

DARK TOWER: THE GUNSLINGER

Screenplay
by

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Based on the works of Stephen King

August 8, 2014

VOICE (OVER)
Hello, hello, hello, is there anybody
out there?

FADE IN:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DEVAR-TOI - END-WORLD - DAY

A small town like any other. Finely tailored lawns. Handsome colonial houses. Adults under porch shade sit, sip tall, ice filled glasses of lemonade. KIDS ride bikes, play freeze tag, bounce big red rubber balls between them.

The only odd thing here: all the children wear small badges, like radiation monitors, each lit to varying levels of red.

A kick goes wide and the ball lands, caught in mid-air by two strong hands.

TILT UP

A **MAN DRESSED ALL IN BLACK**. Handsome. Eyes you might mistake for kind instead of entirely empty.

BOY
(smiling)
Thanks, Mr. O'Dim.

The Man In Black ruffles the child's hair, those pale eyes untouched by even his own smile as (OVER) A BELL RINGS.

Kids stop their playing and look up. The adults stand now too, coming off the porches, falling into step with the children, all heading towards a high steeple at the town's center.

EXT. LIBRARY - DEVAR-TOI - HIGH ANGLE

The children queue into the old and steepled town library.

INT. LIBRARY - DEVAR-TOI - NIGHT - SERIES OF SHOTS

Children are strapped into chairs by their adult minders, IVs slipped into implanted ports on small arms.

An aging high tech serum pump snakes thin mottled tubes into the children's IVs.

Something is wrong with the adults faces; they appear slack, ill-fitting, almost like masks.

On the CHILDREN'S FACES as they all SHUT THEIR EYES. The IV PUMP begins CHUGGING, an awful LOW-TECH NOISE, HARDER, spitting milky fluid into the IVs as the Man In Black walks the floor among them, nodding, as if supervising.

MAN IN BLACK

Good children.

The PUMP increases in speed. The children appear focused behind closed eyes, CONCENTRATING, and...

OBJECTS in the room begin to rise slightly off the floor, when --

The children's EYES SNAP OPEN, HEADS GOES BACK, WHITE ENERGY STREAMING FROM SCREAMING MOUTHS AND EYES.

The Man in Black turns, turns as if he's facing us. And God help all that is innocent or good, he smiles.

CUT TO:

A BOY - CLOSE

Sits up in bed. Eyes wide. Mouth barely stifling a SCREAM.

WIDER

INT. BEDROOM - NEW YORK CITY - PRESENT DAY - DAWN

A terrified **JAKE CHAMBERS** (12), dark hair, sharp eyes, takes a moment, breathing away the nightmare.

He climbs out of bed and goes to the window, past dozens of PENCIL SKETCHES taped to the wall: a familiar Man in Black, a single rose, men with ill fitting faces, children with light shooting out of their eyes, their mouths...

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - MANHATTAN SKYLINE - DAWN

The morning sun stains the familiar silver spires a crimson hue. Jake's face is small in one of the endless windows. As he stares out at the sweeping dawn, we HEAR his voice:

JAKE (V.O.)

There are other worlds than this.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - UPPER WEST SIDE - MORNING

Modern. Affluent. Jake sits on the couch. It's hard not to notice the deep circles under the boy's eyes.

JAKE

And what happens in one, happens in all
the other worlds too. Only...
differently. Like...

Sitting across from Jake is a silver-haired **PSYCHIATRIST**.
He is flipping through Jake's latest DRAWINGS.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Like...
(searching)
echoes.

The psychiatrist lingers on a drawing: a tall DARK TOWER
rising from a vast field of red roses.

He sets down the sketch book, looks up at Jake. The clinical
appraisal in his eyes doesn't hide his concern.

PSYCHIATRIST

Tell me about the earthquakes.

JAKE

I told you already--

PSYCHIATRIST

Tell me again.

Jake stares.

JAKE

I think the earthquakes are the beams
starting to fall.

PSYCHIATRIST

The beams that hold up the tower that
holds up the universe.

JAKE

I know how it sounds.

Hates how this sounds.

PSYCHIATRIST

And the doorways?

JAKE

Please, John.

PSYCHIATRIST

The *doorways*, Jake.

JAKE

The doorways are how you cross from one world to another.

PSYCHIATRIST

I don't see them.

JAKE

Because they're hidden. So not just anyone can find them.

PSYCHIATRIST

But you can.

JAKE

I don't know. Yes. Maybe.

PSYCHIATRIST

But you've said before the doorways are protected by guards.

JAKE

Not guards...

PSYCHIATRIST

Go on.

JAKE

Demons.

The psychiatrist scribbles on his pad.

PSYCHIATRIST

Aren't you afraid?

JAKE

(of course)

Yes. But I think... I'm *supposed* to do this.

PSYCHIATRIST

You're *supposed* to cross over to another world? Supposed to help save the universe?

JAKE

What if it's not made up? What if it's not like you're making it sound?

PSYCHIATRIST

How am I making it sound? How does it sound to you?

Jake glances away, not wanting to answer. The doctor looks at the anguished boy with empathetic eyes.

PSYCHIATRIST (CONT'D)
Let's talk a little about your father.

JAKE
This isn't about that.

PSYCHIATRIST
What happened to your father, Jake?

The moment lasts, finally Jake speaks.

JAKE
He died.

PSYCHIATRIST
How?

Jake looks away, hating this.

PSYCHIATRIST (CONT'D)
How did your father die, Jake?

Jake is fighting back the tears.

JAKE
Everything in my life can't be about that.

PSYCHIATRIST
But this is *entirely* about that. You lost your father. Your world has been collapsing ever since. So, you've created a fantasy in which you alone can hold the world, no the entire universe, together.

Jake looks away. It takes all he has not to cry.

JAKE
It's doesn't feel like a fantasy --

PSYCHIATRIST
Bad things happen. Sad, yes. Awful, sometimes. But they're random.

He reaches out and touches Jake's hand.

PSYCHIATRIST (CONT'D)
So sometimes, faced with the senselessness of life, our mind makes up stories to help us feel in control.
(MORE)

PSYCHIATRIST (CONT'D)
 But they're just that, Jake, stories.
 Stories that can feel terribly real.

Jake's eyes are welling with tears.

PSYCHIATRIST (CONT'D)
 Let's try something. Your head is
 throwing a lot of bad guys at you.
 (hands back Jake's sketch
 pad)
 How about you draw some good guys, see
 how that feels.

Jake looks at him.

JAKE
 I don't want to be.

PSYCHIATRIST
 I'm sorry?

JAKE
 I just don't want to be crazy.

EXT. AMSTERDAM AVENUE - NEW YORK CITY - MORNING

Halloween decorations in store windows. Dervishes of leaves whip the curbs. Jake walks, head bowed. Arrives at a bus stop.

INT. MTA CITY BUS - DAY

Jake sits alone amidst morning rush hour. Folks watch their phones, read copies of The Post with the headline: **MORE EARTHQUAKES ROCK MIDTOWN.**

The city slows down outside the window as the bus pulls to a stop in the low 70's. A PASSENGER'S REFLECTION in the window: the man rubs his head and his face adjusts, as if ill fitting.

Jake's eyes SNAP to the man as the side doors open and the man follows a teenage girl off the bus, now looking perfectly normal. Was it just his imagination?

The bus starts moving again. But now Jake's heart is racing in his chest. He looks down at his sketch pad in his lap.

He takes a few deep breaths, trying to contain his panic.

JAKE
 (small)
 Draw some good guys.

He flips to a new page. Hasty lines begin to form as he DRAWS, a face takes shape. Weathered, yet handsome. Jake intently draws...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MID-WORLD - DAY

The sound of the bus has become the steady CLIP-CLOP of a CHESTNUT HORSE traversing rugged, rocky terrain. A FIGURE on its back, silhouetted against the falling blood red sun.

The MAN carries a satchel bearing some sort of faded crest. He wears dusty road leathers mixed with chain-mail cobbled together over countless years, face hidden in the brim shadow of his old leather hat.

He draws his horse to a stop atop the crest of a RIDGE. Removes his hat and rubs sweat from his forehead as he gazes down at the ONE ROAD TOWN far below. And we get our first good look at him:

He is ageless and rugged. But his handsome features have been worn down by time, like the dog-eared pages of a book. Once brilliant sky blue eyes that have lost all passion, replaced by a weary doggedness.

His name is **ROLAND DESCHAIN**. And he is inarguably the man from Jake's drawing.

Roland replaces his hat and spurs his horse, which starts reluctantly down the rocks.

VOICE (OVER)
(singing, Pink Floyd)
Okay, okay, okay, is there anybody **out**
there?

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

We are looking into a BLACK SPHERE, about the size of a bowling ball. The ball -- **BLACK 13** -- HUMS, like a swarm of angry bees, the image within is the cowboy from Jake's drawing, riding horseback.

WIDER TO REVEAL

INT. LIBRARY - DEVAR-TOI - NIGHT

The MAN IN BLACK, stands in the now empty library, gazing into the cue ball-sized crystal.

MAN IN BLACK

(darkening)

Well, hello you. And today of all days.

Annoyance in his TONE, but also something else. Respect. He returns Black 13 to an ornately carved GHOSTWOOD BOX.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

So be it, old chum. One last time
around the mulberry bush.

(singing)

There is no moon upon the horizon. My
hands felt just like two balloons...

The lone figure on horseback is still visible within the enchanted sphere as the box CLAPS LOUDLY SHUT to BLACK --

EXT. TULL - MID-WORLD - DUSK

CLOSE: BLACK BOOTS walk over dusty ground. Tiny dirt tornadoes swirl in their wake. Unnatural.

WIDER

The Man in Black now strides down the dusty main street of this dusty town. Tombstone by way of Camelot by way of The Last Picture Show. Squat wooden buildings, some with parapets. Telephone poles sport broadcast hubs instead of wires.

The Man heads towards one building in particular. A faded sign hangs, CREAKING and swinging, above the door: "*Olaf Shillestad. Cabinets, Upholstering and Undertaking.*"

INT. UNDERTAKER'S - TULL - DUSK

THE UNDERTAKER (50s) HAMMERS a nail, working by candlelight as he builds a wooden coffin. On his table lays a corpse once named **NORT** (30s, but the ravaged face of a 90-year old).

As the door beyond him swings open, the Undertaker misses the nail and strikes his thumb. He mutters a CURSE as he turns to face the Man in Black, who smiles.

MAN IN BLACK

Sorry. Didn't mean to startle you.

UNDERTAKER

Help you?

The Man in Black walks inside, eyeing the corpse. He takes a deep inhale through his nose, the dead body his snifter.

MAN IN BLACK

Devil weed. Never had a taste for the hard stuff myself.

He looks up at the Undertaker, his colorless eyes glinting in the candlelight as he gestures to a silver cross on the wall.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

Though you're taking quite a risk with your man upstairs, are you not?

The Undertaker frowns, not quite understanding. The Man in Black indicates the deceased:

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

O.D.. If it's a sin to kill yourself, wouldn't your God consider it a sin to help one such as this cross over.

UNDERTAKER

I take it you do not accept His glory.

MAN IN BLACK

The newer gods are more to my taste.

The Undertaker's eyes narrow with understanding.

UNDERTAKER

The Crimson King is no god.

MAN IN BLACK

He's going to cleanse the universe, remake it in his image, populate it with his denizens and rule over it for all eternity.

He smiles.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

Sounds pretty god-like to me.

UNDERTAKER

You have a name, mister?

But his gaze is not as welcoming by half as his words. The Man in Black ignores the question as he walks around the body, now stroking dead Nort's mane of unkempt hair.

The Undertaker's distaste doesn't prevent him from using the opportunity to edge toward a GUN sitting on a side table.

MAN IN BLACK

A man in your profession, you must have given a lot of thought to death.

(MORE)

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

Of lives well lived and heavenly rewards. Of sinners and, well... their opposite.

The Undertaker reaches the table, reaches for his gun.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

Do our actions really matter? Does all this end in death? Is there an after?

Without looking up, The Man in Black raises a finger and the gun SLIDES AWAY from the man's grasp, falls off the table. Magic. The Undertaker's gaze SNAPS UP.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

What if I could give you proof?

The Man in Black looks back at him.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

What if I could bring our friend here back so he can tell you for himself what it's like beyond this mortal veil? Would you like that?

His eyes are magnetic, drawing in the Undertaker's gaze.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

I could do that. But not without cost... Would you invite me into your heart for such a glimpse? You would have to do so willingly.

The older man's fear giving way to something else now. Awe, perhaps.

OLAF

W-who are you?

MAN IN BLACK

I go by many names. Death. Flagg. The Walking Dude.

(casual)

But, hey, call me Walter.

And so, from henceforth, that's what we'll do.

Walter handsprings over the body. Then back the other way. He repeats the action, quicker, and again quicker still.

He's like a black silverfish, dancing back and forth over the body in a motion that is both not human, and disturbing in the way of car wrecks and misborn animals.

Then suddenly he has stopped, is standing stock still beside the corpse. Nort sits up, eyes wide.

UNDERTAKER

...N-nort?

But something's not right. Nort's mouth is slack and drool spills from his lips. His eyes are the same colorless hue as Walter's.

NORT

Hubba-hhba-who.

OLAF

(horrified)

W-what's-- what's wrong with him?

Walter's eyes twinkle. A man with a plan.

WALTER

I said he'd come back. I never said he'd come back the same.

EXT. TULL - MID-WORLD - DUSK

PAN DOWN from a shattered wooden post sign ("TULL") which launches a single crow to find Roland as he approaches the edge of main street.

INT. KENNERLY'S LIVERY STABLE - DUSK

Roland rides his horse through the open stable doors. A robotic baler, hi-tech by our standards, but seemingly a century old here, struggles. A MAN works alongside the failing robot in the deep shadow, pitching hay.

Roland rides his horse through the open stable doors. A MAN works in the deep shadow, pitching hay.

ROLAND

Hey.

MAN

Hey, yourself.

ROLAND

Horse here I'm looking to put up.

The man stabs his pitchfork into the hay. KENNERLY, 30s.

KENNERLY

Good for you. How long?

ROLAND

Night, maybe two.

As he approaches, Kennerly assesses Roland. Notes the ornately painted **HORN OF ELD** slung around his waist. Kennerly tries to hide the sudden greed in his eyes.

KENNERLY

You looking for charity, you come to the wrong place. But I'll do ya an exchange for that horn ya got there.

Roland simply pulls a GOLD COIN out of his pocket, flips it to Kennerly as he dismounts. Kennerly REACTS as he eyes the coin. Bites it to make sure it's real. His eyes NARROW:

KENNERLY (CONT'D)

Man's riding a threaded horse what ain't got two heads or six eyes, tossing around gold coins. You got yourself a name, Mister?

But Roland just walks out into the darkening sky. As Kennerly watches him go...

EXT. TULL - DUSK

Roland walks down the middle of main street. Past a hi tech automobile, APPLE and TESLA logos still visible, half buried in blown sand, all usable parts long ago stripped.

A Boy tosses a stick to a mangy dog. An Old Woman knits on her porch, humming along to faint PIANO MUSIC that drifts from a SALOON ahead. "Hey Jude".

The setting sun casts long shadows as Roland passes a CHURCH. Fresh whitewash not quite hiding graffiti of a single CRIMSON EYE.

PRIEST (OVER)

My brothers and sisters in Christ, the subject of our meditation tonight is The Interloper.

INT. CHURCH - DUSK

CLOSE: A match ignites a tall candle.

PRIESTESS (OVER)

The Interloper who looms with his face in the shadow.

A **WOMAN PRIESTESS** stands at the altar, lighting candles that surround a crucifix.

PRIESTESS (CONT'D)

The Interloper whose poison fingers handed Eve the rotted apple. Who took our Lord up the mountain and showed him all the world's pleasures. Who smiled when Jesus Christ had his moment of doubt and pain.

The wooden pews are half full with TOWNSPEOPLE.

PRIESTESS (CONT'D)

Who among you fears the Interloper?
 (looks from face to face)
 Who among you has the strength to resist him? To fight the Dark Days that surround us?

A Congregant answers in a hesitant VOICE.

CONGREGANT

I do.

PRIESTESS

(nods, "good for you")
 Who else? Who among you will resist his efforts to drag your soul into the muck and mire of Hell?

And now a few others join in. "*I DO!*"

The candles on the altar FLICKER as the church doors open and someone slips into a back pew.

PRIESTESS (OVER) (CONT'D)

Lucifer. Satan. Beelzebub. Abaddon --

Suddenly, her voice falters as her eyes land on the newcomer... The Man in Black.

PRIESTESS (CONT'D)

... he goes by many names...

Something about him makes her blood run cold. Walter nods, a small grin on his lips: "Please, go on".

PRIESTESS (CONT'D)

... and it's he who will return to usher Last Times unto the world.

She looks back to her Congregants, regains her footing:

PRIESTESS (CONT'D)

When he comes to you-- when the devil shows his face, will you renounce him?

CONGREGATION

Yes!

PRIESTESS

Will you renounce the Interloper?!!

CONGREGATION

Yes!!

MAN IN BLACK

(under his breath)
Praise the Lord.

INT. SALOON - DUSK

Sawdust on the floor. Townies drinking, hunched over the bar, or playing Watch Me at the tipsy-legged tables. Some others by the piano SINGING along to the wheezy rendition of "Hey Jude". The batwing doors swing OPEN and Roland enters.

The patrons take subtle notice of him as he sits at the bar.

ROLAND

Steak. Whiskey.

The bartender, **ALICE** (30s) gives him a bemused smile.

ALICE

How's a hamburger and a beer?

The light falls on a nasty scar across her cheek. She was pretty once, maybe even beautiful. Now, just sad eyes.

Roland nods. Puts a gold coin on the bar.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Ain't got change for that.

ROLAND

Don't expect any.

Alice sets a bottle and mug down. Moves off to get the food. Roland pours the beer. Indifferent to the suddenly charged atmosphere in the room, the sidelong glances of the townies, the card game slowing down...

And the approaching MAN, who pulls a KNIFE.

