergio and Mona up the tracks. The naked FLAME of Mona's TORCH flickers creepily over the concrete walls, reflecting off standing water between the tracks. Sergio grips his sickle, glances around nervously.

SERGIO

How far do you think we've gone?

PHILLIP

I dunno. Maybe a mile.
(shouts)
Jenny!

SERGIO

Don't do that, man.

Phillip gives him an incredulous look.

PHILLIP

Why not?

SERGIO

(whispers, nervous)
I think there's someone else down here.

PHILLIP

Yeah. I'm kinda betting on it.

SERGIO

No, I mean... *following* us. *Watching* us.

PHILLIP
C'mon, man. Don't do this.

SERGIO
I swear to God, I keep hearing
things. Like... noises, you know?

PHILLIP
What kind of noises?

SERGIO
Sneaky noises--

A SCUTTLING SOUND in the darkness behind them. Sergio spins.

SERGIO
You hear that?

PHILLIP
(dismissive)
It's just rats.

SERGIO
I don't think so.

PHILLIP
Dude. Stop it. It's embarrassing.

Sergio holds up his hand for silence, squints into the darkness. Disgusted, Phillip turns to Mona.

PHILLIP
Gimme that.

She hands him the nozzle of the flamethrower. He trains it toward the darkness behind them, cranks the valve. The JET OF FLAME illuminates A DOZEN NOG, crouching in the shadows.

Jet-black, skinny and small-statured--all knees and elbows and protruding ribs with hideous, bat-like faces, they SQUEAL AND CHITTER, shielding their eyes, withdrawing, cringing in terror from the light of the torch.

PHILLIP
Whoa--

He stumbles back, colliding with Mona. They both go down, the butane pilot-flame of the torch SQUELCHING OUT in the standing water, THROWING THEM INTO DARKNESS.

With WHISTLING CRIES, the *nog* are upon them.

The terrifying battle is pitched in shadows, punctuated by the CHUNK of blades biting flesh, cleaving bone, the RIP of talons shredding clothing, the GRUNTS and SCREECHES of the combatants.

As Mona struggles to relight the pilot with a butane lighter, EACH SPARK OF THE FLINT revealing horrific STROBE-SHOTS of Phillip AND Sergio--back-to-back--slashing at their attackers, tossing them, stomping them.

(NOTE: The intensity of this sequence will be conveyed primarily through sound-design, with only FLASHES of the actual struggle.)

Mona finally manages to FIRE UP THE TORCH, directing a devastating JET OF OXYACETYLENE FLAME into the oncoming *nog*, SETTING ONE ABLAZE.

SCREECHING, they flee, their panicked retreat marked by the one among them ENGULFED IN FLAMES.

Phillip and Sergio crouch, knuckles white on the handles of their weapons, trembling, utterly freaked. Pale, sweating, breathing hard, they lock eyes. Sergio sneers, mimics Phillip in a STUPID, SQUEAKY VOICE:

SERGIO
It's just rats...

EXT. THE STANDARD - ROOFTOP - DUSK

A WIDE VIEW of Los Angeles reveals the paralyzed metropolis. On the distant horizon, FIRES burn out of control, BILLOWING SMOKE rimmed orange by the setting sun.

EMILY
They'll follow the first one who can
bring back what they had. Power,
light, iPods, running water, MTV,
Oprah...
(turns to Faxon)
Is there some way I can do that?

FAXON
Not *everything*, of course...
(thinks)
But we may be able to manage lights.
Not *electric* lights, mind you, but
something much, *much* better.

EMILY
What?

Faxon gives her a knowing smile.

FAXON
Volume Twelve, Chapter Nine.

INT. THE STANDARD - EMILY'S SUITE - NIGHT

Emily reads from Volume XII of the *Accersitus Sceptrum*:

EMILY
... the *Luminiénte* of the Second
atrum terrae, smale, faery-folke, too
wee for the eye, yet goldbeorht as
the sun, eache to light two cubits--
(to Faxon)
What's a cubit?

Faxon is engrossed in a *Cycle World* magazine. He answers without looking up.

FAXON
The length of one's forearm. From
the elbow to the tip of the middle
finger...

Emily looks at her forearm.

EMILY
How many would it take to light up
this entire building.

FAXON
(a half-second pause)
Fifty-four-thousand, three-hundred-
and thirteen. You'd best Call open
multiple breaches, bind them inside
the light bulbs.

EMILY
Fifty-four-thousand...
(considers it)
Can I do that?

FAXON
Of course. Your breathing
technique's brilliant.
(sighs)
But then, I s'pose you'll have to do
it all over in a fortnight or so...

Emily refers to the *Accersitus Sceptrum*.

EMILY

It says here their average life-span is over three-hundred years.

FAXON

In their home *terra*, yes. But I'm afraid the little buggers don't do so well here.

She appears troubled. Faxon looks up from his magazine.

FAXON

What...?

EMILY

It says they're sentient. They have little... villages and wagons and things.

FAXON

They're *tiny*. You can't even see them. How sentient can they be? Besides, there's loads more on the other side. It's not as if they'll be missed.

EMILY

Still...

FAXON

It's your choice, dear. You're the one who wants to build an empire...

INT. JPL - MAIN ASSEMBLY FACILITY - NIGHT

Several TORCHES have been jury-rigged from scavenged propane canisters and spare rocket parts, FLAMES BURNING LOW. SCIENTISTS AND STAFF sleep in cots arranged in long rows.

Asleep, his head resting at the edge of his cot, Douglas stirs, MUMBLING, in the grip of a dream. There is the rising call of CICADAS, BIRDSONG; the soothing SLAP OF WATER AGAINST A SMALL HULL. TILT DOWN to find THE DARK WATER OF A LAKE. In it, the REFLECTION of a small boy's face

YOUNG DOUGLAS (PRE-LAP)

There aren't any fish.

EXT. LAKE - ROWBOAT - DAY

Above us, dressed in outdoor gear, Grant Wolfe stands at the stern, expertly whipping a fly-rod.

GRANT
There's always fish. They just
aren't under the boat.

REVERSE to find a bored, YOUNG DOUGLAS, 10, stretched out at
the bow of a small dingy, peering into the water.

GRANT
Why don't you call some.

YOUNG DOUGLAS
C'mon, Poppi. I'm not a little kid
anymore.

GRANT
Hmm, what a shame. I suppose you've
forgotten.

YOUNG DOUGLAS
I haven't forgotten, it's just--

GRANT
What?

YOUNG DOUGLAS
It *never* works.

GRANT
Ahh. Yes, quite right. It never has
worked.

Douglas gives him a satisfied I-rest-my-case look.

GRANT
Of course, that doesn't mean it won't
work this time.

Douglas heaves an impatient SIGH.

YOUNG DOUGLAS
You *can't* call *fish*.

GRANT
Who told you that?

YOUNG DOUGLAS
Phillip.

