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**Red Death**

by

Andrew Morris

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Gargoyles: City of the Phoenix  
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Andrew Morris  
4109 W Crystal St  
Chicago 51, Ill.

INT. SCENE - RYOSHI SHOPPING CENTER - FOOD COURT

Chicago's favorite Japanese shopping center bristles with activity over the lunch break. One shop advertises fresh seafood, another noodles, a third hamburgers with a twist, and there are many others. Orders are made and called back, food is thrown onto grills and into pans, slung into baskets and bowls, and passed across the counters to their customers. At one table, a well-dressed man, BRENT SUTTER, sits, the eye of the lunch-rush storm around him, quietly eating a bowl of soup. Another suit approaches, carrying a tray with a hamburger, fries and a cup of soda, and sits across from him. It is CRAIG LARSEN. SUTTER nods in greeting.

Caption: Ryoshi Shopping Center, 11:43 AM, November 1, 2012

SUTTER

Craig.

LARSEN

Good afternoon, Mr. Sutter.

SUTTER

You should try the ramen noodles here.  
They're really good.

LARSEN

I'll stick to the teriyaki burger,  
thanks. Eight dollars seems a little  
steep.

SUTTER

Your loss.

He takes up a spoonful of soup and eats it.

SUTTER

Among several recently, I hear.

LARSEN

Yes, sir, I'm afraid so.

SUTTER

So, let's hear about it.

LARSEN

One of our beta testers on Dellinger  
quit the other night. He's claiming

that some sort of monsters beat him up  
and stole his gun.

SUTTER stops eating, spoon halfway to his mouth. He looks up,  
startled.

SUTTER  
He says what, now?

LARSEN  
Something about monsters beating him  
up.

SUTTER  
Well, what exactly did he say?

LARSEN  
Not much. "Dude, I'm F-in out of here,  
no f-in' piece is worth having f-in  
monsters trying to kick your f-in'"--  
uh, bottom--"all the f-in time." Not  
exactly a direct quote, you understand,  
but--

SUTTER  
How strange.

LARSEN  
I'd recruited him after his car got  
torn up. He came in to Torito, and said  
something about five monsters.

SUTTER  
Novel.

LARSEN  
And that he'd shot one of them, but  
aside from that, no more details.

SUTTER  
Oh, had he? Where did this happen?

LARSEN  
In Humboldt Park, I guess.

SUTTER  
Well, that's something.

LARSEN

It doesn't sound like he had better luck with the Dellinger, either. At least not from the news.

SUTTER

He made ink?

LARSEN

Front page. Not by name, but it sure sounded like him. The paper said someone was tooling around on Halloween night shooting into the crowd.

SUTTER

That's unfortunate.

SUTTER continues eating his soup, thinking for a moment.

SUTTER

I think we need to speak to this young man and get more details. Get his side of the story, find out what's really going on.

LARSEN

Trouble is, I can't seem to find him. He's not answering his phone, and he's not at his house, at least he wasn't this morning.

SUTTER

Humph.

LARSEN

At least he won't go far. He only got five bullets. I promise he won't get any more until he explains himself.

SUTTER

No, by no means. Give me his information and I'll have Central get in touch. You can move on.

LARSEN

All right.

SUTTER

And put the word out that you'll pay  
\$500 a head for those creatures.

LARSEN is surprised.

LARSEN

Sir?

SUTTER

You're supposed to be protecting the  
city, right?

LARSEN

Yes, sir, that's the story.

SUTTER

Then I think, if these creatures exist,  
we'd better deal with them, the fastest  
way that we can.

EXT. SCENE - LAKE POINT TOWER. ROOF. (NIGHT)

The night is clear and dark, except for the lights of Navy Pier standing out against the expanse of the lake. LEXINGTON, BROADWAY, and BROOKLYN are perched on the edge of the roof, watching. LEXINGTON has the Dellinger Model 102 in his hand. BROADWAY has a box of bottles beside him.

BROOKLYN

So these aren't typical guns. I get  
that much, fine. They don't look typi-  
cal.

LEXINGTON

But there's more to it than just the  
looks. Even the bullets are weird.

BROOKLYN

What do you mean?

LEXINGTON

Here, take a look.

He ejects the clip, pulls out one of the spent casings, and passes it to BROOKLYN, who examines it.

BROOKLYN

What am I looking for, exactly?

LEXINGTON

You see those little contacts around the base?

BROOKLYN

Yeah.

LEXINGTON

Something connects to them in the gun, I think. If you look down inside you can see there's a bit of wiring in there.

BROADWAY

But so what?

LEXINGTON

I don't know for sure. That's why--

The lights of the Pier begin to dim. A moment later, there is a deep thump, and then, the first shell of a fireworks show bursts in the sky before them.

LEXINGTON

Okay, there we go. Throw one.

LEXINGTON reinserts the clip and racks the slide. BROADWAY flings an empty bottle up into the sky. LEXINGTON aims the gun at it, tracking it. The light in the center of the sight lights up red, then flicks to green. He fires, and the bottle bursts.

LEXINGTON

Again. Let's see if I can miss this time.

BROADWAY throws another bottle up. LEXINGTON aims at it. The light turns from red to green again, but this time he holds his fire for a moment and lets the bottle fall out of his crosshairs. He fires again, and again the bottle bursts.

LEXINGTON

See? It's correcting the aim as it goes. Get a bead on something, the light turns green, and it tracks.

BROADWAY

So, is that how that guy managed to get Brooklyn that night?

LEXINGTON

I'm not sure. I don't think so. He only had five bullets in the gun to start with.

BROADWAY

But he aimed for me and he got my trophy. He aimed for Hudson and just got his ear.

LEXINGTON

And he just cut Goliath's arm. Yeah.

BROADWAY

So is his aim just really that bad, or what?

LEXINGTON

I just don't know. But I think I understand how the sight works. If we can defeat that, it should make it just another gun.

BROOKLYN

Any ideas on that?

LEXINGTON

A couple. I'll need to try them out to be sure.

BROOKLYN

Let's get back to the tower. Goliath should know about this.

INT. SCENE - DIGG'S DOGS

A greasy spoon in all senses, Digg's Dogs is also a popular meeting spot for Chicago's finest when they're on break. Harsh fluorescent lighting brings out every stain in the restaurant's hot orange and mustard yellow furniture. At one booth, against the window, sit four policemen with four greasy lunches: Officers PAUL HAYS, KYLE MILLER, ERIC SANCHEZ, and KEVIN O'CONNOR.

HAYS

Seriously. I got a guy in district sixteen says he's never seen it this bad.

SANCHEZ

Yeah. Same over in eight. You know Brees?

O'CONNOR

Who?