Without looking at the man, Roland opens his duster to reveal a **GUN** hanging from a holster. Seeing it, the man stops in his tracks.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Pass the salt?

Roland looks up and meets the man's stare. Eye-lock. Then the man SPITS onto the floor, saving face, and turns away.

Alice has noticed the gun too, her eyes linger on the worn sandalwood grip as she sets the hamburger down.

She passes Roland the salt as the Piano Player closes the piano lid and heads out, followed by most of the patrons. Only a few drunks remain.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Friendly place.

ALICE

Long days since anyone's seen an unfamiliar face 'round here. You're the second stranger pass through this week.

We see that news land on Roland.

ALICE (CONT'D)

People 'round here are superstitious. Spook easy.

ROLAND

Boo.

Alice smiles.

ALICE

Guess they're wondering if you're an omen that the world's about to move on again.

ROLAND

I'm hardly that important.

ACROSS THE ROOM -- The batwing doors open and a man slips in... NORT, the recently resurrected corpse.

He notices Roland at the bar and something ticks across his rheumy eyes (which have returned to normal). Something IMPORTANT. A memory... But one just out of his grasp.

AT THE BAR -- Roland takes a bite of his burger. Disgusting, but he expected that. Asks:

ROLAND (CONT'D)

This other stranger. Happen to be dressed all in black?

ALICE
You mean, like a preacher-man?

ROLAND
(nothing like that)
Something like that.

ALICE
I didn't see him myself. Just heard
people talking.

Roland nods, as if this is always the way, as if he has been chasing the man he seeks for a very long time.

ROLAND
They say which way he went?

ALICE
Maybe.

She meets his eyes.

ALICE (CONT'D)
But information like that has a price.

Roland reaches for his money pouch, but she puts her hand on his, stopping him.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I don't want any more of your money.

He looks down at her hand on his, then back up to her eyes. A desperate, needy look there.

ALICE (CONT'D)
You're easy to look at. You don't seem nice or nothing. But maybe kind. Or maybe I just been alone too long and you'll deer gut me in my sleep.

She shrugs, still holds his eyes.

ALICE (CONT'D)
We can turn out the lights if I'm too ugly.

HOLD on Roland returning her stare, impassive.

INT. ALICE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight silhouettes entwined bodies. They're in her bed in her small bedroom above the saloon.

Their movements are awkward, raw. An act of release more than of connection. As Alice moans, and Roland grunts.

Susan.
ROLAND

What?
ALICE

He says nothing.

Alice.
ALICE (CONT'D)

She looks away.

AFTERWARDS: Roland stands at the window, gazing up into the night. As if he's looking for something up there among the twinkling orbs.

Alice lays wrapped in the sheets. She's trying to get up the courage to ask him a question. Instead, what she asks is:

ALICE (CONT'D)
What do they look like?

ROLAND
Hmm?

ALICE
What you see up there?

ROLAND
(a beat)
Nothing up there but stars. And they're going out one by one these days.

He turns from the window. Retrieves his pants and steps into them. She shakes her head, his answer somehow insufficient.

ALICE
So, you going to save all of us? Save the whole damned world?

Roland looks at her, his brow furrowing:

ROLAND
Why would I do that?

ALICE
Because it's your job, I reckon.

ROLAND
Some job. But I think you got me
confused with somebody else.

ALICE
Hell, I do.

He retrieves his shirt. Seems amused by the notion.

ROLAND
What's worth saving anyway?

ALICE
Compassion. Reason. Honor.

ROLAND
Long gone, all of them.

ALICE
...love?

Roland looks at her.

ROLAND
Just a word. Hardly even a memory.

Alice watches him as he dresses. She's fascinated by him. As if she knows better than to ask these questions, but can't help herself:

ALICE
Can you show me them? Up in the sky?

He just looks at her.

ALICE (CONT'D)
The beams of light hold up the Tower?

ROLAND
Like I said, Lady. Wrong fella.

ALICE
I see that crest on your bag. That gun
of yours. You're a Gunslinger.

If her words cause a slight reaction in Roland, he hides it well.

ALICE (CONT'D)
My father, he said all your kind died,
killed when the world moved on. But if
there's even one of you left, then
maybe there's still some hope for us.

ROLAND

Alice, I found this bag and gun on the side of the road next to a corpse who maybe had higher ideas than I do.

He looks at her as he buckles on his gunbelt.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I can't see beams in the sky. And I'm not looking to save the world. I'm just looking for a man.

ALICE

Why?

But his cold stare is all the answer she needs. Finally...

ALICE (CONT'D)

Folks say he headed Southeast. Toward the desert.

With that Roland nods, heads into --

INT. HER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Roland turns on the faucet. Splashes brown water on his face. He looks in the mirror, standing in unkind judgment of what he sees there. Closes his eyes to hide the sight of himself.

EXT. TULL - ALLEY - NIGHT

In the narrow brick darkness sits Nort. He's sprawled in the dirt, back up against a building, stoned out of his mind.

He digs in his pouch of devil-grass for another hit... when a PAIR OF BOOTS step into frame.

Nort follows the boots up to the Man In Black, who reaches inside his jacket and pulls out a **SMALL BOX** which he carefully hands over to Nort.

Nort turns the box over in his hand: it's made of ghostwood, similar to the box The Man in Black stored his crystal ball in. Though this one has the number "19" carved atop it.

As he looks back up to the Man In Black, perplexed --

WALTER

No use wasting a perfectly good resurrection...

INT. ALICE'S SITTING ROOM - DAWN

CLOSE: ROLAND'S HANDS LIFT A DECK OF OVERSIZED PLAYING CARDS from atop the freshly laid coffee table.

Cards are shuffled; notice a card with a drawing of THE TOWER, another with a likeness that resembles WALTER.

WIDER: Roland continues to shuffle as slanted morning sun highlights dust motes in the air. Alice appears behind him with a pot of coffee as he cuts his deck twice.

ALICE

Nescafe. No real coffee anymore.

He nods, MUTTERS a ritualistic SAYING under his breath, begins laying out the cards inward to form a simple cross.

ROLAND

(without looking up)

Can you draw me a map?

ALICE

There isn't enough of this place to need a map.

ROLAND

Of what's Southeast. Beyond the desert.

She fills the mug before him.

ALICE

Men and vengeance.

He ignores her, cuts his cards again, places two more.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Suppose this fellow you seek kills you instead, that's all it amounts to?

One card is The Lady of Shadows. The next is The Prisoner.

ROLAND

What happens when I find him is in the hands of Ka.

Then Roland draws and lays down the final card in the center of the cross. It's one word and image are simple.

The Boy.

Roland stares at the upturned card. Confused.

ALICE

I don't know what's beyond the desert.
Nobody crosses it. Muties, I reckon.
Maybe the preacher will have a map.

Roland takes a sip of coffee. It burns his throat.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Some say it's where you can see the end
of the world coming.

ROLAND

I wouldn't believe them.

ALICE

Why not?

ROLAND

The end of the world came a long time
ago.

He gathers his cards, stands. She puts her hand on his arm,
stopping him. Finally, that question...

ALICE

Take me with you... ?

The look she doesn't want him to see: that he's her last
chance. Final life line before she lets go and simply drowns.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I can trap. I can cook. Do more like we
did last night. Different ways...

Which affects him. Maybe she's even touched some emotion in
him that has been dead for a long, long time.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Please.

But, still:

ROLAND

I can't.

ALICE

Why? The scar? Too old? Too hurt?

ROLAND

Maybe. Can't say what you are or
aren't. But no one walks with me now.

And though he doesn't feel he owes her an explanation:

ROLAND (CONT'D)
 Anyone who does, dies. Sooner or later.

He heads away, towards the door.

ROLAND (CONT'D)
 (nods, turns to go)
 Thanks for the coffee, Allie.

Her eyes, suddenly wet with tears.

ALICE
 ...how did you know?

He turns back.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 They used to call me Allie?

ROLAND
 (a small shrug)
 Seems like it suits you.

As she watches him go, it takes everything she has not to shatter right there.

EXT. TULL - MAIN STREET - MORNING

Roland walks down the middle of Main Street. The Boy tosses his stick to the mangy dog. The Old Woman knits on her porch, HUMMING softly to herself.

Roland looks up at the church's steeple-cross in the distance. With a grimace he heads towards the battered wooden symbol.

INT. SALOON - MORNING

Nort enters, finds Alice drying her tears at the bar. He sets something down on the bar. Wildly pleased with himself:

NORT
 It's for you. He told me to give it to you.

Alice looks at it, confused. It's the ghostwood box.

NORT (CONT'D)
 He said it was important. "Essential", that's what he said. Give it to you before the cowboy left town -- I hope it's not too late.

ALICE
Who said?

NORT
(confused by the question)
...him. The man.

ALICE
(suddenly fearing the
answer)
What...man?

She has opened its lid, her eyes, staring down at what appears to be an old white jawbone inside.

NORT
See, see.

But Alice's eyes have gone a colorless shade of empty.

NORT (CONT'D)
He said you should show it around. Like
a fancy.

INT. CHURCH - MORNING

The heavy doors open and sunlight BLASTS in. Roland enters, eyes trying to adjust to the eerie darkness.

The Priestess stands at the alter.

ROLAND
Mother, I'm looking for a map and I'll
pay the poor box to get it --

But he is interrupted by a GURGLE. Roland's eyes NARROW.

PRIESTESS
Hurts.

What he sees: THE PRIESTESS HAS BEEN PINNED TO THE ALTER.

PRIESTESS (CONT'D)
So much.

Hands staked to the pulpit by candle holders, back pinned upright to the floor by a giant taper. Bleeding from ears, mouth and eyes. But alive.

PRIESTESS (CONT'D)
Said... you'd be coming by.

On Roland, realizing he has a problem.

PRIESTESS (CONT'D)

Said I had to tell you... so I could
die. Said to tell you...

(she struggles to finish)

Said it's been fun... but... all good
things must come to an end--

(final breaths)

Said he'd meet you outside--

With that, her head drops and she dies. ON Roland, darkness
seeping into his eyes.

EXT. CHURCH - MORNING

Roland steps out of the church to find...

All the TOWNSPEOPLE are there, waiting. The church
congregation, the drinkers from the bar, the Boy and his
mangy dog, the Old Woman, Nort. All now with colorless eyes,
armed with weapons of every nature: guns, knives, pieces of
wood...

Roland stares at them, hands drifting toward the guns on his
hips.

ROLAND

I don't want any trouble... Stand fast
where you are and I'll leave
peacefully.

He commands them with his gaze, takes a step forward, but:

VOICE FROM THE CROWD

Leave to spread your evil, you mean.

Roland scans the crowd to identify the speaker as -- unseen
by him, the batwing doors to Sheb's Saloon OPEN, and Alice
walks out.

MORE VOICES

It's him. He's the Interloper!
Kill him!! Kill the Interloper --

And suddenly, BANG! Someone takes a shot at Roland -- but he
spins -- BLINDINGLY FAST -- draws and returns fire -- BAM!
The shooter drops, a bullet hole in his chest.

The shot ECHOES -- then, in the freighted silence --

ALICE (O.S.)

(sing-song)

Yoo-hoo.

He turns. Sees Alice walking toward him. Her eyes are colorless. Like glass.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Hile, Gunslinger.

Colors cross Roland's face we have so far not seen. Rage. And fear. He closes his eyes, worst suspicions confirmed.

ROLAND

Walter.

ALICE

Guess what, you found me.

(then)

How you been, compadre? I honestly can't believe you're still banging away on that drum of yours. Kill the Man in Black. Kill the Man in Black. I mean, purpose is all well and good, but damn, boy, don't you know fixation can be a tad unhealthy? Not to mention... boring. Since we last met I've burned cities to ash, killed worlds with the flu -- which I might add was one of my more creative touches -- and what have you done? Chased after me? Drank a bunch? Gotta hand it to you, son, you sure are persistent.

ROLAND

I am not your son.

ALICE

Well, I've been where only a father should go, don't you think? Why sweat the small stuff.

(down to business)

I've got big work to do. Universe wrecking work. And Ka says you've become an impediment. Hooray you.

ROLAND

Let go of her, Walter.

Alice kneels down beside the dead body, then stands back up holding a big gun pointed downward.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Don't --

Alice, facing Roland, channeling Walter, raises her gun. Her hands are shaking as she pulls back the hammer.

ALICE
 You and me, cuz. One last time around
 the mulberry bush.

ROLAND
 Please.

ALICE
 Time to get you out of my way little
 boy. Old man. Hard to know what to call
 you after all these years. Well, soon
 to be a moot point.

Alice starts to squeeze the trigger.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 (smiles)
 I thought you deserved a proper
 execution.

Roland SHOOTS her. Dead.

A frozen moment as Roland stares at her crumpled body. Then
 Walter's plan is revealed as the town ATTACKS.

People SHOOT, throw knives, launch themselves at him. They
 appear on rooftops. Race from buildings.

As Roland engages --

EXT. ROAD OUT OF TULL - MORNING

Walter walks off into the rising sun, his back to Tull.

WALTER
 (singing)
 There is no pain you are receding. A
 distant ship smoke on the horizon.

Tiny DIRT TORNADOES swirl in the wake of his boots, growing
 in size as --

EXT. CHURCH - MORNING

ON ROLAND, his pupils rack focus. Only the important aspects
 of FRAME are featured: the targets, the exits, etc. Roland's
 ability to shoot is spellbinding, balletic --

WALTER (OVER)
 (singing)
 I have become comfortably numb.

Roland SPINS -- fends off a knife attack with his forearm, ignoring the pain as the blade slices his skin -- he bolts for cover behind a cart as his eyes tick up Main Street to see a DUST STORM rolling in, when -- CRASH -- a wooden fence comes crashing down behind him and ROLAND'S CHESTNUT HORSE CHARGES THROUGH -- in the instant before it lands atop him, Roland drops to the ground and rolls away -- BANG BANG: Roland's bullets find the rider -- Kennerly -- who falls from the horse, dead.

And still the townspeople come at him. The DUST CLOUD semi-obscuring our vision now as Roland kills, with no regard for age or sex, women and children fall among the men, and still he continues killing, proverbial, like the slaughtering of lambs.

He was born to wield a gun. But we see that doing what he is best at makes him feel the worst about himself. The violent blows that get past his defenses almost like a penance, until finally... ROLAND TAKES A CLUB TO THE BACK OF THE HEAD -- he spins and shoots the man in the chest as the dust cloud overtakes everything and Roland's knees go out and HE FALLS!

A long, pregnant moment... then the dust cloud dissipates on the wind... and among the bodies no movement at all. It appears that Roland the Gunslinger has made his last stand.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DALTON PREP SCHOOL - STUDY HALL - DUSK

The sky outside the windows is now smoky blue. Jake sits at a desk, trying to focus on the math on the cabled computer.

Amidst the quiet storm of furtive glances and stolen classroom secrets, Jake looks out of place, solitary.

Jake stops working, looks up, sensing something. He glances at the pencil on his desk which has begun to TREMBLE.

-- and the room starts to SHUDDER. A TREMOR rocks the building. And then it stops.

Kids WHOOP and HOLLER. Natural disasters are fun in Junior High. A VOICE comes over the LOUDSPEAKER.

PRINCIPAL (OVER SPEAKER)
Attention everybody, Principal Fallows here. Just another small tremor. You can all go back to doing what you were doing. Nothing to worry about.

Activity resumes. But Jake just sits there. RATTLED.

That's when he's attacked from behind.

Jake spins, TWO MONSTERS, clawing at him. Jake shoves one back hard, over a chair, hits the other with the computer.

MONSTER TWO

Fuck, Jake?

Jake just stares in confusion at the two kids who decided to test out their Halloween masks on him. Now one is on his ass, the other is rubbing a nasty gash on his forehead.

TEACHER

(standing)

Chambers, what the hell...

A classroom of faces stare back at him. He grabs his knapsack and sketch pad, already racing out the door.

EXT. JAKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - B'WAY AND AMSTERDAM - NIGHT

A rising stack of lighted windows. Jake crosses the avenue and vanishes inside the soaring metal tower.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - FOYER - NIGHT

Jake ENTERS. Affluent. He softly closes the door behind him as he hears a one-sided CONVERSATION in progress. Heated.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

...He practically knocked one of them out, not to mention 200 bucks for the computer.

(beat)

No, I called you first, Lon. I'm calling him now.

ON JAKE, as he listens to the silence.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Jesus, Lon, just pretend to treat him like your own kid --

(beat)

No, I'm not. But I'm sure as hell about to start.

Jake hears her HANG UP, hears the familiar MUSIC of Scotch pouring over ice.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jake crosses through the living room just as his **MOTHER** (40s, pretty, worn down) puts the drink to her lips.

JAKE'S MOTHER

Baby? I didn't hear you come in. How long have you been home?

But he's gone, across the living room and shutting his bedroom door tight behind him.

JAKE'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Baby....

HOLD on his mother, life starting to break her. She drinks, then picks up the phone again, dials.

JAKE'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Doctor Cohen, it's Joan Chambers. Jake had another incident today at school.

She glances at one of Jake's discarded sketches on the table. A barren beach under three hanging moons.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TULL - MID-WORLD - MAIN STREET - DUSK

A red demon MOON, plump and full. TWO 3/4 MOONS hang low in the dusky sky beside it above the silent town.

TILT DOWN

All the roof gutters are lined with vultures, beady eyes staring hungrily at the carpet of dead in the street. The bravest among them take flight, alighting, pecking, biting.

One vulture dives down to land on a single hand, the bird pecks, pecks again.

WHAP! A fist grabs the bird sending the others FLYING in CACOPHONOUS SCREAMS into the closing dark.

Roland rises, gun still in his other hand, beaten, bloodied but still alive.

He stares at the dead, making a small sign with his hand like prayer. He bends, finds his hat and limps off down the road.

EXT. MID-WORLD - RECEDED OCEAN BEACH - NIGHT - LATER

The three moons glow ever brighter. Beneath, the water has pulled back from the shore like gums from diseased teeth.

