

**FAITH**

"Crisis Of..."

by

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## TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

1

New York.

The real New York; air so polluted eyes water acid, noses run black and saliva becomes chalk. Organic waves spill through the streets; parasites and their marks bustling about their business and no one else's.

What a town.

2 EXT. BACK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

2

THUNK.

A WOMAN's lifeless head cracks hard against the ground. A phantom in black momentarily lingers, hovering about the crude dead form which is oozing crimson from its neck.

A fist drives across his mouth, wiping the nourishment from his lips. Stepping from darkness, he reveals a slender build and pasty complexion.

The PASTY VAMP turns to the rear of the alley where another vamp emerges; some STUPID KID with a hard on for Tim Burton and Anne Rice novels. He's sucking a WOUND on his hand.

STUPID KID  
(spellbound)  
Awesome!

Pasty foots the dead woman's BODY.

PASTY VAMP  
Yes, quite.

The Stupid Kid inspects his wound before joining Pasty over the woman's body.

PASTY VAMP (cont'd)  
I told you I would make all our  
dreams come true.

They embrace. Stupid Kid beams with an idiotic grin.

Pasty is the first to break; distracted by the rear of the alley. He drifts away from the kid like a bloodhound following a scent. He seems pleased.

Once again, Stupid Kid starts messing with his hand. Too much pressure on a sensitive area ignites a shrieking HISS from his lips. He fans his hand wildly.

(CONTINUED)

Pasty stops, turns; concerned.

STUPID KID  
(re: wound)  
I went too deep.

PASTY VAMP  
It's supposed to be deep!

STUPID KID  
(sheepish)  
Oh.  
(regains composure)  
So, now what?

Pasty goes ear to ear with such a wicked look even the Stupid Kid flinches at it's creepiness.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Die?

At the alley entrance stands FAITH, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER.

FAITH  
Again, I mean.

The vamps go GAME-FACE.

Faith takes a step.

And then another.

She twirls a stake.

STUPID KID  
(to Pasty Vamp; terrified)  
A Slayer?

PASTY VAMP  
(fronting)  
As are we of her kind.

FAITH  
Not my kind.  
(noticing his attire)  
Is that a cape?

Pasty turns a nose up.

STUPID KID  
It's... regal.

FAITH  
It's stupid.  
(then)  
Jesus, how old are you guys?

(CONTINUED)

STUPID KID

(bold)

While it may be true that I am but  
a mere infant, my lord and master  
has lived to see the crucifixion  
itself!

FAITH

Right.

(sarcastic)

Never heard that one before.

STUPID KID

You call your betters a liars?

FAITH

Don't know about my "betters", but  
I'm definitely calling the two of  
you stupid.

(waits for reaction)

And liars.

PASTY VAMP

You know not of who you speak to,  
meat!

FAITH

Oh, c'mon. Look at you two. No self-  
respecting vamp wears a cape. Well,  
maybe Dracula from what I hear, but  
he's like... uber. You guys are  
like the vamps real vamps beat up.  
You're... nerds!

(to Pasty)

Really, how old?

STUPID KID

Older than the seas of...

FAITH

(to Stupid Kid)

Shut up.

(to Pasty)

Really.

PASTY VAMP

I don't answer to you.

FAITH

Humor me.

PASTY VAMP

One-thous-

(off her look)

One hundred years old.

(CONTINUED)

Stupid Kid deflates a little.

STUPID KID  
One-hundred?

FAITH  
Uh-uh. Try again.

PASTY VAMP  
Fif-

STUPID KID  
Fifty?

Pasty shrugs.

FAITH  
Mmm-hmm. Divide by ten sound about  
right?

STUPID KID  
(turns to Pasty)  
Five? I'm freaking seven!

FAITH  
And dusted.

Ashes fall.

PASTY VAMP  
(distraught)  
Louis!

Pasty charges, Faith sidesteps while grabbing the back of his  
head, pulling him forward as she knees his groin.

He collapses.

FAITH  
(sighs)  
Noobs...

PASTY VAMP  
We had a future!

Faith removes a HATCHET from her leather jacket.

FAITH  
Still do.  
(off his look)  
Who am I to stand in the way of  
true love?

The HATCHET hurls. Pasty loses his head.

FAITH (cont'd)  
(looks at watch)  
Great, now I'm late.

Faith glances down at the body of the dead woman.

FAITH (cont'd)  
Guess you already knew that.

Her fingers close the corpse's eyelids.

FAITH (cont'd)  
I'm sorry.

Eyes flicker as something registers from the back of the alley; another body.

Squinting; the image becomes more clear.

She races into the darkness but stops cold. Her knees buckle and then crash against the pavement.

Two tiny holes blotch the neck of a six year old GIRL. Her eyes having gone wide and gray, her skin still warm and pink.

Her little lips smeared with blood.

Faith cradles the small lifeless head, tilting it back and forth; inspecting the punctures.

She takes the child's jaw and slowly opens her mouth. Gently, she reclines the head back into it's natural resting position.

Her thumb travels over the child's lips, sweeping the crimson up leaving only a diluted smear upon the child's chin and cheek.

Faith's eyes go puffy and red as her face loses color. Her head jerks to the lifeless innocent before her.

FAITH (cont'd)  
It's not her blood...

And off her shocked look, we:

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF TEASER**

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 EXT. BACK ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER 4

Faith wobbles back up and onto her feet. She uses a wall to try and support herself, before crashing back into it.

Her eyes never leave the child.

Her head feels heavy. She tries to support it with her hands.

Her mind is a jumble.

She sobers a bit, or at least appears to. Her eyes spy the hatchet lying upon a pile of dust.

Faith hobbles out of the darkness over to it.

Picks the hatchet up.

Looks back toward the clump of shadow that is the little lifeless girl.

Hobbles back over to her.

She stands over the small desolate frame. Her grip tightens around her weapon.

Eyes the angelic face.

Rubs her eyes red with the sleeve of her jacket.

Zeros on the neck.

Lowers herself back to her knees.

As she raises the hatchet with one hand, the other affectionately moves a batch of golden hair from the child's forehead.

She bites her lip.

Holds her pose. Thinks on it. Hard.

The hatchet is lowered to the ground.

Not here. Not now.

We cut away from Faith's dilemma to:

5 INT. ELEVATOR - WEBB RESEARCHING - MOMENTS LATER 5

PRYOR WEBB hums along to some dreadful muzak as one by one the floor numbers light up, eventually stopping on the ELEVENTH.

