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The Next Best Thing

by

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Gargoyles: City of the Phoenix
Season 2, Episode 13

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

BROOKLYN looks around at nine hoverbikes that have him pinned on the roof. Below him, the city is dark, as is the substation behind him. He looks up at the sky, then back at the others.

BROADWAY

Five minutes?

BROOKLYN

Three. Go.

Four gargoyles (except BRONX) rush for the parapets and leap off into the sky. The hoverbikes give chase. The gargoyles swoop up, roar, and (except LEXINGTON) with eyes lit, dive against them. The fight is on.

BROADWAY dives against the driver of bike #1. [The numbering is arbitrary.] The driver is just able to dodge, and turns to aim at him, when he is tackled by HUDSON from behind, who picks him up and tosses him off. BROADWAY collects him and drops him onto the roof, where he thumps down, unhurt.

As he dives, BROOKLYN shifts the rifle from his back around to his front, and aims, and fires at the tail of bike #2. It sparks, sputters, and dies, and the driver aims it toward the roof of the station, where it crunches down, throwing him off. His compatriot runs over to help him up. As he does, BRONX rushes up to them, snarling in fury, and chases them around the roof, keeping them away from the exit. BROOKLYN moves on to chase the next.

HUDSON shifts into the driver's seat of bike #1 and begins working the controls. The bike lurches forward, climbs, and dives. HUDSON gives a gleeful cackle, howls, and dives against bike #3, firing the cannons toward it. The other bike darts off, and HUDSON gives chase (loosely, imprecisely). As he does, bike #4 lines up behind him, chasing him. BROADWAY tackles its driver, the whole rig overturns, and dumps the driver over the side. BROADWAY deposits him on the roof and swoops back out and around.

Meanwhile, BROOKLYN is being pursued by bike #5. He looks back and tries to dive around to get behind, but can't. It is staying on him too tightly. They fly directly over the top of the station, where LEXINGTON is standing, working a remote control. He pilots a drone, which charges after bike #5. As they loop around and cross the station again, it fires, striking the bike's en-

gine and forcing it down onto the roof, narrowly missing the pilots already there. LEXINGTON swoops the drone around again.

Bike #4 is finally able to get a lock on the bike HUDSON is flying, and shoots it down over the street. HUDSON leaps, takes to his wings, and loops back behind his pursuer. The bike crashes into the street below and explodes. Right behind it, there is a series of pings: BROOKLYN is firing at bike #4, which breaks down and begins falling. HUDSON loops back, picks its pilot off, and takes him to the roof with the others, then back into the fight.

Bike #6 dives into chasing BROADWAY, who is diving away from it. He looks up, and abruptly climbs out. The bike's pilot looks up to follow him, but he collides with bike #7 and both bikes are wrecked out.

Bike #8 is piloted by O'CONNOR, who is being chased by the drone. He yanks the wrist grip around, and the bike leaps away. O'CONNOR looks back and sees the drone falling back, but then looks forward to see BROOKLYN diving toward him, rifle out. O'CONNOR yelps, turns hard left, and BROOKLYN passes him, but gets a couple of shots off into the bike, which pops and sputters. O'CONNOR dives his bike to the roof of the station. He, too, is thrown clear as it explodes on the roof.

Bike #9 is LEVIN. He looks at the carnage, and, seeing O'CONNOR downed, turns and flies away. There is a pop from the roof of the station: ELLEN SANCHEZ has her rifle shouldered, and she fires. She hits the control column in front of LEVIN, which bursts. The bike rolls, descends, and crashes into the high school across the street.

The gargoyles rapidly regroup on the top of the station.

BROOKLYN
That's everyone?

BROADWAY
Everyone accounted for.

BROOKLYN
Great.

But before he can say anything more, the sun breaks the horizon, and they freeze into stone.

Below, BRONX, too, has turned to stone, much to the pilots' relief. They begin to filter over to the door, but ELLEN is there, and points her rifle at them.

ELLEN

Everyone stay right where you are.

O'CONNOR

Ellen, c'mon. You know those things are--

ELLEN

Those "things" saved six of you. That's only because they got to you before I could. Think about that one, Kyle.

O'CONNOR

No, but, see, they're endangering the city, and--

ELLEN

Yeah? Seems to me you were the ones shooting up the substation. You were the ones shooting up the street. You want me to keep going?

O'CONNOR

You can't keep us here. It's just you versus all of us.

ELLEN

Keep wishing.

In the distance, a helicopter approaches. It is a police helicopter, and it arrives and hovers over the scene as several cruisers are heard to arrive below.

ELLEN

Down the stairs or over the side. Which one you got?

O'CONNOR relents; the jig is up.

EXT. SCENE - MANHATTAN. BEACH.

Caption: Manhattan, New York. Day 1, 6:22 AM (New Avalon Calendar)

At the foot of 63rd St, the Hudson sloshes up onto the shore of Manhattan Island. The sky is gray in the pre-dawn light. Along the shore lie GOLIATH, GABRIEL, ELISA, and ANGELA, unconscious. GABRIEL stirs first, rolls over, opens his eyes, and then sits up sharply. He looks around, then struggles to his feet. He goes to ELISA first and checks on her. As he does, GOLIATH groans, and begins to sit up. He looks, and sees ELISA out, and tries to stand.

GOLIATH

Elisa.

GABRIEL

She is all right. She is asleep.

He shakes her gently. She opens her eyes, and gasps, then sits up with GABRIEL's assistance. GOLIATH stands, and, shakily at first, goes to ANGELA. He wakes her, and she sits up, putting a hand to her head.

ANGELA

Where are we?

GABRIEL

I do not know.

GOLIATH looks up the shore.

GOLIATH

I do. This is Manhattan.

And so it is. A wider view shows that they are in the middle of the city. But nothing is visible beyond the river; all the buildings on the other side are shrouded in fog.

ELISA

Yeah. About...63rd Street?

GOLIATH

Yes. It must be.

ANGELA

We're home?

OBERON comes over the rise above them.

OBERON

You are. Albeit somewhat more violently than I had expected.

GOLIATH

What has happened?

OBERON

A storm rose up and threw us down.

GABRIEL

I should think a storm would be no match for your abilities, Lord Oberon.

OBERON

It was no ordinary storm. I fear the earth itself is rebelling.

ANGELA

It must be nearly sunrise.

OBERON

That it is. Will you sleep here?

GOLIATH

It would be best, I think.

OBERON

Very well, then. We will go up and see what has happened.

GOLIATH

Come, this way.

GOLIATH, GABRIEL, and ANGELA go along the beach a little way to find suitable positions, and then take up their postures. A moment later, they freeze.

OBERON

Your city, my lady. Where shall we go first?

ELISA

Nowhere like that. With respect, Oberon, you look like you belong in a fantasy convention somewhere.

OBERON

Meaning what, exactly?

ELISA

Meaning it may be better for you to take human form if you don't want to be stared at.

OBERON

Is that necessary?

ELISA

It may be...advantageous.

OBERON

Oh, very well. Your people are so closed-minded.

ELISA

You don't need to tell me.

OBERON considers, and then makes several passes over himself, changing his appearance to that of a middle-class professional. Unfortunately, his fashion sense is not up to date: the professional looks far more of a yuppie than he should.

OBERON

There. Is that less scandalous?

ELISA

That will do nicely.

OBERON

Come then. Which way?

ELISA

To the police station first. I need to check in.

She takes one last look toward the gargoyles, and then she and OBERON go up the rise and into the city.

EXT. SCENE - GAS 'N STOP. PARKING LOT.

Caption: Altoona, Pa. Sunday, March 3, 2013. 11:21 AM.

A truck stop outside Altoona. MATT's truck is parked a good distance from the building, out of obvious sight. In the bed is NASHVILLE (asleep and in stone) and COLDSTONE (sitting on the bed rail, looking sullen). ENKI and SIGMUND are walking around, stretching. MATT returns with a tray of coffees. He searches and then gives one to ENKI.

MATT

Right. Extra black for you.

ENKI

Thank you.

MATT

Three sugars and three creamers for you.

SIGMUND

Thanks.

MATT takes his out of the tray.

MATT

No word from Chicago, I take it?

COLDSTONE

They have gone to sleep.

ENKI

I hope that's all.

MATT

What do you mean?

ENKI

That light show we got?

MATT

Yeah.

ENKI

That was the stake going in. I'd bet my life on it.

SIGMUND

You think so?

ENKI

As good as done. We're too late.

MATT

So what's that mean?

ENKI

I'm not completely sure about that. I've only seen a ward like that done

once before. The amount of power it unleashes...all sorts of things can happen. Fires. Floods. Hurricanes. Basically, you throw the balance of powers out, the others will make up for it. How do you think Chicago burned all those years ago?

MATT

That was just a big fire.

ENKI

Like I said: balance of powers.

She sips.

ENKI

Makes Chicago not such a bad place to hang out if you're hiding from magical effects.

MATT

Wait. Is that why you were in Chicago?

ENKI

Nosy. Mind your own business.

MATT

All right. Just asking.

ENKI

But I'll tell you this much. You never have magical stuff going on there now. There's a reason for that. You all are the city of big shoulders. You gotta be. You ain't getting any help from nature any more, not until the balance restores, maybe not for another century or two.

MATT

Nothing new. We manage.

ENKI

Yeah, you do. Good old humans, you.

SIGMUND

So what did happen?

ENKI

Well, I just don't know yet. But if they activated that ward and got that kind of effect. It was big. Real big.

COLDSTONE

Big enough to harm Manhattan?

ENKI

Yes. Easily.

COLDSTONE

Then go.

ENKI

Right.

MATT

All aboard.

They get into his truck, he starts up, and drives out.

EXT. SCENE - MANHATTAN. STREET.

ELISA and OBERON walk up the street. It is relatively calm, nobody is panicked, although there is a weird shell-shocked veneer over the people: they are unusually quiet and reserved for Manhattan. Traffic is also unusually light.

ELISA

This doesn't feel like Manhattan. It's too quiet. The last time it felt like this was the day after the towers fell.

OBERON

Very perceptive.

He suddenly crouches down and touches the sidewalk, scowling. A woman walking towards him simply steps around, without a word, and hurries onward. After a moment, OBERON stands.

OBERON

Very perceptive, indeed.

ELISA

Do you have something?

OBERON

Only the ends of something. There has been a great revolt here. But surely you can see that. These are the faces of those left behind by some great tumult, as you said.

They continue onward toward Columbus Circle.

ELISA

"The earth itself is rebelling."

OBERON

Quite so.

ELISA

Fine, but what does that mean for us?

OBERON

That is what we are trying to find out, is it not?

Behind them, a cloaked figure (MAGGIE) approaches.

ELISA

No, Oberon, no word games. I need to know.

OBERON

I am sorry, Elisa. If I knew how to answer you, I gladly would. Some cataclysm has happened here, something severe enough to resonate with Avalon, something with a strength beyond even my experience.

ELISA

That's reassuring.

MAGGIE

Elisa!

ELISA

Maggie!

MAGGIE

Oh, am I glad to see you. Matt said you'd gone to see Goliath.

ELISA

More than that. He's here now.

MAGGIE

What, he's come back?

ELISA

Yes, he's down on the riverbank. We just arrived.

OBERON

I brought them.

MAGGIE

Oh, and you are?

OBERON

I am Oberon, lord of the Third Race.

