

0 11/10/2024

Mother's Nature

by

Andrew Morris

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Gargoyles: City of the Phoenix
Season 2, Episode 4

Andrew Morris
4109 W. Crystal St.
Chicago 51, Ill.

INT. SCENE - JACKSON COUNTY COURT HOUSE. COURTROOM.

Caption: Jackson County Court House. Black River Falls, Wisconsin. Tuesday, February 12, 2013. 9:05 AM

A rural Wisconsin courtroom. Judge ORRIN RANKINE sits on the bench of the court. At the prosecution table sits county attorney MEINDL with a thick file; at the defense table sit ARLENE PEGRAM, dressed neatly, and LORRI NESS, her attorney.

RANKINE

Are we ready, counsel? All right. On the record: This is a continuation of the case in the matter of the condition of A.P., Jackson County versus A.P. We are on the second day of testimony. Mrs. Ness, I understand your client wishes to address the court?

NESS

Yes, your honor.

RANKINE

You have admonished her?

NESS

Yes.

RANKINE

All right. Mrs. Pegram, step right up.

ARLENE stands and walks to the witness box. The clerk steps over and swears her in:

CLERK

You do solemnly swear that the testimony you will give in the present matter shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

ARLENE

I do accept for value.

The clerk, looking rather confused, looks to RANKINE, who winces, and then nods. The clerk sits. RANKINE leans over to ARLENE and looks sternly at her.

RANKINE
Behave, all right?

ARLENE
Okay.

RANKINE
Counsel, go ahead.

NESS stands, file in her hand, but before she can do much more:

ARLENE
Can I just say something first?

RANKINE
No, Mrs. Pegram, you've got a good lawyer, let her do her job.

ARLENE
I just want to say that I accept the authority of this court, but I must reject the offer of the court to--

NESS
Arlene, hold on.

ARLENE
--remain on the premises of the state hospital. When there is life at stake, the moral obligation of any human being--

RANKINE
Oh, sweet lord, here we go again.

ARLENE
--is to ensure that they rise to the moment, and--

NESS
Arlene, just wait a sec, we'll get to that.

ARLENE
--the Universal Commercial Code guarantees to all free individuals an absolute right to do just that.

NESS
Arlene, please!

RANKINE
Okay. Recess, off the record. Counsel,
do you need--

ARLENE
I do not need any further assistance
from a member of the B.A.R., judge.

NESS
Mrs. Pegram, you really need to stop.

ARLENE
No, I will not stop. You have done
everything you can to work with them--

RANKINE
No, we're not doing this again. Offi-
cers?

The courtroom officers approach ARLENE and begin to escort her
from the witness box and out of the courtroom.

ARLENE
This is a travesty of justice, judge! I
have not consented to these proceed-
ings, and I demand to see your official
authority to force a natural human be-
ing to consent to--

They exit.

NESS
I'm so sorry, judge. I thought for sure
that we might have got it this time.

RANKINE
I know. I'd hoped so too. Do you want
to proceed out of your client's pres-
ence?

NESS
I suppose I ought to.

MEINDL
Suits me fine.

RANKINE

On the record. Show that Mrs. Pegram has been removed for disrupting proceedings. Is there anything further you need to present, counsel?

NESS

No, your honor, we would just like to suggest that idiosyncratic beliefs alone are not enough to clear the bar set by *Foucha*.

RANKINE

No, and I would be inclined to agree, counsel, but we also have Dr. Roundtree's report in the record, which states that--

The door opens suddenly, and the court officer reappears.

OFFICER

Judge?

RANKINE

Yes? Oh, no.

OFFICER

She's gone.

NESS spreads her arms in despair.

EXT. SCENE - AERIAL. (NIGHT)

BROOKLYN is gliding aggressively through the night. Ahead of him: some silvery thing, drawing away from him fast. He draws out his plasma rifle and fires off a couple of shots toward it, missing wide. The silvery object descends sharply, and he should- ders the rifle, folds his wings, and follows.

Below him, stretching for miles ahead, is an "L" train. He drops onto it, sinking his claws in to the roof and gripping tight. The train flies ahead at incredible speed, city streaking by with a speed blurring it past any hope of recognition. BROOKLYN begins crawling forward on the train, hand over hand, fighting against the wind.

As he reaches the end of the car, he looks down. Before him is a hopper car, and in the car stand KATANA, NASHVILLE, and TACHI among a stack of gargoyle eggs. They watch him distantly. He

reaches out to them. Suddenly the car melts below his claws, like butter, and he slides back. Frantically, he claws ahead, but the roof of the car keeps sliding out from below his claws as the train accelerates, faster and faster, rendering the city lights around him into streaks.

Suddenly the train veers left. He slides off to the right, grasping frantically, losing his grip, tumbling, falling. A familiar fiery halo envelops him as he tumbles into the Phoenix Gate, falling, falling, falling.

The fire crackles and explodes from his eyes.

EXT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT STATION. ROOF. (DUSK)

BROOKLYN roars to life, and shakes off the last crumbs of his stone self as his clan awakens around him. He puts one hand to his eyes, rubbing at them. There is no fire, no train, nothing but the normal dusk on the roof of the station. Nearby him, BROADWAY and LEXINGTON spring happily to the rooftop, stretching out. BROOKLYN steps down, more reserved. The door opens, and MATT steps out on the roof.

MATT

Oh, my watch must be slow, I missed it.
Evening, everyone.

BROADWAY

Evening, Matt.

From above, GOLIATH and HUDSON land on the roof.

MATT

Plans for tonight?

GOLIATH

None.

HUDSON

It has been a quiet few nights.

MATT

All right. You up for a game of mills?

HUDSON

Aye, that would be fine.

MATT

Great.

LEXINGTON, meanwhile, has noticed BROOKLYN being somewhat detached, and approaches him.

LEXINGTON
Hey, you all right?

BROOKLYN
Yeah, fine, just...rough day.

LEXINGTON
You want to see if we can go up the lakeshore tonight?

BROOKLYN
(listless)
Sure, sounds fine.

Meanwhile, MATT's phone rings. He pulls it out and examines it, then answers.

MATT
Yeah? Hi, Luke. What?

He looks alarmed suddenly, and turns away.

MATT
When? You're sure? Phew. Uh, okay.
Yeah. No, but I can be back pretty quickly. All right. Keep in touch.

He hangs up, and turns back. The others are looking at him expectantly.

MATT
That was my brother. Something's come up, sorry. I gotta go home.

BROADWAY
You're all right?

MATT
Yeah. We'll catch up tomorrow night.

HUDSON
Of course.

MATT hurries inside the station and shuts the door behind him.

HUDSON

Well?

GOLIATH

Catch up to him tonight. I do not like sudden disappearances.

INT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. KITCHEN.

The house is dark. MATT unlocks and opens the back door, and enters, closing the door behind himself. He listens. There is some sound there in the distance, inaudible to anyone but a nervous householder. He quietly goes into a kitchen drawer, draws a knife, and begins moving through the house.

INT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM.

MATT moves quietly through the house, sneaking along, looking into every corner for anything out of place. He gradually reaches the living room. He begins to turn toward the front hall, when he is suddenly blindsided from someone in the darkness. There is a brief struggle, in which the knife is knocked from his hand. His assailant stands and switches on the light, revealing ARLENE.

ARLENE

Well. Missed me in the dark and couldn't hold your weapon more than three seconds tops. I raised you better than that, didn't I?

MATT

Hi, Mom. Sorry.

ARLENE

You should be. Aren't you keeping in training?

MATT

Evidently not.

ARLENE

Oh, come on, Matt.

She helps him up from the floor, and they hug.

ARLENE

Oh, it's good to see you again!

MATT

Good to see you too, Mom.

EXT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT PARK (AERIAL) (NIGHT)

BROADWAY and HUDSON glide through the night toward MATT's house. They land on his roof, near the back.

