

APOCALYPSE MEOW

Written by

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EXT. SUBURBAN GARAGE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Dust motes dance in the golden shafts of LIGHT.

On the HIGHEST SHELF, tucked behind boxes of forgotten memories, lies LANA (a silver Bengal cat). Back then, her coat was sleek, like dark gray smoke curling over snow.

She breathes in the scent of the wood: sun-bleached summers and dry heat.

ADULT ZACHARY (V.O.)

When the world went black, she hid
safe away from the night. It wasn't
just a hiding place. It was hers.
Her sanctuary.

Beyond the garage walls: the MUFFLED ROAR of traffic—the heartbeat of a living world.

ADULT ZACHARY (V.O.)

She loved the dust. Loved how it
clung to her whiskers and paws, how
it spoke of years before her birth.
She loved the smell of the wild that
seeped through the cracks in the
garage walls – the dry grass in late
August, the grossly sweet scent of
oil from a neighbor's lawnmower, the
musk of earthworms after a storm.

EXT. RUINED GARAGE - PRESENT

The sunlight is gone. The sky is an angry striation of red with black clouds. The cityscape is derelict and skeletal.

LANA (Present Day) lifts her head from wooden debris. Her coat is mottled and dulled. STINGING, ACIDIC RAIN lashes down from the MUTED RED SKY.

BALTHOMERE (O.S.)

Lana!

BALTHOMERE (an orange tom, ragged and wet) appears in the frame of a warped blue panel. His tail lashes in a metronome of panic.

BALTHOMERE

Get up! We have to go. We can't stay here! The sky's moved once again.

He vanishes back into the rain. Lana scrambles up.

ADULT ZACHARY (V.O.)

She remembered the smell of cut grass and barbecues, locust husks clinging to tree trunks, the crisp scent of lizards

sunbathing on stones, and the faint acidity of ants that patrolled the concrete. Sometimes, on warm evenings, a woman's perfume would ride the breeze like a ghost, twining itself among all those earthy notes. It was a tapestry no human would ever fully notice – not like she did.

Lana scans the ruins.

INT. HER OWNER'S HOME - FLASHBACK

ADULT ZACHARY (V.O. CONT'D)

But more than that, she missed the feeling of home. And the sounds.

She missed her man-creature-tall, warm, a voice she could find in any crowd. She missed his family. Missed the shifting chorus of their days: clattering dishes, sudden laughter, the slam of a screen door.

EXT. A STREET AT NIGHT. CARS PASSING - FLASHBACK

Lana sits at the side of the road watching traffic pass.

ADULT ZACHARY (V.O. CONT'D)

Most of all, she missed the deep, ever-present roar of traffic, cars sweeping up and down the street like the heartbeat of the world. The cars had terrified her once. She'd dart from window to couch at the sound of tires hissing through puddles, or flinch at the blast of a horn. Now she thought of them as proof—proof there were humans, proof she wasn't alone.

EXT. RUINED GARAGE - PRESENT

ADULT ZACHARY (V.O. CONT'D)

Thank God for dust. Thank God for high shelves. She wouldn't be here to tell this story otherwise.

Lana makes her way outside.

EXT. THE NARROW ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Lana dashes across slick concrete. She passes Balthomere. ALEXIS (a calico) shoots past them both. GEDDY (a charcoal gray cat) and LEN (an orange tabby) emerge from the shadows, falling into rank. CLEO (A Turkish Angora) follows.

ADULT ZACHARY (V.O. CONT'D)

Rot and death ruled the air now.

They thought this place would be different. It wasn't.

They were hunted.

By the sky, by the forests, and by
the ones they used to know.

The humans who died and went into
the "Forever Sea" and returned
without warmth or thought. Shells.
Their bodies carried the stink of
wet soil and rot. Their teeth worked
constantly, gnashing for any scrap
of flesh—living, dead, it didn't
matter. They'd eat their own hands
if nothing else moved.

That was why they hated the wind.
The wind carried scent. And scent
carried death.