Roland sleeps fitfully beside a dying campfire. (OVER) RUMBLING. Suddenly the ground TREMBLES. Exhausted, wounded, Roland sleeps on.

A thin wash of SICKLY GREEN LIGHT appears at the waterline, as if from the shaking of the world, like an opening wound in space -- hovering above the sand.

The surface of the wound roils, and creatures burrow through. They're abominations, crustacean, albino, the size of puppies, eyes on stalks, dripping foul venom.

The world RUMBLES again and the rift closes, bisecting or maiming those creatures still trying to wriggle through.

But the surviving monsters clamber up the beach -- oozing, pinchers SNAPPING, *CLICK CLICK CLICK* --

CLOSE ON ROLAND. His eyes twitch, as if from a nightmare, when -- SHREEEEEEEEEE!!!

His eyes POP OPEN.

Roland spins, gun in his hand before he is awake, SHOOTING the small horror that is leaping towards him, then NAILING two more attackers in fast skitter-scamper advance.

He doesn't see the larger creature over his shoulder as it leaps from a rock behind him -- Roland stands -- SNAP -- its claw clamps shut on his hand, severing two of his fingers, his gun flying.

Roland HOWLS in pain as BLOOD SPURTS from his hand. He rolls free of the creature-- hand finding a ROCK and SMASHING it down on the creature which lets out a blood-curdling CRY --

MORE CLICKING SOUNDS come from behind -- Roland, rises, spinning to see -- another, larger lobstrocity launching itself at him -- WHAM! It knocks Roland to the ground.

SHREEEE -- the creature opens its mouth and SINKS ITS TEETH into Roland's side --

He SCREAMS IN PAIN as he pulls his second gun from the holster, and WHACKS the creature, dislodging it from his hip -- CLICK CLICK CLICK! CLAWS SNAP AIR as it lands on the sand --

Roland, BLOOD spilling from his side, FIRES a cross volley with his left hand, killing the remaining creatures.

Roland looks down at the wreckage of his hand, his side, at the beach and the scar of the vanished portal, like a dark mark on the world.

He touches his wounds. Nothing good will come of this.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - JAKE'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Jake sits on the floor, his sketches spread out around him, staring at image filled pages, eyes frantic. Searching for something amidst the hand drawn lines.

DETAIL. An idealized drawing of a beach, with three moons hanging overhead.

DETAIL. An idealized PORTRAIT of Roland.

DETAIL. A frightening PORTRAIT of two men with the heads of rats.

He's looking for something, anything. HIS EYES NARROW. The way the drawings haphazardly overlap...

Jake begins connecting random points with a pencil until a mosaic forms a shape of its own. It could be...

A HOUSE.

Low-slouching roof. Collapsing porch. Shattered windows like angry, black eyes.

And underneath, if he connects the lines just right, don't they almost form numbers. 1919 --

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY/KITCHEN - SECONDS LATER

Jake comes down the hallway toward the kitchen, haunted eyes.

JAKE

Mama. It sounds crazy but I really think I found something --

STEPFATHER (OVER)

They need your signature.

JAKE'S MOTHER (OVER)

He's just a kid.

Jake is stopped short by what he hears. Sneaks a look into the kitchen at his mother and **STEPFATHER** (50s, not ideal).

STEPFATHER

Columbine? Kids kill kids all the time.

JAKE'S MOTHER

Lon.

STEPFATHER

It's 24-hour observation. Cohen said *delusional*. He thinks the earthquakes are the universe falling apart. Baby, he attacked another boy. He's violent --

Lon slides a faxed consent form across the table,

STEPFATHER (CONT'D)

They need your signature. You have to, Joan. It's for his own good.

The moment lasts. Then she signs away her child.

STEPFATHER (CONT'D)

Good. Because they're on their way.

HOLD on JAKE. Shattered.

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

Jake has scanned his sketch into his computer, is now anxiously running a GOOGLE MAPS search for similar houses and the street number: 1919.

ON SCREEN- Houses come up but Jake rejects them one after the next. Right street number. Wrong city. Wrong feel.

(OVER) A SIREN.

Jake looks out the window at the city. Back to his screen. He CLICKS through images of houses. No. No. No. Siren's getting LOUDER.

Wait! He CLICKS back to an image. The picture's old. No Current Image. But it has the same awful look as his sketch. Like a predator. And the right number. 1919 Dutch Hill. Brooklyn.

(OVER) The SIREN outside is LOUDEST just before it goes deadly QUIET.

Jake, humming with fear, prints the screen grab, already stuffing his sketch book into his backpack.

INT. JAKE'S STEPFATHER'S STUDY - NIGHT

Pack on his shoulder, Jake slips silently into the empty, wood paneled room, crosses to his stepfather's desk.

He jimmys the top drawer with a letter opener and grabs the stack of cash there.

That's when Jake notices a shape tucked behind the cash.

A GUN.

(OVER) The DOORBELL RINGS.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM

Jake emerges into the common area, his mother bowed at the table, his stepfather opening the front door.

JAKE'S MOTHER
(seeing him)
Jake, baby --

She's looking up, wiping fresh tears from her eyes --

JAKE'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
Sweetheart --

JAKE
Lon, don't, you don't know what you're doing here --

STEPFATHER
This is for your own good, Jake --

JAKE
Lon, please, can you just stop being a douche for one second?

Lon stops, for once actually speechless. Jake is equally surprised himself. But in for a penny....

JAKE (CONT'D)
I mean you never liked me, right? We both get it. Not enough mom-time. But I think you're really out of your depth here. Or you're not.
(beat)
Who knows? Maybe I am crazy.
(focused again)
Or maybe these guys coming to get me have different heads under skin masks, know what I mean?
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

(laughs)

Ha. I guess not. No, no, you wouldn't. But I gotta get out of here. I've got to go see. If there's nothing there, if it's just a house, if there's no door, then maybe then I'll go with them, okay, but what if it's real, it's like a pressure inside telling me it's real. Like if I don't, something, *no everything* terrible is going to happen all at once.

(settling)

Momma.

(at her, heart breaking)

Momma, please.

JAKE'S MOTHER

Lon, maybe-

Lon pulls open the door to reveal two ORDERLIES in white.

ORDERLY

Chambers?

They spot Jake.

STEPFATHER

Him.

JAKE'S MOTHER

ORDERLY

Wait --

Okay, kid, listen --

*

*

One of the orderlies is moving forward, separating from his partner. Jake eyes the widening gap between them.

ORDERLY (CONT'D)

No one's going to hurt you --

Jake pulls the gun. Everyone freezes.

JAKE

Stop-

JAKE'S MOTHER

STEPFATHER

Jake --

Jesus --

*

*

JAKE

Everybody. Just. Stop.

Jake gestures with his gun for the remaining orderly to clear the door. Tough guy. He stands fast.

ORDERLY TWO

Listen, kid --

JAKE

I gotta do this, mom.

Jake pulls back the hammer with his free hand. Eyes betray dangerous levels of fear and vulnerability.

A moment. Then the tough orderly takes a half step aside. Jake, back to the wall, slides past Lon and the orderlies.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jake is out of the apartment, backing towards the stairwell as his mother fills the open door.

JAKE'S MOTHER

Baby, please don't go.

(OVER) One of the Orderlies can be heard RADIOING 911.

ORDERLY (OVER)

Have a minor. Armed and dangerous.

JAKE'S MOTHER

I love you, Jake. You know that.

Jake looks at his mother one last time, then BANGS backwards through the stairwell door and is gone.

JAKE'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

(so small)

Come back.

EXT. JAKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT - HIGH ANGLE

Jake breaks out the front doors, racing across the street.

EXT. 1919 DUTCH HILL - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

The steepled Victorian is clearly abandoned, boarded windows, sloping porch.

WIDER

Jake stands on the sidewalk looking up at the perfect match to the picture in his hand.

On the porch, in spray paint: "TRAVELER, BEYOND LIES MID-WORLD" and "LOVE IS A ROSE BUT YOU BETTER NOT PICK IT".

Somewhere a SIREN WAILS. Jake looks over his shoulder, then starts up the cracked cement path.

He pushes through a rusted, PROTESTING gate, climbs onto the rickety porch, faces the door knob.

Deep breath. Moment of truth. Jake reaches for the knob. It turns easily. He pushes the door open and steps inside.

INT. 1919 DUTCH HILL - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

An immense living room illuminated by street light through boarded windows, walls stripped down to struts, floorboards a jagged toothed maze over darkness.

At the far end of the room is another single door, over which grows a thick vine of bright red roses.

Nothing. Just an old abandoned house after all?

Then the door SLAMS shut behind him. Jake spins back over his shoulder, reaches back, tries the knob. Locked.

When he looks back, the room seems to have stretched away from him, the rose-covered door now a football field away.

Equal parts riveted and terrified, Jake takes a tentative step toward the door, then another.

He's unaware that behind him material from the house -- boards, nails -- are starting to tremble and pull free.

Jake is about halfway to the door when he hears a PIANO behind him start to tremble. He turns to see it slide across the floor --

The piano picks up speed and suddenly is flying towards him. Jake has to hit the deck as it SMASHES the wall behind him.

All hell breaks loose. Pieces of the house are hurling towards him, more gathering like a storm in his path.

The stairs ahead rip apart, wood hunching up -- transforming violently into a shape...

An abomination of wood upon wood, with nails as teeth, under a maw of splintering boards, ROARS, blocking his way --

EXT. 1919 DUTCH HILL - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

From the outside, the house is unchanged.

A GRANDMOTHER carries a bag of groceries, her young GRANDDAUGHTER beside her.

As they walk down the sidewalk, the small girl glances toward the house. Then instinctively hastens her pace.

INT. 1919 DUTCH HILL - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

The house is anthropomorphizing around Jake, wood and struts becoming reaching ARMS and HANDS, the door now in its belly.

Jake is RUNNING for that door, but the floor is tilting back, SLIDING away behind him.

Jake DODGES the SMASHING FISTS of the wall struts.

Jake is almost at the door when -- the HOUSE DEMON RISES UP, finally formed. The door, in its gut, rises with it.

As the monster bends to devour its prey, Jake LEAPS toward the rising portal in its belly --

BUT HIS JUMP IS TOO SHORT! He barely manages to grab the door frame as --

-- THE HOUSE DEMON'S HAND CLAMPS AROUND JAKE, ENGULFING HIM.

But to Jake's surprise, he isn't killed. Instead he hears an (OVER) unearthly SCREAM, as if it's grabbed a burning coal, and the hand springs open.

Jake falls through the doorway which is now collapsing around him and out of our world.

BLACKNESS. OUR VISION FLUTTERS.

Three blood red moons hang in deep sky above. Two of them now full, the third nearly so.

EXT. MID-WORLD - NIGHT

Jake lies on his back, blinking, the wind knocked out of him.

WIDER

Jake is in the middle of a wide ring of large, druidic stones that sit in a clearing at the edge of a forest.

He takes a moment to recover his breath, assess his injuries. One arm is scraped and bloody. But otherwise, fine.

As he sits up, he sees beyond the stones, amidst the trees, incongruously, a GAS STATION. It looks a thousand years old. The area around it overgrown. Still, the horse and letters on the hanging sign are familiar, CITGO.

Jake stands, more than a bit freaked out. He takes a step and his shoe SINKS into the ground, which seems somehow bloody. With effort he tugs his foot back. Disgusting.

That's when a CLANGING NOISE makes him SPIN --

Hanging over the weedy ground is a Keystone Cop traffic sign. CLANG CLANG: the STOP placard is replaced by GO.

Jake just stares at it. Bumblefucked.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DEVAR-TOI - END-WORLD - SUNSET

Another evening in paradise. Kids race their bikes, play on lawns in the orange and blue dusk.

INT. DEVAR-TOI - PIMLI'S OFFICE - EVENING

Rows of books. Paintings of dogs playing poker. A giant picture window revealing Main Street behind a wooden desk.

At the desk sits **PIMLI PRENTISS**, round, balding, Mayor. Or warden, depending on your point of view.

Sitting on the desk, legs crossed at the ankles and giving Pimli a manicure is a buxom girl with the head of a red fox.

PIMLI

Lovely, dear, lovely.

WALTER (OVER)

Hello Pimli.

The door swings open, Pimli practically knocking the girl off his desk as he recognizes, stands to face his visitor.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Don't get up on my account.

PIMLI

(flustered)

All hail the Crimson King.

WALTER

Yes.

Walter steps into the room, towards a liquor cart, the young Fox-headed Taheen is already pulling on a human face mask, bowing and backing out as Walter pours two drinks.

WALTER (CONT'D)

I would have been back sooner. Had to kill an old friend.

Pimli accepts his scotch, throws it back in one shot.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Your hand is shaking, Pimli.

PIMLI
You scare the shit out of me, Walter.

This seems to please Walter. He takes a step closer to Pimli.

WALTER
Yes, well. You know what they say.
(Pimli blinks in fear)
Never let them see you sweat.

With that, Walter reaches up and adjusts Pimli's face, which we now realize is also a skin mask.

Pimli breathes again as the Man in Black walks to the window, stares up at the darkening sky.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Did you know they have names? The
Elephant. The turtle. The one we
cracked last week is called the Hare.

PIMLI
Sir...

WALTER
The beams that hold up the Tower.
They're really quite beautiful in their
way. Frankly I had hoped we'd have
broken at least one by now.
(beat)
Are we ready for tonight?

PIMLI
(really scared now)
We've gotten new children. Better
children.

Walter opens his hand and a small ball of fire forms in his palm. Sweat beads on Pimli's face as the fire grows.

WALTER
The third moon will be full by tomorrow
and then we'll have lost our chance.

Pimli fights to keep his knees from knocking.

PIMLI
You'll see, we'll crack the beams
before the moons turn full.

WALTER

Good. You wouldn't want to fail me
Pimli.

PIMLI

Fail? No. No. It's perfectly under
control.

The fire in his palm reflects in his colorless eyes.

VOICE (OVER)

We have a situation --

The door is already swinging open to produce **FINLI**, head of a
weasel, who, now seeing Walter, drops to one knee and bows.

FINLI

All Hail the Crimson King.

PIMLI

(worried for him)
Not the best time.

Finli is pulling a skin mask from his back pocket and donning
it hastily so it doesn't quite fit, a disconcerting result.

FINLI

Let me just put on my face.

WALTER

What situation?

Finli glances nervously at Pimli.

WALTER (CONT'D)

I'm not fantastic at waiting.

FINLI

We've had an unauthorized crossing. The
Brooklyn portal on Keystone Earth.

PIMLI

That's impossible.

No one says anything.

WALTER

How'd they get past security?

FINLI

That's just the thing. The house demon
is offline. I think it's dead.

Walter SIGHS.

WALTER

Listen, today's my day at the prom.
The tower falls tonight. Nothing screws
it up. I'm going to see what all this
distraction's about.

He closes his fist around the fire EXTINGUISHING it.

WALTER (CONT'D)

You get the kids ready. Maximize them.
Drop them in a tank full of nightmares
and steroids. Strip their skin off and
feed them back their screams. Do
whatever it takes but make sure they're
fully charged.

With that Walter turns to leave.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Today's not a good day to disappoint
me. *Comprende?*

EXT. MID-WORLD - ROAD - WALKING - DAYBREAK

Hazy morning sun cuts through the trees, casting the gas
station in a golden hue. Jake moves cautiously across the
broken tarmac, unsettled by the foreign surroundings.

A bird WAILS in the distance, Jake's eyes snap up to the sky.
The clouds seem to drive towards the distant horizon,
rushing, as if pointing the way.

Ahead, Jake spots a kiosk of apparently ancient vending
machines tangled in overgrowth on the side of the broken down
road ahead. Realizes he's starving.

CLOSE ON: A VENDING MACHINE. A sign indicates it's made by
"North Central Positronics -- Bringing You the World".

Jake stares at several empty snack racks behind cracked,
dusty glass. Most of the old labels are unfamiliar to him.

He spots a lone box of Junior Mints. He looks around
furtively, then pulls the corresponding knob. No luck. He
slips his arm into the drop slot, trying to pry the candy out
of the machine, when he hears a RUSTLING --

His back stiffening in fear, he turns as trees shake and a
DEER emerges into the road. As it ambles toward him, Jake
sees that it has a blind third eye in the center of its head,
and a hanging, vestigial, fifth leg.

Eyes wide with terror, Jake is frozen to the spot, his arm stuffed up inside the vending machine, as the awful creature stumbles toward him, then --

A muffled K-RACK. The deer startles, bounds off back into the tree line.

Jake lets out a breath as he hears another K-RACK echo through the woods. Sounds like... a GUNSHOT.

EXT. MID-WORLD - GREAT WEST WOODS - MORNING

CLOSE ON: A can of PEAS is set atop a wooden railing. The label reads Jolly Red Giant.

ROLAND'S VOICE (OVER)

I do not aim with my hand. He who aims with his hand has forgotten the face of his father. I aim with my eye.

CLOSE ON: **ROLAND'S GUNBELT** as he shifts it across his waist onto his left hip.

ROLAND'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I do not shoot with my hand. He who shoots with his hand has forgotten the face of his father. I shoot with my mind.

Roland stands forty yards from the row of impromptu targets. His right hand is wrapped in a field dressing, the strips of fabric stained with blood.

Angry red striations snake up his forearm, infection spreading in his blood. But Roland ignores that as he softly mutters his mantra:

ROLAND

I do not kill with my gun. He who kills with his gun has forgotten the face of his father. I kill with my heart.

With that, he QUICKDRAWS with his left hand.

FIRES.

And misses.

Roland just stands there. Gun still leveled. Staring at the can. Not at all happy.

EXT. MID-WORLD - GREAT WEST WOODS - MORNING

Jake peers from behind a tree. In the distance he can see the man from behind. He watches as Roland draws and FIRES.

Jake ducks out from behind the tree and creeps closer.

He loses sight of Roland as he moves past more trees -- then steps out into a clearing... and stops, confused --

The man is no longer there.

CLICK.

Jake spins. Finds himself staring into Roland's gun barrel. Roland draws back the hammer.

ROLAND
Sneaking up gets you killed.