GRANT
That's because he's not a Summoner.

YOUNG DOUGLAS
 (exasperated)
Nobody's a Summoner. There's no such
 thing.

GRANT
 You've forgotten.

YOUNG DOUGLAS
 I have not.

GRANT
 So...?

YOUNG DOUGLAS
 It's stupid, okay?

Grant nods sagely. Reaches in his back pocket and pulls out his wallet.

GRANT
 I'll wager five dollars you've
 forgotten.

Young Douglas looks at him as if he's crazy. Grant pulls out a five, holds it up.

GRANT
 Five dollars...

Douglas sighs, stands up and cups his hands around his mouth. Begins making a PULSING, LOW-PITCHED BARK.

BACK TO:

INT. JPL - MAIN ASSEMBLY FACILITY - PRESENT DAY

In his sleep, Douglas CONTINUES the LOW BARKING. Suddenly, the ODD ATMOSPHERIC ANOMALY and a LOUD CRACK. A DARK-BROWN, VISCOUS FLUID sheets down from above, DRENCHING Douglas. He awakes with OUTRAGED SHOUT, sputtering, disturbing the others.

A guardsman, BOONE, enters. He raises his PROPANE LAMP, stares at the chaos. DOZENS OF TROUT-SIZED CREATURES flip and squirm on the floor, on Douglas's soaked blanket. Boone lowers the lantern, crouching to get a good look.

BOONE
 What the Hell...?

ONE OF THE FISH - squirms on the floor near his boot. It vaguely resembles a shark, though it has long feelers on each side of its mouth. Its body is covered with DOZENS OF BLINKING, OBSIDIAN EYES.

Bewildered, Douglas looks around, horrified. A SLOW PULL REVEALS that only Douglas and the area immediately surrounding him has been SOAKED BY THE DELUGE, the surrounding cots and their occupants DRY AND UNAFFECTED.

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - NIGHT

LOOTERS ransack shops, streaming out with shopping-carts full of booty, pairs carrying oversized items like sofas and big-screen TVs, a few fighting over their ill-gotten booty.

A CALL rises over the darkened city; its rhythm and cadence reminiscent of an ancient chant in praise of a long-dead god. The looters pause, heads turning toward the source as though enchanted.

The Call CONTINUES FOR A LONG BEAT, ending in a HIGH, SUSTAINED NOTE. A BEAT...

... suddenly, EVERY LIGHT IN THE STANDARD HOTEL BLAZES ON. There is a COLLECTIVE GASP from the people on the street.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE SPACE - VFX SHOT

An ethereal, child-like face of a *Luminiénte*, a curious expression on its face as it presses both hands against an INVISIBLE BARRIER. A STEADY PULL reveals its naked form RADIATING PURE, WHITE LIGHT as it hovers on GOSSAMER WINGS.

Dozens more dart behind it, the SLOW PULL GAINING SPEED, revealing HUNDREDS of the *Luminiénte* bouncing around, trapped INSIDE A LIGHT BULB flickering inside a wall-sconce, which is in turn inside...

INT. THE STANDARD - EMILY'S SUITE - NIGHT

Sprawled on the bed, exhausted from her recent effort, Emily gazes up at the FLICKERING SCONCE, pleased by the results of her most recent Call.

EMILY

It's beautiful... so much more beautiful than electricity.

Faxon stands out on the balcony, gazing down at the throngs below.

FAXON

Of course it is. It's alive...

(turns to her)

There's quite a few of your subjects down there. More on the way. I suggest you address them before they become too unruly.

Emily gazes at the light, a smile of growing satisfaction on her lips, considering the very concept as she MURMURS:

EMILY

My subjects...

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL

Weapons drawn, Phillip, Sergio and Mona move cautiously up the tunnel. Up-track, Mona's TORCH catches a REFLECTIVE GLINT off the front of the subway train.

PHILLIP

That's it.

Phillip, Sergio and Mona cautiously approach. Most of the windows have been shattered. LONG CLAW MARKS rake the steel sides. Shaken, Phillip turns to the others. The silence is oppressive, menacing.

PHILLIP

We'll start at the front, work our way back. Stay together.

INT. METRO-TRAIN

Mona sweeps the TORCH, the weirdly FLICKERING LIGHT revealing SLASHED SEATS, broken windows.

SERGIO

Jesus...

A NOISE behind them, toward the front of the train. Phillip places a finger to his lips. Mona turns the flame of the torch down.

Gripping their weapons, Phillip and Sergio approach the closed DRIVER'S COMPARTMENT. Phillip places a hand on the latch. Suddenly, the DOOR SPRINGS OPEN and a ROARING FIGURE slams into them.

Both go down, struggling. Mona FIRES UP THE TORCH. Phillip has pinned the interloper, the blade of his machete pressed to the man's throat. It's Milton Jefferts, the MTA driver. He GASPS IN ONE LONG TERRIFIED BURST:

MILTON

Please God don't kill me okay don't I swear to God I won't hurt you...

PHILLIP

Who are you?

MILTON

Listen, man. We gotta get outta here. There's... *things* down here--

SERGIO

Fugly little monkeys, scared of the light, faces like road-kill?

MILTON

(astonished)

You seen em...? I thought--

(looks at the others)

What the hell is happening? I mean, what the *hell*...

Nobody has answers. Phillip helps Milton up, clocks his uniform.

PHILLIP

You're a driver, right? Last train outta Highland?

MILTON

Yeah.

PHILLIP

We're looking for my girlfriend. Her name's Jenny. Real pretty. Blond. About five-five.

Milton thinks, slowly shakes his head.

SERGIO

What happened?

Milton hesitates, looks at Mona, then Sergio. Back to Phillip.

MILTON

Those things busted through the windows. Hundreds of them. I locked myself up in the driver's compartment, hid down on the floor...

(squeezes his eyes shut)

I could hear them. All of them, screaming...

He trails off, eyes haunted. Phillip stares at him, then angrily starts away. Milton grabs his arm.

MILTON

Those things're still out there.

Phillip stops, turns.

PHILLIP

So are your passengers.

The implications hit Milton like a gut-punch. He was the driver. He was responsible for the safety of those people. Phillip clocks the man's guilt, speaks gently:

PHILLIP

What's your name?

MILTON

Milton. Milton Jefferts.

PHILLIP

Milton. If I was alone, I would've done what you did. But you're not alone anymore, understand?

There's something undeniably strong in the simplicity of Phillip's logic. Milton draws resolve from the younger man's courage. After a beat, he slowly shakes his head.

MILTON

Hells bells...

He follows them as they move to search the rest of the cars.

INT. JPL - HOLST PROJECT BULLPEN - DOUGLAS'S CUBICLE - NIGHT

Douglas, hair still wet, wrapped in a blanket, shoves papers and periodicals into his leather satchel. The LIZARD nibbles on a leaf of lettuce in its beaker on the table.