SANCHEZ

Tim Brees, up in eight?

HAYS

Yeah, he doing all right?

SANCHEZ

Yeah. Caught it right in the vest. Gonna have a golf ball of a hickie from that.

HAYS

Dude got lucky.

MILLER

They cleaned up, too. No casings.

O'CONNOR

They're getting weird, is what. Paul, you remember that kid we picked up a couple of nights back?

HAYS

Yeah, the one talking about monsters?

O'CONNOR

Yeah, him.

MILLER

What?

O'CONNOR

You know that car that went off the Drive last night by Ohio Street? Picked up some kid running from there, and he said some monsters came down from the sky and were harassing them. Saying something about some kid named J-Mo.

MILLER laughs at this. SANCHEZ does not.



SANCHEZ

What, seriously?

O'CONNOR

Seriously.

MILLER

Well, there you go, they're getting target practice on the monsters.

SANCHEZ

What kind of monsters are they seeing?

HAYS

Something to do with flying ones. He weren't real specific.

SANCHEZ looks thoughtful at this. He has heard this before, but... no, couldn't be, could it? Meanwhile, O'CONNOR plows ahead:

O'CONNOR

Thing is, we know J-Mo. Bit of a troublemaker out in the 14th.

MILLER

Well, what was he doin' downtown?

O'CONNOR

Trick or treating, I guess, how'm I supposed to know? Anyway, he said one of them was gonna cut off J-Mo's hand, but didn't, and another of them had him pinned down in his car.

HAYS

And I asked him whether he'd checked out the Halloween candy before he ate it. He wasn't too happy about that.

SANCHEZ

Another thing I'm seeing is EMS rolling out on more calls. You seeing that?

O'CONNOR

Oh, yeah. Used to be all, "Nah, I'm cool, I'll get to the ER myself."  
'Cause they were getting winged, most-

ly. Lot more of these kids getting taken in now. Lot of 'em in rough shape.

MILLER

Yeah.

SANCHEZ

These kids are getting way too accurate for my taste.

HAYS

Yeah, really. I was telling the wife about it. She's ready to pack up and head downstate to Lasalle County. Says there's openings with the sheriff down there.

O'CONNOR

Gonna do it?

HAYS

What, guard the corn all day? No chance. But right about now, man, it sounds pretty good. Corn don't aim for your head.

MILLER

There's a guy downtown says they're gonna get some guy in who thinks he can make the kids miss more.

SANCHEZ

How's that, Kyle?

MILLER

I don't know. He didn't say. But they're looking at whether these kids have got some kind of scope or something they're using.

O'CONNOR

That's a little better, I guess. You can take the scope away.

HAYS

If you can find it.

DISPATCHER

(on radio)

Units in twenty five, shots fired,  
Kelvin and Masterson, Masterson and  
Kelvin, four shots fired--

HAYS

Whoop, here we go again.

MILLER

All right. Watch yourself.

O'CONNOR

You too.

O'CONNOR and HAYS get up to leave.

HAYS

(into radio)

2538 going.

DISPATCHER

(on radio)

2538, thank you.

O'CONNOR and HAYS exit.

EXT. SCENE - WILLIS TOWER. ROOF. (NIGHT)

All six gargoyles are standing on the roof of the tower. GOLIATH and HUDSON are listening to BROOKLYN, BROADWAY and LEXINGTON describe the situation.

BROADWAY

From the sound of it, this Larsen guy  
is handing these things out all over  
town.

LEXINGTON

And we know the thing will track a target through the air. I don't know how, but we got lucky the other night.

GOLIATH

Luck only goes so far. That many shooters, and that accurate, means we're not going to be safe out there.

BROOKLYN

A gun's no good without ammunition.  
Larsen's the key. If we can get him,  
maybe we can get a lid on the supply  
line. Should help, anyway.

GOLIATH

Then we look for Mr. Larsen.

BROOKLYN

That kid last night said he was at  
Torito Bar.

GOLIATH

Where is that?

BROOKLYN

I'm not really sure, but I'll bet it's  
not far from where I got shot.

HUDSON

Get us close. I can pick up the way  
from there.

GOLIATH picks up BRONX, and the six gargoyles depart to the  
northwest.

EXT. SCENE - EL TORITO BAR - ROOF (NIGHT)

The gargoyles descend and land on the roof. They go over to the  
skylight and look in. Inside, there are several customers at ta-  
bles and several more at the bar.

BROADWAY

Any idea what this Larsen looks like?

BROOKLYN

No idea. That kid just said it was some  
dude.

BROADWAY

Handing them out for testing. Probably  
a suit.

BROOKLYN

That doesn't look like it narrows  
things down much.

The shot goes from table to table, examining the patrons one table at a time.

BROADWAY

Not him...not him...him?

Shot settles on a man and woman at a table, both in business clothes.

BROOKLYN

That guy's on a date.

LEXINGTON

Couldn't this guy be on a date?

BROOKLYN

I don't know his private life, but I don't think so. Not if he's working.

Shot settles on a man sitting alone at a table, dressed in a collared shirt and tie, drinking a cocktail and looking a little ruffled.

BROADWAY

Him?

LEXINGTON

He's just had a bad day at work.

BROADWAY

So has this Larsen guy if he just lost one of his testers.

BROOKLYN

Keep looking.

Shot settles on CRAIG LARSEN, sitting alone at a table. He is neatly dressed and has a beer on the table in front of him.

BROADWAY

Him?

BROOKLYN

Could be. Argh, this is useless. Let's get inside. Maybe we'll be able to hear something.

BROADWAY opens the skylight carefully and climbs in, followed by BROOKLYN and LEXINGTON.

LEXINGTON  
(to GOLIATH)  
Are you coming?

GOLIATH  
We will stand guard out here.

LEXINGTON drops in and closes the skylight behind himself.

HUDSON  
Goliath?

GOLIATH  
Yes?

HUDSON  
How much of this is for our protection,  
and how much is for this city's?

GOLIATH  
This is for us. If the city benefits,  
good for it. Do you see a problem?

HUDSON  
Not a problem. This is just, as you  
say, not our castle to protect.

GOLIATH  
It is not.

HUDSON  
Are you sure of that? You did also say  
you could see us being accepted here if  
we were to stay.

GOLIATH  
I hope that is true. We are not staying  
here. But, castle or not, perhaps there  
is something to protect while we are  
here.

HUDSON gives him a small, knowing smile, and then gives BRONX a quick scratch on the head.

INT. SCENE - EL TORITO. RAFTERS.

Inside the bar, it is as dark as bars are. The bar is set up in a former factory, and the trusses span the ceiling well above the floor. BROADWAY, BROOKLYN, and LEXINGTON spread out on the

rafters overlooking the front bar and watch LARSEN. They are well hidden in the darkness.