(CONTINUED)

As the doors crack open, Pryor's melodic expression is suddenly interrupted by an unexpected greeting.

VOICE (O.S.)  
(cold)  
You... bitch!

Standing in the opening is NOA, covered head to toe in BLUE SLIME.

She looks as shocked as Pryor as she realises who she's talking to.

NOA  
(quickly)  
Oh, God! Sorry, Pryor, I thought  
you were Faith!

PRYOR  
(eyes her)  
Probably a good thing for you I'm  
not.  
(re: slime)  
What is that stuff? What happened?

Noa wipes the slime from her lab coat as Pryor exits the elevator, moving past her, and we pass on into:

Noa trails behind Pryor.

NOA  
Yeah, well, remember that geirswath  
you brought in yesterday?

PRYOR  
Yes?

NOA  
It hatched.

PRYOR  
(raises eyebrow)  
Hatched?

NOA  
Yeah. Hatched. These little slugs,  
straight out of 'Night Of The  
Creeps,' came pouring out.

Pryor nervously scans the area, keeping a worried, watchful eye out for the little buggers.

NOA (cont'd)  
(off Pryor; sigh)  
I took care of it.

PRYOR  
How?

Noa lifts up a shoe, covered in blue, with it's heel broken and hanging on by a thread. The two stop in their tracks.

NOA  
(scowling)  
I managed to stop them getting out into the city, but... I ruined my shoes.

Pryor glances down, noticing she is bare footed.

PRYOR  
But all gone now, right?

Noa is dumbfounded by his complete and absolute lack of sympathy.

PRYOR (cont'd)  
(off her look)  
I'm very sorry about your shoes.

Noa sighs. Again.

NOA  
Yeah, they're all gone.  
(beat)  
Like my shoes!

They continue walking.

PRYOR  
So... you say it "hatched" while it was on the slab? Interesting. The reason we use iron is to keep mystical properties from-

NOA  
(cuts him off)  
Well, no.

They stop.

PRYOR  
What?

NOA  
It wasn't on the slab.

PRYOR

Why on earth not?

NOA

Uh, because Faith didn't show up,  
and I can't lift that treckler  
demon from this morning off it by  
myself!

PRYOR

(horrified)

You put an unstable creature in one  
of the normal exam rooms?

NOA

(protesting)

It was supposed to be dead! I  
didn't really think it would be a  
problem!

Noa plops down on a nearby brown mini-sofa and removes her  
coat, setting it next to her. Pryor bites his lip as he  
watches the sofa turn an icky blue.

NOA (cont'd)

(holds up shoe again)

'Course, it wouldn't have come to  
this if Faith had bothered to show  
up for work. She could have gone  
all super-slayer on their bugly  
asses.

Pryor isn't listening to her.

PRYOR

Faith hasn't made it in yet?

(looks at watch)

Well, she's only a little late.  
She's probably still a bit drained  
from the encounter with the insiro  
demon.

NOA

(scowls)

Oh, you mean the same demons I  
risked my life to hunt down with  
absolutely no compensation in pay?  
Yeah, course! How could we forget  
about them?

PRYOR

(off her look; quickly)

Which is still late nonetheless.  
I'll have a talk with her when she  
gets in.

(CONTINUED)

Pryor heads down the hall, toward his office. She calls after him, their discussion unfinished.

NOA

What about my shoes?

PRYOR

We'll call it even for the cushions.

NOA

Cushions?

Looks down to the sofa.

NOA (cont'd)

Crap.

Noa watches as Pryor closes his door behind him.

NOA (cont'd)

Do I have to clean this?

Pryor's door closes, and we cut from Noa's sulky expression over to:

JON QUINN sits at his desk, computer monitor aglow before him. He thumbs through a brochure from Webb Researching. He fixates on a biography of its founder, Pryor Webb.

Quinn taps some keys and a new screen pops up. He types again but this time only asterisks appear on-screen. A tap of the 'Enter' key and a new window appears. It's empty save for a lone blinking cursor.

He types two words: "Webb, Pryor". A series of numbers rains across the screen. Another window pops up, this time with a picture of Pryor and a long blurb.

Quinn scans through the text but is interrupted by the unexpected ringing of his phone. He snatches it into his hand.

QUINN

(on phone)

Yeah?

(pause)

Great, great.

(pause)

Not great? Oh.

(upbeat)

No, that is great, or at least, better than nothing. Yeah, give it to me, I'll write it down.

(CONTINUED)

Quinn scribbles on a post-it.

QUINN (cont'd)  
I'm gonna follow it up right now.

A boyishly handsome face leans in to Quinn's ear. It is LEHTO, his recently deceased partner.

LEHTO  
Check the serials.

QUINN  
What?  
(beat; back to phone)  
Listen, can I get you to run those serial numbers for me? Great. How long?  
(beat)  
Excellent. No, I'll wait.

Quinn covers the mouthpiece to the receiver; turns to Lehto. He doesn't seem too fazed to see his ex-partner.

QUINN (cont'd)  
I can't believe I didn't think of that.

LEHTO  
You did.  
(off his look)  
I hate to be the bearer of bad news Jon, but I'm dead.

QUINN  
You know what I mean. Can't believe I hadn't thought of it before now.

LEHTO  
(chuckles)  
You're starting to worry me, Jon. Pretty sure it's a bad sign when you start talking to yourself.  
(beat)  
Or people who aren't there.

QUINN  
I'm just a little stressed. This is rough work.

LEHTO  
Stress? Get a map and turn to Egypt. See that big river running down the middle of it? What's that called? I think the word you're looking for is 'denial.'

QUINN

I'm going to just pretend I don't know what you're talking about.

LEHTO

What you do best. Never listen to common sense, even when it's your own.

Quinn goes back to the phone, ignoring Lehto.

LEHTO (cont'd)

C'mon, Jon. You know what kind of a cop Lehto was. You've read his file.

Lehto leans in to Quinn's face, but he just turns, facing the other direction.

LEHTO (cont'd)

Despite outward appearances, the guy was thorough in his work, and in every aspect thereof. Think about it, guy gets a new partner, he's gonna want to know-

QUINN

(snapping)

Shut up.

(back to phone)

Yeah? You're kidding. They don't match up? Alright, run a trace and get me what you can, when you can. Thanks.

Quinn hangs the phone up.

QUINN (cont'd)

Huh.

Looks back to Lehto.

QUINN (cont'd)

Serials on the hard drives don't match. However, there was fragmented data on the hard drives we pulled from the burnt machines.