INT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM.

ARLENE

Well, anyway, they insisted that I couldn't even speak at my own hearing, can you imagine? So I told them, they needed to get educated on the law, and...

There is a thump on the roof. MATT looks up, with just his eyes. ARLENE does not notice.

ARLENE

...gave them some pointers on how to learn more about--now, don't you roll your eyes at me! I'm still your mother.

MATT

Sorry, Mom, I just thought I heard...do you want something to drink? Coffee, or something?

ARLENE

Oh, now, it's 10 at night. Who drinks coffee so late?

MATT

Well, I could get you a pop or something.

ARLENE

Anything without fluoride in it would be fine. I'm on a roll now, never felt better. Wouldn't want to dull it.

MATT

Let me go see what I have.

He gets up and goes into the kitchen briskly.

INT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. KITCHEN.

MATT enters the kitchen and, as quietly as he can, opens the back door. HUDSON and BROADWAY are there. MATT whispers.

MATT

You got to get out of here. It's my mother.

BROADWAY

That's a problem?

MATT

Yes, it is. She's not supposed to be here.

HUDSON

Where is she supposed to be, then?

MATT

In a hospital.

BROADWAY

Can we help her go back?

MATT

No!

ARLENE (OFF)

Matt? Is everything all right?

MATT

Fine, be right there.

BROADWAY

We're not doing anything else.

MATT

Well, can't you not do it somewhere else?

HUDSON

Speak plainly.

MATT

Vamoose.

BROADWAY

No. We've at least got to keep an eye on you. And I want to know more about your own clan, too.

MATT

All right, fine. Just keep out of sight, and whatever happens, just...put up with her.

HUDSON

If you're sure about this?

MATT

Very, very, extremely sure. Please.

BROADWAY

All right.

MATT

Thanks. I'll fill you in later. Go on.

He shuts the door on them.

EXT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. BACK PORCH. (NIGHT)

BROADWAY

Well? What now?

HUDSON

Now we watch. Here.

They go to the back window and peek in from the sides. MATT, looking slightly frazzled, has a couple of pop cans in his hands. He glances back at them, and then goes back to the living room.

INT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM.

MATT enters, and hands a drink to ARLENE. She scrutinizes it.

MATT

Sorry, it's the best I've got.

ARLENE

Ah...bottled in Birmingham. That should be all right. You get that much right, anyway.

MATT

So, how have you been otherwise?

ARLENE

Been doing well. Been doing research,
mostly.

MATT sits. Through the next conversation, he is only half-listening, and he keeps glancing toward the back window.

MATT

Oh? About what?

ARLENE

About the forces behind the nation's
governments, mainly.

MATT

Ah.

ARLENE

And I think I'm on to something big,
Matt. Something amazing.

MATT

What's that, mom?

ARLENE

Did you know that the Illuminati walk
among us?

MATT

No, I can't say I did.

ARLENE

Well, they do. And there's another
thing.

MATT

What's that?

ARLENE

They have devised some sort of a plan
to make monsters.

MATT

Oh? What kind of monsters would those
be?

ARLENE

Ones that would make your toes curl just to hear about them. Horrible, demonic ones. Winged creatures with fangs and claws, the kind I used to tell you kids about in bedtime stories.

MATT squirms in his seat, and takes a longer glance back at the back window. BROADWAY and HUDSON are barely visible there. BROADWAY has sat up slightly and is arching an eyebrow at MATT, who rolls his eyes before turning back to ARLENE.

MATT

Oh, Mom, come on. Can't be any such thing.

ARLENE

Oh, no? Haven't you seen what came to New York City?

MATT

And those were government made?

ARLENE

Had to be! No other explanation, or do you expect me to believe they just popped into existence?

MATT

No, Mom, I don't expect you to believe anything in particular.

ARLENE

But I can prove it now.

MATT

Yeah?

ARLENE

Oh, yeah.

MATT

How's that?

ARLENE

They've come to Chicago.

MATT sits up very straight at this while trying very hard not to look like he is sitting up very straight at this.

EXT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. BACK PORCH. (NIGHT)

BROADWAY

Uh oh. Is that our cue?

HUDSON

Steady. Let her talk.

INT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM.

MATT

Well, that's, um, interesting. What part of Chicago, exactly?

ARLENE

Downtown. Right in the heart of the Loop. At the Federal Building.

MATT

Oh.

He relaxes somewhat.

ARLENE

Or at least, that's where they're keeping the proof.

MATT

What proof is that?

ARLENE

Embryos. Little ungrown ones. They make them at an underground base in New Mexico. They shipped them to New York, and now they're shipping them here. They grow them up in secret and then they turn 'em loose.

MATT

Oh, that's interesting. And you said you can prove this?

ARLENE

Yes. With your help.

MATT

Help? How?

ARLENE

My boy is so clever. Getting inside the system. Taking a job with the power company, with all that access to all those buildings downtown.

MATT

No, Mom, it doesn't work like that.

ARLENE

It has to.

MATT

Mom, I can't do that. I'll get fired.

ARLENE

The truth will out, my son.

MATT

Then the truth's got to work its own way out, because I can't be opening any doors for it.

ARLENE

You will. Listen to your mother.

MATT

I won't.

ARLENE

All right, then.

She stands.

ARLENE

We wrestle for it.

MATT

Mom, I'm not wrestling you either. Can't you just sit down and we can talk for a while?

ARLENE

Come on.

She goes into the dining room. MATT jumps to his feet and follows her in.

INT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM.

ARLENE turns on the lights and MATT winces, looking toward the back windows; both gargoyles have hidden themselves. ARLENE crouches and puts her hands in front of her.

ARLENE

Come on. I taught you how to do this,
now let's go.

MATT

Mom, I don't want to hurt you.

ARLENE

Then make it clean.

MATT starts to talk, but shrugs. He takes up a wrestling posture, facing the window. BROADWAY and HUDSON peep in as he does. ARLENE engages with him in a collar-and-elbow hold.

ARLENE

Right. Three, two, one, wrestle!

ARLENE begins to shuffle around as MATT tries to hold his ground, keeping her back to the windows. This does not last long: she shifts her arms, thrusts one arm past his chin, and takes him over her leg to the floor with a loud thud. MATT grunts. Both gargoyles react. ARLENE puts one knee on MATT's chest.

ARLENE

We're going to need to get some armaments first. You drive.

MATT

Ehhhh.

EXT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. BACK PORCH.

BROADWAY and HUDSON are watching this. BROADWAY winces. HUDSON grins.

BROADWAY

Where do you think she picked up moves
like that?

HUDSON

They must have a fine physical training
regimen in that hospital.

BROADWAY

I guess so.

HUDSON

A feisty one. I would like to know her better. Come along, we should follow them.

They climb to the roof.

EXT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT PARK ARMORY. (NIGHT)

MATT pulls up to the front of the armory and parks. His mother is in the passenger seat.

ARLENE

Now, I can handle this myself, you just wait in the car. Won't be more than a few minutes.

MATT

You can handle the National Guard by yourself?

ARLENE

Trust Mother, would you?

MATT

Yes, mother.

ARLENE

Very good. Be right back.

She gets out of the car and goes toward the door of the armory. There is suddenly a voice from behind, startling MATT.

HUDSON

She just might.

MATT

Yah! Please don't do that.

BROADWAY

What is happening?

MATT

She thinks she is going to get armed.

BROADWAY

No, beyond that.

MATT

She wants to raid the Federal Building downtown.

BROADWAY

No, I got that. What is her overall...

MATT

Her deal?

BROADWAY

Right.

MATT

She's not well. She has been in a mental hospital in Wisconsin for fifteen years. I guess she got out.

HUDSON

But she is not recovered, then?

MATT

She thinks she's going to break into the Illinois National Guard armory by herself. What do you think?