MAGGIE

Oh, it's you. I should have known you might have something to do with this.

OBERON

I don't know what you mean by that.

ELISA

No, Maggie, I don't think Oberon's to blame for this one. Why, what's happened?

MAGGIE

You don't know?

ELISA

No.

INT. SCENE - TERMINAL. MEZZANINE LEVEL.

ELISA, OBERON, and MAGGIE descend from the street into the mezzanine. TALON, AL, RUTH, and a human wrapped in a towel (HAL in human form) are there; the human is sitting on the floor, cradling his head in his hands, as RUTH sits next to him.

MAGGIE

We have company.

TALON

Elisa! What are you doing here? I thought you were in Chicago.

ELISA

I was, but I got diverted. What's going on?

TALON

Manhattan got turned inside out. That's what. We're still not completely sure of what's happened, but already the news is saying that trains aren't getting in or out.

AL

Neither are phone or internet. It's like the rest of the world just vanished.

Meanwhile, OBERON has gone around and is approaching HAL and RUTH. RUTH's hackles go up.

OBERON

What happened to you?

RUTH

I don't know that I would like to tell you, actually.

OBERON

I need to know.

HAL

It's all right. I just, had an encounter.

OBERON

Encounter? With what? Who?

RUTH

That is enough.

She goes toward him, head up, eyes glinting. OBERON steps back.

RUTH

Now, you keep your distance.

TALON

Ruth, what is it?

RUTH

I don't want him near us, that's all.

TALON

All right. Sir, if you'd just...

OBERON looks back at them, and then at a visibly disturbed RUTH, and then steps away.

TALON

Thank you, Mister...?

OBERON

Lord Oberon.

TALON

Oh, really? Just what we need.

OBERON

Yes, actually, I am. Unless you think you can hear the earth crying out in pain, feel its spasms--

TALON

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

OBERON

Do not interrupt me.

TALON

No. I have had enough going on today already, and the sun's only just come up. The last thing I need is the lord of the fairies come down to make more trouble--

OBERON

Trouble? What do you know about trouble?

TALON

I know that--

MAGGIE

All right, enough. Lord Oberon, would you please go down to the platform for

a few minutes? I want to speak to my husband.

OBERON

As you wish. But I will have you know that I am not making this trouble.

TALON

Fat chance of that.

OBERON

Now, I have said--

MAGGIE

Dear, please. Oberon?

OBERON, frustrated, goes down to the platform. RUTH's hackles go down and she rubs her face against HAL's.

MAGGIE

Maybe you should avoid picking fights with almighty supernatural beings, honey.

TALON

Oh, I know. But I remember the last time, and now is no time to have more of his...capers.

HAL

Thanks for that, hon.

RUTH

Now, hush. You just get your strength back, you hear me?

ELISA

Hal?

HAL

Yes, ma'am. How are you?

ELISA

Fine, thanks, but, uh...

HAL

I know. Don't mind the change of looks. I just--

ELISA

--had an encounter. I heard.

HAL

Yeah. It was that guy from before. With the spiders. Walloped me good, too. He threw a bolt of lightning or something.

TALON

He was out with Bennie. Bennie came running back to let us know. By the time we got to him, they'd all gone.

RUTH

Who's that other one with you, Captain, if you don't mind me asking? I take it the people around here know him as a troublemaker.

TALON

Lord Oberon is very well known around these parts. He caused us a lot of trouble a few years ago. What are you doing with him anyway?

ELISA

He brought us back from Avalon. He said something about the earth rebelling.

TALON

Well, what's that supposed to mean?

ELISA

He won't say.

TALON

Typical.

ELISA

But he seemed to hit a nerve with you earlier.

RUTH

He smells wrong. Like danger in an overpriced suit. Wouldn't you say, Hal?

HAL

No, sorry, Ruth, I can't smell anything in this body.

RUTH

Oh, hon, I'm sorry. I forgot.

HAL

No, it's all right. I know.

TALON

Something else, though. Alexander was with this other guy.

ELISA

Helping him?

TALON

I don't think so. Sounds like the other guy had captured him.

HAL

Yeah, that's what it looked like, all right.

ELISA

Then he's made two enemies right there: David Xanatos, and Lord Oberon.

RUTH

How so?

ELISA

David is Alexander's father, and Oberon is his grandfather.

RUTH

Oh, jeez.

ELISA

Yeah.

HAL

Well, that's not a bad spot to be in, if this Oberon fella is as powerful as David Xanatos.

ELISA

Maybe.

TALON

You going to tell him?

ELISA

I don't know. If Oberon finds this out, he's not going to do anything else until Alexander is safe.

MAGGIE

You can't just hide it from him.

ELISA

No. But I don't think I want to spring it on him just yet. We may need him.

MAGGIE

I was on my way to go see Inspector Bluestone. Maybe we should bring Oberon with?

ELISA

That might be a good idea. Come on.

ELISA and MAGGIE go down the stairs to the platform.

INT. SCENE - SUBWAY. MERLE'S LAIR.

MERLE and ALFHARD (holding ALEXANDER) enter. MERLE lights a cigarette lighter, and with that, a torch on the wall, which lights the room. Within the room, a pair of pentagrams are carved on the floor.

MERLE

Place him here.

ALFHARD

Yes, sir.

ALFHARD places ALEXANDER in the center of one of the pentagrams. ALFHARD steps away. MERLE stomps on one point of the pentagram, and a gold pulse fires its way around all the lines, surrounding ALEXANDER.

MERLE

There. That will do nicely. Do you know what this is?

ALEXANDER

A jail cell. Whoopie. I was making those when I was five years old.

MERLE

And breaking them?

ALEXANDER reaches out. A mystic force repels his fingers from the lines, with a glow.

MERLE

Yes, I hadn't thought so.

ALEXANDER

Get to the point. You're Merle?

MERLE

So I am called.

ALEXANDER

Not Merlin.

MERLE

No.

ALEXANDER

Loser.

MERLE

Oh, ha, ha. The young wizard has quite a tongue on him, doesn't he? Perhaps I should take that and bind it to a staff. I could get hours of laughs at parties.

ALEXANDER

Well, come and take it, then.

MERLE scowls, but does not move.

ALEXANDER

Since I was five, I said. I know how these work.

MERLE

So you do. It does not mean your debts won't be paid eventually.

ALEXANDER

No, I have other things for that. So! New Avalon. Tell me more.

MERLE

A working name, nothing else.

ALEXANDER

But you're saying the ward made this possible.

MERLE

Oh, completely. I mean, tracking down all the ward points and then laying them out. I have my methods, but I do not have your resources.

ALEXANDER

That's great. And my reward is to be pinned in here?

MERLE

It is. As you point out, nothing gets in, and nothing gets out. So you can sit there and enjoy the view as long as you can take it.

ALEXANDER

A view of what, exactly?

MERLE

This world is vile. Corrupt. Decadent, and so forth. I made a piece of it, and I am ashamed of what it has become. So I am going to repair this corner of it, at least, and leave the rest to spoil.

ALEXANDER

Gosh, what an original idea.

MERLE

I do not care for originality. You speak to me of originality when you are 4,000 years old.

ALEXANDER

Four thousand? Wow, and you don't look a day over two.

MERLE grins at him, nastily, and shakes his head.

MERLE

I'm not opening the pentagram. I am not that much of a fool.

ALEXANDER

No, because here's how much of a fool you are. These tunnels are my friend's father's domain. My father has infinite resources at his disposal: wealth for his allies, armies for his enemies. And my grandfather, sir, my grandfather, he is the lord of Avalon. The original. And he won't be pleased to find out his grandson is being held by a pretender.

MERLE

These tunnels are now my domain. I have the forces of the earth itself at my disposal. And if Oberon's strength were sufficient to break the ward, then I might be worried about him as well. I tire of this conversation. I have an address to give to my new subjects and this is a waste of my time.

MERLE goes to the doorway, accompanied by ALFHARD.

MERLE

If you get hungry or thirsty, your magic should work in there all right.

MERLE and ALFHARD exit. ALEXANDER stretches his legs out, sits back, and blows a long deep breath.

INT. SCENE - POLICE STATION. BLUESTONE'S OFFICE.

ELISA, MAGGIE, and OBERON are in BLUESTONE's office, with the door closed. BLUESTONE is seated with a coffee and a sheaf of reports spread out in front of him.

BLUESTONE

Nothing. Sorry, but we've got nothing going in or out.

MAGGIE

Not even TV or radio?

BLUESTONE

Not a thing.

ELISA

So we are stuck here.

BLUESTONE

Most of us are. How did you get in here, anyway?

OBERON

My timing was just right, Inspector. That is all.

BLUESTONE

Yeah, I bet.

OBERON

So suspicious. Now, truly, Inspector, do you truly think I would be responsible for this mayhem and then appear before you? You, who are otherwise so fully...illuminated?

BLUESTONE gives him a sharp look, but says nothing.

BLUESTONE

So now what?

ELISA

Is David Xanatos in town?

BLUESTONE

And Fox. Yeah, as far as I know. Why? You think they're involved with this?

ELISA

They might not know it, but they are.

BLUESTONE

Come on.

He stands, and they leave his office.

INT. SCENE - POLICE STATION. BULLPEN.

BLUESTONE, followed by ELISA, MAGGIE, and OBERON, exit BLUESTONE'S office. As they cross the bullpen, the TV on one end (which had been playing news reports quietly) squeals. The group stops to look, as do MORGAN and several of the other officers in the bullpen. The reports are replaced by MERLE.

MERLE

New York. How are you? Good morning,
and welcome to a new era.

ELISA

What is this, filler program?

BLUESTONE

I don't know.

MERLE

I have brought you here, apart from the
rest of the world, to clear you of the
corruption that afflicts you. No more
will you fear, or want. From this day
forward, I will lead you into a new
world, a New Avalon.

OBERON

New Avalon?

MERLE

A land of peace and plenty for those
who accept it. The price for this is
simple: your obedience, and your love.

MORGAN

Guess he doesn't know where he is.

MAGGIE

Wait.

MERLE

I have loved you enough to do all this
for you. All I ask is that you return
that love to me. Together, we will pre-
vail, we will prosper, and we will have
a great time.

MAGGIE

I know who that is.

ELISA

Who is it?

MERLE

But let me warn you now: I come to
purge corruption, not to coddle it.
Those who would obey will gain. I will

now show you what will happen to those
who will not. Alfhard?

MERLE steps aside, as ALFHARD leads three people to line up
against a tunnel wall. One is MANNY THORBURN (see episode 1).
MAGGIE takes down her hood and looks intently. ALFHARD steps
away.

MAGGIE

It's that wizard. From the tunnels.

MERLE

This one (indicating THORBURN) sold his
office for petty funds. This one tried
to take my wallet. And this one cursed
my name for crossing his path. All are
corrupt. All shall be punished.

MERLE puts up his hands.

MERLE

Ad k'purt al sinetur regresa pregurtho!

A bolt of energy flies from his hands into the three people, who
react in pain, and then suddenly melt into piles of insects,
which scurry away across the floor. In the bullpen, the officers
react in disgust, as does MAGGIE, who puts one hand to her
mouth. MERLE turns back to address the camera.

MERLE

I hope no further displays of strength
will be necessary. Prosper, New Avalon.

He nods off-screen, and the signal breaks, resuming the news
broadcast. MAGGIE puts one arm over BLUESTONE and then sinks to
the floor, retching.

