

**NIGHT  
OF THE  
ECLIPSOID  
MAN**

**DRY SMOKE & WHISPERS • SEASON TWO**

**PART ONE**

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••••• **TEASER**

Complex digital lock sequence. Large rolling door heavily opens. Ominous lab equipment. Two people enter, stop by door. Aneelia is falling in love with Knightbridge. Knightbridge respects her, wishes he could return her feelings, but many circumstances prevent.

ANEELIA:

**Bridgers, please, tell me you're not *upping* the timetable. Again.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE:

**What timetable? Baaaasil's in 'is usual 'run 34 test flags up the pole before we fly the real one mode'. (Flagpole is instant reminder of Jasper's fate. Pause, then he mutters under his breath...) Oh, J. Why didn't you just the Henth hang on. (his mood goes deeply blue for a moment, she picks up on it.)**

ANEELIA:

**What's wrong. You're sad all of a sudden.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE:

(trying to cover his lapse with humor, but there's a slight edge to it) **Blotuses, girl, my head, speakin' 'a 'up init'. Stop readin' me, yeah?**

ANEELIA:

(reddens a little, but handing it back) **Touchy, touchy. Now you're irritated.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE:

**I'm just really on trial-racin' a little 'inventor's upgrade' and no Thurwoody eyes on me back, ya know?**

ANEELIA:

**I know. But this, this project... we're playing with fire on this one... the hottest fire you can play with.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE:

(now his mood goes darkly reflective) **I know. No easy way Home, crossin' the 'ole Night Bridge.**

ANEELIA:

(trying to turn his mood, playfully, rebelliously) **Well, let me stay and help out then.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE:

**Ahhh, Neelz, we been through all this. You are Basil's perfect uptown apprentice. We gotta keep it that way. He catches me doin' something on the sly – won't matter.**

ANEELIA:

**Bad feeling. Big, bad feeling... I feel like you're pushing yourself way too hard... Some things come with time.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE:

(Now with overt bitterness, without thinking, he's always been put off, behind the eight ball) **Yeah, well, all those Ye Olde Royalty Money Towers – always got big clocks on 'em, yeah? Why? Because they own all the time in the world.**

ANEELIA:

(doesn't take offense. Jokingly, but serious underneath, thinking a green card might lead to something more) **Hey... if you married me, you'd have money.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE:

(winces, for he knows she's serious) **Neelz..I keep tellin' ya. I got ghosts. 'Razor-teeth Jackaraws got your back at a chained up sewer grate' ghosts... (back to it) Now lock me in. And eighty-six that timing code. What I got planned for tonight, trust me. I'll be the holonews wunder-kind, just like when this project began.**

ANEELIA:

(frustrated) **Oh, alright, go ahead then. Be nothing but blind ambition.** {Beat. Quietly, if somewhat bitterly) **But I know better.** (Resigned now, knowing he's too stubborn to stop, maybe finally realizing that he's right, that no lasting relationship can come of this) **If this goes wrong... it's on you.**

Door re-closes. Lock resequences. Footsteps rushing away.

KNIGHTBRIDGE:

(sighs) **Oh, Neelya. Since I was ten years old.** (quietly, but like a soldier who knows he has to keep on going) **It's always been on me.**

••••• **SERIES INTRO**

**SONG'S NARRATION:** The stars overhead. They give life. But their solar winds also eventually take it away. We go rushing about our individual worlds, building cozy refuges, all meant to make us forget one inescapable truth: We are temporary beings.

Tonight, one young man hopes to make his mark. Ambition. The road to greatness. Or, in the case of one Spencer Knightbridge, prodigy apprentice to a brilliant scientist, it will be a road lit by a heart-of-the-sun plasma inferno. A one man holocaust, as his tread-upon heart is unleashed upon the forsaken ghetto of his past, during the *Night of the Eclipsoid Man*.

**ACT ONE**

Study of Basil Thurwood. Warm room, cosy fire. Clink of glasses in a toast.

THURWOOD & HENCHARD: **To success!**

THURWOOD: **But more importantly, to old friends to share it with, Professor Durrick Henchard. I'm so glad you'll be the first to see my new invention. Faith! A few more weeks and we may change the shape of the universe. Or at least our locations within it!**

HENCHARD: **I'm so excited for you, 'Quintocratic Arts and Science winner, Doctor Basil Thurwood' – I can see it now in the Quaymet Gazette. We've come a long way from the orphanage, haven't we?**

THURWOOD: **We were lucky to be there when we were.**

HENCHARD: **'The Benign Overseers Orphanage for Higher Learning.' I still like the sound of that.**

THURWOOD: (disapprovingly) **And now it's the 'East Side Academy for the Wayward'. I don't know, it's all still managed by the Sisters of Unity, but the Order seems to have gone both corporate and parochial in, well, frankly, an unpleasant way.**

HENCHARD: **It's become a real war between the Progressives and the Traditionalists, hasn't it? And neither side really listening to the other. (takes a hefty swig of brandy) Then *and* now, the Sisters were, uh, shall we say, *devoted*...**

THURWOOD: **Too much so, sometimes. Remember Sister D•Léna? Those metal-pin boots and indigo raven robes suited her to a T.**

HENCHARD: **Now, Basil, to be fair, I do accord Sister D•Léna with setting me on the path. If she hadn't gotten me to fly right, I'm not so sure I would be here in your sitting room today.**

THURWOOD: **Well, I'm glad you can be so charitable. You know, she resigned from the Sisterhood?**

HENCHARD: (dismayed) **She did? I'm sorry to hear that.**

THURWOOD: **Very strange circumstances. One of the orphans, well, committed suicide, in a macabre and unfortunate way. Quite the scandal... (muses for a beat) *Anyway*, I couldn't wait to get out of the place. Maybe it was an indirect inspiration for what I call the... wait for it... *Invertistice Eclipsoid Tesseract*.**

HENCHARD: (taken aback for a second, then laughs a little uncomfortably)

**That has an ominous sound.**

THURWOOD: **Because it's the sound of something that will ignite a *whole new Era of Expansionism*, reducing the Past to fiery ashes in its wake!**

..... SCORE SEGUE

We are back in Thurwood's lab. The sound of the plasma generator is much closer now, throbbing. Knightbridge opens a fairly large access panel. As he says the line below, he partially climbs inside a console. The generator muffles, his voice becomes more resonant in the close confines of the instrument panel.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Six months! I showed you the stabilizer.** (sounds of a small power towel rotating out five bolts, punctuating the following) **Aaaannd...*nothing*. So, Dr. Blueblood Basil, *me!* I'm goin' *first!* Gonna be so *high up*, walkin' between the stars.**

Pneumatic whoosh as slides out the five-bolted cover and puts it down on the floor with a clunk. He drags a small valise into the space and unzips it. Takes the large device out of the bag and kisses it.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **And you, my fast-track blitzin' Eclipsoid Stabilizer, you're just the start.**  
(It activates and we hear a steady sine-wave effect. Ominous)

..... SCORE SEGUE

Basil is pouring another drink, then seats himself in a big wing back by Henchard as he says this:

