

THE THRONE OF BONES

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BLACK SCREEN

SUPERIMPOSE:

When Vendriel the Insidiator lay dead on the field at Lilaret, a ghoul ate the king's corpse and took his place among the living. After a time the mimic tried to shed his borrowed guise, but found that he could not. The Insidiator, although exhibiting some alarming new quirks, lived his life as if he had never died; the ghoul that had eaten him was seen no more...

Moral: Eat no corpse whose spirit is stronger than your own.

--Mopsard, Fables for the Fabulous

FADE IN:

INT. DUNGEON

PRINCE FANDIEL, late 40's, aristocratic and sharp, steps in and surveys the scene.

Prisoners scream and wail at the sight of him. Instruments of death line the walls and ceiling.

The Prince nods in approval at their songs of despair. Confident and calm, he turns to...

COMMANDER PAPOS, late 50's, eyes fierce with a face bearing many scars. He steps into the room from behind, swinging a burlap bag by his side.

PRINCE FANDIEL
Can you feel it, Papos? We are nearing the end. We have him right where we want him. The Empress will be thankful, Polliel will bless.

PAPOS
I want to be the last thing he sees.

PRINCE FANDIEL
Yes, yes, but not today. I want him to regret with all his soul he ever lived through to tomorrow.

The Prince leads them on through the chamber.

OUTSIDE A CELL

An VETERAN GUARD, and a YOUNG GUARD, snap to attention from both sides of the door. They unlock a series of padlocks, bolts and latches sealing the cell.

The Prince and Papos wait impatiently, tapping their heels and cracking their knuckles.

A Guard fumbles with the lock, the Prince winces with half a laugh.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Sir, take your time and make the rest of us wait.

The door swings open, the Prince glares at the offending Guard on the way in.

INT. THE THIEF'S CELL

The Prince enters; his eyes light up; he beams with a smile as he becomes fixed on the unseen prisoner.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Squirmodon!

Papos is by his side, he kicks the prisoner off-screen.

PAPOS

Wake up, you crooked, old, waste of shit.

There's a groan from the off screen prisoner.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Good evening, I have had the pleasure of dinning with the Empress, herself, and won approval of a new way to brighten your day.

The groan, coughs and hacks, there's a rough laughter.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

You haven't given up your lot yet, but I think I can change your mind.

More laughter.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

There is a cult in the city, for a price they will tell me all your secrets, I have only but to give them a hand or an arm, a nose and an eye... Sadly we are in short supply of all of the above and more.

After a moment there is a small sad cry, the prisoner weeps.

The prince mindlessly nods his head.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

Oh, I know, I know, I know. It's sad to see this come to an end. I'm glad you believe in this superstition. I will make a donation to Polliel's goodwill in your name, not to worry--

The BODY OF THE THIEF jumps out at the prince, scaring him!

The thief is but four stumps and an indistinguishable face and lipless mouth, he lashes out violently, attempting to gnaw on the Prince's ankle.

The Prince is shocked, but then he stops and laughs at the thief.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

(to Papos)

No, no it's fine. It's like a baby, suckling at the teat.

The prisoner throws back his head and cries. His sobs sooth the prince and gratify Papos with a smile.

Prince Fandiel turns to Papos.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

Secure a piece... just a piece. I want him to live to see the error in his ways.

PAPOS

Aye, aye.

PRINCE FANDIEL

(to Squirmodon)

Farewell my dear friend, I will see you soon.

More sobs and cries from the floor.

The Prince leaves.

Papos picks up Squirmodon and sets him down on the bench in front of him. He pulls the burlap bag to his side.

PAPOS

Superstition... hmmmph. You don't work in the necropolis as long as I have and not learn its ways. Ghouls exist, that's for sure. But, what interests a ghoul above all else is something that the Prince, the people, *no one* can't comprehend. One ghoul in particular, Vomikron Noxis, King of the Ghouls. He will grant you a favor, but in return he would want something more substantial than a sliver of flesh.

Papos pulls out a large hacksaw from the burlap bag.

PAPOS (CONT'D)

The King demands the brains, the tongue, the ears, your teeth to gnaw on, but especially your eyes. He won't be satisfied until he can't bite down into them, this I know!

He holds the saw close to the thief's cheeks...

INT. OUTSIDE THE CELL

The Thief screams, then turn to gurgles, then dies off. The guards remain unmovable, but questioning and hesitant.

INT. THE THIEF'S CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Covered in blood, Papos laughs and puts the thief's head in a bag and slings it under his arm. He exits the room.

INT. OUTSIDE THE CELL

Papos storms out of the cell, staring down his guards.

PAPOS

The Prince demands it!

Papos leaves.

The Veteran Guard looks to the Younger Guard with a frightened look on their face.

INT. THE ROYAL PALACE HALLWAYS

The Young Guard stands before the furious Prince.

PRINCE FANDIEL
He did what?!

INT. STAIRWELL

Papos laugh manically. He barrels down the stairway.

He runs into SKINNY GUARD and a CHUBBY GUARD.

SKINNY GUARD
Sir! Where would you have us?

Papos pulls out his sword quicker than we know what's happening and slices the Skinny Guard through the neck.

The Chubby Guard is slow to react, but in the same motion, Papos bears down on him with the next thrust.

INT. BARRACKS

Papos, wide eyed, bursts into a room full of a dozen of his soldiers.

PAPOS
Rise up, dogs!

The soldiers burst into action, rising from their comfortable positions to stand at attention.

PAPOS (CONT'D)
You are not worth another word, but
a smear on my sword if you do not
aid the Prince by getting out that
fucking door! Form rank!

The soldiers jump over each other in a panic following Papos's command.

Papos cackles as the guards pass by.

INT. THE ROYAL PALACE HALLWAYS

The Veteran Guard stands before the Prince.

VETERAN GUARD
Sire, we followed him down to the
lower keep.

PRINCE FANDIEL
Find him. Wake the reserves.

EXT. THE ROYAL PALACE - NIGHT

A bell rings in the night, an alarm.

EXT. THE ROYAL PALACE -NIGHT

Papos slips down the side of a wall, behind some shrubs,
behind a patrol.

The shrubs rustle and shake.

From out the other end, at the patrol's back, Papos exits the
shrubs and slips through a door.

EXT. THE ROYAL PALACE TERRACE - NIGHT

The prince stands at the edge looking out to the city. The
Young Guard and the Veteran Guard stand by his side.

Papos and his horse gallop through the killing grounds and
slips between two doors just as they're closing.

The prince grips the railing and fumes.

EXT. CROTALORN - NIGHT

Papos laughs as he rides through the empty streets.

A massive hill lay before him.. the necropolis.

EXT. DREAMERS' HILL - NIGHT

The horses hooves pound the soft dirt.

This is the necropolis. Tens upon tens of thousands are
buried here. Tombs and crypts line the streets of the dead.

Papos pass's TWO OLD NIGHT WATCHMEN, they raise their weapons
in the air after the commander.

He laughs again and a again, each more maniacal than the
last.

A horn sounds in the night.

FURTHER DOWN

Papos has successfully evaded everyone. He smiles and rears his horse to turn a corner.

At the edge of the maneuver, Papos shuts off. It's like a light switch. He stiffens on his horse, eyes roll back and falls off the horse with a neck snapping crack.

The body, for some reason, still shudders and spasms...

EXT. DREAMERS' HILL - NIGHT

A group of the Prince's forces, the Never-Vanquished, are leading a mob that has developed. A group of about twenty or more sweep like a wave down the street.

A BRAVE SOLDIER rears up ahead of the crowd. He spies ahead of him.

BRAVE SOLDIER

This way!

The crowd follows.

FURTHER DOWN

Papos is a pulpy, deflated, mass of flesh with a barely recognizable face.

A clawed, gray, slimy and inhuman hand reaches out and grabs the sack with the thief's head.

EXT. DREAMERS' HILL - NIGHT

The mob comes to a threshold, they hear a roar that's not unlike a tiger. Everyone stops dead in their tracks.

From up top a DARK SHAPE bounds from one tomb to another.

The Brave Solider steps forward.

BRAVE SOLDIER

Look!

The Shape escapes.

EXT. DREAMERS' HILL VARIOUS - NIGHT

The horse thunder down the street, just keeping up with the Dark Shape.

The mob raise their weapons to attack.

An unearthly laugh fills the air.

The Never-Vanquish charge harder.

EXT. OLD SECTION OF THE NECROPOLIS - NIGHT

The Dark Shape lands beside a tomb.

There's a small plot of land paved with stone and the stone statue of a man holding his hand out in the air as if to receive a blessing at center of this clearing. Tombs and crypts line the edge of the circle.

In a most guttural voice...

DARK SHAPE

Oh Dolton, Dolton Bose. You
sanguine bed pisser, horse fucker,
and prude. There's no faith in you
to show yourself and kiss my royal
rod!

A roar, the demon from the depths of a tomb clamors alive.

The dark shape laughs and bounds away just in time.

The mob floods into the area, they fixate on the first thing they see...

A GHOUL (Dolton Bose) a demon so foul, emerges from a crypt to greet his enemy, his face falls when he sees the mob rushing at him.

The crowd envelops the beast. They hack, slash and stick into the demon with their pikes, axes, bills and swords. The ghoul succumbs with a cry that's cut short.

TWO EYES

...Look from the shadows. The dark shape laughs.

BACK TO SCENE

A head is hoisted above the crowd on a pike. A leg is passed around, a legless torso is dragged away. The Brave Solider holds out the ghoul's heart.

The crowd doesn't notice as the dark shape slips away from the scene.

EXT. THE ROYAL PALACE TERRACE - NIGHT

The Veteran Guard and the Young Guard stand before the Prince Fandiel, who is incredulous.

VETERAN GUARD

Sire, Commander Papos was overcome by a ghoul. The ghoul has been confronted and slain. The head of the thief has not been recovered.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Such an act could not have been accomplished on its own. The creature would have needed help.

He snaps his fingers and motions for a group of guards behind the Veteran and the Young Guard. They seize the shocked Veteran and Youth and take them away.

The prince contemplates with himself...

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

Ghouls... If there's a shred of truth to their abilities...

He motions to a BEARDED GUARD.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

Send for our resident Ghoulogist at once.

EXT. ANATOMICAL INSTITUTE - DAY

The sun rises over the horizon.

A wide street runs from the city, up the hill and over past the institute. Before it reaches the necropolis it passes by an old mansion at the bottom of the hill, this is the Glyphtfand residence.

PORFAT (V.O.)

...Non invasive forms of observation have yet to be discovered. Dissection is our main course of action...

The morning bell chimes, class is in session.

INT. CLASSROOM

There are about thirty students around the age of twenty seated in rows up and down the room.

Almost all of them snicker.

PORFAT (O.S.)

...In my paper you will see moral ambiguity is not localized in the heart, like many have thought, but in section fifteen of the brain. You can see my diagram...

ZEPHRYN VENDREN, late teens, tall and strong, is about the only student not joining in on the joke. He holds his hand over his mouth and stifles an urge to call out in the class room, he looks to...

DOCTOR PORFAT, late 50's, old and feeling it, but still has some fight left in him. He writes a cross diagram of a human skull on the chalk board behind his desk.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

...I have cross referenced the size of the skull and have measure the cranial ridges and bumps to ascertain the subjects propensity for violence.

Porfat notices out of the corner of his eye the students laughter. He falters.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

I... uh... have proven case after case of the connection... such a find will help cure the mental illnesses of our age...

A PALE STUDENT bursts out and laughs, other begin to join in.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

What is the meaning of this?

Porfat steps out from his desk.

He's wearing no pants.

The students, (all but Zephyryn), join in making fun of the doctor.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Oh dear.

Porfat becomes angry. He slams his hand down on his desk.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Out! Class dismissed!

There's a cheer from the student body (all but Zephyryn).

Porfat rushes out of the classroom.

INT. THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Cluttered and brimming to the ceiling with dust, books and bones.

Porfat bursts into his office, mad as hell. He slams the door...

A stack of papers and books begin to teeter.

PORFAT

No, no, no!

The pile leans forward, Porfat's reaches out to stop them.

He catches it. Success!

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

PRINCE FANDIEL (O.S.)

Porfat are you there?

PORFAT

No! Don't open the door.

The door swings hard and fast, catching Porfat off balance. Porfat and the pile of books and papers sprawl out in the room, Porfat is on his bottom.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Oh, good, you're here.

The Prince Fandiel's eyes lingers on a lonely piece of paper that slowly falls in front of him.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

You should really look into getting this place cleaned up.

Porfat regains his composure.

The prince sweeps off the contents of Porfat's desk and perches himself on it.

He looks long and hard into Porfat's eyes.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

Ghouls...

Porfat stands, he grabs his back with a wince of pain.

PORFAT

I know of them.

PRINCE FANDIEL

What do you know?

PORFAT

Superstitions has it, the Death God grants curses, or gifts to certain individuals who live peculiar lives. Most often these people would be driven to the graveyard on a fateful night to evoke a transformation into something evil; an animal, a ghoul. Zombies were popular once, but they grew old. Why do you want to know about them?

PRINCE FANDIEL

You've heard of the thief, Squirmodon?

PORFAT

Indeed, I have. Stole the wealth, started the riots.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Well, we have him, or should I say, we had him. Before he passed on, we had him right where we wanted him. He was a broken man.

PORFAT

He had one last trick up his sleeve?

PRINCE FANDIEL

A priceless one, but no matter, I have a plan. There is a cult in this city that worships a so called, King of Ghouls. A king that will grant favors in return for among all things cults worship.. cold cash. Luckily, I still have enough to the thief left to strike a deal.

PORFAT

I'm afraid I know little of society's outliers in this case, all my work has been with bones and books.

The prince scoffs.

PRINCE FANDIEL

I wouldn't leave you cold traileed.
You can start by attending an
auction today. Due to the nature of
the auction, I can not go and would
like you to in my place.

PORFAT

Why not just find them yourself?

PRINCE FANDIEL

Well they don't want to be found,
at least not by authorities. That's
where you come in.

He narrows his eyes at the doctor. Porfat shrinks back.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

It is said that the workings of a
Chalcedor is up for bid. I have not
heard of this man, except for the
authorship of key maps and layouts
for sections of the city our
supposed cult is located. Spend no
more then five thousand fillies to
obtain these papers and be ever in
my favor.

PORFAT

How can I say no?

The prince laughs and shakes his head.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Maybe if you were a ghoul.

Pofat sighs.

EXT. CROTALORN - DAY

Porfat walks with his staff amid the bustling throng of rush
hour downtown.

The sun burns through the sky.

He comes to a stop. His mind is elsewhere. He taps his
fingernail onto his teeth, lost in thought.

PORFAT

(to himself)

An appeal to the Death God... his
presence here... Graveyard miasma
not a contagion...

Porfat comes across an OLD HOMELESS WOMAN begging on her knees on the street. She holds out a cup for Porfat and with a toothless smile.

OLD WOMAN
Alms for the poor.

Absentmindedly, he reaches in his coat and pulls out a few coins.

PORFAT
Here, here.

Porfat turns away, lost in his world.

Immediately after, a GRUNGY ASSAILANT steps in and grabs the Old Woman's cup. She cries out.

GRUNGY ASSAILANT
Better my coffer than your petty
foibles, bitch!

She reaches out for her cup but is obviously too feeble to do anything.

The Assailant laughs and turns to face a very serious Porfat.

PORFAT
Drop it.

The Grungy Assailant looks Porfat over.

GRUNGY ASSAILANT
I reckon I should take a piece out
of you as well.

Porfat holds his staff out preparing for an attack.

TWO OTHER DIRTY ASSAILANTS step out from the crowd behind their pal.

GRUNGY ASSAILANT (CONT'D)
A better caste of victim.

PORFAT
I will make you earn every bit of
it.

The three assailants close in.

The Grungy Assailant rears back his arm for the hit--

A hand grabs him from behind and pulls the assailant back between his two goon friends.