BLUESTONE

Maggie, it's all right. Breathe.

OBERON

What wizard is that?

MAGGIE

He was in the tunnels. He fought with
Alexander, and--

OBERON

He did what?

MAGGIE

They fought. Alexander did well, but that wizard fought hard.

OBERON

I need to see Alexander.

MAGGIE

He's gone. Captured.

OBERON

By this wizard?

MAGGIE

Yes, it sounds like it.

OBERON

I will speak to his guardians.

BLUESTONE

That might not be--

OBERON

(angrily)

I will speak to them.

ELISA

I'll take you there.

OBERON

I do not need your escort.

ELISA

You're getting it anyway. My city is under attack. I need answers myself.

OBERON looks at her, scoffs, waves one hand dismissively, and walks away.

BLUESTONE

Maggie, are you going to be all right?

MAGGIE

Yes. I need to get back to the Terminal.

BLUESTONE

So do I. Come on.

MAGGIE stands, and she and BLUESTONE go together.

ELISA

Morgan, get up a few more squads and have them keep a look out. If this wizard turns up on the street, keep an eye on him, but don't engage him, got it?

MORGAN

Sure thing. We'll get on it.

ELISA

And watch out.

MORGAN

Don't need to tell me that. I got enough roaches in my apartment already.

ELISA follows OBERON out.

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

Caption: TSS Humboldt, Chicago. Sunday, March 3, 2013. 5:44 PM.

BROOKLYN, BROADWAY, LEXINGTON, HUDSON, and BRONX are all where they were previously, asleep. Down on the roof below them, by the door, are ELLEN (armed), ROLF SCHUMACHER, and BELLO LOWELL. As the sun goes below the horizon, the gargoyles awake, startling SCHUMACHER and LOWELL. The fragments of their skin clatter to the roof below. BROOKLYN leaps and glides down to the roof, below, followed by the others (BRONX carried by HUDSON). LOWELL takes several frightened steps back, and ELLEN reaches out to stop him.

BROOKLYN

Thanks for the assist this morning.

ELLEN

Glad to help, but I'm afraid there may be more trouble coming. Brooklyn, this is Commander Schumacher, Chicago Police. This is Bello Lowell, manager of Edison security. They have questions.

LOWELL

You could say that.

BROADWAY

I'm sure we can explain everything.

SCHUMACHER

You can explain blowing up the street?
You think you can explain that?

BROADWAY

We did not blow up the street. That was
the Quarrymen doing that.

SCHUMACHER

You mean it was human stupidity.

BROOKLYN

He didn't say that.

SCHUMACHER

No, but I did. I am stunned that nobody
got hurt. Mr. Lowell here is just as
stunned that they were able to get the
power back on so quickly. What actually
happened here?

BROOKLYN

We were attacked, and we defended our-
selves and our home.

LOWELL

What home, this?

HUDSON

This is our castle, for the duration.
We will defend it.

LOWELL

How did you even get here?

BROOKLYN

One of our friends let us stay here.
Matt Pegram.

LOWELL

Don't know him.

BROADWAY

You ought to.

LOWELL looks at them, in turn.

SCHUMACHER

Well?

LOWELL

I don't know. I need to take this back to the office.

SCHUMACHER

But for right now?

LOWELL

For right now, I guess it's okay.

BROOKLYN

It's not like we're going to be able to go anywhere.

SCHUMACHER

No, you're not.

ELLEN

It's on the news. Manhattan is gone.

The gargoyles react with shock to this.

BROADWAY

What? Gone?

HUDSON

What do you mean?

ELLEN

Come inside. You need to see this.

They go inside.

INT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT STATION.

The TV is on and showing news footage from a helicopter, showing the traffic backup on the west approach to the Holland Tunnel. Traffic is absolutely stopped, headlights stretching off through the city. The chyron says, "MANHATTAN VANISHED." There is nothing visible past about the center of the Hudson River. The gargoyles watch, stunned, alongside ELLEN, SCHUMACHER, and LOWELL.

SCHUMACHER

Ellen got me to try to check up on you earlier. I was going to call the NYPD. Nothing.

HUDSON

How is this possible?

SCHUMACHER

We don't know. Nobody knows. They're working on it.

There is a chirp from the console. LEXINGTON leaps over to it and switches on.

LEXINGTON

Yeah, are you there?

MATT

(on phone)

Yeah, we're here. I guess you can see what's going on.

LEXINGTON

We're watching it now. What can you see?

EXT. SCENE - FORT LEE, N.J. STREET.

Caption: Fort Lee, N.J. 6:48 PM.

MATT's truck is parked on a side street. He and NASHVILLE are in the bed, MATT seated on the rail, NASHVILLE looking out toward the east sky. ENKI is standing at the front.

MATT

Nothing at all. We took a walk up onto the Washington Bridge a while ago. It just ends. There's a wall of some sort there at the end, but it's invisible.

LEXINGTON

So there is something there?

MATT

Yeah, I suppose so. But whatever it is, nothing is getting through it. Coldstone's up checking it out now.

LEXINGTON

Keep us posted.

MATT

Sure thing.

BROOKLYN

We're also having a problem with your security people. They're here now.

MATT

No. Really?

LOWELL

Really. Mr. Pegram, this is Bello Lowell, Edison security. We're going to need to have a chat when you get back, us and your boss, who is...?

MATT

Mike Benson, Standards.

LOWELL

Thank you. We'll be in touch.

MATT

I'm sure.

LOWELL

And as for you, watch yourselves. If you're gonna protect this substation, you'd better protect it well, because anything that happens in here, so much as a window breaks, I'm gonna hold you responsible.

HUDSON

You need not lecture us on the meaning of protection, Mr. Lowell.

LOWELL

Mr. Schumacher, I want to talk to you too. Come on.

LOWELL and SCHUMACHER exit to the stairs. ELLEN goes to BROOKLYN.

ELLEN

Anything I can do?

BROOKLYN

No. Not now.

ELLEN

All right. Have a good night.

BROOKLYN

Yeah.

ELLEN leaves. After she is gone, BROOKLYN kicks at the floor, turns, and puts his hand to his face.

MATT

You guys there? Hello?

LEXINGTON

We're here.

MATT

Don't worry about the security guy, I will take care of him.

BROOKLYN

It doesn't matter.

The others look at him. After a moment, he turns to face them.

BROOKLYN

We're getting into Manhattan. We are not losing our home, not again. If there is a wall, there has to be something on the other side. Find out what.

LEXINGTON

I'll look. All the channels are dead, the Labyrinth too.

BROOKLYN

Whatever you can get. Phone, text, pagers, Morse code, anything that can get through, get it.

LEXINGTON

I'm looking.

BROOKLYN

I need the phone.

LEXINGTON

Sure.

He unplugs the phone from the console and hands it to BROOKLYN.

BROOKLYN

The rest of you, stay here. I need a word in private.

BROADWAY

Why in private?

BROOKLYN

Because this isn't for you. Trust me on this, for once.

HUDSON

Aye.

BROOKLYN goes out to the roof. LEXINGTON looks at BROADWAY, who shrugs, and then LEXINGTON sets to his work.

EXT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT STATION. ROOF.

BROOKLYN steps out, closing the door behind him, and goes toward the edge of the roof before putting the phone to his ear.

BROOKLYN

Are you there?

MATT

Yeah.

BROOKLYN

How much did you hear?

MATT

Enough to get me worried. What's going on?

BROOKLYN

I sent you away from here to keep you out of danger, and I messed it up. I put you right on the front line.

MATT

You didn't send me alone. I have Coldstone and Gnash here too.

BROOKLYN

And a mad Sumerian god.

MATT

Oh, details.

BROOKLYN

No, listen. This is really dangerous. If we get through, it'll only be by you getting inside and you may not be able to get back.

MATT

Then I'll get inside for you.

BROOKLYN

You don't have to do this. I keep telling you "no heroics." I'm not changing my mind on that.

MATT

If I don't get inside, you may never get back here yourself.

BROOKLYN

You will stick to this?

MATT

If my blood is going to be shed, better for my friends than anything else. I will stick to this. You have my word on it.

BROOKLYN

Knock it off. We got enough drama as it is.

MATT

Yeah, I guess. What do you need?

BROOKLYN

I need you to use your talents. You deal with things that go sideways better than anyone I know, and they don't get more sideways than this.

MATT

You really know how to boost a guy's confidence, you know that?

BROOKLYN

And something else. Turn on your speaker.

MATT

All right.

BROOKLYN goes back inside.

INT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT STATION.

BROOKLYN enters, phone in hand.

BROOKLYN

Get a channel open to Coldstone.

LEXINGTON

Got it already.

BROOKLYN

Coldstone, you're listening?

COLDSTONE

I am.

BROOKLYN

Matt is in charge of your group. You report to him for the duration.

COLDSTONE

That is unwise.

MATT

Yeah, uh, can we--

BROOKLYN

I have decided. You will give him all possible protection. That goes for you too, Nashville.

NASHVILLE

If you say so, father.

BROOKLYN

Matt, your mission is to get through that barrier. Find a way. We're working here too and if we find anything we will be in touch. Meanwhile, protect your company.

MATT

Yes, sir.

BROOKLYN

And let them do the work. I don't want my lieutenant getting killed. If you find anything, call. Get to it.

MATT

Right.

EXT. SCENE - FORT LEE, N.J. STREET.

MATT hangs up, and looks up at NASHVILLE.

NASHVILLE

Okay, boss, what first?

MATT

I don't know.

NASHVILLE

Great.

They look over at ENKI, who has begun crawling along the ground, feeling the earth around her.

MATT

Everything all right?

ENKI

No.

MATT

Okay. Um. Anything we can help with?

ENKI

No. Give me a minute.

NASHVILLE

Not like the world is breaking down or anything.

ENKI

You feel it too?

NASHVILLE

There is a wall around my home city, for one thing.

ENKI

Ahhh. Just be quiet.

She continues to pad around the ground. COLDSTONE lands.

MATT

Any luck?

COLDSTONE

No, captain, all clear, captain.

MATT

Bit of hostility?

COLDSTONE

Humans cannot lead gargoyles.

MATT

Good thing this came from Brooklyn, then, isn't it?

COLDSTONE looks away and growls to himself.

MATT

I'm as puzzled by it as you are, believe me. I did not ask for this.

COLDSTONE

Then step aside and let me run this.

MATT

No. Brooklyn said I should be in charge. I am not going to ignore that. Did you find anything up there?

COLDSTONE

Nothing. It is a sphere, right down to the water on all sides I could see.

MATT

No way over?

NASHVILLE

No way under, either, judging from the traffic into the tunnel.

MATT

Leaves us without a lot of options for getting in.

ENKI

Don't be sure about that.

She is now running a finger along a line on the ground. She looks up at them.

ENKI
There's a lash line here.

MATT
Lash line?

ENKI
Yep. And if that's what I think it is,
then I have a pretty good idea of
what's happening.

INT. SCENE - EYRIE TOWER. XANATOS RESIDENCE. FOYER.

There is a knock on the front door. DAVID XANATOS enters and opens the door, admitting ELISA and OBERON.

DAVID
Captain. I had expected you would be
too busy to visit, what with the end of
civilization going on.

ELISA
If civilization is ending, then you
know you're the first one I will check
in on.

DAVID
Come in.