Quinn holds the post-it up to his former partner.

QUINN (cont'd)

This address.

LEHTO

Know it?

(CONTINUED)

QUINN

No, but I can find it.

Quinn launches from his seat, grabbing his coat from off the back of his chair.

LEHTO

Why bother? Someone's obviously trying to throw you off the trail.

QUINN

Obviously. But it's all I've got.

LEHTO

You know you're walking in to a setup. You could be in danger.

QUINN

Uh-huh.

LEHTO

So how are you going to play it, then?

Quinn returns to his desk and removes a handgun from a drawer, the size of which would make Dirty Harry envious.

QUINN

Loud.

Quinn cracks a grin, and we cut into the noise of:

The child is nestled over Faith as if she were asleep. The background behind her blurs as the train travels through the tunnel.

Faith is oblivious to her surrounding. She just stares at a clump of dirt on the floor. After a beat, her eyes blur and cross, sleep catching up with her.

She shakes it off and reaffirms her grip on the child.

As the train rattles onwards, we cut back to:

Pryor pinches the bridge of his nose, squeezing his eyelids tight. His head is pounding.

He opens a drawer on his desk and removes a small brown bottle, pouring some pills into his hand.

He swoops them into his mouth and with a hard GULP, they go down.

A light flashes on his answering machine. He presses the playback button.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Hello, Mr. Webb. It is unfortunate that I have missed you. We have a new specimen for you to examine. You may collect it from my apartment within the next twenty-four hours. Thank you, and good day.

PRYOR

(to machine)

Yes, of course, my pleasure.

(grumbling to himself)

Between having The Circle as a benefactor and my own personal Slayer, this place is starting to get a little overpopulated. We can't keep our heads above water as it is!

He reclines back in his chair, letting his head go limp, falling back where he can stare at the ceiling.

PRYOR (cont'd)

I can't afford another employee right now.

He exhales and stares at the dots in the ceiling. Takes a deep breath and snaps back.

Pryor scans his desk looking for something, anything, to occupy his attention.

Then he sees it from the corner of his eye: a DESK CALENDAR. A date is circled in RED. He takes the calendar into his hand, reminiscing as if it were a photo.

PRYOR (cont'd)

(thoughtful)

And another year escapes us already.

He sets the calendar back upon the desktop and takes his phone in hand, dialing a number he knows all too well. It only rings twice.

PRYOR (cont'd)

Hello, yes, this is Pryor Webb, I'd like to schedule a visit.

We leave Pryor and his call as we cut back into:

10

INT. FAITH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM. LATER

10

The door latches shut. Footsteps reverberate throughout the sparsely decorated room.

Faith lays the child on her bed and pulls up a chair next to her.

GOLIATH emerges out from behind a GUITAR CASE (the words "R.I.P. OLLIE" scrawled across it) and walks back and forth between his master's legs, purring. He goes unnoticed.

Faith stares at the little angel settled above her sheets, her hands go limp in her lap.

A few moments go by and Faith leaves the bedside.

SMASH!

A chair shatters against a wall.

Goliath scampers underneath the bed, fearing for his very life.

Faith goes berserk.

Knocking over a table, picking it up over her head and smashing it on the ground, and then into the wall.

Her portable television crashes into an old chest in the corner of the room. She marches up to it, withdraws a fist back into the air, finishing it off with a devastating and quick jab.

She hoists another chair over her head, turning to throw it aimlessly like the rest when she comes to a cold stop.

GABRIEL stands before her. No playful smirk, no charming smile.

GABRIEL

Faith.

(then)

Stop.

As their eyes meet, she becomes aware of the moment.

FAITH

It's helping.

(CONTINUED)

GABRIEL

Maybe, but sooner or later you're gonna run out of furniture to smash, and I'd really rather not be here when that happens, and you start looking for something else to break.

Faith still has the chair in her hands as she lowers her gaze to the floor.

GABRIEL (cont'd)

So why don't you put the chair down so we can talk?

As Faith slowly lowers the chair to the floor, we:

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF ACT ONE**

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

11 INT. FAITH'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

11

Faith looks around, seeing the devastation she had caused to her apartment. She sighs loudly.

FAITH

Sorry. I don't know what the hell just happened.

GABRIEL

A fairly thorough trashing of your apartment, it would seem.

(then)

Your cat seems to have had a crisis of its own, too.

Faith notices the mess on the floor. She squints and then looks back to the bed, specifically underneath it.

FAITH

Damn it, Goliath!

(beat)

Actually, I think that might have already been there.

Gabriel makes a face, his nose squishing up.

FAITH (cont'd)

(off the look)

Yeah. I think he's protesting something, I just don't know what.

PRYOR

You should probably find out.

Faith flops down into the chair she very nearly destroyed.

FAITH

Agreed.

An awkward moment as they wait for the other to speak until...

FAITH (cont'd)

What are you doing in my apartment?  
Again? Is this the new cliché?  
'Faith's in trouble, time for a rooftop rendezvous?'

GABRIEL

Not this time.

(then; sly)

So, you're in trouble?

(CONTINUED)

FAITH  
Huh? No. Things are just...  
complicated for me right now.

Gabriel looks to the bed, acknowledging the dead child.

GABRIEL  
So it would seem.

FAITH  
I can handle it.

GABRIEL  
And the plan is to just wait until  
she turn and then... "poof"?

Gabriel mimes a staking motion, and Faith spins her head back to the child, who looks as if she were merely napping.

FAITH  
Pretty much.

GABRIEL  
You know it could be hours yet.

FAITH  
Your point?

GABRIEL  
Aren't you late for work?

FAITH  
(not in the mood)  
I think under the circumstances, a  
little "hooky" is acceptable.

GABRIEL  
They're probably worried about you,  
though. Shouldn't you at least call  
to check in?

FAITH  
(shrugs)  
They know I can take care of  
myself.

GABRIEL  
I'm sure they do. They still worry.

FAITH  
Not my prob, they should just know  
better.

GABRIEL  
Still, I don't see why it's such a  
problem to just pick up the ph-

(CONTINUED)

Faith bolts out of her chair, knocking it backward.

FAITH  
Drop it, Gabriel!

As Gabriel stares blankly back at her, Faith collects herself, looking embarrassed by her outburst.

GABRIEL  
Quite the emotional response.

Embarrassment turns to anger.

FAITH  
You need to leave.

GABRIEL  
You need to stay.

She flinches.

FAITH  
What?