DOUGLAS

I'm a danger to every single person in this facility.

JELLICO

I'm not getting this.
(to Megan)
Are you getting this?

DOUGLAS

The flash-point is me.

MEGAN

(rolls her eyes)

Oh please, Douglas. Does it *always* have to be about you?

DOUGLAS

(ticks his fingers)

I was there when the rat-thing popped up. The lizard appeared on my chest. *My* chest. And now the fish and all that water--

JELLICO

(corrects him)

Brine.

Douglas tosses his Major Matt Masons into the satchel.

DOUGLAS

That's right. Brine. *Saltwater*. Pouring down from nowhere and nailing me. *Just me*. How do you explain that?

LIZARD

Explain that.

JELLICO

And you figure that because you've been present at each of these events, that you're somehow--

DOUGLAS

--responsible. Yeah.

Jellico thinks about it.

JELLICO

Okay. Do it again.

DOUGLAS

What?

JELLICO

Make some more fish.

Douglas looks at him, startled. Thinks about it.

JELLICO

Well?

DOUGLAS

No.

Jellico gives the others a smug I-rest-my-case look.

DOUGLAS

Listen. The last time, it was a school of some kind of--whatever--smaller species. If I did it again, it could be God-knows-what. A shark. It could be a freaking *whale*.

MEGAN

A whale's not a fish.

Incensed, Douglas snatches up the beaker containing the lizard, storms out.

EXT. JPL - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Carrying his satchel, the beaker under one arm, Douglas walks across the parking lot arguing heatedly with Jellico. Megan struggles to keep up.

MEGAN

For Christ's sake, Douglas, get real! The cars don't work and you live in Silverlake!

DOUGLAS

I've got my bike.

JELLICO

C'mon, Wolfe. We'll figure this thing out together--

DOUGLAS

I've already figured it out.

JELLICO

On what basis?

They approach Douglas's BMW.

DOUGLAS

Observation. Pure scientific method. It's freaking Newtonian.

(quotes)

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances." Besides, I know in my gut that I'm the one making these things happen. I can *feel* it...

(realizes)

I've always felt it.

He tugs the mountain-bike off the rack on his car, shoves the beaker in his satchel, slinging it over his shoulder.

JELLICO

Oh yeah! I *feel*, therefore it *is*!
That's *real* Newtonian, Wolfe! *Real*
objective!

A guardsman, ESTAVEZ, positioned at the door, armed with a crossbow, is startled as the door SWINGS OPEN, slamming into him. Douglas stalks out, followed by Jellico:

ESTAVEZ (O.S.)

Halt!

The three scientists stop, turn as a guardsman, ESTAVEZ, levels a crossbow, scared to death that he might actually have to use the thing.

DOUGLAS

(annoyed)

Oh great. Look who's gonna get
medieval on my ass.

ESTAVEZ

Get back... in the building... *now*.

Megan approaches Estavez.

MEGAN

He's not going anywhere, okay?
(back to Douglas)
Douglas, c'mon. This is stupid.
Let's go inside.

DOUGLAS

(torn, upset)

I can't, okay? It's too dangerous.

Douglas starts to mount the bike. Estavez braces to fire.
Megan SHOUTS A WARNING:

MEGAN

Douglas!

and shoves Estavez as he PULLS THE TRIGGER, spoiling his aim.

DOUGLAS

Oww! Oww, *shit!*

He stares down at the short bolt protruding from his calf. Glares at Estavez. The guardsman looks like a 12-year-old who just got busted for breaking a school window.

DOUGLAS
You *dumbass*!

ESTAVEZ
I'm--I--I told you to stop!

Douglas crouches, grabs the bolt and, wincing, yanks it from his calf, ROARING in pain through grit teeth. Suddenly, a THUNDEROUS CLAP and the EARTH JOLTS. The scientists and the guardsman GASP, take a step back.

Douglas stands, pissed, the bolt clenched in one hand. Realizes their attention is focused behind him. He turns.

A DRAKKEN

Reptilian, its body is roughly the size of a Winnebago. Powerful limbs, razor claws, serpentine neck, flat, viper-like head. Behind its jaws is a row of flaps resembling the cooling ducts on a race car. Its scales are differentially patterned, similar to those of a diamondback rattler.

The Drakken seems disoriented, gingerly testing the asphalt with its feet. It turns, its long tail smashing into a line of parked cars. Startled, it UNFURLS A PAIR OF HUGE WINGS and majestically lifts off, BELCHING A JET OF BLUE FIRE.

They watch in slack-jawed awe as it banks off toward the southwest, occasionally BREATHING GOUTS OF FLAME THAT IGNITE THE TOPS OF TREES in it's wake.

Douglas turns to his colleagues, eyes bright with vindication.

DOUGLAS
See? See? I *told* you!

Numb, the scientists nod, speechless.

DOUGLAS
Any questions...?
(silence)
Good!

He casts aside the crossbow-bolt, awkwardly gets on his bike, the beaker tucked under one arm, and pedals away, weaving off into the night.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL

Milton, now armed with a crowbar, exits the rear of the train followed by Phillip, Mona and Sergio.

MILTON

There were at least a hundred boarded
that train.

SERGIO

Where'd they go?

Mona points the torch up-track, illuminating the tunnel.
DOZENS OF DISCARDED SHOES AND SOCKS are strewn across the
tracks.

MILTON

What the Hell...?

Phillip kneels down and picks up a gold card. Turns and
motions to Mona.

PHILLIP

Mona. Gimme some light.

Mona approaches, holds the torch so he can make out the
details on the card. It's a VISA GOLD. The name of the
holder reads: JENNIFER BENNETT.

PHILLIP

Jenny...

Bewildered, he peers into the darkness.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL - FORK

CLOSE ON BARE FEET - stumbling up the tracks--grimy, some
bleeding. ECHOING SOBS AND MOANS. The air is filled with the
ECHOING THRUM of DISTANT DRUM-BEATS and INHUMAN CHANTING.
Trish babbles to herself:

TRISH (O.S.)

I was driving my Lexus this morning.
I was drinking a decaf latté and
listening to N.P.R....

A MACYS CARD falls on the tracks.

TRISH

What're you doing?

Terrified, clothes smudged with soot, Jenny and Trish are
among a crowd of Commuters, lashed together by ROPES AROUND
THEIR NECKS, savagely whipped and dragged along by CHITTERING,
half-seen NOG.

JENNY
Dropping credit cards. Leaving a trail.

TRISH
For your stalker.

JENNY
(upset, too loud)
He's not--
(lowers her voice)
He's not a stalker.

TRISH
Why'd they make us take off our shoes?

JENNY
It doesn't matter.

TRISH
Maybe not for you. I was wearing Manolos--

She's silenced by the CRACK OF A WHIP, a SCREAM from someone behind her. Jenny looks up-track, eyes filled with dread.