Enter ELISA and OBERON. They go into the living room.

INT. SCENE - EYRIE BUILDING. XANATOS RESIDENCE. LIVING ROOM.

DAVID, ELISA, and OBERON enter.

DAVID
I know it will be hard to believe, but
I really don't have anything to do with
this one.

OBERON
That may be, but you have something to
do with one of its consequences. Where
is my grandchild, Xanatos?

DAVID

What?

FOX XANATOS enters.

FOX

Who is it, David? Oh, Oberon.

DAVID

Oberon.

OBERON

Yes.

FOX

Why are you here?

OBERON

I want to know where my grandchild is.

DAVID

I don't know.

OBERON

You do not know where your child is?

FOX

Believe it or not, we do allow him to be at large in the city.

OBERON

Where is his guardian then? Where is Puck?

DAVID

He went to bed with a headache.

OBERON

I will see him.

DAVID

Of course. This way.

DAVID points the way, and OBERON, ELISA, and FOX follow him.

INT. SCENE - EYRIE BUILDING. XANATOS RESIDENCE. OWEN'S APARTMENT.

OWEN lies on the bed, in shirt, trousers, and tie, his stone arm across his chest, his other arm clutching an ice bag to his head. There is a knock at the door.

DAVID
(outside)
Owen? You have a visitor.

OWEN
I am not well enough for visitors, Mr. Xanatos. Would you give them my regrets?

DAVID
I don't think he will take them.

OWEN
Oh, all right.

He sits up, straightens his tie, and goes to the door, opening it. OBERON is right there, and right wrathful. OWEN immediately kneels.

OWEN
My lord!

OBERON
Stand up and let me in there. The rest of you, wait outside.

OWEN steps back from the door, allowing OBERON to enter, and then closes the door.

OBERON
Don't you face me in that ridiculous aspect.

OWEN
My apologies, lord.

He gestures, and changes into PUCK.

PUCK
Lord Oberon, what a pleasure.

OBERON
Is it, really?

PUCK
Always!

OBERON
Let me relieve you of the pleasure,
then. Where is Alexander?

PUCK
Well, really, my lord, I do not know.

OBERON
You are his guardian, are you not?

PUCK
Ever and always.

OBERON
And you propose to guard him from your
bed?

PUCK
No, my good lord!

OBERON
So then, where is he?

PUCK
I do not know. My sight is clouded, my
lord. I had not expected that.

OBERON
I wonder!

PUCK
Why, what do you mean?

OBERON
Only that a ward that closes off earth
magic would be remarkably useful for
one of my children who wished to escape
his bonds. Is that not true?

PUCK
Is it? Now that you mention it, I sup-
pose it might.

OBERON

You naughty imp. You have incurred my displeasure once. Had I my full powers, you would feel my displeasure a second time.

PUCK

No, my good sir, do not be angry. Please remember your servant Puck, who has protected your grandchild this long without fail.

OBERON

I do remember. I remember a rebellious scamp whom I had to banish from Avalon. Do you know that some pretender is calling this New Avalon? By rights, I ought to exile you from this place as well.

PUCK

No, good lord, sweet lord, do not do that.

OBERON

Then you will tell me what you have done, and you will speak plainly.

PUCK

Well. I had encountered a wizard of impressive talents, and of such powers that I knew not what he was. He sought a ward for the purpose of correcting humanity, and said it would be to the benefit of my ward Alexander, and as I had not yet taught him of warding, I felt it was time.

OBERON

What kind of ward?

PUCK

Only an earth ward, nothing of note. Only...

OBERON

Only what?

PUCK

He sought to tie it to specific points under the earth. I used my influence on Mr. Xanatos to see it done. Alexander used his connections to gain all the ward stakes needed, and between us we build a ward of such strength as you have seen.

OBERON

Thou foolish creature. What have you done, then? Do you not know?

PUCK

It is only a ward, is it not?

OBERON

Change your appearance. For the sake of your own life, you will come with us and you will undo the mischief you have done, or I will banish you into an even baser state than you are.

PUCK

I would not have that. All right.

He gestures over himself, resuming his form as OWEN. OBERON opens the door.

OBERON

I am pleased to report that Owen has agreed to help us.

OWEN

That is correct.

OBERON

Come, down to the street.

OBERON and OWEN exit his room.

INT. SCENE - EYRIE BUILDING. XANATOS RESIDENCE. LIVING ROOM.

GOLIATH, GABRIEL, and ANGELA are in the living room, with FOX. OBERON, OWEN, and ELISA enter.

ELISA

Goliath? What brought you here?

GOLIATH

I suspected that Xanatos would have something to do with this. Have you found anything out?

OBERON

Yes. I know now what to look for. Have you any chewing gum?

FOX

I have some, why?

OBERON

Give it to me.

She does. OBERON offers it to GOLIATH.

OBERON

Here, chew this.

GOLIATH

What for?

OBERON

Science.

GOLIATH

I will not.

OBERON

Oh, for...the world is ending and you stand on dignity? Very well. Captain?

ELISA

Uh, all right.

She puts a piece of gum in her mouth and begins chewing, and the six of them (except DAVID and FOX) exit.

INT. SCENE - TERMINAL. MEZZANINE LEVEL. COMMS ROOM.

AL is at the console of the comms room, tweaking and adjusting knobs. He finally comes back to the microphone and keys it.

AL

This is the Labyrinth, calling Chicago or anyone who hears us, over.

He unkeys. There is no response, just a faint hiss of static. He begins adjusting again. TALON enters.

TALON
Any luck?

AL
Nothing so far. It really is like
everything else is gone. Like we're the
last ones on earth.

TALON
I doubt that.

AL
Really?

TALON
I hope it's not the case.

AL
That's two different things, boss-cat.

(keying the mike)
This is the Labyrinth, calling anyone
in range, please respond. Over.

He unkeys. The static remains unchanged. TALON exits.

INT. SCENE - TERMINAL. MEZZANINE LEVEL.

TALON enters. MAGGIE and MICHAEL are there.

TALON
Well, nothing so far.

MICHAEL
Nothing at all?

TALON
Not a peep.

MAGGIE
Then we really are alone.

TALON
We always have been, in a way, haven't
we? We'll manage.

They clasp hands. MAGGIE looks at him: he is confident, she is worried.

TALON
Trust me.

MAGGIE
I do.

Enter MERLE, followed by MAISHA and ALFHARD, from the street.

MERLE
We can't have that.

TALON
You! I thought Alexander took care of you.

MERLE
The tables have turned. I have him, and I am expecting to have you.

MAGGIE
Maisha?

MAISHA
I'm sorry, Maggie.

TALON
You won't get me easy.

MERLE
I don't plan to. I plan to get your people first, as many as I need.

TALON
Get them how?

MERLE
Maisha?

MAISHA
No. Please.

MERLE
Did you think you would avoid this forever? Your time is up.

MAISHA

No!

MERLE

Oh dear. Alfhard?

ALFHARD

Sir.

MAISHA

Maggie! Run!

TALON

Don't you dare. Don't you touch her!

MAISHA tries to run toward the platform as ALFHARD points to her. There is a bolt from his hand into MAISHA, and MAISHA screams. She dissolves into an indistinct gray ghost, a WRAITH, her scream dissolving into a wail that trails off. The ghost stops short and turns to face the group.

MERLE

I don't have to.

TALON, enraged, winds up and throws a bolt of energy at MERLE, who circles one hand and reflects it directly back to him. TALON is stunned and falls to the ground.

MICHAEL

Dad!

MERLE

Now, I will offer you a choice. You can keep up the fight with me, in which case my captain here will have no choice but to turn his troops loose downstairs. Or, you can go with me, and maybe we can make some sort of arrangement.

TALON

What did you do to her?

ALFHARD

Put her back to her normal form.

MAGGIE

But she was one of our residents.

MERLE

Charming how the notion of a "spy"
hasn't penetrated down here yet. Well?

MICHAEL

Dad?

TALON

All right.

MICHAEL

No!

MAGGIE

Derek!

TALON

But only if you leave these people
alone.

MERLE

Eagerly accepted. Why would I destroy
my people wantonly?

MICHAEL

You seemed happy enough to do it last
time we met.

MERLE

You were in the way then. Learn from
it. Come.

TALON gets to his feet, with effort, and starts down the stairs
behind MERLE, followed by ALFHARD and the WRAITH. MICHAEL leaps
toward them, and the WRAITH turns and fires a stone, missing
MICHAEL but hitting the wall behind him, which shatters.

MAGGIE

Michael!

ALFHARD

Want a second try? I'll warn you: her
aim is off because she was human so
long. It improves with practice.

MAGGIE

Come back here.

MERLE

Very good. Listen to your mother.

They exit.

MICHAEL

Mom.

MAGGIE

Give them five minutes. Then, get the Clones.

EXT. SCENE - MANHATTAN. STREET. (NIGHT)

GOLIATH, GABRIEL, ANGELA, OBERON, OWEN, and ELISA walk down the sidewalk, getting a few funny looks from around them.

ELISA

Why am I chewing this gum?

OBERON

I need something to show you what's going on here. I saw them here, I am sure...

They approach a street vendor, who has a box labeled, "REAL GAR-GOYLE STONE \$15". GOLIATH looks at this and shakes his head. The vendor, for his part, is excited to see a group of gargoyles coming toward him.

OBERON

Fifteen dollars for how much?

VENDOR

About this much.

He holds up about a palm-sized piece of gargoyle stone skin, wrapped in plastic.

OBERON

Pay the man, Captain.

VENDOR

Of course, I'd be happy to take trade--

GOLIATH growls, cutting him off. ELISA digs money out of her pocket and gives it to the VENDOR, who hands over the skin to OBERON. He unwraps it.

GABRIEL

What is this?

ANGELA

Tourist memento.

GABRIEL

(disgusted)

Our shed skin? Whatever for?

GOLIATH

I do not know. Is there a reason we encourage this?

OBERON

Yes. Captain, your gum?

ELISA takes the gum out of her mouth.

OBERON

Stretch it across this.

ELISA does, sticking it in place. OBERON holds the skin up to the others.

OBERON

Very well. Here is what has happened, in physical terms you can understand. Manhattan has a ward across it. The ward is connecting place to place, such as this gum is. Now, this Merle person has done something to break the sphere of the earth, thus.

He breaks the skin in two, with the gum bridging it.

OBERON

The ward holds the two parts together, but it allows them to drift a little, like this.

He gently draws them apart, with the gum stretching between them.

OBERON

Thus Merle can separate his New Avalon from the rest of the world without completely breaking connections.

GABRIEL

You speak with a voice of experience,
my lord.

OBERON

I do. This is how Avalon is arranged.
It is no surprise that this imagined
New Avalon would be much the same. But
it is so much worse.

GOLIATH

In what way?

OBERON

It is weakly done, and quickly. Avalon
had, oh, I think it was several hundred
bonds to the rest of the world. Why do
you suppose you can reach Avalon from
any body of water, after all? But this
one has maybe a dozen, not many more.

ELISA

Which means what?

OBERON

Put too much stress on the bonds,
and...

He pulls the halves apart sharply, and the gum breaks. He throws
one half of the skin into the gutter.

OBERON

We are lost for ever.

GOLIATH

No. I will not have Manhattan lost.

ELISA

Neither will I.

ANGELA

Nor any of us. So what do we do?