BROADWAY  
He's a slow drinker.

LEXINGTON  
He's probably waiting.

BROADWAY  
For who?

BROOKLYN  
How about him?

Through the door, a young man enters, and comes directly to LARSEN's table.

BROADWAY  
Looks like it.

INT. SCENE - EL TORITO. FRONT BAR.

LARSEN  
Mr. Kendricks, how are you?

KENDRICKS  
Fine, Mr. Larsen. Thanks.

LARSEN  
Have a seat. Something to drink?

KENDRICKS  
(sitting)  
Thanks, yeah.

LARSEN  
(to the bartender)  
Phil, could you send over a beer,  
please?

PHIL  
Okay, Mr. Larsen.

LARSEN  
Now, I wanted to talk to you about a  
little proposition I have for you. I  
represent an organization that makes

weapons. From time to time, they like to try out new guns--

KENDRICKS

Man, I know all of that. I heard all of that before.

LARSEN

Oh, is that right?

KENDRICKS

Yes, sir. They also say you've got a piece that can't miss.

LARSEN

They say it correctly. Here it is.

He draws his briefcase from under the table, opens it, and withdraws a Dellinger 102. He places it on the table, and KENDRICKS picks it up.

LARSEN

The latest in firearm technology, and so on and so forth. But I can see you're a no-nonsense kind of guy.

KENDRICKS

You got that right.

LARSEN

Operation is fairly simple. Aim using the big sight. Put your finger on the trigger, and the sight turns red. When it turns green, you're locked and ready to rock.

KENDRICKS

Awesome.

INT. SCENE - EL TORITO. RAFTERS.

BROOKLYN

That's the guy.

BROADWAY

Yeah, and he's still passing these things out. We gotta stop him.



LEXINGTON

You want to drop in on him now?

BROOKLYN shakes his head.

BROADWAY

Why not?

BROOKLYN

Because he's armed, and because there's too many innocent people around.

BROADWAY

So what do you want to do?

BROOKLYN

Get him outside.

LEXINGTON

And then what? He's already handed off the gun.

INT. SCENE - EL TORITO. FRONT BAR.

Behind the bar, the bartender (PHIL) finishes pouring drinks into test tubes that are racked on a serving tray. He is talking to a waitress, who is in a bikini.

PHIL

I swear, next year we make half as much of this stuff. Nobody ever buys them on Halloween and these tubes are a pain to clean out. You ready?

WAITRESS

Yeah, I'm ready.

PHIL

Knock 'em dead, babe.

They kiss briefly.

PHIL

(announcing)

All right, everyone! Get ready, 'cause it's moon shots time! Two bucks a shot, come on up!

The waitress climbs up on the bar with a little help from PHIL. He reaches under the bar and flicks a switch, lighting several blacklights around the premises. The waitress's bikini and the test tubes also light up in various colors. She begins to walk up the bar, handing out shots to a few of the patrons.

INT. SCENE - EL TORITO. RAFTERS.

The shot centers on BROADWAY and BROOKLYN with LEXINGTON out of shot.

BROADWAY

Oh, that's pretty. What's that?

BROOKLYN

Bar special. Wonder how they do that?

LEXINGTON (OFF)

Trick lighting. Blacklight and a bit of fluorescent dye in the drink.

BROOKLYN and BROADWAY look at him in surprise.

BROADWAY

Uh, Lexington?

LEXINGTON (OFF)

Probably really unhealthy, too.

BROOKLYN

Lex?

BROADWAY

Lexington?

LEXINGTON (OFF)

What?

BROOKLYN

Look at your hands.

Shot pulls back to show LEXINGTON. His right side is lit up brilliantly red, and he glows like a neon sign in the blacklight.

LEXINGTON

Uh...

BROADWAY

What's going on?

LEXINGTON

I don't know, but I don't like it.

INT. SCENE - EL TORITO. FRONT BAR.

PHIL's eye is drawn to the rafters by some motion. He sees LEXINGTON up there, or at least a part of him, frozen in shock.

PHIL

I thought I told Charlie to get those decorations down.

WAITRESS

He did.

PHIL

What about that one?

He points.

INT. SCENE - EL TORITO. RAFTERS.

BROADWAY

I don't think they're fans, either.

Below, as LEXINGTON begins to move, it becomes clear to PHIL and the WAITRESS that this is no decoration. They begin to yell. The WAITRESS drops her tray, and test tubes scatter and spill as she jumps down off the bar. The other patrons, including LARSEN, follow the gaze of the bar staff up and stare at LEXINGTON.

BROOKLYN

Out!

LEXINGTON stands and pushes on the skylight, but it does not open.

LEXINGTON

It's not working!

BROADWAY

Pull the latch!

LARSEN is looking at LEXINGTON, astonished. KENDRICKS points the gun at LEXINGTON.

LEXINGTON

What latch?

BROOKLYN

That one! Pull!

From KENDRICKS's point of view, we see through the sight, centered on LEXINGTON. His finger goes onto the trigger.

LEXINGTON

Got it!

He unlatches the window and pushes it up. Through the sight, we see it go from red to green. KENDRICKS pulls the trigger. There is a click. LEXINGTON, BROADWAY and BROOKLYN pile out of the skylight onto the roof.

EXT. SCENE - EL TORITO - ROOF (NIGHT)

LEXINGTON, BROADWAY, and BROOKLYN climb out on the roof, frantically. LEXINGTON is no longer lit up.

BROOKLYN

Trouble!

BROADWAY

We gotta go.

GOLIATH

What did you do?

LEXINGTON

Lit up like a Christmas tree. They're coming.

HUDSON

What do you mean, "lit up?"

BROADWAY

Go!

They leap off the roof and clear out of there.

INT. SCENE - EL TORITO. FRONT BAR.

Across the dining room, drinks are spilled. The bar looks like an atomic waste accident, with the late "moon shots" spilled all over it glowing wanly in the blacklight. The other patrons of

the bar are conversing excitedly among themselves, while an awestruck KENDRICKS and LARSEN both stare at the open skylight.

KENDRICKS

What the hell was that?

LARSEN

I don't know.

KENDRICKS

And why the hell didn't the gun work, man? You trying to set me up?

LARSEN

No, no, of course not.

He pulls a clip out of his briefcase.

LARSEN

You never loaded it.

KENDRICKS takes the clip from him, and examines it, embarrassed.

KENDRICKS

Oh.

LARSEN

But now that you've seen that, maybe you can help me out. Come on back. I have a proposition for you.

LARSEN and KENDRICKS go toward the back bar.