GABRIEL  
Shouldn't be that surprising,  
Faith. I work for some "all  
knowing, all seeing" entity or  
something, remember?  
(off her look)  
I know why you're really here.

FAITH  
Oh, yeah? Then please, do tell.

GABRIEL  
You're planning to bolt.

And we cut from Faith's surprised expression to:

12 INT. WEBB RESEARCHING - MOMENTS LATER

12

As he leaves his office, Pryor hastily puts his jacket on, brushing past Noa.

NOA  
Going out?

PRYOR  
Yes, I have business to attend.

NOA  
Great. So what am I supposed to do  
here by myself? Get attacked by  
more slimey things?

(CONTINUED)

PRYOR

Well, for one...

Looking at her bare feet.

PRYOR (cont'd)

You might want to put something  
over your feet.

NOA

Really? Well, I'm sorry, I didn't  
bring a spare pair as I didn't know  
they were going to get damaged  
during any smooshing!

PRYOR

You can find some galoshes in the  
closet.

A look of terror overcomes her.

NOA

You have got to be kidding...

PRYOR

And second, clean up the rest of  
the "slimey stuff". Mop and bucket  
should be with the galoshes.

NOA

(scowls)

I hate you.

Pryor steps into the elevator, pressing the button for the  
bottom floor. He looks back out to Noa as the doors start to  
close on him.

PRYOR

If you get all that done, we'll  
discuss that compensation you  
mentioned earlier.

Pryor exits into the elevator, it's doors engulfing him as  
Noa watches on in disbelief, and from her look, we cut all  
the way over to:

Some PUNK has the barrel of a GUN stuck down his throat. His  
eyes are wide with terror, tears already having stained his  
cheeks.

The gun belongs to Quinn, who is hunched over this punk, foot  
on chest, keeping him pinned.

QUINN

Yeah, I'm so not buying this.  
What's worse, I don't think you  
know a damn thing that can help me,  
do you?

The punk shakes his head in a rapid back and forth motion.

QUINN (cont'd)

I'm going to take this gun out of  
your mouth on the condition that  
you only speak when spoken to, got  
it?

Punk jerks his head up and down.

Quinn withdraws the weapon.

QUINN (cont'd)

I'm going to go out on a limb and  
take a wild guess that you have a  
list of priors, correct?

PUNK

Y-yeah.

QUINN

Let me guess, arson on that list?

PUNK

Mm-hmm.

QUINN

Right.

(beat)

Everything points to you being my  
man.

PUNK

(blurts out)

I didn't ever kill no cop!

Quinn waves the gun reminding the Punk. His hands SLAP over  
his mouth. Quinn breaks a smile.

QUINN

Now, as I was saying... You're  
obviously not my guy.

The Punk's face lights up a little.

QUINN (cont'd)

Problem is someone wants me to  
think you are. So now, I have to  
figure out what the smart move to  
play here is.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

QUINN (cont'd)

(beat)

Do I "a" take you in, "b" put a  
bullet behind your ear...

Suddenly, anxiety makes a re-appearance on the Punk's face.

QUINN (cont'd)

Or "c," forget we ever had this  
little meeting of ours?

(off his expression)

You want a say in this?

Again, the Punk jerks his head up and down.

QUINN (cont'd)

You may speak.

PUNK

(quickly)

Listen man, I don't know who told  
you what, but I ain't never killed  
nobody. Especially no freaking  
cops!

(innocently)

I just deal.

QUINN

Yeah, model citizen. I get it.

Right, then.

Quinn stand up, over the Punk. Tilts his mammoth sized pistol  
upward so the Punk can get a nice look at it. He freezes,  
terrified to make the slightest gesture.

QUINN (cont'd)

You see this? It's a monster. One  
shot will tear right through you  
and leave nothing but bit of beef  
jerky. I use this, you die.  
Horribly.

The Punk starts backing away from Quinn, pulling himself with  
his hands behind him. Quinn notices and makes a calming  
gesture with his hands.

The Punk stops.

QUINN (cont'd)

I'm not going to use this monster  
on you unless you make me.

Quinn holds his gun on the Punk, and slowly backs away,  
making his way to a door.

As he trains his weapon on the sniveling Punk, he flips his  
off hand outward where a tiny gun ejects from somewhere  
inside the sleeve of his jacket, FIRING two piercing shots.

(CONTINUED)

The Punk's knee erupts in blood and he collapses to the floor, clutching his wound and YELLING in pain.

PUNK

What the hell, man?!? What the hell! You shot my freaking knee, you son of a bitch, my knee! What the hell is wrong with you?

QUINN

I chose "D: None of the above."

Quinn puts his weapons away and continues.

QUINN (cont'd)

This meeting never happened. A deal went bad, you were shot...

Notices the punk thrashing about in pain.

QUINN (cont'd)

Okay, that last part you could probably figure out. Anyway, the perp who did the shooting ran out the door. You had never met him before.

(sternly)

Listen!

(pause)

You never met the guy before. This was just a deal that went bad. Now, I'm going to leave here and phone in an anonymous tip about shots being fired. An ambulance will be here soon enough. Got it?

The Punk rocks back and forth in agony.

QUINN (cont'd)

(loud)

Got it?

PUNK

Yeah, I got it, man!

QUINN

Do us both a favor and forget my face.

Quinn grins suddenly, patting a hand lightly against the punk's cheek.

QUINN (cont'd)

Thank you for your co-operation.

As Quinn turns and exits, we cut outside to:

14 EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

14

Quinn ignores the screams coming from inside the building. He gets into his car, where Lehto sits waiting in the passenger seat.

LEHTO  
That's a pretty damn sight far from procedure.

QUINN  
This whole thing is pretty damn far from procedural.

LEHTO  
Finally coming around, huh?

Quinn starts the car.

LEHTO (cont'd)  
So, can you live with it?

QUINN  
I don't know.

LEHTO  
Yeah, you do. Tell me. Say it.  
(beat)  
Can you live with it?

QUINN  
(beat)  
No.

LEHTO  
And what are you gonna do?

QUINN  
I don't know.

As Quinn pulls out into the street, a smirk appears on Lehto's face.

LEHTO  
Yeah, you do.

Lehto breaks into a wide smirk, as we cut to:

15 INT. WEBB RESEARCHING - NIGHT

15

Noa walks down a hallway carrying a mop and bucket. She is wearing BIG YELLOW GALOSHES, muttering to herself.

NOA  
She's going to see my dark side now.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NOA (cont'd)  
Cleaning up this stupid mess,  
having those things crawling all  
over me!  
(shudders)  
Ugh. You don't see me sleeping in  
when I get attacked by demons...