THURWOOD: **Fifteen grants and *thirty-three* deep pocket investors – we got *all* of them! Dangle the plum of instantaneous travel between the stars, and private industry is falling all over itself to be first in line.**

HENCHARD: (Astounded) **And you say this, this *Eclipsoid Tesseract* will create a *conduit* to another world, even over half a galaxy?**

THURWOOD: **Yes! It turns a narrow beam of space inside out. Inverts and reverses it. I call the event an 'eclipsoid', because it eclipses normal continuum. And a tesseract, as you know, is a spatial shortcut, a folding if you will between one place and another. So when the eclipsoid reinverts, whoever is in the field is instantly transported. In seconds!**

HENCHARD: **But what do you use for energy?**

THURWOOD: **That's my breakthrough!** (secretively, subconsciously lowers voice)  
**You must keep this under your hat, Durrick! *Order of the Benign OverSeers Blood Brother Oath?***

HENCHARD: **Oh, I'm not doing the pins again, Thurwood. You have my solemn word!**

THURWOOD: **Good enough!** (very excited) **Durrick... I've tapped into the very heart of the sun itself!**

HENCHARD: (shocked) **What?!**

THURWOOD: **A controlled wormhole gateway funnels the fusion reaction inside our own sun almost *directly* into the Eclipsoid Tesseract.** (pause for effect) **Durrick, this thing runs on literal *star power!* The very aether of life-giving heat and creation!**

..... SCORE SEGUE

Closing of access panel. Knightbridge stands up and zips up the valise. Hits main power.

SYSTEM AI: **Redundancy warning!**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Are ya daft, ya di-polar tin pile?! *Override!***

SYSTEM AI: (Adjustment sequence) **New component accepted and verified.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Tops! Checkered flag goes *down*.** (pause, then activation control, sequence of access codes following) **Eyes on the track, Knightbridge...**

SYSTEM AI: **Activation sequence complete.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (defiantly) **Alright, *Quaymet*. You, me. We're on.**

Activates another control, and the ominous inferno sound ramps significantly.

SYSTEM AI: **Heart of the Sun Gateway establishing.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (whoops in victory) **Leaving your stinkin' hulk in the *stardust*, you high and mighty *jackboot* prison planet!**

Activates another control, large subterranean gears begin to whir.

**I make good on this one... it'll be *my life*. *My terms*.**

SYSTEM AI: **Eclipsoid Tesseract Beam Projectors achieving Lock Position.**

Rising of the three cannons which lock into place at the end of each sequence. Number One rises. Number Two rises. Number Three rises. They can overlap, but are timed identically. When last one locks:

SYSTEM AI: **Projectors ready. Allocate destination.**

The generator now starts making sounds that are a premonition of what's about to come. Knightbridge has to raise his voice over it, not unlike a sea captain over an approaching storm. He chooses at total random.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Ohhh....*M•Hellengau!* There's a place. All you goth punks in the ghetto – here's one for ya. Storms. Island castles. Deadly secret societies. I make it to and back from *there*, I can deal with anything your mingin' two moons can throw at me.**

The generator ramps with a particularly disturbing howl ••••• then hard or morph cut to an ominous alarm system in Thurwood's study.

HENCHARD: **What the Henth is *that?!!***

THURWOOD: (instantly realizing what's occurred) **Oh, OverSeers, no.**

They both rise and Thurwood rushes for the door, Henchard following.

THURWOOD: **You fool. You *fool!***

Throws open the study door, and they both run down a hallway, the alarm growing louder as they do.

HENCHARD: ***Basil, what's happening?***

THURWOOD: **Spencer Knightbridge, if my guess is correct!**

HENCHARD: ***Knightbridge!* I told you he's a bad apple! I thought you let him go!**

Now they're running down a metal spiral staircase.

THURWOOD: **Durrick, he's a prodigy. He took my work and invented a Stabilizer that even I couldn't wrap my brain around. I told him it would be six months til we could even begin to test.**

HENCHARD: **Even though you were ready now.**

Now they hit a metal floor leading up to the lab.

THURWOOD: **I wanted to surprise him. Give him credit for the Stabilizer.**

They stop before the lab security door.

THURWOOD: **Voice Recognition! And silence that alarm!**

SYSTEM AI: **Entry granted. Cancel alarm.**

Door rolls open. The Eclipsoid machinery is still ramping. Echoing over it loudly in the large chamber:

SYSTEM AI: **Sequence initiated. Awaiting sufficient power for Tesseract Commencement.**

**SONG'S NARRATION: Moonlight filters down through the skylight dome over Thurwood's lab. Knightbridge is in a glass containment chamber, suspended at the center of a trio of silver teardrop projectors. Lambent energies flicker at the muzzle of each, in gyrating striations of propane blue, yellow and red.**

Knightbridge's voice is amplified by a mike system in the chamber.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Oh! And here he is, Doctor Basil, in the flesh! Chuffed you're here – to see your *own history* being made. And Doubting Thomas Professor Durrick. A Capital Bonus of the Day!**

THURWOOD: **Knightbridge, stop this madness. Come down out of there!**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **So *you* can be the first? Sorry, *old man*. Dead tired of coming in last. Face it, without my Stabilizer, this whole set-up coulda ended up in the Science Museum of *Crackpot Whack*.**

THURWOOD: (astounded, dismayed) **Are you saying you built *another one*?**  
(now he's really horrified) **Did you install it into the machine?!**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Accepted and verified!**

THURWOOD: **Knightbridge, I've *already* installed one. There are *two* now. They may double feedback! (shouts) *System, abort sequence!***

SYSTEM AI: **Cannot abort. Power at critical. Transfer in three...**

CUT TO KNIGHTBRIDGE, up close in chamber. All other sounds muffled. Countdown continues outside.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (heavy irony) **Ohhh. Ain't that just the capper to my perfect life.**

THE THREE BEAMS ACTIVATE. SCREAMING HOWL OF ECLIPSOID TESSERACT.

## **END ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO . . . . SONG PLAYING THE NICKELODEON CALLIOPE. STOPS ABRUPTLY.**

SONG: **Mmm? Ah, a guest!**

Song rises, already crossing the room as the door whistle sounds. Beat, McKendrick whirs in.

McKENDRICK: **Master Song, you have a...**

SONG: (opening door) **Greetings. To what do I owe the pleasure?**

McKENDRICK: (whirring back out of the room) **Why do I even bother?**

SONG: (raising voice) **Oh, McKendrick, would you –**

McKENDRICK: (calling back from kitchen) **Already activating the tea maker.**

SONG: **Please come in, Miss...**

ANEELIA: **Demarisben. Aneelia Demarisben.**

McKendrick whirs back in. Stops as he listens to this exchange. Song picks up on Aneelia's dire mood immediately.