Zephryn steps into view and up to the other two assailants.

ZEPHRYN

Flies, retches. Leave before I step
on you with a bigger shoe.

The Two Assailants don't get the hint, they turn to face the young man.

MOMENTS LATER

One assailant's head goes through a wall.

The other, his head broken and bleeding, is thrown into the back of a manure cart.

Zephryn turns to face a shocked Porfat.

PORFAT

Well done, Master Zephryn. There is
hope in this city after all.

Zephryn holds his hands up in mock modesty.

ZEPHRYN

If my clan were to see this, I
would be forced to conclude with
their heads in a bag.

PORFAT

Small favors. What brings you to
these parts, you're a far path from
Vendren Hill.

Zephryn leans in close for only Porfat to hear.

ZEPHRYN

The Chalcedor bid. I came by your
office to ask you a question when I
overheard your conversation. I
couldn't help it, but I believe I
can help you.

PORFAT

A simple task. I think your
services and skills better suited
to something else.

ZEPHRYN

But you are in need, professor and
I empathize.

PORFAT

A noble quality, but I can handle
this. Thank you for your help.

Porfat turns to face the streets, Zephyryn lingers behind.

ZEPHRYN

'The purpose of science is not to serve ourselves but to serve society at large. Its advancements need to be a beacon of light that will encourage others to help those with lesser standings and rise above the limits society has placed on them.'

Porfat stops.

PORFAT

I talked of ghoulishness as if it were a reversible disease. I know now that those that are afflicted do so willingly and are beyond my help.

ZEPHRYN

You also said, 'Nothing about the disease is certain.' I really did read your book.

PORFAT

Hope indeed. Very well.

Porfat and Zephyryn walk side by side down the busy city street.

Behind them, unnoticed by anyone else, the Old Woman slumps back into her spot.

Her eyes roll back into her head, her mouth yawns open, a trickle of blood runs down her forehead.

She falls out of sight.

INT. AUCTION HOUSE

The room is bustling with around fifty interested patrons.

OLDER PATRON

Thirty fillies!

AN EAGER PATRON waves his ticket in the air.

The AUCTIONEER hammers his gavel on the podium.

AUCTIONEER

Do I hear forty?

POTBELLIED PATRON
Forty fillies!

PORFAT AND ZEPHRYN

Sit midway up and center. Porfat leans to Zephryn.

PORFAT
If I've ever felt so certain about
anything in my life.

Zephryn scans the crowd.

ZEPHRYN
I vaguely remember the name
Chalcedor from your class.

SKINNY PATRON
Fifty fillies!

PORFAT
A man among men. A distinguished
author of an era some two hundred
years ago. He dabbled in one area
or another and mastered several.

ZEPHRYN
Isn't he the pornographer?

PORFAT
Maybe...

Zephryn's eyes are averted. He looks to the back of the room.

ZEPHRYN
Oh, no.

AUCTIONEER
Do I hear eighty fillies?

At the back of the room is WEYMAEL VENDREN, late 40's, a fat man. Dressed in red and black, he wears Vendren elite colors running across his overcoat, with pale skin and tiger striped tattoo running down the side of his face.

Beside him is POLLIARD, 12, a grey, serious and ominous boy. Polliard stares and lingers on the auctioneer's every word.

ZEPHRYN
It's a Vendren. He's on the hill.

Porfat is half distract by what's in front of him.

AUCTIONEER
Ninety fillies, going once!

PORFAT
Five hundred fillies!

There's a few gasps and murmurs.

ZEPHRYN
No! Too much.

AUCTIONEER
Ladies and gentlemen, do I hear a
thousand?

From the back of the room..

WEYMAEL
Two thousand.

PORFAT
Two thousand five hundred!

ZEPHRYN
We can't outbid him--

WEYMAEL
Four thousand fillies.

The crowd's riled up. People stand up to see the opposing parties.

A LADY GLYPHT, late 60's, yet vibrant and voluptuous beyond her years, stands up from the crowd across the room and eyes Porfat.

Beside her, ALPHEA, early 20's, blond hair, blue eyes, also with a tiger stripped tattoo running down the side of her face. Alpheia gasps holding her hand over her mouth.

PORFAT
Five thousand fillies!

WEYMAEL
Six thousand.

ZEPHRYN
Offer six point five. I can cover
it.

PORFAT
Six thousand five hundred!

AUCTIONEER
Do I hear eight?

Everyone in the room turns to Weymael..

He simply nods.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
Eight thousand fillies!

Everyone turns to Porfat..

Defeated.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
Sold, to the Vendren in the corner!

The crowd applauds.

Lady Glypht never takes her eyes off Porfat.

INT. AUCTION HOUSE - LATER

The crowd begins to disperse leaving Porfat and Zephryn alone.

Porfat stamps his staff on the ground hard.

PORFAT
(to himself)
Balderdash! This city will consume me.

(to Zephryn)
I thought you were a Vendren. Don't you have access to their funds?

ZEPHRYN
I am a lesser lord. I don't even live on the hill.

PORFAT
A fine pickle indeed.

He taps his teeth with his fingernail and turns away.

PORFAT (CONT'D)
Indeed...

In front of Zephryn, Alpheia steps up and offers a bright and beautiful smile.

ALPHEIA
Hello.

ZEPHRYN
Uh... hello.

She holds out an envelop.

ALPHEA
You're a Vendren.

ZEPHRYN
Yes.

ALPHEA
From where? I rarely see you on the hill.

ZEPHRYN
I moved from Fandragord last month.

ALPHEA
No stripes. Almost time?

Zephyryn nods. Alpheia smiles.

ALPHEA (CONT'D)
Your master has been summoned by the Lady Glypht.
(nodding to Porfat)
He seems lost.

They look to see Porfat tapping his teeth, staring up at the ceiling, mumbling with himself.

ZEPHRYN
I'll pass it along.

She bows. Zephyryn couldn't be more smitten, he's all smiles.

ALPHEA
I noticed those eyes from across the room.

She turns and walks away.

ZEPHRYN
What's your name?

She walks out of the building without missing a beat.

Zephyryn perplexed, turns back to Porfat.

ZEPHRYN (CONT'D)
Doctor, Doctor. Here!

Porfat opens the envelop.

PORFAT
(reading)
You are cordially invited... come alone... at the Glypht residence... tonight...
(MORE)

PORFAT (CONT'D)
(he turns to Zephryn)
Out of the frying pan and into the
fire.

INT. WILLING LEPRESS INN

Porfat slams down his cup on the bar and motions for the
GRUMPY BARTENDER for another.

Zephryn sits beside him, drawing an unfavorable glare from
the Bartender.

PORFAT
I would like to send my imbecile of
a brother-in-law down the stairs
with my foot, had I not forgotten
the price for high treason.

ZEPHRYN
An unforeseen circumstance. There
was nothing we could do.

PORFAT
It's okay. This is all the Prince's
fault. There are a few fleeting
rumors about ghouls, but I never
thought to investigate them. I am
comfortable in living out my tenure
at the institute, this adventure
wears me thin.

ZEPHRYN
But your book puts you at the
forefront of the field of ghoulist.

PORFAT
Ghoulologist... I've felt the sting
of that moniker for quiet some
time. I toyed with ghouls while
waiting for inspiration on more
important projects. The book has
brought me nothing but grief from
the city's alternative culture
seeking to gratify themselves in
this filth.

ZEPHRYN
The Prince may not want to hear
that.

Porfat grips his walking staff and shudders at the thought.

PORFAT

We may be able to learn something yet. Lady Glypht's son contracted ghoulishness some time ago and then died at the hands of the Never-Vanquished. I visited her house to console her, but found she surrounded herself with some of the city's most vilest folk. I learned nothing from my visit then. Maybe this time...

ZEPHRYN

I'll see you tomorrow?

PORFAT

Yes. Tomorrow...

He doesn't seem so sure.

EXT. ANATOMICAL INSTITUTE - DAY

The sun sets in the horizon.

Porfat's buggy makes its way down the hill, away from the school and towards a tall, once grand, house that now looks old and decrepid. This is the Glyphtfand residence, or Fand house for short.

EXT. THE FAND HOUSE - NIGHT

Porfat makes his way through the dark.

Porfat stops, something's not right. He looks left and right out into the darkness.

VOICE (O.S.)

'Like unto him that lieth with himself, he that laugheth with himself shall slay himself.'

Porfat grips his staff.

PORFAT

Does it say anything in your book about people that ambush people in dark places, get their head broken?

ZORNARD, late 20's, a Cluddite with their green and yellow fist insignia over the chest, steps out from the shadows. He's dressed in cheap light armor with his hand on his sword.

REAPER and DUKE, both 20's, step out from behind Zornard; nothing fantastic about them.

ZORNARD

I know not that. Are you a mocker?
Or a scoffer?

REAPER

He's a blasphemer.

ZORNARD

Tell us your name, that we may ask
our reverend lord commander to
write it down against the day when
you are called forth to answer.

PORFAT

My name is my own. So, stand aside,
or I'll have Lady Glypht call her
dogs.

The Cluddites grudgingly separate.

ZORNARD

Your name is your own, but your
face is in my eye, blasphemer. If
you have business with the witch,
pass and be damned.

Porfat triumphantly walks past them and up to the door.

He knocks; it opens.

INT. THE FAND HOUSE ENTRANCE

Porfat is ushered in by TWO MUCH OLDER SERVANTS.

Lady Glypht eagerly descends a narrow stairway, rushing to greet her guest.

LADY GLYPHT

Dr. Porfat! It's been quiet
sometime, what's kept you all these
years!?

PORFAT

Madam, do you know there are
Cluddites outside your door,
harassing people?

LADY GLYPHT

Why, yes I hired them. Those poor boys need something to keep them busy and you can't be too careful nowadays.

PORFAT

They--

Porfat stops dead his jaw drops and he stares. Directly past Lady Glypht emerges Weymael and Polliard. They boy gives Porfat a depraved stare.

LADY GLYPHT

Doctor, have you met Weymael Vendren and my grandson Polliard?

PORFAT

I had thought--

LADY GLYPHT

Yes, that Lord Glyphtfand was my only son. He had a brother, whose very name is banished from this house. I've since put my son's boy in Weymael's care.

Weymael steps forward and gives Porfat a half hug and a smile.

WEYMAEL

The Doctor and I share a scholarly passion. I didn't think anyone in Crotalorn knew of Chalcedor. He's more revered with the likes of a Sythiphorian. You very nearly stole a treasure from under me.

LADY GLYPHT

Chalcedor...

The Lady rolls her eyes and leans against the doctor.

LADY GLYPHT (CONT'D)

I had no idea our local ghoulogist had such a naughty side.

PORFAT

I value the author purely as a social historian...

Porfat begins to mutter. Lady Glypht giggles. Weymael sneezes and wipes it on his arm.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

When we last met, you had surrounded yourself with some exotic admirers. I don't see any right now. Have you dropped them all?

WEYMAEL

It pleases the lady to patronize Crotalorn's advanced artists and intellectuals, but she never receives guests of that sort when her grandson visits.

LADY GLYPHT

Of course, you're an exception, Doctor. I promise to receive you eagerly anytime you wish to enter my... home.

Weymael's jaw drops; Polliard scoffs at the innuendo; Porfat's tightens his fist.

PORFAT

Yes, yes. The reason for my visit would be to see if any of these advanced intellectuals would happen to know about ghoulishness. I had hope to question them about a ghoulish cult that has started practicing rites in our city.

LADY GLYPHT

Have you ever heard of a ghoul worshipping anything, Weymael?

POLLIARD

Their food.

PORFAT

No, this cult is made of human beings. The Prince wants to know more about them, he was hoping to locate them--

LADY GLYPHT

The Prince! Surly finding such a group should pose no problem. Why would he need to associate with that unsavory group at all?

PORFAT

Superstition, my Lady. Ghouls are sad to have powers of recalling the memories of their carrion.

POLLIARD

Like, if a thief were caught by the Prince.

Porfat turns to Polliard, surprised.

PORFAT

Young lad--!

POLLIARD

If I were a ghoul, I would eat the thief and keep the treasure for myself.

LADY GLYPHT

All this disgusting talk I hope hasn't spoiled your appetite, Doctor. You will stay for a bit of supper, won't you?

There's a clatter in the kitchen. Lady Glypht backs away with a smile at the doctor.

LADY GLYPHT (CONT'D)

Excuse me for a moment.

Weymael steps in and puts his hand over Porfat's shoulder.

WEYMAEL

Doctor. Something miraculous has happened. The duality of Chalcedor's work has been something of legend, surely you can imagine.

PORFAT

Yes, yes. Was it useful?

WEYMAEL

Useful? It was a miracle. A copy of his 'Nights in the Garden of Sythiphore'. A rare mint condition copy.

The doctor is in awe.

PORFAT

That must be over two hundred years old.

He looks over Weymael once again with a new impression of him.

WEYMAEL

Something even a broad minded bookseller would refuse to sell to the public.

PORFAT

Indeed... Can I see it?

Weymael smiles.

WEYMAEL

But of course. This time tomorrow? There is a gathering tomorrow involving my clan, I would relish a chance to escape it with a fellow Chalcedor enthusiast.

Lady Glypht storms in the room and pulls Weymael aside.

LADY GLYPHT

Where is he?!

Everyone turns around.

Polliard is missing.

WEYMAEL

I... I...

LADY GLYPHT

You idiot!

Lady Glypht strikes like a viper, she whips her open palm across Weymael's face with enough force to knock him back.

Porfat is shocked, he gasps.

LADY GLYPHT (CONT'D)

Go find him!

Weymael cowers in fear.

WEYMAEL

But, my heart, my asthma...
(he lowers his voice)
...The king...

She strikes him again!

LADY GLYPHT

Useless!

She stops and turns to the doctor. She changes her tone like a bad accordion.

LADY GLYPHT (CONT'D)
 (pleading)
 Oh Doctor! Please help me.

She falls onto him and holds him by the collar, she puts her head down by his chest.

LADY GLYPHT (CONT'D)
 Weymael is a fool and my servants
 are even more useless. Help me find
 him.

Porfat is in near hysterics. He tries awkwardly accepts her embrace.

PORFAT
 Of course, yes.

EXT. THE FAND HOUSE - NIGHT

A storm sweeps across the necropolis washing over the house and up the hill.

Lady Glypht pulls Porfat by the hand out of the house straight to...

ZORNARD AND CREW

Guarding the outer perimeter.

Lady Glypht screams across her yard over the storm.

LADY GLYPHT
 My grandson, he's gone! Find him,
 Zornard!

The Cluddites spring into action. They march into Dreamers' Hill.

LADY GLYPHT (CONT'D)
 (to Porfat)
 This way.

She yanks him hard.

EXT. DREAMERS' HILL - NIGHT

Lightening discharges across the sky giving us a brief glimpse of the necropolis.

Lady Glypht and Porfat scan the horizon.

PORFAT
Polliard!

Lady Glypht reaches out and pinches Porfat's lip.

LADY GLYPHT
Quiet, he'll run, the scamp.

She pulls him along further.

EXT. FURTHER DOWN - NIGHT

Porfat rushes through the graves trying to keep up with Lady Glypht.

There's a crackle of thunder with a lingering sound of something animalistic trailing behind it.

Lady Glypht stops; Porfat runs into her.

PORFAT
I'm sorry, I apologize.

Instead of turning him away, she receives him and grabs his hands.

There's a far off cry of something that may or may not be an animal.

LADY GLYPHT
Oh, Doctor.

She puts them over her breasts.

PORFAT
No, we mustn't.

LADY GLYPHT
Shame on you, Doctor. We've been waiting for this all night.

Another crack of lightening and thunder. This one sounding more animal than the last. Lady Glypht tries to cover the sound with a moan.

PORFAT
What was that?

Porfat wrestles Lady Glypht until she let's go, causing Porfat to land on his ass.

He looks up; Lady Glypht is gone.