EXT. SCENE - AERIAL. (NIGHT)

All six gargoyles are flying through the night, in closer formation than their trip out.

BROOKLYN

Okay, Lex, what was that all about?

LEXINGTON

I don't know. Never happened to me before.

BROADWAY

You said something about trick lighting. Have you been playing with dye at all?

LEXINGTON

No! (thinks) Maybe. Yeah! Oh.

BROOKLYN

What?

LEXINGTON

The gun. I shot it with my right hand.  
There must be something in the bullets.

GOLIATH

Maybe they are trying to identify their  
users.

BROADWAY

It's a double cross!

BROOKLYN

What?

BROADWAY

Think about it. They're marking their  
shooters with fluorescent dye. And  
they're handing out the guns to gang-  
sters. So what that means is...

BROOKLYN

They're flagging the gangsters. So all  
the cops have to do is turn on a trick  
light, and they'll light up.

HUDSON

So Larsen is double-crossing his own  
customers. But why?

GOLIATH

The police.

HUDSON

Why would the police want that? Giving  
powerful weapons to their enemies?

GOLIATH

No. The police are his customers. He's  
going to hand over his testers to them.

BROADWAY

Sounds good to me.

## BROOKLYN

But what's his angle? He's just going to hand them over, and that's it?

## BROADWAY

Think about it. If he was planning to round up all of the gangbangers, he'd have to hand these things out to all of them, and then they'd actually have to fire them in order to get marked. It'd be a bloodbath.

## GOLIATH

I do not think Larsen would be concerned about a bloodbath.

## BROOKLYN

No, but the police would be. Especially because their blood would be on the line too.

## LEXINGTON

It's a fail-safe. It's got to be. Or a plan "B", or something.

## BROADWAY

Explain that.

## LEXINGTON

Larsen's out doing whatever he's doing with the police. It falls through. He tells them, "Okay, but, how about this: I can get you your shooters, and all you need is a blacklight on a helicopter."

## HUDSON

And they're easy targets.

## LEXINGTON

Exactly.

## GOLIATH

And he escapes with clean hands.

## BROOKLYN

So to speak. What's his plan, then? What's Plan "A"?

LEXINGTON

Maybe there's a clue inside the gun.

INT. SCENE - INDUSTRIAL LOFT.

Within a dusty and somewhat disused industrial loft, LEXINGTON sits, and BROOKLYN is standing, behind a work bench with some electronics tools spread across it. LEXINGTON is busy working to disassemble the Dellinger. He's not having an easy time of it: he's got a screwdriver shoved in the back of the grip, and is trying, as gently but persuasively as he can, to pry it open.

LEXINGTON

Rrrf. Come on, split.

BROOKLYN

Give it here, I'll open it for you.

LEXINGTON

How?

BROOKLYN

Give it to Broadway. He's good at breaking up guns.

LEXINGTON

No, I want it working. Might need it later.

BROOKLYN

If you say so.

He continues trying to split the gun as they talk.

LEXINGTON

Got to be a little more than just self defense, didn't it?

BROOKLYN

Yeah. Weird how that happens.

LEXINGTON

Think maybe Goliath has a point? I mean, if we'd laid low, maybe this wouldn't--

BROOKLYN

If we'd laid low, it'd be someone else's problem, at best. The guns would



still be out there. Larsen would still be out there. Nothing to say we wouldn't have got caught up in it sooner or later. Besides...

LEXINGTON stops.

LEXINGTON

What?

BROOKLYN

I kinda like this. Been a while since we saved the world. Some part of it, anyway.

LEXINGTON

I'm with you there.

He begins prying again.

LEXINGTON

Might be a big part, too. More I look at this, the more it looks like mass production. Whoever's behind this, they're making lots of them. Snap clips so they are quicker to--

There is a sudden crack, and the butt of the gun splits.

LEXINGTON

There we are!

He continues working the halves of the grip apart, carefully.

LEXINGTON

Quicker to assemble. Makes it easy to turn out lots of them fast. This goes beyond just the Chicago gangs. Lot further than that. You think maybe...

He stops working and looks up.

BROOKLYN

What?

LEXINGTON

Maybe that's why we're here? I mean, why we wound up in Chicago after the storm, was to deal with this?

BROOKLYN

Like the train took us where we needed to be? You think we hopped the train from Avalon, or something?

LEXINGTON puts his head down and continues working.

LEXINGTON

No, but, you know, it's not like that's the only reason we'd end up right where we needed to be.

BROOKLYN

I hope not. Seems like a long road to a short house.

Finally, the grip breaks completely open. LEXINGTON puts it on the work bench and carefully pulls the halves apart. He examines the internals carefully.

LEXINGTON

Yeah, just what I thought.

He reaches in with a pair of long-nose pliers and extracts a small cylinder, which is wired into the mechanism.

BROOKLYN

What is it?

LEXINGTON

Radio receiver wired into the trigger.

BROOKLYN

What's that for?

LEXINGTON

Plan "A".

EXT. SHOT - CHICAGO POLICE HEADQUARTERS

Behind the general police headquarters, the sun is up. Patrol is just beginning to roll out for another day's work.

INT. SCENE - CHICAGO POLICE H.Q. CONFERENCE ROOM.

Seated around the conference table are two police officials: OFFICAL A and OFFICIAL B; two officers, LT. C and LT. D, and CRAIG LARSEN.

LARSEN

I'm pleased to be able to meet with you today. As you know, Cuprium Arms values our relationship with our customers, and we're happy to help in any way that we can.

OFFICIAL A

We're glad you could come in today, Mr. Larsen. We appreciate it.

LT. C

You've heard of the problems we're having out there?

LARSEN

Yes, I have. Something about the criminal element improving their marksmanship over the last couple of weeks?

LT. D

I don't think it's a laughing matter, Mr. Larsen. I have two of my men in the hospital right now. Just bruised ribs this time, but next time could be worse.

OFFICIAL B

Exactly. Gang Intelligence is hearing that some of the factions have got some pretty powerful new weapons at their disposal.

LARSEN

Yes. We know all about it.

The others look at him, startled by this news.

OFFICIAL A

What?

LT. C

How do you know about this?

LARSEN

We've seen it before. Here it is.

LARSEN opens his briefcase and pulls out a Dellinger, and lays it on the table.

LARSEN

Meet your enemy.

OFFICIAL A

What's this?

LARSEN

Dellinger model 102 semiautomatic. It's a smart gun, so they say.

LT. D

Is this cleared?

LARSEN

Completely. Please, have a look.

LT. D picks up the gun and examines it. He then starts passing it around the table, and each of the others examine it in turn, as LARSEN explains.

LARSEN

We've been seeing these show up in many of the cities that we serve. New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, Atlanta--they're all dealing with these.