HER POV

Up ahead, a Y-FORK, the main tunnel continuing forward to the right while a SECOND TUNNEL MERGES IN FROM THE LEFT. It appears disused, its walls constructed of SOOT-STREAKED BRICK rather than concrete.

The prisoners are herded into the older tunnel by their small, misshapen captors. A FAINT RED GLOW FLICKERS somewhere beyond a bend, casting grotesque shadows on the curved brick walls.

TRISH
Okay, that's *it*.

TRISH stops short, pulls out an expensive PDA/CELL PHONE, snaps it open and begins dialing.

JENNY
(whispers, urgent)
Put that away.

TRISH
I'm calling nine-one-one. This is *completely* unacceptable.

The HISSING CRACK OF A WHIP as it STRIKES a nearby prisoner.

JENNY

Trish--

TRISH

No. I think I got some bars...

JENNY

It's not even on!

ANOTHER WHISTLING SNAP AS A WHIP STRIKES TRISH'S HAND. Trish CRIES OUT, drops the PDA. She instinctively bends to retrieve it, feeling around in the darkness.

JENNY

Trish, no--

One of the ugly little brutes shoves her. Prisoners tied to Trish stumble, fall. The skirmish immediately escalates into a brawl, punctuated by THUDS and RIPS, HUMAN SHOUTS and the HIGH, WHISTLING SQUEALS OF NOG.

The rope binding Jenny to the rest of their group SNAPS in the fray and she's thrown clear of the action, sprawling on the tracks. She grab's Trish's hand.

JENNY

Trish!

The CLAWED HAND of a fallen *nog* closes around Jenny's ankle, throwing her momentarily off balance. She KICKS it loose and stumbles clear, flees down-track into the darkness.

EXT. WOLFE HOUSE - LATER

Douglas coasts up to his house. Exhausted, he dumps his bike in the driveway, gazes at the darkened windows.

INT. WOLFE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Douglas opens the front door.

DOUGLAS

Phillip? Jenny...?

Silence. Douglas SIGHS, zombie-walks straight to the kitchen.

INT. WOLFE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Douglas sets the beaker on the counter, opens the refrigerator and listlessly pulls out a bottle of beer. He closes the refrigerator door, REVEALING DAHLIA BLAKE.

DOUGLAS

Jesus!

He stumbles back, staring agog at the little woman. Bumps hard into the wall, knocking some mugs off a pegboard.

DAHLIA

Douglas Wolfe?

DOUGLAS

(nods, stammers)

Did I--where did you--oh my God...

DAHLIA

It's okay. You didn't zap me here. I'm just like you. A little on the short side, but plain old vanilla homo sapiens.

DOUGLAS

Who are you?

DAHLIA

My name's Dahlia Blake. I was your grandfather's assistant on *Nemo*. You remember *Nemo*?

DOUGLAS

Down in Costa Rica. That was the movie he was working on--

DAHLIA

--when he disappeared.

(nods)

I was the last person to see him.

Douglas is palpably relieved. Dahlia notices the Lizard in the beaker, peers in at it, fascinated. Taps the glass.

LIZARD

Hello.

She grins, turns to Douglas.

DAHLIA

I have something for you...

She picks up a thick manila envelope from the kitchen table

DAHLIA

... from your grandfather. It'll explain everything--
(corrects herself)

DAHLIA (CONT'D)

--well, maybe not *everything*, but a great deal. A good start, anyhow.

Douglas takes the envelope, weighs it in his hands.

DAHLIA

Go ahead. Open it.

Douglas tears open the flap, slides out a THICK BOOK, hand-bound in cracked, ancient leather, the title in GOLD LEAF. Douglas READS THE COVER:

DOUGLAS

"The Summoner's Craft..."
(stunned, to Dahlia)
Summoners?

Dahlia looks up at him, eyes twinkling, the knowing smile on her lips slowly spreading to a grin.

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS

The shimmering skirts of the AURORA BOREALIS dominate the Northern horizon. PEOPLE carrying TORCHES AND CANDLES thread their way up the sidewalks, weave between stalled vehicles toward bright lights of The Standard Hotel.

EXT. THE STANDARD HOTEL - NIGHT

A LARGE, BRAWLING CROWD has gathered, all of them pressing forward, begging to be let inside, attracted by the comfort and safety of the light.

Hotel guests and staff cower behind hastily stacked barricades against the glass entrance. Someone throws a brick, SHATTERING A WINDOW. The crowd ROARS APPROVAL.

Suddenly, BOLTS OF BLUE LIGHTNING CRACKLE DOWN from above, instantly BLASTING A FEW OF THE ROWDIES INTO DUST. The crowd backs away, fearful.

FAXON

That will be quite enough of that!

The crowd looks up, stunned by what appears, for all intents and purposes, to be an Angel of God hovering over the driveway portico of The Standard.

Emily steps out onto the portico, surveys the crowd. Trembling, she withdraws a folded sheet of paper from her pocket, opens it. She swallows nervously and begins reading a prepared speech.

EMILY
Citizens of West Hollywood...

Emily pauses, her voice still inaudible due to the CHATTERING OF THE CROWD. Faxon raises his hand. It glows with radiant power as he BELLOWS:

FAXON
Silence!

A hush falls over the crowd.

EMILY
Citizens of West Hollywood. I am here to tell you that the darkness is not temporary. It has been prophesied.

She falters. A few in the crowd look at each other, confused, MUTTER among themselves. Emily forges ahead.

EMILY
Nine hundred years ago--

An errant gust of wind blows the speech from her hands. She looks at Faxon, panicked. He gives her a slow nod, eyes steady. She draws a deep breath.

EMILY
I am Emily Pelligrino. And when I was a little girl, I was a princess in a world where wishes came true, and magic and miracles were real...
(pauses)
And then I *grew up*.

She says the last with disdain, her confidence growing with every word.

EMILY
I was told that magic *doesn't* exist, that wishes *don't* come true, that I was nobody special. I was told the best way to avoid disappointment is to believe in *nothing!*
(a beat)
I am Emily Pelligrino, and I am here to tell you, that is a *lie*.

The Crowd responds with a huge, MUTTERING SIGH. She waits for silence, meeting their eyes, drawing strength from their undivided attention.

EMILY

You are special. Wishes do come true. Magic is real. Magic is standing right here, next to me.

She glances at Faxon.

EMILY

I am Emily Pelligrino, and I am here to tell you, this darkness is not due to technical difficulties. It is not a malfunction or a failure or a temporary interruption of service.

(a beat)

This. Is. For. Ever. This is what happens when you believe the lies. This is what happens when you believe in nothing.

Silence. She scans the Crowd. Realizes for the first time in her life the thrill of holding a large audience in thrall.

EMILY

The future belongs to those who serve the truth. The truth is the light. I am Emily Pelligrino, and I have brought you light!