Porfat mutters under his breath as he struggles to stand up.

EXT. THE STREETS OF DREAMERS' HILL - NIGHT

Porfat stumbles out onto the necropolis street.

He pauses to look left then look right. Something's not right.

VOICE (O.S.)
Halt, blasphemer!

Porfat straightens up. He shakes his fist looking for his staff but it's not there. He looks up to see:

Reaper and Duke, armed with their bills. They stare angrily at Porfat.

DUKE
The witch sent us here, she said there would be a ghoul after the boy this evening and you failed to keep him. This is all your fault.

PORFAT
I did no such thing the boy wasn't under my care.

Duke and Reaper raise their bills at Porfat. Porfat does a double take.

DUKE
He's here. I can feel it.

PORFAT
Malarkey. Let us be rid of this place instead. The boy doesn't want to be found.

BANG!

There's a flash across the sky. Everyone looks up.

A scream fills the air but is soon cut short.

PORFAT (CONT'D)
No, no!

DUKE
It's close. Two men can take an abomination. They fear our iron.

There's a rustling from up ahead.

PORFAT

There is no known proof to the limits of a ghouls' strengths. Let us go and say we failed.

Reaper and Duke turn to the noise. Porfat begins to walk away.

DUKE

Stay, blasphemer, or your next.

PORFAT

(indignant)

I'll be right behind you.

Reaper and Duke look...

AROUND THE CORNER

The bills peak around the corner first, before three terrified men look to see...

A crypt is blanketed in shadows, there is nothing there save for a lone leg protruding out of the dark.

It moves!

It tussles!

DUKE

By Cludd, I slay thee and rid this abomination from his everlasting light!

Two eyes open and pop out of the dark. There's a small chuckle from the beast.

Reaper shoves his bill at the shape in the dark.

His bill reaches in, but won't come out. Reaper yanks and pulls but the beast has grabbed it on the other end.

PORFAT

Polliel save us!

Reaper is yanked into the shadows. The ground shakes as it spews out screams and blood, it sprays out and covers much of Duke.

The Dark Shape laughs manically at the two men alive.

Porfat turns to run.

Duke fears the worst and runs as well.

EXT. THE STREETS OF DREAMERS' HILL - NIGHT

Porfat is ahead of Duke by a margin. He panics and pants as he flees the site.

Duke fumbles with himself, falling behind.

DUKE
Save us, Cludd! Send us to his
everlasting--!

Duke screams.

Porfat turns to see...

VOMIKRON NOXIS King of Ghouls, ??'s, poised over Duke's body holding his head. The beast is a dark grey muscular, primordial beast, the biggest ghoul in the story.

Blood sprays out of Duke's stump showering Vomikron, he doesn't seem to mind.

Vomikron smiles and roars at Porfat.

Porfat runs with all his might, but there's only so far down the street he can go.

Up from behind the shape of the king drops the head, leaps up to a rooftop and bounds from one to the next until he catches up to Porfat. There's nothing he can do.

Vomikron perches above the doctor.

In a most guttural voice...

VOMIKRON
It is dangerous for an old man to
defy the gods...

The ghoul lowers itself to the ground and stalks Porfat, getting closer and closer...

VOMIKRON (CONT'D)
...Your eyes are as special as
Gluttriel could make...

Porfat backs up against a tomb. This is it!

VOMIKRON (CONT'D)
I will start with them first.

A giant claw of a hand from the ghoul grabs Porfat's leg, squeezing it tight. The doctor winces.

The ghoul drags the doctor closer...

ZORNARD (O.S.)
 Fire, fire! Burn the beast and be
 cleansed from our sight!

Vomikron turns to see...

Twenty Cluddites flood the street.

Zornard leads the charge; Archers nock their bows; Fireballs
 are hurled.

Vomikron squeezes Porfat tighter than ever.

VOMIKRON
 But, only when I can enjoy them.

Vomikron runs to the nearest tomb and disappears down a
 hidden alley.

Porfat tries to get up, but he's greeted to a roar of a
 pissed off tiger that echos in the night. The doctor is
 shaken to his very core.

Porfat faints.

MOMENTS LATER

It's rough, but the doctor does it. He wakes up to the ugly
 sight of that Cluddite, Zornard. Porfat cheers!

PORFAT
 Zornard!

ZORNARD
 Aye, I am he, blasphemmer.

Porfat bolts up and hugs the Cluddite.

PORFAT
 Am I ever glad to see such a
 wretched sight--

ZORNARD
 Get not too close, lest you fear
 Cludd's hammer.

Porfat backs off.

PORFAT
 Never a better euphemism told, my
 stoic friend.

Zornard gives him an disrespectful shake of the head.

PORFAT (CONT'D)
Did you find Lady Glypht?

ZORNARD
Nay, the Lady nor the boy have not
been seen. The ghoul was all we
encountered.

The Cluddite group kneel on the ground and bow their heads to
murmur a prayer.

PORFAT
What are they doing?

ZORNARD
Silence, while we strip this
abomination from our minds.

Porfat's caught in a Cluddite private time and shakes his
head.

The doctor heads back down the street.

EXT. DREAMERS' HILL - NIGHT

Porfat peers from around the corner. One of the shadows hangs
an eaten leg and Reaper with his chest caved in.

The doctor steps in examining the scene.

PORFAT
Fo, fom, fommer, fommie, forn,
Fornikon.

Porfat tugs on the leg Vomikron was eating and pulls it out
of the shadows.

The smell hits him hard. He winces in disgust.

He rears in with a braver curiosity than before.

The leg was the only thing not eaten by the ghoul. The
skeleton is littered with strings of flesh.

PORFAT (CONT'D)
You could be anyone, couldn't you?

INT. THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Morning creeps in through the window.

The Doctor paces in a frenzy about in the room, forever looking out the window at the Fand house outside. He taps his teeth and mumbles incoherently.

PORFAT

The delusion one is attributed... in correlation to a decline in manners in our sorry age...

Zephyryn stands by the door, patiently observing the doctor.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Fornikon's Mania is the belief in that a ghoul will eat the corpse and impersonate the person for a period of time -- What's that!

They both stop.

They listen. Porfat gazes across the room.

Nothing.

Porfat sighs and rolls back into a makeshift bed by his desk.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Never ever grow old, Zephyryn. We're only meant for so long...

His eyes flutter before they close.

ZEPHRYN

I can't prevent what lays ahead.

PORFAT

...A sorry age indeed...

Porfat succumbs to snores.

Zephyryn picks up a blanket beside him and lays it over the doctor.

Porfat rustles, but is laid more peacefully.

INT. THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

The Doctor slowly wakes up to see a woman in front of him.

NYSSA, early 50's, strikingly beautiful, adorned in purple silks, shakes the doctor gently.

NYSSA

Porfat... Porfat...

He slowly comes to; she offers him a heartfelt smile.

NYSSA (CONT'D)

Always here. For the solitary animal, this way of life would be a virtue.

Porfat is bemused.

PORFAT

Unfettered by years of rigorous routine and discipline.

NYSSA

And all for what? Being at my husband's beck and call?

Porfat rises and shakes the collar of his coat at the thought.

PORFAT

Talk about animals...

NYSSA

You have value, Porfat. I will talk with my husband to rid you of this errand.

PORFAT

Do no favors. I will see this through. I merely have to pass some information along to him and I'll be rid of him proper.

He searches turns and twists around searching for something.

NYSSA

Do so. Have a look around you, maybe you'll see where you're going before it's too late.

PORFAT

As always, wiser than the kings or the old folk in the hills.

She offers a sincere smile.

NYSSA

Family, Porfat. One day you will have to listen to me.

He finds it... his walking staff. He grips the staff tight and lingers at the door looking at Nyssa.

PORFAT

That day will surely come.

NYSSA

Be safe.

Porfat gives a knowing nod before exiting the room.

EXT. CROTALORN - DAY

The city of Crotalorn sprawls out before us.

The river, Miraga borders it on the east, while the necropolis folds around the other half on the west.

Moving along from one hill to the next is...

EXT. VENDREN HILL - DAY

A castle with many spires, overlooking the city.

INT. VENDREN PALACE HALLWAYS

Rich, very rich.

Servants and officials everywhere, all with tiger striped tattoos. The Vendrens wear black and red robes separating themselves from the servants who wear white and red.

They are in a bustle of commotion as they prepare for a party.

Young Polliard makes his way through the crowds. He passes by TWO BUSY BODY CATERERS; between TWO NOBLE LORDS; up a flight of stairs; past TWO MEAGER SERVANTS; he comes to an old wooden door.

INT. WEYMAEL'S STUDY

Two giant bookcases line the room, it's dusty and dirty.

Weymael sits at his desk at the center of the room, Chalcedor's book in front of him. He studies intently.

The door ominously creaks open. Weymael pays no mind.

The shadow of Polliard creeps over the book. Weymael reluctantly peels himself away from his reading.

The young man stands before Weymael with his chin up and a haughty smirk on his face.

POLLIARD

I want my meal.

Weymael slams the book closed and grabs his overcoat.

WEYMAEL

Soon.

Weymael exits his study.

EXT. OLD SECTION OF THE NECROPOLIS - DAY

Porfat steps out onto the plot of land and admires the statue at its center.

Vendren Hill is just above us.

Porfat walks up to the statue admiringly and wipes off some leaves from its mantle.

A plaque reads: "Chalcedor"

Porfat's gaze lingers over the statue.

A buggy stops on the side of the road behind him. The TWO SHARP DRESSED COACHMEN wave Porfat in.

PORFAT

(to the Coachman)

Kind sir.

EXT. VENDREN HILL FRONT GATES - DAY

Porfat steps out of the buggy and basks in the palace's awesome glory.

A row of Death's Darlings seal the way in.

SHARP DRESSED COACHMAN

Fifty fillies.

Porfat's eyes go wide, he stiffens and faces the Coachman.

PORFAT

Fifty fillies!? That's outrageous!

Do I look like a tourist?

The two Coachmen get stand up and threateningly face Porfat.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

I'd rather paint with a feather.

He grips his staff.

FROM BEHIND THE GUARDS

...Emerges Zephryn, he quickly surveys the scene.

ZEPHRYN
Guards, assist him!

GOATEED GUARD
Which one? The fat one seems to be
winning.

BACK TO SCENE

Porfat's kicking ass. He swings his staff with proficiency
landing a blow that sends one Coachman to his knees.

COACHMAN
Please, sir! Mercy!

The Coachman turns to run. Porfat gives him a kick to the
behind.

Zephryn runs to Porfat's side. He smiles.

ZEPHRYN
Making friends?

Porfat gives Zephryn a dirty look.

INT. VENDREN PALACE HALLWAYS

Zephryn leads Porfat.

ZEPHRYN
What are you doing here of all
nights, doctor?

PORFAT
It is busy up on the hill.

ZEPHRYN
They're honoring an artist tonight
for his contribution to the
Vendren's collection of
antiquities. A statue so beautiful
that people have mistaken it for
reality.

PORFAT
Of all nights. That malefactor did
say there was a gathering. He did
not say it would be this opulent.

ZEPHRYN

Weymael?

PORFAT

Yes, the buffoon said he would be here to show me Chalcedor's book.

ZEPHRYN

Then we head there, you can't run the hallways without an escort--

A hand reaches out and grabs Zephryn. CAPTAIN NAGENDRA, late 40's, ugly face, wearing Vendren elite colors and dressed in ornamental medium armor. Nagendra bears down on the young man before him.

NAGENDRA

Hold it, Master Zephryn, you're late.

ZEPHRYN

Late?

NAGENDRA

For your shift.

ZEPHRYN

I'm not working any shift.

NAGENDRA

By orders of Princess Liame you are required to fulfill your duties or suffer punishment by clan law.

ZEPHRYN

I'm a Viscount to Baron Vendriel the White of Fandragord. I am here in Crotalorn on scholarly pursuits. I will not suffer some fool.

NAGENDRA

Then suffer the law. You can't pass.

Zephryn turns to the doctor.

ZEPHRYN

I will get this straightened out soon.

NAGENDRA

Take to the west wing and make sure our guests don't dilly dally in our castle.

Zephryn bites his tongue and nods to Nagendra. Zephryn walks away.

Nagendra turns to Porfat.

NAGENDRA (CONT'D)

The party's that way, fool.

Nagendra leaves.

A hand taps on Porfat's shoulder. Porfat turns to see..

PHYLPHOT, late 40's, Weymael's Vendren servant, a dirty, ugly, stick of a man. He gives Porfat a contemptuous look.

PHYLPHOT

The master said you'd be here.
Alright, follow along.

He turns away, leading Porfat deeper in.

PORFAT

Your master, Weymael? He's not in his study?

PHYLPHOT

He's attending the gathering.

PORFAT

An excuse to get away..

PHYLPHOT

What?

PORFAT

Do you know of the boy, Polliard?

PHYLPHOT

Yes, he is the master's ward.

PORFAT

I'm curious, what became of the boy last night? Did he find his way home?

Phylphot stops, turns and gives the doctor the 'evil eye'.

PHYLPHOT

He always comes back.

INT. VENDREN PALACE WITH POLLIARD

A HURRIED COOK races down the hallway carrying an order.

Young Polliard merely observes.

TWO EAGER WAITERS rush by, oblivious to the young boy.

Polliard does nothing.

Alphea steps up from behind..

ALPHEA

I could have sworn, young master,
that you have grown several inches
taller since the time we last met.

Nothing, no reaction, the boy's a stone.

ALPHEA (CONT'D)

I bet there's a soul in there. Ahhh
there looks like it. There are ways
you can tell.

Young Polliard looks up. His mouth twitches. Alphea leans in turning serious.

ALPHEA (CONT'D)

There are ways to measure a man's
death.

The boy offers up a crooked smile. About the best he's ever
gunna get.

Alphea rests her hand on Polliard's shoulder.

ALPHEA (CONT'D)

Good... There may be a future for
you here yet. Run along, enjoy the
party.

Polliard obeys.

INT. VENDREN PALACE GRAND ROOM

Porfat steps into probably the last place on earth he would
ever want to go.

A clan of about eighty people occupy the room with a small
contingent of guards lining the perimeter. Black and red
splash the walls and people.

An half orchestra assaults our senses. The people dance and
mingle.

The room's centered around a throne. On it, a dark ruler.

PRINCESS LIAME, late ??, her skin is stretched tight across her face. She's in her finest dress, looking like a living corpse brought back from the dead. Princess Liame survey's the scene with approval.

PORFAT

Phylphot stops at the edge of the party with the doctor.

PHYLPHOT

Death's Dildos won't have me no farther than this. My master is over there.

Phylphot leaves. Porfat wanders the scene toward..

WEYMAEL

Weymael is hunched over the buffet, nibbling on the hors d'oeuvres, his eyes forever latched on to an unseen sight. He doesn't notice Porfat's approach.

PORFAT

Uhm, yes. Hello?

WEYMAEL

What is it?

PORFAT

We had met last night--?

WEYMAEL

(curt)

--Yes, yes, of course I remember.

Food's practically falling out of his mouth. Weymael pays no mind to the doctor, he forever stares toward the center of the room.

PORFAT

Is there any-- Can you-- If it would please--

Weymael shirks everyone of Porfat's attempts.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Sir, you try me!

Weymael wanders off into the crowd, muttering to himself.

WEYMAEL

Fat fool...

Left at the tables, Porfat growls under his breath, clenches his fist ready to shake it. Porfat's pissed.

WEYMAEL

He wades his way through the crowd, his head never waivers from its destination. We catch a glimpse of...

ZARA, early 20's, a rare gem of beauty in this ugly world. She outshines everyone in the room. She stands before the princess, next to an ugly marble statue bearing her resemblance.

ZARA

A courtesan would have nothing to do with that. I feel a great sympathy for the Vendrens, but such a request goes too far.

Princess Liame stands up and steps toward Zara. She talks low so only Zara can hear her.

PRINCESS LIAME

But this is no ordinary favor. It involves almost no pain on your part at all.