OBERON

We need to find this Merle and stop
him, and happily I have his primary
collaborator here with us, is that not
true?

OWEN

I would not claim primacy, sir.

OBERON

Oh, sweet, silly Puck, you are always first among my rogues. Come, come, where would Merle be?

OWEN

My lord, I do not know. I promise you this is true.

OBERON

Well, then. A general idea?

OWEN

Puck knows, not Owen. Surely my lord knows that he has forbade--

OBERON

You are not dodging that easily. Puck shall speak through Owen until the sun rises.

OWEN

He was very eager to set the stakes underground.

ANGELA

The Labyrinth?

OWEN

It was nearby many of the sites, yes.

OBERON

You know where this is?

ANGELA

Yes.

OBERON

You see? You are a useful knave. Come, then.

ANGELA starts toward the Labyrinth, but does not get far. A thrown bottle strikes her across the back of her head and falls to the ground. The others turn to look. HARRY, patently intoxicated, is angrily shouting at the group, as his friends (MAN 2 and MAN 3) hold him.

HARRY

That's what you get! You leave us behind and now I ain't never see my girl again!

GABRIEL

What do you mean by this?

MAN 2

Harry, stop it! Knock it off!

MAN 3

You gonna get in trouble, man!

HARRY

I don't care. I want my girl back. Lemme go.

ELISA

All right, that's enough of that. Go home.

HARRY

Don't you tell me to go home. Don't you tell me that. Those monsters left and now it's no home no more.

OBERON

Monsters, you say?

He raises a hand toward HARRY.

GOLIATH

That will not be...

The spell is leaving OBERON's fingers as the words leave GOLIATH's mouth, however, and slams into HARRY's face, leaving him with a pig nose and donkey's ears. HARRY feels his head, finds the ears, and whimpers as MAN 2 and 3 look at him, astonished.

GOLIATH

...necessary.

MAN 2

What did you do?

OBERON

A gift. An evening's lesson in humility. Take him home. Sobriety will restore him.

MAN 3

C'mon, man, get out of here.

HARRY

What you do? What did you do?

MAN 2

Come on, you're just going to get in worse trouble.

HARRY, MAN 2, and MAN 3 leave.

GOLIATH

(to ANGELA)

Are you hurt?

ANGELA

No, father.

OBERON

The unmitigated nerve of these people! I am surprised you tolerate it at all.

GOLIATH

It is our home, for better or worse.

ELISA

Emphasis on the "worse," if we don't get this under control. Come on, Talon's people moved, it's this way now.

They start off toward the Terminal entrance.

GOLIATH

Has it been like this since we left?

ELISA

Not much. Plenty of people hoping you would come back. The usual few saying "good riddance."

OWEN

Now, Captain, I think you may be putting a shine on the facts, don't you?

GOLIATH

In what way?

ELISA

Yes, what do you mean by that?

OWEN

Don't you think the "plenty of people" you talk about have their own reasons for wanting the gargoyles back?

ELISA

Yes. That's true.

OBERON

What is true?

GOLIATH

Exploiters.

OWEN

That would be a better term. I know that Mr. and Mrs. Xanatos were very eager to have your help promoting some of their ventures.

ANGELA

And they expected that to happen?

OWEN

They had hoped, and you know that Mr. Xanatos always sees his hopes fulfilled.

ANGELA

To our detriment.

OWEN

When necessary.

GABRIEL

And yet you tolerate this? I am sorry, father.

ANGELA

It has been worth the trouble, some nights.

GOLIATH

Perhaps.

They continue onward.

INT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT STATION.

Caption: TSS Humboldt, Chicago. Sunday, March 3, 2013. 10:03 PM.

LEXINGTON is on the console, busily working to try to tune in Manhattan. The others are watching the television, rapt, horrified, as IDRIS BRANNIGAN reports. A shot of people midspan of the George Washington Bridge, going up to the edge and looking down where it is cleaved clean in two. Several are leaned up against the invisible barrier, posing for a photo.

BRANNIGAN

A full day has passed, and still no sign of what has happened. Officials say they are puzzled. They have found no way into Manhattan, no sign of where it has gone, and no way through the barrier that popped up early this morning, apparently cutting off not just all routes into the city, but all communication as well.

Shot of an Army officer in uniform, addressing a press conference.

MAJOR

Our attempts to contact the city have so far not been successful, no, but we are trying new methods.

LEXINGTON

Yeah, phase shifting, I can see that, guys. Beat you to that one.

BRANNIGAN

What had been curiosity has now given way to fear for what has happened.

Interview with a man in casual clothing.

MAN 4

Well, I haven't heard from my friends since last night. I've been calling and calling and it just goes to voice mail, and, uh...

(his voice catching)

I just want them to be okay.

It goes on like this in the background. LEXINGTON keeps adjusting. He tunes down and down. There is a warbling sound from the console, and he turns down the volume, but his ears go up and he listens. BROADWAY looks back at him.

BROADWAY

You mind? We're trying to find out what happened. What is that?

LEXINGTON

I don't know. But that is in the wrong place. Hold on.

BROADWAY

That better be a clue I hear.

LEXINGTON

It's just a noise right now.

The others look anxiously back at him as he begins working on the signal. The silence drags on a bit too long.

BROADWAY

Any time now.

LEXINGTON

Give me a minute! And quit staring over here.

BROOKLYN

Enough.

LEXINGTON

Try this.

He clicks on the console. A distorted, slow voice comes from it.

VOICE

Oooooooooommmmm ehnnnnnnnnnn...

LEXINGTON

No, hang on.

He grabs up a voice recorder and starts recording.

HUDSON

Is there a voice there?

LEXINGTON

Shh!

VOICE

...ssssss ehhsssssss daaaaaaaahhh llll-
llahhhhhbrrrrrrnnnnnnnnffftttttt....

LEXINGTON

Hang on.

He stops, rewinds, and speeds up the tape.

HUDSON

(on tape, fast)

Isthatavoice?

LEXINGTON

(on tape, fast)

Ssh!

AL

(on tape, slowly)

...is the Labyrinth, do you copy--

The others jump up at this.

LEXINGTON

That's them.

BROOKLYN

Finally. Why's it coming through so
slowly?

LEXINGTON

I don't know. How about if I ask them?

BROOKLYN

Do it.

LEXINGTON fiddles with the console, and then keys the mike.

LEXINGTON

Labyrinth, this is Chicago, do you hear me?

There is a long pause.

AL

(very slowly)

Essssss essssssh vvvvvv lahhhh-brnnnnfffff...

LEXINGTON

No, let's try this. (On radio)
Labyrinth, this is Chicago, say that again.

He turns on the recorder.

AL

Ssssssss essssssh vvvvv lahhhhh-brnnnnfff, plllllssssss
ssaaaaaagnnnn...

LEXINGTON stops, rewinds, and plays back.

AL

(on tape)

This is the Labyrinth, please say again?

LEXINGTON clicks the recorder and speaks into it.

LEXINGTON

This is Chicago, Labyrinth. We copy.
There's a time delay, you are coming through very slowly. Over.

He rewinds, and then plays this back very slowly into the microphone.

INT. SCENE - TERMINAL. RADIO ROOM.

AL is on the console with MALIBU and HOLLYWOOD standing by. He listens intently. As the voice comes over, AL nearly leaps out of his chair.

AL

We got them! Boss-Cat, need you!

MALIBU

I get.

AL

Yes, go!

(into radio)

Chicago, got you loud and clear, good to hear your voice, Lexington. Over.

LEXINGTON

Likewise, Labyrinth. How are you doing there?

AL

(into microphone)

Safe, but nobody knows what's going on. What does it look like from out there?

LEXINGTON

Manhattan just vanished. We have someone trying to get in who might be able to help.

AL

Sooner the better. Over.

MALIBU enters, followed by GOLIATH and OBERON.

AL

Where is he?

MALIBU

Talon captured.

AL

Captured?

GOLIATH

Maggie says someone called Merle caught him.

LEXINGTON

We're working on it. Over.

GOLIATH

Lexington?

AL

Yeah, you want to talk to him?

GOLIATH

Yes.

AL

Go.

GOLIATH

(to microphone)

Lexington, what has happened?

LEXINGTON

Goliath, is that you?

GOLIATH

Yes, it is.

LEXINGTON

Good to hear from you. Manhattan disappeared for us.

GOLIATH

Manhattan is here.

LEXINGTON

And there is something else. Your voice is coming through very slowly.

GOLIATH

What do you mean, slowly?

LEXINGTON

We have been talking to you for fifteen minutes on this end.

OBERON

Oh, of course.

GOLIATH

What is it?

OBERON

This New Avalon is slipping out of time just as Avalon is.

BROOKLYN

(on radio)

Goliath, we have Matt and Coldstone outside, trying to get in. Is there anything you can do to help them?

OBERON

Not unless they can shake the moorings loose, and that's dangerous. Get too aggressive about it and we could be broken free of reality completely.

MALIBU

That a bad thing.

OBERON

Very.

MALIBU

Not do?

BROOKLYN

Are you there?

GOLIATH

(into microphone)

We are. If you can shake the strings that moor this world to the rest, perhaps you can enter.

BROOKLYN

We will do what we can.

OBERON

Our better chance would be to suppress this Merle, whoever that is. But we need to go quickly. What time is it there?

GOLIATH

(to microphone)

What time is it there?

BROOKLYN

About four hours past sunset now.

OBERON

If it gets to tomorrow there, we may be too far out of step to ever come back.

GOLIATH

(to microphone)

We must fix this by sunrise there, or
it may be too late.

BROOKLYN

Right. Goliath, how do you know all of
this?

GOLIATH

Oberon is with us.

INT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT STATION.

LEXINGTON looks at BROOKLYN, who is startled. He regains his
composure quickly.

BROOKLYN

(into recorder)

Understood. We are on it.

He clicks off the recorder and hands it to LEXINGTON.

BROOKLYN

Get Matt on the line. Tell him what's
going on.

LEXINGTON

Right.

HUDSON

And for us?

BROOKLYN

Nothing we can do but make the connec-
tion.

HUDSON

Aaah.

He stands, with effort, and goes to take up one of the dowels
from the corner. He swings it to and fro, working off his frus-
tration.

EXT. SCENE - FORT LEE, N.J. STREET.

ENKI is still on the street, with SIGMUND by her side, tracing
along the street idly. MATT is in the truck, on the phone. COLD-

STONE and NASHVILLE stand idle, restless. MATT disconnects, and walks over to ENKI, followed by COLDSTONE and NASHVILLE.

MATT

Well, they've managed to talk to Manhattan. Things are safe, they're saying, for now.

NASHVILLE

"For now"?

MATT

Well, it sounds like we need to get a solution today, or it may never get fixed.

NASHVILLE

Wonderful.

ENKI

What solution?

MATT

Shake the strings that moor--

MATT AND ENKI

--this world to that one.

ENKI

It is about time. Let's go.

SIGMUND

You can do that?

ENKI

I can do a lot. You. Rockhead. Got any kind of a long distance weapon in that tank of a body you're dragging around?

COLDSTONE

Yes.

ENKI

If we go up on that bridge there, you think you can hit a point right about here?

COLDSTONE

No. I can hit a point with much better precision than that.

ENKI

Prove it to me.

MATT

Hey. Don't be starting fights. Coldstone, you can do that?

COLDSTONE

Easily.