Roland has somehow crept up behind him. But despite Jake's fear... somehow, he's also quietly thrilled:

JAKE
You're real.

Roland just stares at the boy. His odd clothes. His twinkling eyes. As if part of some great cosmic joke.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I knew you were real.

ROLAND
Who are you, boy?

JAKE
Jake Chambers. I drew you.

ROLAND
(frowns)
You... drew me? From your deck?

JAKE
What? No. Here, look --

Jake slings his backpack from his shoulders, removes his sketchbook, and offers Roland some drawings in his pad --

JAKE (CONT'D)
See.

Roland looks at the drawing flipping through Jake's hands.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I think I was sent here to help you.

Roland's eyes tick from the drawings up to Jake. If you were to say he's displaying an emotion, it wouldn't be fascination. Or amazement. More like annoyance.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Help me?

If he had it in him, Roland might CHUCKLE. He doesn't.

JAKE (CONT'D)

You... look like you were in some fight.

ROLAND

Where do you hail from, Jake Chambers?

JAKE

Sorry?

ROLAND

Your home.

JAKE

New York. But you've probably never --

Roland's eyes darken but he says simply:

ROLAND

Then I bid you safe journey back.

JAKE

Back. What? No --

Jake looks up from his drawings, sees that Roland has turned and is already headed off.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Wait!

Roland doesn't look back, just disappears into the woods.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Wait!

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE - BROOKLYN - DAY

Walter stands looking at the house which, from out here, still looks perfectly normal. He starts up the cement path.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - BROOKLYN - DAY

Walter opens the door, walks inside. CLOSE ON HIS FACE as he surveys the room.

WHAT HE SEES: the structure has seemingly restored itself to its benign state. Just the interior of an abandoned house.

But Walter notes DETAILS... the iron staircase RAILINGS are subtly mangled... the plaster MOLDINGS oddly out of place... FLOORBOARDS out of alignment. As if the house has been reassembled by Dr. Frankenstein.

And from the closed doorway at the far end of the room comes a faint BUZZING.

Walter frowns, crosses the room to the doorway and opens the door to reveal a flat BRICK WALL.

The buzzing is LOUDER here. Walter grips the door-frame, and the rotted wood easily peels away in his hand, revealing teeming scores of TERMITES, which BUZZ excitedly as they scatter down the wall.

Walter spots a small DARK STAIN on the door-frame. He scrapes some off with his long fingernail, examines it closely.

WALTER

Who's been sleeping in my bed?

EXT. WEST 61ST STREET - DIXIE PIG - NIGHT

A dark, storefront bar. That single crimson eye painted on the heavy door. JAZZ spills into the night as Walter vanishes inside.

INT. DIXIE PIG - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Walter walks wordlessly past a burly bouncer who simply averts his eyes, heads down a long red hallway into --

INT. DIXIE PIG - BAR - CONTINUOUS

The bar is crowded with patrons, very few of whom are human. Taheen, Low Men and Vampires play pool, slide the puck up a bowling machine, feed the JUKE BOX, flirt or feed.

Weasel and chicken countenances look up and fall silent as Walter passes, the monster who scares all the other monsters.

At a table in the back, a group of men and women are playing poker. They look up as he approaches, faces white as sheets, fangs glistening behind joyless smiles. VAMPIRES.

The thinnest of the group has a frowning face and oddly laughing eyes. His name is **RICHARD SAYRE**, clearly the boss.

WALTER
(perfunctory)
All Hail the Crimson King.

SAYRE
Yes. All do.

He holds Walter's eyes, competition, respect, loathing, a heady brew of bitter emotions and history between these two.

SAYRE (CONT'D)
To what do we owe this visit from his Majesty's *loyal servant*?

Whatever the backstory here, it's not pretty.

WALTER
The house demon we bought for our door in Brooklyn is dead.

SAYRE
(shrugging)
They just don't make 'em like they used to.

WALTER
Maintenance is part of the contract.

One stud vampire takes a drag of his cigarette. FRANK.

FRANK
You're the ones using the house to transfer children off world. Who says you didn't break it yourselves?

Walter's eyes flick to the youth.

WALTER
Did you just speak to me without being spoken to, vampire?

Hard to make a table full of vampires' blood run cold. But apparently Walter has done just that.

SAYRE
No need for unpleasantness. The boy is an idiot. But he does make a point.

Walter withdraws from his pocket a small plastic baggy.
Offers it to Sayre.

WALTER

Whoever got through left a little blood
behind. Be a good dog...

Sayre glares at Walter a beat, then shakes the BLOOD SAMPLE
out onto his palm, LICKS IT with forked tongue.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Vampires. So few uses, so much time.

SAYRE

A boy. Young. On the cusp of puberty.

Walter just stares at him: I'm listening.

SAYRE (CONT'D)

(then)

House demons are old. Outliers. They
can transport all the little telepaths
his Majesty's heart desires.

WALTER

But...?

SAYRE

But, in theory, try to send a strong
enough psychic through, he might...
overload it.

WALTER

Kill it, you mean? Just by using the
portal.

SAYRE

He'd have to be tremendously powerful.

Walter nods, thought something like this might be the case.

WALTER

I need him identified.

SAYRE

Do you now? What's in it for me?

WALTER

Don't play games with me, Richard. You
swore your kind to His service.

SAYRE

Ah but this matter seems so *timely*.

Walter says nothing.

SAYRE (CONT'D)

I've felt the earthquakes. Word on the street is you've got something big coming down in the next few days. Something world shattering you might say.

WALTER

What do you want?

SAYRE

I know that when the tower falls He has promised you this world. I want enough humans to breed and keep me fed for a very long time. Say, eternity.

WALTER

Done.

Sayre nods, turns to one of the others.

SAYRE

Send a conjurer and a tech team to Brooklyn.

WALTER

Next time I'll teach you how to roll over. Maybe even play dead.

(off Frank)

And he did.

FRANK

What?

WALTER

Speak when not spoken to.

(to Sayre)

Kill him.

SAYRE

(sighs)

As you wish.

As Walter walks away from the table we hear Frank's PROTESTS silenced by the sound of his SNAPPING NECK.

EXT. MID-WORLD - RYE PLAYLAND - DUSK

The amusement park has been abandoned centuries earlier. The skeletons of rides and arcade booths litter the fairway.

Roland stands cooking over a small fire against a sea of stars. He is wrapping his damaged hand in a fresh bandage. The angry red infection stripes are chasing up his shoulder.

He wipes sweat from his clammy forehead, tosses the discarded, bloody bandage, HISSING, into his FIRE.

He glances up at a boy's silhouette, sitting on an elevated fragment of blacktop thirty yards away. Roland turns a small carcass roasting on a spit. After a long moment, he SIGHS.

ACROSS THE PARK --

Jake sits with his arms wrapped around his shoulders, shivering. His stomach growls as he hears a crunch and looks up to see Roland walking toward him.

Roland stares down at Jake a long beat, then:

ROLAND

I thought I was clear, boy. Go home.

JAKE

(really pissed)

Don't worry. On my way. First thing in the morning. Next flight out.

ROLAND

(turns to go)

Good.

JAKE

I was joking.

Roland stops, turns back.

JAKE (CONT'D)

You have that here? Everyone is like you; I'm guessing not so much.

Roland just looks at him. The boy is trying hard to hide his vulnerability behind the bravado.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Look, I can't leave, okay. I don't know how.

(then)

And I don't want to. I mean as much as I want to, I don't.

(threadbare)

You don't understand how hard I've been trying to

(believe in)

Find you.

ROLAND
Then you've wasted your time.

JAKE
(as Roland turns)
Wait.
(off Roland's glare)
I'm scared all the time. You don't know what it's like. Like there are bugs inside the walls of the house, and no one can hear them, just me. Only its not just the house it's... everywhere.
(finally)
Am I crazy? Am I crazy or is everything really... ending?

Roland stares at him a long beat.

ROLAND
Yes.

JAKE
Yes what?

ROLAND
You aren't crazy.

Jake closes his eyes in a combination of confirmed dread and impossible relief.

JAKE
Why?

ROLAND
There is nothing exists that something doesn't long to destroy.

JAKE
But it's your job to save it, right?

Roland just stares. Who is this kid?

JAKE (CONT'D)
That's why I'm here. I can help you--

That's when Roland draws and aims his gun right at Jake.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Wait--

Roland FIRES. Actually, past Jake's shoulder. Missing but scaring off a mutated, three headed snake. Jake stares after the slither-limping creature in horror.

ROLAND

Help me? Wanton impudence.

Roland glances at his gun, worried that he missed the snake.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

You have forgotten the face of your father, you shame him. I have no job to save anything and even less use for a child such as you.

(holsters his gun)

Stay, leave. As you wish. But when I set off in the morning, I set off alone.

With that, Roland turns, and heads back to his fire.

JAKE

(small)

Draw a hero. Nice. Some fucking hero.

Jake wraps himself in the blanket, looks off into the darkness and the unseen horrors there, determined not to cry.

EXT. MID-WORLD - RYE PLAYLAND - LATER - NIGHT

Jake lays asleep under the blanket, the old tin clown on Pennywise's House of Horrors bowing in the wind.

MAN'S VOICE (OVER)

(very faint)

Jake?

Jake's eyes flutter open.

MAN'S VOICE (OVER) (CONT'D)

Jake?

He sits up. Looks at Roland, asleep by his fire.

MAN'S VOICE (OVER) (CONT'D)

Over here, kiddo.

Jake shakes his head. Then with a last look to the sleeping Roland, heads towards the sound, into the darkness...

EXT. MID-WORLD - NIGHT

Jake walks away from Roland's campfire into the woods. The night is sharp as crystal, stars shine through the canopy of trees like pinholes in the black velvet sky.

A SIGN that must be at least a hundred years old reads:
Welcome To Roosevelt Syracuse International Airport.

Spray painted across the sign are the words: We All Float.

Jake can see, beyond the edge of the woods, a long strip of tarmac, once an airfield, but now cracked, overgrown with weeds and littered with broken aircraft.

MAN'S VOICE (OVER)

Jake.

From beyond a distant, ravaged service building, golden light halos into the night sky.

MAN'S VOICE (OVER) (CONT'D)

Jake. Back here.

Jake frowns, then he heads toward the building, and the glowing light beyond, shining like a beacon.

EXT. MID-WORLD - RYE PLAYLAND - CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Roland opens his eyes to a DEAFENING ROAR, as if his campsite is in the center of a ROILING WAVE. He sits up.

Actually takes him a second to get his bearings as he shivers and wipes the clammy sweat off his brow.

He glances up to where Jake was sleeping. The boy is gone.
ALERT now:

ROLAND

Boy!

But he cannot hear his own VOICE, so loud is the ROARING. And Roland can now hear the tip of another sound, a thousand VOICES, calling, SCREAMING.

Roland flips open his gun, shoves a bullet in one ear, halving the SOUND, then another bullet in the other ear, world now mercifully silent.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Damn him.

He is up and racing fast into the night.

EXT. MID-WORLD - ABANDONED AIR-FIELD - NIGHT

Jake walks towards the building, golden glow spilling from beyond it, making the cracked tarmac glitter like diamonds.

MAN'S VOICE (OVER)
Back here, kiddo.

Jake rounds the crumbling building and is washed in warm golden light, his eyes going wide in wonder.

EXT. MID-WORLD - BEHIND THE BUILDING - NIGHT

A large, shimmering PORTAL hovers over the tarmac. Beyond its glittering surface is a New York street, busy with the pedestrians and traffic of a contemporary Manhattan night.

On the sidewalk stands a MAN in modern dress, his face half-shrouded in the shadow of a street lamp.

JAKE
...Dad?

JAKE'S FATHER
Hey, kiddo. Long time. How you doing?

JAKE
You -- You can't be here. You're dead.

Jake's father CHUCKLES, a rich, kind SOUND full of sweet mischief.

JAKE'S FATHER
Son, have you seen this place. Magic portals. Three-eyed deer. Welcome to Mid-World. Normal rules need not apply.

Jake stares at his father, only now really knowing how fully starved for him he has become.

JAKE'S FATHER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I let you believe I was dead.
I should never have gone along with it--

JAKE
-- What? I don't understand. You --
they gave us a medal.
(near breaking)
We buried you.

JAKE'S FATHER
It's a long story. But we'll have time for that now. I made a mistake, Jake. I should never have left you and your mother alone. Especially not with that asshole.

Jake can't contain a surprised smile.

JAKE
You know about Lon?

JAKE'S FATHER
Jake, I've been watching you every day
of your life.

Jake can think of a thousand things to say but only finds the very simplest of words.

JAKE
I missed you so much, Daddy.

JAKE'S FATHER
I know, son. I'm sorry. But I'm here
now.

Jake's father, his face still half obscured, reaches across worlds, out towards his son.

JAKE'S FATHER (CONT'D)
I'm going to take you home.

EXT. MID-WORLD - ABANDONED AIR-FIELD - NIGHT

Roland breaks the tree line, racing dead out across the tarmac. Ahead is the broken building and glow behind.

But the light spilling past it onto the tarmac isn't golden, instead the sickly pallid green of the portal on the beach.

Instinctively Roland's right hand reaches for his gun, realizes fingers missing -- draws instead with his left --

EXT. MID-WORLD - BEHIND THE BUILDING - NIGHT

Jake faces his father.

JAKE'S FATHER
Take my hand, son. Come home.

Jake reaches toward his father.

EXT. MID-WORLD - AIR-FIELD/BEHIND THE BUILDING - NIGHT

Roland whips around the building, gun opening in front of his chest, still running --

What he sees: No New York. No smiling father.

About a hundred yards away, Jake reaches up towards a nasty event horizon beyond which roil INNUMERABLE MONSTERS OF IMPOSSIBLE SIZE AND VARIATION, linked only by their utter *otherness*, their pure, insatiable hunger --

A school of creatures like bloated, ambulatory piranhas with legs and eyes on stalks and fanged mouths press against the inside of the thinny, gnashing maws distending the dimensional membrane towards Jake as he reaches out --

Suddenly a large shadow rushes from behind the piranhas and a much BIGGER MONSTER chumps them, RAMMING the membrane, moving teeth stretching the lip of the membrane even closer to Jake.

SUDDENLY: SHOTS -- the creature's eye stalks EXPLODING, the giant mouth jerking incrementally backwards with each IMPACT!

WIDER: Roland is SHOOTING with his left hand, what he lacks in precision he makes up for with an unyielding attack as he runs straight toward the thinny's watery face --

As he reaches Jake, he jerks him back with his ruined hand and FIRES a SHOT right next to Jake's ear with the other.

Jake is reaching up to his father's hand when the sudden EXPLOSION tears away half the world of New York, the monsters revealed in its place.

Jake's hand goes to his RINGING ear.

Another SHOT in his other ear and the other half of New York is gone, replaced by the monsters.

Jake just stares -- his ears RINGING as --

Roland throws Jake backward hard, hurling him onto the tarmac behind him --

ROLAND
(lips moving)
Run!

Jake is scrambling away -- Roland marching backwards, SHOOTING, holding the ground between the boy and the expanding membrane of monsters until they are out of reach.

Jake sits on his butt, terrified, out of breath as Roland crosses and stands over him, looking down, expression dark. Jake just stares past him at the portal. Finally finds his voice:

JAKE
My... father. I saw him in there.

ROLAND
Your father?

JAKE
(nods, a beat)
He died. A long time ago. When I was a kid.

ROLAND
(considers that, then)
That was not anyone you know.

Roland breaks open his gun, struggles with his injured hand to replace the spent bullets as Jake continues to gather his wits.

ROLAND (CONT'D)
To use your language, the walls of the universe are growing thin. Those are the bugs that chew on them, servants of the Crimson King. One of their more pleasant traits, they can use your hope like a lure to a cattle fish.

JAKE
...I saw my dog get runover once.
(off the portal)
That light feels like that. I can't explain...
(beat)
He's the one who's doing all this? The Crimson King? Who is he?

ROLAND
Not who. What?

Roland holsters his gun. Starts off.

JAKE
(to himself)
Not really an answer.

Close on Roland as he moves away from Jake who throws a last, troubled look back to the disappearing thinny and gets up to follow. Close enough to see Roland's uncaring gaze... but also something else: the dazed feverish look in his eyes.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - JAKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jake'S MOTHER SITS IN THE LIVING ROOM, PHONE BY HER SIDE, THE NEWS on the TV as she pours herself another drink. Jake's stepfather crosses, takes the drink from her hands.

She looks at him with red-rimmed eyes as he sets the drink down.

JAKE'S MOTHER

How can they not have any news? It's been almost a day.

JAKE'S STEPFATHER

The police have his picture. They're all looking for him. He's just a kid. How far could he go for Christ's sake?

The doorbell RINGS. Jake's mother looks up, hopeful.

INT. THE FRONT DOOR - SECONDS LATER

As Jake's stepfather pulls it open. Walter stands there.

Jake's stepfather frowns, puzzled as Walter SMILES:

WALTER

So sorry to bother you. I'm here about your son. Might I come in?

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - JAKE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Walter ENTERS the room holding his GHOSTWOOD BOX in his hands. He removes the small black sphere. BLACK 13.

JAKE'S MOTHER

(trying to contain her hope)

You said you may have an idea where Jake is?

Walter looks up at Jake's mother and stepfather standing in the doorway. Then down at Jake's computer.

JAKE'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

The police said he erased the drives.

WALTER

Everything, living or dead, leaves a stain. You just have to know what you're looking for.

Walter raises the ball. Utters some LOW WORDS and --

The room is suddenly occupied by the frozen ghosts of moments past -- TABLEAUS in time, overlapping one another in space: moving in reverse order: Jake exiting the room; stuffing his drawing pad into his backpack; working at his computer.

Walter walks around the floating images examining the ghosts of Jake's sketches as they hang taped to the walls.

JAKE'S MOTHER

How --

Jake's stepfather is already backing out of the room, pulling Jake's mother with him, her eyes filling with frightened tears. Walter smiles, walking towards her.

WALTER

He's quite special, your son, isn't he?