ZARA

I've given you this masterpiece. I've given you my presence, I've outshined all the stars of your court and blessed this gathering.

PRINCESS LIAME

It is but a tiny slit on your wrist or ankle. I wish to drink but a small amount of your blood.

PORFAT

He bites and nibbles at the food on the banquet table. He shares awkward eye contact with Lady Glypht from across the room. He chokes on the food as he averts his eyes.

BACK TO ZARA

ZARA

Such things are best left for the Lord Commander of Tears, or left to ghouls. A common whore might take pity.

PRINCESS LIAME
And deny a princess this small
request?

ZARA
I'm sorry, your majesty. My patron
protector would not agree.

Zara turns and runs into Weymael who's almost breathing down
her neck.

Weymael eyes her chest lecherously. Zara's exasperated and
embarrassed. She's sandwiched between these two Vendrens.

ZARA (CONT'D)
(to Weymael)
Yes?

Zara turns from Princess Liame to Weymael, looking for some
explanation.

WEYMAEL
Your beauty is an endless mystery,
for there is nothing to compare.
Will you not join me for some food
and wine?

ZARA
One preposterous Vendren is enough
for the evening, but two? Am I
being initiated somehow?

WEYMAEL
You are being adored, from wide and
afar.

ZARA
Take your fill, it will be the last
you see of me--

She turns to leave, but Weymael grabs her arm.

PRINCESS LIAME
The last of a courtesan, or the
whore?

WEYMAEL
Indulge me.

She shakes him off.

ZARA

I'd rather leave you to wallow in
this bitch-infested hellhole than
indulge the likes of you.

Zara slaps Weymael. Everyone around the immediate vicinity
quiets.

Weymael holds his face, ashamed. Princess Liame seats herself
back onto her throne.

Zara looks at Weymael for a moment.

ZARA (CONT'D)

I would give thee a plague for your
indulgence, and be as chaste as
ice. You sicken me to my core and
may fate take pity on your actions
and guide you off a cliff.

Weymael gasps. Several people do as well. Princess Liame
smiles.

Weymael turns and leaves.

ZARA (CONT'D)

(under her breath)
Vendrens...

She snubs her nose.

PORFAT

Sees Weymael push his way past the Death's Darlings guarding
the exit.

Porfat steps up to the guards and attempts to pass.

TWO IMPOSING GUARDS step in, blocking Porfat's path.

PORFAT

Confound it!

He turns and faces the party looking for another way...

None.

INT. VENDREN PALACE HALLWAYS WITH WEYMAEL

Weymael stomps his way down the corridors like a fuming train
wreck waiting to happen.

Alphea steps onto the scene from an adjacent hallway almost causing a crash with Weymael.

He steps left, steps right. Weymael gives Alphea the 'evil eye'.

WEYMAEL

Stupid bitch! Out of my way!

Alphea steps aside, Weymael continues.

Alphea's clueless, she shakes her head.

INT. VENDREN PALACE HALLWAYS WITH POLLIARD

The boy meekly makes his way somewhere. He has his sights set down a hallway, thoughtlessly looking for his next move.

Captain Nagendra steps out from behind a veil and puts his hand firmly over the boy's shoulder before he can make his move.

NAGENDRA

Boy... Why? Why are you here?

Polliard's stone face is his only response.

NAGENDRA (CONT'D)

Do you know this place, this palace is no deterrent against those that wish you harm? This is no game of hide and seek.

Polliard tries to shake his grasp.

INT. VENDREN PALACE HALLWAYS WITH ALPHEA

Alphea, flustered, turns and runs into someone. She looks up to see..

Zephyryn. TWO SUBSERVIENT GUARDS trail behind him at the end of the hall.

ALPHEA

Zephyryn! Oh, I'm so glad it's you.

She hugs him, digging her face deep to his chest. He holds her by her shoulders.

ZEPHYRYN

You shouldn't be wandering the halls.

ALPHEA

I'm finished for the night. There are too many fools here causing mischief.

Alphea looks up to him, she looks deep within his eyes.

She releases him and backs away. She offers him an encouraging smile.

ALPHEA (CONT'D)

Come with me?

Zephyryn glances at the Two Guards behind him.

ZEPHRYN

Not yet.

Zephyryn's look says it all.

ALPHEA

A pity. Perhaps later, if all's well?

Alphea backs away bowing before Zephyryn; she turns and disappears down a hallway.

INT. VENDREN PALACE HALLWAYS WITH POLLIARD

Nagendra shakes Polliard hard, the boy shakes and struggles to escape.

NAGENDRA

Usurper. I can feel it. It is you.
You escaped me long ago.

With a mighty power, Polliard shakes Nagendra off. Nagendra's jaw drops, he is shocked at the boy.

NAGENDRA (CONT'D)

Your mother, she was mine! You took her from me!

Polliard slowly backs away.

NAGENDRA (CONT'D)

Your eyes... they tell all. I want them.

Polliard runs away. Nagendra narrows his eyes on the boy.

INT. VENDREN PALACE GRAND ROOM

A FAT VENDREN blocks Porfat's path, laughing hysterically. Porfat's locked in some damning conversation. Porfat looks at all the food falling out of the Vendren's mouth.

PORFAT

Sir, do you know, somewhere, there
is a mine missing its maw?

The Fat Vendren laughs even harder.

Porfat's not pleased. He tries backing away but the Fat Vendren follows.

Porfat backs up into... Zara.

She spills her drink on herself and turns to Porfat madder than ever.

ZARA

Does every fat old man want a piece
of me?!

Porfat turns away from the Fat Vendren and slams his open palm on the table.

PORFAT

If the Sons of Cludd had their way,
lady, they would make you cover
your porcine rump in public!

Zara gasps. She throws what's left of her drink in Porfat's face and storms away.

Porfat hushes the Fat Vendren.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Not another word.

Porfat walks away from him.

Porfat stands by the nearest exit, blocked by Two Imposing Guards.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

By far your greatest accomplishment
is undermining the poor, the sick,
the wea--

TWO MORE BLACK AND RED GUARDS come up from behind and hook an arm under Porfat's shoulders. They heave the doctor up.

PORFAT (CONT'D)
 (shocked)
 What?! Unhand me this moment!

The Two Guards usher him out the nearest exit.

PORFAT (CONT'D)
 What ever harm you do, you do so
 with your very life at stake!

They come to the door, they pull back to throw him out..

Zephryn appears! Followed by his men.

ZEPHRYN
 (tsk, tsk, tsk)
 Doctor, doctor, doctor.

He holds out his hand to halt the Two Guards. They relent and hand over the doctor to Zephryn.

ZEPHRYN (CONT'D)
 You do have an uncanny knack.

PORFAT
 They put you in charge?

ZEPHRYN
 Everyone's at the party. It has
 left us with a window. I know what
 you seek and where it is, there
 isn't much time.

PORFAT
 As you wish, young master.

INT. VENDREN PALACE HALLWAYS

Weymael, silently, enters someone's room.

INT. VENDREN PALACE HALLWAYS

Zephryn and Porfat march down the hallways, Zephryn leads the way.

PORFAT
 Well done, a rare Vendren indeed.

ZEPHRYN
 This is not for my clan.

PORFAT
 No?

ZEPHRYN

I had a sister.

PORFAT

You are suggesting an unpleasant ending?

Zephryn give's Porfat a look.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

My apologies, young master. I am merely trying to get to the root of the problem. My field of interest is in its infancy and I merely wish to expand...

Zephryn softens.

ZEPHRYN

She is somewhere in this damned city. No one, not the king, the prince, the princess, my clan, no one can stop me. My patron in Fandragord will have me see her returned for a proper burial, if there's anything to bury.

PORFAT

Blood first...

ZEPHRYN

Clan first, blood second... only if they don't notice.

PORFAT

I can see Polliel's light in you. You have a unique strength, young master.

ZEPHRYN

You're too kind, but I'm still a Vendren.

INT. WEYMAEL'S STUDY

The door creaks, the handle shakes... nothing.

BANG, BANG, BANG!

The door breaks open on the last bang and splinters the lock.

Nagendra enters and closes the door behind him.

He surveys the room for a moment before laying his eyes at Weymael's desk.

Before him lay Chalcedor's book over top a white mountain of books and papers.

Nagendra picks up the book and looks it over in his hands admiring it.

VOICE (O.S.)

Mmmmmmmeeeeeee...

Nagendra listens for a moment for the voice and smiles.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Buuuurrrrryyyyy...

Nagendra turns to the giant book case looking for the source of the voice.

There's another groan, Nagendra searches, until he hears...

More voices!

Nagendra stops. He turns to the door. The voices are just outside.

Nagendra slips behind the massive bookcase just as the door to the room swings open.

Porfat and Zephryn are at the edge.

ZEPHRYN

Looks like someone broke in here.

PORFAT

Where is Weymael?

ZEPHRYN

I saw him enter the East Wing, we have time.

Porfat and Zephryn enter the room, scanning, searching...

PORFAT

I never knew anyone that wore necromancy so clearly on their sleeve.

ZEPHRYN

It's easy when you have the power of the clan behind you.

PORFAT

My brother-in-law would have something to say about it, necromancy in Crotalorn is a one-way trip to the gallows.

They both hear the groan.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

What was that?

ZEPHRYN

Over there.

They move to the bookcase, Zephryn looks up.

VOICE (O.S.)

Oooooohhhhhh...

Zephryn climbs a small ladder by the side of the bookcase, he looks through every shelf.

PORFAT

Be careful, Master Zephryn.

Zephryn pulls some books aside. He finds it, whatever it is and gives a quizzical turn of the head.

Zephryn pulls out a cage; in it a skull. He hands it down for Porfat to see.

Porfat examines the skull, there's nothing special about it until...

THE SKULL

Buuurrrryyyy mmmmmmeeeee.

Porfat falters, he nearly drops the cage in shock.

PORFAT

(to the skull)

Yes! Yes of course!

Porfat looks to Zephryn.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

I wonder.

(to the skull)

Are you the Magister Meinaries? A close friend to the author Chalcedor?

The skull hesitates.

THE SKULL

Yyyesssss.

PORFAT

My word, Zephryn. This is how Weymael knew about the auction. He extracted the information from this skull.

ZEPHRYN

This skull knew your author?

PORFAT

Yes, some two hundred years ago. The connection between Meinaries and Chalcedor is only known to a few people. Our Vendren is very good at what he does.

Porfat puts down the cage on Weymael's desk.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

This is it. This is the proof I need to burn Weymael at the stake.

ZEPHRYN

Why not trade it for your book?

PORFAT

Oh, yes. The book. Perhaps that would be a better course of action.

Porfat falls into a haze. His eyes wander, thinking; processing this information. His gaze falls down onto the desk.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

What's this?

ZEPHRYN

What is it?

Porfat clears some papers aside. There's another book covered up. Porfat removes the papers on top of it to see..

A picture of a boy that looks like Polliard. The boy stands in front of Lady Glypht.

Porfat opens the book.

PORFAT

(reading)

Reciting incidents from days long ago, after a decade of searching I have finally found him..

(MORE)

PORFAT (CONT'D)
 (to Zephryn)
 This can not be...

ZEPHRYN
 What does it say?

Porfat reads on...

FADE OUT:

BLACK SCREEN

SUPERIMPOSE

Lord Glyphtfand's story

BEGIN FLASHBACK

FADE IN:

EXT. THE FAND HOUSE - DAY

LORD GLYPHTFAND, 19, who looks similar to Polliard in stature, (forever with that depraved look on his pale face), stands before the necropolis at the bottom of hill before the institute.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)
 It has been discovered that Lord Glyphtfand was never truly responsible for his actions... He was driven mad most notably by his family. A father who was accused of murdering everyone, with a mother and son spared the slaughter...

INT. THE FAND HOUSE

Lady Glypht dabs a young Lord Glyphtfand with a handkerchief. She steps back and admires her son.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)
 No one knew that the Lady herself was something more than she presumed to be...

A lonely skull rolls by. Lady Glypht looks and takes note.

Lord Glyphtfand is the picture of innocence.

Lady Glypht shakes her head disapprovingly at the skull.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)
He never needed a better lie...

EXT. DREAMERS' HILL - NIGHT

Glyphtfand opens a tomb by moonlight.

GLYPHTFAND

Holds jewels and bobbles close to his face, examining and in awe.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)
Upon reaching of age, the new Lord
of the house of Glypht assumed the
responsibilities of collecting a
vast amount of treasure...

LADY GLYPHT

Lady Glypht's approving face, accepts these gifts from Glyphtfand.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)
But, his nightly graveyard
escapades were soon at an end..

EXT. THE FAND HOUSE - DAY

Meet UMBRA, early 20's, a Vendren with the signature tattoo with a typical Vendren haughty, dower, shit eating attitude look on her face. She is in a wedding dress out on the front lawn.

Lord Glyphtfand stands beside her in a Glypht's finest wedding suit.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)
In what was assumed as a bonding
of kindred spirits, Lord Glyphtfand
and Umbra Vendren took part in
grave robbing for a time..

A gathering of Vendrens surrounds them. A DARK VENDREN PRIEST attends his ceremony.

Umbra is not impressed. Glyphtfand looks longingly at Umbra, who averts her eyes from his.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

Lord Glyphtfand was a passing phase for her. For, Umbra's desire lay with ghouls. She spent all her time and energy imagining a better life through ghoullism. A better way...

Lady Glypht gives Glyphtfand the 'evil eye'. When Glyphtfand glances her way, his smile is wiped clean off his face.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

It is only logical that things took a turn for the worst...

INT. THE FAND HOUSE LORD - GLYPHTFAND'S ROOM

Umbra swings a baler hook down on Lord Glyphtfand.

He catches her arm, holding it out. He looks at a giant bruise that has spread across her arm.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

Umbra, it seemed, had found a more suitable lover...

Glyphtfand is seething rage, he throws down her arm and strikes her.

Umbra still has a contemptuous look. She spits in Lord Glyphtfand's face.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

There was much said about what happened to his father. His body was never found, or so Lady Glypht admits...

Umbra races out the room.

EXT. THE FAND HOUSE - NIGHT

Umbra races out into the darkness.

Lady Glypht watches from a lonely lit window.

EXT. DREAMERS' HILL - NIGHT

Umbra runs from tomb to tomb in tears.

UMBRA

Exudimord! Exudimord!

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

The witch said it was her own
husband who she was calling out to
that night. A ghoul so foul, its
mere stench drew men mad..

She listens for a response... nothing.

GLYPHTFAND

He stalks her in the dark. The moon is almost hidden.

UMBRA

UMBRA

Exudimord! Exudimord!

When... BAM! A baler hook flies out of no where and pierces her
throat.

Lord Glyphtfand stands over her holding the weapon.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

His life came all down to this. His
choice to be part of his degenerate
bloodline, forged and sealed by his
very own mother and perpetuated by
his father. It was all in his
grasp..

Glyphtfand rips the hook out.

Blood pours out of her throat, she holds the wound choking on
her own blood, she falls to the ground dead.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

At last he had his love right where
he wanted her. He could finally
possess her in a way he could not
in life..

Glyphtfand holds Umbra's heart to his face. He smiles.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

And like all whom Gluttriel smile
upon, Lord Glyphtfand was granted
his greatest wish..

Lord Glyphtfand bites into the heart, gorging on it.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

But he didn't turn into just any
ghoul..

EXT. DREAMERS' HILL - NIGHT

The silhouette of Vomikron, a tall and terrible beast. He stalks the graveyard by moonlight.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

Never in Crotalorn's history has a ghoulish ruled the underworld with such fury and malice. Never have the ghouls assembled and organized from the chaos from which they dwelt. A king so terrible any normal ghoulish would submit its life in ultimate servitude...

Vomikron roars like a tiger.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

But there are rumors Lady Glypht is nurturing a protegee...