She raises her arms in triumph. The Mob explodes, ROARING APPROVAL. Gunter and Klee gaze up at Faxon and Emily, raise their fists, respond enthusiastically.

GUNTER

Hail Emily!

KLEE

Yah. Und da angel! Rock on!

A tough-looking BIKER nearby seems ready to punch them out for their accents alone. Shoves Gunter.

FAXON

Go forth. Tell others what you have witnessed here. Some shall embrace the light and serve your empress. The rest... shall be put... *to the sword!*

EMILY

(startled)

To the *what?* No!

But her objection is swallowed by the ROAR OF THE CROWD. Gunter and Klee wave a LIGHTERS as if they're at a Rammstein concert. Faxon grins manically, pumping his arm as he CHANTS:

FAXON

Pelligrino... Pelligrino...
Pelligrino...

MOB

Pelligrino... Pelligrino...
Pelligrino... Pelligrino...
Pelligrino...

INT. SUBWAY - Y-FORK

CLOSE ON JENNY'S MACY'S CARD as it's hit by flickering light.

SERGIO (O.S.)

There's another one!

QUICKLY APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS. Sergio picks up the card, reads the bearer's name under the light of Mona's torch.

SERGIO

It's Jenny's.

He hands the card to Phillip, who glances at it, then peers uptrack. The main tunnel continues to the right. AN ANGRY RED GLOW FLICKERS in the disused brick tunnel to the left. Sinister CHANTING AND DRUMS ECHO distantly.

SERGIO

(nervous)

I think that one on the right's
prolly our best bet.

Phillip gives Sergio a look, then turns to Milton.

PHILLIP

Where does that one go?

MILTON

Looks like one of the old Red Car
tunnels. Been shut down since
Kennedy was president.

PHILLIP

You gotta light?

Milton digs in his pocket, pulls out a butane disposable. Phillip turns to Sergio:

PHILLIP

You and Mona head right. Milton and me'll check out the one on the left. We'll meet up back here.

INT. WOLFE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CANDLELIGHT. A fire roars in the hearth. Dahlia wraps gauze around the arrow-wound in Douglas's calf while he sits in a Morris chair.

DOUGLAS

I always thought it was just another one of Poppie's crazy stories.

DAHLIA

To be fair, so did he. At best, he only half-believed it.

DOUGLAS

He half-believed everything.

DAHLIA

(smiles, remembering)

Yes. He was magnificent...

Douglas hadn't meant it as a compliment. He gives her a disapproving look. She smiles.

DAHLIA

He said to me once, "Dahlia? Where there's bath-water, there are babies."

She chuckles. Douglas smiles, despite himself. He hefts the book, contemplates its cover.

DOUGLAS

So, I'm a Summoner.

DAHLIA

It appears so, yes.

DOUGLAS

What about Phillip?

DAHLIA

According to your grandfather, no. You were the only one born with the *membranula*.

DOUGLAS

Membranula?

DAHLIA
Structures inside your sinuses--

DOUGLAS
(remembers)
--polyps. The doctor said they were
just polyps.

DAHLIA
(smiles knowingly)
They give you the ability to vibrate
open portals between the *atrum terrae*-
-the Nine Dark Lands that share
dimensional space with Earth. It's
all in the book.

Douglas considers this for a beat, troubled, then:

DOUGLAS
So I can breach dimensions with my
voice.

DAHLIA
Given the right tone, volume and
inflection. Yes.

DOUGLAS
And this book--

DAHLIA
Books. There's thirteen other
volumes, plus indices and a few
forbidden texts--

DOUGLAS
--which we don't have.

DAHLIA
(defensive)
They're exceedingly rare! We're
lucky to--

DOUGLAS
(holds up one hand)
--gotchya. Can't pick em up Barnes
and Noble. So with the chants--

DAHLIA
--Calls--

DOUGLAS
--Calls in these books, I can control
it, breach dimensions--

DAHLIA
 (corrects)
 --*atrum terrae*--

DOUGLAS
 Right. I can open portals between
 these "*atrum terrae*" and import
 animals--

DAHLIA
 --they're not all animals. Many are
 as intelligent as man--some more so.

DOUGLAS
 Sentient.

DAHLIA
 Very. And a number have powerful
 supernatural abilities.

DOUGLAS
 But I can control them. With the
 chants--

DAHLIA
 --*Calls. Binding* Calls. Yes.
 Correctly done, any creature you
 bring into this world is bound to you
 as its master.

DOUGLAS
 But without the right, specific,
 perfectly executed Call, it's just--
 it can run amok, right?

(MORE)
 DAHLIA
 Yes. Its will is its own.

Douglas considers this a moment, then looks at Dahlia with an
 expression of dawning horror.

DOUGLAS
 How many people can do this?

DAHLIA
 Summon? Maybe one in a million.

DOUGLAS
 There's ten million people in Los
 Angeles County.
 (holds up the book)

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

And how many do you suppose have a full set of these puppies on their bookshelf?

Dahlia thinks a moment.

DAHLIA

Very few?

DOUGLAS

(angry)

Yeah! Very few as in *none*!

He whips his pant leg down, grabs his shoe and bolts for the door.

DAHLIA

Douglas!

She starts after him.

EXT. WOLFE HOUSE - NIGHT

Douglas hops down the walkway, pulling on his shoe. Dahlia struggles to catch up.

DAHLIA

Don't go--

DOUGLAS

My brother is out there. And Jenny! In the middle of a worldwide black out, and there's at least ten people in this town who can brain-fart dragons!

He picks up his bike. She grabs his forearm.

DAHLIA

You have no idea where they are.

DOUGLAS

Downtown. He was meeting her at work.

He mounts the bike, notices how distraught she is.

DOUGLAS

It's gonna be okay.

She reluctantly releases his arm.

DAHLIA

Be careful.

He nods, stands on a pedal and begins riding down the hill. Dahlia stares after him.

INT. RED CAR TUNNEL

RATS scuttle down the rusty tracks, their bloated forms reflected in standing water between the rails. Phillip and Milton crouch, flanking the SHATTERED HOLE in the brick wall. Within, FRIGHTENED MURMURS, the occasional WHIMPER, the CRACK OF A WHIP. They peer inside.

MILTON

The hell...?

The tunnel has broken through into what looks like an OLD INDUSTRIAL BOILER-ROOM. HUGE PIPES snake along the walls, the ceiling. The steel bulkhead of a FURNACE GLOWS CHERRY RED.

SEVERAL DOZEN FRIGHTENED COMMUTERS huddle in the cramped space. A number are poked and prodded by A FEW HALF-SEEN NOG down a STEEL LADDER into a large FREIGHT ELEVATOR SHAFT leading deeper into the bowels of the city.

PHILLIP

Where are they taking them?

MILTON

I dunno. I don't think I *wanna* know.

A HAND falls on Milton's shoulder. He starts, terrified. It's Sergio. Mona stands behind him.

MILTON

What the hell you doin, tryin to give me a thrombo?!