SONG: **I've heard that name. You're one of Basil Thurwood's interns.**

ANEELIA: (taken aback, instantly suspicious) **How did you know that?**

SONG: **We have a *synchronistic* connection. My agency partner is Professor Durrick Henchard.**

ANEELIA: **Oh, of course! Dr. Thurwood's mentioned him several times.**

SONG: **He's an old, old friend of Basil's and he's having dinner with him *right now*. (and now, Song already knows she's an Empath and that the situation is past dire.) **Excuse me, Miss DeMarisben, if I cut straight to the chase. You're here about Spencer Knightbridge. And if he's in danger, than the Professor and Dr. Thurwood are, too. I know about his project.****

ANEELIA: (opens up) **I've done something incredibly stupid. Spence is in his lab right now...**

SONG: (knows what this means) **No. He's going to fire that thing up, isn't he.**

McKENDRICK: **Alright. Tea unneeded.** (whirs back out)

ANEELIA: **We've got to stop him. I think he's going to test it on *himself*.**

SONG: **McKendrick!**

Whirs in, a device he's carrying is making an interesting thrumming sound, when he hands it to Song it stops.

McKENDRICK: **Here's the power stick for the B&S SonoJet, Master Song. McCallister is prepping it for flight.**

But at this point, Aneelia goes into a kind of trance, her face pinched with dread and pain.

ANEELIA: **Oh, no... Spencer, no.**

SONG: **Aneelia... Aneelia?**

McKENDRICK: **Master Song, is that what I think it is? *Is she...***

SONG: **Aneelia, tell me what's happening.**

The moment passes. She comes out of it, but her eyes are filled with tears and her voice breaks.

ANEELIA: **It's too late.** (anguished) **What has he *done*?** (horrified) **What is he?**

AND: HOWL of the Eclipsoid Tesseract. Song drops to his knees, clutching his head in great pain. Aneelia gasps, almost feeling it with him. McKendrick whirs rapidly over.

McKENDRICK: **Master!**

A second howl. Song cries out in agony. The howl fades into a jumble of angry voices. Song passes out and collapses.

## ••••• SCORE SEGUE

Inside the Containment Chamber: Open on Knightbridge roaring, his entire body on fire. This fades into ragged gasps. He stabilizes. Looks at the lab. Sees it as an imprint negative. His voice echoes now, caught between three locations.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (amazed, also disappointed) **I'm *still here*?** (almost bitterly) **I'm... *alive*?**

Cut to lab by Thurwood and Henchard.

THURWOOD: **Knightbridge? Is that you?**

**SONG'S NARRATION:** In the Containment Chamber above stands the negative silhouette of a man. Diamond interstices of energy radiate from him in every direction, his eyes casting beams of fire, his mouth emitting effulgent radiation when he speaks. He looks down on them and they can feel his regard like tingling microwave beams.

THURWOOD: **Knightbridge. Stay where you are. Maybe we can reverse this.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (sees himself in the glass. Ponders this for a moment) **Reverse... a reverse?**  
(he almost laughs) **No... I've crossed – no, I've burned the old Night Bridge *this* time...**

HENCHARD: (under his breath, imperatively) **Basil, we can't let him out of there. The radiation. It has to be at lethal levels. Can you lock him into that containment chamber?**

THURWOOD: **I can.** (raising voice) **System, lock Containment Chamber!**

SYSTEM AI: **Complying.** (Loud gears and sliding bolt, then lock in place)

A pause, all the energy in the room pulsing.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **I heard everything you said.** (pondering it, the weight of it) **Is it possible? Me. Quaymet's punching bag from birth... deadly? Lethal? Beastly planet.** (now a horrible anger sets in, all the loss, all the pain, laid at the doorstep of the planet he hates almost more than any human) **You torture me. Take away anything I love. And now, the one sin I tried not to commit. Tried to be better than the assholes who beat me to the ground every day, every year. Who killed without blinking an eye. No, I was better than that. And now here I am. Deadly to all around me! ... Well... time for a change?** (he takes stock of how he feels inside, senses the power) **I have rotted in so many cages... all my life... I want out.**

**SONG'S NARRATION:** Knightbridge raised his arm. All the striating colors surrounding him pulsed forward and down his arm, glowing into a ball around his hand.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **I think the energy inside of me... at this cage.**

The Field howls, and the three locking mechanism detonate and melt. Another howl and the door explodes outward with a squeal of metal, whooshes down and hits the floor with a heavy clang, it's glass window shattering.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Doctor, Professor. No grudge with the two of you. Shield yourselves.**

THURWOOD: **Over here, Durrick! The lead radiation slider!** (They scramble behind it)

Knightbridge walks down the chamber steps, they creak and groan from all the ambient energy.

THURWOOD: **Knightbridge. Please! Don't leave! Don't expose others to this. For once, think of someone other than yourself, I beg of you.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (instantly irritated) **Other than myself?...** (but then he considers his actions)  
**I guess that's how it would look from the outside.** (but now the anger returns)  
**You know, you judge. All the time. Do you know what it's like, living with cavemen. And you're their go get it boy. Say no, put up any fight and it's not a slap on the wrist. They'll end you...** (darkly, under breath)  
**if you're lucky.** (a howl pulses with his anger) **Did you know I stole from you, Basil? That I was forced to knick your laboratory, pinch your tech?**

THURWOOD: **I ... I suspected it was so. But what you returned to me, Spencer. Seeing your progress, seeing your brilliant breakthroughs. I did not hold it against you.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Well, of course. Everybody's a better man than Spencer Knightbridge, that bowery bum punk-ass disappointment.** (howl)

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Time to change that too? Maybe it's Clock Tower Time. Send those filigree gold-carat hands round and round and round... backwards. Maybe I'm a mistake. I don't belong here. I don't belong anywhere.** (howl again) **But if I shouldn't be here... I know me some right drug-dealing cheating kid-beating life-stealing bastards... that shouldn't be here, either.**

Raises his arm, the energy flows out, the wall of the laboratory explodes outward, debris raining down outside. Henchard and Thurwood react, but remain behind their protective wall. Knightbridge walks through the rubble. Crunching glass and gravel. He stops in the hole, ruminating as he stands there:)

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **What's that old saw? You can take the kid out of the ghetto... (laughs darkly) Well, now *this* kid... can take the ghetto out.**

Another bolt of energy sends an i-beam flying and it clangs out into the street. Knightbridge walks away, the field diminishing. CUT BACK TO: inside lab. Wall burning in near distance.

HENCHARD: (running from behind shield, and dragging Basil with him) **Come on, Basil, we've got to get out of here before the authorities arrive.**

THURWOOD: **But we need to report this...**

They reach the main door. They run through and back down the echoing corridor.

HENCHARD: **And tell them *what*? An Eclipsoid Man is on the loose? We've got to back to our Agency HQ and loop in Song, before this *really* gets out of hand.**

## ..... SCORE SEGUE

Knightbridge out on the street. Subdued city ambience, we're in a middle class suburb.

KNIGHTBRIDGE **I feel things... opening up. The city. I can feel it. All the people.** (there's the first hint of the Eclipsoid telepathy effect) **It's like *drowning*. There's too much 'a *everything* all around me...**

And he keys in. On the one remaining person he cares about and who cares about him. Fade in and fade out on: *Aneelia's horrified reaction: It's too late.* (anguished) **What has he *done*?** (horrified) **What is he?**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: ***Aneelia. She knows. How does she feel everything. She knows.***

And here is where we can introduce the FLASHBACK IN, FLASHBACK OUT FX..