FADE TO:

BLACK SCREEN

A baby cries.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

It was said only a degenerate so filthy could father a child with a willing host. You see, most ghoulish spawns become biological messes. A shapeless form not suitable for life and are limited thus. This child was different...

FADE IN:

INT. TOMB

GLUTTORIA, 20's, a female ghoulish, holds the baby close to her bosom.

She hears a roar and looks up in panic.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

Because of its human father, Gluttoria was not allowed to keep the baby long. The King would have none of it, but she was brave...

EXT. DREAMERS' HILL - DAY

Gluttoria runs out into the daylight, the sun blinds her.

She slowly regains her vision to the sight of..

A crowd of armed and angry people.

The crowd rushes Gluttoria.

The baby wrenched from Gluttoria and is passed from human hand to hand to hand.

EXT. HOUND SQUARE - DAY

Gluttoria is hoisted into the air on a lamppost and forced to face at the sun. She screams.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

The child was never seen again, or
so everyone had thought...

A crowd gathers around the ghoul.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

By chance I came across young
Polliard by way of Lady Glypht...

Weymael watches from the crowd.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

Against the king's wishes, she
keeps the young boy safe in my
care...

A MAN WITH A BILL walks out from the crowd raising his weapon in anger.

WEYMAEL (V.O.)

...Until the day comes where the boy
will take his place as King of the
Ghouls...

The Man With A Bill stabs Gluttoria in the eye with his weapon. She screams even louder.

END FLASHBACK

INT. WEYMAEL'S STUDY

Porfat slams the book shut, he looks to Zephyryn.

PORFAT

I wouldn't trust that imbecile to look after a rock.

From behind the bookcase, Nagendra smiles.

ZEPHRYN

What are we going to do?

PORFAT

I must tell the prince, he will put an end to this whole affair.

THE SKULL

Buuurrrryyy Mmmeeeee...

Porfat and Zephryn look to the cage.

PORFAT

Yes, yes and bury you.

Zephryn hands Porfat a table cloth. Porfat wraps the cage up.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Finally, an end to this evening.

Porfat and Zephryn exit the room.

A moment.

Nagendra slips out from behind the bookcase, book in hand. He sneaks a peek out to the hallway and leaves himself.

INT. VENDREN PALACE GRAND ROOM

Lady Glypht stands by the corner of the room observing, scanning, never taking her eyes off her hosts. She casually sips from a tea cup.

Up from behind, Nagendra steps up to Lady Glypht.

NAGENDRA

The necromancer is gone, he won't be trouble for very long.

Lady Glypht turns and looks at the book.

LADY GLYPHT

Dirty, dirty. It's good we relieved him of this filth, before anyone discovered what is inside.

Lady Glypht grabs the book. Nagendra's grips it tighter, not letting go.

NAGENDRA

The boy. Give him to me.

LADY GLYPHT

You will not lay a finger on him. I have plans for him and if anything should happen, you'll find yourself answering to a thousand guards at your doorstep.

Lady Glypht tears the book away from Nagendra. He lets out a dissatisfied grunt.

NAGENDRA

He's an abomination.

Lady Glypht turns away from Nagendra. He grabs her, spins her around and kisses her full, open mouth on the lips.

She peels herself away and wipes her mouth clean.

LADY GLYPHT

Aim for a higher Vendren next time, you ape.

Nagendra is fuming.

NAGENDRA

You will not keep him long, I will have him.

Lady Glypht walks away.

INT. A CLOSET

Weymael bursts inside a walk-in closet, closes the door and panics.

His chest heaves, he's breathing heavy. He coughs and wheezes. He wipes a line of sweat off his forehead.

He peers out to see something we can not.

From the soft steps, he hears someone has entered the room outside the closet.

INT. ALPHEA'S ROOM

Alphea drops her dress and reaches for a nightgown from her dresser. She prepares for bed.

INT. ZARA'S ROOM

Zara steps into her room, pissed off. She holds out her dress looking at the spill and begins to change.

INT. A CLOSET

Weymael, looks out through a crack in the closet, tries to keep himself under control.

He sees faint images of flesh changing in or out of a gown.

Weymael bites his lip and gasps.

He begins to shake violently and seizures, he falls back in the closet, spasmodic.

BOTH ZARA AND ALPHEA HEAR SOMETHING

INT. A CLOSET

Weymael's skin inflates like a balloon. It grows to a sickening size before it splits down the center.

Something terrible protrudes out of the split.

ALPHEA

Walks across her room.

ALPHEA

Hello?

ZARA

Walks across her room.

ZARA

Is someone there?

INT. A CLOSET

In something that we could only describe as 'intestinal'. A tubular yet amorphous white shape slimes and slithers in on itself.

The end of the worm protrudes from the bowls, a large maw of teeth yawns and stretches.

ALPHEA'S HAND

Reaches for a door knob.

ZARA'S HAND

Reaches for a door knob.

INT. ALPHEA'S ROOM

The door to the hallway swings open. Alpheia relaxes.

ALPHEA

Oh. Hello...

INT. ZARA'S ROOM

She opens the closet door. She never had a chance.

The head of a giant worm strikes down on Zara covering her head. Her screams are muffled.

The worm is about 15 feet long with tendrils sprouting from its side and a long mouth filled with razor sharp teeth.

It pours out of the closet and wraps itself around Zara. They both fall to the floor with a loud thud.

The worm, little by little, swallows Zara whole.

INT. VENDREN PALACE HALLWAYS

Porfat and Zephyryn rush down the hallways. Porfat holds the cage close to his chest.

PORFAT

I'll be glad to be rid of this place.

A hand reaches out and grabs Porfat!

It's Lady Glypht, she holds in her hand Chalcedor's book.

LADY GLYPHT

My apologizes, Doctor. Had I known you would be here...

Porfat's tongue tied. He spies the book in the lady's arms.

PORFAT

I... errr... yes it's okay, M'lady. I trust your grandson is...

LADY GLYPHT

Oh yes, the Sons of Cludd brought him in by dawn. Thank you for searching.

Porfat tries to make his way past her but she puts herself in front of him.

LADY GLYPHT (CONT'D)

Can we expect anymore visits from our favorite ghouologist?

Porfat tries left, but she matches him.

PORFAT

My obligations at the institute...
err...

Lady Glypht smiles.

LADY GLYPHT

Surely, we can have you over for a proper supper?

ZEPHRYN

Lady please! We must go!

Lady Glypht gives Zephryn the 'evil eye'.

PORFAT

It's been a long night, M'lady.
Please.

She steps aside allowing them to pass.

LADY GLYPHT

Hopefully we will see each other again, no?

PORFAT

I'm most certain of it.

Porfat steps past Lady Glypht.

EXT. THE ROYAL PALACE - DAY

The most perfect day you could ask for.

PORFAT (V.O.)

Your malefactors are right here in the city.

INT. THE ROYAL PALACE HALL

Prince Fandiel sits with Nyssa around a table eating their meal. Porfat stands over them, waving his book at the prince.

PORFAT

Weymael Vendren, Lady Glypht. All part of an insidious plot for some perverted royal lineage.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Well done, doctor. Did they say where the thief had hidden his treasure?

PORFAT

No, not specifically, but it all lay somewhere in that book the Lady possess.

The prince stands up.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Porfat, Porfat. You never cease to amaze me.

PORFAT

So? Will you flog that infernal necromancer and send the lady to the gallows?

Prince Fandiel laughs.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Unfortunately, I can not even discipline the lowliest Vendrens, Death's Darling's will not allow it. But... but... the inclusion of the Fands, that warrants a further investigation.

PORFAT

We will send this Crotalorn a message, we will not tolerate this sort of degradation in this city.

The prince comes nose to nose with Porfat.

PRINCE FANDIEL

I will send this message.

Nyssa sighs at her husband.

NYSSA

And to all the rest of us in ire.

EXT. VENDREN HILL - DAY

The palace stands tall and ominous.

INT. VENDREN PALACE GRAND ROOM

Zephryn stands before Prince Liame and with a troop of Death's Darlings lining the perimeter.

Weymael stands in the wings with the lesser lords.

Court's in session and the murmurs of the crowd fills the air.

Zephryn is grim..

Then silence.. it's the princess's turn. All eyes are on her.

PRINCESS LIAME

I think we can all agree that the greatest part of our happiness can depend on mutual satisfaction, that the other has done their duty to the clan.

The princess wears a smirk.

PRINCESS LIAME (CONT'D)

Our treasured guest and four men are not accounted for. I wish to know why and I have executed the last ten men to find this out. It makes no difference. No one knows, no one cares. Punishment has not been sinking in.

The murmurs from the side lines rise in agreement. The princess pauses for effect.

PRINCESS LIAME (CONT'D)

Poor Zephryn, I would not wish this even on my brother. It is almost certain death which has not been in short supply around here.

A BLACK AND RED BARON steps up to the princess and offers her a letter.

ZEPHRYN

Your Highness, I have something to share--

PRINCESS LIAME

Silence!

Her shout chills the audience, there's not a soul that doesn't have her attention.

PRINCESS LIAME (CONT'D)
 You failed me Zephryn and now you
 must pay, pay like all the rest.
 But, I have something different for
 you.

The princess stands up and walks to Zephryn. She holds out her hand with the letter at the end of it.

PRINCESS LIAME (CONT'D)
 Take this. There is a new lord in
 Crotalorn and I will bade him
 goodwill. This will explain my
 terms.

She bares down at Zephryn, she looks hard into his eyes.

PRINCESS LIAME (CONT'D)
 The misery of hundreds hangs in the
 balance. You will be his play thing
 for him to do as he pleases. Now
 go, the sight of you sickens me.

She waves him off. THREE LARGE GUARDS move in to take Zephryn away.

ZEPHRYN
 No! You can't do this!

The crowd roars, Zephryn is soon drowned out.

ZEPHRYN (CONT'D)
 Please! Mercy! Mercy!

Weymael steps in and grabs Zephryn by the collar.

WEYMAEL
 Having a lousy day? Send my regards
 to the king, fool.

Weymael laughs and disappears into the crowd.

Princess Liame sits down on her dark throne with a satisfied smile.

Zephryn panics. The Three Large Guards pull him away, he looks for any sympathy in the crowd...

None.

ZEPHRYN
 No...! No...!

They pull him by his shoulders out of the grandroom.

The doors slams shut.

EXT. DREAMERS' HILL - DAY

The Prince, Porfat and a contingent of Never-Vanquished ride on their armored horses down the hill from the institute to the Glypht residence at the edge of the necropolis.

The institute, on top of the hill, blots out the sun.

EXT. THE FAND HOUSE - DAY

Porfat and Prince Fandiel ride in front.

PORFAT

Look!

He points.

LADY GLYPHT

From the second story balcony she stands, both hands on the railing, stern as ever.

BACK TO SCENE

Prince Fandiel rides up the house.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Lady Glypht of house Glypht, cousin
to Fand. Open up.

There's a '*hurrumph*' from up above. The Lady turns and screams into her room.

LADY GLYPHT

Phylphot!

PORFAT

(to Fandiel)

Be on your guard, she is capable of
great evil, sire.

The door swings open, Phylphot is there to greet them.

INT. THE FAND HOUSE INNER WARD

Porfat with his walking stick, the Prince and about eight men fill the room. The troops fan out and begin turning over the place.

Porfat's feeling good. He's got a smile and spring in his step. So good, in fact, that he doesn't notice the 'evil eye' Phylphot gives him.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Ah M'Lady. So good of you to join us.

Lady Glypht descends from the stairway.

LADY GLYPHT

What ever you're here for I'm sure we can work out some sort of arrangement.

PRINCE FANDIEL

How kind of you. But there is a suspected cult operation opposed to Polliel's beliefs in the city to which you are connected too. I am simply lay down punishment in leu of any evidence to support this.

The Lady gasps.

LADY GLYPHT

Surely, you don't mean this.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Yes, yes madam. It's unfortunate. I am merely here as an overseer. I'm sure this is a simply a misunderstanding.

THE FAND HOUSE SERIES OF SHOTS

--BUCK TOOTHED TROOPER overturns a bed.

--LAZY EYED TROOPER sacks a room.

--A closet door opens, a SCARED and CURIOUS TROOPER look inside.

--Prince Fandiel with a smirk, assured of his victory.

--Another closet opens... a skull rolls out.

--A bed is flipped, revealing femurs and ribs bones.

--Four troopers storm the attic, revealing a pile of skulls.

--Buck Toothed Trooper whispers into the prince's ear.

PRINCE FANDIEL
 (impressed by what he
 hears)
 Oh really.

--The Curious Trooper pulls out a book from out from under a bed.

--Lazy Eyed Trooper lays Chalcedor's book on a bureau.

--The Scared Trooper opens the chest. It's filled with coins, and jewels.

--TWO ARMED TROOPERS enter the cellar; gold, relics and treasure everywhere.

--The prince turns to Porfat.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)
 (re: the Lady)
 Is that so?

--A mummified body falls out of, yet, another closet.

THE PRINCE

The Buck Toothed Trooper leans in so only the prince can hear...

TROOPER #1
 My Prince, she's robbed Polliel and the church. Almost all of this wealth is stolen from Dreamers' Hill, most assuredly from our ruler in kind.

The prince shakes his head and smiles. He turns away from the guard and over to Lady Glypht just yonder.

PRINCE FANDIEL
 (to the Lady)
 It's okay, everything is well. I'm sure this is all a misunderstanding.

He turns to the Curious Trooper.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)
 Be gentle with them now, I want them saved for later--

LADY GLYPHT
 (shouts)
 Stop!

Everyone turns. Lady Glypht smiles coyly.

LADY GLYPHT (CONT'D)
Don't you want to hear what I have
to say?

PRINCE FANDIEL
No.

He turns away to exit. Lady Glypht's face falls.

LADY GLYPHT
Even if Crotalorn's wealth was at
stake?

Prince Fandiel stops. He turns and smiles at the Lady.

PRINCE FANDIEL
Ahh, cooperation. What else do you
know?

Porfat holds out his hand to stop the prince.

PORFAT
Are you sure this is wise, sire? I--

The prince looks down at the offending hand. He brushes away Porfat's hand and stares him down. Porfat backs off, shrinking away.

Phylphot chuckles.

LADY GLYPHT
I know that I would only tell you,
your Highness and no one else.
Please follow me?

The prince with a satisfied smile follows the Lady.

PRINCE FANDIEL
No worries, Porfat. Even if there
is some trickery afoot, I doubt
anyone will be alive long enough to
regret it.

INT. LADY GLYPHT'S ROOM

Lady Glypht and Prince Fandiel walk in.

PRINCE FANDIEL
You have thirty seconds.

LADY GLYPHT

Have they caught the monster that invaded your castle and stole your chief?

PRINCE FANDIEL

How do you--?

LADY GLYPHT

I know a great many things...

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE

Porfat, Phylphot and a Slack Jawed Trooper wait impatiently on a bench just outside.

Phylphot scratches his groin under his pants. Porfat shakes his head in disgust.

INT. LADY GLYPHT'S ROOM

LADY GLYPHT

I know a great many people as well. They happened upon something you seek.

Lady Glypht moves to the table, on it Chalcedor's book.

PRINCE FANDIEL

What?

Lady Glypht flips open the book.

LADY GLYPHT

Here some where. The thief scribbled it down somewhere in here before being caught. I will give it to you if you leave this place and never return.

The prince laughs.

PRINCE FANDIEL

That's good, that's good. And I'll just leave. What makes you think I won't just take the book and do with you what I will anyway?

The lady presses her lips and holds in a breath.

LADY GLYPHT

Because some forces at work here supersede even your power.

(MORE)

LADY GLYPHT (CONT'D)

We are their prey. If properly motivated, what's to say they won't aim for someone higher the royal ladder next time? Such an event could be prevented through proper diplomacy.

She lifts the book and holds it to the prince.

Fandiel's smirk has been replaced by some sort of a disillusionment.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE

The door bursts open, Prince Fandiel marches out.