SERGIO

Sorry, man...

(to Phillip)

Highland station's about fifty yards up the main tunnel. We found this at the foot of the escalator.

Mona hands Phillip Jenny's TALBOTS CARD. He looks at it, relieved. Sergio peers into the breach in the wall.

SERGIO

Oh, man... that's metal.

(to Phillip)

We better book.

He turns and start away. Phillip doesn't move, eyes locked on the crush of dismal humanity in the cramped boiler room.

SERGIO
Phillip. C'mon, man...

 PHILLIP
There's only three of them guarding
those people. We can take em.

 SERGIO
Dude, Jenny went the other way. We
waste time here, we're never gonna
catch up with her.

Phillip looks at the others, a tortured expression on his
face.

 PHILLIP
I know, but--

 SERGIO
But *nothing*. These people are
strangers, okay? There's nothing we
can do for them.

 PHILLIP
We can't just leave.

 MILTON
He's right.

Milton steps over, stands by Phillip. Sergio looks at Mona,
who sniffs at him and joins the other two. Sergio sighs.

 SERGIO
Oh, *man*...

EXT. SILVER LAKE BLVD. - SUNSET TUNNEL

Douglas weaves his bike through a CROWD OF REFUGEES walking up
Silver Lake Boulevard. A SHOUT:

 LOTTIE
Douglas? Is that you?

He brakes, looks around. Spots Lottie, disheveled, exhausted,
walking with a few of the COWORKERS we saw earlier.

 DOUGLAS
Lottie!

He looks at her Coworkers, sees Jenny and his brother aren't
among them.

DOUGLAS
Where's Jenny?

LOTTIE
Phillip came by. He was gonna try to find her. She went out to lunch with Trish.

DOUGLAS
Where?!

LOTTIE
Hollywood and Highland--

EXT. HOLLYWOOD/HIGHLAND METRO-RAIL STATION - NIGHT

Jenny stares aghast at the surrealistic scene.

JENNY
Oh my God...

Display windows are shattered, their contents picked clean. PEOPLE holding candles and homemade torches wander west like pilgrims down Hollywood Boulevard, weaving between stalled cars, toward THE GLOW of The Standard Hotel.

Suddenly, the ECHO OF AN INHUMAN SHRIEK and she's STRUCK from behind, falling to the ground.

INT. RED CAR TUNNEL

THREE NOG herd A DOZEN BOUND CAPTIVES down the tunnel, GROWLING and smacking them toward the breach in the wall. They crowd up to the bottleneck.

IN THE SHADOWS - Concealing their weapons, Phillip, Milton and Sergio stealthily slip into the group, allow themselves to be shoved through into

INT. THE BOILER ROOM

They step down with the others, move into the crowded room, pushing their way toward the front to place themselves between the captives and the elevator shaft.

TRISH
Phillip Wolfe. You have some *nerve* coming down here!

Phillip, startled, turns and sees Trish. She gazes at him accusingly. It's clear she's suffered some kind of break with reality.

TRISH
It's over, Phillip! You're *sick*--

PHILLIP
Shh, don't--

A *nog* turns toward the commotion. Pushes his way toward Phillip and Trish.

TRISH
Don't you shush me, you *troglydyte*!
This isn't the middle ages! You
don't own her. If a woman wants to
break off a relationship, she has
every right to--

Phillip draws his machete and CLEAVES THE ATTACKING NOG.
BLACK BLOOD sprays over Trish's Pinko Alberto blazer. She
turns to Phillip, incensed.

TRISH
Now, that's *exactly* the kind of
brutish behavior I'm talking about!

Phillip looks at her, realizing she's nuts. Then he ROARS:

PHILLIP
Now!

Milton whips out his crowbar, SLAMS a *nog*, who hurtles,
SHRIEKING, down the elevator shaft.

PHILLIP
(shouts)
Go for the door! Everybody run!
Move!

INT. RED CAR TUNNEL

The Captives rush out of the breach, Mona pulling them,
shoving them down the tunnel toward safety.

As soon as Sergio, Milton and Phillip are clear, she lays down
a DEVASTATING BLAST with the flamethrower. HIGH, WHISTLING
SCREAMS ECHO from the INFERNO inside the boiler room as the
Captives and their rescuers flee down the tunnel.

EXT. THE STANDARD - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Under the SHIMMERING LIGHTS OF THE AURORA BOREALIS, a vast
CANDLELIGHT PROCESSION of pilgrims approach the hotel from
every street, resembling rivers of fire.

A SLOW PULL reveals a *nog*, squatting on the balustrade like a living gargoyle, gazing down at the madness below.

EMILY (PRE-LAP)
What do you mean, "tribute."

INT. THE STANDARD - EMILY'S SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Emily stares at Faxon, furious.

FAXON
It's a custom. The rules of *nog* etiquette demands--

EMILY
Nog *etiquette*?!

FAXON
I know, I know. They're disgusting, but they have surprisingly complex social protocols--

EMILY
I don't care. I bound them. They serve me. They'll do what I tell them to do.

FAXON
(patiently)
Not... without... accepting tribute.

EMILY
The teeny people in the light bulbs? Fine. I went with that. But I'm not going to allow a bunch of *human beings* to be executed by those... those *things*!

FAXON
It's *not* an execution. It's a sacrifice; a proscribed, highly ritualized demonstration of their loyalty and appreciation--

EMILY
Fine. Then I'll just go out there and tell them to release the prisoners, and send me flowers next time.

Faxon looks at her, heart attack serious.

FAXON

Emily, you must listen to me. You're correct in saying you're their master. They will serve you. They will protect you and fight for you. But you must... accept... tribute.

EMILY

Or what?

FAXON

To deny them is to strike at the very core of their social structure. It will break down, they will go mad and there will be unimaginable bloodshed. *Human* bloodshed.

Emily looks deflated, frightened.

EMILY

I can't send them back?

FAXON

No. Once invoked, the Binding Call cannot be reversed. It is done.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD AND LAUREL CANYON - NIGHT

Teeming with PILGRIMS, all of them streaming toward the lights of The Standard. A number of BOUND CAPTIVES being dragged against their will by SNARLING NOG.

Among them, Jenny is pulled forward, tethered by her bound wrists to TWO NOG. She struggles and one of them STRIKES the back of her legs with the shaft of a nine-iron.

JENNY

Help! Help me!

A few of the Pilgrims glance her way. One of the *nog* HISSES at them, exposing rows of needle-sharp teeth. Terrified, they retreat, clearing a path as the *nog* drag her around the corner and she gets her first look at

THE STANDARD - blazing with shimmering light in every window.

Emily instinctively digs in her heels. The *nog* roughly jerk her forward.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD/HIGHLAND METRO-RAIL STATION - NIGHT

Phillip, Sergio, Milton and Mona help a few of the COMMUTERS out the entrance. A few shake Phillip's hand, THANK HIM. The STREAM OF PILGRIMS continue west.