ENKI

Then that's our plan. Who's going to Manhattan?

NASHVILLE

Better question: who's not?

MATT

We are all in on this. What do we do?

ENKI

Come on, up to the bridge.

EXT. SCENE - GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE.

MATT, COLDSTONE, NASHVILLE, ENKI, and SIGMUND make their way through the stopped traffic to the midspan of the bridge. ENKI thumps her hand against the barrier.

ENKI

Okay, count of three, everyone lean on here and push, and you shoot. Ready?
One, two, three!

As they lean on the barrier, COLDSTONE raises his gun arm and fires at a distant point on the street, blasting a small crater, and sending a yellow spark along the street both ways, up on the bridge, and into the barrier, which briefly phases, revealing the bridge beyond. They all fall through.

On the other side, the earth rumbles and shakes, and the bridge clatters frighteningly. ENKI gets to her feet first, followed by SIGMUND, then the others, who look around.

NASHVILLE

We did it. We're home.

ENKI

Mostly, but not quite. I don't think...

MATT

What?

ENKI

Do you taste copper, by any chance?

MATT

No.

ENKI

Good. Then we haven't lost Manhattan.
Come on, let's go save the city.

MATT

Right.

ENKI strides off down the bridge, devoid of traffic on this side, with SIGMUND. MATT, COLDSTONE, and NASHVILLE lag behind.

COLDSTONE

Are you leading this, or is she?

MATT

She seems to know what she is doing.

NASHVILLE

You're sure?

MATT

Not really, but we are here, right?

COLDSTONE

Here, and there is more. Their signal
has resumed. I can find Plutus.

MATT

For once, you're a ray of hope. Come
on, then.

He heads down the bridge alone.

NASHVILLE

Matt!

MATT

What?

NASHVILLE points off the side of the bridge. MATT looks, and then puts one hand to his head, and nods.

MATT

Yeah, of course.

NASHVILLE

Thank you. My feet are killing me.

NASHVILLE runs to the edge and leaps off into the air, followed by COLDSTONE, as MATT hurries to catch up to ENKI.

EXT. SCENE - MANHATTAN. AERIAL. (NIGHT)

NASHVILLE and COLDSTONE are gliding along, looking down at the city. It is starting to get rowdy. Several people are driving wildly through the streets; one car is doing donuts in a city park as a crowd gathers and cheers, and down another block someone has thrown a brick through a store window, and two people pile out of it carrying a big-screen TV.

EXT. SCENE - MANHATTAN. STREET. (NIGHT)

The burglars hustle along the street, when there is a blast in the street in front of them. They draw up short. COLDSTONE lands, with NASHVILLE, who draws his sword.

COLDSTONE

That is far enough. Put that back.

BURGLAR

No. Who cares about a TV, anyway?
World's ending, gargoyle, may as well
watch it in style.

NASHVILLE

The world's not ending. We're going to
make sure of that. So put it back.

BURGLAR

You going to make me?

NASHVILLE

Yeah, if I got to.

BURGLAR

Set it down, Ralph.

They set it down. The BURGLAR draws out a pistol from his belt and aims it at NASHVILLE. As he does, a TV news van pulls up short. A cameraman leaps out of the back and begins filming the encounter.

COLDSTONE

Reconsider. This is really not a good idea.

BURGLAR

Maybe not. Not a lot left to worry about now, and I've wanted to plug one of you guys for ten years.

NASHVILLE

What for?

BURGLAR

Because I'm tired of you going around, and trying to get everyone to toe--

He does not get further than that. Suddenly there is a hail of stones from the sky. All of them look up; the BURGLAR's assistant (Charlie) runs for cover. Above, a trio of WRAITHS hurtle groundward, flinging stones. NASHVILLE, COLDSTONE, and the BURGLAR dive for cover, NASHVILLE giving cover to the BURGLAR with one wing. The stones smash into the news van, punching holes in the sides of the van and smashing out the windshield. The creatures land, and turn in unison to face COLDSTONE, NASHVILLE, and the BURGLAR. They speak in unison.

WRAITHS

Disorder will not be tolerated. This is the order of your lord.

BURGLAR

We ain't taking his orders!

He runs from cover, turns his gun sideways to shoot the cool way, and fires, striking one of the WRAITHS, who deflates and collapses. The other two raise their hands toward him as he flees, and fire stones. The stones strike him, and the BURGLAR vaporizes. The WRAITHS then turn back toward COLDSTONE and NASHVILLE.

WRAITHS

Corruption will be expunged.

NASHVILLE

Good idea.

He draws his sword, and leaps forward toward the WRAITHS. They turn their hands upon him, and fire. NASHVILLE leaps, dives, and rolls past their volley, brings his sword around, and with a roar, slashes through the nearest WRAITH, who breaks and flutters to the ground. The other raises its hands toward him, but never makes it before COLDSTONE's plasma blasts vaporizes its head, and it collapses. NASHVILLE looks around at the three limp piles of rags that had been the WRAITHS, eyes alight, and his eyes darken. COLDSTONE comes up to him.

COLDSTONE

This is a new complication.

NASHVILLE

No kidding. Come on, we need to get back to Matt before those things do.

COLDSTONE takes off as NASHVILLE leaps up onto a building and begins climbing, in full view of the now-abandoned camera.

INT. SCENE - MERLE'S LAIR.

MERLE is seated in a shagged-out easy chair, watching a TV set. To one side, ALEXANDER sits in his pentagram, watching intently; to the other, TALON is seated inside another, wrapped in his wings, also watching. The TV is showing the departure of COLDSTONE and NASHVILLE from the previous scene. MERLE thumps the arm of his chair. ALEXANDER looks over to TALON and smirks.

ALEXANDER (VO)

You were right. They did come.

TALON (VO)

I've asked you not to do this.

ALEXANDER (VO)

You'd rather he eavesdrop?

TALON (VO)

No. I guess not.

ALEXANDER (VO)

You hungry?

TALON (VO)

Yes.

ALEXANDER makes a couple of short passes, and popcorn boxes appear in both his and TALON's hands. MERLE glances back, sees this, and rolls his eyes before turning back to the TV.

TALON (VO)

Thanks.

ALEXANDER (VO)

Don't mention it. Good to have friends in high places, isn't it?

MERLE

(aloud)

We'll see about that.

ALFHARD enters.

ALFHARD

Sire? They are approaching.

MERLE

All of them?

ALFHARD

Many of them.

MERLE

Well, let them come. I do not fear them.

TALON

You should. They are so much stronger than you think.

MERLE

That is just it. They aren't. Let's go out to meet them.

He stands and goes out to the tunnel.

INT. SCENE - TUNNEL.

MERLE and ALFHARD step out into the tunnel. Coming around a bend in the tunnel are GOLIATH, OBERON, MAGGIE, DELILAH, CLAW, and several others in the lead, with a number of other Labyrinth

residents behind them, armed with clubs, hammers, and other tools. MERLE spreads his hands.

MERLE

Welcome, all. I am so pleased to receive your tribute. Anything else is going to be less welcome.

GOLIATH

No tribute, here. You have prisoners. Release them.

MERLE

Aha, just like that?

OBERON

Just like that. Or, of course, we could make this more difficult for you.

MERLE

Show me.

OBERON winds his hands up, casting a magical orb, and then flings it at MERLE, who merely swats the back of his hand toward them, swatting the orb back to OBERON. OBERON tries to catch it, but it flings him back over the crowd and he rolls to a stop. He struggles to his feet. At the same time, there is a distinct quaking of the earth.

GOLIATH

Oberon!

MERLE

Lord of the Fair Folk, indeed. And who created your race, then? Have you any idea who it is you face?

GOLIATH, furious, charges at MERLE, who looks at him disdainfully. GOLIATH swipes at him, claws out. MERLE merely puts out his hand, catching GOLIATH by the throat and lifting him, completely unaffected. GOLIATH grabs at MERLE's arm, struggling to breathe.

MERLE

Have any of you any idea? Truly?

DELILAH

Goliath!

She rushes toward MERLE, who gives her the same treatment. She struggles to get free. CLAW and MAGGIE start, fitfully, toward this, but are hard-pressed to overcome their fears.

MERLE

I had heard this city was tough. Some champions. This will be easy to dominate.

But from behind him:

COLDSTONE

Not so.

COLDSTONE, NASHVILLE, MATT, ENKI, and SIGMUND approach in the tunnel. COLDSTONE raises his gun as NASHVILLE draws his sword. MERLE turns, still holding GOLIATH and DELILAH.

MERLE

More abominations. How is it that this city is defended only by outcasts? (to GOLIATH) Hm? Do you know?

COLDSTONE

Release them now or you will find out.

MERLE

Oh, and you think you can just shoot me down? Go ahead with it.

MAGGIE

Coldstone!

COLDSTONE

Keep everyone back. Release them, I said!

MERLE

No, I won't.

COLDSTONE fires. The bolt bursts around MERLE and his captives, harmlessly. GOLIATH and DELILAH are beginning to lose consciousness.

MERLE

Seriously, you expected that to work? Really?

There is a hand on his shoulder from behind him. MERLE turns his head; it is MICHAEL.

MICHAEL

Hi there.

There is a flash as MICHAEL discharges into MERLE. MERLE spasms, and falls, releasing GOLIATH and DELILAH. They work to catch their breath.

MICHAEL

Welcome to New York.

ALFHARD draws a pistol from his belt and aims at MICHAEL, but it is promptly blown out of his hands by a blast from COLDSTONE. There is another rumble from the earth around them. MATT's party approaches; NASHVILLE goes to GOLIATH to check on him. GOLIATH looks up at him.

NASHVILLE

Hi, Goliath. Long time no see.

They clasp arms as GOLIATH smiles weakly. DELILAH stands weakly, and then goes over to ALFHARD.

DELILAH

Now, how about those prisoners of yours?

MERLE

Alfhard! Dispatch the Wraiths!

MERLE aims one hand toward ALFHARD, who screams, and transforms into a WRAITH, and then vanishes up through the tunnel wall.

DELILAH

What was that?

MERLE

It seems I have to purge more corruption than I thought.

ENKI

Oh, you always have, haven't you?

MERLE looks at ENKI, who approaches him close and kneels down to look at him.

MATT

Enki, watch it.

ENKI

You watch it. We know each other very well, don't we?

MERLE

What are you doing here?

ENKI

You know what. Tell you what, release these prisoners and we can talk.

MERLE looks at her, and then raises his fingers and snaps. A ball of energy surrounds him. ENKI leaps forward and grabs him, and both of them disappear. The earth quakes again, harder this time. The others look around. OBERON stands and comes forward.

OBERON

Every time he uses earth magic, he weakens the bonds. They're beginning to snap.

GOLIATH

Alexander must be nearby.

OBERON

Perhaps, but I don't dare seek him. Any magic could break more bonds and we could be lost.

MICHAEL

Alexander, you here?

ALEXANDER

(off)

Yeah, I'm here!

MICHAEL

There, taken care of.

TALON

(off)

We both are!

MICHAEL

Dad! We're coming!

OBERON
Who are you, then?

MICHAEL
Michael Maza.

OBERON
I am Oberon, Lord of the Third Race.

They shake hands.

MICHAEL
Let's go get them out. This way.

He heads off toward Merle's Lair, followed by OBERON. GOLIATH stands, assisted by NASHVILLE, as MATT approaches.

MATT
How was your trip?