**SONG'S NARRATION: Maybe it was all the power he was channeling. Something was changing deep inside. Without warning, Knightbridge was swept into a memory from his past, reliving it as if he were there. Almost as though something in his mind was trying to reveal every last truth about himself, to himself.** FLASHBACK IN.

In different circumstances, they would have been lovers. There is deep mutual respect. Both yearn for some part of the other's world. And so they cling together, both hoping to make a difference, somehow, some way.

ANEELIA: **Why are you so different?**

KNIGHTBRIDGE **Me, different? Nah, common as they come. Honorary *Menk*. Same as all those young abandoned lads from Menkleford. Kinda took me under their wing at the Wayward Academy. Proud to be one of ‘em.** (then he thinks on it) **But if I’m different, what about you?**

ANEELIA: (brief flash of paranoia, has he figured out she’s an Empath?) **What do you mean?**

KNIGHTBRIDGE **Hey, I’ve run into my unfair share of Penthouse Prunellas, and you’re no High Tea pinky-waver. You care about things... I know you think I’m all ‘booky brillie’ ‘n all that, but why do you... fancy me?** (bitterly, and with an air of angry near-resignation) **I am East Side and I’m startin’ to fettle I will *always be East Side*.**

ANEELIA: (with some asperity) **Spence, come on! On my *West* side, every day, I’m *surrounded* by rich sons of industrialists who skate through *everything*. And here you are. Doing the hard work. Maybe with Dr. Thurwood’s help, we can *both* find our place. Some oasis between our two worlds. *Promise me you’ll be patient*.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE (turning serious) **I can’t feel the *Time*, Neelz. That’s the thing. It’s like *tomorrow*? They say: *all the time in the world*. But me? I’m not feelin’ it. *It’s like it’s not there*.**

FLASHBACK OUT. Eclipsoid Howl and Knightbridge finds he’s been stationary far longer than is a good idea considering his condition. **Whoop of a police sonocar** and an officer with a car intercom. The officer is scared to death, but he is trying to do the right thing. Serve and Protect.

OFFICER: **YOU! *Stay still! Don’t move!*** (Weapon activates and announces: TARGET ACQUIRED) (to his superiors over the car’s com) **Car 25 reporting. I have... I don’t know what I have. I need backup, *quick. Please*.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE (realizing he has to stop this) **No, *NO BACKUP!***

**SONG’S NARRATION: Knightbridge raises his arm. The field flashes out. But his adrenaline intent is exponified.** (FX) **The officer returns fire.** (FX) **But it just glances off the Eclipsoid Field.** Ricochets off, hitting a wifi tower with a zap. Then transformer blows with that weird echoey fuse breaker explosion sound. **One side of the street is plunged into darkness. And then the field hits the car.** (KA-THUNK, tearing and crumpling metal. The siren starts to whoop, but distorts and dopplers out.) **The cruiser goes flying, the front bumper striking the Officer as he tries to dodge the field.** CUT TO: (close up as Officer is hit by car, cries out, hits the ground hard. Tries to get up, collapses. Rushing air dopplering as car flies through air behind him. CUT BACK TO: ORIGINAL POV, as car hits the ground in near distance and rolls, finally crashing into another car. Second car’s alarm goes off.) **And in a nearby home: two witnesses watch their quiet neighborhood turn into Eclipsoid hell.**

CUT TO: Inside home across the street. Still have power. Chaos of the ongoing heard from indoors. Couple at window.

WILLIAM: ***Thayna, call Capital Emergency!***

THAYNA: (keypad of phone, mistakes, panicked reaction, keying again.) ***For Penta’s Hayla, Willam, I’M DIALING. I’M DIALING!*** (Phone ringing) ***Oh, the Bannister’s car! And their lovely elm is on fire.***

WILLIAM: ***Never mind their tree, what is that, that Thing in the street?! He’s lit up like some kind of alien war movie!***

THAYNA: (line is still ringing) ***Oh, come on – ANSWER!!*** (phone just keeps ringing)

WILLIAM: **Oh, this is not good. There's an officer down. That thing, it's stooping over him... They're both... *glowing all over.***

THAYNA: (rushes over, really alarmed) ***I think it's killing him. William, go out and help!***

WILLIAM: (but he's afraid, no way) ***I... I...***

THAYNA: (like she's gonna go out there, but still, disappointed, sharp) ***WILLIAM!***

WILLIAM: (those who can't be brave, rat out) (keypad tap and his phone announces: RECORDING VERIFIED) (relieved, breathless) ***THERE! – I got it all on my ToneAkai.***

WILLIAM: (He rushes away to his computer, slapping phone into receptacle ***I'm gonna post this on Police Net Viral Videos.*** (Verification beep, computer: VIDEO READY FOR UPLOAD.) ***We gotta warn the whole damn capital!***

CUT TO: Outside, cars burning, sirens closing in. Pure chaos.

**SONG'S NARRATION: Out on the street, a shocked Knightbridge kneels by the fallen Officer.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: ***Oh, he's not gonna make it. Officer, I'm sorry. All this power. I don't know how to control it.*** (first hint of eclipsoid telepathy) ***He's got internal injuries. I wonder...*** (the eclipsoid energy ramps again) ***Take my strength. My life force. Heal, damn you, heal.*** (approaching cop car squeals around a corner nearby) ***Gotta get outta here. Hope that's enough... Please let that be enough.*** (off he runs into the burning suburb)

## **END ACT TWO**

## **ACT THREE**

Open with the night sounds of Quaymet, East Side. Buoys and sluggish lapping water from the near-by river. Ship horns.

**SONG'S NARRATION: And so the long night begins. Down by the winding waterfront: the docking ports of the East Side warehouses. And one black-hole silhouette of a refugee, surrounded by a scintillating plasma field of red, yellow and butane blue.**

The Eclipsoid Field fades quickly in. Knightbridge is half-running, then takes stock and stops for a moment. He's out of breath momentarily, it was a constant marathon trying to stay out of sight until he could find a way down to the more deserted river district.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (walking rapidly) ***OK.*** (still catching breath) ***This is better. Almost deserted this time 'a night.*** (moves into a space between buildings, using his field to fling some crates aside, a big dumpster rolls to one side) ***Where the hell do I go? How do I hide when I'm like *this*?***

Now KB moves again, shoving past some refuse bins. And he comes out on a creaking wooden warehouse balcony / dock over the river. The water sounds sluggish, wrong. He experiences an instant sympathy.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: ***The River Thothboro. What our great capital has done to you.*** (something surfaces, mutated sorrowful call, submerges again) ***Gah! Try livin' in that metallic smuck... I wonder...*** (he thinks for a moment, lapping of thick waves) ***If I threw myself in, would I go under? Or would this field just burn it all away from me. Volcano against the Sea. Could I do it?*** (dark laugh)

