

A DAWNING DARKNESS Part One: A Sea Witch For All Seasons

By

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EXT. PORTLAND, MAINE - CASCO BAY - NIGHT

Under a FULL MOON, the lobster boat "Waverider" chugs along the Atlantic ocean. The weathered craft is manned by a CAPTAIN at the wheel and one CREW HAND on deck.

CAPTAIN
Any sign? Talk to me.

CREW HAND
No. Not yet-- wait. Yeah. I think I see it. Starboard, twenty yards.

Captain slows the boat into a turn then circles what appears to be some fashion of LOBSTER BUOY, only its design is anything but ordinary.

The Crew Hand clicks a flashlight, shines it onto a piece of paper in his hand, then onto the buoy.

CREW HAND
Hell yeah. That's gotta be it!

CAPTAIN
Keep it down.

Captain cuts the engine and leaves the wheel for the deck.

CAPTAIN
(reaches for the paper)
Gimme that.

He compares the crude sketch of a buoy on paper with the real one bobbing in the water.

CAPTAIN
(satisfied, nods)
Haul her in.

The Crew Hand reaches out with a gaff, hooks the buoy, pulls it into the boat and wraps the rope over the winch. When it starts to wind, the boat LISTS to one side.

CREW HAND
Damn. That shit's heavy. They tell you what it was?

CAPTAIN
Never mind that. Besides, I got half up front, so if it's a bust, they can go screw themselves.

CREW HAND
Pro'bly drugs. Or could be guns--

CAPTAIN
(brusquely)
Said shut up about it if you wanna
get paid. Got me?

CREW HAND
(shaken)
Yeah... alright.

The winch winds the line. Then, a WHOOSH and a SPLASH.

The Crew Hand stops the winch. Captain leans over to grab the line and whatever might be at the end of it.

CAPTAIN
Higher. Bring 'er over. Easy now.

The Crew Hand cranks the winch a bit more while Captain steadies a COFFIN-SIZED WOODEN CRATE, peppered with barnacles, slick with seaweed, ancient in looks.

They lower it with care to the deck floor - THUD. Both men lean over the casket-like crate, equally perplexed.

Captain crouches lower to get a good look. He rubs his gloved hand over the sides, the top, the corners, then turns to the Crew Hand with an intense glare.

CAPTAIN
Like I said, not a word.

CREW HAND
(nods)
Yes sir.

CAPTAIN
Then take us in.

The Crew Hand starts the engine, throttles it toward shore.

Captain makes himself comfortable on The Crate. He takes off his gloves, pulls out a cigarette, lights it, inhales, exhales. Repeats.

He admires The Crate, caresses the ornate filigree etched into the waterlogged wood. He is mesmerized, lost in thought. The more he admires, the deeper his gaze.

He turns to check on the Crew Hand, dutifully at the wheel, then back to The Crate. He studies the etchings.

CREW HAND
(over his shoulder)
Which dock are we meetin' 'em at,
North Bay or south? Hey Cap?--

A gruesome CRACK of metal on bone cuts the Crew Hand short.
He crumples to the side and reveals

CAPTAIN

standing stoically with a DECK MALLET in hand, cigarette in
mouth. He steps over the Crew Hand and grabs the wheel.

He flips a cassette player on. COUNTRY MUSIC washes over the
moonlit waters accompanied by the chug of the lone engine.

EXT. FRANKLIN TOWERS - PORTLAND - NIGHT

The city's tallest building, a massive brick apartment
complex, overlooks the nearby Casco Bay.

INT. FRANKLIN TOWERS - PENTHOUSE SUITE - NIGHT

An open studio apartment that takes up most of the top floor
is bedecked with Baroque oil paintings in ornate frames,
antique furnishings, taxidermy and Persian rugs. Someone
with money, power, influence or all three lives here.

Lightning flashes slice through the long row of tall
windows, thunder follows. A cold storm brews outdoors, but
there is hot tea brewing inside...

A dainty hand lifts a teapot from a small side table and
pours it's contents into a delicate China cup.

On a CLAP of thunder, the impossibly smooth face of
MONATARA, 60, is illuminated: an elegant woman dressed in
dark gray, sits calmly in a high back chair.

Eyes fixed on the windows, she studies the light rain, lifts
the cup to her mouth, sips, tastes... looks down into the
cup to find her simple tea has turned THICK, BLACK.

Monatara reaches for the saucer, SPITS onto it, and inspects
the glob. Something has changed, something isn't right.

Lost in thought, the saucer and cup SLIDE from her hands and
CRASH to the floor.

MONATARA

No... it can't be...

She stands, moves to the row of windows, takes in the stormy skyline of Portland, the choppy waters of Casco Bay.