GOLIATH
Quite strange. It is good to be home.

NASHVILLE
Hey, if those Wraiths are attacking...

GOLIATH
Then we will defend against them.

TALON enters.

TALON
We all will. Mutates! Clones! To battle.

There is an affirmative cry from the crowd.

EXT. SCENE - ROOFTOP. (NIGHT)

MERLE and ENKI are on a rooftop, looking out over Manhattan. Below, the WRAITHS swirl and dive, strafing the people below.

ENKI
Happy?

MERLE
No. You should know better than to ask me that.

ENKI

I don't know you at all anymore. "New Avalon"? This was never you.

MERLE

Oh, there you go again, always rooting for the human race.

ENKI

Why's that so surprising? I made them.

MERLE

To serve us. Now look at them.

ENKI

They have grown. Maybe they've even outgrown us.

MERLE

Impossible.

There is a howl from the sky behind them. They look back and duck: TALON is leading a group through the sky.

EXT. SCENE - MANHATTAN. AERIAL. (NIGHT)

TALON dives through the night, roaring. Behind him are DELILAH, MALIBU, CLAW, MAGGIE, HOLLYWOOD, and BURBANK. All roar through the night, diving toward the WRAITHS. In answer, the WRAITHS howl hollowly and fire stones back toward the group. The group rolls and splits, dodging the stones. They join combat, the Labyrinthers firing and slashing at the WRAITHS, the WRAITHS firing toward the group but not making any progress. CLAW and MAGGIE stay outside the main melee, but the others dive right in.

From the other side, GOLIATH roars, diving in from the sky toward the WRAITHS, flanked by COLDSTONE and NASHVILLE with their weapons drawn. They join the battle, bottling up the WRAITHS and driving them toward the Labyrinth crew.

Two of the WRAITHS dive toward a small group of people hiding behind a parked car, firing. NASHVILLE slashes, cutting both WRAITHS in one blow; they flutter to the ground, harmlessly. NASHVILLE swoops back up, saluting the group as he passes; they cheer.

TALON's group does similarly: a couple is pinned in front of a store, embracing in fear as the WRAITH approaches, hands up.

TALON fires a bolt into it, and it bursts in a flash. The couple looks up:

TALON
Get to cover!

Which they do, waving to him. He leaps up, and as he does, COLDSTONE scoops him up and takes him higher. One of the WRAITHS chases him, firing. COLDSTONE puts the throttle on hard, drawing away, and then tosses TALON away (who takes to his wings and dives around) then turns and fires, blowing up the WRAITH.

The WRAITHS are, eventually, eliminated. Both groups land in an open area, coming together, having confirmed they won. As they do, a small crowd below gathers, and begins applauding them. They acknowledge the cheers, each in their way.

EXT. SCENE - ROOFTOP. (NIGHT)

MERLE looks down, frustrated.

ENKI
Like I said: they do outgrow us, eventually.

He raises his hands toward them:

MERLE
If they think this is over--

ENKI leaps on his back, holding her switchblade to his throat.

ENKI
--then they are right. You're my brother, but I don't plan to let you do this.

MERLE
You wouldn't dare. You know what that would mean.

ENKI
Yeah. It'd mean I'd have to jump off and follow you onto the other plane. Oh well, I was getting tired of this body anyway. How about you?

MERLE
You can't do this.

ENKI

Maybe not, but they can. Look at them.

He does. The crowd has now moved in to shake hands with the gargoyles and mutates. The tone is generally celebratory.

ENKI

And you think they're just going to submit?

MERLE

This is not fair, Enki. They are our servants!

ENKI

Yes, they are! What do you think they're doing down there, huh? Dancing? Those people are taking care of the world that you and I and An made. What else do you want them to do?

MERLE looks back down at them, and relents. ENKI comes off his back, folding her switchblade.

MERLE

I want them to worship us again.

ENKI

Maybe it's too late for that. But, I tell you something, they get together like that down there, maybe they are.

MERLE

Maybe so.

ENKI

Right?

MERLE

Right.

ENKI

Who am I?

MERLE

You are Enki, my brother.

ENKI

Sister.

MERLE

Brother. I don't care how you dress.

ENKI

Oh, all right, we can talk about that later.

MERLE

And who am I?

ENKI

Merle.

MERLE

No.

ENKI

Enlil, my brother. Undo all this.

MERLE

I will.

There is a sudden, violent tremor from below them. The stars in the sky suddenly slip forward, then back, as ENKI and MERLE look up at it.

ENKI

Enlil, you need--

MERLE

Come on.

ENKI nods, and takes MERLE's hand. MERLE gestures, and the two of them disappear in a flash.

INT. SCENE - TUNNELS.

ENKI and MERLE appear in a flash. There is another tremor as the two of them run through the tunnel.

MERLE

The ward's pretty well balanced, but there's one stake I had to put in out of position.

ENKI

Why's that?

MERLE

City Hall was in the way. But if we can pull it, the ward should pull everything back together.

ENKI

Sounds like a plan to me.

They run up on a tunnel and into the subway under construction. MERLE begins searching the floor. There is another violent rumble that becomes continuous. He finds the spot, kicks the dirt aside, and reveals the top of a gold spike. He looks up at ENKI.

ENKI

This one?

MERLE

This one. Help me.

ENKI

Always.

They both put their hands on the spike and pull. There is a resistance from it: energy drawing it back to the earth. They overcome this, however, and there is a loud boom as the energy snaps into the earth, bounces, and pulls back in with a slurp.

EXT. SCENE - MANHATTAN. STREET. (NIGHT)

The celebratory group lurches and everyone falls to one side as the earth gives one more violent yank. There is a flash of light across the sky, and as it goes, the stars move back to their accustomed positions. Everyone gets back up.

NASHVILLE

What was that?

TALON

I don't know.

COLDSTONE

Neither do I.

GOLIATH

Coldstone, go and look.

COLDSTONE

Aye.

He runs some distance off, and then launches into the sky.

EXT. SCENE - MANHATTAN. AERIAL. (NIGHT)

COLDSTONE flies up to look around. He gets above the buildings and looks out over the Hudson River. New Jersey is there, and the George Washington Bridge is whole. Traffic is stopped, but below, the people look up in wonder, and then cheer.

EXT. SCENE - MANHATTAN. STREET. (NIGHT)

COLDSTONE lands and comes up to the group.

COLDSTONE

We are safe. The world has returned.

NASHVILLE

We're home. Hey, everyone! We're back!

There is a great cheer from the crowd, except GOLIATH, who nods, and looks on. COLDSTONE sees this, and looks at him.

EXT. SCENE - SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' MONUMENT. (NIGHT)

BLUESTONE, GOLIATH, ELISA, MATT, GABRIEL, OBERON, and ALEXANDER are at the railing, looking out over the river.

BLUESTONE

Well, someone has to say it.

GOLIATH

What?

ELISA

Never thought I'd be so glad to see Jersey.

BLUESTONE

That.

MATT

Aw.

BLUESTONE

Hey, live here a while and you'll be ragging on them too.

MATT

That a suggestion?

BLUESTONE

Fact of life.

GABRIEL

This Jersey, it is a foul place?

BLUESTONE and ELISA chuckle.

MATT

I think it's just envy. I think secretly they'd move to Newark if they thought they could.

GABRIEL

Oh. How about Avalon? All this was responsible for what was happening there?

OBERON

Yes. It was a sloppy job, as you would say. The rift between Manhattan and the rest is not yet healed, but it will heal.

GABRIEL

And Avalon?

OBERON

It should be calm now.

ELISA

That's a relief.

ALEXANDER

And you're going back there?

OBERON

Of course. The Gathering is still happening, and I must be there for it. Why? Would you like to come?

ALEXANDER

No. This place is worth protecting.

OBERON

So it is.

OWEN approaches from behind them. OBERON looks at him, and then strides toward him. ALEXANDER chases OBERON.

OBERON

And as for you, you naughty imp. You were to protect Alexander, not let the whole island be shifted into a new frame.

OWEN

Wait.

He gestures, and becomes PUCK.

PUCK

You were saying?

OBERON

I was saying that you are an insolent and irresponsible knave, and why I would be so foolish as to leave my flesh in your care I have no idea.

PUCK

That's what I thought you said.

OBERON

Puck! For shame! I was merciful before, and now--

ALEXANDER

Be merciful again.

OBERON

And why is that?

ALEXANDER

You set him to protect me? He has done that. I am here, and safe. You set him to educate me? He has done that. Now I see the power of a ward. Where has he failed?

PUCK

Yes, lord, what are the particulars of your complaint?

OBERON

Only helping to destroy the bounds of reality itself.

PUCK

And?

OBERON

(angrily)

You...

OBERON raises his hand, and a ball of energy appears. He makes to throw it at PUCK, but ALEXANDER is there first, and throws an orb at OBERON's upstretched hand. The ball of energy flashes, and transforms into a rat. OBERON, startled, drops the rat and wipes his hand across his coat.

ALEXANDER

Grandfather, please. Do not destroy him. If I am to stay here, I will still need a teacher. Who will you send for the job?

OBERON

I would rather spend my time on that than waste another minute of my life coddling this rogue.

ALEXANDER

Then let me. He has taught me my powers, and can continue to do so. Let me teach him humility. Let me work on him.

PUCK

I could live with that.

OBERON looks at them in turn.

OBERON

Well. Perhaps there is an education in this for you as well. All right. The student becomes the teacher at last.

ALEXANDER

I will do my best to be worthy of this.

OBERON

And you. I had put binders on you to keep you out of trouble, and now I see they have not worked.

PUCK

Oh, no, good Lord Oberon, please do not
fetter me further.

OBERON

Far from it. I hereby loosen your fet-
ters. You had been constrained to
present in your other form to all oth-
ers but Alexander. I now release you
from that constraint.

PUCK

Oh, my good lord! I thank you--

OBERON

And I place it in the hands of your
pupil.

PUCK

You what?

OBERON

He cannot teach you obedience without a
leash, now, can he? If he wills you to
take your form as Puck, you may. If he
wills it otherwise, you may not.

PUCK

Oh, but, my good lord, this is...

He leans in close to OBERON, who recoils in disgust.

PUCK

He is only a child, my lord!

OBERON

Then you will teach him to be mature
beyond his years. For your own good.

PUCK

I...eggh. Very well.

OBERON

Good. I believe my work here, as they
say, is done.

He turns on his heel and walks back to the others. As he does,
ALEXANDER makes a small gesture, and a "KICK ME" sign appears on
OBERON's back. ALEXANDER and PUCK fist bump lightly.

OBERON

Now, then, shall we return, knight?

GABRIEL

Aye, my lord.

(to GOLIATH)

And you are sure you won't come and stay in Avalon? It should be much more peaceful.

GOLIATH looks away. At some distance is a street vendor selling "REAL GARGOYLE SKIN," who looks back at him and licks his chops. GOLIATH growls.

GOLIATH

I will come.

ELISA

What?

MATT

Goliath?

GOLIATH

I will not stay. But I need one more thing from Avalon.

OBERON

Ask. You have done me good service, Goliath. What do you need?

GOLIATH

To go where I am needed.

BLUESTONE

I can tell you that now and save you the trip. That's right here.

ELISA

Yes. This is home.

GOLIATH

This is the home of the New York Gargoyles. If we are to find peace with the humans, that is not who we can be. We must go further than that.