**No. My luck, even if the river took me... wouldn't I just become one more haz mat poison to float downstream? So, no...** (getting a little angry again) **All those platinum towers, all the factory owners over there, on the other side – they've have done enough to your stinkin' banks, eh, old Thothboro?** (almost laughs at the double meaning) **Banks, yeah. There's the joke. We're all dying over here from the industrial sludge. But all the money we make for 'em... goes into their banks, over there. Clean and green...**(suddenly, he's overcome by it all) **Why?** (and he suddenly finds himself thinking of himself and Aneelia) **Why is it always West or East? Penthouses or tenements? It's not fair.** (a beat) **Always split in two. Always split in two.** (river dragon surfaces in distance, roars. A little harbinger.) **Maybe that's the math. Just... erase myself. Like a bad equation on a chalk board...** (anguished, shouting it out) **I miss you, J. You made it all matter.** (he walks off the dock, away from the river, and the nostalgia hits) **Penta, the night we met. That freakin' blizzard. All I wanted was for it to take me out. But you wouldn't let it. Always doin' right by people. Always puttin' yerself on the line...**

Flashback effect. Wind, whistling. Jasper, trying to revive Knightbridge, shaking him, then slapping his face.

JASPER: ***Knightbridge! Knightbridge, wake up!***

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (teeth chattering) **Leave me alone. Go away!**

JASPER: ***What are you doing out in this old tree fort?***

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Let me freeze.**

JASPER: ***The blizzard's not letting up. You're gonna die out here.***

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **So let me.**

JASPER: ***No. Come on.*** (making light) **You know if you don't show up in class tomorrow, you face something worse than death – Sister executlon.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (groggy, irritated) **Why didn't the Menks come for me? Who are you?**

JASPER: **Oh, I'm just the Academy 'bad influence'. But I couldn't let you stay out here, once I heard. Now, come on. I got a friend in the dorm from the Up North. He can make sure you're OK, no frostbite.**

A whistling gust of wind and the scene changes. Inside the school. Kids talking. Chime goes off, like a church bell. Everybody immediately goes very still. Wind is still moaning outside. Every now and again, that damn rope on the flagpole.

SISTER D•LENA: **Class will come to order. In a moment, Roll call. But first: It seems the Quad SouthEast front door was heard opening and closing twice last night... far after curfew! And with a blizzard outside.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (he's going to take the fall) **Sister, I...**

But a chair scrapes and Jasper stands up.

JASPER: (boldly declarative) **Sister, it was me.**

SISTER D•LENA: **Jasper Pennion. I might have known.** (and her voice goes very cold) **Reason?**

JASPER: (blithely) **I wanted to visit a friend. In Quad SouthWest.**

At this a titter goes round the room. It's well known that Jasper is, you know.

SISTER D•LENA: **A friend?** (and she makes both words sound obscene) **Fraternization... is not allowed. At any time, much less...** (the rest goes unsaid. she strides over.)  
**This is your third infraction just this month. Hand out.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (he really doesn't want Jasper to take the fall for this) **Sister, I...**

SISTER D•LENA: **Yes, Knightbridge?**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (Menk friends? No way can he be associated with a Jasper) **Nothing, ma'am.**

Down whisks the ruler. With so much force, we hear a subtle crack in Jasper's hand.

SISTER D•LENA: (realizing she may have gone too far, he's a small boy, but still gruffly, saving face)  
**Report to the Nurse. And be thankful I don't put you in Solitary, again.**

Coming back up and out of it again. We're back by the river. In reflection, Knightbridge talks with Jasper.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Still wish I had stood up for you that first time. But I was such an idiot – still caring what the Menks thought.** (bitterly) **And wasn't that a stab in the back waste of time.**

Now he turns away from the river, striding rapidly away.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **I know where to go next. I have a debt to pay to you, Jasper. One small memorial... too little, too late.** (then with great almost demonic resolve, so angry at all the injustice) **But then we erase... all of them. High and low.**

#### ••••• SCORE SEGUE

**SONG'S NARRATION: Bleumont Boulevard in the Neon Bowery. Headquarters of the Dry Smoke & Whispers Detection Agency. The Professor and Doctor Thurwood found me deep in delirium, Aneelia by my side.**

In the salon. Song is laid out on the couch, making sounds like he's warding off an attack. He's living Knightbridge's memories. Improvise lines like: No, not *you*. Defiance. Not wanting to do what he's been told to do. Henchard is kneeling by his side, examining him.

HENCHARD: **Song? Song!? This is not good. His eyes are dilated. He's in some kind of Tel...** (realizes he's in company who doesn't know he's a telepath) **...some kind of delirium.**

THURWOOD: (checking his phone, accesses video - we hear a brief muffled replay, then Thurwood keys it off in dismay.)(very upset) **Well, we're already too late. There's been an incident with Knightbridge. A policeman is in serious condition. An entire neighborhood with power out and blazing fires everywhere.**

ANEELIA: **How can Spence even be alive.**

HENCHARD: **We've got to get Song awake! He's the only one that has a chance of finding Knightbridge before it all blows up.**

ANEELIA: (slight pause) (it's time to do the right thing) **Maybe... maybe he's not the only one, Professor Henchard... I...** (This is harder than she thought) **I'm an Empath. And it's clear to me that Detective Song is...**

THURWOOD: (heard Durrick's slip earlier, instantly puts two and two together, says it almost gingerly)  
**...Telepathic? Oh, that explains so much. Durrick – why didn't you tell me. You know I would keep that secret as if, well, blood oath, my friend..**

HENCHARD: (dismayed this is all hitting now, *more* complications) **It wasn't my secret to tell, Basil. Permanent exile from Quaymet – Penitentiary Planet, anyone? People who even know can be prosecuted and sent away, too. (bitterly) Or just disappear.**

At this, Aneelia reacts involuntarily, some memory of great pain. Henchard reads it and knows. Instantly sympathetic.

ANEELIA: (overcome) **How did you know that?**

HENCHARD: **It seems we've both had dealings with the Quintara.** (then he has an intuition, takes her hand) **You lost someone.**

ANEELIA: **My brother... They took him. Told us he was dead. I know he's not.**

HENCHARD: **There's no time now, but know this, you're among friends. And allies. Song and I will help you. But right now, thank you for being brave enough to tell us this. It may make all the difference.**

THURWOOD: **Durrick, I hate to interrupt, but... (he sighs deeply, with great worry, direly) Time is not on our side. I think I've figured out part of what has happened with Knightbridge and well... it's... catastrophically not good.**

HENCHARD: **Then reaching Song is even more imperative. And, Aneelia! You can already help me. I'm trying to remember something Song told me. Something about just this kind of situation... (racks his brain, can't unlock it) What was it?!?**

ANEELIA: **I don't know Detective Song, so there's no way I can read him, just his delirium. Close your eyes and think about that moment in the past.**

ANEELIA: (Aneelia's Empathy effect) **Mmm. I feel – you're overwhelmed. It's almost too much information. You're kind of resisting the metaphysical stuff.**

HENCHARD: (half laughs) **Had to get over that.**

THURWOOD: **Please! Hurry. It's not just Knightbridge. We've got far more at stake.**

ANEELIA: **And... (amused but irritated) you've just appraised something.**

Henchard jumps up suddenly and starts going through Song's vest pockets.