As she disappears down the corridor...

NOA (cont'd)  
She is in so much trouble. No more  
bagels, that's for damn sure!

Noa pauses, realising she shouldn't be thinking these  
thoughts, and bites her lip.

NOA (cont'd)  
(mousy)  
I hope she's okay...

As Noa sighs and starts walking onwards, we cut to:

Faith sits in her chair, head hanging low.

GABRIEL  
You're not even going to bother to  
deny it, are you?

FAITH  
What's the point? You've got your  
all knowing thingy.  
(beat)  
Probably a better way to say  
that...

GABRIEL  
Want to tell me why?

FAITH  
I'm sure you could tell me just as  
quickly.

She stands up, walking past Gabe to gaze out her window.

FAITH (cont'd)  
I don't like to stay in one place  
for too long.

GABRIEL  
Why is that?

FAITH  
Jesus, what are you, some kind of  
shrink now? Why am I even talking  
to you?

GABRIEL

Because you want to. Now, answer my question.

Faith continues to look out the window in silence.

GABRIEL (cont'd)

Okay, how about we explore relevancy? Why leave now? You freak out about having to stake a six year old, so it's time to go? You think you'll never see another pre-pubescent vamp?

FAITH

It's not the kid. I can handle the kid.

GABRIEL

I think it is.

FAITH

I'm a slayer. When the time comes, I'll slay. But not a second before.

GABRIEL

Oh, of that I have no doubt. But I think this current crisis of yours is about the child.

FAITH

You've lost me.

GABRIEL

Not the plan.

(then)

Let's back up a little. Why are you here, specifically?

FAITH

I'm thinking you don't mean metaphorically.

(off his look)

Where else was I going to go? I knew she was bitten, I knew she had tasted their blood. If I'd left her there, there's no telling what morgue she would have ended up at, and people would have died.

GABRIEL

So you brought her to your home.

FAITH

You have a better suggestion?

(CONTINUED)

GABRIEL

Why didn't you take her to Pryor?

FAITH

What?

GABRIEL

He's a scientist. A demonologist. Surely, he'd love to have such a specimen to study. Think about how much of a benefit to his bio-mystical research. What a prime example!

FAITH

That's sick. She's just a kid, and anyway, Pryor's not like that.

GABRIEL

Not like what?

FAITH

He's not going to go and cut her up for the sake of scribbling a few new notes on the subject.

GABRIEL

Even though he knows what she is about to become?

FAITH

Not to a kid, he wouldn't.

GABRIEL

Interesting.

FAITH

What is?

GABRIEL

You're so defensive that Pryor wouldn't harm the child, even knowing what she was about to become, and yet... here you are, waiting to cut her head off.

FAITH

What's your point?

GABRIEL

What would he say if he knew what you were about to do.

FAITH

Not a thing. It's what needs to be done.

(CONTINUED)

GABRIEL

Then pick up the phone.

FAITH

He'd understand as would Noa. It's not a pretty world, Gabe.

GABRIEL

No, it's not, is it? You're right though; they would understand. They're not the problem - you are.

FAITH

Just keep talking, I'll let you know when you make sense.

GABRIEL

You don't want them to know.

FAITH

It's not something to brag about.

GABRIEL

No, I mean how easy it is for you.

Faith throws a dark look at Gabe, and from that we cut to:

INT. SUGARWATER APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Pryor makes his way down a narrow hallway, stopping in front of a fairly nondescript door. He knocks twice.

The door opens to the pudgy frame of MR.OWL.

MR.OWL

Why hello, Mr. Webb. We actually didn't expect you this early.

PRYOR

Sorry, have I come at a bad time?

MR.OWL

No, no, of course not Mr. Webb. Please, please do come in. And mind your step.

INT. EPICENTER - CONTINUOUS

Pryor enters but is surprised to see that in place of the quaint apartment he has grown accustomed to over the years, there now rests a massive stadium sized chamber. Grand, bright, it's decor a Gothic Victorian.

Pryor looks all around him, his face registering the surprise we're feeling at suddenly finding ourselves in such a room!

(CONTINUED)

He is overwhelmed, and it's from this amazed look that we:

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF ACT TWO**

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

19 INT. FAITH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

19

Gabriel circles around a motionless Faith. Her head hangs low, her eyes blink as she tries to take everything and it's accuracy thereof in.

GABRIEL

See, we find ourselves here in a dilemma that just sums you up as a person, Faith. This is exactly the sort of mess that you seem destined to attract, whether you want to or not, and no matter how many things you do to try and restore some kind of balance to that huge karmic scale hanging over you, it's always going to be tipped one way.

Faith shoots Gabe a look, but he raises his hands - he's telling it like it is for once.

After a beat, Faith looks back down at the child on the bed, then to the floor. Gabe takes advantage of her silence to continue his speech.

GABRIEL (cont'd)

That's not to belittle what you've done with your life - far from it. You've helped save the world - or, at least, a quiet little Californian town that would probably have gone on to become the first battle in a war that would have devastated the planet.

FAITH

How do you know that?

GABRIEL

I'm sorry?

FAITH

(looks up)

How do you know Sunnydale would have ended up with those uber-vamps taking over the world if we hadn't stopped them?

Gabe grins at her.

GABRIEL

It's not a hard one to work out, Faith.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GABRIEL (cont'd)

Even with the small matter of the West Coast sunshine keeping them contained, did you ever stop to think that there were more things down in that Hellmouth than vampires?

FAITH

Like what?

GABRIEL

Warlocks, witches, demons - things with the power to blot out the sun. Permanently.

FAITH

Okay, so we did good. What does this have to do with her?

Faith motions to the girl, and Gabe nods.

GABRIEL

I'm getting to that.

(beat)

So, you helped save the world, then you went off and did your own thing, you even managed to find what looked like love out of it, with Robin.

Faith throws Gabe a cold glare.

FAITH

You don't get to say his name.

GABRIEL

(raises hands)

I'm just illustrating my point. Robin was a good guy, I'm truly sorry for what happened to him. But, in a way, it does tie in with what I'm saying.

FAITH

Huh?

GABRIEL

Robin got close to you. Very close. He found his way into that heart of yours, and for the first time in your life, you opened up. Let someone inside.

FAITH

Yeah, and?

GABRIEL

And then when it came down to it,  
what did you do? You ran.

FAITH

That wasn't my fault. Things were-

GABRIEL

Hey, you can justify it to yourself  
any way you want, point of the  
matter is, you ran away.