EXT. MID-WORLD - ROAD - WALKING - AFTERNOON

Roland traverses what was once a paved highway across high green cliffs under blue sky. Jake follows, a dozen paces behind, walking awkwardly.

JAKE

Hey. Can you wait a minute?

Roland keeps walking, well ahead of the boy.

JAKE (CONT'D)

C'mon, you wouldn't have saved me last night if you were just gonna let me die out here.

Jake sees Roland momentarily stumble as they make their way down a slope toward a fast moving river.

ROLAND

(to himself)

Bad habit.

They are passing an endless spreading field covered with swaying flowers.

JAKE

Hey. *Please*.

Roland ignores him, and finally, Jake can't hold it anymore. Steps into the field of flowers, unzips, and begins to pee.

But as he waters them, the flowers begin to take flight. Because those aren't pistils, they're eyes. And the velvety petals are wings. Jake jolts, wide-eyed as they soar about him in a rising wave.

Ahead, Roland has stopped at the river, filling a jug from his satchel. Jake comes up behind him, zipping up.

ROLAND
(not looking up)
Stop following me.

JAKE
Why won't you let me help you?

ROLAND
I'm trying to kill a man. No higher
cause than that. And unless you have
something more than that lawyer's
weapon in your satchel...
(Jake is surprised)
You're no help to me at all.

JAKE
Who are you trying to kill?

But Roland's answer is silence. Jake watches him a moment,
his mind turning over an upsetting thought. Finally:

JAKE (CONT'D)
It's true. What you said earlier. I try
to remember what he looked like but --

Roland turns to look at Jake, more curious than empathetic, a
man long inured to heartbreak.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I can't remember his face.

ROLAND
Your father is dead. Like all the past.
The world has moved on. You should
follow its example and do the same.

Roland's body shivers despite the high sun. He spills some
water on his pale, clammy face.

JAKE
You don't look too good, by the way.

ROLAND
Ah, universe saver and nurse's maid
too. Are there other wonders you have
in store?

Roland crosses past him and returns the water jug to his
satchel.

JAKE
(to himself)
Dick.

Just then, a nearby CRUNCHING NOISE makes Jake's back stiffen. He turns, scans the tall grass, seeing nothing.

JAKE (CONT'D)

What's that?

ROLAND

(unfazed)

We're being watched. Have been for the last six wheels.

With that, Roland heads off. Jake looks around: the fuck? TENSE now as he follows.

EXT. RIVER CROSSING - MID-WORLD - HIGH WIDE - SUNSET

Jake follows Roland down rolling hills towards a village of variously sized GEODESIC DOMES made of colorful sail cloth set amidst rich, blowing corn fields.

But then, noting the tarmac and towers upon which the domes sit, Jake's eyes alight with wonder and recognition.

JAKE

Echoes.

ROLAND

What?

JAKE

It's Newark airport.

Which amazes Jake but means nothing to Roland who turns and continues down toward the village.

EXT. RIVER CROSSING - CONTINUOUS - SUNSET

Roland pauses, glancing up at a weather-ravaged sign ("ARRIVALS/DEPARTURES"). Then his shoulders stiffen and he continues past.

Where once were runways are now lush fields being tilled by men and women with tan skin and tied back long hair.

The farmers start to notice them. One by one they still their rakes.

Jake is suddenly anxious. He picks up his pace, sticking closer to Roland as more folks stop working and just stare.

An OLD MAN up ahead, selling apples from a cart, turns and sees them, suddenly going stock-still.

He steps out into the middle of the road, standing directly in their path. Just staring at them, at Roland.

Then the old man drops to one knee, puts his fist to his forehead. He bows. When he looks up his eyes are full of tears.

OLD MAN

Hile Gunslinger.

Jake's fear turns to fascination, clocking the respect afforded to Roland. All the men and women in the fields are dropping to their knees and saluting as well.

ROLAND

(taking his hand)

Put on your hat, old timer. The sun is hot.

As Roland helps the man back to his feet, he notes someone moving through the field toward him...

A **VERY OLD WOMAN** approaches Roland. Jake watches Roland's back straighten. A gesture of respect. Surprising coming from Roland. The woman stops when she reaches him.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Long days and good nights.

VILLAGE ELDER

And to you, Gunslinger.

(then)

My scouts saw you coming. We thought all your kind vanished from the land.

Roland says nothing. She squints as she considers him. Then a smile creases her ancient features.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)

Well, well. And on the eve of the three full moons. And here I thought all my interesting times were behind me.

(then)

But why do I ken you're here for more than refreshment.

Roland meets her eyes. A beat, then simply:

ROLAND

Refreshment is always welcome.

EXT. MANNI VILLAGE - NIGHT - HIGH ANGLE

An open air common amidst the brightly colored domes of sail cloth. Tables are set with torches and electric lanterns. Fresh food is abundant.

EXT. MANNI VILLAGE - HEAD TABLE - NIGHT

Roland sits at the right of the Village Elder, Jake across from her. The air is festive, celebratory. Jake can't believe what's being put down in front of him.

JAKE

Pizza.

He's about to dive in when he notices the Village Elder make a gesture over her food with her hands. She circles her hand over her plate, then closes her hand in a fist and wraps it in the other palm. Apparently some form of Grace.

Jake watches Roland and the villagers do the same, and approximates the gesture himself.

Then he digs in. Closes his eyes in delight. The Elder looks at him.

VILLAGE ELDER

Good?

JAKE

(smiles)

Good as Ray's.

She winks at him, as he grins, stretches the cheese. He notes a MANNI GIRL, about his same age, staring at him frankly from across the table. He awkwardly raises a hand:

JAKE (CONT'D)

What's up?

MANNI GIRL

(smiles, testing out the words)

What's up?

Several more children stare at Roland. When he looks at them they race away, GIGGLING.

VILLAGE ELDER

(calling after)

Stop that.

(to Roland)

I cry your pardon.

ROLAND
They commit no offense.

VILLAGE ELDER
They have never seen a gunslinger.

Jake clocks the word but Roland says nothing to that, continues to eat in silence.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)
That you are here gives me hope that
the world may turn again. Your quest
for the Tower --

ROLAND
Ended ages ago. I don't mean to be rude
but it's been a while since I've eaten.

VILLAGE ELDER
Of course.

Roland looks down, continues eating in silence.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DEVAR-TOI - END-WORLD - SUNSET

Kids race their bikes, play on lawns in the fading light of another perfect evening. (OVER) A BELL RINGS.

Kids stop their play and look up. The adults are standing now, too, a few not wearing masks, displaying heads of featherless birds, hairless weasels, rats, ferrets.

The kids head towards the center of town their minds falling in, walking beside them.

Norman Rockwell by way of Charles Adams.

EXT. LIBRARY - DEVAR-TOI - HIGH ANGLE

As the children queue into the old and steepled town library, we can see that quite a few of them now have white hair.

INT. LIBRARY - DEVAR-TOI - NIGHT

Children are strapped into chairs, IVs slipped into implanted arm ports by as Pimli walks the floor supervising.

At the center of the circle is a DARK HAired BOY in a POLKA-DOTTED CHAIR that, by its design, resembles a throne. First among equals. Pimli CLAPS his hands, a jolly camp counselor.

PIMLI

Ice cream for those who do best today.
And red cars and dollies. Extra TV and
a trip to the fair. What could be
better? Isn't this best?

There is something SING SONG about his voice, and liquid
amber, like honey as he goes about his practiced routine.

PIMLI (CONT'D)

I'm proud of most of you already.
Eager to say well done, well done.

Pimli joins Finli, who is manning the bulky and aging high
tech serum pump that leads to the children's IVs.

A rusting ID plate on the machine reads: "North Central
Positronics". Pimli appraises the children, anxious.

PIMLI (CONT'D)

(off the kids)
Some of them look pretty alert.

FINLI

Pimli, dessert was packed with more
antidepressants, antipsychotics, age
retardants and just plain old opiates
than the pharmacy counter at Rite Aid.
You really need to chill.

PIMLI

Chill? Seriously?

Finli gestures to the CLICKING pump, milky, viscous fluid
traveling through plastic tubes into the children's arms.

FINLI

Honey, you want the neural enhancer to
work, right?

He gestures to the ancient machine.

FINLI (CONT'D)

Telekenisis is a tricky thing.

Finli puts his hand on Pimli's, calming him, looks at him
with beady weasel eyes, mimics taking deep breaths:

FINLI (CONT'D)

In and out, babe. In and out. It's all
under control.

Pimli steps out in front of the row of children.

PIMLI

Time to play the storybook game,
children, you remember how.

He closes his hands and a large patch of air in front of him
shimmers and glows, filling the SCREEN.

EXT. MANNI VILLAGE - NIGHT

The feast is well under way. A villager approaches the Elder
with TWO MUGS atop a silver tray. She takes them, offers one
to Roland.

VILLAGE ELDER

Old Miller. From the cans. Saved for a
special occasion.

Roland accepts a mug, holds it up and toasts an old toast.

ROLAND

Beer after beer.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)

One beer stands clear.

They CLINK. Roland takes a long draught of the beer.

ROLAND

A taste I did not think I would ever
taste again. Thank you.

VILLAGE ELDER

So, you no longer search for the Tower.

Everyone's eyes are on him. Including Jake's, who pretends
not to be paying the rapt attention that he is.

ROLAND

I've traded futility for a goal that's
more achievable.

VILLAGE ELDER

I see. And what would that be?

ROLAND

Revenge.

The Manni woman looks at Roland. Her eyes subtly narrow. As
if she's doing her best to keep judgment out of her gaze.

VILLAGE ELDER

What happened to you all? Our knights.
Our Marines. Our gunslingers.

ROLAND
(simply)
We lost.

He tips his mug to the air and drinks.

INT. LIBRARY - DEVAR-TOI

Pimli walks among the children strapped into their chairs.

PIMLI
Once upon a time there was a wise and
kind ruler called the Crimson King.

He opens his hands and the shimmering air now fills with a
Disney-like animation of a handsome man in flowing red gowns.

PIMLI (CONT'D)
He ruled over a dimension both bright
and beautiful.

Now the handsome man in red robes stands on green rolling
hills populated by bounding deer and bouncing rabbits.

PIMLI (CONT'D)
One inhabited by the most magical
creatures ever created.

One mighty elk-like creature noses up to the red-robed king
and the sovereign turns and feeds it out of his open palm.

PIMLI (CONT'D)
But then something awful happened.

The skies over the kind, handsome king go dark and stormy and
all the animals turn and run away into the forest.

PIMLI (CONT'D)
A hole was torn.

The landscape behind the king bursts open revealing a white
hole, the handsome man sucked rudely backwards through it.

PIMLI (CONT'D)
And the Crimson King was pulled into
our universe and imprisoned.

The handsome man now stands in a dark telescoping chamber,
revealing itself to be huge, the cartoon king tiny.

PIMLI (CONT'D)
Trapped in a terrible Dark Tower.

The chamber shrinks until we are outside a monolithic black turreted castle set in a field of black roses, the king's face a small white shape in a high-barred window.

PIMLI (CONT'D)

Can you help the king, children? Can you break down the Tower and set him free so he can bring kindness and light to our universe. I think you can. Concentrate.

THROUGH the turning animated image of the Tower, the children around the room all close their eyes.

PIMLI (CONT'D)

Concentrate. You've already done well before. The beams that hold the Tower grow weaker each time we play. Maybe today will be the day when the terrible Tower falls.

EXT. MANNI VILLAGE - NIGHT

A small BAND strikes up. Guitars, violins and a penny whistle. Roland looks up from his food as villagers joyfully rise from the tables, forming two large circles as the band settles into a lively IRISH REEL.

A WOMAN approaches Roland, offers her hand.

MATRONLY WOMAN

May I have the honor?

Jake expects this to go poorly but instead Roland glances at the village elder, stands and nods.

ROLAND

The honor would be mine.

Jake watches in wonder as Roland joins the dance.

INT. LIBRARY - DEVAR-TOI

Pimli paces the row of children, continuing this Montessori exercise gone mad.

PIMLI

You know how to play.

Pimli touches the old control deck on the pump and the fluid delivery increases in speed and volume, a reverse milking.

PIMLI (CONT'D)

Focus on a single point. Draw light and power to that point.

Objects in the room begin to rise slightly off the floor. Even people.

Suddenly one of the children's heads goes back, white energy streaming from her throat and eyes, forming a glowing bolus in the center of the room.

PIMLI (CONT'D)

Those are my good, good children. Think about the Tower. Bring it down.

Another child's head goes back, streaming energy, growing the bolus as his hair starts to turn gray.

EXT. DEVAR-TOI - LIBRARY - NIGHT

The windows of the building glow in the night.

EXT. MANNI VILLAGE - NIGHT

The dance CONTINUES. Partners are exchanged. The Village Elder watches Roland bow to a new partner. Though he keeps up the dance, his eyes narrow with exertion and fever.

INT. DEVAR-TOI - LIBRARY - NIGHT

A gray-haired child's face begins to become translucent. Then he actually collapses into himself, like glassy ash.

PIMLI

Sheemie, can you help the others?

That turns out to be The Boy with Dark Hair's name. Energy is flowing from him into the bolus, brighter than any of the other streams. Unlike most, his badge is entirely red.

PIMLI (CONT'D)

Can you help your brothers and sisters?

Sheemie shuts his eyes tight, and the beams coming from him grow brighter and stronger still, a workman straining to take more than his share of a heavy load, and slowly, the few suddenly fading kids around him remain solid again.

Sheemie, brow beading sweat, almost shines with power.

EXT. MANNI VILLAGE - NIGHT

ON ROLAND, as the music speeds up and the pace of the dance quickens. As Roland is joined by a NEW PARTNER, the sea of dancers seems to blur around him.

EXT. DEVAR-TOI - LIBRARY - NIGHT

The windows burn like suns.

INT. DEVAR-TOI - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Two more children become translucent and then collapse into glittering ash, gone on the wind. Pimli looks to Finli.

FINLI

Hang on--

PIMLI

We're losing a lot of them--

FINLI

One more second--

EXT. MANNI VILLAGE - NIGHT

Roland twirls, trying to keep up with the dancers that seem to speed around him as the music THROBS in his head.

Suddenly, his dance partner is replaced by A 16 YEAR OLD GIRL, impossibly beautiful, golden hair and eyes like liquid sky, smiling back at him.

Roland FLINCHES, as if he's been struck, tries to blink away the glowing vision --

INT. DEVAR-TOI - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Another child dies, vanishes in falling spirals of glassy ash. Finally, Finli nods.

PIMLI

Now, children. Let the energy free!
Break the beam! Now!

EXT. DEVAR-TOI - LIBRARY - NIGHT

The throbbing bolus of energy EXPLODES upward. For an instant, a high lattice of BEAMS is visible in the sky.

The energy EXPLODES in the sky high above the steeple, ROARS out in both directions in a straight line over the world.

EXT. MID-WORLD - BREAKER'S ENERGY PULSE - MOVING

We RACE along with the energy wave, EXPLODING AND DESTROYING land, creatures, all life, leaving dessication and decay in its fading wake, RIPPING AWAY and supplanting even sky itself with an ugly wet scar and the suggestion of moving shapes beyond, lurching with the unmistakable hunger of death.

EXT. MANNI VILLAGE - NIGHT

Still dancing, Roland reaches for the young woman, the glowing vision reaches back.

ROLAND

Susan --

But the dance ends, the music coming to a stop and Roland stands alone across from his dark haired partner.

Roland takes a moment to recover, breathing away the vision. He turns back to the Village Elder, but his eyes land on Jake, who is staring back at him.

JAKE

... Who... was she?
(off Roland's look)
The girl?

Roland's eyes narrow.

ROLAND

There was no girl.

He looks to the Village Elder.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Thank you, Sai, for your hospitality.
I will be on my way --

JAKE

There was a girl there, dancing--

Jake begins to stand as Roland straightens his gunbelt --

JAKE (CONT'D)

I could see her--

ROLAND

Now I would ask a favor.

The Manni woman nods as if she knew this was coming.

VILLAGE ELDER

You graced our table and danced the
coma-la. I did not think you did so for
enjoyment, much as I wished it were so.
Ask and what is ours is yours.

ROLAND

I'd be obliged if you'd custody this
boy. I'm sure he'll work for his keep.

JAKE

What?

ROLAND

Take him, use the old doors to send him
back to his earth, make him work the
fields--

JAKE

You can't--

JAKE (CONT'D)

Sell him to the harriers for meat, I
don't care --

JAKE (CONT'D)

No -- !

The dishes on the table begin to CLATTER. People STOP as the
plates, mugs and smaller objects begin to rise slightly.

VILLAGE ELDER

(darkening)

Beam quake.

In the sky above them, cracking energy glows. Like heat
lighting, and yet, not at all like heat lightning.

WIDE ANGLE

The energy created by the children rips along the horizon, a
savage horizontal tornado of light.

ROLAND

stands, silent, staring at the sky as women are rising from
the tables, hurrying children back inside as the world
CRACKS, shakes and MOANS.

Across the river, beneath the tear of spilling green light, trees and animals struck by the sickly glow turn into GLASSY ASH that now collapse and blow away on the wind.

Jake watches, too scared to move as the lethal light continues tearing open the sky overhead, the spilling decay beneath racing up the hill and towards the clearing, towards them, grazing feast tables, barking dogs and stunned villagers, transforming life into sudden glassy ash.

WIDE ANGLE

The rend in the sky closes like diseased lips, the light falling dissipating, darkness returning.

JAKE

stares as floating objects drop back to the table and ground with prosaic THUNKS. (OVER) Villagers WEEP.

Jake looks up at Roland with stunned horror. Roland wobbles. His eyes widen as his legs give out and he falls, face first, onto the ground.

People GASP as the Manni woman kneels over Roland's fallen body. She looks up, dark eyes telling the tale...

VILLAGE ELDER
(quiet urgency)
Sick bay. And get Henchick.

OFF JAKE, trying to blink through the shock and horror.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

The two kids from Jake's class, the ones with the Halloween costumes, well here they are trick-or-treating.