HENCHARD: **That's it! The ring! The ring! (Finds it, holds it up) Here it is! He said this ring is a conduit. His father gave it to him in M•Hellengau... if I touch the center, the family crest...**

Eclipsoid howl. Next stop: the Neon Bowery. Knightbridge being thrown into a pile of trash cans.

WATCHER: (good naturedly, like he's taken a truant student to task. To his ally looking on.)  
**He's not payin' the rent, Aiden K!**

AIDEN K: (loaded and dark-cored, there's a silently ticking entropy to this guy) **My good man Watcher. He's a lousy complainin' good-for-nothin' little punk, fact there. I should know.**

Watcher reaches down and pulls Knightbridge back out of the cans.

WATCHER: **Mistra Knightbridge. Zipper Man. What we be havin' here is a little communication breakdown, don'cha know. We say get it. You zipper it on up and you bring it on in. That's our deal.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (defiantly, angrily) ***I got you the stash!***

WATCHER: **This is only *half* the oweance. Aiden, my man, didn't I say: a *full lid* 'a the *finest* stingersticks.**

AIDEN K: ***A full lid.* I taught 'em better 'n that.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Look, I can't knick any more equipment. Doc Basil is *keen*, get it? I get the pink slip over 'missing inventory', and it's *done*.** (getting a little cockier than he should) **No more free ride!**

WATCHER: (backhands him, hard. Suddenly dangerous. He activates a VibeKnife) ***You callin' the Watcher a freeloader?***

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **No!** (grudgingly) ***No, sir.***

WATCHER: **Guess we just gonna have to give you another back 'a the ear *reminder*.** (vibe-knife swipe. Red-hot poker pain. Knightbridge cries out.) **Now you 'fettle' this right proper, Mr. Menker man – we can nose you out like a slenth in a sewer hole, no matter *where you be!*** (vibe knife off, holsters it) **This ain't even fun anymore. This just be gettin' *old*.** (and he walks away heavily down the gritty alley. Over his shoulder:) **Aiden, you take it again from here.**

Whistling nonchalantly away from us down the alley. Beat, Aiden walks over. Sounds concerned at first.

AIDEN K: **Spencer, Spencer, Spencer. You know *better* than to be mouthin' the *Man*.**

Now the Nicholson comes out. Grips Knightbridge by the throat, choking him, and shoves him up against the gritty wall.

AIDEN K: ***So glad I put that GPS in your brain. You belong to me. Forever. So no back-talkin' to the Watcher, right? Got it?!. Ya GOT IT?!!***

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (a beat, then with deep resentment and thinly veiled venom) **Yes.**

AIDEN: (tightens his grip) **Yes, *what?!***

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Yes... *Father*.**

AIDEN: (in low voice) ***Keep this up? Where your Mother went after she left us high and dry – You won't get it outta me. Great big galaxy out there. And only I know where she went.***

••••• SCORE SEGUE ••••• JOINED TELEPATHY AND EMPATHY FX RETURN.

SONG: ***Oh, thank the Creators, I'm out.***

ANEELIA: (in tears, to herself) ***My Spence. Why didn't you tell me how bad it was?***

SONG'S NARRATION: **We all came back at once. The ring had broken my connection to Knightbridge's memories. But not before Professor Henchard and Aneelia had also witnessed just a part of what I had endured for almost an hour.**

HENCHARD: **Oh, Sisters of Mercy, Song. Did we just re-live one of Knightbridge's recent memories?**

SONG: (Song too is deeply affected) **In living color. How long was I out and how much have I missed? Professor, with your permission – a quick scan?** (telepathy effect) **Gah! This is *Capital Red Crisis* bad.**

An elevator is revealed with a single deep resonant bell and the doors swoosh smoothly open:

SONG: **Alright, everyone in the elevator. we'll have to sort all this on the wing.**

They all comply. Henchard does not like high-speed flying, so he says with distaste as they enter the lift:

HENCHARD: **The Belgren-Serns SonoJet?**

SONG: **You know it.**

Doors swoosh shut and elevator drops dramatically.

••••• **BRIEF SCORE SEGUE** ••••• Inside the SonoJet. Engines are ramping up.

SJ CONTROL SYSTEM: ***Engines priming.***

SONG: **So now, Basil, straight up: how dangerous is our current situation, as long as Spencer Knightbridge stays alive?**

THURWOOD: **Then you've figured it out. Why we *must* find Knightbridge and... and somehow *undo* all this.**

ANEELIA: (she suddenly gets it too) **Oh, Shards. *Both* tesseract conduits are *open*. Fixed open by his very existence. His failed destination...**

SONG: **And I can tell you what *that* was. In some kind of bizarre quantum synchronicity, he sourced *M•Hellengau*. It's the place where I was *born*. That's why such a primal link was formed.**

THURWOOD: **And the delirium?**

SONG: **The second he was linked to the *M•Hellengau* conduit, I was connected to it *and* Knightbridge's subconscious. And I couldn't get back out!**

A repeating klaxon sounds three times. Then very large rolling mechanism echoes up from a tunnel ahead of them.

SJ CONTROL SYSTEM: ***Rotary access opening. Launch tunnel ready.***

HENCHARD: (and the other penny drops, and he says in horror) **Wait! The other open conduit – is the one connected to the *heart of the sun*?**

THURWOOD: **That's where Knightbridge's deadly plasma energy is coming from. *And*, these tesserae are meant to be open for *seconds*, not *hours*. They could collapse on their own at any time.**

HENCHARD: **Basil, what if either connection is severed violently, such as *military action*...**

ANEELIA: **Then Quaymet becomes connected with its own sun. Through an unstable wormhole in the middle of the Capital.**

SONG: **Pure core fusion pours through like a butane pilot light, ignites our atmosphere and *whoosh*, Quaymet becomes a temporary second sun. *Not* the best way to get that perfect summer tan.**

SJ CONTROL SYSTEM: ***Ready for launch.***

SONG: **Here we go. *Engines, engage.***

CUT TO: Reverbed launch tunnel. The SonoJet roars past us and dopplers up into the night sky.

## **END ACT THREE**

## **ACT FOUR**

Night sounds of Quaymet, East Side. Crickets. The random tang-tanging of a rope against a hollow flagpole. Then the coruscating field surrounding Knightbridge ramps in as he walks up on gravel.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Well, here it is. The East Side Academy for the Wayward. Gated and locked up at night like a baroque *prison camp*. Oh, those high stone walls. (whistle of wind) To keep it's wards *safe*... or keep them *safely in*.**

Howl and a surge. Knightbridge strides into the grounds and up a flight of concrete steps.

**And there *it* is. Where my life *ended*, in a way.**

He stops in front of the flagpole, looks up at it.