A splintering CRACK. The blue gate at the end of the alley
SHATTERS.

SHELLS spill through. Jerking, gray limbs. Rancid flesh that
sloughs from bones. Black sludge drips from skulls with milky
eyes and vacant sockets. Limp, rotting flesh. Their teeth
gnash constantly—a wet, mindless sound.

BALTHOMERE

Move! Go!

EXT. THE STEEL GATE - CONTINUOUS

A tall, steel, spring-loaded gate blocks the path.

THOMAS (a white Maine Coon) and FLYNN (a Siamese) strain
against the mechanism to hold it open. Metal SHRIEKS.

THOMAS

Move! Faster!

Alexis and Lana skitter through the narrowing gap. Geddy and
Len follow.

The gate SLAMS shut. A heavy, metallic THUD—like a gunshot.

The troop stops. Gasping. Rain hissing on the metal.

Thomas looks at the group. His eyes go wide.

THOMAS

Balthomere!

Thomas runs back to the bars. Flynn stays frozen, staring at the ground.

ON THE GROUND: A single orange paw. Severed. Soaked with rain and blood.

THOMAS

Help me! Flynn, help me!

Thomas shoves against the steel bars. His claws scrape uselessly on the slick metal.

From the other side: A wet, choking GURGLE. Then—the sound of RIPPING FLESH.

Dark blood oozes under the gate like spilled oil.

A heavy THUD hits the fence. Balthomere's leg flops over the bottom rail, landing at Thomas's paws.

Thomas falls back, silent.

Lana stares at the blood spreading in the rain.

ADULT ZACHARY (V.O.)

Lana would never forget the sound.

The sound of a leader who never left anyone behind, who had pulled them from the jaws of death more times than she could count, dying in a place where none of them could reach him.

And as the rain hissed and the Shells feasted, she wondered –

When would it be her turn?

Lana looks up at the red, cracked moon.

FADE OUT.

EXT. POWER LINE CORRIDOR - DAY

Lightning flashes—jagged and furious—splitting the scarlet sky. Each passing day seems darker than the one before. What sunlight remains is swallowed whole by the looming black and blood-drenched sky overhead.

Huge, skeletal TRANSMISSION TOWERS disappear into the horizon, rusted and silent. Dead leaves spiral through the wind.

Thomas and Jerrill's voices carry as they argue, even through the rain. Jerrill's frustration is the sharpest thing in the air.

EXT. UNDER A SHED ROOF - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Tin rattles above. Rain drums endlessly.

Lana and Jerrill are pressed into the cold dirt.

JERRILL

(a whisper)

It should be you. You have what it takes. And you survived to find us when everything went black.

LANA

(raising her voice
against the rain)

We all survived to find one another.
I'm no better suited than Thomas—or
any of us. You'd do just as well.

She places a paw on her shoulder.

JERRILL

(scoffs, brushing away
her paw)

Pfth. Hardly. I'm just saying—Thomas
was in charge of the gate. He
panicked. Flynn panicked.
Balthomere's dead because of them. I
can't look at him and pretend
otherwise.

LANA

At least Thomas ran back to try. How
much can be said for Flynn? Or for
the rest of us?

JERRILL

Shh. Not so loud. I don't want
anyone hearing us.

LANA

Why? Afraid they'll think we're a
thing?

JERRILL

(Whiskers twitching)

I just... you know I care about you.
I care enough to want to see someone
better like you in charge. That's
all.

LANA

And what does caring about me have
to do with leading a troop?

JERRILL

I get it, fine. I'm just saying it
should've been a vote. If we'd
voted, you'd be leading us right
now. I'm sure of it.

EXT. POWER LINE CORRIDOR - PRESENT

Jerrill's voice carries over the storm again, not a whisper this time. Lana turns, about to tell him to save the fight for later—but something else cuts her short.

LANA

Be quiet! Listen.

The howl of the wind. The drum of rain. Then—a SHUFFLE. Not feet, but meat

dragging bone forward. The wet slap of limbs moving wrong.