Porfat pushes Phylphot aside and rushes to the prince's side. They make their way down the hallway.

PORFAT

Well?

PRINCE FANDIEL

Everything's in order.

PORFAT

Will the witch burn?

PRINCE FANDIEL

That's none of your concern. Continue on with the mission.

PORFAT

She will come for me! She must burn!

PRINCE FANDIEL

Do not get caught. Incognito, I say.

PORFAT

This is madness. May I borrow some troops?

PRINCE FANDIEL

I can't afford to be involved in this anymore. But, you still must act out my orders.

PORFAT

Then what am I supposed to do?

PRINCE FANDIEL

Keep your head off the knife.

The prince slaps the Chalcedor's book into Porfat's hand.

The doctor stops following the prince and slumps his shoulders in defeat.

EXT. CROTALORN - NIGHT

A storm rages on, the thunder and lightening roar.

INT. THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

A dim candle on the desk lights the scene with a soft glow.

Thunder cashes from outside through the window.

Porfat is wearing his reading glasses, in careful examination of the document in front of him.

THE SKULL (O.S.)
Buuurrrryyyy meeeeeeee.

A deep rumble of thunder stirs him out of his concentration, he looks about the room.

Porfat calls out to the darkness.

PORFAT
Oh... hello. Just passing through?

A moment. A dead serious voice responds...

ZEPHRYN (O.S.)
You could say that.

Lightening flashes through the window, revealing the room from its shroud.

Zephyryn stands by the door. He looks rough. He holds his own arm and cowers at the light.

ZEPHRYN (CONT'D)
Did you find it?

Porfat squints to see him. He gives up and turns back to Chalcedor's book.

PORFAT

Yes, all of it. The thief wrote down a verbal map in a dialect at least fifty years old describing his way behind a place called Blackberry Bank, an old section of the city. How the prince knew all of this is beyond me.

ZEPHRYN

This will show the way?

PORFAT

To the last place the thief would have hidden it, yes. Emerald street is a filthy part of town. It doesn't surprise me he's hidden it there.

ZEPHRYN

Excellent, we can leave at once?

PORFAT

Certainly not, not with this weather. There's more time tomorrow.

THE SKULL

Oooohhhh...

PORFAT

(to the Skull)
Yes, shut up!

THE SKULL

He never paid me back.

PORFAT

Consider your reburial as payment.

The Skull shuts up.

A moment.

Porfat nods in approval.

EXT. OLD SECTION OF THE NECROPOLIS - DAY

The sky is cloudy and overcast.

Chalcedor's statue lay at the center of the clearing, tombs and crypts line the edging.

Porfat and Zephryn gather at a plot of land lowering a bag into the ground.

PORFAT

A far better deed could not have been done, farewell.

THE SKULL

(from inside the bag)

Ooohhh, thank you.

Zephryn pours dirt into the grave; Porfat surveys the scene.

PORFAT

I wish I knew what lay next. The older I get, the more situations become more severe on my constitution. If there was only a way for our thoughts...

Porfat trails off, he taps his teeth with his finger nail, thoughtlessly.

ALPHEA (O.S.)

Our thoughts lead us where they may.

Zephryn and Porfat look to a nearby tomb.

Alphea glides onto the scene in her finest dress. She holds in her hand a white and red striped rose.

ALPHEA (CONT'D)

We are not bound by fate. Some of us merely rise and some of us fall.

PORFAT

Polliel teaches another way.

ALPHEA

I am young, yet I have had my fill with who I owe my destiny to.

She bows before Zephryn holding out the rose.

ALPHEA (CONT'D)

In honor of your servitude. By clan be blessed to your end.

Zephryn gives the doctor an uneasy glance, then accepts the rose.

ALPHEA (CONT'D)

There are ways to measure a man's life.

(MORE)

ALPHEA (CONT'D)

Yours reaches to the highest
pinnacle emblazoned by a thousand
torches. The clan will remember.

She leans in and gives Zephryn a small kiss on the cheek.
Zephryn's cold.

Alphea nods at the statue.

ALPHEA (CONT'D)

Chalcedor was a ghoul. He's dead
now. What do you think of his
destiny?

Porfat gasps.

ALPHEA (CONT'D)

He went by his Cluddite name,
Dolton.

PORFAT

Impossible!

ALPHEA

He was revered as a savage
creature. Pity he couldn't hold his
own.

PORFAT

I'll have you know Chalcedor's died
of unknown causes! He's been dead
for over two hundred years!

ALPHEA

Two hundred years? But this was
just last week.

(Alphea laughs)

I must go. My brethren will wonder
where I am.

Zephryn offers a half hearted nod and watches Alphea walk
away.

Porfat calms down and grips Zephryn's shoulder reassuringly.

PORFAT

Come. The day grows old.

Zephryn solemnly nods.

EXT. CROTALORN - DAY

A soft and subtle rain covers the city.

EXT. EMERALD STREET - DAY

Porfat and Zephryn step out of the rain under an overhand leading to a door. Porfat knocks three times.

Nothing.

He tries the door; it opens.

INT. GOURDFOOT'S TAVERN

This place is about as seedy as it gets.

A dirty bartender, GOURDFOOT, late 40's, scrubs a dirty mug with a dirty cloth.

Several patrons known as Ignudos (Crotalorn's Aborigines) occupy the tables, they're deep in a game of racing cockroaches.

The entire room goes silent and all eyes turn to the doctor and Zephryn when they enter.

GOURDFOOT

Yes?

PORFAT

Yes, kind patron. I am understanding that you sell your wares from a cellar down below?

GOURDFOOT

Down below?

PORFAT

It was the cellar of a warehouse wasn't it?

GOURDFOOT

Yes, they say you can walk through all of Blackberry Bank without seeing the light of day.

A ROWDY IGNUDO raises his glass.

ROWDY IGNUDO

No, what they say is if you go down there, you will never see the light of day again.

There's a laugh from the crowd.

Porfat is grim.

PORFAT

Yes, well I wish to gain access.

GOURDFOOT

The cellar? It will cost you many fillies.

PORFAT

Why?

GOURDFOOT

It takes many men to open the door, plus I keep whatever you find.

ROWDY IGNUDO

He want you to find a *glybdi* slut to work the back room.

The crowd laughs again.

PORFAT

Sir, I will not pay.

GOURDFOOT

Then, we won't open door.

ZEPHRYN

I will do it.

GOURDFOOT

What?

ZEPHRYN

I see it over there.

Zephryn pushes past Gourdfoot, behind the bar. He stands before the doorway.

GOURDFOOT

Fool, I will get my slaves to do it.

ZEPHRYN

Don't bother.

He grips a latch and braces himself.

Zephryn with all his might, heaves and hoes. He lifts the heavy latch up and pulls back a drawbar that was sealing the door.

Gourdfoot is in shock, as is the rest of the room.

As the door opens, a rush of air fills the room. The Ignudos stand up and back away from the entrance to the cellar.

GOURDFOOT
It will still cost you.

Zephryn leans in against the bartender. Gourdfat flinches.

ZEPHRYN
Give him a little something,
doctor.

Porfat throws a few coins at the bartender.

PORFAT
Thank you for your time.

Porfat lowers himself down into the cellar.

INT. BLACKBERRY BANK CAVERNS

Porfat steps into about a foot of water and is followed by Zephryn.

Porfat looks up at Gourdfat.

GOURDFOOT
You want back in, you go someplace
else!

Gourdfat, seals the door, blotting out the light.

A moment.

Porfat lights a lamp.

PORFAT
It is a dark road indeed, young
master.

Porfat, looking down at his makeshift map, leads the way.

LATER

SMASH!

Zephryn stands by an urn he's broken over a rock.

The doctor looks back.

ZEPHRYN
Junk. All junk.

PORFAT
I do admire your quality, young
master.

(MORE)

PORFAT (CONT'D)

You've shown yourself resourceful to someone you do not owe anything to. A rare condition. However, your sister brought you to the city, but you said nothing further of her.

ZEPHRYN

She's lost.

PORFAT

But to remember those who you have lost..

ZEPHRYN

She wanted to become a ghoul. I have no proof, but I could tell she wanted it. She entered beneath this damned city and has never been seen since.

Zephyryn struggles with the last part. He wipes his face.

PORFAT

The soul would gain no wings, had the eyes no tears.

From further down the tunnel is a sound, faint and distant.

ZEPHRYN

Wait. What's that?

There it is again, a long chorus of something in agony.

PORFAT

There, I hear it too!

Porfat leads the way to..

BLACKBERRY T-JUNCTION

Porfat looks left and right, the two paths leading away are blocked by rubble.

They face the wall with trepidation. Porfat and Zephyryn exchange glances.

They hear a wail. Something on the other side is crying out.

ZEPHRYN

This will take some finesse.

He braces his should and runs into the wall.

A crack!

PORFAT

That's it! This path continues!

Zephryn cleans himself off and backs up for another shot.

BAM! The shoddy wall caves in under his power. Zephryn falls through to the other side.

INT. THE TROVE

Zephryn can't see much, until Porfat waves his light in from the other side.

Gold and jewels everywhere. Rugs, paintings, coins, you name it. All piled to the ceiling in half a foot of water. The scene is gorgeous.

The treasure sparkles in Porfat's eyes.

PORFAT

My word...

Porfat moves to a sculpture bust holding an emerald necklace.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

At last. It's all here. We did it
Zephryn! We did it!

He takes the emerald necklace and puts it around his neck, covering it with his shirt.

Zephryn scans the room.

ZEPHRYN

It's just that we heard something
else down here--

Another cry! It's in the room!

Porfat and Zephryn turn to the source.

Zephryn moves a chest aside revealing a naked body.

Alphea! She cowers in the water, crying and covering herself.

ALPHEA

Oh, Zephryn, what are you doing
here?!

She wails even louder. Porfat grabs a table cloth nearby and covers her.

ZEPHRYN

It's okay, everything's going to be alright.

She shakes her head vigorously.

ALPHEA

No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no!
It's not going to be alright. He's near, I can feel it. I'm not strong enough.

She jerks her back, she begins to shake.

ALPHEA (CONT'D)

No! Too soon! Too soon!

She convulses where she lays, Zephryn holds her.

ALPHEA (CONT'D)

(stuck in a loop)

Oh Zephryn, oh Zephryn, oh Zephryn,
oh Zeph--! oh Zeph--!

She flails on the ground splashing water and treasure everywhere. Porfat holds her head above water.

ALPHEA (CONT'D)

Please don't let me-- god!

Her skin inflates, she arches her back to the ceiling. Her eyeballs poke out of her face till they pop out of her skull.

Porfat drops her and backs away.

PORFAT

Stand back, master Zephryn, she's beyond us now!

A rip appears down the center of her face and a malformed shape protrudes out from the split.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Polliel!

The body that lay beneath the skin of Alpheia spills forth in a gelatinous mess, a sickening birth.

Polliard, naked and wet, stands up from the mess. He squints at the doctor and Zephryn.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

It's him! The ghoulish child!

Polliard hisses and backs away from the two.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Do not provoke him, Zephryn. He is unnaturally strong.

Zephryn steps up to Polliard.

ZEPHRYN

He's still just a boy.

Polliard lashes out and slashes Zephryn with his hand. Zephryn backs off.

PORFAT

Back! Back!

Polliard retreats to the back of the room to a doorway.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Hurry, we must go, he may bring others.

Porfat hooks his hand under a reluctant Zephryn's arm. Zephryn turns to the doctor.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Now!

INT. SEGUED TUNNEL

Porfat and Zephryn race down a dark path.

PORFAT

Falls down into the water.

PORFAT

My leg, a wretched cramp.

Zephryn picks up the doctor.

ZEPHRYN

Look!

There's a faint glimmer of a light at the end of this tunnel.

INT. THE THRONE ROOM

As Porfat and Zephryn enter, a wall of stench hits them like a slap on the face. They cringe and hold their noses in disgust.

The room is a filthy mess of debris and decay. At its center lay a throne of bones. Human bones, animal bones, it's a sick mockery of a real throne.

Then... a moan, something else is in here. Porfat and Zephryn freeze.

PORFAT

What animal is this?

There's a rustling from beyond the darkness. Porfat readies his staff, Zephryn steps up past the doctor walking ahead of him.

Weymael crawls out from behind the throne on his hands and knees. He looks up to Porfat.

WEYMAEL

Fat fool! What are you doing here?

Weymael turns back to his business and desperately searches the debris in front of him, sifting through the garbage.

PORFAT

Me? What the devil are you doing here, necromancer? Are you in league with the king?

Weymael holds up a piece of paper to his face examining it. Dissatisfied he throws it back to the debris.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Answer me or I'll--

Zephryn steps up to the necromancer and grabs him by his coat collar and lifts him up to his feet.

ZEPHRYN

Answer or I'll step on you like no other.

Weymael, shirks off Zephryn.

WEYMAEL

Fools, all of you. You should stayed above in your meager little lives. I am looking for the rest of Chalcedor's notes, scattered in this mess.

PORFAT

Why?

WEYMAEL

Because I am afflicted by
Gluttriel's curse. I must seek
absolution or forever be tied to
the death god. My only hope is in
this mess, the cure was written
down by Chalcedor long ago.

PORFAT

This is madness.

WEYMAEL

Of course! This world must be
bright and new to an old man that
hasn't stepped out of his office in
years.

PORFAT

Pompous, bloated, idiotic--

WEYMAEL

--Please, spare me your thoughts. I
may never be able to come here
again, time is precious, I--

He's interrupted by noises from across the room. The faint
flicker of a light peeks down across a doorway. Weymael's
face falls.

WEYMAEL (CONT'D)

Oh no! We're too late!

He scrambles across the opposite wall and seeks cover.

Porfat and Zephryn share a glance with each other before
scrambling themselves.

Porfat and Zephryn hide on opposite sides of an arched
doorway. Porfat covers his lamp with his coat. Both have
their backs against the walls, hidden.

LADY GLYPHT (O.S.)

..Well, then your a fool..

Pofat shudders at the Lady's tone, but...

In a most guttural voice...

VOMIKRON (O.S.)

These insects are not fit for the
scum between my toes.

Lady Glypht and Vomikron appear on a doorway above. They
descend a stairway into the throne room.

LADY GLYPHT

You'd best behave. They are your
only connection to the world above.
A king without followers...

VOMIKRON

A king with the retch of the earth
for followers, bah! I will eat
everyone of them.

LADY GLYPHT

You will do no such thing, they are
your power. Without them we can not
start our war.

Vomikron grabs Lady Glypht by the arm.

VOMIKRON

Maybe I will eat you first. You
look delicious.

PORFAT AND ZEPHRYN

From their hiding spot Porfat and Zephryn share a glance.
Porfat bites his fist.

Porfat and Zephryn can't see it, but they hear the sound of a
hand smacking a cheek. Lady Glypht cries out and we can hear
her smacking him back.

LADY GLYPHT (O.S.)

You're nothing!

There's some grunting. A sound of them hitting the floor
followed by the sounds of some unusual scuffling. Then a
steady, soft, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump...

Zephryn edges to the corner of his spot. He risks a peak
around the corner.

Unknown to Porfat, smoke rises from his coat...

Zephryn looks... he sees... to turns back to his spot with his
hand over his mouth holding back a gag.

Curious, Porfat looks...

VOMIKRON (O.S.)

I smell fire.

LADY GLYPHT (O.S.)

Uhhhh, yes, and only you can quench
it...

Porfat turns to his cloak, a small flame has risen from his coat, he gasps.

VOMIKRON (O.S.)
Someone's hear, I can smell it.

BACK TO SCENE

Weymael falls out of his hiding spot on to his hands and knees shaking.

WEYMAEL
No, no, please... my king.

There's a roar, but not from Vomikron.

Out from his hiding spot, Porfat let's out the most fiercest battle cry he can muster.

PORFAT
Here! A kiss for you!

Porfat swings his lantern, winding up for a big hit and landing on...