Suddenly, the whole world begins to SHAKE and RUMBLE, setting off dogs and CAR ALARMS before it finally subsides.

KID 1
Biggest one yet.

INT. DEVAR-TOI - LIBRARY - NIGHT

The children have gone. A Taheen sweeps up the glassy remains of the burnouts as Pimli stands with Finli over the console.

PIMLI
(comforting)
You did your best, hon.

Finli shoots him a dejected look.

PIMLI (CONT'D)
We could try and get away.

FINLI
Where could we go? He's everywhere.

That's when the door opens and a figure ENTERS, so framed by light that his black clothes make him a walking shadow.

WALTER
Hello, boys. How's the universe
wrecking business tonight?

Both bow slightly but Finli steps forward.

FINLI
It's my fault, sir. The beam cracked.
But it didn't break. I don't have
enough children for another attempt
before the moons wane. I failed you.

Finli squeezes his eyes shut, waits to die.

WALTER
Tish tosh.

Still bowed, Finli opens his eyes, casts a sidelong glance at Pimli who almost invisibly shrugs.

WALTER (CONT'D)
You still have a few of the little
buggers, right?

FINLI
Yes...yes, sir.

WALTER
Great. We'll finish off the beam
tonight. Hyper stimulate the survivors.

Pimli and Finli exchange a look.

PIMLI
As I mentioned, sir, we're too short--

But Walter is practically jocular.

WALTER
I done found us a new quarterback.

Walter walks over and pats the old US Positronics pump.

WALTER (CONT'D)
 Dosed and wired up, he'll probably
 bring down the Tower all by himself.
 (turning to Pimli)
 I want you to find me a boy.

EXT. MANNI VILLAGE - IN FRONT OF SICK-BAY - NIGHT

Jake waits nervously in front of the tent.

WALTER (OVER)
 His name is Jake Chambers.

The Elder exits the tent. Beyond the closing flap Jake can see Roland, unconscious, IV bag running fluids into his arm.

JAKE
 Do they know what's wrong with him?

But she is clocking the destruction wrought on her village, gaze so intent Jake thinks she may not have heard.

VILLAGE ELDER
 Yes.

And with that she starts walking.

JAKE
 Wait--

Jake has no choice but to follow her.

VILLAGE ELDER
 Whatever bit off his fingers was sick
 with radiation. And now that poison has
 spread inside his blood too.

JAKE
 Will he be okay?

But they have arrived at the spot where the sickly light touched down. Amongst the petrified tables and chairs VILLAGERS caught in shock, turning to flea, now transformed into GLASSY ASH. A sculpture garden of the dead.

VILLAGE ELDER
 A beam has been weakened. Here the
 results are death and decay.

Family members WEEP at the feet of the dead, laying yellow flowers where they stand. But even now the dawn winds pull their loved ones apart, ashes lifting onto the breeze.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)

But in the heavens worlds are dying.
The stars themselves are winking out.
Soon our universe itself will cease to
be.

Jake looks at the desiccated ground, the frozen dead, the
WEEPING men and women, impossible horror all around him.

JAKE

Is he the devil? The Crimson King?

Her LAUGH is utterly without humor.

VILLAGE ELDER

The devil is a puppy he can kick.

Jake sees what he didn't before. A small glassy figure. The
girl who smiled at him, her eyes wide, face frozen in a final
gasp of fear, MAN standing, WOMAN heaving in WRACKING SOBS.

JAKE

Why is he doing this? What does he
want?

VILLAGE ELDER

Evil always whispers promises to those
who will listen. But I'll tell you what
the King really wants. He wants to tear
down the walls of the universe and let
his monsters spill in. No more light.
No more time. No more life, at least
not the way we know it. Just his
ungodly horrors, endlessly devouring
and devoured, feeding on each other for
all eternity.

She looks back over her shoulder at the sick tent.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)

And our best hope to defeat him was
likely that Gunslinger.

JAKE

He's going to die, isn't he?

VILLAGE ELDER

He won't live out the week.

OFF JAKE surprised at his sudden rush of spilling tears.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

INT. DEVAR-TOI - PIMLI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Pimli has moved to an old computer, powers it up as Walter and Finli watch from the doorway.

PIMLI

Jake Chambers. We'll issue a bounty.
Get the lost pet posters up.
(to the computer)
Open search protocols. All worlds.

Instantly, a field of tiny bursts of color emit from the machine, like stars appearing in the air all around them.

WALTER

This one's shielded somehow. It's the only reason we haven't detected him by now.

PIMLI

He's on keystone?

WALTER

He may already be here on Mid-World.

PIMLI

...here? But how did he --

WALTER

Just get to work please.

Pimli doesn't have to be told twice. The stars around them begin to move, Finli sifting them like a virtuoso.

EXT. MANNI VILLAGE - CLIFFS

Jake stands looking out into the valley and the corpse of a city that might have once been Newark beyond.

Golden light breaks on the horizon as the SUN appears. The world, for all its dying, can still look peaceful and startlingly beautiful.

VILLAGE ELDER (OVER)

Our doors can send you home.

The older woman stands behind him.

JAKE

How is he?

VILLAGE ELDER

Ka is a wheel.

JAKE
Whatever that means.

VILLAGE ELDER
Resting.
(wry)
Not very peacefully I might add.

Jake turns to face her.

JAKE
My world. This is going to happen there
too?

VILLAGE ELDER
Yes.

JAKE
(agonized)
I was supposed to help him. I was so
sure. Why else would I have seen all
this?

This gets her attention.

VILLAGE ELDER
Seen, how?

The Elder's eye are narrowing, still fixed on Jake.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)
Like you saw the girl in the dance?

JAKE
I know I'm sounding crazy--

VILLAGE ELDER
I saw her too.

Jake looks up at her, startled.

JAKE
She was there? She was real?

VILLAGE ELDER
There, no. But real, yes. Once.

The old woman considers. Then she takes his hand. He feels a
light JOLT.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)
The knack is called the shine or the
candle flame. Most have none past
childhood. Some have a touch, like me.
(MORE)

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)
 It's how we both saw the dancing ghost
 he carries with him.

It is only then that Jake realizes she isn't TALKING. He can hear her in his mind. She lets go of his hand.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)
 (using her VOICE again)
 But in a precious few it burns so
 bright that the world peels back and
 reveals the whisperings of places and
 old things and even the inside of men's
 minds. A precious few like you, child.

As Jake hears that, she nods.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)
 So, you say you were sent here to help
 him. So help him.

JAKE
 How?

VILLAGE ELDER
 Ka is a wheel.

JAKE
 Please stop saying that.

She can't help but smile.

VILLAGE ELDER
 The old mercuries might have cleansed
 his blood, but radiation poisoning is
 an illness for which there is no longer
 a cure.

JAKE
 The mercuries?

VILLAGE ELDER
 Ancient medicines. Now long gone.

Jake's eyes brighten.

JAKE
 You're shitting me.

EXT. MANNI VILLAGE - MORNING

Sun washes over the brightly colored sail cloth domes.

ROLAND (V.O.)
 What's a... pharmacy?

INT. SICK BAY TENT - MORNING

Roland sits shirtless on the edge of the bed, pulling on his boots. Ancient medtech machines line the room, most broken and patched together. An IV hangs on a wooden pole.

VILLAGE ELDER
 It's where medicines are kept in his world. According to the boy, mercuries are plentiful there and easy to obtain.

Roland finishes pulling on his boots.

ROLAND
 Good luck for those who live there.
 (then)
 I won't burden you any longer, I feel much better now.

Roland stands. Tries to ignore the wave of dizziness that triggers.

VILLAGE ELDER
 Right. And a quest to resume.
 (then)
 I suppose walking yourself into a grave is not a powerful enough deterrent.

He ignores that as he retrieves his shirt. The ANGRY RED INFECTION MARKS that streak his spine and back make her pause.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)
 Who is Susan? What happened to her?
 (off his look)
 You called for her in your delirium. Again and again.

ROLAND
 All the past is dead.

VILLAGE ELDER
 I think I begin to understand now.
 (then)
 With her loss went your hope.

ROLAND
 I have hope. I hope to kill a man, snap his neck like a bird's.

The older woman says nothing, glances at Roland's deck of cards, spilling out of his bag on a small wooden table.

VILLAGE ELDER

....So, when Ka speaks, you listen?

An uncharacteristically challenging tone in her voice. He looks at her.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)

Yet Ka sent you the boy and you dismiss him.

ROLAND

He is easily dismissed. He's a child.

VILLAGE ELDER

Perhaps so.

(then)

Do you remember the story? What the fox said to the little prince? 'It is only with one's heart that one can see clearly. What is essential is invisible to the eye.'

He's buckled on his gun-belt. Now stabs his GUNS into their holsters.

ROLAND

My mother read me that story. If I told you hers, I don't think you'd like it.

He starts past the Manni woman toward the door. But then STOPS. He's caught his own reflection in a mirror.

VILLAGE ELDER

You're dying, gunslinger.

WHAT HE SEES: His face is white and sleek. The red lines of toxin are visible, creeping up under the collar of his tunic.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)

You'll be lucky to make it half a wheel.

He can see her reflection in the mirror behind him. Despite her advanced age he is clearly closer to death.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)

Roland Deschain. Son of Steven, last of the line of Eld. Roland the White.

He glances at her sharply. She meets his gaze, matches the challenge.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)

Yes. We knew all your names once.

She stares at him.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)

So how will you exact your precious
revenge? If you are a corpse?

The question hangs in the air. SLIGHT RACK in the mirror from the old woman's face to Roland's.

EXT. MANNI VILLAGE - DAY

At the edge of the valley is the footprint of what was once a terminal. What remains of the building are infrequent DOORS set in fragments of wall. Some doors still have native control panels, others are connected to jury-rigged switches.

Manni Technicians are attaching power enhancers to one of the more broken, ancient doors. Taking readings with a set of magnets and plumb bobs.

Jake stands nearby, watching. He notes that on each door is a now familiar name and logo.

JAKE

Who are they anyway?

One of the Technicians looks at Jake, who indicates the logo.

JAKE (CONT'D)

North Central Positronics?

The Technician considers, then shrugs, as if to say, no harm.

TECHNICIAN

Legend has it was them that punched a hole in the sky and allowed the Crimson King to enter, in a place called Arrow's Head. Them and the USE Army.

JAKE

The *U.S.* Army... ?

But, hearing a MURMER ripple through the crowd of gathered Manni, Jake turns --

Approaching up the hill, he sees the old Manni Woman leading Roland. Roland's slow, pained gait sparks Jake's concern all over again.

WITH ROLAND AND THE MANNI WOMAN

Roland fights the temptation to take the Manni Woman's arm for support as he uncomfortably eyes the villagers who line his path, bowing to him as he passes.

ROLAND

They embarrass me with their respect.

VILLAGE ELDER

Because you're not the hero they want you to be?

ROLAND

I've made myself perfectly clear on that account.

He looks at Jake up ahead.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

I'm no one's hero.

(then)

I'll have his mercuries. But for my reasons. Not yours and not theirs.

VILLAGE ELDER

We're not so naive as to doubt your sincerity.

(beat)

But as long as you're alive, we still have a chance.

Roland looks around at the broken landscape.

ROLAND

World ran out of chances long ago.

The lead Manni Technician nods that they're ready.

TECHNICIAN

Portal regenerator should target the nearest un-occluded area in a twenty meter radius for the return door.

ROLAND

Should?

TECHNICIAN

(I'm sorry)

The Tech is really old, Sir.

The Tech holds out a 70s style DIGITAL WATCH.

TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)

May I?

Roland offers his wrist.

TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)

When it reaches noon, it will be time
for you to cross back to this world.

Jake looks at the watch, confused. It seems to be going
crazy, the time running impossibly fast.

JAKE

But -- it's not --

The engineer meets Jake's eye. Smiles kindly.

ENGINEER

Time is funny here. Don't worry --
it'll work fine once you cross over.

Roland pulls his sleeve down over the watch. Jake looks
toward the high tech WHINE as the old doorway powers up.

VILLAGE ELDER

(to Roland)

Ka be with you both.

They walk towards the door. Roland stops, turns back towards
the old woman.

ROLAND

I thank you for your kindness.

VILLAGE ELDER

Not kindness. Opportunism. I still have
faith in you.

He nods, almost smiles.

ROLAND

You think me a fool to have given up
hope?

VILLAGE ELDER

Son, the brutality of life leaves us
with hope or hopelessness. I just think
hope is a better place to shoot from.

With that, she reaches up on tip toe and kisses him on each
cheek.

VILLAGE ELDER (CONT'D)

It was an honor to meet you.

Roland turns away before she can see the sadness in his eyes.

The Elder kneels to Jake, kisses his cheeks as she WHISPERS something to him we don't hear.

Jake looks at her, nods soberly, then looks to Roland who is opening the door and stepping through without a look back.

Jake rolls his eyes -- dick -- then follows through the door--

And steps into BLACKNESS. A beat as his eyes look to make out any kind of shape in the darkness, when SUDDENLY --

-- HONNNNKKKKKKKKKK!!!

Jake's head WHIPS around as HEADLIGHTS SWEEP across his face -
- his eyes SAUCER as he sees a TRUCK bearing down on him --
HONNKKKK -- and realizes he is --

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - CANAL STREET - LATE NIGHT

They've crossed over directly into the middle of the busy thoroughfare to the Manhattan Bridge.

Jake spins out of the way of the truck -- sees Roland frozen to the spot amidst the NOISE and WIND and CONFUSION -- Jake races across traffic, grabs the cowboy by the arm --

JAKE

Move -- !

-- pulls him staggering to safety at the side of the road. Roland looks back as a car WHIPS PAST, inches from his nose.

ROLAND

Thought we came here to save my life.

Jake, breathing hard, grabs the taller man by the sleeve and pulls him away.

JAKE

Come on --

EXT. PRINCE STREET - SOHO - NIGHT - HIGH ANGLE

This late everyone looks a little out of place. Jake and Roland move down the sidewalk, approaching a 7-Eleven.

INT. 7-ELEVEN - NIGHT

DING: a bell over the door CHIMES as Jake leads Roland inside the all-night convenience store. The overhead fluorescents amplify Roland's sickly pallor as he follows Jake across the store to the back. He gawks at the stocked shelves.

ROLAND

All this... is for purchase.

JAKE

Yeah. But it's mostly crap. The medicine's back here.

FEMALE VOICE

Hey, cowboy --

Roland's eyes snap around. Two WOMEN stand down an aisle. Low cut tops, short shorts over black stockings.

HOOKER

(smiles)

Wanna ride my pony?

The other hooker chuckles. As Roland opens his mouth to reply, a small hand tugs his sleeve. Jake. Pulls him away.

JAKE

You don't want to talk to them.
They're --

ROLAND

-- We have their kind in my world too.
(musing)
Though usually we don't buy them in a store.

JAKE

... what? No -- they're not --

Jake has to stop himself from smiling. Hands Roland two small boxes of MERCURY TABLETS.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Hold these. Don't move. I'm gonna get us some hot dogs.

(off Roland's look)

Food. Stay here. I'll be right back.

Jake heads off. Roland looks down at the packages in his hand. CUT TO:

THE FRONT COUNTER --

The TWO MERCURY BOXES are set down on the counter. TILT UP to the CASHIER. Who looks from the medicine up to Roland. His eyes twinkle in contained amusement as he rings up the packages:

CASHIER

Howdy. That's fifteen nine--

Roland places a GOLD COIN on the counter. ON THE CASHIER: the fuck? Jake appears, holding two Big Gulps, and two hot dogs, offering a CREDIT CARD:

JAKE

You take AmEx?

That's when he notices a rack of New York Posts. His own smiling picture is on the cover, under the word MISSING.

INT. DEVAR-TOI - PIMLI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Pimli stands amidst the hurling storm of stars, pulling through them, bunching and spreading them like sail cloth.

PIMLI

Gotcha!

He holds up both hands and the storm stops. He pulls one close up, a small bright point of light.

PIMLI (CONT'D)

He's on keystone Earth.

Walter, who has been standing in the corner, crosses.

WALTER

Odd.

PIMLI

And sir, he's not alone.

Walter's expression darkens as Pimli pulls up another light point overlapping Jake's, a small rose blossom.

WALTER

No--

(furious)

Gunslinger!

Finli cocks his head, a remarkably non-human gesture.

FINLI

I thought they were all dead.

WALTER

This one's too stubborn to die.

PIMLI

Sir, Deschain's way down on the threat matrix. Conventional wisdom says he's pretty washed up.

WALTER
Conventional wisdom is for idiots.

Walter heads towards the door, seething.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Pin down the kid's location and send it
to me. Ready the others. That beam
breaks tonight and this kid's going to
help me do it.
(portentous)
It seems you have a destiny young Jack--
(nope)
What's his name?

PIMLI
Jake, Sir. Jake Chambers.

WALTER
Whatever. Just find him.

EXT. 7-ELEVEN - STREET - NIGHT

Jake leads Roland from the store and down the sidewalk.

JAKE
It's only been a day since I left?

ROLAND
Time is --

JAKE
Funny over there. Right. Got it. Shit.
We have to get off the street.

He hands Roland one of the hot dogs.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Can I see the watch?

Roland hikes up his sleeve. 3AM.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Nine hours.

ROLAND
Savages.

Jake looks up at him, surprised.

ROLAND (CONT'D)
That you would eat your own dogs.

Shaking his head he takes a rough bite. He is pleasantly surprised.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

What breed is this?

Jake starts to answer. Decides better. Looks around. Even in New York, a man and a young boy, alone in the street late at night are bound to attract some attention.

JAKE

Listen, people are looking for me.

ROLAND

A bounty?

JAKE

No, but -- something like that. I ran away from home.

(realizing)

And I just used my mom's credit card.

(then)

We have to get away from here. It's not safe.

He pulls something from his hip.

ROLAND

I'll wait here for the door to reopen.
I can defend myself.

Jake glances over, sees Roland raising his big GUN.

JAKE

What th-- ?! Put that away --
(quiet, urgent)

You can't do that here. There are laws -
- we'll be arrested.