Faith falls quiet again as she watches Gabriel pace round  
her, still throwing glances over to the girl on the bed.

GABRIEL (cont'd)

So what we have to ask ourselves  
here isn't 'where should I run to  
this time,' but 'why should I run?'  
You're going to start running out  
of good reasons really quick if  
this is all it takes for you to  
leave behind what you've started to  
build for yourself here.

FAITH

So what have I 'built' here,  
exactly?

GABRIEL

Some kind of life, maybe? I know  
it's not something you've ever  
thought you could have, not since-

FAITH

(stern)

Don't say his name again.

(beat; quietly)

Please.

Gabriel pauses, then nods, respecting her wishes.

GABRIEL

But you know who I mean. Since all  
that got taken away from you in  
France, you've gotten back into  
your old cycle. Go to a city, hang  
around until you start to make a  
few people you can sort of call  
'friends,' then as soon as they  
start getting even vaguely close,  
as soon as they begin to get the  
tiniest insight into who Faith  
Lehane really is, at the deepest,  
darkest depths of her soul... you  
bolt.

(CONTINUED)

Faith looks up at him, falling silent again as he speaks.

GABRIEL (cont'd)

The problem is, you're afraid they'll get to know the "real" you and hate you for it. You reason that it's better to leave now, before they find out exactly what kind of a monster you really are.

Faith is a mix between hurt and angry, yet she hangs on every word.

GABRIEL (cont'd)

That child is a catalyst to a repetitive pattern you live your life by: Don't get close to anyone and never give them the chance. Things have been going so well for you here, you let your guard down. Opened up a little. Then this child falls into your lap, and you know how awful and heart-wrenching it is - but you don't feel it. You've seen true horror in your life, and truth to tell you were responsible for a lot of it.

Gabe walks over to her, looks her direct in the eye.

GABRIEL (cont'd)

But that doesn't make you a bad person. At least, not here and now, anyway. The truth of the matter is that you are who you are, not who you were. Ever. Time doesn't work that way.

FAITH

(beat)

So, what, you're saying I shouldn't feel bad for the things I've done?

GABRIEL

No, no. Feel bad. Feel very bad.

FAITH

I do.

GABRIEL

Good.

(off her look)

I'm going to have to spell this out for you aren't I?

(CONTINUED)

FAITH

So, we're not finished then.

GABRIEL

My point is: you are more than a vampire slayer. Act like it.

FAITH

Act like what exactly?

GABRIEL

Human.

Faith turns to look at the bed. She steps over to it. The little girl has gone pale and blue, yet her face so sweet, so adorable.

She brushes some stray hairs from the child's face. A moment passes and she turns to speak to Gabriel, but he is gone.

The little girl's head suddenly shifts a little - from side to side. She's starting to wake up.

Faith caresses the child's cheek. Her eyes are cold and hard.

Faith reaches down to the side of the bed, where the hatchet lies, and as she grabs it, we quickly cut to:

Pryor looks around in amazement of the gigantic structure in which he now stands.

PRYOR

My God...

MR.OWL

Mr. Webb, this is "The Epicenter". It is where we of "The Second Circle" commune for our annual meetings and... events.

PRYOR

H-how is this even possible? This place is larger than the entire apartment complex! At least twice, no, three times the size.

(to himself)

Just like 'Doctor Who'...

MR.OWL

This is merely a pocket of another dimension. I assure you my apartment is still back at Sugarwater.

Three hooded men, dressed in similarly elegant attire to that of Mr. Owl approach.

MR. OWL (cont'd)  
Ah, Mr. Webb, allow me to introduce  
Mr. Swallow, Mr. Sparrow, and Mr.  
Robin.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Mr. Webb.

Another, thin man with a hook nose, dressed in likewise attire, comes to them from behind. This is MR. RAVEN.

PRYOR  
Mr. Raven, a pleasure as always.

MR. RAVEN  
Likewise, Mr. Webb.

The men stand in silence, until finally...

PRYOR  
So, this specimen you have for  
me...

MR. OWL  
Ah, yes, of course. Please follow  
me.

Pryor follows Mr. Owl into a dark corridor and down some steps into another room.

In the room, there is a long table with a small SILVER BALL upon it.

MR. OWL (cont'd)  
Here.

Mr. Owl uncurls a fat finger toward the silver ball.

PRYOR  
The ball? I was expecting  
something more... organic.

MR. OWL  
Please, be my guest.

Pryor hesitates for a moment, then moves over to the table. He takes the ball in his hand, it fits perfectly in his palm.

PRYOR  
It's soft. And light. Very light.  
(to Owl)  
Weightless?

Mr. Owl simply smiles and says nothing.

Pryor folds his fingers on it, squishing it in his hand, but like soft rubber, it returns to form.

MR. OWL

Now. Drop it.

PRYOR

Hmm? Drop it?

MR. OWL

Yes. Please.

Pryor turns his hand over allowing the ball to drop to the ground.

THWAM!

The ball tears into the concrete floor spitting up rock, like a meteor falling to earth.

PRYOR

My word!

Mr. Owl smiles.

PRYOR (cont'd)

But, it only had the consistency of a rubber ball and virtually no weighted mass!

MR. OWL

When in contact with organic material, yes. However, add even the slightest velocity and an inorganic surface and... well you can see for yourself.

Pryor bends down and picks the ball back up, gives it a squeeze and it folds again.

PRYOR

Amazing. Absolutely amazing.

MR. OWL

Perfect study for your... gadgets?

PRYOR

Yes, very much so. Thank you.

MR. OWL

We are always glad to help.

(CONTINUED)

Pryor tosses the ball up and catches it in his hand a couple times. On the last catch, looks back to the rubble on the floor.

PRYOR  
Just incredible.

Pryor holds the ball up to his eye, inspecting it with a closer, curious look.

A curious smile unfurls from Mr. Owl's lips.

The car cruises along a not so crowded street as Quinn flips his cell closed and violently throws it into the passenger seat.

Lehto leans in from the back seat.

LEHTO  
And?

QUINN  
They're activating a sleeper within the department.

LEHTO  
In the department?

QUINN  
Yeah.

LEHTO  
Why the hell would they have a sleeper in the department? You're there. Are they keeping tabs on you?

QUINN  
No, this is a bona fide sleeper agent. Doesn't even remember who they really are. Well, they didn't. They've probably been activated by now.

LEHTO  
Why activate a sleeper? Why not just send someone? Unless...