At the door, ARLENE knocks loudly. After a moment, a young soldier opens the door.

SENTRY 1

Yes, ma'am? Is something wrong?

ARLENE

No, I'm just getting a few things.

SENTRY 1

Such as?

ARLENE abruptly punches him in the gut, then the head, dropping him.

ARLENE

Oh, revenge, for one.

She goes inside. Back at the truck:

HUDSON

I think she has a good chance.

MATT

Oh, boy. Guys, I don't draw on you much, but could you--

HUDSON

Straight away.

BROADWAY and HUDSON go inside the armory behind ARLENE.

INT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT PARK ARMORY.

ARLENE strolls along calmly, humming to herself, followed in the shadows by BROADWAY and HUDSON. She walks past a few armored vehicles.

ARLENE

Hmm, should I? No, too ostentatious, and we'd never get it upstairs.

She continues onward, stopping at a rack of rifles. She goes over the selection.

ARLENE

Hmm. That's too large...never get the bullets for that...ah!

She picks up a soldier's rifle and weighs it in her hands.

ARLENE

Yes, perfect. That will do nicely. Now the bullets. Um...

From up above, in the gallery, a door bangs open. Another sentry comes out.

SENTRY 2

Hey. Hey! What are you doing?

ARLENE

You, there! Where do you keep the bullets for this thing?

The sentry draws his sidearm.

SENTRY 2

Put that down at once!

ARLENE

Oh, all right, I'll find them myself.

The sentry begins to aim at ARLENE, but finds his gun being pushed out to one side. He looks up; BROADWAY is right there, holding him off. The sentry opens his mouth to yell, but BROADWAY is there first, punching him in the head. He rolls down the gallery and lies there, knocked out. A third steps out onto the gallery.

SENTRY 3

Hey, you coming back? What is--

He doesn't get much further. HUDSON puts his left hand over the sentry's mouth, and puts the tip of his sword to his neck.

HUDSON

(quietly)

Be very quiet.

SENTRY 3 turns out to be a bit more vigorous than the others, though, and brings his arms around the inside, deflecting both HUDSON's sword and hand away. He gets in one punch to HUDSON's chin, knocking HUDSON back slightly. The sentry spins away and reaches for his sidearm.

SENTRY 3

Park--!

This is as much as he gets out. BROADWAY gets in behind him in a half-nelson, tying up his gun arm, and with the other fist, knocks him cold. BROADWAY sets him down gently on the floor. BROADWAY and HUDSON exchange looks, and then look down at ARLENE.

Below, as this goes on, ARLENE hums to herself, picking over boxes of ammunition in a drawer. She finds what she is looking for, pulls out the box, flips it in her hand, and turns to go.

ARLENE

Got it! Thanks, g'night.

She exits.

HUDSON

We had better leave as well. Back to the station.

BROADWAY

Not with Matt?

HUDSON

No. It is his mother. She's no danger to him, and we know her target. And--

There is a noise in one of the offices off the gallery, and both gargoyles look toward it.

HUDSON

Up and out.

They jump up and climb toward the windows along the roofline as the sergeant comes out of the office. Quietly, they exit. The sergeant walks over to the two unconscious sentries, and checks on them, and then looks around, alarmed.

EXT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT STATION. ROOF. (NIGHT)

HUDSON is facing the others, telling what he and BROADWAY have gone through.

HUDSON

They were gone when we left.

GOLIATH

But he is in no danger?

BROADWAY

Not from what I could see. Not immediately.

HUDSON

But she has a certain vigor to her. She's sure to be in trouble soon.

The door opens and MATT enters, face full of agony. BRONX comes over to him and greets him as he approaches the group.

BROADWAY

Are you all right?

MATT

No. I had to get her to send me out for protein powder and distilled water. You guys are okay?

BROADWAY

Sure, it was just three guards. Nothing much.

MATT

Yeah, but armed guards!

HUDSON

It is not a burden. We have had much worse.

GOLIATH

But an explanation would be appreciated. Why is your mother taking weapons from the guard?

MATT

Because she is unwell. She thinks she is going to save the world.

GOLIATH

From what?

MATT

Well...from you, I think.

BROOKLYN

What?

MATT

She is convinced that the government has some sort of embryonic creatures downtown, and she didn't name names, but it sure sounds like she means you guys. Other gargoyles, I mean.

BROADWAY

Yeah, that's what she said.

BROOKLYN

Could she be right about that?

MATT

I don't think so. I mean, you didn't come from a lab in New Mexico, did you?

GOLIATH

No.

MATT

Well, there you go.

BROOKLYN

But she's still dangerous.

MATT

Yeah. If she finds you here, I don't know what she plans, but I doubt it's any good.

BROOKLYN

More than that. What about you?

MATT

I mean, I've dealt with this before.

GOLIATH

Have you?

MATT

I mean...mostly. Somewhat.

GOLIATH

It may be better for us to look out for you both.

BROOKLYN

When's she planning to go downtown?

MATT

Not tonight, I don't think. Hard to tell for sure.

BROOKLYN

So we have some time to go recon this building. What did she plan?

MATT

She meant for me to let her into the electrical rooms. But I--

BROOKLYN

Lexington?

LEXINGTON

Sure.

HUDSON

We should return to the armory. It would be better to know in advance if they have tracked down those weapons.

BROADWAY

Yeah.

GOLIATH

We will go with you, Matt.

MATT

I mean, if you want to, sure.

BROOKLYN

No time like now. Come on.

BROOKLYN and LEXINGTON take off to the east, and HUDSON and BROADWAY take off to the west. MATT looks after both of them, worried.

GOLIATH

Is this all right?

MATT

I just don't want to put you to a lot of trouble for this.

GOLIATH

Why?

MATT

It's just...you know my history. She was responsible for my brother...um...

GOLIATH

But you still protect her.

MATT

She is my mother. Of course I do. That doesn't mean you have to.

GOLIATH

It does. You have protected us, in your way. We will protect you, and we will protect those in your clan.

MATT

I don't feel like I've earned that.

GOLIATH

You do not need to. And in any event,
it has been quiet here.

MATT

Be careful what you wish for. You don't
know my mother.

GOLIATH

No. I do not take a peaceful city for
granted, but it does get...

MATT

Boring?

GOLIATH

That is not exactly the term I would
use. It is close. But there is more
than that.

MATT

Oh? What's that?

GOLIATH

When we left Manhattan, I had hoped its
troubles would follow us here. They
have not.

MATT

What troubles?

GOLIATH

There were many. Some you may have
heard of, some you may not. I do not
know what news had come this way. All
were aimed at us. There were nights,
low nights, when I have thought we
brought more danger to Manhattan than
protection.

MATT

Like the storm.

GOLIATH

Aye. And it did follow us away from
there when we left. But the rest has
not, and I do fear it is only a matter
of time before one of those dangers

takes advantage of a city lying bleeding.

MATT

I see. So, peace here may mean the battle is still going to be there.

GOLIATH

Yes.

MATT

How can I help?

GOLIATH

We have not earned your help, have we?

MATT

Stuff that. I like you guys. I don't want you getting hurt, or your friends.

GOLIATH

And now you see why we will protect you.

MATT

I guess so.

GOLIATH

Come on.

He picks up BRONX and goes toward the parapet.

MATT

I don't suppose my mother is one of those dangers you're hoping to keep away from Manhattan right now, though. She is more of a problem for me than I see her being for you.

GOLIATH

I do not see a distinction, and if she has us targeted, we should be involved in this.

MATT

Thank you.

GOLIATH takes off going west, clutching BRONX, and MATT watches him go briefly.

EXT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT PARK ARMORY. ROOF. (NIGHT)

Below, several police cars are parked outside of the armory as HUDSON and BROADWAY arrive on the roof. They look down, then at each other, and then enter through an inconspicuous window.

INT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT PARK ARMORY.