SERGIO

Dude...

Phillip follows Sergio's gaze. Trish is carrying on an animated conversation on her cell-phone.

PHILLIP

Her phone works?

SERGIO

(shakes his head sadly)
I checked. Thing's broke, just like
the rest of em...
(looks at Trish)
She thinks she's talking to her maid.

Disquieted, Milton gazes toward the glow of The Standard. Phillip approaches.

MILTON

Somebody turn on the lights?

PHILLIP

I don't think so. There's
something...
(searches for the word)
... *wrong* about it.

Mona nods, signs to Sergio in ASL. He signs back. She responds emphatically. He turns to the others.

SERGIO

Mona thinks it's evil. I think she's
right.

PHILLIP

We gotta find Jenny.

SERGIO

Dude. How the hell're we supposed to
even find her? It's *impossible*.

Phillip stares at him. He doesn't have a ready answer. Discouraged, he sighs, looks down. At his feet, A WALK-OF-FAME STAR gleams dully in the moonlight.

GRANT (O.S.)
Nothing's impossible.

SLAM TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - DAY

Grant Wolfe gazes down at us, wearing a tweed coat, open shirt-collared, cravat and a self-effacing grin on his face.

GRANT
A million people come here and dream
of getting a star on this street with
their name on it.

TEEN PHILLIP, 15, gazes down at a star that bears the name "GRANT WOLFE" in gold letters over a medallion bearing the silhouette of a motion picture camera.

GRANT
Silly, isn't it?

YOUNG PHILLIP
I think it's cool.

Grant pulls a handkerchief from his pocket, crouches and rubs a smudge of grime off the "E" in "WOLFE."

GRANT
A million people. Most of them have
no idea who I am or what I've done.
All they know is that I have a star,
and they don't...

He gives the medallion a quick polish. Satisfied, he looks up at Phillip.

GRANT
Do you know what the difference is
between all those people and me?

YOUNG PHILLIP
What?

GRANT
Practically nothing, except...
(winks, whispers)
... I never gave up. After all...

BACK TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD/HIGHLAND METRO-RAIL STATION - NIGHT

Phillip gazes at the star on the sidewalk, completes Grant's thought.

PHILLIP
... nothing's impossible.

DOUGLAS (O.S.)
Phillip!

Phillip turns, startled. Sees Douglas as he rides up, dumps his bike on the curb.

PHILLIP
Doug?

The brothers embrace.

DOUGLAS
I can't believe I found you guys!
(looks around)
Where's Jenny?

MILTON
Over here!

They turn. Milton approaches from down the street holding an open purse, Jenny's DRIVERS LICENSE in one hand.

MILTON
Looks like she's gone west with the others.

All eyes turn toward the unnatural glow of The Standard.

EXT. THE STANDARD HOTEL - NIGHT

Nog herd BOUND CAPTIVES toward the hotel, armed with whatever weapons they've managed to scavenge--baseball bats, clubs, knives, hatchets and the occasional sword. An area has been cleared under the portico.

The CROWD is on the edge of hysteria--some terrified, others captivated by the spectacle. Gunter and Klee push toward the front for a better view.

GUNTER
Check out the coztumes, Klee! Is totally Lord of za Rings!

KLEE

Yah yah. Und look at the big one on
za cadillac! He's like za awesome
Frank Frazetta, no?

GUNTER

Yah yah! Za Death Dealer!

A HUGE *NOG* - stands on the hood of an Escalade. Bandy-legged, powerfully built, well over five feet tall, wearing a hammered helmet with steel horns, a chain-mail veil covering his face. He holds a large red FIREMAN'S AXE.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. THE STANDARD - EMILY'S SUITE - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Emily gazes down in horror at the spectacle below. She looks at Faxon, desperate.

EMILY

How do I stop this?

He tilts his head, gazes upon her with sincere, but condescending pity.

FAXON

You can't.

The Death Dealer looks up at Emily, as if awaiting her approval. She starts to turn away. Faxon gently takes her chin in the crook of his forefinger.

FAXON

You mustn't turn away.
(emphasizing each word)
You must be strong.

She looks up at Faxon, eyes pleading. Finds no succor in her companion's dispassionate, mask-like beauty. Gathers herself and gazes down at the Death Dealer.

Nods.

The Death Dealer raises the axe over his head in both hands and cuts a LOUD WHISTLING CRY. The crowd ROARS in awe. The *nog* drag their captives toward the Escalade.

THE DEATH DEALER - looks at the prisoners, as if deciding which will be the first to feel the sting of the axe.

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS

Phillip frantically scans the crowd. Douglas gazes, stunned, at the *nog* surrounding the escalade, their Death Dealer standing on the hood.

DOUGLAS

What the hell are those things?

SERGIO

Dunno! Fought a buncha them down in the tunnels.

PHILLIP

Jenny...!

EXT. THE STANDARD HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Jenny reacts to his call, turning, trying in vain to see over the heads of the crowd pressing around her.

JENNY

Phillip?! *Phillip...!*
(struggling wildly)
Lemme go!

The scuffle draws the Death Dealer's attention. He points at Jenny with the haft of the axe. Two *nog* grab her arms and drag her toward the Escalade.

Jenny SCREAMS.

Phillip spots her, begins shoving his way forward into the crowd.

PHILLIP

Jenny...!

The *nog* SLAM Jenny down on the hood of the SUV. THE CROWD FALLS SUDDENLY SILENT, as if realizing for the first time that this is not a movie, not a theme park attraction or a stunt show or a special effect, but the real thing.

JENNY

(shouts)
No! No! *Phillip! Help! Don't--*

One of the *nog* wrenches down the collar of her blouse to bear her neck while two others hold down her arms. Jenny SCREAMS for her life, terrified:

JENNY

NO...!

The Crowd snaps out of their trance, falling into HORRIFIED CHAOS, the *nog* at the perimeter of the execution area beating them back. Phillip and the others struggle forward against the crowd. He grabs the flamethrower from Mona, fires a BURST OF FLAME over their heads.

SERGIO
We're too far away! Not enough
candlepower!

DOUGLAS
Candlepower?

SERGIO
They can't stand light. Freaks em
out.

Douglas suddenly stops, remembering...

DOUGLAS
Oris. The Garden world...

SLAM TO:

INT. AQUARIUM - PLATYPUS EXHIBIT - DAY

Grant Wolfe gazes at the PLATYPODA frolicking in their artificial habitat.

GRANT
... a glittering emerald, suspended
in perfect stasis between two yellow
stars, bathed in perpetual sunlight--

BACK TO:

EXT. THE STANDARD HOTEL - PRESENT DAY

Douglas stands stock still, gathering himself. Glances at the others, trapped at a standstill, pushing forward in vain--the crowd is too dense. They'll never reach Jenny in time.