OFFICIAL B

Unbelievable.

OFFICIAL A

But we haven't heard anything from them about this.

LARSEN

Tell me this: do your sources in those cities tell you about every new gun they find?

OFFICIAL A

Of course not. But this is a little different, isn't it?

LARSEN

Only if you don't know how to handle it. And they do, and so do we.

LT. C

Really?

LARSEN

Absolutely. You handle it with this.

LARSEN reaches into his briefcase and pulls out a toy badge, and lays it on the table.

LT. D

A Junior Patrolman badge?

LARSEN

Ah, yes, I apologize for that. Security gets so paranoid about people carrying real police badges onto airplanes. No, it's a dummy, but the same principle applies to a real badge. Let me demonstrate.

He turns the badge over.

LARSEN

What you see here is a miniature radio transmitter. We have examined these weapons, and discovered that a signal on 229 megahertz interferes with the gun's mechanism so that it can't fire. One of the liabilities of an electronic gun, I suppose. Observe.

LARSEN pulls a clip out of the briefcase.

OFFICIAL A

Mr. Larsen, if you are going to load that weapon, I have to insist that we go down to the firing range first.

LARSEN

Don't worry. They're just caps, see?

LARSEN ejects one cartridge from the clip and hands it to OFFICIAL A, who examines it.

LARSEN

Totally harmless, I assure you, just enough charge to drive the mechanism.

OFFICIAL A

(reluctantly)

Well, all right.

LARSEN

Thank you. Now, observe.

LARSEN loads the clip into the gun, and cocks it.

LARSEN

I have the transmitter switched off  
right now. As a result--

He aims at the corner of the room and pulls the trigger, and the  
gun fires with a loud pop.

LARSEN

The gun fires quite normally. To con-  
tinue: if I now switch on the transmit-  
ter, like so.

He manipulates the badge, then turns it face-up on the table.

LARSEN

The first problem for the shooter is  
that the aiming mechanism is jammed.  
You see?

He aims at a poster on the wall and places his finger on the  
trigger. The sight glows red for a moment, then begins flashing  
red.

LARSEN

That's the error signal. Now it's just  
another gun; all the smarts are  
blocked. If I go ahead and fire anyway:

LARSEN fires into the corner of the room again. There is a loud  
pop, again, but also the grating sound of the gun jamming. The  
slide jams back.

LARSEN

You will see that I can only get one  
shot off before the gun jams.

LARSEN begins working the slide, but it does not unjam.

LARSEN

And I can't unjam it easily. Leaving  
plenty of time for me to be safely ap-  
prehended for unlawful use of a weapon,  
or whatever the case may be.

LT. C

Nice demo.

OFFICIAL A

Mmm. So you're proposing to equip our officers with transmitter badges. Is that right?

LARSEN

Precisely.

OFFICIAL B

How quickly can you get them turned around?

LARSEN smiles at them, pulls a pen from his pocket, and clicks it.

EXT. SCENE - WILLIS TOWER. ROOF. (SUNSET)

Six stone gargoyles are lined up along the roof of the Willis Tower. As the sun descends below the horizon, they crack and split, and all six gargoyles awake, roar and stretch. They then gather together.

BROOKLYN

What's the plan for tonight?

LEXINGTON

We know there's a receiver inside these guns, and it looks like it's meant to interfere with them. I've got a transmitter put together that'll talk to it, which should give us a better chance.

BROADWAY

Which means now is the time to take on Larsen.

GOLIATH

Yes. The transmitter is working?

LEXINGTON

It works on the one gun that we have, anyway. No reason it shouldn't work on the others, too.

GOLIATH

That will have to be enough for now.  
Take Bronx and watch the tavern for  
him. Hudson, Lexington, and I will seek  
out Larsen if he is on the street.

The six of them launch off the roof (BROOKLYN and BROADWAY carrying BRONX) and into the night sky.

EXT. SCENE - CITY STREET (NIGHT)

A nondescript late-model car prowls the mean streets of Chicago. It draws up to a seedy corner where several disreputable characters are loitering. One, KEVIN, approaches as the driver lowers his window, revealing it to be LARSEN.

KEVIN

Oh, it's you. What's up?

LARSEN

Hello, Kevin. How's that equipment  
working out for you?

KEVIN

Working good, no problems so far.

LARSEN

Good to hear it. Listen, I've got another offer for you.

KEVIN

Yeah? What's that?

LARSEN

A little business proposition. Come  
over to El Torito at 11 and I'll tell  
you all about it.

KEVIN

You got it.

LARSEN

Great. Back bar. See you then.

EXT. SCENE - ROOF (NIGHT)

On the roof of an adjacent apartment building, GOLIATH, HUDSON, and LEXINGTON are watching as KEVIN and LARSEN talk. LEXINGTON has the Dellinger tucked into his belt.



GOLIATH

This is the man?

LEXINGTON

That's him.

HUDSON

I don't like the idea of him making  
business propositions at this point.

GOLIATH

Nor I. It sounds too much like he is  
preparing a bounty.

LEXINGTON

On who?

GOLIATH

Perhaps a spy that he found the other  
night.

GOLIATH turns to look at him, meaningfully.

LEXINGTON

Oh.

HUDSON

Come on. The others should be at the  
bar by now.

LEXINGTON

I'll catch up. There's one more thing I  
have to take care of.

GOLIATH

Be quick about it.

EXT. SCENE - EL TORITO - ROOF (NIGHT)

Through the skylight, the bar is lit, but quiet. BROOKLYN,  
BROADWAY, and BRONX are on the roof, generally watching out.

BROOKLYN

Feels good to be working again.

BROADWAY

Yeah. I'd almost forgotten what it was  
like.

BROOKLYN

Hate to say it, but I'm almost hoping  
we don't finish this off tonight.

BROADWAY

Careful what you wish for.

BROOKLYN

No, I know. But sitting around, you get  
real rusty.

BROADWAY

I hear you.

He looks down through the skylight into the bar.

BROADWAY

Look at all these guys showing up now.

Through the skylight, about fifty gang members are visible,  
milling around in the back bar, mostly avoiding one another and  
trying to look tough.

BROOKLYN

Real pillars of society.

BROADWAY

Well, we could leave them to Larsen to  
clean up.

BROOKLYN

No chance. Whatever these guys did, I'm  
not happy about helping Larsen get them  
massacred.

BRONX, looking in a different direction, begins whimpering.

BROADWAY

Sounds like they're back.

HUDSON and GOLIATH arrive, and land on the roof.

GOLIATH

Anything so far?

BROOKLYN

Lot of traffic, but that's about it. No  
sign of Larsen. Where's Lexington?

GOLIATH  
Dropping off the gun.