Inside, the police are circulating around the floor of the armory alongside several National Guardsmen, reviewing the scene of the late crimes. Up on the gallery, SENTRY 2 is holding an ice pack to his head and speaking to an officer. HUDSON and BROADWAY sneak onto a rafter, out of sight. A police DETECTIVE is speaking to the CAPTAIN of the local Guardsmen.

CAPTAIN

But as far as we can tell, it was only the one down here.

DETECTIVE

And upstairs?

CAPTAIN

I don't know. They keep saying there was something there. Not someone, something.

DETECTIVE

What sort of something?

CAPTAIN

They didn't get a good look.

DETECTIVE

Huh.

CAPTAIN

Total take wasn't much. Two rifles and a box of ammunition.

DETECTIVE

Seems like a lot of trouble to go through.

CAPTAIN

How'd you do?

DETECTIVE

Well, we got some camera shots from around here. We're working to get the license plate right now.

BROADWAY

(quietly)

Uh oh.

HUDSON

(quietly)

What is it?

BROADWAY

(quietly)

I think they're going to figure out who was here.

From the street, officer MILLER enters and calls out to the DETECTIVE.

MILLER

Hey, they got a hit on that plate.

DETECTIVE

All right, let's go.

The DETECTIVE starts to follow MILLER out.

HUDSON

Can you keep them busy?

BROADWAY

I can try.

HUDSON

Do it. I will warn the others.

HUDSON climbs out onto the roof. BROADWAY looks down at the people inside, and scratches his chin.

BROADWAY

Well, direct approach is quickest.

He leaps down onto the gallery. Eyes alight, he spreads his hands and wings, and growls at SENTRY 2, who skitters backward, wide-eyed, along with the officer who had been talking to him. BROADWAY then leaps toward them, clearing well above both of

them, and then bounds up the wall and out of the windows near the roof.

EXT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT PARK ARMORY. ROOF. (NIGHT)

BROADWAY climbs out onto the roof and goes to the edge, facing the parked police cars, wings spread, looking quite grand and impressive. Several officers pile out of the Armory and begin yelling at the police outside. One or two of them turn the spotlights onto him, giving him a wonderful dramatic appearance. He turns around briefly: behind him, he can see the silhouette of HUDSON leaving in the sky. He leaps off, dives toward the police, and then glides quickly away up the street. The police cars take off, one by one, and chase him up the street.

EXT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT PARK. AERIAL. (NIGHT)

BROADWAY makes a series of dives and climbs and banks back and forth to draw the attention of the police. Several of the cars in the lead open fire on him, and he weaves to dodge the gunfire. BROADWAY looks back at them briefly.

BROADWAY

(to himself)

Watch it, guys. Bullets travel.

He banks hard to the left and the police follow him up.

EXT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. ROOF. (NIGHT)

GOLIATH and BRONX are standing on the roof, looking out at the night. MATT enters from the scuttle and walks over to them.

MATT

Well, she's definitely out for the night. Must have worn herself out on the run.

GOLIATH

Good.

MATT

What you said before, about the troubles you'd had in Manhattan. What did you mean?

GOLIATH

There were many. Would you like a full list?

MATT

No, no. But some highlights would be all right. Kind of want to understand what you're up against.

GOLIATH

You have met David Xanatos.

MATT

The other night, yeah.

GOLIATH

He had much to do with many of them.

MATT

I should have figured as much. Such as?

GOLIATH

Long ago, now, he brought us to Manhattan.

MATT

From where?

GOLIATH

From Wyvern Hill, in Scotland.

MATT

Quite a long way. He must have been very--

GOLIATH

In the year 994.

MATT

What? No, seriously?

GOLIATH

Yes.

MATT stares at him.

GOLIATH

And there is more. Early on, he had retained a scientist of his own to...copy us. To make more for his own purposes.

MATT

He didn't, did he?

GOLIATH

He did. One cruel and avaricious. He was responsible for the blast some years ago, at the conference of our supporters.

MATT

Wow.

GOLIATH

And there were others. His first attempts were on humans he found in the street. Most of them survived, but much changed.

MATT

What happened to them?

GOLIATH

They hid. They still live, under the streets. One was the brother of my...my friend. He now leads them.

MATT

And are they another threat, then?

GOLIATH

Hardly. They are protectors, although in their own way.

MATT

And this is just a few of your enemies you're talking about now.

GOLIATH

Yes. You see now what I had hoped to spare the city from?

MATT

Yes. I can't say I'm excited about the thought of them coming to Chicago, though.

GOLIATH

We defended Manhattan. We will defend Chicago as well, until we return home.

MATT

I know.

He thinks a moment.

MATT

But if this scientist guy was able to make copies of you, wouldn't that mean...

He is cut off by HUDSON's arrival.

HUDSON

The police have traced you. They are coming.

GOLIATH

How quickly?

HUDSON

Broadway has gone to distract them, but I do not think it will hold them off long.

GOLIATH

Go and get your mother away from here. We will defend this place until you go.

MATT

Right away, and, hey?

GOLIATH

Yes?

MATT

Be very careful. I mean that.

HUDSON

You as well.

MATT runs over to the scuttle and slides down the ladder. GOLIATH and HUDSON go to the front of the roof and watch. In the distance, the sirens approach.

INT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM.

MATT rushes in and turns on the lights. His mother is sleeping on the couch. He shakes her.

MATT

Mom? Mom? Wake up.

ARLENE

Mmm hmm. What is it?

MATT

Cops are coming.

She springs fully awake and sits bolt upright.

ARLENE

Really?

MATT

Yes, and you and I are leaving now.
Come on.

ARLENE

We can't leave now. This is your home.

MATT

No, Mom. We're going to get away from
here.

ARLENE

Nonsense. I didn't pick up those rifles
for decoration. Lock and load.

MATT

Mom, listen. There are a hundred cops
going to be coming here, and I don't
know if you have heard the news, but
they are not exactly reluctant to shoot
back when they are shot at.

ARLENE

Great, that should make it all the more
interesting.

MATT

Maybe for you, but what about my neigh-
bors downstairs?

ARLENE

Well...

MATT

You wanted to go get those creatures
downtown, right? It's going to be hard
to do that with the cops right here,
right?

ARLENE

I suppose so. But you're really spoiling this for me.

MATT

I know. But come on, anyway. I know a place we can hide until the heat's off.

ARLENE

Now, that's my son!

She stands and gathers up one or two things. MATT runs to his bedroom and grabs a bag. They join hands, and go to the back of the apartment.

EXT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. ROOF. (NIGHT)

The sirens have gotten louder. BROADWAY arcs into view and lands on the roof near the others.

HUDSON

How long?

BROADWAY

Half a minute, no more.

GOLIATH

Matt is taking his mother away. Go with them until they are in the clear.

BROADWAY nods, and goes to the back of the roof. Below, the door bangs open, and MATT and ARLENE step out onto the porch. BROADWAY looks down over the edge of the roof: he catches MATT's eye, and then sits up again.

MATT

It sounds like they're getting close.

ARLENE

We could still stand and fight this.

MATT

That has a bad track record, mother.

He gives her a hard look, and for just a moment, her heart wells up in her. But then she hardens.

ARLENE

Come on, then.

They run down the back steps and across to the garage. BROADWAY takes off from the roof and begins to circle above the garage as the first of the police cars arrive in front. GOLIATH and HUDSON go to the front, and take off.

EXT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. FRONT YARD. (NIGHT)

Several police officers pile out of their cars and begin to approach the house. From above, there is a loud roar. HUDSON dives from above, eyes lit, swooping down across the police, who scatter in response. From the other side, GOLIATH dives at them, and then glides out down the street. Two or three of the officers give chase.

However, one officer is less affected than the others: officer SANCHEZ, whose eyes widen when he sees GOLIATH and HUDSON diving at the police. With him is officer MILLER, who has ducked and has his pistol out, aimed at the rapidly retreating GOLIATH.