The stench hits: metallic blood and the thick, greasy scent of a fresh kill. Dog. And something human. Female.

THOMAS

(fur bristling)

There's got to be a hundred of them!

LANA

Hurry! We run now, argue later!

The troop BOLTS along the spine of the POWER LINE CORRIDOR. A wet, copper stink rises from the rusted metal towers like a shield.

Lana slams into GEDDY'S hindquarters. The line has stopped.

LANA

Why—

A wave of SHELLS emerges from a grove of skeletal trees. Hundreds of them. They move like drunk marionettes, stumbling in jerks and lurches, branches cracking underfoot.

Their voices belch out—obscene and desperate.

Alexis appears at Lana's side, drenched and out of breath.

ALEXIS

(panting)

May I suggest we draw them into the ravine? Len and I can take them. The rest of you push forward. We get their attention, lead them down, and lose them. There's a pipe in the ditch—narrow enough they'll never follow.

LANA

And you two? Once you're down there—you're down. How do you climb back up? And what if we don't meet again? We should stick together.

ALEXIS

(nods)

Not this time. There's too many. A horde that size buys you hours. Maybe more. Len and I can slip out the other end and meet you. The rain's been hard, but the pipe didn't look flooded.

LANA

Didn't look flooded. And if it is?

ALEXIS

Then we swim.

Alexis smiles faintly. The scarlet sky paints her mischievous green eyes like glass.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

We've already talked it through.

Len approaches Lana at a lope. He places a heavy paw on her shoulder.

LANA

Oomph!

LEN

You tell Thomas what's what. We'll see you soon.

Lana nuzzles his face briefly.

LANA

Come back to us. We don't need more graves.

Len grins. He doesn't promise.

They are gone in a heartbeat, sprinting toward the oncoming wave. The sound of Shells meeting them is swallowed by the rain.

FADE OUT.

EXT. POWER LINE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

A landscape of rusted iron and scarlet fog. Massive POWER LINE TOWERS loom like skeletal gods, their heavy cables sagging and humming a low, dissonant chord in the wind.

Len tears across the sodden earth, shoving himself into the path of a writhing mass of SHELLS.

LEN

(Roaring)

COME ON! GET OUT OF THERE, GIRL!

Alexis is heaving, her flanks churning as she leads the horde toward the ravine. The Shells ignore Len completely. Their milky eyes are locked on her.

ALEXIS (V.O.)
It wasn't supposed to be like
this...

EXT. FOREST EDGE - CONTINUOUS

Lana drops low. A wall of Shells blocks her path.

LANA
(Whispering to herself)
You got this. You've lived through
worse.

Lana closes her eyes. Senses bloom: the sour tang of wind,
the cold slick of mud,
the bitter metal of rain.

LANA (CONT'D)
I'm one of the royal felines. I can
do this.

She slides into the thick leaves, pressing her belly to the
damp earth. The Shells shuffle past, blind to the silver
shadow slipping through the trees.

LANA (CONT'D)
(Whispering to herself)
I got this, I got this...

EXT. THE RAVINE - CONTINUOUS

ALEXIS
(Panting)
I don't got this!

Alexis winds through skeletal legs, a
clawed hand missing her by an inch. She breaks free and slams
into Len.

LEN

(Strained, barking)

What the fuck was that, Lexi? They
were all over you like flies! I
didn't even exist to them!

They weave through the towering iron spines of the power
lines. Rusted cross-arms jut out at odd angles. Len glances
back, mid-sentence.

LEN

Seriously, what was that? Next time,
I'm go—

SFX: WET SMACK.

A rusted iron support arm catches Len

across the temple. The sound is like a gong. He goes limp
instantly, tumbling over the ravine's edge. He collides with
several jagged rocks on the way down and SMASHES against a
boulder at the bottom.

ALEXIS

LEN!

She scrambles down. Below, Len's spine is bent at an
unnatural angle.

SFX:THUD. THUD. THU-THUD.

Above, the Shells are walking off the edge. They hit the
ground only to scramble up instantly.