QUINN  
(deflated)  
Right.

Lehto is now in the passenger seat. He holds up Quinn's CELL PHONE for him to take.

Quinn takes his phone back from out of frame. We never actually see Lehto handing it to him.

LEHTO

When you're right, you're right.

Quinn just grimaces and punches the gas.

LEHTO (cont'd)

You can't shoot a cop.

QUINN

I know. So do they.

LEHTO

There's really no doubt in your mind at this point, right?

QUINN

You tell me.

(off his look)

Not at all.

Quinn looks back, and Lehto is gone. We cut to:

A phone RINGS as a grumbling Noa carries a bucket and mop past Pryor's office. The machine picks up.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(Pryor's Voice)

You have reached Webb Researching, unfortunately I am currently unable to answer the phone. Please leave a message at the tone.

BEEP. BEEP. BEEEEEEP.

ANSWERING MACHINE (cont'd)

(Unknown Voice; frantic)

Something's coming. Coming for me. I know this because they know this. Pryor, they let me out. They opened the cage. I didn't wanna go. They made me. They didn't want it there. Pryor? Pryor, I don't want to die alone. Pryor? Pryor? Listen to me, Pryor! You have to find me, you have to save me! You're my last chance, my only hope - you've got to help me Pryor! Are you there> Pryor? Pry-

CLICK.

The machine shuts off and Pryor's office once again becomes quiet and still.

Mr. Owl escorts Pryor back through the great hall and to his apartment door.

MR. OWL

I am sorry if I seem rude for rushing you off, Mr. Webb.

PRYOR

No, no, no, I understand, Mr. Owl. You're obviously busy people and I apologize for taking up your time.

MR. OWL

Nonsense, Mr. Webb.

(beat)

I hope the specimen is to your liking.

PRYOR

Very much so. When I get this back to the lab, I can already think of a dozen applications for something like this, so I'll get right to work on implementing those ideas. I think Noa's still there, she should be able to help.

Thinks about it for a minute.

PRYOR (cont'd)

Mr. Owl, The Circle does so much for Webb Researching, are you sure there is nothing -

MR. OWL

Shush the thought, Mr. Webb. We of the Second Circle are quite content to simply aid you in your studies. We seek no reward and are honored you carry our sigil upon your person.

Pryor looks at the mark upon the back of his wrist and beam, never more proud to carry it.

PRYOR

Thank you, it is an honor for me as well.

Pryor nods and the two men shake hands. Mr. Owl opens the door and Pryor promptly steps out into the tiny hallway of Sugarwater Apartments.

Mr. Owl closes the door as Mr. Swallow approaches.

MR. OWL

Mr. Webb has the object in his possession. It should start broadcasting an appropriate power signature within the hour, and consequently, cloaking our own.

Mr. Owl puts his hand on Mr. Swallow's back and the two head back to the core of The Epicenter.

MR. SWALLOW

Likewise, Mr. Winston has also been suitably prepared.

MR. OWL

Excellent.

MR. SWALLOW

We should begin.

MR. OWL

Of course.

And from the hooded men's glances to one another, we:

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF ACT THREE**

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

24 INT. WEBB RESEARCHING - NIGHT

24

Pryor exits the elevator and breezes past an exhausted Noa, resting once again on the brown sofa.

NOA

Pryor.

Pryor is still marvelling at the silver ball. He gives Noa part of his attention.

PRYOR

What is it, Noa? Everything back to being clean and pristine?

NOA

Still no Faith.

She now has his undivided attention.

PRYOR

Still?

Looks at his watch, frowns.

PRYOR (cont'd)

Did you try calling her?

NOA

Of course. No answer.

PRYOR

Still, best not to jump to conclusions.

NOA

Pryor, if you're back for the night, do you mind if I...

PRYOR

Absolutely. Go ahead, I mean.

Noa springs up from the sofa and plops down the hall in her galoshes.

Pryor considers going with her, but thinks better of it. He continues down the corridor to his office, and we cut into:

25 INT. PRYOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

25

Pryor enters.

(CONTINUED)

Has a seat at his desk. The flashing light from his machine catches his eye.

PRYOR

What now?

He starts to press the play button, but stops.

PRYOR (cont'd)

It can wait.

As Pryor takes the small grey object out of his jacket and stares at it, we cut to:

Quinn hangs a right into the alley. It's pretty average. Smells bad, looks bad, probably a dangerous place for most.

He find a nice spot to lean against. He waits.

His cell goes off.

He fumbles through his jacket, trying to find the right pocket. He catches it just in time.

QUINN

(on cell)

Hello? Heya, Sing.

(pause)

You know, just out and about.

Taking things easy.

(pause)

No, not really.

A SILHOUETTE appears at the other end of the alley. It's moving toward him.

Quinn glances up towards the approaching shadow, and falls quiet for a beat.

QUINN (cont'd)

(on cell)

No, listen, I'm supposed to be meeting someone. I can't really talk.

(pause)

Yeah, yeah, a real pretty lady.

No, not your type.

(pause)

Right on, I'll give you all the details tomorrow. K, bye.

Quinn clicks his phone shut and takes a few steps toward the Silhouette. His hand on his weapon - just in case.

He stops in his tracks as the Silhouette steps into his light.

SING  
Hello, Jon.

Sing grins at Quinn as we quickly cut back to:

INT. FAITH'S APARTMENT - LATER

Faith lies on her bed, staring up at her ceiling contemplatively.

A moment or two and she wills herself up.

On the floor next to her are some bags - packed with her clothes and ready to go.

She kicks the bags under the bed.

A fierce barrage of rapping attacks her door.

She warily works her way over to it, and sneaks a look through the peephole.

She takes a step back.

Faith looks around the devastation that is her apartment. She tries to pick things up, brush things under the bed, but realizes it's all in vain.

The rapping continues. She eyes the door, frozen in place.

With great effort she regains use of her motor functions and moves slowly to the door.

She unlocks and opens it.

Standing before her is Noa, out of breath.

NOA  
Jesus, Faith! We were worried about you!

Noa takes her cell out of her jacket and starts dialing.

NOA (cont'd)  
I gotta call Pryor and let him know you're okay.

Faith notices her feet.

FAITH  
(raises eyebrow)  
Nice galoshes.

NOA

Don't even get me started. You're going to get your own damn bagels from now on.

Faith has no idea.

NOA (cont'd)

Where the hell were you tonight?

FAITH

(hesitant)

I was- I wasn't sure if I was coming in.