**A flagpole. Fly your colors! Take heart, young sinners, you *belong!*  
*Gold on Indigo!* The Order of the Benign Overseers will keep you safe  
within these walls... your *Family!* ... but only if you become *just like us.***

(field surges) **But we couldn't do it, could we, J.**

The Eclipsoid Field ramps again. FLASHBACK IN. Academy CHIME RINGS. Secluded library room. Classes have let out for recess. We hear the chattering students muffled in the hallway for a stretch, then that fades away under the following.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **How did the sisters lose track of this library annex?**

JASPER: **I don't know, but it's the perfect lunch-period sanctuary, isn't it?**

Jasper triggers a large mechanized bento box. It announces '*You are most welcome, from T-Kaiyo Café.*' They both tuck in.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **My alleyway get-it guy. *Good* sushi. What's up, *your* next class period?**

JASPER: **Oh, MeeYenta's Shell, *gym class.* Gotta be some way out of it.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (Knightbridge has a sudden inspiration) **Hey! You could check out the *locker baskets.* Then you can stay in the locker room. No *sports.* You'd have almost an hour to... write your poetry. Start that short story you've been avoiding for *months.***

JASPER: **Oh, Knight – henth, *no.* I can just hear the jocks: 'hey, Jasper, how 'bout I stick you in my basket so you can lick my sweaty socks til I get back.' And that would be before the punching begins...**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **So *Sorry,* J... I keep forgetting.**

JASPER: **You got the Menks, they don't mess with you.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Oh! J, I have something for you. (jewelry box rotors open with miniature gears)  
My mother gave me this and now I want you to have it. She said it's called an OverSeer Ring.**

JASPER: **Oh, that's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen... it's too beautiful. I'll lose it.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (he almost chokes up, some memory from his past) **That's just it. Once you put it on, you *can't.* I lost it on a hiking trip way up in the Vorga Cascade and the next morning, there it was on my finger again. She said: There's an inscription under the crest that reads: *Speak Truth and the OverSeers will Free the Sun.*'**

JASPER: (moved to tears) **I swear, if it weren't for you, I think I'd just curl up in a ball and die. (he thinks for a minute) I think you're the only person who's never busted my chops for *something.***

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Oh, come on. You're tougher than that. Remember the one thing the Sisters are right about: *As you do, so you reap.* What does *this* lot know of writers, or, or poets. People that can show you a bigger world than just what's under your bleedin' *nose* everyday. You're going to be *known.* They *hate* that. Both of us – we're going to show them *all* in the end.**

••••• FLASHBACK OUT BUT EXTENDED. REVERBED, OVER IT: KNIGHTBRIDGE IN THURSTON'S LAB CHANTING: "BLOOD AND ASHES, 30 LASHES"... THEN OUT INTO ONE MORE LESS PLEASANT MEMORY.

SISTER D•LÉNA: (horrified, angry, disappointed) ***I know about the two of you! Jasper I can understand. I've tried in every way to set him right. For years. But I've given up. He is a Faithless reprobate.***

KNIGHTBRIDGE: ***Where is he? What have you done to him now?***

SISTER D•LÉNA: ***He's in the Solitary Hole! You and your rash actions put him there!***

YOUNG KNIGHTBRIDGE (anguished) ***No! It's not his fault. Punish me.***

SISTER D•LÉNA: ***So he can continue to lure you off the straight and narrow? I think not. (earnestly) You still have a chance. Renounce him – and this mortal sin – and come back to us. Save yourself.***

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (but her concern only triggers him) ***Save myself? The only thing we need saving from is you. You and this hypocrite prison camp. Benign OverSeers, my backside. You like to lord over us as if you were OverSeers yourselves. But you're not. You're just sadistic sad spinsters in blue crow jail-guard robes.***

He's pushed her too far, misunderstanding her concern. She slaps him, hard.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (a beat, to his mind, might as well be Watcher. He's almost breaking down now, defiant, angry and desperately worried about Jasper) ***There, ya see? There's your love. And I want nothing to do with it.***

FLASHBACK OUT. Eclipsoid field pulsing.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: ***A flagpole. Just a hunk 'a metal. But this is where you died... (anguished) I told you I was coming back. Still doesn't make sense. But the note. It was your writing. (with affection) Such a jail yard facilitator, ya little wheeler and dealer. Ciggies. Booze. Even the Menks loved ya... for a while... And oh, Penta, all your books.. Pilfered here, there and everywhere... And your writing. That elegant cursive – where did all that come from?... (gives into the grief at last) ... And why is it gone?***

FLASHBACK OUT. Field surges. Overcome with the memories, Knightbridge looks up at the sky.

***Jasper! ... I'm so sorry... Forgive me!***

Howl of energy lashes out. The pole creaks, melts, crumples, hits the ground with a hollow thud. Another wave of energy, and it bubbles and melts into the ground..

KNIGHTBRIDGE ***Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Good-bye, J... (quietly, resignedly, in a pause of the power that surrounds him) I still love you.***

••••• SCORE SEGUE••••• CUT TO: Inside Sono-jet. Cockpit ambience, sonar, power thrum.

THURWOOD: ***Well, we're in the air, but now what? Emille, can't you find Knightbridge with your telepathy?***

SONG: ***I'm honestly afraid to try. I'm afraid of getting pulled back in, and not getting back out.***

SJ CONTROL SYSTEM: (LOUD ANGULAR ALARM) **PERIMETER ALERT!**. (military jets rushing up)

HENCHARD: **WHOA, SONG! Bogies at 5 o'clock!**

SONG: **NAV, HARD LEFT EVASIVE!**

The Sonojet veers, engine pitch altering drastically. The two military jets scream by, doppler away.

BASIL: **That was too close!**

SONG: (dismayed, angry at fate) **That was Air Power Strike Force. FRECK. The big guns are on the hunt.**

**SONG'S NARRATION: High in the skies over the Capital, I made a frantic call to STAFF, Quaymet's most powerful military force, and my personal friend and ally, Field Commander Gregson.**

GREGSON: : (Over intercom in the Sonojet) **Sorry, Song, Air Strike's already on it. This Knightbridge Eclipsoid-whatever-he-is, nearly killed a police officer, and now we have valid reports that an, an (he's reading the report) East Side Academy is under attack.**

HENCHARD: (raising his voice) **Hold on, The Academy for the Wayward?**

GREGSON: **Yeah, that's it.**

THURWOOD: **Why would he go there?**

HENCHARD: **Oh, I don't know. Fanatical sisterhood, gated campus. It's not the same place we knew, Basil.**

SONG: (impatiently) **At least we've got a location. Look, Commander, if any action is taken against Knightbridge, it's game over. You can kiss the whole damn planet goodbye. Here's the Intel...**

#### ••••• SCORE SEGUE

Knightbridge walking away. Then sirens become apparent.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **We have honored the dead... (he stops, looking back at the Academy) Schoolyards... That's where it all starts. All buddy, buddy, pal, pal. Til you cross some *unseen* line in the sand.**

FLASHBACK IN. Two more memories. Between classes, kid chaos, then it quiets. Bridges accessing locker.