MATT
Further where?

GOLIATH
I do not know. Avalon might.

MATT
I don't get it.

ELISA
I do. But wherever you are going, I'm going with you.

GOLIATH
I would have it no other way.

BLUESTONE
And what am I supposed to tell command?
Oh, right--

BLUESTONE AND ELISA
--I have the vacation time coming.

BLUESTONE
I guess.

MATT
How much vacation time? What is going on?

GOLIATH
You will learn someday. Until then, however, there is one more mission for you.

MATT
Anything.

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

BROOKLYN, HUDSON, BROADWAY, LEXINGTON, and BRONX are on the roof, looking out anxiously. From a distance, several shapes appear, and COLDSTONE, COLDFIRE (carrying FU-DOG), KATANA, NASHVILLE, TACHI, and ANGELA land on the roof. ANGELA and BROADWAY embrace, tearfully.

ANGELA
I told you I was coming back.

BROADWAY

I never doubted it.

BRONX and FU-DOG sniff each other, happily, and then BRONX begins to play-fight with FU-DOG.

TACHI

Fathers!

TACHI rushes into LEXINGTON's arms.

LEXINGTON

Hey, squirt! Long time no see!

NASHVILLE

Kon'nichiwa, otosan.

BROOKLYN

Welcome home, my son.

He places a hand on NASHVILLE's shoulder, warmly, and then looks up at KATANA, who is scowling at him. He gulps.

BROOKLYN

Hi, honey.

KATANA

Oh, shut your beak. Come here, *orokana*.

She leaps at him and they embrace, rubbing each other's heads fiercely and wrapping their wings around each other.

KATANA

I had lost you.

BROOKLYN

Nothing is lost until it is gone. Oh.

He buries his face in her shoulder.

The door opens, and MATT enters the roof, quietly, carrying a folded newspaper. He watches the greetings, and smiles to himself. BROOKLYN looks up, and sees him there. MATT looks down, and then turns to go back into the station.

BROOKLYN

Hey! Where are you going?

MATT

Long drive, going to get some sleep.

BROOKLYN

No chance of that. Come here.

MATT

Oh, no, I don't think...

BROOKLYN

Fu-Dog, fetch.

BROOKLYN points at MATT, and FU-DOG leaps into action. In three bounds, FU-DOG is upon MATT, knocking him down, seizing him in his jaws, and begins dragging him across the roof back to BROOKLYN. MATT yells about this. FU-DOG sets MATT down at BROOKLYN's feet (he has parted from KATANA at this point). BROOKLYN kneels and looks down at him.

BROOKLYN

You bring the clan back together, and you think you're going off to bed just like that?

MATT

It was a really long drive.

BROOKLYN

Come on.

He reaches down and picks MATT up.

BROOKLYN

This is our clan, right here. This is our life. Thank you is not enough. You were a good lieutenant.

MATT

Oh, come on. That was you keeping me out of trouble. All I did was drive.

KATANA

And which of us could have done that?

She bows deeply to him.

KATANA

Domo arigatogozaimas.

BROADWAY

Yes.

ANGELA

Thank you.

MATT

Well. Gosh.

BROOKLYN

Now, where is Goliath?

MATT

Well...um...

BROOKLYN

"Um"?

GOLIATH lands on the roof, with ELISA, sets her down, and comes toward the group.

BROOKLYN

Oh, there he is.

ANGELA

Goliath? I thought you were going to Avalon.

GOLIATH

So I did.

EXT. SCENE - AVALON. BEACH. (NIGHT)

GOLIATH, ELISA, and GABRIEL get into the skiff and push off. OBERON, now in his usual form, waves at them, and GABRIEL waves back.

GOLIATH (VO)

I had hoped that Avalon might show me the way. Whether to return to Manhattan, or go to some other place.

BROADWAY (VO)

What other place? Of course we belong in Manhattan.

GOLIATH (VO)

Manhattan thinks we belong to Manhattan. I am not sure of that.

EXT. SCENE - ON THE WATER. (NIGHT)

GABRIEL rows through the water and the mist. As the mist clears, the lights of a city are visible.

GOLIATH (VO)

But, I am sure that Avalon knows where we belong. And so we set off from its shore once more.

GOLIATH sticks one finger in the water, pulls it up, and tastes the water.

GOLIATH

Fresh.

ELISA looks at him, and then out the front of the skiff, as the lights of Chicago come into view.

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

GOLIATH

And it seems that we belong here, for now.

ELISA

For now.

BROOKLYN

But why?

GOLIATH

To widen our horizons. And to keep Manhattan our home, not our prison.

MATT

Exhibit "A", right here.

He hands the newspaper to GOLIATH, who unfolds it. It is a tabloid, and the front page is a color photo of the gargoyles, Mutates, and humans celebrating. The headline is, "NEW YORK IS BACK / City's gargoyles, friends, bring island back from the brink / Details page 3."

GOLIATH

"The City's gargoyles." We must be more.

COLDSTONE

Aye, that much is true.

BROADWAY

And we will be.

ELISA

I have no doubt of it, if you stay here.

BROADWAY

You could stay here too, you know.

ELISA

No. My clan is larger than Manhattan, and anyway, you're just a phone call away, or a flight. You can grow here. I'll make sure you have something to come home to.

MATT

And in the meantime we'll welcome you, warmly.

GOLIATH

As you have. Thank you.

He extends his hand to MATT, who shakes it.

MATT

It has, as ever, been my privilege.

DAVID (VO)

I'm pleased to say that we have finally received word from the gargoyles.

EXT. SCENE - EYRIE BUILDING. CASTLE WYVERN. (NIGHT)

DAVID XANATOS stands at a podium on the castle walls, giving a press conference.

DAVID

I have here a letter from Goliath himself that, I think you will agree, reinforces the need for the City Defense Fund's work.

He unfolds a letter and reads it out.

DAVID

He says, "Manhattan is protected."

EXT. SCENE - FERRY DECK.

Human HAL is boarding the ferry with RUTH, who is muzzled (and looks terribly cross about it). He reaches down to give her a deep scratch, and she rolls her eyes and leans into it. He looks back at the dock, and waves. MAGGIE (hooded), MICHAEL, ALEXANDER, and OWEN are there; the first three wave back.

DAVID (VO)

"We have ensured that, and we will continue to ensure that. Our allies have secured the city. In them, we place our trust, and we ask that you do so as well. For our part, there is more to learn and more to protect."

INT. SCENE - EL TORITO BAR. BACK BAR.

A number of men in Quarrymen's uniforms (masked) are sitting in the back bar as LEVIN presents on a screen.

LEVIN

...is to ensure that they cannot continue to threaten this city. We are all of one mind on this, correct?

MEN

Right.

LEVIN

O'Connor, I want you to take the demolition group up the alley. I need you to get the charges set around the base of the building (indicating) here, here, and about every twenty feet here.

But up above, several sets of eyes light up.

LEVIN

Brees, you're going to take team "B" to the southeast side and provide cover for...

INT. SCENE - EL TORITO BAR. FRONT BAR.

The bar is vacant at the late hour except for one large figure hunched over the bar at the end, in a trench coat and fedora, watching an empty glass. PHIL approaches him.

PHIL

Okay, mister, closing time. One more for the road? What'll you have?

A blue clawed hand reaches out and pins PHIL's to the bar. He looks up in alarm, into BROADWAY's face; his eyes are lit, and he grins nastily.

BROADWAY

Revenge.

PHIL turns his head to shout an alarm, but never gets it out as another hand covers his mouth from behind. KATANA puts her sword across his throat and shows her face over his shoulder.

KATANA

Shhh.

INT. SCENE - EL TORITO BAR. BACK BAR.

LEVIN

...need to watch out for them when they do come down, so you'll be pushing them over the north parapet only. Everyone stays off the north side of the station. I don't think I need to tell you what a falling gargoyle could do.

At which point NASHVILLE drops onto LEVIN, pinning him down to the floor.

NASHVILLE

Thanks for the cue.

At this, HUDSON, GOLIATH, BROOKLYN, COLDSTONE, and ANGELA drop in around the room from the rafters, surrounding the Quarrymen, who look around in great alarm. They can go nowhere. Moments later, SCHUMACHER and a group of police officers in uniform enter from the front bar.

SCHUMACHER

Okay, everyone, hands in view.

COLDSTONE

You need not fear, Commander. All are unarmed.

LEVIN

Commander! Help us!

SCHUMACHER

You Brad Levin?

LEVIN

Yes!

SCHUMACHER

That's terrific, you know what? I got an arrest warrant here with your name on it.

NASHVILLE picks him up roughly from the floor and walks him over to SCHUMACHER.

LEVIN

Arrest warrant? For what?

SCHUMACHER

Attempted murder and destruction of a public building.

GOLIATH

And you will be able to add conspiracy to destroy our substation.

LEVIN

On what grounds? This is insane! We were ambushed! You let me go this instant!

SCHUMACHER

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LEVIN

You can't do this! You really think you're going to get testimony? In court?

SCHUMACHER

Yeah.

LEVIN
From a gargoyle?

SCHUMACHER
No need. Lowell?

One of the Quarrymen unmask; it is BELLO LOWELL.

LOWELL
Yes, sir. I saw everything.

LEVIN
Who are you?

LOWELL
I'm with the electric company.

SCHUMACHER
Will you take him outside?

NASHVILLE
Gladly. C'mon, sunshine.

NASHVILLE walks LEVIN outside as LEVIN struggles fruitlessly. As he exits, LEXINGTON enters and begins securing the computer that LEVIN had been presenting from.

SCHUMACHER
All right, the rest of you, masks off
and badges out!

The others begin to comply as the gargoyles move to keep them corralled. KATANA and BROADWAY enter with PHIL in custody as SCHUMACHER begins to collect badges, scowling at the officers in front of him.

DAVID (VO)
"To those who would wound a city that
still bleeds, we say simply: come away
from there. Come to Chicago, if you
dare. Come and face us in this place.
We will stand against you."

EXT. SCENE - MANHATTAN. ROOFTOP. (NIGHT)

ENKI and MERLE stand on the roof, looking out over the city.

DAVID (VO)

"We will stand all challenges, and may whatever gods exist show you their mercy."

ENKI

You ever heard of the pigeon drop?

MERLE cocks an eyebrow as they look at each other.

INT. SCENE - HUMBOLDT STATION

MATT has fallen asleep on the couch watching the television. His head is slumped to one side as DAVID XANATOS continues on the TV.

DAVID

"But know also that, as millions sleep soundly under our protection, we demand respect, a level of respect that Manhattan has not been able to provide."

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

The gargoyles take their places around the roof. BROOKLYN shows KATANA to a place by his side and ANGELA takes one next to BROADWAY. FU-DOG and BRONX flank TACHI. COLDSTONE and COLDFIRE look out stoically to the east. Below, GOLIATH stands with ELISA's hands in his; she is wearing her backpack. He touches her hair, and she nods and smiles at him, a tear in her eye. GOLIATH then leaps off into the air and circles around to the top of the station as she watches him go.

DAVID (VO)

"We will not be mocked. We will not be exploited. We will not back down from a challenge. We are defenders of the night. We are gargoyles, and we will defend our home wherever we choose to make it."

GOLIATH lands, takes his position, and faces east as the sun rises and all (but COLDSTONE, COLDFIRE, and ELISA) turn to stone.

=END=