Lady Glypht, who straddles Vomikron, who's laying with his back on the ground.

CRACK! The lamp lands solidly on Lady Glypht dousing her in oil and flames.

The witch lets out a blood curdling scream.

Zephryn and Porfat stand back toward an exit.

Covered in flames, Lady Glypht flails wildly over Vomikron who's handling her like a hot potato. The ghoulish king roars!

Porfat backs up to a stairway and fumbles. He trips and goes sprawling head over foot, backwards down the passage.

ZEPHRYN
Doctor!

Zephryn follows.

INT. SEGUED TUNNEL

Zephryn helps Porfat up. They race down the tunnel.

From behind, Weymael screams and races down after them.

FURTHER DOWN

Vomikron's screams echo through the corridors.

Ahead of them, Porfat and Zephryn with Weymael behind, come to a small gap in the floor.

Porfat doesn't stop. He heroically propels himself over the hole in the ground onto the other side. He turns to see Zephryn...

Effortlessly makes the jump.

Weymael jumps, but comes short. He grabs for some roots on the ground before him to hold on to. He hangs by the ledge.

WEYMAEL

Help! Help me!

Zephryn stops; Porfat continues down a little before turning back.

WEYMAEL (CONT'D)

Need I remind you of our lineage
that binds us! If you do not save
me, the Vendrens will come down on
you will full furor!

Zephryn gives Porfat a longing look, sad and on the verge of tears.

ZEPHRYN

(to Porfat)

Go!

Porfat does a double take.

PORFAT

Are you mad?

Vomikron turns the corner at the end of the tunnel. He sees his prey and smiles.

ZEPHRYN

Now!

PORFAT

...Seeing Vomikron, turns and runs. He comes to a 'Y' split in the tunnel and takes left. Zephryn doesn't see.

ZEPHRYN

...Grips the necromancer by his wrist and with his mighty strength, lifts Weymael up out of the pit.

WEYMAEL

Fool!

Weymael pushes Zephryn aside and runs as fast as he can. He takes the left exit at the end of the tunnel.

VOMIKRON

Stay for dinner?

Zephryn runs, he takes the right hand turn at the 'Y' intersection.

INT. UNDERGROUND RIVER

The path is narrow, the water rages on.

Porfat slips along by the path.

A ghoulish howl is heard. Porfat lets out a cry.

Weymael bursts onto the scene running, he's pointed at Porfat. There's only room on the path for one.

Weymael rushes to Porfat and pushes him off the side of the ledge into the river.

PORFAT

Damn you, foul--!

The water overtakes him.

Weymael laughs.

INT. TUNNEL

Zephryn's light is running low in the caverns, he's all alone.

His light falters, he let's out a whimper.

He comes face to face with two eyes that stare at him from the darkness.

The shadow overtakes him..

FADE OUT:

BLACK SCREEN

A moment...

FADE IN:

EXT. THE MIRAGA RIVER BEACH - DAY

Porfat has washed ashore, he's barely alive.

A wave washes over the doctor bringing a little light to his dim disposition.

The city lay on the other side of the river, he is at the edge of town. Beyond him is forest.

A hand twitches... his arm rises to his head, palms down he comes to some sort of consciousness...

A shadow is slowly cast over the doctor's body. Someone is approaching...

The doctor achingly turns his head up to see...

Phylphot, the servant.

EXT. HOUND SQUARE - DAY

The square is busy, a throng of people dominate the noon day rush.

A cart with Vendren insignia pulls up to a Vendor just off in the corner.

The VENDREN DRIVER dressed in the famous red and black, climbs off his horse, brushes a little dirt off his coat and walks on his merry way.

The cart basks in the noon day sun. Just enough time to carry the smell.

A OLDER PASSERBY wafts in the scent of something terrible. His face contorts, he searches for the source.

PASSERBY

What in the seven hells...

A few others gain the scent and stop.

On the abandoned cart, the doors to a storage compartment fold outwards. There's a small rustling from inside...

One by one a small crowd develops, the smell overpowering them, creating a small clearing in front of the cart.

PASSERBY (CONT'D)
Well, someone open it!

The Passerby looks around for someone willing... no one. He scoffs and faces the cart himself.

He reaches out to grab the handles, the smell makes him wince even more.

The doors burst open!

It's Polliard... covered head to toes in gore, mainly running down from his mouth.

Beside him is a corpse stripped clean beyond recognition. A rough skeletal frame with strips of flesh with a caved in skull.

A TANNED WOMAN screams.

The crowd panics.

Polliard hisses at the crowd, pulling himself out from his hiding spot.

PASSERBY (CONT'D)
Come here, you freak!

Polliard swipes at the crowd before cowering under the cart. The Passerby races in to catch him.

He grabs a hold of Polliard's wrist.

The corpse falls out of the cart beside the Passerby. He screams. He turns to see...

The boy yawns his mouth and begins to bite down on the hand; the Passerby pulls away.

Polliard disappears under the cart out on the other side.

The Passerby moves around the cart to the other side to see...

Polliard vanishing down an alley. Gone. A small trail of blood follows him.

PASSERBY (CONT'D)
Dammit!

A ELDERLY MEMBER OF THE CROWD spits on the corpse.

EXT. THE FAND PALACE - DAY

Rays of sunshine pour over the Empress's seat.

INT. THE FAND PALACE GRANDROOM

Prince Fandiel delicately places his teacup back on his dish.

PRINCE FANDIEL

If I were to take a guess, I would say their armies were ready to march on us in possibly another six months to a year. Vendrens attacking our sovereignty and during the winter no less.

TWO ELITE GUESTS across the table from him nod their head in agreement.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

I...

Just beyond them, the prince narrows his sites on something lurking in the background.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

Excuse me for a moment.

INT. THE FAND PALACE HALLWAYS

Just outside, Prince Fandiel charges out of his hall to see: Porfat! He's a disheveled mess.

A STALKY GUARD and a ROBUST GUARD stand by his side.

STALKY GUARD

We've been searching for him all week, sire.

ROBUST GUARD

He said he was last seen in the care of a Vendren servant.

PRINCE FANDIEL

And he just shows up on our door?

Porfat is defiant.

PORFAT

At your beck and call no less. A mess, this is all some horrible mess...

PRINCE FANDIEL

You've been missing for more then a week, Porfat.

(MORE)

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

My reports last have you hanging
around with a lowly servant of the
Vendrens. A search has been put out
for the both of you. Where have you
been all this time?

PORFAT

You're splendid existence in
blissful ignorance has put you in a
precarious position, my lord!

The prince is taken aback by the comment. Porfat takes
advantage of his momentary imposition.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

There is a degeneracy in this city.
One that has been hiding under your
very nose and you have failed to
act!

Porfat ends the last word by stamping his walking staff on
the ground for effect.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Here, my search has yielded
results.

He pulls from out from underneath his shirt a necklace made
of emeralds. The prince is mesmerized.

PRINCE FANDIEL

You found it!

PORFAT

Indeed, under Blackberry Bank. The
way is sealed from up above, the
locals will not let people in.
However, I came upon another way,
one not known for fifty years.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Where?

PORFAT

The Glyphts. They are being fed
this ghoulish lifestyle through
tunnels to the necropolis into
their very house all this time.

PRINCE FANDIEL

But, what of the Lady?

Porfat shrugs.

PORFAT

We need not worry about her ever again.

The prince smirks.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Perhaps there is a future for you here after all, dear Doctor.

PORFAT

(laughs)

No, there is not!

The prince's face drops. Not funny at all.

EXT. ANATOMICAL INSTITUTE - DAY

The Prince, Porfat and about twenty-five men charge down the hill.

A storm is rolling in from over the hills.

EXT. THE FAND HOUSE - DAY

Porfat rears his horse ahead of the prince and spies on the ominous house.

PORFAT

Look!

Weymael is on the second story balcony. He shakes his fist at Porfat and runs into the house.

PRINCE FANDIEL

I suspect this will take a few moments.

Prince Fandiel charges on.

INT. THE FAND HOUSE INNER WARD

The outside doors burst inward and off hinged. About a dozen men swarm into the house. The Prince and Porfat follow.

PORFAT

Come out, Necromancer, answer for your crimes!

Prince Fandiel strides past the doctor.

PRINCE FANDIEL

We'll have him in no time. Go see
for yourself.

PORFAT

I will investigate the wine
reserves if it pleases you. I hand
this affair over.

PRINCE FANDIEL

It pleases me if you stay, I did
not give you my word...

Porfat wanders off.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

Wait, where are you going?

Porfat's gone.

INT. KITCHEN

Porfat enters the unkept kitchen. No sane person would ever
cook here, this place is disgusting.

He strolls through dark, dirty, damp galley.

INT. INNER WARD

The Prince nods his head in approval.

LOYAL GUARD (O.S.)

First floor, clear!

PRINCE FANDIEL

Good, good.

INT. KITCHEN

Porfat comes to a threshold. He holds his hands over his nose
and winces.

He looks around for the cause, but only sees some burlap bags
in the corner.

A LOWLY GUARD enters the room.

PORFAT

Only filth and disgust in here.

The Lowly Guard nods and exits.

INT. THE FAND HOUSE HALLWAY

A mattress is tossed in the hallway.

Dust, fluff and debris are tossed in the air.

A ANGRY GUARD rips apart a pillow.

ANOTHER ANGRY GUARD empties a jewel case onto the ground.

Possessions are tossed in the hallway; a ransacking like no other. The guards are merciless and the place is torn to shreds. The hallway fills with junk and debris.

INT. KITCHEN

Porfat hears a faint scratching from over in the corner of the galley.

He cautiously steps in that direction.

INT. INNER WARD

The prince paces, impatiently, back and forth.

INT. KITCHEN

Porfat swings the cold room door open...

No one there.

Behind Porfat, the pantry door, creaks open and a head pops out.

INT. THE FAND HOUSE HALLWAY

On the second floor hallway, an OBSERVANT GUARD spots the attic door.

INT. KITCHEN

The door swings open behind Porfat, a black shape steps out.

INT. INNER WARD

The prince looks up to see the Lowly Guard bark down from the second floor..

LOWLY GUARD
No one on up here, sire. They must
have given us the slip.

Prince Fandiel ascends the steps to the second floor.

PRINCE FANDIEL
Nonsense, he's here somewhere.

INT. KITCHEN

Porfat peers into the cold room.. nothing. He shakes his head,
swigs a bottle of wine and turns to see:

Zephryn!

The boy shambles towards Porfat.

INT. HALLWAY

A GUARD reaches up to open the attic door.

INT. KITCHEN

Zephryn puts his hand on the doctor, his eyes hard as steel.
The doctor jumps.

He's been reduced down to a cold, blue, shell of his former
self, zombie like.

PORFAT
You nearly gave me a heart attack,
young master.

Porfat looks closer at the distraught lad.

ZEPHRYN
It's good to see you again. I
thought we lost it all.

PORFAT
I hung in there by the thread. That
imbecile pushed me into the waters,
I had clung for dear life.

INT. HALLWAY

The Guard throws open the door.

From up above they can hear a loud thud and something that
sounds like water breaking free from a balloon.

The ceiling bends inward from an unseen weight.

INT. KITCHEN

Zephryn grips Porfat on the shoulders with both hands.

ZEPHRYN

And that was all? There wasn't
anything else?

He scans Porfat looking for the answer on his face.

INT. HALLWAY

The ceiling bends to the breaking point. That's it.

The Vendren Worm breaks through the ceiling, splinter and rock everywhere. It crushes TWO UNLUCKY MEN on the way down.

The guards hold position just in front of the worm, weapons raised, shouting and cursing every second of the way.

The maw of the worm sweeps from one side of the hallway to the next.

Tendrils extend and lashes out on the thing they find.

The worm raises its head and looks down at the front row.

The Guards rush the creature and stab it at every chance they get.

The worm threatens attack, but they Guards dodge out of the way.

The worm dives down, picks up a guard and swallows him whole.

Its tail whips back and forth and smashes the assault from behind to pieces.

INT. AROUND THE CORNER

The Prince walks at the end of the hallway only to see a UNFORTUNATE GUARD pulled out of scene by some tendrils.

There's a cry and blood paints the walls in front of the prince.

INT. KITCHEN

Porfat and Zephryn hear the crash.

PORFAT
Oh, that doesn't sound good at all.

AROUND THE CORNER ON THE SECOND FLOOR

The Prince retreats down the steps with the maw of the worm in tow.

INT. INNER WARD

The Prince slides down the railing and is out the front door in seconds.

HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE INNER WARD

Porfat and Zephyryn peek into the inner ward just in time to see...

INT. INNER WARD

The fifteen foot long worm spills from the second floor balcony with a crash that shakes the house to it's core!

A TWO POOR BASTARDS hang by their necks from the tendrils.

The worm takes One Poor Bastard and slides it into its mouth.

HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE INNER WARD

A tendril whips by and snags Porfat by the shoe. Porfat braces himself by the door frame.

PORFAT
Zephyryn!

The doctor strains against the door, the maw envelopes his view.

Zephyryn charges in with a cleaver and hacks away at the tendrils.

Porfat frees himself, he backs away from the entrance.

PORFAT (CONT'D)
We're trapped!

Zephyryn pulls the doctor back.

INT. KITCHEN

Zephryn open the pantry and kicks the inner wall in. A secret passage is revealed.

ZEPHRYN

This way!

INT. ENTRANCE

More of the prince's Never-Vanquished flood the room.

They swarm the beast, it flails and wails under the assault.

INT. TUNNEL

Zephryn leads Porfat on.

PORFAT

I demand to know what's going on!

ZEPHRYN

You were right, by clan be damned.
I'm under sentence of death by
servitude to the underworld.

INT. TUNNEL - FLASHBACK

Zephryn is on his knees standing before Vomikron, he hands the ghoul a missive.

ZEPHRYN (V.O.)

By orders of Princess Liame, I am
to serve the ghoul king to my end
at his pleasure.

The king smiles.

BACK TO SCENE

PORFAT

What would the Vendrens want to
conspire with ghouls?

ZEPHRYN

Same reason as Prince Fandiel. To
learn the truth of people who
betray them.

PORFAT

You must have undergone terrible things.

ZEPHRYN

I know ghouls now. I have done things to prove my worthiness to them.

INT. INNER WARD

A guard is squashed under the beast's weight against the wall.

A man is choked to death by a tendril.

A pike stabs into the gelatinous beast.

The maw screams with a roar so fierce, it bathes a POOR GUARD in disgusting ooze.

The worm cries out as more and more bills, pikes, axes, and swords dig into its body.

INT. TUNNEL

Zephryn leads Porfat.

ZEPHRYN

I am flirting with disaster. One day the death god will reward me, eventually, for the work I have done.

PORFAT

Spare an old fool, please.

Zephryn gives him a worried look.

INT. INNER WARD

The melee, with every ounce of preservation, destroys the beast little by little.

It screams out in pain.

A geyser of white puss launches from its body. Blood pours out in small rivers.

The worm slowly gives in.

INT. TUNNEL

Porfat grabs Zephryn by the shoulder.

PORFAT
Where are we going?

ZEPHRYN
To see the king.

PORFAT
Are you mad? Why?!

Zephryn stops and looks Porfat dead in the eyes.

ZEPHRYN
Because, I can not do this alone, I
need you there!

Zephryn's lip quivers, he shudders. His eyes say it all.

PORFAT
I apologize, young master. How
could I deny a favor to a friend.

Porfat's grip holds firmer on the young lad's shoulder. He
shakes Zephryn reassuringly.

ZEPHRYN
Thank you, doctor.

Zephryn continues down the passage.

Porfat lingers behind, he looks toward Zephryn and shakes his
head. He doesn't seem so sure...

PORFAT
All too soon.

INT. KITCHEN

The Prince enters the room. TWO CLEVER GUARDS have discovered
the secret entrance.

GUARD
This way, sire!

INT. TUNNEL

Zephryn and Porfat come to a light at the end of their
passage...