MILLER

Did you see that? Sanchez, did you see that?

SANCHEZ

Yeah, I saw it, Miller. Come on.

They begin to make their way toward the back of the house through the gangway.

EXT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. ALLEY. (NIGHT)

A patrol car drives up into the alley and stops behind MATT's garage, shining its spotlight around. It does not stay long. BROADWAY drops forcefully onto the car's trunk, sinking it hard. He leers into the rear window of the car, eyes alight. The driver floors it down the alley, BROADWAY riding along the whole way. As they get clear, MATT's garage door opens. He pulls out into the alley and briskly drives away the other direction.

Down the alley, the patrol car exits into the street, banging the curb as the patrolmen try to make the corner. BROADWAY leaps off and flies up into the night, banking around to stay behind the patrol car. It whips around the block again, facing MATT's truck. A moment later, the patrol car U-turns, lights on, and begins to give chase.

BROADWAY

Oh no you don't.

He turns and pursues the patrol car.

EXT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. BACK YARD. (NIGHT)

SANCHEZ, with his weapon drawn, begins to work his way up the stairs, followed by MILLER. He reaches the second floor, meeting the frightened eyes of a woman inside. He quietly gestures to her to get inside and out of sight, which she does. Up to the third floor. He backs up to the wall, and sneaks a quick look through the window inside MATT'S apartment. There is nothing. MILLER comes up behind him, looks across, and gestures at the ladder up to the open roof scuttle. SANCHEZ nods, and goes over to the ladder. With his pistol in one hand, he steps onto the ladder. In front, there is another roaring scream and a series of yells from below as GOLIATH and HUDSON make another pass across the police below.

EXT. SCENE - STREET. (NIGHT)

MATT tears along an arterial street, pursued by the police car, which is pursued from above by BROADWAY. The police car closes tight on the truck, when there is suddenly a loud thump on the roof as BROADWAY lands there. He punches it rhythmically, ending with a shave-and-a-haircut riff before gripping the light bar and leering in the windshield. The officers scream, and the car swerves hard. BROADWAY leaps clear as the car vaults the curve, crashes through a fence, and lands in a junkyard, skidding to a stop. The officers inside look around, stunned. BROADWAY spirals up: below him, MATT's truck continues down the street and out of sight around a corner. Below, BROADWAY sees the officers get out and look at the roof, guns drawn, but, failing to see anything, begin scanning the sky. He clears out.

EXT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. ROOF. (NIGHT)

SANCHEZ slowly climbs up the ladder. He sticks his eyes above the edge and looks around quickly. He takes one more step up, looking around nervously. He finally turns to look behind himself, turning himself nose-to-nose with BRONX, who gives him one mighty sniff and then licks him clean across the face. SANCHEZ lets out an exasperated sigh.

MILLER
(whispering)
Sanchez? What is it?

SANCHEZ
 (to MILLER)
 Slow 'em down. They're not here.

MILLER reaches for his radio.

MILLER
 (to radio)
 2565, in the back, nobody's here. Slow
 'em down.

DISPATCHER
 (on radio)
 10-4 2565, units on Kil--

There is a loud squeal as Sergeant MIKULSKI cuts in.

MIKULSKI
 (on radio)
 Miller, where are you?? Don't you tell
 me there ain't nobody here!

SANCHEZ
 Oh, boy. Tell him to come back up here
 and we'll show him.

(to BRONX)
 You guys are in big trouble.

BRONX
 Arrghur.

INT. SCENE - FEDERAL BUILDING.

A darkened government building. A hallway with a line of identical offices, which ends at a wall of windows overlooking the darkened city. The sky is just beginning to lighten outside. A door cracks opens midway along the hall. LEXINGTON sticks his head out, looks around cautiously, and then steps into the hall, followed by BROOKLYN. They begin to go down the hall, looking at the rooms around them.

LEXINGTON
 Oh, look, more of the same.

BROOKLYN
 You think this could be it?

LEXINGTON

I don't know. I still think that, if they were doing any of...that...they'd need plenty of power. They're near enough to the utility floor, so they'd have that here.

BROOKLYN

You said that about the other three floors.

LEXINGTON

Yeah, I did.

BROOKLYN

Just keeping you straight on that.

LEXINGTON

There's one other possibility.

BROOKLYN

What's that?

LEXINGTON points to his head and spins his finger in a tight circle, making the familiar sign.

BROOKLYN

Yeah. Well, but, suppose she's actually on to something?

LEXINGTON

Suppose she is. Then what?

BROOKLYN

Then...I don't know. I'm kind of hoping...

LEXINGTON

Katana?

BROOKLYN

Yeah. Something like that. If they need "zhe goot breeting shtock," or something like that.

LEXINGTON

I guess it's possible.

BROOKLYN

No crazier than a lot of things.

LEXINGTON

No, it's not.

BROOKLYN

Even if it's nonsense, you've got to figure that Matt's mother is probably--

He holds up a hand suddenly, cutting himself off. He sneaks an eye around a corner, looking, with one hand on his katana. He relaxes, and steps out around the corner, and they continue to investigate.

BROOKLYN

It's probably the same kind of nonsense she's working from. May as well work back from that.

They come up to a set of double doors, room 3727, locked with a card lock, with a "NO ADMITTANCE" sign. LEXINGTON inspects it.

LEXINGTON

Well...if anything's it, this is it.

BROOKLYN

Can you get through it?

LEXINGTON

I think so. Give me a minute.

He pulls a pocket computer from his belt and puts it up against the card pad. The computer beeps and begins processing.

LEXINGTON

Doesn't look like a very complicated lock, though. Most genetic engineering schemes have guards at least.

BROOKLYN

That's what bothers me. This place is abandoned. Graveyards have more security.

LEXINGTON

Budget cuts, I guess.

The computer beeps and flashes at them. LEXINGTON puts it on the pad, and the pad beeps and the door clicks. They open the door and look inside, and then at each other, disappointed. It is a supply closet.

BROOKLYN

Well, so much for that.

LEXINGTON

Anything else to check out?

BROOKLYN

No. Sun's coming up. Let's get back up top.

They shut the door and begin going back to the stairwell.

LEXINGTON

So what's your plan now?

BROOKLYN

Get them here, and then work it out as we go.

LEXINGTON

That's not really a plan, is it?

BROOKLYN

It's probably the safest one we've got. It's not like it's good sense to plan around a crazy person.

EXT. SCENE - FOREST PRESERVE. (DAWN)

MATT is tramping through the woods, assault rifle slung over his back, phone to his ear. He is talking to LUKE PEGRAM on the phone.

MATT

Are you in Chicago yet?

LUKE

Just got in about two this morning. Where are you?

MATT

The Grand Army of the Republic Woods.

LUKE

No, really.

MATT

Really. Mom thinks that's a good omen for our success, but it was just the first place I could go to get her isolated.

LUKE

Where is that?

MATT

On the river, west of the city.

LUKE

And I guess she's not there if you're able to talk on the phone?

MATT

No, she's in camp, making her final plans. She saw a couple of deer around last night, and sent me out to bag one.

LUKE

For breakfast?

MATT

Well, she said that or some hotcakes.

LUKE

(laughs)

MATT

She never changes, does she?

LUKE

Well, not when she's like this. When she's on her meds she is a lot more reasonable.

MATT

I hope so. That'd be the point, wouldn't it?

LUKE

She asks about you. She wants to know where you are, whether you're okay.

Whether you got married yet, that sort of thing.

MATT

Yeah.

LUKE

But then she starts saying the meds are confining her, and off she goes.

MATT continues on in silence a moment.

LUKE

Are you all right?

MATT

Yeah, I'm all right.

LUKE

The cops said something about being attacked when they got to your apartment last night. What happened?

MATT

I don't know. I wasn't there.