NOA

Well, next time, call! I know you've got this whole 'loner' thing going on - boy do I know that by now - but that doesn't mean you can just take the night off work without telling us what you're doing! You could have been lying dead in an alleyway somewhere - which, by the way, I appreciate is also the kind of thing that could happen to you more often than most people - so next time, let us know!

FAITH

I don't think it's going to be a problem from here on.

Noa pokes into the room, eyeing the broken furniture and cracked walls. She drops her arm to her side just as Pryor answers the phone, calling out "Hello?" repeatedly.

NOA

Did you have a guy over?

Faith glances round at the mess, then rolls her eyes.

FAITH

Look, Noa, now isn't a good time, so maybe you should-

NOA

Oh, no. You think I'm letting you out of my sight again tonight? Forget it!

Faith takes a step back, folding her arms and raising an eyebrow to Noa - but the attempt to put Noa off bounces right off her.

(CONTINUED)

Admitting defeat, she takes a step back and lets Noa bustle into the apartment.

NOA (cont'd)

Okay, here's what we're going to do. First off, we're going to clean this place up, then you're gonna tell me what the hell happened and where the hell you were all night, and then...

Noa turns to face Faith, a huge grin suddenly plastered across her face.

NOA (cont'd)

And then I have to tell you all about the date I went on with that police guy I met last week!

FAITH

(surprised)

You're dating him?

NOA

Well, yeah, kinda. You know, we just went out a couple times, nothing major.

Faith reaches back and shuts the door to the apartment, as Noa tidies up some of the mess on the sofa - a smashed plant pot has spilt its dark earth across the cheap upholstery.

Noa holds the homeless plant up, looking at Faith in shock.

NOA (cont'd)

You smashed Fergie!

FAITH

(blinks)

What?

Noa tries to scoop some of the stray dirt back into what's left of the pot, taking it back over to the window ledge as she speaks.

NOA

Fergie the Fern! You know? I got you this as a moving in present, 'cause, you know, the only green thing in this whole apartment is what's growing underneath your freezer - which, I might add, is so many different kinds of gross I may have to get Pryor to come up with a species for it!

Noa continues to bustle around the apartment, her voice fading away as Faith's attention drifts.

Faith glances towards the bedroom, snapping her head back as Noa calls out to her.

NOA (cont'd)

Hello? Are you even listening to me?

FAITH

Sorry. Spaced out. What did you say?

NOA

I said 'you're not gonna skip town on me and leave all this mess, are you?'

Faith takes a look round her trashed apartment - then cracks a grin.

She looks back to Noa, shaking her head.

FAITH

Not tonight.

NOA

Well, good!

Noa puts her hands on her hips, looking back at Faith and slowly breaking into a smile as she rolls her eyes.

NOA (cont'd)

What would you do without me picking up after you, huh?

FAITH

(wry)

Yeah, you're like the annoying little sister I never had.

NOA

(offended)

Hey! I'm not annoying! Persistent, maybe, but with you, somebody's got to be.

FAITH

(frowns)

What's that supposed to mean?

Noa takes a beat, looking over to Faith and choosing her words carefully.

NOA

Just means that whenever you're left to your own devices, I can see you just slip back into the same old habits! Am I right?

FAITH

Something like that...

Faith glances over her shoulder again, towards the bedroom, and this time Noa picks up on it.

NOA

What's with the looks towards the bedroom?

Noa's suspicion suddenly converts into a mischevious grin.

NOA (cont'd)

You have got a guy over haven't you? Is that why you're being all voidy on me?

FAITH

'Voidy'?

NOA

Yeah, as in 'avoid.' What, you never heard that before?

FAITH

(beat; grins)

No, never.

NOA

Well, there you go. That's what you learned today. 'Course, if you'd bothered to show up for work, you'd have learned that Geirswath don't hatch and unleash their hellspawn o' doom if you keep them on the iron slab in the middle of the exam room, instead of a normal exam table.

FAITH

I guess you're right.

NOA

Damn straight I am!

Noa points down at her galoshes.

NOA (cont'd)

I mean, didn't you wonder why I was wearing these things?

(CONTINUED)

Faith finally manages a brief chuckle, Noa's attitude doing the job of taking her mind off the events of the evening.

FAITH

(shrugs)

I dunno, I figured it was a fashion statement. Can't move whenever you're on a break at the lab for those girl's magazines, for all I know, galoshes are the new black or something.

Sighing again, Noa takes a seat on the now clutter-free sofa, shrugging the bulky galoshes off and dropping them on the floor.

NOA

Can I borrow some shoes or something? Because those thing? Ew. We're talking sweat.

FAITH

Alright. Hang on.

Faith turns and steps into her bedroom.

Faith's still-packed bags are lined up on the floor next to her bed.

She stares down at them for a beat, then hoists one up, emptying it out onto her bed and locating a pair of scuffed old black sneakers.

She starts to head back towards the front room, then pauses.

Turning back, she heads over to the rest of the bags, and quickly upends each of them, spilling their contents out onto the floor of the room.

The resulting heap of clothes and belongings is a mess, but it's also a mess that won't be moving.

At least not for a while yet.

Satisfied, she turns back round, and as she leaves her room we cut to:

Twelve hooded and robed men stand in a circle chanting. Among them are Mr. Owl, Mr. Robin, Mr. Swallow and all the rest.

Candles flicker and burn around them.

A blue flame fans wildly in the center of the circle.

The chanting grows louder and louder until the flame dies.

There is silence.

Until...

MR. SWALLOW

It has begun.

The circle disperse and break into little groups, socializing among each other.

Mr. Sparrow, Mr. Robin and Mr. Owl flock together.

MR. SPARROW

Well, Mr. Owl. Fantastic planning as usual.

MR. OWL

Very kind of you to say, Mr. Sparrow.

Mr. Raven approaches the men, bringing drinks. The finest wine, to be precise.

MR. RAVEN

I must admit, I hate to lose one of our more amusing assets.

They each take a glass.

MR. OWL

I must agree, Mr. Raven. The loss of Mr. Webb is unfortunate but quite necessary.

MR. SPARROW

How long do you think he has left, Mr. Owl?

MR. OWL

Certainly, no longer than twenty-four hours at the most.

MR. RAVEN

What an incredibly horrid way for one to die.

They raise their glasses together.

MR. OWL

Indeed.

29 CONTINUED: (2)

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As they CLINK the glasses, we quickly:

**BLACK OUT:**

TITLE OVER - To Be Continued...

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**END OF SHO**

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