INT. THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE

Rows of half eaten bodies line the racks, chains and hooks. This is the King's feeding ground. Porfat is about to have a heart attack.

Cultists fill the room, funneling toward it's exit.

Zephryn leads the way through the group, familiar with the place.

Porfat holds a handkerchief over his nose.

PORFAT

Abominable!

ZEPHRYN

Look there!

Porfat turns to see...

A body hanging from the rack. Long black hair, with two half eaten breasts, and a lower abdomen hanging loose with intestines wrapped around it's stripped clean legs.

ZEPHRYN (CONT'D)

I believe that was her.

PORFAT

Her?

(it dawns on Porfat)

My word!

They join the current and flow down the river of people out the end.

ZEPHRYN

Some ghouls had their way with her.
And there is not a single thing we
can do about it.

INT. THRONE ROOM

Porfat and Zephryn bask in it's filth. Flies swarm, the smell overpowers. A mockery of a royal court is in session. Cultists line the doorway leading down past the throne, to their spot on the floor before the king.

They descend a rusty old stairway.

PORFAT

This place is an abomination to
everything Polliel holds sacred.

PORFAT AND ZEPHRYN

Zephryn leads ahead of Porfat down a stair way. Porfat pauses the line for a brief stop. He catches his breath and continues down the step.

PORFAT

Please, wait here for my imbecile brother-in-law, he will make short order with them.

Zephryn doesn't listen or he doesn't hear the doctor. His gaze lays with what's in front of him. Impending doom awaits.

VOMIKRON

The king and his throne, sit under a light that fills all but the edges of the room.

Along the way, cultists shed their clothing as they approach the king.

At the edges of the throne room lay ghouls. A fair number of them. They light up the darkness like a clear night sky; glowing eyes everywhere.

The cultists moved from the throne away to a structure set of rows before him.

Those that make it face to face with the king, kneel down before him, bend forward and kiss his crotch.

Vomikron leaves a low snarling chuckle in amusement.

ZEPHRYN

He's zoned out away from Porfat's cries. The doctor gives up in a muted slump of discouragement.

THE THRONE

Zephryn stands before the king. Zephryn's eyes flicker everywhere but the monster in front of him. He's lost all of his strength and resilience he once had before.

In a most guttural voice...

VOMIKRON

Ahhh, the Vendren...

ZEPHRYN

O King, I don't have the boy.

VOMIKRON

I can see that. Zephryn, you were chosen for your many talents, one of which is to dupe young boys. Have you failed us?

The king's bemused grin falls off to a wrathful mask.

Zephryn hesitates in quiet desperation.

ZEPHRYN

Weymael Vendren has disappeared. His servant Phylphot has been captured. He said Polliard died of food poisoning not long ago.

VOMIKRON

Idiot! The boy was a ghoul, he could eat whatever he wanted. Unless he subsumed what he consumed. However... If you can't bring me back the boy, perhaps you can bring me some more of your sister..

PORFAT

Squirms in his spot. He grips his staff ready to swing.

VOMIKRON

Looks steely eyed at Zephryn.

VOMIKRON

(nodding down to his lap)
Go ahead.

Zephryn face falls. He lowers himself down to the king's crotch.

PRINCE FANDIEL (O.S.)

So, here is where everyone is!

BACK TO SCENE

Prince Fandiel barges in with enough soldiers that could seriously make a dent in this place. They fan out.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Did I miss the party?

Vomikron narrows his eyes and snarls at the king.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)
 Until further notice, all cult
 activity in the city is cancelled
 and you all will come back with me.

Vomikron jabs his finger at the prince.

VOMIKRON
 I will take care of you personally.
 (to Zephryn, pointing
 down)
 Now finish this.

PORFAT
 No!

Porfat runs out past the cultists, raises his staff and swings it down right on the king's forehead.

The king and the throne go sprawling backwards, tipping over.

Everyone is shocked. There's silence. Then...

CULTIST (O.S.)
 It's the ghoulogist!

Porfat sighs at his name. He grips his staff and raises it in the air.

Chaos ensues.

The Never-Vanquish advance on the cultists. From behind, long clawed hands reach out from the darkness pulled a few back.

Vomikron stands up from his throne mad as hell. He sets his eyes immediately on Porfat.

The Prince slashes his sword on every approaching cultist.

Cultists scramble for safety.

A POOR CULTIST gets in Vomikron's way. The ghou king twists his head around three-sixty.

Porfat clears a path through the naked cultists with his staff. The occasional skull cracks and splits.

Ghouls advance on the prince's troops. The troops rear around and fight off an attack from both sides.

Zephryn grabs a weapon from a fallen Never-Vanquished.

Vomikron steam rolls his way through the crowd b-lining it for Porfat.

Zephryn snaps a ghoul's neck and turns to see what Vomikron's doing.

Vomikron waves his hand, sending THREE MEASLY CULTISTS flying. He grabs Porfat.

Zephryn races to Porfat's aid.

Vomikron holds the doctor by the neck raising him off the ground. He winds up his other arm ready to claw at him.

Zephryn drives the end of his sword through Vomikron's back and out his guts. Porfat is nearly impaled as well.

Vomikron is shocked, he screams out in pain. He drops Porfat trying to get his hands around his back.

Porfat grabs his staff.

PORFAT
Zephryn, come!

Porfat knocks out an UNLUCKY CULTIST.

Vomikron pulls the sword out and snarls at the fleeing Porfat and Zephryn.

Porfat and Zephryn almost make it.

Vomikron grabs Zephryn's shoulder.

With out even thinking, Zephryn cocks his hand back and deliver's a skull cracking blow to the king sending him stumbling back.

Zephryn pushes Porfat towards the stairway.

ZEPHRYN
Go!

With all his might, Zephryn jumps on Vomikron. The two lock together in mortal combat.

Porfat seeing no other way, rushes to the rusty, old stairway.

As he climbs, the structure teeters.

A ghoul is knocked against the stairway and impaled on a pike held by a Never-Vanquished. The stairway begins to fall.

Porfat is almost off the stairway to freedom. A hand from behind grabs his shoulder, he turns to see...

The prince.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Leaving us so soon, Porfat? I think
the Empress would like a word--

The stairway collapses. Prince Fandiel screams, he reaches out and catches the ledge.

Porfat, on safe ground, reaches out to save the prince.

PORFAT

Take my hand, you fool!

The prince reaches out and grabs Porfat's hand when...

PRINCE FANDIEL

Porfat--!

Prince Fandiel is pulled off the ledge out of sight by an unseen force.

Porfat lingers for a moment on where the prince just was.

PORFAT

(to himself)
Better this way!

He turns and races to freedom.

EXT. POTASH ALLEY - NIGHT

Porfat explodes from a hole in the wall and stumbles for a moment on the empty city street.

From inside the hole he can hear a faint clamor of voices.

Porfat rushes to the other side of the street hiding behind some rain barrels.

He looks on...

Zephyryn stumbles out of the hole. He holds his broken arm tightly across his chest and cries out...

ZEPHYRYN

Porfat! Porfat!

PORFAT (V.O.)

I couldn't do it.

Zephryn looks in all directions not knowing where he wants to go.

PORFAT (V.O.)
I couldn't trust me senses.
Something held me back.

Zephryn cries out again, tears stream down his eyes,
Zephryn's lost.

ZEPHRYN
I'm sorry, Porfat!

THREE CLOTHED CULTISTS emerge from the hole in the wall and circle Zephryn.

PORFAT (V.O.)
I felt I had succumbed as a dire
devil, with no pity in my heart.

The cultists kick and punch Zephryn in their circle. Zephryn falls to the floor, helpless under the assault.

Porfat is fighting himself. He peers over the barrel and looks on.

PORFAT (V.O.)
He surely was something else, fore,
Zephryn Vendren had died a much
braver soul than I. But, from some
burning in my heart, I had to help
him, I had to act...!

Porfat finally stands up.

Prince Fandiel and eight Never-Vanquished emerge from the hole.

PORFAT (V.O.)
...Another time.

Porfat ducks down again in his spot a coward.

The Never-Vanquish stab, hack and slash the cultists. Gone. Dead.

The prince lords over Zephryn.

PRINCE FANDIEL
At last. This is not going to end
well for you.
(to his guards)
Pick him up.

ZEPHRYN

No...!

EXT. CROTALORN - NIGHT

Porfat runs through the streets, reeling from his encounter.

PORFAT (V.O.)

I am confused, befuddled. It has been hard... my senior years. Growing old is just as dramatic as my youth, yet the transition is like a thief in the night, taking my life little by little.

EXT. HOUND SQUARE - NIGHT

Porfat races to the Willing Lepress Inn.

PORFAT (V.O.)

How could I be so stupid. I should have lent all my assistance to save the boy. There is very little I can now do, yet I am resolved in doing it one hundred percent.

INT. WILLING LEPRESS INN - PORFAT'S ROOM

Porfat writes by candle light on the pages of Chalcedor's book.

A furious wind blows through his window, the light flickers.

PORFAT (V.O.)

That is why I write to you, dear sister, in the hopes you can send my confession to the Empress at once.

He dabs his ink and rests his quill.

PORFAT

(to himself)

I must go to him. To make sure of the young master's true destiny at all costs.

He turns to a DARK MESSENGER who was standing behind the doctor the whole time.

The Dark Messenger bows before the doctor.

INT. THE FAND PALACE GRANDROOM

A row of Never-Vanquish line the way to the throne.

Prince Fandiel's footsteps are the only sound in the court. All hushed heads follow him as he makes his way to...

EMPRESS FILLITRELLA, late teens, tall and majestic. She sits on her golden throne and faces Crotalorn's elite, with judicial confidence and poise.

Prince Fandiel stops mere steps away, a close, yet formal distance. He holds in his hands Chalcedor's book.

A moment.

PRINCE FANDIEL

TO Fillitrella, Empress of all
Seelura and the Outer Islands,
Scourge of the Thallasshoi, Torch
to the Argyori, Hammer of Gasatayne
and Beloved of the Fairies, from
Fandiel, Prince of the House Fand,
Commander for the Never-Vanquished,
most humble greetings.

From his side, Nyssa attends as well. She wears a sore face, she dabs her tears with a handkerchief.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

The conspiracy of the suspected
cult operations in the city
pertaining to the location of the
thief's treasure, has been
resolved. We have named Doctor
Porfat as chief conspirator. His
ties with the Vendrens,
particularly Weymael Vendren and
the Lady Glypht, both of whom have
disappeared, have proven this
beyond a shadow of doubt.

PORFAT

He pushes his way desperately through the crowded city streets. Everyone's in his way, time is lost.

BACK TO SCENE

PRINCE FANDIEL

We have recovered a book that
proves this all, your highness.
(MORE)

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

An intercepted message from the Doctor himself who is still at large. In it he described a war in the underworld, a throne of a dark king at the center of the city and how he was innocent.

Prince Fandiel holds Chalcedor's book in the air for all to see. He drives his point home for the crowd.

PRINCE FANDIEL (CONT'D)

One thing bothered me... He misspelled the Sun God's name wrong. Instead of Polliel, he wrote Polliard, the Vendren ward whom is missing and sought after to this hour. By identifying the boy, the doctor has proven how familiar he is with him. This, if you look deep enough, is the missing piece of evidence against the doctor.

(he lowers the book and looks at it with disdain)
Porfat's charges increase further with the distribution of pornography.

POFAT

...Stumbles over a grave and scrambles to get up. He frantically reaches out for stability.

BACK TO SCENE

PRINCE FANDIEL

It is unfortunate the Doctor is not in custody, but troops have been posted all over the city and we expect his capture very soon.

ZEPHRYN

An executioner's axe swings down.

Zephryn is beheaded.

SERIES OF SHOTS

--A NEVER-VANQUISHED SOLDIER spears a POOR DEATH'S DARLING through the chest.

--A UNLUCKY DEATH'S DARLING is cut in half by a battle axe.

--A contingent of Never-Vanquished and a small group of Death's Darlings clash at the gates of Vendren Hill.

PRINCE FANDIEL (V.O.)

The execution of the boy Zephyryn and the apparent disappearance of Weymael sparked an uproar in the city. The opposing force was quelled, they never had a chance.

BACK TO SCENE

The prince is smug.

PRINCE FANDIEL

Is is believed that we have expelled the Death God's manifested power in the city. A cleansed in the good sight of Polliel.

A moment...

EMPRESS FILLITRELLA

And what about the boy?

PRINCE FANDIEL

Why, he has been buried in a pit reserved for the common criminals. In the duty of appeasing the Cluddite population in the city, I have posted a small contingent of the celibate warriors to watch over the boy incase of any cultist or Vendren interference.

Done.

Prince Fandiel clicks his heels and offers a faint smile. He bows before her.

All is silent.

Nyssa breaks the silence with her quiet sob.

The smile drops from the prince's face. He tries to ignore his wife, but he can't.

EXT. DREAMERS' HILL - DAY

The Sun sets over the horizon.

EXT. BASE OF THE HILL - NIGHT

Porfat stands before the site of a mass grave. Bodies heaped everywhere, the dumping ground for the wretched and poor.

Across from him is a group of five Cluddites standing at the edge of the grave. Among them is... Zornard!

Porfat approaches is severity and intent.

PORFAT

Zornard!

ZORNARD

It is the blasphemer.

PORFAT

Where is he, what have you done with him?

Zornard laughs dead pan.

ZORNARD

No concern of yours. Now turn back, Cludd has no use for thee.

PORFAT

Fools! I must see him, I must see him at once!

ZORNARD

Oh will you now?

Zornard steps towards Porfat with his bill pointed at him.

ZORNARD (CONT'D)

Cludd has preordained our glory with mercy and justice, all those opposed will fall under our iron.

The bill is waved in Porfat's face, he pushes it aside.

PORFAT

Cluddite nonsense.

Zornard stiffens angry as hell.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

You have no idea what's at stake. There's an evil here even Cludd can not dispel.

ZORNARD

Cludd sees all and shines down on
all with justice and vengeance. His
hammer cleanses our souls.

PORFAT

Straight to damnation.

A giant claw of a hand reaches from behind TWO POOR CLUDDITES
and pulls them into the pit.

PORFAT (CONT'D)

Hells...

ZORNARD

The beast!

Blood sprays out from the ledge onto the TWO REMAINING
CLUDDITES.

They stab their weapons down into the darkness.

PORFAT

No, no!

Two bloody bodies are thrown at the Remaining Cluddite
sending them on their asses.

Vomikron emerges from the pit.

He roars at Porfat like a pissed off tiger.

Vomikron bends down and grips the Two Remaining Cluddites
heads in his palms. He squeeze hard. There's a crack and snap
of bone as the heads are crushed under his strength.

In a most guttural voice...

VOMIKRON

Doctor... come here, I have a gift.

Vomikron beckons with his finger.

Zornard loses it. He turns to run.

Vomikron watches him go, then smiles at Porfat.

Porfat runs.

He doesn't make it far. In two giant leaps, Vomikron bounds
to the doctor and knocks him over.

Vomikron chuckles.

VOMIKRON (CONT'D)

At last I dine on what's mine, what
I truly saviour.

This is it! The king raises his clawed hand in the air
prepared to strike...

VOMIKRON (CONT'D)

I bet you taste deliciously sour--
wait...

The king lowers his arm. He peers into Porfat's eyes with
deep curiosity.

VOMIKRON (CONT'D)

I know you...

A sudden realization washes over the monster.

Vomikron holds Porfat's head in the cup of his hands. Porfat
squirms.

VOMIKRON (CONT'D)

Boy...

Vomikron rears back his head and laughs the most ghoulish
laugh ever.

VOMIKRON (CONT'D)

Polliard, at last. I have kiss for
you, a kiss of teeth...

Vomikron opens his mouth wide exposing his full row of fangs
and knives.

PORFAT

NO--!

Too late, Vomikron dives down off screen attacking Porfat.

All there is left is the sound of a hungry maw munching on
prey.

THE END