LUKE

Mutt. Come on.

MATT

Lukey, I gotta tell you something. You remember those gargoyles out in New York?

EXT. SCENE - DREAMSCAPE. (NIGHT)

BROOKLYN is gliding through a dark night sky across a featureless plain. He lands and takes a few steps forward. Out of the dark appears KATANA, chained to a table.

BROOKLYN

Katana! Hold on, I got you!

He takes several steps toward her, but his feet slide backward along the ground, as if he were running uphill on ice.

KATANA

Brooklyn! Get me out of this!

BROOKLYN

I'm trying!

He reaches forward to try to get to her, and cannot reach. He digs his claws into the ground to pull forward, but keeps sliding backward. As he is straining, a spotlight clicks onto KATANA. She squints her eyes and turns from the light. Into the light steps a white-coated human, a MAD DOCTOR, with perfectly coiffed hair and a head mirror the size of a frying pan on his head.

DOCTOR

Oh! Now! Hold on, for the show is just starting!

BROOKLYN's eye lights, and he surges forward toward the DOCTOR, but slides backward even harder. He finally slides back into a theater seat and is forced to sit. He attempts to get up, but can't; it's as if gravity is too strong for him to get up.

DOCTOR

Let us begin the operations!

The DOCTOR cups his left hand to KATANA's abdomen, and reaches in with his right to draw out a paper chain, which he flings across the empty void, where it hangs in the air. As he does this, KATANA keens in pain.

DOCTOR

Four out of five of us agree that there is a vital need for embryonic multiplicative techniques for the survival of the fittest! And, lo, forthwith it goes!

BROOKLYN

Katana!

She cries out. On closer inspection, the paper chain consists of tiny gargoyles, alternating Nashville and Tachi figures, linked at the hands and feet. The little figures cry and squeal as the chain flails in the void. BROOKLYN grabs for the chain, but it remains just outside of his grasp. The doctor begins pulling more and more vigorously:

DOCTOR

And we can produce more, and more, and
hundreds, and hundreds and hundreds and
THOUSANDS and THOUSANDS!

As he pulls, KATANA stops screaming. As BROOKLYN looks on in horror, her head begins to unravel and pull down inside of her as the chain is pulled out.

BROOKLYN

No. No! Katana!

He lunges toward her, trying to reach her, but is sucked back into the chair. Then he tries to move again, but he cannot. He looks down: his lower body is turning to stone, very gradually moving up his torso. He struggles to get free.

DOCTOR

And then, once the product is completed, we can feed the beast all that it wants to eat! Ah ha ha ha!

At this, there is a blue vortex that forms to their right. The chain flaps and whips in the resulting wind, and is sucked into it. As it goes, a torrential storm begins around them. The chain is drawn into the swirling winds, and shredded, the squeals of its links echoing around. BROOKLYN continues to struggle to get free as the stone creeps up around his neck, up over his face, and over his eyes.

EXT. SCENE - FEDERAL BUILDING. ROOF. (DUSK)

BROOKLYN is sleeping, with LEXINGTON nearby. The sun sinks below the horizon, and they shake themselves awake with a roar. BROOKLYN promptly drops to one knee, panting, eye wide in terror. LEXINGTON sees this, and rushes to him.

LEXINGTON

Hey! What's wrong? What's happening?

BROOKLYN

I'm just...

He looks around at the roof. All is quiet and normal. BROOKLYN shakes his head.

BROOKLYN

I'm fine. I'm all right.

LEXINGTON

No, you're not.

BROOKLYN

Yes, I am. I just, I had a bad dream.
That's all. I'm fine.

He stands, and stretches his wings out. He begins to walk it off.

LEXINGTON

You're sure?

BROOKLYN

Yes! Yeah. Arrgh.

LEXINGTON watches him walking up and down the roof and rubbing his face. BROOKLYN looks back at him.

BROOKLYN

Really.

LEXINGTON

All right. Do you want to go back to the station once it's dark?

BROOKLYN

No. I have a feeling the action's going to be here. I want to be ready for it. Do you have the phone?

LEXINGTON

Yeah.

BROOKLYN

Text Matt, and let him know we're here.

LEXINGTON pulls out the phone, and begins texting.

INT. SCENE - MATT'S TRUCK.

MATT is driving along the street at dusk, with his mother sitting next to him. His phone beeps. He pulls it out and looks at it briefly.

ARLENE

Eyes on the road, dear.

MATT

Yes, Mom.

He puts the phone away.

ARLENE

Who was that?

MATT

Junk text. Nothing important.

He looks out ahead at the dying light on the buildings. Above him, in the distance, he sees a cluster of shadows sliding across the buildings, trailing him into downtown.

SHOT - AERIAL.

From above, MATT's truck continues down North Avenue toward the city; in the distance, the skyline is visible. A moment behind, BROADWAY, HUDSON, and GOLIATH, with BRONX carried between, are following him in the air.

INT. SCENE - FEDERAL BUILDING. LOBBY.

MATT, carrying a toolbag, and ARLENE, both in work clothes and MATT in his Edison hardhat, approach the security desk. ARLENE has on a backpack. MATT holds out his badge to the security guard.

MATT

Edison. Gotta see the transformer rooms.

GUARD 1

Go on through. Gonna be long?

MATT

Not too long, maybe half an hour.

ARLENE

More like an hour.

MATT

More like an hour, I guess.

GUARD 1

Okay. Shift change's coming up, just let the night guy know you're here if you stay longer.

ARLENE

We won't engage in joinder.

GUARD 1

What?

MATT

She means we won't be doing much work like joindering tonight. Should be quick.

GUARD 1

Go on.

MATT

Thanks.

He steps around the guard desk and toward the elevators, pulling ARLENE along with him. He lowers his voice.

MATT

Please let me talk, Mom.

ARLENE

Oh, you know so much, don't you? You were just about to make joinder with that guard.

MATT

Fine. Fine. But I know how the Edison guys talk to the guards, so let me do it!

ARLENE

Don't talk to your mother that way!

MATT

Shh!

ARLENE

Don't shush me!

MATT

He's right back there. Do you want him to follow you?

ARLENE

I don't care. I can take down a squirt like--who are they hiring for guards nowadays, the Lollipop Guild?

MATT jams his thumb on the elevator call button, and the elevator opens. They go in.

MATT

Oh, my God, mother, you are going to be the death of us both.

ARLENE

Now, you listen to me, let me tell you something. This is my assault, and I know best--

The lecture is cut off by the elevator door closing.

INT. SCENE - FEDERAL BUILDING. 35TH FLOOR.

A darkened hallway in the Federal Building. The elevator pings, and the doors open. Deep in the hallway, there is a shift in the darkness. MATT and ARLENE step out into the hall. ARLENE has a rifle in her hands and is looking ferocious. She looks around.

ARLENE

This way.

They begin to work their way along the hallway. MATT is nervously looking around as ARLENE tries one door, then the next.

MATT

Do you know what it is you're looking for?

ARLENE

A laboratory. Probably toward the building core. The power they'd need would be immense.

Behind them, two silhouettes shift in the hall. MATT looks up sharply at the motion, but does not see anything. They continue down the hall gradually.

ARLENE

Refrigeration, for one thing.

MATT

Right.

ARLENE

And then for gene editing. That's heavy equipment. I've seen it online. They'd have their work cut out for them setting that up. They'd need an equipment room or something, something with a wide entrance and a solid floor.

MATT

Could they get that up in these elevators, though?

ARLENE

Wouldn't need to. They can teleport it.

MATT

Oh.

ARLENE

But teleporting takes a whole lot more energy, that's the other thing, and it's got to be sort of open so there is no shielding. I learned about it online. They say that--

There is suddenly a ding in the darkness as the elevator arrives, cutting her off. She holds up a hand, and then motions for MATT to get clear. He stands with his back to the wall. She points at his bag. He looks at her. She points at his bag again, more insistently. MATT rolls his eyes, reaches into the bag, and draws out a rifle. He cocks it.