SNECKER: **Hey, Bridgers, wait up...**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Snecker, what's up it?**

SNECKER: **Eh...that's just it... It's your friend. Your *facilities* guy... *Pennion*.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: (he knows what's coming, defiant) **Yeah? What about it?**

SNECKER: **Ain't cool. Don't be baggin' yer bagger... ya know? 'Fraid we're havin' to *cut you loose*... rest 'a the guys just wanted to beat ya both up, but I thought you deserved some slack... but, ya know, don't come 'round no more. OK? (walks away down hall, whistling off key)**

FLASHBACK OUT. And we're back in the present. Brief pause. Field pulses.

**'N there you are. This line here. That line there. Then it's all just *cavemen* again. Dukin' it out over *dinosaur barbecue*, 'n who gets the biggest rib. First it's food. Then it's territory. Worst of all: *Family*. Then you stick a flag up in it and it's... *War... Me. My kind first. At any cost.*(and now, jets nearby) *Time to go.* (now for another mission) **Let's start with the lackeys. 'We was just following orders. We didn't light the ovens. *We just shoved everybody in.*'****

And now some harsh Quaymet version of helicopter. Black Ops Specials, like a hornet.

**So, swaggering commandant wanna-be, Cottonmouth. And your little aide-de-camp, Stang.** (eclipsoid telepathy) **Ah! These powers. They just keep opening up. What in M•Hellengau are they doing to me? What am I becoming?** (now an eclipsoid version of the telepathy effect comes into play) **Oh, this is right amazing. I can see, miled away. I can find you... just by thinking about it ...** (eclipsoid surge and telepathy effect) **Cottonmouth. Stang. Show me where you are ...**

Eclipsoid long howl, and a new setting opens up. Sounds like some kind of dark, demented carnival.

**SONG'S NARRATION: The Diamond Icicle. An illicit Mudd Club for Quaymet's Goth and buzzcut cliques. Where the disenfranchised offspring of both poor and rich find strobe light cubicles or velveteen arenas for any manner of chemically induced indulgence.**

An announcement from a stage nearby: "Welcome, Diamond Icicle patrons. Time for the *Flavor of the Night!* Get ready to crawl and doggie down to the skull-ripping riffs of *IRASCIBLE FOMENT...*" UP CLOSE, SOUND OF A HYPO.

STANG: (beat) **Whooaaah. Oh... Cottonmouth, my man. This is superior.**

COTTONMOUTH: **Best Locker's Thraw I ever got off a dead man... hey, Stang, let's kick this joint. Foment's a broken ankle. You, me, we got Brainiac Fish to fry.**

Doors swoosh open, and we're back into the Quaymet nightscape. Doors close behind them. Band setting up comes through on tinny speakers on the outside of the building.

STANG: **Oh, stankers, yeah. Time to catch up with that Raggedy Ear Knightbridge. Where do ya think we'll find him this time?**

Car unlocking beep, gullwings ratchet open, souped engine roars into life, idles obnoxiously. They climb in, doors close.

COTTONMOUTH: **Let's find out.** (hits sequenced controls on a wrist device.) **With the GPS Bridger's old man had installed into his Medoolio Oblonggotcha...** Sonar pinging as it locates. Then PAINFUL SQUEAL OF FEEDBACK. Both react. Next. the device shorts out entirely, burning CM's arm. The doors lock. Car computer: **DOOR LOCKS ACTIVATED.** Howl of Eclipsoid field fills the car, followed by K's amplified voice.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **STANG. COTTONMOUTH. No need to find the Brainiac Raggedy Ear. He's already found... you...** (And Howl becomes Roar)

••••• **SCORE SEGUE** • **BACK IN THE SONOJET. SONG'S ON THE COM.**

SONG: **So, Commander Gregson, that's what we're up against. Can you relay this info up and down the chain and control it?**

GREGSON: **Look, Song. I can't fight you on the science...**

SONG: **But... you've got troops with itchy trigger fingers, spoiling to take on the perfect video game antagonist.**

GREGSON: **Now you got it. I can send out the order: No weapons fire of any kind. But this is a dumpster fire, and my troops are the kerosene.**

SONG: (almost resigned) **And who can blame them.** (thinking on feet) **Ok... Just let me get to Knightbridge first. Deal? Song, out.**

ANEELIA: (urgently) **Detective Song, something's really wrong. Spence, he's not at the Academy.**

SONG: **What?! There's no way he can move that fast.**

THURWOOD: **I don't think you have any choice. You've got to use your telepathy.**  
SONG: (bracing himself) **OK, gotta try.** (strong telepathy effect) **OK. OK. I can sense him now without getting trapped.** (then astounded, almost angry) **He's miles away! Thurwood, can Knightbridge teleport?**

THURWOOD: (flustered, discouraged and guilty) **He's, he's connected to teleport conduits.**  
SONG: **Point...** (exasperated) **Wow. He's over by the wastelands. Changing course.** (jet veers drastically, picks up speed) **And putting on the boosters.**

**SCORE SEGUE ••• FIELD IN FULL RAMP.** Swirl of power as Knightbridge materializes right in front of their car.

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Knightbridge materialized in fire right in front of Cottonmouth's JetRacer. He slammed his hands down on the hood (BANG!) and the metal began to glow. And then he leaned towards them, grinning, the fiery plasma coruscating out of his mouth as he spoke.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Old friends... I was just visiting our alma mater. How's the buzz of that Locker's Thraw wearing now?**

STANG: (panicking) **Oh, Cottonmouth. Tell me this is a bumner trip, man. We're just hallucinatin' this, right?**

COTTONMOUTH: (always the one to try to bluff his way through anything) **What are you? You're not Knightbridge.**

KNIGHTBRIDGE: **Oh, Cottonmouth. How can you say that – when we've known each other so well... it's a violation. So let's go... a small trip down Memory Lane... Just the three of us.**

Howl of eclipsoid energy. Flashback mic ambience.

COTTONMOUTH: (sadistically) **Your father said... I can do to you whatever I want. Stang, cuff those trouble-makin' hands behind his back.**

Stang cuffs him roughly. Cottonmouth circles him, bootheels in the alley grit.

COTTONMOUTH: **Now whack him.** (Stang hits him in the back of the legs, Knightbridge drops to his knees painfully). **That's right, down on your knees, Jasper lover. Stang: Disinterator?** (lethal gun being activated) **So time to do everything I want. Or Stang here will vaporize you.**

Stang cranks the gun, buzz saw whine heightens. Spiral back out to the present.

COTTONMOUTH: **Get out of my head!** (panicking, almost hysterical) **GET OUT OF MY HEAD!**

STANG: **Is he reading your mind? Is he reading your mind? You can't let him know! Stop him! YOU'VE GOT TO STOP HIM!**

Cottonmouth hits Stang hard on the jaw.

COTTONMOUTH: **Shut up! SHUT UP!!!**

CUT TO: Outside with Knightbridge.

KNIGHTBRIDGE:: (elated at first) **Oh, I smell secrets.** (but then: an epiphany: all the little pieces that didn't fit are falling into place. Jasper giving up? The ring, missing?) **Cottonmouth... Stang...** (and the field ramps ominously) **Show me everything... I... must... not... know.**

**END ACT FOUR**