ROLAND

Come as they may. I am...
(beat)

Hard to detain.

Jake looks at him. Roland's eyes are bloodshot. Unfocused. And he's holding a loaded gun. For the first time maybe Jake is feeling that this was a mistake, in over his head.

JAKE

Please. I'm not saying you couldn't
kill a whole city's worth of cops. But
is that what you want?

Roland says nothing.

JAKE (CONT'D)
It's too dangerous out here.

ROLAND
Yes. For anyone who challenges me.

JAKE
Yes. Fine. For them. Whatever. We need somewhere warm and safe where I'm not going to get recognized -- somewhere the medicine can start to work.

The gunslinger remains impassive.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Jesus. Put away the gun.

ROLAND
Jesus.

JAKE
What?

ROLAND
Jesus. The Nazarene. You're familiar with the old gods too.

JAKE
Look, this is my world, okay? You don't understand how things work here. If we're going to survive you have to listen to me now. *So, please put away the gun.*

Roland stares at him. Finally holsters his weapon.

ROLAND
So, boy, what do you suggest?

The moment lasts as a MAN passes on the sidewalk. As he meets Jake's glance, passing under a neon light, just for an instant, his face SHIFTS, almost resembles a chicken.

Just a trick of the light, but Jake tenses perceptibly.

JAKE
We have to go home.

EXT. BUS - NIGHT

An MTA bus WHIPS through frame...

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Roland and Jake sit in the half filled bus. Roland looks at a Sleeping Drunk as Jake opens a box of mercury pills.

JAKE
It says two tablets every four hours.
(shakes some out in his
hand)
Here. Take five.

He hands Roland the medicine. The Gunslinger just stares at the small round tablets in his quivering hand.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Haven't you ever -- you swallow them.
(hands him a Big Gulp)
Use this. Just put 'em on your tongue
and --
(mimics)
-- wash it down... You probably wanna
do one at a --

Roland dumps the pills in his mouth. Sticks the straw between his teeth, takes a long pull of soda --

JAKE (CONT'D)
-- or... all of them. That works too --

ROLAND (O.S.)
WHOOOOO -- !!!

Jake's eyes SNAP UP! Sees Roland's face breaking with unexpected DELIGHT.

ROLAND (CONT'D)
What is this...? Magic elixir...?!

SLURRRRRP -- the Gunslinger takes another long pull. As if he can't believe the pure, bliss contained inside the paper cup. Jake looks up to see the other riders staring at them.

JAKE
It's sugar.

ROLAND
("God/heaven/sex")
Shuger.

Jake's anxious now, wondering if anyone recognizes him.

JAKE
-- c'mon, we're the next stop.

Roland takes another long pull of soda and stands to follow Jake.

INT. COLUMBUS AVENUE - WALKING - NIGHT

Jake moves quickly, head down, trying to avoid anyone looking at him. Roland looks at Jake.

ROLAND
Can I have that?

Jake looks up. What?

ROLAND (CONT'D)
(points to Jake's Big Gulp)
Your shuger. Mine is empty.

Jake hands over his Big Gulp.

JAKE
(resolved now)
Look, my mom is home. And her new husband. He won't understand, but she will.
(realizing)
She'll see... see you're real.
(then)
And if my stepfather wants to call the police, you can shoot the phone.
(a bonus)
Then maybe him too.

EXT. JAKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - B'WAY AND AMSTERDAM - NIGHT

TILT DOWN from Jake's apartment building to find Jake and Roland, approaching up Broadway.

Roland is still trying to process the cascade of sights and sounds of the city as they arrive at the busy intersection.

Jake spots an opening in traffic, starts across the street, but Roland is staring at a HORSE attached to a buggy -- the animal wears a tuxedo jacket and black top hat.

ROLAND
Animals here still have speech?

JAKE
(shakes his head)
Come on.

Roland follows Jake into the street.

ROLAND

Then why is that horse wearing clothes?

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - 29TH FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jake steps off the elevator. He pulls his apartment key from his pocket.

ROLAND

-- I don't follow: people pay good coin
just to be ridden around in circles,
how is that pleasurable?

JAKE

Good question.

He unlocks the door to his apartment.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jake ENTERS.

JAKE

Mom, it's me, I'm okay, I'm home --

As Jake continues into the apartment, ON ROLAND: as he gets a bad feeling.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

We're WITH ROLAND as he follows Jake through the apartment --

JAKE

-- listen, there's someone with me---

Roland sees Jake STOP, mid-sentence, frozen in his tracks, his eyes narrow as he follows Jake's eye line to see --

A dark splatter on the pale carpet... another on the far wall. Roland recognizes them instantly.

ON JAKE: just standing there, staring at the blood stains, as we PUSH IN ON HIM: his mind trying to deny what his heart already understands... CONTINUE PUSHING IN when --

FLASH: HIS STEPFATHER FLIES ACROSS THE ROOM AND SLAMS INTO THE WALL --

Back to Jake, EVEN CLOSER NOW as --

FLASH: A MAN DRESSED ALL IN BLACK VICIOUSLY STRIKES HIS MOTHER --

Jake BLINKS in shock --

FLASH: *WALTER STANDING OVER TWO CORPSES, SMILING --*

JAKE (CONT'D)

No, no, no....

A boy, frozen in place, trembling, almost in seizure.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I can't stop. I can't stop...

(starting to scream)

SEEING IT!!!

And his SCREAMING has no end. Roland glances up at thin walls, kneels before Jake, gun coming up in one fluid motion.

Hands moving like poetry, sure, despite the boy's WAILING, stock breaking open, a bullet spilling into weathered palm.

ROLAND

Okay, boy.

Roland flips the bullet to the back of his fist, fingers moving as if playing an invisible piano, the shiny cylinder rolling from knuckle to knuckle in front of Jake's eyes.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Okay...

(first time)

Jake.

The bullet dances back and forth across his hand, hypnotic, like water, the glinting light reflecting in Jake's eyes.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Close your mind's eye. Don't see anymore, boy.

The bullet moves faster and faster still. Jake's MOANS have quieted to WHIMPERS.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Don't see.

The boy is quiet now, the fugue of seeing giving way to the shock of loss. Jake looks up, tears spilling from his eyes.

Roland looks back at him. Despite Jake's moment of weakness, what Roland sees instead, for the first time... is his strength.

EXT. WEST 61ST STREET - DIXIE PIG - NIGHT

Walter approaches the black doorway painted with that single crimson eye.

INT. DIXIE PIG - BAR - CONTINUOUS

Sayre throws back a shot of crimson liquid. Sets the glass down as Walter arrives at his table. Sayre eyes him.

SAYRE

Is anyone ever happy to see you?

WALTER

I certainly hope not.

SAYRE

Well your batting average stands.

WALTER

I need six of your best men. For lack of a better word.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - MANHATTAN SKYLINE - MORNING

The sun breaks over Central Park.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

Roland stands at the floor to ceiling living room windows, gazing out as sunlight bathes the city in a golden haze, his first view of the city in daylight.

After a moment, despite himself, he looks up into the sky.

...nothing but clouds.

And though he expected as much, we see the flicker of DISAPPOINTMENT in Roland's eyes.

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jake's eyes flutter open. He lays on his bed a moment, disoriented, trying to get his bearings...

And then we watch as awareness floods into his eyes as he remembers.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jake moves down the hallway. As he turns into the living room he visibly girds himself, preparing himself to see the evidence again of his mother's death.

But when he looks, the bloodstains are gone.

Roland stands at the window, staring down at the spreading city. He turns to face Jake.

ROLAND
So much like Lud before the fall.

JAKE
How did I get to my bed?

ROLAND
I carried you.

JAKE
(off the cleaned floor)
Thank you.

Jake meets the cowboy's eyes. The two just stand there.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I couldn't stop seeing it. Like it was happening right in front of me.

ROLAND
Your time on Mid-World likely polished your shine.

Jake just nods, not sure what to say.

ROLAND (CONT'D)
Your second sight seems to have been all but hidden. Did someone once cast a protection glamour on you?

JAKE
We don't have magic here.

Roland frowns -- unlikely -- but says nothing.

JAKE (CONT'D)
You look like you're better.

It's true, the angry red stripes have vanished from Roland's neck and arms, his complexion has taken on a rosy glow.

ROLAND
I swallowed another handful of
medicine. I feel much stronger.

Jake nods. That's good.

JAKE
(first time)
Roland.

Roland glances up.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Who was he? The man who...did it.

Roland closes his eyes briefly, opens them again.

ROLAND
One who enjoys destroying childhoods as
others do a good meal.

Jake opens his mouth to respond, then just closes it again.
Roland has already turned away.

ROLAND (CONT'D)
In my world bullets have become scarce,
very hard to come by, I take it that's
not the case here.

JAKE
Not so much. No.

ROLAND
I'd like to purchase as many as I can.

JAKE
Sure. I can search for the closest ammo
stores.

ROLAND
We have no time to search this city.
The portal re-opens in two hours.

Jake has crossed to the kitchen laptop.

JAKE
Not that kind of search.

Roland comes around to look at the screen, instead fixes on a
framed photo on the shelf of a handsome man in uniform.

ROLAND
Is this your father?

JAKE
 ...Yeah. That's my dad.

ROLAND
 He was a soldier?

JAKE
 No, a policeman.

Jake looks at Roland. And for perhaps the first time in his life, something about the gunslinger makes it okay for him to talk about this. Makes him want to talk about it.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 When I was a kid, some bad guys hijacked two airplanes and flew them into two tall buildings downtown -- the World Trade Center. The buildings caught fire... my dad... he ran in to pull people out... a few years later he got sick, from what happened when they collapsed. Then he died. I guess those towers kind of held up our world too.

ROLAND
 When was this?

JAKE
 About 10 years ago.

Roland seems to be doing math in his head.

ROLAND
 About a hundred years on my world. When the first beam broke.

JAKE
 What happens on your world echoes on mine.

ROLAND
 (surprised, but yes...)
 Echoes.

JAKE
 You see why you have to start looking for the Dark Tower again --

Roland's eyes cloud.

ROLAND
 I've told you, the Dark Tower means nothing to me --

JAKE

I've seen you looking up. Looking for
the beams. I know you still --

ROLAND

(killer)

Enough!

(softer)

Enough.

Jake has taken a step back, pushed by Roland's rage.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

You have done me a great service, Jake
of Earth. You have healed me and put me
back on my quest to find the Man in
Black. By now you can swear how evil he
is as much as any of us.

JAKE

Okay, we'll kill him first. But then --

ROLAND

There is no we, Jake Chambers. Our
journey together is done and I fare
thee well.

Roland glances at the computer screen, then grabs his bag, is
heading for the door when he stops, sensing what's happened
behind him.

WIDER.

Jake has drawn his gun, hands shaking.

JAKE

Don't you get it? You need me.

Roland turns.

JAKE (CONT'D)

You can't leave me here. You need me to
help you.

ROLAND

Put the gun down, Jake.

Jake just holds it trained on the gunslinger.

JAKE

Please.

(small)

He killed my mom because of me.

Roland stares at him a long beat. Then he moves impossibly fast; Jake's gun is on the floor and his is to Jake's head.

JAKE (CONT'D)
What are you going to do?

Roland stares deeply at this boy, seeing something familiar.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Go ahead then, shoot me.

But Roland has pulled his gun away. He SAYS something Jake cannot hear.

JAKE (CONT'D)
What?

Roland is already breaking the stock, that single bullet finding his knuckles.

ROLAND
Brave.
(compassion)
I said brave.

And with that the bullet begins to move across Roland's hand like water.

EXT. JAKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - B'WAY AND AMSTERDAM - DAY

Roland emerges from the building, looks back up at Jake's window and then heads into the city spreading before him.

INT. DEVAR-TOI - PIMLI'S OFFICE

Pimli is still working the computer as Finli ENTERS.

FINLI
Anything more specific? The moons are rising.

PIMLI
How is that helping?

FINLI
Just keep looking.

PIMLI
Babe.

Finli just raises both hands and steps back as Pimli works.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - B'WAY AND AMSTERDAM

Jake blinks awake. He's sitting on the couch. The apartment is empty. He's alone.

JAKE
(standing)

No.

Tears begins to spill.

JAKE (CONT'D)

NO!

He rushes to the computer. The list of gun stores is long, all near enough to potentially be where Roland is going. Jake stands there, shaking with frustration. The moment lasts.

He closes his eyes.

FLASH -- ROLAND WALKS TO THE DOOR.

Jake's eyes spring wide.

INT. DEVAR-TOI - PIMLI'S OFFICE

The holographic display explodes with rose-colored light.

FINLI
Holy shit!

PIMLI
Christ get a fix. Don't lose it.

FINLI
Lose it? How the hell could I lose it?
Look at the size of that signature. And
it's still coming. What is this kid?

EXT. JAKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - B'WAY AND AMSTERDAM - DAY

Jake stands on the street corner, looking around frantically. His eyes fix across the street.

FLASH -- ROLAND STEPS ONTO A BUS.

ON Jake as he urgently flags a cab. Yanks open the door --

INT. TAXI CAB - B'WAY AND AMSTERDAM - DAY

Jake sits in back, eyes squeezed closed.

DRIVER
 Where to, kid?
 (off Jake)
 Kid?

Jake's eyes spring open.

JAKE
 Clements' Sporting Goods -- 9th and
 49th, and hurry, please.

INT. DEVAR-TOI - FINLI AND PIMLI

Both stand looking at the ever expanding tracking holograph now revealing a grid of Manhattan streets.

FINLI
 Locked on.

PIMLI
 Call the boss?

FINLI
 Oh yeah. I think he's on his cell.

INT. CLEMENTS' GUNS AND SPORTING GOODS - DAY

Roland stands at a glass display case studying a BULLET CALIBER chart. The SALESMAN ("**FAT JOHNNY**", 40s) stands watching him in this otherwise empty store.

Roland stabs one of the images.

ROLAND
 These.

FAT JOHNNY
 Winchester .45s. Makes sense. That's about the right caliber for a gunfighter.

ROLAND
 I cry your pardon...

FAT JOHNNY
 Just making a joke. No offense. How many you need?

ROLAND
 Bullets? As many as you have.

And we see in the salesman's eyes that what has been mild amusement at Roland's get-up now turns to concern. He notes the bloodstained bandage on Roland's damaged hand.

FAT JOHNNY

50 rounds per box. I think I have about
20 boxes.

ROLAND

In that case, all of them.

As Fat Johnny moves to the storage shelves, his eyes tick to the **CONCEALED GUN** stored beneath the display counter.

FAT JOHNNY

...sure thing. I'll just need to see
your ID and gun license.

ROLAND

(incredulous)
Gun license.

Fat Johnny sets the first boxes down on the counter. Roland notes the sets of HANDCUFFS for sale as Johnny retrieves more ammo.

FAT JOHNNY

I know. Blame Uncle Sam. Can't even
sell you any ammo without one.

ROLAND

Of course --

A moment as the two men LOCK EYES.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Don't.

But Fat Johnny's hand is already darting out for his
concealed gun...

Roland is way quicker, moving so fast that we almost don't
him vault over the counter -- snag the handcuffs from the
wall and -- SHNIKK -- cuff Fat Johnny's gun hand -- SHNIKKK --
to the display case!

Fat Johnny just stares at the gunslinger, STUNNED, as:

FAT JOHNNY

I don't want any trouble.

ROLAND

They always say that after.

Roland begins stuffing boxes of shells into his jacket pockets.

INT. TAXI CAB - 49TH STREET - DAY

The cab slows at a strip of liquor stores and boarded up store fronts.

CAB DRIVER
Sketchy neighborhood, kid. You sure
this is where you want?

Jake looks out his window, sees Clements' Guns and Sporting Goods.

JAKE
Yeah, this is it.

EXT. CLEMENTS' GUNS AND SPORTING GOODS - 7TH AVENUE AND 49TH STREET - DAY

The taxi pulls to the curb.

CAMERA MOVES AROUND TO REVEAL two arriving Buicks -- and now we see the OCCUPANTS -- an assortment of VAMPIRES and unmasked LOW MEN -- an otherworldly hit team.

Chicken and weasel-faced creatures slip on HUMAN FACES, Vamps pull BLACK COWLS low over their eyes -- then, with a nod from the lead driver --

The doors all swing open, monsters spilling onto the street, several holding guns low at their sides.

INT. CLEMENTS' GUNS AND SPORTING GOODS - DAY

Roland fishes out his money pouch, drops a few GOLD COINS onto the display case --

ROLAND
That oughta cover the bullets.

Roland turns, heading for the door when behind him -- BAM!

Roland spins to see Fat Johnny BANGING HIS HEAD INTO THE GLASS COUNTER TOP -- BAM! BAM! BAM!

A last violent blow and Fat Johnny slumps, unconscious. Roland looks at him. A sinking feeling in his belly, which is precisely when --

VOICE
Hile Gunslinger.

WALTER APPEARS ON THE SURFACE OF THE GLASS DISPLAY CASE
BEHIND ROLAND. The gunslinger turns.

WALTER
Isn't this what you've wanted all these
years? To see me. Well, here I am.

Walter's image appears on every reflective surface in the
store, all of which smile.

WALTER (CONT'D)
And you. You're looking more and more
like your mother every day.

INT. DIXIE PIG - DOWNSTAIRS OFFICE - DAY

Walter stands in a small below ground back office/storage
room, staring into his crystal ball, Black 13.

WALTER
Turn around so I can get a better look
at the resemblance.

INT. TAXI CAB - DAY

Jake hands over a twenty.

JAKE
Keep the change.

DRIVER
Tha--

SUDDENLY THE FRONT WINDSHIELD SHATTERS AND THE DRIVER'S BODY
IS YANKED OUT -- but his legs hit the dash so whatever's got
him can't pull him out, his upper body outside the cab -- as
Jake scrambles backward in his seat -- THE DRIVER GETS YANKED
AGAIN BY THE DARK, INDISTINCT SHAPE ON THE HOOD OF THE CAR --
his legs hit the dash again --

Jake fumbles to open his backpack, panicked, as the driver
finally gets YANKED out of the cab, then BAM -- SOMETHING
OUTSIDE SLAMS INTO THE ROOF OF THE CAB -- Jake's eyes WHIP UP
as -- SHRINNKKK -- the roof is PUNCTURED BY A LONG-
FINGERNAILLED-HAND and PEELED BACK like a tin can --

INT. CLEMENTS' GUNS AND SPORTING GOODS - DAY

Roland glares at Walter, his eyes filled with hate. His GUN is out and pointing moving from reflection to reflection.