Around the corner step a pair of security guards. One of them shines his light toward MATT and ARLENE.

GUARD 2

You two! What are you doing here?

ARLENE

You won't get to know.

She raises the rifle to her shoulder. Both guards draw their guns in response.

MATT

No, don't!

GUARD 2
Drop your weapon!

ARLENE
You drop yours first.

Suddenly, GUARD 2 whips around backward. There is a punch in the darkness, and he goes to the floor. GUARD 3 looks after him. He continues turning beyond where he'd planned, and a punch rocks him backward. He raises his gun toward his assailant, but it is knocked out of his hand. There is a scuffle, and this ends with GUARD 3 flung down the hallway past MATT and ARLENE, where he slams into a wall and slides down to the floor, knocked out. Where he had stood, three glowing eyes in the darkness indicate what happened. ARLENE aims at them. MATT reaches out to pull down the rifle.

MATT
Don't! Do not!

Out of the darkness, BROOKLYN and LEXINGTON approach, on their guard. ARLENE looks at them, and gasps. There is a tense moment. Then, ARLENE lowers the rifle on her own. MATT looks at her, astonished.

ARLENE
Hail and well met, friend.

Confused, BROOKLYN and LEXINGTON look at each other, and then at ARLENE.

MATT
Friend?

BROOKLYN
Hail, woman.

ARLENE
I am Arlene of the family Pegram. This is my son Matthew. We are here to release you from this bondage.

BROOKLYN
Is that so?

MATT
Mom?

ARLENE

Don't be frightened, Matt. They won't hurt us.

MATT

No, they...

He looks over at BROOKLYN and LEXINGTON. BROOKLYN has an intense look on his face. LEXINGTON is a little more baffled, but is going along with it.

MATT

...you're sure?

BROOKLYN

Young one. If you mean to assist us, then we mean you no harm. Your help is very welcome.

ARLENE

It is not my place to take from this world what God has put into it. You will have our help.

BROOKLYN

Come along, then.

He turns and begins walking down the hall, followed closely by ARLENE, with MATT and LEXINGTON at a short distance.

LEXINGTON

(whispering)

Hi.

MATT

(whispering)

Evening. What's the plan?

LEXINGTON

Beats me. Just go with it for now.

MATT

Yeah.

BROOKLYN

We are going up.

He enters the stairwell, followed by the others.

INT. SCENE - FEDERAL BUILDING. 37TH FLOOR.

BROOKLYN opens the stairwell door and steps out into the hallway, followed by ARLENE, MATT, and LEXINGTON. They begin to make their way down the hall, carefully.

BROOKLYN

We believe it to be this way. This floor or the floor above.

ARLENE

I agree. My own analysis suggested as much.

They continue around the corner. Suddenly, there is a blaze of light: the hall lights come on, and before them is a group of half a dozen police officers, weapons drawn. BROOKLYN and ARLENE duck out of the hall one way, LEXINGTON and MATT the other.

MIKULSKI

Arlene Pegram, put down your weapon and get your hands in the air!

ARLENE clutches her rifle all the more tightly in response. She looks across to MATT, as does BROOKLYN. MATT is frightened.

MATT

Do it!

ARLENE grits her teeth, leans out into the hall, and opens fire on the police.

MATT

No, Mom! Don't!

She ducks back in as a volley of shots come back down the hall, shattering the window behind all of them. ARLENE winds up to open fire at the police again, but as she is about to lean out, BROOKLYN gets hold of her and holds her back.

BROOKLYN

Okay, that's enough of that.

ARLENE swings her elbow back into BROOKLYN's gut, breaking his grip, and jumps into the hall. She aims her rifle at BROOKLYN as she does. At this, LEXINGTON leaps at her, landing on all fours in the hall. She reels back, and aims at him. BROOKLYN steps out into the hall, hand on his katana.

MIKULSKI

Hold fire!

BROOKLYN

Thanks for that. Come on, what happened to not taking out, et cetera?

ARLENE

That broke when you held me back. Matthew!

MATT

What?

ARLENE

Don't just stand there, take care of this!

MATT steps out into the hall, rifle down.

MATT

I am.

ARLENE

What?

MATT

Mom, put it down. This is not going to work.

ARLENE

Oh. Oh, my son. No.

MATT

Mom, just stop.

BROOKLYN

Mrs. Pegram, please don't do anything more. It's over.

ARLENE

No.

MATT

I'm trying to help you.

ARLENE

No!

She turns and runs toward the broken window.

MIKULSKI

Stop!

MATT

Mom, no!

She turns to face them, teeth bared.

ARLENE

This is you, son. This is your doing.

She spreads her arms, leans backward, and falls out of the window. BROOKLYN immediately leaps out after her. MATT rushes to the window to look out.

EXT. SCENE - LOOP. AERIAL. (NIGHT)

ARLENE dives serenely, crossing her arms across her chest. She then reaches for the handle concealed within her coat and pulls, releasing the parachute. She tucks and somersaults as it deploys, and catches her, and she descends gracefully. As she does, BROOKLYN dives past her, looking over in astonishment.

BROOKLYN

...gotta be kidding me...

He drops out of sight, and ARLENE chuckles slightly. Her fall is suddenly arrested, however, and she begins to travel sideways as her parachute canopy collapses. She looks up in fear, then dismay, then crosses her arms and scowls as she is pulled upward.

INT. SCENE - FEDERAL BUILDING. 37TH FLOOR.

MATT steps back from the edge as BROOKLYN lands, furls his wings, and steps briskly inside. Moments later, BROADWAY enters, followed by GOLIATH, holding ARLENE by the strings of her parachute. She still has her arms crossed and is scowling furiously. She looks at an astonished MATT.

ARLENE

Some son.

MATT

Mom? What do you, what...

ARLENE

Protein powder. Really? I know I taught you about diversions.

BROOKLYN

Go!

MIKULSKI

Go on, take her.

The officers charge through the group and up to ARLENE, restraining her with GOLIATH's help. BROADWAY steps up to MATT, who listlessly hands him his rifle as he watches. As ARLENE is restrained, she looks up venomously at MATT.

ARLENE

I have no son.

He looks back at her, sadly. The officers remove her toward the elevator lobby as MATT looks on after her. GOLIATH and MIKULSKI converge on him.

GOLIATH

Are you all right?

MATT

Yeh.

MIKULSKI

She had a box of ammunition. Do you still have it?

MATT

In my bag. Hold on.

He reaches into his bag and fishes it out, all while still looking on after his mother. He hands the box to MIKULSKI. Returning from the elevator core, SANCHEZ comes up to the group.

SANCHEZ

She's on the way down.

MIKULSKI

Very good. Nicely done.

As they talk, MATT continues down the hall a bit, separating himself from the group.

SANCHEZ

Well, sarge, I think the gargoyles deserve an assist on this one.

MIKULSKI

I suppose so. But why did you help us?

GOLIATH

We had an opportunity to protect this city as well as our friend. Of course we would take it.

MIKULSKI

I'd assumed we would need to shoot her down to get her. She didn't seem to be the type to surrender peacefully. I sure didn't expect a parachute. Thank you.

MATT

Can I go home?

The others turn to look at him. He looks back at them.

MATT

I mean, if I gotta go in for assisted armed whatever--

MIKULSKI

Well, you do have a few things to answer for.

He starts toward MATT, but GOLIATH puts out a hand to stop him.

GOLIATH

Sergeant, we helped you with this. Is that right?

MIKULSKI

Yeah.

GOLIATH

Help us with this, and leave him. He did help keep her under control.

MIKULSKI looks at him, and then at MATT, and then shrugs.

MIKULSKI

Yeah, all right. Go on.

BROADWAY

You need a lift or anything...?