HUDSON  
He'd better hurry. Look who's here.

From over the edge of the roof, they watch as LARSEN pulls up and parks, gets out of his car, and strides into the bar.

GOLIATH  
Not an ounce of shame in that man. And responsible for how many people being shot?

HUDSON  
Too many.

GOLIATH  
It ends tonight. We end it tonight.

HUDSON  
(to GOLIATH)  
Now, there's the fire.

GOLIATH looks at him, and cracks a very slight, fleeting smile.  
LEXINGTON arrives and lands.

LEXINGTON  
What did I miss?

GOLIATH  
Larsen just arrived. Do you have the transmitter?

LEXINGTON  
(patting a pouch on his belt)  
Right here.

GOLIATH  
We need to find out what he's planning. Open the skylight. We should be able to hear from here.

They surround the skylight and open it.

INT. SCENE - EL TORITO. BACK BAR.

LARSEN ascends to the stage at the back of the barroom, and addresses the crowd.

LARSEN

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. How are you tonight?

There is a general growl of satisfaction from the crowd.

LARSEN

Cuprium Arms values the contributions made by our beta testing squad. To show you how much we appreciate what you're doing, we wanted to offer you an extra opportunity to try out your weapons, and possibly to earn a valuable bounty-

GANGSTER 1

How much?

LARSEN

All in good time. Now, how many of you have heard stories of creatures swooping down on you guys in the night?

There is a general murmur. About half of the gangsters raise their hands.

LARSEN

How many have seen one?

Most of the hands come down. Four or five stay up.

EXT. SCENE - EL TORITO. ROOF. (NIGHT)

BROOKLYN

I swear, I thought we were keeping a lower profile than that.

BROADWAY

We are. They're just trading rumors.

GOLIATH

Trading fears. Get them surrounded.

LEXINGTON reaches to his belt and switches on the transmitter. The others begin to enter through the skylight.

LARSEN (BELOW)

Well, let me tell you, they are no story, but are quite real.

INT. SCENE - EL TORITO. BACK BAR.

LARSEN

And Cuprium Arms is very, very interested in their capture. We value our testers, and we want to see nothing happen to them--

GANGSTER 1

Get on with it, Larsen. How much?

LARSEN

Five hundred dollars for each of these creatures that you take down.

There is another general murmur of approval.

GANGSTER 1

How many are there?

GANGSTER 2

I heard ten.

GANGSTER 3

I heard there was thirty.

GANGSTER 4

Man, I know a guy says he had fifty of them come after him.

LARSEN

The truth is that we don't know how many there are. But we'll pay five hundred dollars, cash, for each head you turn in.

GANGSTER 2

So what are we looking for?

LARSEN

A good question. We've heard they have wings and claws, but we haven't heard much else. Maybe one of you could add to that?

GANGSTER 1

I saw one, he was about twelve feet tall, man. He came up to me and was, like, growling and stuff. I pulled out on him, and, wham! He was gone.

LARSEN

They're fast. Add that. Anyone else?

GANGSTER 4

That one that chased down Peeper, he had a tail, and he grabbed him with that.

GANGSTER 2

Peeper's stupid, man. How you grab someone with a tail?

GANGSTER 4

Man, he got it around his ankle like it was a snake or something, and pulled him down.

LARSEN

Snake-like tails. Good. Anyone else?

BROOKLYN (OFF)

I saw one, and he looked just like this.

He jumps to the stage, landing on all fours, eye alight.

BROOKLYN

Hello, boys. Let's play.

He reaches for his katana. There is a general gasp of horror, followed quickly by the sound of fifty guns being cocked. LARSEN is suddenly horrified, and waves his arms at them.

LARSEN

No! Not up here! Not up here!

But, as it happens, they are up there, and all the guns are aimed toward them. LARSEN dives to one side, and BROOKLYN rolls to the other. There is a volley of fifty shots, which destroy the backdrop to the stage.

HUDSON (OFF)

He's right. I'm back here.

He drops off the rafters, and lands behind everyone, eyes lit and sword out. The crowd turns and aims for him. He dives and rolls to one side, but no need; there are fifty clicks as the guns jam, followed by a lot of rattling and clattering of their owners trying to unjam them.

GANGSTER 2

What? What is this?

GANGSTER 4

Man, my gun's not working!

BROADWAY and LEXINGTON drop out of the rafters to either side of HUDSON, poised for action. GOLIATH drops down at the front of the room, nearer to LARSEN. The crowd begins to reel back, and starts for the door, where it is intercepted by BRONX, who crouches, growling, in front of the doors.

In desperation, several of the gangsters attack the gargoyles with their fists, gun butts, bottles, and whatever else is at hand, and the melee ensues. One charges BRONX, who ducks into his legs, sending him sprawling. Another tries to pistol whip BROADWAY, who catches his arm mid-swing, rips the pistol out of his hand, crushes it, and then flings him for five yards.

In the melee, LARSEN attempts to escape through the back doors. GOLIATH catches him by the shoulder, spins him around, and goes lighted-eye-to-eye with him.

GOLIATH

Going somewhere?

LARSEN draws his own Dellinger from under his coat and aims it into GOLIATH's ribs. GOLIATH, unimpressed, grabs it and shoves it aside as LARSEN fires into the back bar. He then rips it away from him, and, with a deep growl, crushes it and throws it away.

GOLIATH

Five hundred dollars?

He grasps LARSEN by the collar and belt and launches him across the stage with a roar, sending him crashing to the ground alongside BROOKLYN.

BROOKLYN

That'll teach him to be a cheapskate.  
Whoa!

BROOKLYN ducks a flying punch from one of the gangsters, draws his katana, and counterattacks.

Meanwhile on the other end of the bar, LEXINGTON grapples with one of the gangsters, but is not so lucky, and is thrown over the bar. He lands on his hands and rolls down safely, but stays down behind the bar. He crawls along, until he sees a switch marked "BLACK LIGHTS." Then, he stands.

LEXINGTON

(yelling)

Hey, everyone! Tonight's special: betrayal!

He switches on the blacklights. Every gangster in the place lights up in red from their gun hand back. (LEXINGTON does not light up this time.) Already horrified, many of them stop in sheer terror at this newest development.

GANGSTER 2

What?

GANGSTER 4

What is this, man?

GANGSTER 3

Larsen! Where are you? What is this?

In the distance, sirens approach.

GANGSTER 1

It's a setup, man! Get out!

They turn to leave, but BRONX is still blocking the door, growling at them.

GANGSTER 1

Or, not.

The sirens approach rapidly, and stop.

GOLIATH

All out, now!

The gargoyles climb up the walls, or jump, into the rafters, depending on where they are when this command comes. As they get up into the rafters, the police (including HAYS and O'CONNOR) come through the door, guns drawn.