MONATARA (V.O.)

Heavens above and gods below. Be merciful on our souls. One lifetime of suffering is all a heart can withstand, but one more? My eyes cannot bear the sight of such terror. Too many have perished at her hands and now I fear the worst looms on the horizon. We must pray, pray that the light will rise up before this, this dawning darkness consumes our land once again... or the future may never know the meaning of hope.

EXT. PORTLAND, MAINE - DAY

Vistas of the city, downtown, and the Old Port.

EXT. DURGAN'S HARDWARE & HOUSEWARES - DAY

Customers enter and exit a downtown store.

INT. DURGAN'S HARDWARE & HOUSEWARES - DAY

CODY HALL, 17, is half texting, half stocking the shelves. His red Durgan's smock dangles on his slight frame.

MR. VALDEZ the store manager appears.

MR. VALDEZ

How many times do we have to tell you kids? There's no texting when you're on the floor. Comprende?

Cody covertly slips his cell phone into his smock.

CODY

I was just checking the time.

MR. VALDEZ

(pointing at the wall clock)
That's the only one you need, mi amigo. Now look...

(points to a customer)
she's in your aisle. Hop to it.

ESTHER JENKINS, 70, a stooped woman wrapped in an over-sized cardigan studies the fireplace accessories.

Cody presents her with an ash can.

ESTHER
As long as the ashes won't fly out.

CODY
You're gonna burn stuff *in* it? I don't know if they're made for that.

Esther takes the ash can from Cody.

ESTHER
Does the lid come with it or is that extra?

CODY
It's a set, but... you might as well get a fire pit.

ESTHER
Oh no. Not that. Something with a lid. Gotta keep the ashes--

CODY
I know, the ashes from flying out. Whatta ya burning anyways?

She hesitates, lifts the lid from the bucket.

ESTHER
Cards.

CODY
What, like poker cards?

ESTHER
Tarot. Tarot cards.

Cody doesn't follow.

ESTHER
It's a bad deck. I need to get rid of 'em. It's what they recommend.

Esther turns to leave with the ash bucket.

CODY
Can't you just throw it away?

She gets in Cody's space. He leans back.

ESTHER
(unhinged)
Because, young man, when you throw away your bad luck, someone else, a complete stranger, is bound to get it and I don't want that sorta thing hangin' around my neck. Would you?

CODY
No... not really.

ESTHER
Didn't think so.

Esther spins around and is gone. Cody shakes his head, flicks his bangs and, of course, checks his cell phone.

EXT. LILANKA'S PSYCHIC PARLOR - DAY

LILANKA'S PSYCHIC PARLOR, an eclectic mix of New Orleans kitsch and Yankee modesty, is a small bungalow set among other homes along a quasi-residential city street.

INT. LILANKA'S PSYCHIC PARLOR - DAY

LILANKA, 65, sits at a teller's table. With her immaculate hair, she looks more like a real estate agent than a mystic.

She holds the hands of SARAH WINNERT, 35, a desperate housewife swimming in ragtag clothes and gloomy despair.

SARAH
But I've tried that. I'm just no good at those kinda things.

LILANKA
(a hint of Eastern bloc heritage in her voice)
Shhhhh... now stop talking like that, Sarah. Don't fight your fate. This isn't a game. This is your life... and your life is in turmoil and I'm trying to help. That is why you come here, yes?

Lilanka pulls Sarah's hands closer. She calms down.

LILANKA
OK then. Now. This man in your
life. He's a kind man, no?

SARAH
Yeah... sometimes.

LILANKA
And he treats your kids well?

SARAH
I guess. When they're around, sure.

LILANKA
(eyes shut, focused)
Hmmm... yes, I see this. Yes it's
becoming clearer to me. He...

Lilanka's upbeat mood drops, her face falls into a grimace.

SARAH
He what?

LILANKA
(wavering, confused)
No... no, that's not right. That
can't be.

SARAH
What? Is it bad?

Lilanka's eyes WIDEN, her mouth OPENS. She clasps Sarah's
hands into a VISE GRIP. Sarah struggles to pull free.

SARAH
Ow. My hands. It hurts.

Lilanka's YANKS Sarah across the table and holds her close.

SARAH
Lilanka! Please! Let me go--

LILANKA
(a voice, not her own)
Yar'kuluth! Vlas rogg... chaktu...
Yar'kuluth!!

Lilanka coughs up DARK PHLEGM that splatters onto Sarah's
face. Lilanka goes limp, face down onto the table.

Sarah recoils, steps back, her chair topples onto the floor.
She's in shock, frightened. She wipes the OOZE off her face
with her sleeves, her hands.

Sarah notices an ENCROACHING SHADOW behind her. She turns and stares into the DARKNESS. It smothers her, consumes her.

She is terrified, MORTIFIED... voiceless.

EXT. BRIGHAMS COVE - SOUTHBAY DOCKS - DAY

POLICE CRUISERS dot the parking lot. LOCAL OFFICERS are moving to and fro, an AMBULANCE and FIRETRUCK are nearby. ONLOOKERS are mill around to get a look at the commotion.

DETECTIVE CHARLIE SUMMERS, 55, pops the door of a government issue SEDAN and lumbers out. His wide shoulders make a tight fit and the cheap suit he's stuffed into is covered with powdered sugar, evidence of breakfast.

Summers dusts off his pants, jacket, claps his hands.

SUMMERS

Fuckin' doughnuts. Why are all the good ones so god damn messy?

TRENT LAGASSE, 40, his younger, and slimmer, counterpart exits from the passenger side. Being a cop, his baby-face makes it a challenge for anyone to take him seriously, but his attitude is all business... most of the time.

LAGASSE

(an accent that belies his South Boston roots)

It's a defense mechanism, like nature's way of sayin' don't eat me. Like blow fish. They're covered in sharp needles but people go and eat'm anyway cuz they're considered a delicacy, then they go and have a fahkin' heart attack.

SUMMERS

Yeah? Then why do they call it a pie hole, Lagasse? Explain that.

LAGASSE

Don't get me started with pie.

A POLICE OFFICER approaches.

OFFICER #1

Detective Summers?

SUMMERS

Yeah.

OFFICER #1

We're over here.

The Officer leads, Summers and Lagasse follow.

The three men approach a BLUE PICK-UP TRUCK.

OFFICER #1

The victim's name is Doug Driscoll, local fisherman, captain of a boat called Waverider.

SUMMERS

Who found him?

OFFICER #1

Dock manager. First thing he saw when he pulled into the lot.

BLOOD paints the inside of the truck's windows. The Captain is slumped to one side in front of the steering wheel, his head half blown off, his right hand clutches a pistol.

Summers and Lagasse take in the gruesome scene.

LAGASSE

Family been notified?

OFFICER #1

We're workin' on that.

SUMMERS

There were two bodies?

THE DOCKS

FISHERMEN are ever present. Police tape cordons off the "Waverider". Summers, Lagasse and the Officer lift the tape and board the vessel.

The Crew Hand's body is exactly where it landed, head surrounded by a POOL OF BLOOD.

Summers angles in for a closer inspection.

OFFICER #1

We're trying to I.D. the body, but none of the fishermen or dock employees recognize him.

LAGASSE
Even Driscoll's crew?

OFFICER #1
They're all accounted for. Must've
been a hired hand.

Summers spots a neatly folded piece of paper on the floor of the boat. He pulls out a pen from his pocket, lifts it up.

LAGASSE
We'll need to talk to them and the
manager. If there's anything else,
I'll let you know.

The Officer leaves. Lagasse looks off into the bay.

Summers places the paper on the console, smooths it out with another pen. He stares at the sketch of the unusual buoy, some NAUTICAL COORDINATES and the words: ESBAT MOON.

LAGASSE
Dunno, Charlie. These territory
disputes are gettin' outta hand.
Last month it was just a murder,
now a murder-suicide. All this
killin' over a nasty,
bottom-feedin' crustacean. Just
ain't right.

SUMMERS
What ain't right is you being from
Boston and not liking lobster.

LAGASSE
See what I mean? Soon as you call
something a delicacy, everyone's
suppose ta gobble it up.

SUMMERS
What do you make of this?

Lagasse moves to Summers. Both men eye the sketch.

LAGASSE
Those are coordinates. I know what
moon is. What the hell is Esbat?

SUMMERS
Fuck if I know. But I might put
your murder-suicide theory on
simmer 'til we find out.

The crude sketch fills the screen.

EXT. ESTHER'S BACKYARD - DAY

Esther is knelt next to the ash can which is in the center of a small lawn. She flips the lid on a can of LIGHTER FLUID and squirts a steady stream into the ash can, drowning a stack of TAROT CARDS that rest at the bottom.

She sets the lighter fluid aside, reaches for a small box of wooden matches, strikes one and stares at the flame.

ESTHER

You don't own me anymore.

She tosses the lit match into the can. FLAMES erupt, SMOKE follows, the cards BURN.

Esther stares into the flickering flames and, before long, finds it difficult to breathe. She reaches for her throat, gasps for air, she is suffocating.

HUSHED VOICES from the flames seem to beckon her, taunt her.

She rolls sideways onto the grass, clutching her throat with BOTH HANDS, her face flush with blood.

THICK SMOKE swirls, casting a SHADOW over her face, her body. She is compelled to stare into the growing darkness.

IN THE ADJACENT YARD

ALAN CLAUSSEN, 65, a retired busybody, steps from his work shed to find THICK SMOKE rising from next door.

ALAN

My god.

He rushes to the wood fence, steps up, finds Esther laying in a fetal position next to the flaming ash can.

ALAN

Esther! Jesus, Esther!

He darts along the fence, around the corner, and rushes to Esther's side. He shakes her, turns her head.

ALAN

Esther. It's Alan. Can you hear me?

He reaches for the nearby lid, coughing, waving away the stench, and slams it on top of the fire, but the smoke persists. He turns back to Esther.

ALAN
Hold on. I'll call for help.

Before he can, Esther CLAMPS ON to his wrist. She's alive.

ALAN
Esther. Can you hear me? Esther?

Her mouth opens wide, a faint WHEEZE escapes, Alan leans in. When he does, she COUGHS a wad of DARK, VISCOUS LIQUID onto his the side of his face.

Her head tilts to the side. Alan shakes her body. No reaction. No response.

ALAN
Esther? Esther?!

He dashes inside. Wisps of BLACK SMOKE float up and away.

EXT. SECLUDED FARM - DAY

A WHITE LONG-BED SUV turns off a narrow country road onto a winding driveway that leads to a classic New England farm setting, miles from the nearest neighbor.

The SUV steers past a Victorian home and toward a nearby barn, the doors of which open automatically.

INT. VICTORIAN HOME - DAY

A SILHOUETTED FIGURE stands by a window frame, observing the SUV. A cell phone buzzes on a table, a bony hand, scribbled with VEINS and dotted with LESIONS reaches for the phone.

SILHOUETTE
(flips it open)
How long?

The mouth that belongs to the bony hand has cracked lips, pale skin, and rotten teeth.

PHONE VOICE O.S.
Give us two hours. Three tops.

SILHOUETTE
I trust you weren't followed.

PHONE VOICE O.S.
Negative. We're clear.

EXT. BARN - DAY

The SUV pulls into the barn, the doors close.

EXT. VICTORIAN HOME - DAY

Through a smudged window, the Silhouetted Figure is no longer a mystery as daylight illuminates the ancient face of

KULBATKYA, a part-human, part-creature, witch-like woman whose appearance is at once off-putting and magnetic. Her rapturous eyes, while very human, produce an unavoidable soul-crippling effect that many have fallen victim to.

She tugs at the hood of her woolen cowl, pulling it away from her thick white hair, folded ears, and knobby horns.

KULBATKYA
Welcome home, my queen.

INT. BARN - DAY

TWO MEN in dark suits exit the SUV, walk to the rear doors, swing them open and reveal The Crate.

INT. SUMMERS' SEDAN - DAY

Summers and Lagasse are headed south on I-95. The radio squawks a request. Lagasse puts aside his iPod.

LAGASSE
(into the CB)
Thirty-two, Lagasse here. Over.

DISPATCH O.S.
Requesting B unit to five- fifty-
five Elm, South Portland, two body,
one- eighty- seven, priority one.

LAGASSE
Copy that. Thirty- two and sixty-
four on route. Over.

DISPATCH O.S.
Copy.

He picks up his iPod.

LAGASSE
You heard 'em, champ.

SUMMERS
So keep reading.

Lagasse touches the iPod screen.

LAGASSE
OK, so... where was I. Right. Esbat is a Wiccan meeting held each month during the full moon. It is usually a time for initiation ceremonies that involve healing magic.

SUMMERS
And Wiccan is that voodoo shit 'cept with witches and crystals, right?

LAGASSE
(types on iPod)
More or less.

SUMMERS
What, like more witchcraft, less voodoo?

LAGASSE
Hold on. I'm gettin' to that. OK, Wicca is a Neopagan religion and form of witchcraft. So no voodoo.

SUMMERS
And the last full moon was?

LAGASSE
(considers)
Last night.

EXT. PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL JETPORT - DAY

RIVIAN PITROVICH, 45, an elegant wisp clad in Euro-black coat, boots and sunglasses, steps from the terminal pulling a black carry-on case.

A LIMOUSINE waits curbside. THE DRIVER hops out, reaches for her bag. She declines.

DRIVER
I'll get that for you.

RIVIAN

Let's go.

He moves to open her door, but she is nearly in the back seat with her carry-on. He slams the door.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Rivian removes her sunglasses, rubs her intense green eyes. The tinted interior window lowers.

DRIVER

I didn't catch where we're going.

Rivian hands him a piece of paper with a pair of HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS. He inspects the paper, the bills.

DRIVER

Uhm... this says Brunswick not *New* Brunswick.

RIVIAN

(Russian accent)

No questions. Just drive.

DRIVER

Tell me, are these route numbers? Because I don't recognize 'em.

RIVIAN

They're GPS coordinates. You do have GPS, no?

DRIVER

Of course. Yeah. All set.

The Driver taps the GPS system as the interior window rolls up and the limo glides onto I-95.

Rivian flips open her cell phone and TEXTS a message.

TEXT: *En route.*

She glances at the passing scenery. A reply text chimes.

TEXT: *Caution. May be followed.*

Rivian flips the cell phone shut, reflects on the message, turns, looks out the back window. Nothing unusual.

She unzips the carry-on case.

From several hidden pockets and sleeves, she carefully removes a series of plastic, steel and wooden PARTS that click together forming a SMALL HANDGUN of sorts.

It's an odd looking weapon, but clearly an implement of self-defense... and destruction.

EXT. LILANKA'S PSYCHIC PARLOR - DAY

Summers and Lagasse arrive, walk past a few POLICE OFFICERS toward an AMBULANCE where

Sarah Winnert is wrapped in a blanket, surrounded by a few PARAMEDICS.

OFFICER #2

(to Summers)

Name's Sarah Winnert. She was unconscious when the mail lady called. Lilanka couldn't be revived.

SUMMERS

What's she saying?

OFFICER #2

Not much. Well, not much that makes any sense. Keeps talkin' about a *yar coolith*.

LAGASSE

You run the name?

OFFICER #2

Nothing comes up.

Summers and Lagasse approach Sarah.

SUMMERS

Miss Winnert? I'm detective Charlie Summers. This my partner detective Trent Lagasse. We understand you were getting your palm read--

SARAH

(rocks back and forth)

Yar'kuluth... yar'kuluth...

Sarah is in a trance-like state.

Summers and Lagasse exchange looks.

SUMMERS

Sarah? Can you tell us anything
about your visit with Lilanka?

LAGASSE

Do you remember what happened?

Sarah looks up at Lagasse, then Summers, then down.

SARAH

Yar'kuluth... yar'kuluth...

SUMMERS

Tell me about this *yar coolith*. Was
he, or she, there with you? Sarah?

Sarah does not respond.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

The limousine rolls to a stop alongside a stretch of
desolate farm country and thick woods.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

The interior window rolls down.

DRIVER

Here we are. Not sure what this is
all about, but--

RIVIAN

(hands over another bill)
You see anything, anybody... honk
the horn.

The Driver takes the bill.

DRIVER

Whatever you say.

She exits, closes the door and steps into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Rivian pulls out her WEAPON and charges the chamber while
scanning the thickening grove of trees.

She pauses, turns and catches a glimpse of a HUMAN FIGURE
standing in the distance, partially obscured, but there.

She advances. The Figure is eclipsed by a wide tree trunk.

RIVIAN
Phineas?

Her crisp voice slices through the woods.

PHINEAS
Yes?

Rivian lurches, spins around and points her weapon at

PHINEAS LYNCH , 60, a tall, bearded man now standing arm's length from her. His open face and kind eyes suggest a jovial spirit which his hearty laughter substantiates.

Rivian is not so amused. She lowers her weapon.

RIVIAN
Damn you, Phineas. Have you no shame?

PHINEAS
(an Irish lilt)
Oh, come now, Rivian. Since when was I known for my good manners? I'm lucky if I have any a'tall.

RIVIAN
Or any manners. I might have pulled the trigger just now.

Phineas opens his arms wide.

PHINEAS
Then let make it up to you with a warm embrace. Please?

Rivian considers, then softens. The two hug.

RIVIAN
You're a lucky old fool.

PHINEAS
Age has nothing to do with it, my dear. I've been a lucky fool all my life. More foolish in recent years, but forever pressing my luck.

RIVIAN
Your text? Is the gathering in some sort of... jeopardy?

PHINEAS
 (inspects the forest)
 There's no telling... but there is
 something I must explain. This way.

Phineas leads, Rivian follows.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

The limo is idling. The Driver is on his cell phone.

DRIVER
 Hell yeah, I'll take it. Three
 hundred clams to park in the
 woods... I dunno, 'til she's done
 doing whatever the hell she's
 doing... yeah, from the jetport...
 beats me. French or European,
 somewhere foreign.

The limo's engine cuts out.

DRIVER
 What the... friggin' engine just
 died... hold on. Eddie? Hello? Ed
 you still there? Eddie?

The cell phone is dead. He turns the ignition. Nothing.

DRIVER
 You gotta be kiddin' me.

He pops the hood, steps out.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

The Driver tinkers with the engine. He checks the cell phone
 again. Still dead.

DRIVER
 God dammit.

He slams the hood shut, the engine STARTS -- the driver's
 seat is EMPTY.

The tires SPIN and the limo ROARS FORWARD over the Driver,
 and CRUSHES him before he can step aside.

The limo SKIDS to a stop, the engine turns off.

BOTH front doors swing open... then swing shut.

EXT. REMOTE WOODS - DAY

Phineas and Rivian stand near a makeshift stone DOLMEN, an ancient Celtic altar roughly the size of two granite refrigerators on their sides and a slab resting on top.

PHINEAS

And nearly three centuries later,
here we stand, at the site of it
all, at the crossroads once again.
If this blood-soaked ground had a
voice, it would surely sing a
sorrowful tune.

RIVIAN

So why here? And why now?

PHINEAS

There's a multitude of reasons.
Only one matters. She has returned.
This is reason enough.

RIVIAN

But that wretch has been buried for
ages and for good reason. Clearly
there's something more at play
here.

PHINEAS

My hunch? Kulbatkya has a hand in
this, and there are possibly
others, but I can't be certain.

The two consider the dolmen, the ground, in silence.

RIVIAN

(reflective)

Phineas, my ancestors, our
ancestors came here to escape
persecution, not perpetuate it. A
new world of promise to freely
worship the god of our choosing, to
embrace our heritage, to live
without fear. Must we standby to
witness our hopes burn like the
bodies of those before us?

PHINEAS

The pact was breached, the peace
broken... but we mustn't lose faith
and swap focus for fear. And we
won't be alone, Rivian. I've called
upon others who are traveling this
very second.

RIVIAN

Will they be joining us here?

Phineas holds a up finger, shushing Rivian. Both inspect the woods. Rivian reaches for her weapon.

He points to the thick wall of trees, then motions with his hand. The two circle the dolmen with caution.

INT. LILANKA'S PSYCHIC PARLOR - DAY

Summers and Lagasse move around the kitchen area, inspecting the upended chairs, the bare table, its contents dragged to the floor by the tablecloth. Tarot cards, candles, candle holders and trinkets are strewn about.

SUMMERS

All these candles and no fire?

LAGASSE

If they were lit, there'd be wax everywhere. I don't see any.

SUMMERS

Since when did you grow a brain?

LAGASSE

(picks up a Tarot card)

I just don't get this crap. I mean, I know people need help and all, but come on. Fortune telling? Psychics? It's like throwin' darts in the dark.

SUMMERS

Kinda like all those scratch tickets you buy every week?

LAGASSE

Least I can get somethin' back. This is like throwin' ya money away.

SUMMERS

Don't be so sure.

Summer moves to the counter, then down the hallway, into

LILANKA'S BEDROOM

He pushes the door open, enters. It's a bedroom, like millions of others. On the nightstand next to the lamp, a few magazines, an unfinished crossword puzzle, and under them all, a weathered book with the title WICCAN RITES & RITUALS.

Summers opens the pages to where the bookmark is sandwiched, finds the chapter heading: ESBAT - FULL MOON, FULL HEART.

He flips the bookmark over, a business card: *The Green Hand ~ Science Fiction, Mystery, Occult, Rare & Used Books ~ 172 Congress Street, Portland Maine, 207-428-7926.*

LAGASSE (O.S.)

Hey, Charlie, ya might wanna take a look at this.

Summers closes the book, along with the bookmark, and takes both with him.

LILANKA'S KITCHEN

Summers finds Lagasse standing on a chair inspecting a quarter-sized black glob of goo stuck to the wall.

SUMMERS

What the hell's that?

LAGASSE

No friggin' idea, but it sure as shit ain't candle wax.

EXT. REMOTE WOODS - DAY

Phineas and Rivian meet one another on the other side of the dolmen. They are close enough to whisper.

PHINEAS

You're positive no one followed?

RIVIAN

Of course. I paid the driver to honk if he sees anyone.

PHINEAS

Call him.

RIVIAN

Honestly, Phin.

PHINEAS

Now.

Rivian, a touch irked, pulls out her cell phone, taps a few buttons, places the call.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

The Driver's cell phone lights up, rings, and rings...

EXT. REMOTE WOODS - DAY

Rivian holds the phone to her cheek. Phineas watches. She hangs up. The two hold glances, only to be interrupted by a FLASH of light and a GUST of wind from behind.

Atop the dolmen, a pair of HUMAN FIGURES stand upright, manifested from thin air; both identically wrapped in form-fitting coarse crimson cloth; their androgynous faces are pale, stoic. The two figures appear to be identical.

Rivian aims her weapon at one, then the other. Phineas extends his left arm, palm facing the dolmen. A standoff is crystallized for a moment.

THE TWIN speaks, and moves, in unison.

THE TWIN

My place is not to judge for I am
but the jury. The time of peace is
past and will give way to fury.

PHINEAS

Spare us the doomsday speech,
demon. What have you come for?

The Twin LEAPS from the dolmen and FLOATS to the ground below. Phineas and Rivian hold fast.

THE TWIN

Not what, old man, but who.

RIVIAN

You have no business in these
woods.

THE TWIN

My business in these woods was
interrupted ages ago. Surely you
know this to be true.

PHINEAS

These grounds are sacred, to our kin and heritage, and the likes of your kind are not welcome here, not even in times of peace.

The Twin parts ways, one walking to the left, the other to the right, circling Phineas and Rivian.

THE TWIN

Why cling to memories of the fallen when the future holds such promise?

PHINEAS

Because those very memories serve a purpose far greater than the senseless destruction from which they were borne.

THE TWIN

Senseless? Hardly. But at the time it was the most reasonable action.

Rivian flexes, tightens her grip on the weapon.

RIVIAN

(emboldened)

Genocide may be reasonable in your woeful world, but you certainly won't find the same success in ours. Here we stand as living proof.

THE TWIN

Which is precisely what brings us together this very instant.

PHINEAS

Then before our memories conspire and send you back to hell, please, enlighten us.

EXT. ESTHER'S HOUSE / BACKYARD - DAY

An AMBULANCE and FIRE TRUCKS are parked along the street. CURIOUS NEIGHBORS have gathered to gawk at the scene.

Paramedics wheel Esther, on a stretcher, to the ambulance. Once inside, it speeds away. Several Fire Fighters exit from the backyard area.

Alan Claussen speaks with a POLICE OFFICER.

ALAN

No, I first saw the smoke, then tried to help. It looked like she was suffocating or choking.

POLICE OFFICER

And then she coughed something up?

ALAN

(pulls out a handkerchief)
Onto my cheek. Like tar. Wiped it off with this. See?

The Police Officer pulls out a clear Ziploc baggie.

POLICE OFFICER

Please. If you don't mind. We'll have our team look it over.

ALAN

Of course.

Alan drops the stained handkerchief into the baggie.

EXT. REMOTE WOODS - THE DOLMEN - DAY

The Twin continues to slink from side to side in front of Phineas and Rivian, who are rather transfixed.

THE TWIN

While I stand before you part messenger, part monitor, it must be said that I have been thrust here by forces below to fulfill a broken promise and help restore The Sacred Order of Zarnethia.

PHINEAS

But is it... are we... too late?

THE TWIN

No. You are not. However, you were correct, Phineas. As we speak, Kulbatkya is indeed pulling strings, as many as she can grasp, but not all. It is true, some strings have been tied into knots upon knots and braided into a noose to fit the necks of a thousandfold. But others have been commandeered by the likes of your people and many more. The coming days will

prove difficult, although not insurmountable.

RIVIAN

And how are we to know for certain you mean us no harm?

THE TWIN

Ah, Rivian, or shall I use your given name... Riv'lach of Nadyaviczk, the name bestowed upon you by your distant and bewitched Russian ancestor Baba Yaga. I'd think you'd be thankful that hag lacked an appetite for the blood of her own ilk, or perhaps she was just stuffed with the flesh of your siblings?

Rivian PULLS the trigger on her weapon, sending an ENERGY BEAM toward one of The Twin's bodies, then takes aim at the other. The Twin stands firm, unfazed by the blast.

THE TWIN

Save your blood lust for the main event, my dear. I'm afraid those tired spells won't have any affect here. Same for you, old man.

PHINEAS

Then you won't mind if I try.

Phineas FLICKS his wrists at The Twin, all fingers splayed outward, a TORRENT of energy follows.

The Twin ABSORBS the energy and VANISHES -- then REAPPEARS atop the dolmen. Phineas and Rivian turn around.

THE TWIN

Mark this! All druids, sorcerers, witches, warlocks, mages and soothsayers... all children of mighty Zarnethia must unite in spirit and in force, to rage against the dawning darkness, to fight until your dire end, or all will surely boil for eternity in the hellfire cauldron of Shansatka, The Shadow Queen of Vak'thil! I have knowledge that her powers have strengthened, that her legion has grown, and her heart beats with such ire that she will stop at

nothing to shred the fabric of our dimension into oblivion! This cannot come to pass!

RIVIAN

Then who shall lead us?

PHINEAS

You've proven our powers are tenuous at best.

THE TWIN

You must call upon Monatara, for she alone has stared deep into the wicked soul of Shansatka, deep into her empty eyes not moments before sending that demi-devil to a watery grave on the ocean's floor. Open your minds to Monatara. Only she holds the key to restore The Secret Order to its rightful glory. Behold Zarnethia! The Kingdom of Light! Our Home Eternal! Behold Zarnethia! Behold Zarnethia!

The Twin fades and is gone, its voice echoing through the trees. Rivian turns to Phineas.

RIVIAN

Please tell me you're in good graces with the Big M.

Phineas considers.

RIVIAN

In contact with her?

He stammers.

RIVIAN

On speaking terms?

He shrugs.

RIVIAN

Perfect. Our only hope and you're not even talking to one another.

PHINEAS

(untethered)

She's unreasonable, she's stubborn and she poured every drop of my single malts down the drain.

RIVIAN
That's what ex-wives do!

Phineas marches away.

PHINEAS
Then our precious dimension, our
glorious Zarnethia and all of
mankind will have to drip down the
drain as far as I'm concerned.

Rivian chuckles.

RIVIAN
Oh, Phin. Not only is your magic
failing, but it think you've lost
your sense of humor.

PHINEAS
You can't do that to a ninety year
old scotch and expect to get into
heaven!

EXT. BARN - DAY

Wides doors are swung shut.

INT. BARN - DAY

Kulbatkya is poised over the decomposed body of

SHANSATKA, THE SHADOW QUEEN OF VAK'THIL, whose fleshy
skeleton is partially covered with strips of ornate fabric,
rests on a stone slab about waist high.

THE FLOCK, six men and six women, dressed in sharp suits and
formal attire, are evenly flanked around the slab.

Kulbatkya pulls the hood away from her head, makes eye
contact with her audience, then reaches out, lays her hands
on the rotting head of Shansatka.

The Flock join hands.

KULBATKYA
During the times before time
itself, when our souls were lost
and left to wander this
insufferable dimension, you, my
queen, took us in and offered
comfort. You filled these

earthbound bodies, these empty
vessels, these paltry frames, with
unimaginable strength and power, so
that we might serve you, so that we
might earn passage into the
hallowed kingdom of Vak'thil!

Kulbatkya's body stiffens, her head tilts back.

Shansatka's bones begins to TREMBLE.

THE FLOCK

(in unison)

We worship only you, Shansatka,
Shadow Queen of eternity, the
divine door to all that lies
beyond.

What remains of Shansatka's flesh starts to HEAL ITSELF,
reversing the effects of time. Her organs begin to REFORM.

Kulbatkya holds fast, but feels her own lifeforce
diminishing.

KULBATKYA

(weakening)

Now, the moment has come for your
faithful servants to return the
blessings you so selflessly endowed
upon us. Rise up, my queen! Rise
once again and lead your dutiful
flock into the Dawning Darkness!

To the shock of all around the slab, Shansatka's arms SWING
UP, her hands CLUTCH the arms of Kulbatkya, whose body
SHAKES.

There is a TRANSFORMATION at play: Shansatka grows STRONGER,
turning back the hands of time while KULBATKYA grows WEAKER
and wails in anguish.

THE FLOCK

(hesitant)

Rise up... our queen. Lead us
through the door to beyond.

KULBATKYA

My queen! Rise up and show no mercy
on our flesh!

With each second, Shansatka's DEATH GRIP on Kulbatkya DRAINS
her of all lifeforce until Kulbatkya BURSTS INTO FLAMES.

The Flock steps back.

Shansatka HURLS the flaming, wailing Kulbatkya across the length of the barn which lands in a heap.

Shansatka has now restored her own body to what it once was, The Shadow Queen has returned.

The Flock kneel and raise arms to Shansatka.

THE FLOCK
(in unison)
Praise be, almighty queen! Praise
be!

Shansatka LEVITATES above the slab, above her flock, spreading her arms wide like wings.

From the pits of terror, she emanates a HEINOUS SCREECH, so shrill that The Flock cover their ears and writhe in pain.

INT. PORTLAND MEDICAL CENTER - ROOM - NIGHT

Esther, barely alive, is hooked to a monitor and an I.V. drip. Her pained eyes say "Let me die" as she stares at the ceiling until tears form and roll down her face.

She squeezes her eyes shut, then mouths the words to a prayer.

The I.V. bag, clear with saline, TURNS BLACK, the dark contents slide through the tubes, into her arm.

She continues to pray... until her eyelids OPEN to reveal a pair of BLACK EYES, her mouth opens wide.

A SHADOW dims her face.

Monitors beep, her body shudders, Esther dies.

INT. FRANKLIN TOWERS - PENTHOUSE SUITE - NIGHT

Monatara, sits at a long table lined with lit candles, contemplating, meditating... until the echo of Shansatka's SCREECH interrupts her silence.

The row of candles FLICKER, then are SNUFFED OUT.

FADE TO BLACK

END OF PART ONE