MATT turns and walks away without responding.

MIKULSKI

He's taking it hard.

BROADWAY

I'm going to go check on him.

BROOKLYN

No. I'll do it.

GOLIATH

As you like. We should leave now. Come on.

GOLIATH, BROADWAY, BROOKLYN, and LEXINGTON exit through the broken windows.

MIKULSKI

How long have you known?

SANCHEZ

Since December.

MIKULSKI

And you're not worried about them at all? I mean--

SANCHEZ

No, sir. They've been good help.

MIKULSKI

If you're sure. All right.

SANCHEZ begins to leave.

MIKULSKI

Sanchez?

SANCHEZ

Yeah, sarge?

MIKULSKI

They never made it around to room 3727, did they?

SANCHEZ

Not as far as I know, why?

MIKULSKI

It, just...nothing. Forget it.

SANCHEZ

Yes, sir.

He exits. When he is out of earshot, MIKULSKI pulls out his phone, dials, and puts it to his ear.

MIKULSKI

Hi, Doctor Roundtree, please. Yeah.
Thirty-six. She never made it that far.
Right.

He hangs up, and then leaves, switching off the lights as he goes. For a moment, out of the broken windows behind where they had been standing, there is a little flare of light that crosses, stops, hovers, and then continues on.

EXT. SCENE - MATT'S HOUSE. ROOF. (NIGHT)

MATT and LUKE are on the roof.

LUKE

She'll be going back tomorrow. Needless to say, her chances of release just got shot down. Again.

MATT

Maybe it's for the best. She is a lot to handle.

LUKE

At least it was your turn. I had her last time. For three days, can you imagine?

MATT

Yeah, I can imagine.

LUKE

She hijacked a pancake house and demanded they show her the temple.

MATT

She what?

LUKE

She kept saying there was some sort of temple in back. No such thing, of course.

MATT

I wouldn't be so sure about that.

LUKE

I am. We checked.

MATT scoffs, and looks east toward the city.

LUKE

You okay?

BROOKLYN lands on the roof.

BROOKLYN

I was going to ask that myself.

MATT turns to face him. LUKE is horrified, and begins to back up. MATT grabs his arm.

MATT

Luke, Luke, it's okay. This is who I was telling you about. His name is Brooklyn.

LUKE

Wha?

MATT

This is my brother, Luke.

BROOKLYN

How do you do?

He extends a hand to LUKE, who slowly takes it and shakes.

MATT

It's all right. He's a friend. Like a brother to me.

BROOKLYN

Like a brother, but definitely not.

MATT

Oh.

BROOKLYN

Sorry, but your relatives are almost as nuts as mine.

MATT

Oh, now, I don't believe that.

BROOKLYN

You met Demona, remember?

MATT

Oh, yeah.

LUKE

Demona?

MATT

Yeah, don't ask. She lives up to the name.

BROOKLYN

Would you excuse us? I have something to talk to your brother about.

LUKE

Sure. Sure. Hey, give me a call sometime, all right?

MATT

Yeah, all right. You going right home?

LUKE

Work calls.

MATT

Okay, we'll talk this weekend. Safe drive.

BROOKLYN

Good racing, Lyle.

LUKE looks at him, curiously.

LUKE

Thanks.

He goes down the scuttle.

MATT

And, excuse me, but my mother is not as nuts as Demona, from all you've told me.

BROOKLYN

She's a strong contender.

MATT

Oh, whatever. If you say so.

He turns back to look out over the city.

BROOKLYN

You never answered the question.

MATT

What's that?

BROOKLYN

Are you okay?

MATT

What's it to you?

BROOKLYN

Sorry, I just thought--

MATT

No. I mean it. You guys ask me that all the time. Why the concern?

BROOKLYN

You're one of the few people we've really met here. We like you. I like you. We don't want anything happening to you and we want to protect you.

MATT

I'm all right.

BROOKLYN

Really? We helped you send your mother back to the hospital, and you're all right?

MATT

Oh, Brooklyn, no. It took years of work, but I'm good now, I got through

that years ago. Don't worry about that. It's hard but, I know she needs to be there. She's getting the care she needs.

BROOKLYN

Right.

MATT

"Your help is very welcome." How did you come up with that?

BROOKLYN

Well, she started it with that "family Pogram" stuff.

MATT

Fair enough.

They are quiet a moment.

MATT

Are you all right?

BROOKLYN

Yeah, I suppose.

MATT

You suppose?

BROOKLYN

I'm just...I've been having a lot of bad dreams recently. Stuff.

MATT

Stuff.

BROOKLYN

Stuff I don't want to talk to my clan about.

MATT

Oh. Well...

BROOKLYN

Well?

MATT

You want to tell me?

BROOKLYN

Why would I tell you?

MATT

Because I don't know what it's like being you. I don't know any better. But I'd like to.

BROOKLYN

Yeah.

MATT

So?

BROOKLYN

You got some time?

MATT

If you need me, I got all night.

BROOKLYN

I don't know what they are. The latest had Katana, my mate, chained to a table. I was trying to get her loose, but I kept getting pushed back from her--that's a thing that keeps happening, I get pushed away from her, or from our children--and then there was this mad doctor, who put his hands onto her, and...

As this fades down, BROOKLYN begins to narrate.

BROOKLYN (VO)

It went on like that for two hours. He just sat there and listened to me drive on for two hours about my nightmares, and half a dozen other things. He never broke in. He never stopped me, never showed me he was bored, never interrupted. He kept me talking for two hours. And then, right at the end, all he said to me was:

MATT

I don't think you're as alone as you think.

BROOKLYN (VO)

He was right, of course. I'd forgotten that.

EXT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT STATION. ROOF. (NIGHT)

The others are outside. HUDSON and BROADWAY are playing nine-men's morris, LEXINGTON is playing fetch with BRONX, and GOLIATH is looking off to the east. BROOKLYN lands, and goes up to GOLIATH.

GOLIATH

How is he?

BROOKLYN

He is fine. But I'm not. You have a few minutes?

GOLIATH looks at him, concerned. The others notice, and come over toward them.

EXT. SCENE - DREAMSCAPE.

BROOKLYN is gliding through a dark night sky across a featureless plain.

BROOKLYN (VO)

And that was how I broke free.

He lands and takes a few steps forward. Out of the dark appears KATANA, chained to a table.

BROOKLYN

Katana! Hold on, I got you!

He takes several steps toward her, but his feet slide backward along the ground, as if he were running uphill on ice.

KATANA

Brooklyn! Get me out of this!

BROOKLYN

I'm trying!

He reaches forward to try to get to her, and cannot reach. He digs his claws into the ground to pull forward, but keeps sliding backward. As he is straining, a rope flies toward him. He takes hold of it: on the far end, the rest of his clan are holding on. He pulls himself up along the rope, reaching the table.

He sinks his claws into it and begins breaking the chains. KATANA is freed. She embraces him, and they stroke each other's hair.

KATANA

What took you so long?

BROOKLYN

Oh, my love, I ask myself the same thing.

They continue their embrace as the whole scene darkens.

EXT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT STATION. ROOF. (DUSK)

BROOKLYN awakens, alongside the others, and stretches. He smiles: he is well-rested, and ready to go. LEXINGTON and BROADWAY look over at him, and see that he is in a much better mood, and smile back at him. MATT enters from the door.

MATT

What, again? Seriously, I need to get this watch fixed.

BROOKLYN (VO)

Matt Pegram is a goof, with a stubborn disposition and a weird broken family. But I know why we put up with him. He is one of the strongest people I know.

MATT

How'd you sleep?

BROOKLYN

Great.

MATT

Awesome. Can you show me how to do this thing...

MATT mimes putting a sword up in front of his face and stepping out to the side, and BROOKLYN draws his katana and makes the move MATT is talking about as the voices fade down and the others go about the evening's business.

=END=