HAYS

Chicago Police! Everyone down on the floor now!

GANGSTER 2

Yes, sir. Thank you for showing up so soon.

The gangsters go to the floor. Unseen, the gargoyles exit through the skylight onto the roof.

EXT. SCENE - EL TORITO. FRONT. (NIGHT)

There are twenty or thirty police cars stationed outside, along with several squadrols, all with lights flashing. Several of the gangsters are being led away to the wagons. They offer almost no resistance. Officers O'CONNOR and HAYS are talking to one of the detectives on scene.

DETECTIVE

It beats me. I've been working Gangs for fifteen years, and I've never seen a haul this big or this wide.

HAYS

Neither have I.

DETECTIVE

And you say you got a tip about this?

O'CONNOR

Yes, sir.

DETECTIVE

Who tipped you off?

O'CONNOR

No idea. Someone left this on the hood of our car while we were at lunch.

He pulls out a Dellinger and hands it to the detective.

O'CONNOR

This was rolled up inside of the barrel.

He hands him a crumpled note. The detective spreads it out and reads it aloud.

DETECTIVE

"If you want the rest of these, go to El Torito at 11 tonight. The Red Death is upon the shooters." Red Death?

HAYS

I thought it was nonsense when I read it, but O'Connor thought it was worth checking on.

O'CONNOR

When we went in, all of these guys were glowing red. Something to do with the lighting in there; when we got them out, it stopped.

DETECTIVE

Someone's got a flair for the dramatic.

HAYS

Maybe so, but every single one of those guns we recovered, they were glowing red too, right around the breech.

DETECTIVE

Glowing gunshot residue? That's a first.

O'CONNOR

Well, whoever wrote that note knew their stuff.

HAYS

You think this is all of them?

DETECTIVE

Probably not, but it's a good chunk of 'em, anyway. Thank God for anonymous tips.

There is motion in the sky. It catches O'CONNOR's eye, and he looks around at it, reflexively. It is LEXINGTON, silhouetted against the night sky, gliding off.

O'CONNOR

Hey, Hays! Paul!

HAYS turns to look, as does the DETECTIVE.

HAYS

What?

O'CONNOR

You see that?

They look, but there's nothing distinct to be seen.

HAYS

What? What'd you see?

O'CONNOR

Monst...er. No. Sorry. Never mind.

The DETECTIVE looks questioningly at HAYS, who shrugs in response.

EXT. SCENE - AERIAL (NIGHT)

All six gargoyles are gliding back downtown (BRONX being carried by BROADWAY and BROOKLYN). They are in high spirits.

BROOKLYN

That felt good. That was a long time coming.

BROADWAY

You said it. Did you see that one guy tried to clobber me? Whammo! Off into the wall!

LEXINGTON

I'm just glad the cops took my note seriously.

GOLIATH

You did well tonight. I do not think we will have to worry about these weapons any more.

BROADWAY

Do you think we got all of them?

GOLIATH

I am sure that we did not. But the ones we did will tell the rest, and they will know it was a set-up, and that should be that.

HUDSON

Aye. Put some fear into them, anyway.  
The very best weapon that there is.

BROOKLYN

Did you see what happened to Larsen?  
Did the police get him?

GOLIATH

I lost track of him. If they haven't  
got him, he should have something to  
think about, anyway.

INT. SCENE - BLACK HAWK MOTEL

A midrange motel room. LARSEN, looking somewhat the worse for  
wear, is on his cell phone with SUTTER.

SUTTER

Did you close the deal?

LARSEN

Yes, sir. Three thousand RF badges at  
five hundred a piece.

SUTTER

Excellent.

LARSEN

Not that it does them much good now,  
though. They already rounded up most of  
my testing crew.

SUTTER

As long as the check clears. Anyway,  
they wanted these guns off the street,  
and now they have them off the street.

LARSEN

Yes, sir.

SUTTER

Which plan did you use?

LARSEN

Neither, actually.

SUTTER

What do you mean?

LARSEN

I think somebody must have tipped off the police. There was a raid.

SUTTER

You think there was a plant?

LARSEN

Not as such, no.

SUTTER

"Not as such"?

LARSEN

Well, Mr. Sutter, those creatures that the kids had been talking about. I saw one last night. It was spying on us.

SUTTER

Is that right?

LARSEN

I think it had been shooting a Dellinger too. It was marked.

SUTTER

How interesting. And do you think this was a police creature?

LARSEN

I don't think so, but it came back tonight with its friends, and it did manage to jam the guns somehow.

SUTTER

I see.

LARSEN

And then, it turned on the bar lights while I was presenting your bounty to our testers. Lit them all up, gave the whole game away.

SUTTER

Extraordinary. Dr. Cotter will be very interested to hear about that.

LARSEN

Nevertheless, I can report that Project Dellinger was a complete success.

SUTTER

I'm pleased to hear that. I will relay the report up the line. Excellent work.

LARSEN

Thank you, sir. Where did you need me next?

SUTTER

Albuquerque. Can you make the 12:45 flight?

LARSEN

I believe I can.

SUTTER

Do it. Tickets and hotel info are on the way to you. You'll be meeting a rep there to pick you up.

LARSEN

Thank you, sir.

He disconnects. He then goes to the window and looks out at the night.

EXT. SCENE - WILLIS TOWER. ROOF. (NIGHT)

All six gargoyles land on the roof, separately. BROADWAY and BROOKLYN deposit BRONX on the roof as they land, and he jogs excitedly up to the edge and back. All but GOLIATH are still excited. GOLIATH goes quietly up to the edge of the roof and looks out.

LEXINGTON

I can't get over how good that felt.

BROADWAY

You said it. The old clan, back in action!

BROOKLYN

So, what do you think? Finish cleaning up tomorrow night?

BROADWAY

Yeah!

LEXINGTON

I wanna make sure Larsen's cleared out  
of town, myself.

BROOKLYN

How about it, Goliath?

He doesn't answer immediately.

BROOKLYN

Goliath? How about it?

GOLIATH

No.

The others are struck by this. Their euphoria is immediately  
damped down.

BROOKLYN

What?

BROADWAY

No?

GOLIATH

No.

LEXINGTON

But we did so well tonight! You said so  
yourself!

GOLIATH

And you did.

BROOKLYN

So, let's keep it going.

BROADWAY

Yeah, we can't stop here.

GOLIATH

We have to.

He turns and looks at them.

GOLIATH

Nothing has changed. We were threatened, and we eliminated the threat. That's all.

BROADWAY

But the rest of those gangsters are still out there! We can't quit now!

GOLIATH

We have got to.

BROOKLYN

We can't. As long as they're still out there, they're still a threat to the city.

GOLIATH

More than we are?

BROADWAY

Definitely!

GOLIATH

And would those people you entertained on Halloween agree with you on that?

BROADWAY

(dubiously)

Well, yeah. I think so.

GOLIATH

Even after all the gunfire?

BROOKLYN

That wasn't our fault!

GOLIATH

No? Then whose was it? Who were they looking for?

There is an embarrassed silence from the others. Even BRONX has picked up on the shift in mood, and is watching GOLIATH, ears back.

GOLIATH

This city is too much like Manhattan in one way: we still inspire fear.



LEXINGTON

In the criminals.

GOLIATH

Who know that we are here now. Who are talking. Who are spreading fear of us. Who are offering bounties on our heads. This is not the attention that we need.

BROADWAY

We can fight them. When haven't we been able to do that?

GOLIATH

And would you fight a city?

LEXINGTON

If that's what it takes.

GOLIATH

Then who are you protecting?

LEXINGTON

I...well...

GOLIATH

Would you really draw them into a fight with us? To what end?

BROADWAY

But we have a chance here! Whatever happened in Manhattan, we can start something better here! Don't you see that, Goliath?

GOLIATH

Start something better? Start what, exactly?

BROADWAY

A life.

GOLIATH

Are you so ready to abandon Manhattan, then?

BROADWAY

No! I'm not abandoning anything! I'm, just, saying we can--

GOLIATH

Then you need to lie lower than this.  
For our sakes and for theirs.

LEXINGTON

But how does that help? What are we  
protecting by sitting around quietly?

BROOKLYN

Everyone.

They look at him.

BROOKLYN

He's right. If I'd stayed out of sight  
that first night, I wouldn't have been  
shot. And all of this other stuff would  
have been resolved by the cops.

BROADWAY

With Larsen's help?

BROOKLYN

Yes, probably. Look, I don't like it  
any better, but we've got to keep quiet  
for everyone's sake. We make too many  
enemies out there, and we're sunk. So  
are our friends. That's a fact.

BROADWAY

(emphatic)

But it's wrong.

BROOKLYN

Is it? You wanna protect them, right?

BROADWAY

Yes!

BROOKLYN

And you want to protect Manhattan?

BROADWAY

Of course.

BROOKLYN

Then we need to do it by staying clear  
of them. The less tangled up we are in  
their problems, the less they're likely

to get tangled in ours, and that's just the way it is.

He walks toward the edge of the roof.

BROOKLYN

(bitterly)

I'm through talking. I'm turning in.

BROADWAY, LEXINGTON, and BRONX follow him. BROADWAY continues to try to discuss it with him. GOLIATH wilts slightly, putting one hand to his face.

HUDSON

That was a hard blow.

GOLIATH

And necessary. They speak as though this were now their home.

HUDSON

It is, at least for a little while. Do you really think they will refrain from protecting it?

GOLIATH

No. But we must protect Manhattan first. I fear what our enemies there may do if our situation becomes too well known.

HUDSON

Hmm. And?

GOLIATH

And I do feel this city attaching itself to us already. Better to shake those bonds off before they grow too strong.

HUDSON

Perhaps so. But we have enemies here now, too, and we will need to deal with them.

GOLIATH

So many enemies, and no allies.

He sighs deeply.

GOLIATH

We have been on this roof too long. Tomorrow we find another.

HUDSON

Aye, Goliath. Tomorrow.

They join the others. As they approach, BROOKLYN gives GOLIATH a hurt look, and GOLIATH looks back at him. The gargoyles take up their accustomed poses, and freeze into stone as the sun touches them, and the new day begins.

EXT. SCENE - J-MO'S HOUSE. (MORNING)

J-MO drags himself homeward along the street, clearly exhausted from having been up all night. As he approaches his house, he sees two cars parked in front. One has a dealer's sticker in the window. The other has New York plates. He barely takes notice of these: he is about to face certain murder at the hands of his aunt. Bracing himself, he goes up the front steps and into the house.

INT. SCENE - J-MO'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM.

J-MO enters. In the living room are CORINNE, along with a man (NATE WALTERS) dressed in a dark suit, both seated. J-MO looks at them, the terror barely hidden behind his eyes.

CORINNE

(calmly)

Where have you been?

J-MO

Tyrone's.

CORINNE

You didn't call.

J-MO

No, Auntie. Ty's phone don't work.

CORINNE

I told you that boy was trouble.

J-MO

I know.

CORINNE

Come in here. We need to talk.

J-MO steps further into the room.

CORINNE  
You wrecked the car, didn't you?

J-MO  
No, it... Yeah.

CORINNE  
What were you out doing Halloween night?

J-MO looks at the man suspiciously.

WALTERS  
You can tell the truth. We know already.

J-MO  
You the police?

WALTERS  
No.

CORINNE  
Well?

J-MO  
We was...we were out looking for...monsters.

CORINNE exhales sharply and sits back.

J-MO  
They were what tore up the car, Auntie, I swear.

WALTERS  
And you were also helping to test the Dellinger 102, isn't that right?

J-MO  
Yes, sir.

CORINNE stands up and goes over to him.

J-MO

We didn't want them to come and mess with you, so Ty and I were trying to get rid of them.

CORINNE embraces him, tearfully.

CORINNE

Oh, Jerome, what are you doing?

J-MO

I'm sorry, Auntie. We were trying to protect you.

WALTERS

Mrs. Tyler?

CORINNE releases J-MO and turns to him.

CORINNE

Yes?

WALTERS

I want to let you know that Jerome has done much more than we expected. My organization has gained enormously from his efforts, and we feel that the very least we can do is to replace your car.

WALTERS opens his briefcase and pulls out a manila pouch, with a set of keys. He hands it to her.

WALTERS

The car is outside. It's yours, free and clear.

CORINNE

You're serious?

WALTERS

Very much so, ma'am.

CORINNE

Thank you. But if half of what you all tell me is true, I'm just glad to have my nephew back in one piece. That's all I want.

WALTERS

About that. There is something else.

He reaches into his briefcase again and pulls out a small book, hardbound, with a red cover.

WALTERS

Jerome, my name is Nate Walters. I represent the Castaway Foundation. We're very concerned with these creatures that you encountered, and we'd like for you to learn a little more about them.

He hands the book to J-MO.

WALTERS

You should read this. My card is in the book. Mr. Levin or I will be very happy to answer any questions you might have.

J-MO and CORINNE look at the book. It is titled, "The Hammer and the Gargoyle," by Angus Canmore. Protruding from the top of the pages is WALTERS's business card; what is visible is the hammer-Q logo of the Quarrymen.

=END=