WALTER

Why won't you just die? What's the percentage in living, Roland? Haven't you been ringside for enough death?

ROLAND

Coward. Stop cowering behind your magics.

INT. TAXI CAB - DAY

Jake finally manages to pull his stepfather's GUN from his bag -- WHIPS IT toward whatever is up there and BAM! BAM!

WHUMP! Something hits the roof, then TUMBLES INTO THE CAB -- Jake sees the Vampire's angry, surprised eyes as it lands in the front seat, when -- the BACK DOOR is suddenly YANKED OPEN -- a Low Man there -- reaching for Jake -- Jake points -- FIRING WILD SHOTS as -- he slides across the back seat, PUSHES OPEN the other door and TUMBLES FROM THE CAB --

EXT. TAXI CAB - DAY

Jake sees the door to the ammo shop, is up on his feet, racing towards it for dear life.

JAKE

(silent)

ROLAND!

Jake grabs his own throat. Why didn't his VOICE make a sound?

WIDER

A FIGURE stands across the street watching on. Sayre. He flicks his wrist casually.

Almost to the door, Jake is lifted off his feet into the air.

Sayre makes another small gesture and Jake is hurled violently back across the street and smashed up against a boarded store front, gun falling from his hand.

SAYRE

(looking down at Jake)

That's enough.

INT. CLEMENTS' GUNS AND SPORTING GOODS - DAY

Walter suddenly appears right in Roland's path on the glass front door to the street.

ROLAND
Face me like a man.

Walter smiles.

WALTER
I suppose I really should thank you.
Your *sweet* mother. Alain. Cuthburt.
Susan. Dear, dear Susan. How she
screamed. Do you remember? You've
served up so many for me. And now this
one.

Roland's eyes narrow in CONFUSION.

WALTER (CONT'D)
I love the special ones. And this one
is oh so special.

The pieces are starting to fall into place.

WALTER (CONT'D)
You're what he came for, aren't you?
Another innocent drawn by the idiotic
delusion that you're a hero. Crossing
entire universes for love.

Roland's stomach sinks.

WALTER (CONT'D)
(lethal)
Really quite touching, when you think
about it.

ROLAND
No!

Roland, suddenly understanding, SHOOTS the door into shattering glass, racing past it out into the street.

WALTER
(reflected in glass
fragments on the floor)
Kill you later.

EXT. CLEMENTS' GUNS AND SPORTING GOODS - 7TH AVENUE AND 49TH STREET - DAY

ON ROLAND as he EMERGES, his eyes going dark.

WIDER

Roland stands in the middle of the street. The two Buicks are gone. The cabbie lies on the sidewalk, body twisted in ways a body is not meant to twist, dead.

(OVER) A MOAN. Coming from inside the cab.

Roland moves to the taxi, looks through the shattered front windshield -- and sees the black-cloaked form inside.

ROLAND

(simple)

Where did they take him?

The Vampire lifts his head, looks up from beneath his cowl...

HIS SHOULDER AND HALF OF HIS FACE HAVE BEEN SHOT OFF, he's in horrible pain, and despite that, he curls what remains of his lip into a grin:

VAMP

Gotta hand it to the kid, tough little shit.

ROLAND

...how 'bout you? How tough are you?
Tough enough to spend the rest of
eternity in pain. With half a face, and
only one arm.

The Vampire meets Roland's eye, confused.

VAMP

Can't say I won't miss my cheek. But I
still got both my arms.

ROLAND

...so far.

With that, Roland slips his HUNTING KNIFE from his waistband -- the Vampire's face dawns with a horrible understanding as Roland reaches in through the open door --

VAMP

No --

ROLAND

Tell me or I cut off the other arm. And
a few of the smaller bits too.

The SOUND of approaching SIRENS in the distance.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

You know the rules. You'll have to burn
yourself up before they see you.

The Vampire's eyes dart back and forth. (OVER) The SIRENS are
getting LOUDER.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Where did they take the boy?

VAMP

Dixie Pig.

Roland leans in with his knife.

VAMP (CONT'D)

Hey -- we had a deal...

ROLAND

Right. No cutting.

Roland roughly grabs the Vampire by the cloak and DRAGS him
from the cab into the street...

As the cowl falls from the creature's face and the SUNLIGHT
hits his body, the Vampire catches flame -- SCREAMING
horribly as he turns to DUST.

Roland has already turned away, moving to his horse, when...

INT. DIXIE PIG - DOWNSTAIRS OFFICE - DAY

Walter, biding his time, manipulates Vampire men and women
before him, manipulating them like hand puppets.

WALTER

Now you two kiss him.

Sayre ENTERS with Jake as the men and women oblige.

SAYRE

Stop that.

Walter looks up, sees Sayre in the doorway, clearly not happy
about any of this.

WALTER

Touchy.

He waves his fingers, releasing Sayre's gang.

WALTER (CONT'D)

You can go, Richard. I'm saving you for a rainy day. Take your little friends and run along.

Sayre gives him a withering look and they all leave, as:

WALTER (CONT'D)

So, you're what all the fuss is about.

Walter, eager, swings his feet off the desk, crosses and stoops to stare in Jake's eyes.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Come on boy. Do something. Show me. Light a fire in the air, teleport from here to there, read my thoughts, burn the room, dear God, make the world go boom.

Jake just stares back at him, trying desperately not to let Walter see how frightened he is as Walter reaches into his coat and brings out a PSYCHIC DETECTOR BADGE --

WALTER (CONT'D)

Tommy can you hear me?

He pins the badge on Jake:

WALTER (CONT'D)

Tommy can you see me?

The badge LIGHTS UP, going all the way to the TOP.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Well ain't you the shit.

Even Walter seems impressed.

WALTER (CONT'D)

You will be just what we need to bring down the Tower. You will be indeed.

Off Jake.

EXT. WEST 61ST STREET - DIXIE PIG - DAY

Traffic ROARS past the brooding bar... after a long moment, REVERSE TO REVEAL Roland, across the street, arriving atop his horse, eyeing the bar. Measuring the place.

Then he draws his gun, swings himself down, and we CUT TO:

INT. DIXIE PIG - BAR - DAY

A SONG plays on the JUKE BOX as we PUSH THROUGH THE LENGTH of the crowded bar... and as we approach the front door --

WHAM!!! The door BANGS open, sunlight spills in. The Vampires reflexively shield their faces as all heads -- Vampire, Taheen and Low Men alike -- turn to the open doorway...

But no one is there.

A frozen moment, then the BARTENDER flicks a look at two LARGE BOUNCERS, who nod in response.

The bouncers each draw a GUN, cock them, and step outside into the light.

A long moment... all eyes on the empty door-frame... no one uttering a sound... just the MUSIC playing on the jukebox, then, just as the song ENDS, from outside...

BANG! BANG!

A moment of silence as glances are exchanged, then, almost as one, every patron in the bar withdraws a weapon... the juke box WHIRS as a new platter is put in place and a song starts. A familiar MELODY...

Hey Jude, don't make it bad...

CRASH! The WINDOW furthest from the door SHATTERS as Roland BURSTS INSIDE, HIS GUN ALREADY BLAZING AS SHOCKED PATRONS TURN TO HIM, RETURNING FIRE --

What happens now happens all at once as for the first time in our story, we see what Roland is truly capable of: with his GUN in his left hand, and his HUNTING KNIFE in his bandaged right, he is poetic, operatic, a soul meant for shooting --

Take a sad song, and make it better...

Roland shapes the arc of his BULLETS with his HAND, with the movement of his BODY, as he advances through the bar -- Taheen, Low Men and Vampires FALLING, SPINNING, bottles and mirrors SHATTERING, bodies FLYING backwards from the load of his bullets. Returned FIRE is a rain that never touches him --

Remember to let her into your heart...

ROLAND'S EYES: a light we haven't seen before, dizzying and terrifying -- a warrior's light -- as he moves through the enemy ranks like a swimmer through water -- grabbing them as semi-human shields, FIRING, SLASHING --

Then you can start, to make it better...

His HANDS, KNIFE and GUNBUTT like clubs as he SLAPS his chest to reload between vollies -- spinning as he FIRES, crouching, standing -- all the while driving toward the back of the bar and the stairs that lead to the basement --

INT. DIXIE PIG - DOWNSTAIRS OFFICE - DAY

The MUSIC is piped in down here through small mounted speakers, competing with the SOUNDS of the BATTLE above.

WALTER
(singing along)
*And anytime you feel the pain, hey
Jude, refrain...*

He reaches into his coat and brings out what appears to be a small drop of FIRE which floats above his open palm.

WALTER (CONT'D)
(still singing)
*...don't carry the world upon your
shoulders...*

Walter waves his hand and the tiny fire flies into the wall, a HOLE beginning to burn, a slowly growing PORTAL OF FIRE spreading to REVEAL THE FABRIC OF REALITY ITSELF, rending as if made of knitted thread.

WALTER (CONT'D)
You know this song, Jake? Bit before
your time.

Jake is still doing his best to hide his fear.

JAKE
I know it -- it was my father's
favorite.

WALTER
Man had good taste.

WHAT JAKE SEES THROUGH THE EXPANDING PORTAL: the library room in DEVAR-TOI. The remaining children strapped into chairs.

The central polka-dotted THRONE chair which is empty -- which is meant for Jake.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Shall we?

And with that he grabs Jake by the collar and drags him through the portal and out of this world.

INT. DIXIE PIG - BAR - DAY

ROLAND, still FIRING away... Vampires lung at him with POOL CUES -- Roland's first shots SHATTERING the cues, his second felling the Vampires.

INT. DEVAR-TOI - LIBRARY - NIGHT

ON JAKE: finally unable to disguise the look of fear that now floods into his eyes.

WALTER (O.S.)
This is the way the world ends --

WIDER: Walter straps Jake into the polka-dotted THRONE chair:

WALTER (CONT'D)
...not with a whimper, but a bang. A boy. You. How's that feel?

Walter crosses to Finli and Pimli. He looks up at the three full moons out the window.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Now would be good.

PIMLI
Yes, yes.

FINLI
Of course.

Finli throws a switch on the monitor console.

FINLI (CONT'D)
Neural accelerator is online.

Pimli steps into the circle of children.

PIMLI

Time to play, boys and girls. Time to
play.

INT. DIXIE PIG - BAR - DAY

Unseen by Roland, TWO MORE TAHEEN appear behind him, have him
dead in their sites as they both FIRE -- but at the last
instant, back still to them, Roland DODGES --

The two weasel-faced Taheen exchange a glance: where'd he go?
-- as Roland pops up from behind an overturned table -- BAM!
BAM! -- slaying them both -- the Taheen crumple to the
ground.

ON ROLAND: a quick beat, then he lowers his smoking gun, all
the monsters dead, hurries toward the stairs...

INT. DEVAR-TOI - LIBRARY - NIGHT

A teen boy seems to react first, eyes springing wide, head
going back in a kind of rapture.

A force can be seen emanating from his throat and chest, like
light, like water, streaming towards the center of the room.

Now another two children's heads go back, eyes rapt, energy
flowing from their throats, growing the indoor sun.

In the center of the circle of children, a blinding bolus of
energy begins to form.

Jake resists A VIBRATING WHISPER. He looks up to see Sheemie
looking back at him.

SHEEMIE

(mouthing)

Fight it.

Sheemie is obviously trying to do just that but the strain is
showing. Suddenly his head goes back, eyes locking as energy
pours from him and the bolus glows ever brighter.

ON Jake as he stares at the slowly fading portal in the wall,
the basement of the Dixie Pig slowly vanishing from sight.

JAKE

(prayer)

Roland...

Suddenly Jake's head is snapped back, power pouring from him,
his stream exponentially larger and brighter than the rest.

The glowing energy in the room is blinding.

WALTER
 (off Jake)
 Suck him dry.
 (rising fervor)
 Topple the tower and break the sky.
 The world moves on, children. Prepare
 to behold the Crimson King!

INT. DIXIE PIG - DOWNSTAIRS OFFICE

Roland ENTERS in time to see the library through the closing wall. His gun goes up...

GUNSLINGER VISION -- RACK FOCUS TO WALTER

After so long, his revenge is finally in his sights.

INT. DEVAR-TOI - LIBRARY

Jake has begun to cycle, sees Roland through the solidifying wall. He closes his eyes.

JAKE
 (telepathic)
 Roland!

INT. DIXIE PIG - DOWNSTAIRS OFFICE

Jake's voice is LOUD in Roland's mind.

JAKE
 (telepathic, a plea)
 Roland, don't.

INT. DEVAR-TOI - LIBRARY

Walter spins, he's heard Jake too. The Man in Black locks eyes with the Gunslinger.

WALTER
 Release the pulse! Do it now!

JAKE
 (telepathic)
 There are other worlds than these.

INT. DIXIE PIG - BACK ROOM

Roland's eyes tick to Jake's. Understanding.

Roland is already squeezing the trigger.

GUNSLINGER VISION -- RACK FOCUS CHANGES TO JAKE.

Roland is moving his gun as he squeezes the trigger.

Roland FIRES Walter ducks for cover.

As the wall closes, Roland watches a red bloom on Jake's chest, like a rose.

INT. DEVAR-TOI - LIBRARY

The energy bolus in the center of the room, bright as nuclear fire, is starting to flare upward when... it vanishes.

Jake slumps in the chair. He looks up at Roland's fading visage. SMILES as he says softly:

JAKE

I see it now... I see the face of my father.

And Roland is gone replaced by the library wall.

Walter just gapes, open-mouthed, STUNNED.

WALTER

No. No.

On Jake, a tiny smile creases his lips.

JAKE

(soft)

I -- did it... I -- saved the universe.

(softer still)

I knew I wasn't crazy.

And with that, his job done, Jake Chambers dies.

WALTER

(howling rage)

Noooo!

INT. DIXIE PIG - DOWNSTAIRS OFFICE - DAY

Roland stands facing the solid wall. A part of him that he thought long inured to pain now shattering.

ROLAND

(bowed)

Fair thee well. Gunslinger.

EXT. DIXIE PIG - DAY

Roland emerges, past police cruisers now SCREECHING to a stop in front of the bar.

A doorway stands in the middle of the street, invisible to others.

Cops are spilling out of their cars, drawing their guns.

COP
(shouting)
Drop your weapons!

But Roland pays them no mind, simply opens the door and steps through it.

As far as the startled cops are concerned, the guy just vanished.

EXT. MID-WORLD - DAY

And steps through a doorway in the Manni Village. The Village Elder stands with many of the others.

She looks to the door behind Roland. But one look at his eyes tells her all she needs to know.

Roland looks around, his face hollow, grieving... but then, as his eyes tick up, they WIDEN with surprise...

And we slowly ANGLE AROUND to what he sees...

High in the sky... set amidst puffy cumulus clouds...

Is a beam. ONE OF THE BEAMS THAT HOLD UP THE TOWER.

Roland's humorless chuckle lives somewhere between awe and irony. He wipes his brow with his hat.

ROLAND
Just a boy, the one owed for this.

VILLAGE ELDER
Old enough to do some good is old
enough these days.

ROLAND
Glad to have walked with him. Sorry for
what he spent.

VILLAGE ELDER

I'd wager he'd say fair price if we could ask him.

Roland looks at her a long moment, then he nods, for the first time in ages embracing the burden of leadership.

ROLAND

Long days and pleasant nights.

VILLAGE ELDER

Long days and pleasant nights to you, young man. And to us all.

Roland returns his hat to his head, tips it, begins to walk away, in the direction of the beam.

MANNI ENGINEER

That man's going to save us all?

VILLAGE ELDER

Better him than you or me.

MANNI ENGINEER

Why's that?

VILLAGE ELDER

He might just have a chance at it.

There is a twinkling light in the old woman's eyes as she watches him go, vanishing into the setting sun.

EXT. MID-WORLD - DAY

A HIGH WIDE SHOT: we're ABOVE the beam, looking down on Roland, a mere speck in the distance, and we fly over the verdant valley -- following the length of the beam -- as the valley becomes endless fields of bright RED ROSES to ESTABLISH the Dark Tower, a shadow piercing the clouds.

INT. MID-WORLD - THE DARK TOWER

CRYSTAL BALLS float in a circle. Within one Roland stares up at the beams; in another; a SCREAMING Walter is hoisted onto a wooden cross by pretty nurses; in another the Manni rejoice in a feast; in Manhattan Fat Johnny tries to tell his story to two policemen; worlds upon worlds.

PULL BACK AND OUT TO REVEAL these magic spheres orbit a creature only glimpsed in shadow, a sweaty misalliance of spider creature and man, true horror given face and form, staring out through malignant eyes.

Behold the **CRIMSON KING** as it throws back its ungodly head and ROARS. CUT TO:

CLOSE ON A CRACKLING FIRE. We're --

EXT. MID-WORLD - NIGHT

Roland has made camp for the night beside a running river. Above him, the BEAM is plainly visible in the night sky. Beyond it we see the waning moons. The danger has passed.

His dinner eaten, Roland is sitting over his DECK OF CARDS, having arranged them in the familiar cross, now MUTTERS his ritualistic saying -- as he turns over the CENTER CARD. And his eyes widen, because...

It's THE BOY.

ON ROLAND. He just stares at the card as the fire lights his eyes. If Ka deems it, then so it shall be.

Roland picks up the card, slips it in his shirt's breast pocket. As he slings his pack over his shoulder, his eyes set in determination. And something else. HOPE.

WIDE. Roland sets off across the desert.

WIDER STILL. As Roland's lone figure heads toward the horizon, walking beneath the fast rushing light of the BEAM.

FINAL FADE TO BLACK.

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