DOUGLAS
(under his breath)
Help me, Poppi. Help me remember...

Douglas clears his mind, imagining a vast garden. Taking a series of deep breath, he tilts his face toward the night sky.

THE DEATH DEALER - braces himself, raises the axe to strike the fatal blow. Suddenly, he's startled by the sound of a Summoner's Call: A DEEP, POWERFUL, SINGLE VIBRATING NOTE.

EXT. THE STANDARD - EMILY'S SUITE - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Faxon reacts to Douglas's CALL.

FAXON

Darling? You recall our conversation about all those other Summoners? The ones you said wouldn't pose a threat?

EMILY

Yes.

FAXON

Well, it seems one of the "toddlers" has pulled the ring on a hand grenade and lobbed it your way.

EXT. THE STANDARD HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

The crowd instinctively clears room for Douglas. Phillip and the others turn, staring at him as he CONTINUES THE CALL, gazing intently at the sky, back arched, fists clenched.

A SHARP, THUNDEROUS CRACK draws their eyes to...

THE NIGHT SKY - The stars and space seem to quiver in a small section, approximately sixty feet above the street.

Suddenly, IT TEARS OPEN, THE EDGES CURLING IN WAVES like linen being parted. Behind the night, BLINDING DAYLIGHT.

A BEAM OF SUNLIGHT spears through, lighting the area around Jenny. The Death Dealer and the rest of the *nog* SCREECH, covering their eyes, scampering in panic for cover.

THE BREACH - A clear view of TWO DISTANT YELLOW SUNS in a robin's-egg blue sky.

DOUGLAS - trembling, gazing at the breach, muscles straining. The others stare skyward, a GENTLE BREEZE blowing down.

MILTON

Smell that?

Mona SIGNS something to Sergio. He nods in agreement.

SERGIO

Flowers...

Sensing eyes on him, PHILLIP turns toward the hotel.

PHILLIP'S POV - Standing on her balcony, Emily scans the crowd. Faxon behind her, gazes in wonder at the breach. SHE FINDS US.

PHILLIP - locks eyes with her.

PHILLIP

You...

SLAM TO:

INT. AQUARIUM - ELECTRIC EEL EXHIBIT - DAY

YOUNG EMILY PELLIGRINO, gazes at an undulating eel. Distracted, she LOOKS DIRECTLY AT US...

REVERSE - A handsome YOUNG PHILLIP WOLFE, his arms crossed on the sill of the glass opposite us, chin cradled on his forearms. He gazes dreamily at us.

BACK TO:

EXT. THE STANDARD - EMILY'S SUITE - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Emily stares directly at us, recognizing us...

EMILY

You...

EXT. THE STANDARD HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Phillip continues staring at Emily. Takes a step forward. Jenny SHOUTS:

JENNY

Phillip!

Phillip snaps back to the here-and-now, bursts forward to aid Jenny, followed by the others. He cuts away her bonds, takes her in his arms as the others free the rest of the captives.

DOUGLAS - Frozen in extreme concentration, he continues The Call, trembling, sweat coursing down his face, BLOOD trickling freely from his nose.

PHILLIP

Doug! Doug!

Douglas turns his head slightly, sees Phillip holding Jenny. He STOPS THE CALL, face relaxing with an expression of overwhelming relief. The BREACH CLOSES with an ECHOING BOOM and the street is again thrown into darkness.

PHILLIP

I got her, man. We got her.

Douglas opens his mouth as if to reply, then COLLAPSES IN A DEAD FAINT. Phillip catches him. Holding his brother in his arms, Phillip looks up at the others.

OUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. THE STANDARD - ROOFTOP - DAWN

The sun rises in a dirty, smoke-smudged sky.

FAXON (O.S.)

To sustain a breach, to hold it open
in such a way is no small thing. The
will required is formidable.

EXT. THE STANDARD - EMILY'S SUITE - BALCONY

Bitter, Emily gazes down at the city, Faxon standing behind her.

FAXON (CONT'D)

... the Summoner who did this is
dangerous. And very, very powerful.

EMILY

More than me?

He hesitates, afraid to tell her the truth. She turns. His fear is all the answer she needs. Disgusted, she steps past him into the room.

INT. THE STANDARD - EMILY'S SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Angry, Emily throws herself on the bed. Closes her eyes. Faxon, reading her foul mood, eager to please, pulls the heavy curtains, BLOCKING THE SUNLIGHT. After a long, sullen beat:

EMILY

How do I find him? Him and the
others. The *toddlers*.

FAXON

Things will happen. Strange things.
And where strange things happen,
you'll find Summoners. Then you can
deal with them...

(a beat, eyes glittering)

We can deal with them.

He swallows, nervous, afraid to say more. She sulks a moment, gazing up at the lights still blazing with *Luminiénte*.

EMILY

Don't those little bastards ever sleep?

FAXON

Asleep. Awake. It makes no difference. The light of the *Luminiénte* burns as long as they draw breath.

Frustrated, Emily closes her eyes. Her anger only grows. After a beat, she opens them, SNARLS:

EMILY

That's enough!

The LIGHTS BLINK OUT. Emily is startled by the abrupt darkness. Its import is a growing rock in her stomach. Horrified, she looks at Faxon, who returns her gaze, appraising, inscrutable.

EXT. SILVER LAKE - DAWN

The dawn sun shimmers off the placid waters of the reservoir. Quaint, clapboard homes hug the surrounding hills. Tents have been set up on the small spit of grassy parkland that flanks the reservoir.

VOLUNTEERS pass out water bottles to NEIGHBORS. The LOCAL KIWANIS have set up griddles, serve hotcakes and sausage to bedraggled men, women and children. A small RED CROSS tent administers aid to the INJURED and ELDERLY.

Phillip stands with Jenny in high grass at the edge of a vacant lot overlooking the valley.

JENNY

It looks the same.

PHILLIP

(shakes his head)
Everything's changed.

JENNY

What happened?

Phillip ponders her question a beat, meets her eyes.

PHILLIP

I think the world just became a lot more black and white.

He seems distracted as he gazes past her at

DOUGLAS - seated under a tree away from Sergio, Mona and Milton, cradling his head. Phillip approaches, crouches next to him.

PHILLIP

You okay?

DOUGLAS

I got a migraine, a guy shot me in the leg with a crossbow, and the Bride of Yoda's waiting for me at the house to teach me the ways of The Force.

PHILLIP

(passable Yoda)

Strong it is in you.

Douglas shakes his head, SIGHS. Phillip takes a seat.

PHILLIP

How long before they get the lights back on?

DOUGLAS

Decades. Maybe never.

Phillip nods sagely. A contemplative beat.

PHILLIP

Think the beer in our fridge is still cold?

Douglas lifts his head, looks at Phillip for the first time. The two brothers lock eyes. Douglas slowly smiles, despite himself. Phillip returns it. Hold, then...

SLAM TO BLACK: