

Modus (Working Title)

By

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PROLOGUE: MERIDIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE REMOTE SOUTH

White snow. A small collection of penguins waddles across.

WE MOVE UP from the penguins to a nonartful arrangement of plain gray box-like buildings which sits atop a frigid mountain peak soaring above a frigid ocean in a frigid corner of the world.

INSERT: Meridian Research Institute "Remote South", Mt Paget, South Georgia Island, Atlantic Ocean, Southern Hemisphere, Earth, January 18, 2010 CE

We fly out to a wide vista of the whole island, glittering white in the shining ocean. Suddenly...

AN EXPLOSION gives birth to a blinding shaft of white light that pierces the sky and burrows into the mountain peak below. Boulders crash down the mountain.

THEN TIME SPEEDS UP.

INSERT: 2010 (Ticks upward to track the passage of time)

In fast motion, we see the smoke clear to reveal the shaft of light, holding there at the mountain's peak, with a sudden flurry of human activity around it.

We see vast structures being erected around the shaft of light, buildings of unknown purpose cluster around it and rise high above the mountain's peak. A low, strong voice booms OVER the activity.

ALEXANDER (VO)

Infinite Energy, they called it. Meridian, they named it. A rift in the fabric of reality that made anything possible. Hope. An end to war. A new birth for the human race. But we saw it for what it was.

INSERT: 2026

Black-and-white still photographs of stockpiled weapons all over the world are overlaid in sequence over our view of the mountain.

TIME SLOWS TO NORMAL SPEED

Small explosions rock the new structures around the shaft of light.

TIME SPEEDS UP

(CONTINUED)

Machines of war take the place of machines of construction. Gouts of smoke erupt and obscure our view, only to clear immediately on a battle-ravaged seascape, littered with flotsam, the island pockmarked with craters.

ALEXANDER (VO)

An extended hand from the Devil himself. A cordial invitation engraved and stamped with the seal of war.

INSERT: 2079

The wreckage is cleared away and more construction can be seen, a shining collection of sky-tearing buildings beginning to overwhelm the mountainous island.

ALEXANDER (VO)

A false peace. A desperate truce as the nations, overcome with self-preservation but learning nothing, vowed to put aside the weapons of war and unite under one flag, a flag flown over a devil's gift.

INSERT: 2080

TIME SLOWS TO NORMAL SPEED

A parabolic launch ramp with the shaft of light as its asymptote carries a series of massive space shuttles into the sky as fireworks go off in celebration.

ALEXANDER (VO)

The most terrible of the weapons of war, too dangerous to be destroyed, were shot into space.

We fly in to a giant plaque at the base of the launch ramp which reads:

JACOB'S LADDER "Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it." Genesis 28:12

ALEXANDER (VO)

"Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."

(CONTINUED)

INSERT: (The time-counter vanishes)

We see for the first time the bearer of the low, strong voice in the flesh. In a vast, dimly lit sepulchral chamber filled with men and women in identical robes, he stands, proud yet filled with tension and righteous fatigue.

With graying but well-groomed hair, a medium build that seems taller than it is, and eyes that you would follow to war, he tightly grasps the pulpit from which he gives his homily. ALEXANDER MARONI.

ALEXANDER

The angels of God. What did they know of angels, my brothers and sisters?

DISSOLVE TO:

INSERT: 2099 (time-counter returns)

More of these men and women in robes, clustered around a hangar bay filled with warheads, futuristic in design but unmistakable in purpose.

ALEXANDER (VO)

The arrogance. The hubris! To dedicate to God this ultimate of evil things, this contemptuous "Ladder to Heaven", this tower of Babel! Our forebears saw the truth of things, my brothers and sisters! Our forebears knew what an evil had been wrought in God's name! Our forebears understood that such a mighty evil could only be answered with an equal evil! An eye for an eye! A profanity for a profanity!

INSERT: 2099 (still)

A missile flies over the night sky and streaks toward Beijing. The instant it impacts, erupting in a titanic mushroom cloud...

INSERT: 2100

A missile hits London.

A missile hits Cairo.

A missile hits Paris.

A missile hits New York City.

(CONTINUED)

Moscow.

Osaka.

Chicago.

Calcutta.

Istanbul.

Shanghai.

We see countless missiles impact in a salvo that rips across the surface of the entire planet, leveling major population centers.

Fly out to view the upper hemisphere of the Earth from space as evil clouds begin to cover the continents.

ALEXANDER (VO)
Devastation, they called it.
Ashfall, they called it.

TIME SPEEDS UP

We return to our vista of South Georgia Island, which stays dormant under the fallout for a century (as the time-counter indicates) before new activity is glimpsed.

INSERT: 2100

People congregate on the island, and gradually construction recommences and speeds up, faster and faster, expanding outward from the island onto the surface of the ocean. We fly out to track this expansion.

The city envelopes an archipelago to the east, and a massive megalopolis can now be seen in the middle of the Southern Atlantic Ocean.

We fly further out to display the city in comparison to the blasted, barren landscape of the major landmasses of the planet, an ocean away. Text reads:

INSERT: "New Olympia, colloquially known as Remote South, 2396 CE".

ALEXANDER (VO)
Ninety percent of the world's
population paid for the sins of the
nations, and the remaining ten
percent congregated, irony of
ironies, under the umbrella of
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALEXANDER (VO) (cont'd)
 their precious Meridian, the energy
 of the rift which keeps the fallout
 at bay.

THE TITLE appears over this vista.

Suddenly, yet smoothly, we fly in toward an area of the city, diving into the ground and revealing the sepulchral chamber where Maroni is giving his sermon.

ALEXANDER
 Is it not fitting, my brothers and sisters, that the devil-tower which the nations worshipped, warred over, and revered above their own Creator, now sustains their toehold on the physical world, this last bastion of humanity's attempt to forestall the end of days, when God will descend to deliver his chosen people from these despicable fleshy bonds? The twenty-fifth millenium approaches, brothers and sisters. We prepare...

We pull away from the massive chamber, backwards through some underground corridors, up a vertical shaft, and into opulent halls and rooms of luxurious excess, to a girl's room.

INT. JESSICA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The girl, JESSICA MARONI, is young, thirteen years to be exact. She has long black hair, purple eyes, olive skin, and a BOYFRIEND, who is somewhat older.

The boyfriend is currently caught between first and second base, and is considering just making a run for third, rules be damned. Jessica is not entirely opposed to this idea in theory, but:

JESSICA
 Stop...stop.

BOYFRIEND
 Stop?

JESSICA
 It's almost...stop.

BOYFRIEND

Almost what?

He does something we can't see which makes her laugh, but:

JESSICA

My dad's almost done with his thing. I have to go. He'll be waiting for me. Get...get off, you.

He rolls off of her, obviously disappointed, but used to this kind of thing, as we can see from his playful mocking.

As she sits up and begins to compose her hair:

BOYFRIEND

Your dad? You're disgusting! You disgust me.

She giggles as he milks looking scandalized, and pushes him lightly.

JESSICA

You are gross!

BOYFRIEND

And you're so secretive. When are you going to tell me what goes on with you and your dad?

JESSICA

Rich people stuff.

BOYFRIEND

This again.

JESSICA

We eat the finest real fish and drink real tea and count his money every night together.

BOYFRIEND

Fascinating.

JESSICA

It takes a long time!

BOYFRIEND

Do you fuck before or after?

JESSICA

You are gross!

(CONTINUED)

A knock on her door. She looks toward it, and where he can't see, her face is panic-stricken, but only for a moment. She quickly turns to him with the majority of her fear masked.

JESSICA
(hissing)
Get!

He is used to this as well. He rolls off her bed into the space between it and the wall. Jessica hurries to the door and opens it a crack. The BUTLER speaks.

BUTLER
Mistress.

JESSICA
Oh, it's just you.

BUTLER
Yes, it is just me, Mistress. So good of you to notice. Are your toys put away properly?

She purses her lips at his characterization of her boyfriend and gives him a look, but also carefully shakes her head. He leans in and whispers:

BUTLER
If I may be so bold, Mistress.

JESSICA
Yes I will just...just get! Get!

EXT. MARONI MANOR - NIGHT

A window opens and a shadow exits unceremoniously and rappels down the house. Inside,

INT. JESSICA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jessica turns again to the door and opens it enough to let the butler inside.

BUTLER
The master will conclude his meeting soon, mistress, whereupon your presence will be expected in the grand study.

He takes a beat and she looks expectant. He closes the door behind him and lowers, to a degree, his carefully crafted butler's demeanor, leaning toward her more naturally.

(CONTINUED)

BUTLER
Mistress...Jessica.

JESSICA
Y...yes?

BUTLER
Your toys. Perhaps it is time...to
part with them.

She narrows her eyes in irritation.

BUTLER
Your birthday, Jessica. It is in
less than a month. You know what
that means, certainly.

She does know what this means.

BUTLER
Jessica, are you still...surely you
haven't...

She reacts with all the nonverbal indignance of a teenager
being asked such a personal question, but does not answer.

BUTLER
I need you to tell me, Jessica.

JESSICA
(embarrassed)
No, okay?

BUTLER
(relieved)
Good. That...that is very good.
Jessica, please, you know what your
father would say about...toys. You
know this can't continue.

Jessica says nothing. He straightens to his butler posture
and resumes the utmost of courtesy.

As he opens the door:

BUTLER
I humbly implore you, Mistress, to
give my words careful
consideration.

He pauses.

BUTLER

Your presence will be expected in the Grand Study in approximately twenty minutes, Mistress.

He closes the door.

CUT TO:

Jessica showers.

CUT TO:

She changes.

CUT TO:

We follow her through corridors and staircases in the mansion to one of many sets of tall, finely crafted wooden double doors.

As she opens the left door, we see her father, Alexander Maroni, standing proudly and sternly, behind a desk, or perhaps a table. The door closes behind her.

EXT. MARONI MANOR - NIGHT

We see in through the window of the Grand Study Jessica and her father momentarily before...

We fly up to see the city as a whole.

EXT. PANINI STREET - NIGHT

A street like any other in the city, two raised walkways flanking a river of ocean water, bustling with people on the walkways, watercraft in the river, and aircars above.

A tiny, filthy URCHIN GIRL can be seen in an alleyway to the side.

EXT. JACOB'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We see through a window a man in his late twenties, overweight but not obese, working happily at a futuristic computer station. He is JACOB ROAN, but we will get to him later.

EXT. ANGELICA SKYSTREET - NIGHT

A raised street consisting of walkways floating hundreds of feet in the air, and aircars overhead and underfoot.

We see Jessica's BOYFRIEND walking along.

(CONTINUED)

We fly up to see the city as a whole once more, as:

TIME SPEEDS UP

Night collapses and the sun rises over the gigantic city of Remote South.

TIME SLOWS TO NORMAL SPEED

EXT. ANGELICA SKYSTREET - DAY

It is mostly empty.

EXT. JACOB'S APARTMENT - DAY

He is asleep in bed.

EXT. PANINI STREET - DAY

It is completely empty, except for the Urchin Girl from before. She pokes her head carefully out from the alleyway.

She squints and shades her eyes against the harsh rising sun. She is dressed in rags, covered with dirty, and painfully thin to look at. She cannot be older than five.

She has shortish, ragged hair that might be a bright copper red if it were clean, dense freckles indistinguishable from the dirt on her face and shoulders, and tired green eyes. The voiceover we hear is a young woman, older than the words she speaks, as though reading them from a book for children.

HATCH (VO)

I have no name back then.

EXT. PANINI STREET - NIGHT

The streets are filled with people. Urchin Girl darts around, her attention on their pockets and purses, never on their eyes. They take no notice of her.

HATCH (VO)

I don't knew about names.

A wealthy businessman and his young wife, resplendent in elaborate furs.

HATCH (VO)

Names for the fine-coats,

In an alleyway behind the businessman, a destitute figure shaking uncontrollably.

(CONTINUED)

HATCH (VO)
names for the bad-heads,

In the main street, an overweight whore saying something we can't hear at a passing man.

HATCH (VO)
names for the high-skirts,

Back in another alleyway, the same streetwalker and the same man engaging in acts, mostly concealed in the gloom.

HATCH (VO)
and the shake-legs.

The john pulls out money for the whore and Urchin Girl leaps forward to snatch some of it. She vanishes back into the crowd before he can get a bead on her to follow.

HATCH (VO)
The shake-legs easy.

Back in the street Urchin Girl makes a try at the pockets of different wealthy man, but a swipe of his hand sends her sprawling and scurrying away.

HATCH (VO)
The fine-coats not easy.

She dodges out of the way of a low-flying car and drops the money from the john. A younger whore scoops it up and makes off with it.

HATCH (VO)
The high-skirts too strong.

She slinks back to collapse near the destitute man.

HATCH (VO)
The bad-heads not have a thing.

He turns toward her with hungry eyes. She runs away.

HATCH (VO)
But want things I don't have.

Urchin Girl stays on the move, following the crowd and snatching a wallet from an unwary pedestrian or a bit of food from a kiosk when she can.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PANINI STREET - DAY

The streets now empty, she still walks, the rising sun glaring once again on her freckled skin. She looks for scraps of food in dumpsters and corners.

HATCH (VO)

No walker here in sun, but me.
Everyone sleep, inside in sun, but
me. Sun too hot, too bright, but
easy to find eat when no one here,
but me.

As she continues on her search, she sees Jacob Roan sitting on the porch of his apartment, chain smoking. She stays out of sight.

HATCH (VO)

But sometimes is fat man in sun.
Fat man sit and make
strange-breath. Lots of people make
strange-breath, but fat man does it
in sun.

She looks he lifts a cigarette to his mouth and sees him beaming to himself about nothing.

HATCH (VO)

And fat man happy. Happy every day.
Happy about strange-breath? Or sun?
No one happy about sun.

She looks at his eyes, which are tired, too tired for a man of his age (though she doesn't understand this) and also very, very happy and content.

HATCH (VO)

Fat man happy every day.

His eyes flick toward her. He is surprised for an instant, and then sad to see her in her pathetic state, but he does not stop smiling. She lets out an animalistic squeak and darts out of sight.

HATCH (VO)

No. No. Not look at eyes. Not the
eyes. Eyes look back, eyes see, and
then bad things. Bad things.

He walks toward where she hides around a corner, concerned. He speaks in an indeterminate English West Country drawl.

(CONTINUED)

JACOB
Don't be frightened, it's okay,
innit? I've seen you around here
before.

She takes off in a dead run farther down the alleyway, which turns out to be a dead end. He keeps coming.

HATCH (VO)
Never the eyes.

FLASH of a pair of bleary, drunken eyes on a man of similar age to Jacob. Urchin Girl can be seen reflected in them.

FLASH back to Jacob's happy eyes as he comes toward her.

JACOB
(earnestly, gently)
Don't be frightened! I won't hurt
you!

HATCH (VO)
No. Hurt always happens. Hurt
from...

FLASH of another pair of eyes, a woman's, dialated and oblivious, Urchin Girl reflected in these as well.

FLASH back to Jacob's eyes, now more concerned than happy.

JACOB
All right! All right!

Jacob's mouth fills our view, bent slightly in concern.

HATCH (VO)
But then the fat man did something
to me no one had ever done before.

Jacob acquieses to her fear and comes no closer.

JACOB
All right there, Hatch!

HATCH (VO)
The fat man called me by a name.

Jacob sits down on the ground a safe distance from her and pulls out another cigarette.

JACOB
That's what you look like, you
know. You look like you just
hatched.

HATCH (VO)

He talked to me like a person.

JACOB

I've mentioned you to my friends.
They think I'm sentimental. But I'm
just curious, aren't I?

HATCH (VO)

He talked to me like a friend.

JACOB

That's what I tell them, I tell
them I'm curious, and they say to
me, they say...

He pauses to laugh, and tears start to form in Hatch's eyes.

JACOB

They say that'll get the better of
me one-a these days. But I say fuck
em.

He grins mischievously at her as he swears.

JACOB

So what's your story, Hatchling?

HATCH (VO)

He made me feel safe. I knew he
wouldn't do anything bad to me.
So...

She goes up to him, hugs him, removes his wallet, and runs
like hell.

INT. MARONI MANOR GRAND STUDY - NIGHT

Alexander Maroni looms, reading from a massive tome...

ALEXANDER

"The lord has changed my mouth by
his word and opened my heart by his
light. He causes his eternal life
to inhabit me and lets me speak the
fruit of his peace to convert souls
who could come to him, and he leads
captives to freedom. "

Jessica stands before him and recites...

JESSICA

"I took courage, and captured the world, yet my captivity lies in the high one's glory and lies in god my father. The gentiles who were scattered abroad are gathered together, and I am not polluted in my love--"

ALEXANDER

"By my love."

JESSICA

"By my love," sorry, "for them."
Egh.

She pauses and shakes her head to clear it.

JESSICA

"The gentiles who were scattered abroad are gathered together, and I am not polluted by my love for them."

(beat)

What does that mean? Loving outsiders...gentiles...that's okay?

ALEXANDER

To a point, yes. The gentiles are those who have forsaken God, and so God has forsaken them. Pity is a form of love, and one we must always remember as we make and unmake this world.

JESSICA

But doesn't it say...look...

She goes over to him and turns the book in his hands so it faces both of them, and lifts a hunk of pages, flipping through them for the exact page.

JESSICA

Here, Gospel of Phillip. "A gentile doesn't die, having never been alive to die." Why should I pity someone who isn't alive?

ALEXANDER

Jessica...

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA

And why do they need pity anyway if they don't really die?

ALEXANDER

Jessica.

JESSICA

What? I'm just trying to understand--

ALEXANDER

Yes, I know, and you must believe me when I say that I sympathize with your confusion. The truth contained in these words is divine, which means that it flows from a source none of us can hope to comprehend in this life. But, being divine, it is also infallable. You must remember that.

JESSICA

But what does that matter if I don't understand it?

ALEXANDER

I have known men who have indeed spent their entire life pondering this divine truth, and new aspects of it were revealed to them by the Father until their dying day.

JESSICA

(snarkily)

Well that sounds like a great life.

ALEXANDER

(tenderly)

I know that kind of life seems hard to imagine, and it is. But faith takes many forms, and there will be many different paths for you to choose from.

She looks away. He presses on...

ALEXANDER

Jessica, I can't tell you how envious I am of you. The doors that will open when you complete the Testing...I remember my fourteenth birthday. It was a wonderful day.

(CONTINUED)

She looks back, and gives him a humoring smile.

ALEXANDER

Now let's take that last passage
from "The gentiles who"...

She nods...

JESSICA

"The gentiles who were scattered
abroad are gathered together, and I
am not polluted by my love for
them. "

INT. JESSICA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jessica and Boyfriend are entwined in each other once more,
pollution seemingly the first thing on the agenda.

A shirt falls to the ground, and another.

A hand reaches down and around for a bag, finds it, and
withdraws.

BOYFRIEND

I've got it. Here with me.

JESSICA

Oooh, really?

BOYFRIEND

Yeah...yeah, get off me, let me get
it out.

She tumbles off him and looks eagerly at the bag.

BOYFRIEND

Now roll over on your stomach

JESSICA

Let me see it!

BOYFRIEND

Roll over, and I'll show it to you.

She does, and he pulls out a rod the size of a pen with
buttons and switches on the side, and a sharp point at one
end. She turns her head to look at it.

JESSICA

Yesss!

(CONTINUED)

BOYFRIEND

I've got the modulator too. You decide on a design yet?

JESSICA

Just get it going, I'll decide in a minute.

BOYFRIEND

Okay, now hold still...

He unhooks her bra and lets the straps fall loosely to the sides.

BOYFRIEND

Hooold still.

He flips a few switches, inserts the needle between her shoulder blades (she gasps) and presses a button.

A dark ink flows into her skin, forming a shapeless blob.

BOYFRIEND

Allmost there...

JESSICA

It feels weird.

BOYFRIEND

Hsng on...

He removes the needle, leaving a splotch on her back.

BOYFRIEND

So where do you want it?

JESSICA

I was thinking on my left shoulder. Or maybe...well, you can change it later, right?

BOYFRIEND

Should be able to. Now let's see.

He pulls out another device, this one a cube-shape with a soft pad on one side, and a screen on the other side.

BOYFRIEND

You have a file?

JESSICA

Hm?

(CONTINUED)

BOYFRIEND

With the image.

JESSICA

Oh yeah, it's in the local net. My root directory. Just pick one, I can't decide!

He navigates with the screen to a file tree and flips through several designs. He picks one (we can't see it) and places the pad on her shoulder.

JESSICA

No, go lower. Like, lower on the arm.

He does, and the device begins to hum.

The ink between her shoulderblades reacts and begins to flow sensually toward her left arm. She moans with indistinct pleasure.

It passes her neck,

and rounds her shoulder,

coming to rest underneath the device, which now hums louder. She begins to giggle dreamily. Presently, it stops.

He lifts the device up and an elegant pair of wings is now tattooed on her arm.

JESSICA

Is it done? Let me see!

She pulls her arm over and twists the flesh to get a better look. Squealing with delight, she hops up and runs to her full-length mirror, perusing herself as Boyfriend sidles up behind her and their reflected eyes meet.

Her bra shoulder straps begin to slip down.

He helps them along.

They kiss.

EXT. MARONI MANOR - NIGHT

TIME SPEEDS UP

Night turns to day.

TIME SLOWS TO NORMAL SPEED

(CONTINUED)

INT. JACOB'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jacob sits in what would be total darkness if not for the many holographic displays hovering in front of him. Many of the displays show images of the little girl, now called Hatch.

Jacob wears a variety of interface equipment, including gloves, eyepieces, and a headset. On one of the screens we see KRAKEN, a young black woman with a mane of dreadlocks, huge glasses and stern, piercing eyes.

KRAKEN

You do understand how wrong this is, right?

Jacob twitches a few fingers and calls one of the displays, which is notated "Live" to the center of the array.

JACOB

I don't know about wrong. Creepy yes, but not wrong. But it's in the intent, innit?

KRAKEN

And your intentions-

JACOB

My intentions are noble, young lady.

KRAKEN

Tchuh. This isn't what we do, Speakeasy.

JACOB

Of course not. This is what I do, innit?

KRAKEN

You're a deranged voyeur.

JACOB

I am curious, girl. Curious.

Our attention is drawn to the "Live" screen, which shows Hatch buying food from a VENDOR with a futuristic credit card, ostensibly from Jacob's wallet.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PANINI STREET - NIGHT

The same scene as described, in person.

JACOB (VO)
This little Hatchling... She's
special.

The vendor looks at the shiny high-class credit card, and back to Hatch with doubt. She smiles and makes a motion with her finger to turn the card over. He does, and her face smiles at him on the reverse side of the card.

Shrugging, he swipes the card and hands her a loaf of bread and the card back, both of which she clutches to her chest and runs off with.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Hatch furtively glances around before greedily digging in to the loaf of bread.

We see her card on the credit card, which is firmly jammed under her arm.

KRAKEN (VO)
You added her to your account.

JACOB (VO)
Did it the moment she stole the
card.

KRAKEN (VO)
Speakeasy. Why would you do such a
thing.

INT. JACOB'S APARTMENT

Jacob smiles slowly as he responds:

JACOB
To see what would happen.

INT. KRAKEN'S APARTMENT

A similar, completely darkened room but for a wall of glowing displays. We see that Kraken is strapped into a sort of hovering wheelchair and also chooses to use more traditional interface methods like a keyboard and mouse.

KRAKEN
Very scientific. Do you have any
idea what kind of danger you have
placed that poor little girl in?

(CONTINUED)

JACOB
(on a similar screen in
Kraken's room)
Why, whatever do you mean, Miss
Kraken?

We see on one of the displays in Kraken's room an image of Hatch huddling in the alleyway overlaid with a list of incident reports and police bulletins concerning the vicinity, being rapidly updated in real time.

KRAKEN
Panini Street is one of the most
dangerous places in Remote South.
What if, oh, I don't know, anyone
mentions to his friend Jackie the
Rapist that he saw a helpless
five-year-old street rat using a
triple-platinum credit card?

Jacob grins infuriatingly on a screen.

KRAKEN
You have placed a several billion
dollar bounty on her head,
Speakeasy. What the hell are you
doing?

Kraken gasps as she sees on her displays a HORRIBLE MAN quietly approaching Hatch.

INT. JACOB'S APARTMENT

Jacob twiddles a finger and the image of Kraken on his displays dissolves to the image of a SHADOWY FIGURE on a rooftop.

Jacob raises his hand and the Figure nods.

EXT. PANINI EMPORIUM ROOFTOP

The Figure raises a rifle with an impossibly long barrel.

His scope shows us the Horrible Man advancing on Hatch, who...

EXT. ALLEYWAY

...leaps forward with a small taser gun and fires at the Horrible Man, who is visted upon by an excruciating electric shock and goes down. Hatch squeals and scurries away.

INT. JACOB'S APARTMENT

(CONTINUED)

KRAKEN

This is sick, Jacob.

EXT. PANINI STREET

Hatch is running down the sidewalk.

JACOB (VO)

Oh, cheer up, luv. There's potential in this one.

KRAKEN (VO)

What the hell are you talking about? She's a small frightened little girl with-

JACOB (VO)

You know how I said I changed the face on that card?

KRAKEN (VO)

Yes...

JACOB (VO)

I lied. She did it herself. This little hatchling may be small, and frightened, but she is not helpless.

EXT. A DARK STREET

Jessica's Boyfriend walks along, perusing the storefronts, when two men emerge from an alleyway and pull him back in with them. Multiple gunshots pierce the night.

INT. JESSICA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jessica sits glumly on her bed leaning on the Butler, who is comforting her. Her tattoo cannot be seen.

JESSICA

It's been two weeks! He's never been away this long!

BUTLER

Perhaps...

It pains him to say this, and he is not even sure if he should.

BUTLER

Perhaps things are better this way.

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA
Go to hell!

He rises sadly. She flings herself onto the bed where he was. He turns to leave.

JESSICA
You know what the worst part of
this is?

He turns back to face her.

JESSICA
If I actually had a dad I could
tell about boyfriends and stuff, he
could use his, you know, billions
and billions of dollars to try and
find him.

A look of intense sadness on the Butler's face is hidden competently by years of practice.

BUTLER
I am so sorry, Jessica.

JESSICA
Leave me alone!

He exits.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE JESSICA'S BEDROOM

Alexander stands there sternly. The door closes completely behind the Butler and they walk together.

ALEXANDER
She doesn't know?

BUTLER
No, Sir. But the unknown brings her
almost as much pain.

ALEXANDER
Pain. Pain is...unfortunate, but it
is preferable.

BUTLER
Yes, Sir.

ALEXANDER
Preferable to what awaits her if
she does not learn to set aside
such passions!

(CONTINUED)

They walk.

ALEXANDER
You sympathize with her.

BUTLER
Sympathy is one of my many jobs,
sir.

ALEXANDER
Do not brush my concerns aside! You
sympathize with her too
much! There are things...things
she needs to be taught. That are
too difficult for me.

BUTLER
Sir.

ALEXANDER
She is the reason, do you
understand that? She is the reason
for all of this. All I have built.
All I continue to build. All I will
sacrifice on the day of my death.
It is all to ensure that the same
fate does not await her as awaits
the lowest of the swine out there!

He gestures out a window. They walk.

ALEXANDER
I have given up my place in heaven
for her. I will not allow her to
give up hers.