Alexis lunges for Len's scruff. She strains, her back
arching, her claws digging for purchase in the churned mud as
she drags him.

ALEXIS

(A guttural, sobbing
growl)

Get up... Len, get UP!

She hauls him backward, her breath hitching. Behind her, the Shells are gaining. Five feet. Three.

She surges with a burst of panicked strength, dragging his doubled weight into the concrete tunnel mouth just as a rotted hand swipes at his tail.

INT. THE TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Blackness. The Shells scratch at the concrete outside, nails screeching.

Alexis collapses over Len's cold, orange fur. Her vision tunnels. The darkness of the pipe feels like the same oblivion that claimed him as the shock of his death crushes her. She sinks into unconsciousness, sprawling across his corpse.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. WASTELAND - NIGHT

The rain has a new, sharper bite. Lana shivers, her fur matted into wet, knotted tangles. She sleeps, digging her claws into the damp earth while she tosses and turns.

NIGHTMARE- A SURREAL MONTAGE OF KALEIDOSCOPIC IMAGES DEPICTING VARIOUS ANIMALS AND HUMANS IN SPIRIT FORM AS THEY TRAVEL THROUGH AN APOCALYPTIC EARTH.

LANA (V.O.)

All beasts who wander blessedly meek
have inherited a shell of God's
creation... the shell we once called
"Earth." Haunted are the souls of
the ones left behind, be they
human-creature, canine-creature, or
be they us, the royal felines. No
creature is exempt from this
foretold and forever darkness; the
forever sea that turns to mire.

Lana winces in her uncomfortable sleep.

LANA (V.O. CONT'D)

Woe to the souls of the saved, for
we are damned—for to live is to
perish, and to survive is to surely
suffer at the expense of their
damnation. Forever and ever...
Amen.

EXT. WASTELAND - NIGHT

Lana's eyes snap open with a start. She shakes the rain from
her coat and

whispers a sick, quiet prayer for Alexis.

FLASHBACK - EXT. DRAINAGE PIPE - NIGHT (PREVIOUSLY)

Rain plasters Thomas's white fur to his skin.

LANA

And I suppose you'd have played it
safe?

THOMAS

(Hissing)

I'd have not played anything! I'm here to survive and help everyone else survive! Not to play games with other lives! If their plan was such a great idea, why didn't you do it?

Lana's lips tremble.

LANA

Thomas—fuck off.

A long silence, heavy and brittle. Lana turns to walk away.

THOMAS

Lana?

LANA

(Turning around)

What?

THOMAS

(Faint smile curling his lips)

It's in everyone's best interest to comply with what's best for the group, yeah?

Lana says nothing. Her tail lashes against the mud.

INT. DRAINAGE PIPE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT - PRESENT

Blackness. Alexis snuffles and shivers. Her thoughts echo in the pipe.

ALEXIS (V.O.)

The things we take for granted. The things we've lost forever.

FLASHBACK - INT. A COZY HOME - DAY

A woman—Alexis's owner—smiles as she watches Alexis eat food from a bowl, petting her.

TRANSITION: The same woman and two kids laughing as they use cute cat toys to play with her. Alexis lunges after the toys, her tail swinging side to side as she laughs.

ALEXIS (V.O.)

The love I'll never feel again...
the joy I'll never have. I miss
being loved. I miss the freedom.

FLASHBACK - EXT. A VIBRANT GREEN FIELD - DAY

Alexis chases a butterfly. SCENT BEAMS trail around her as she leaps into the air to catch it.

FLASHBACK - INT. BARN FULL OF HAY - DAY

Alexis and Len lay together, nuzzling one another in the soft glow of light being cast from a bulb overhead. The sky is blue outside and we see the green field from the open barn door. They bunt heads.

ALEXIS (V.O.)

But more than anything... I miss my
friend. I miss Len. I miss his
love.

INT. DRAINAGE PIPE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT -PRESENT

ALEXIS

(A whisper)
I don't want to die alone.

She looks at the metal grate sealing the exit. A cold lattice. Beyond it, a faint red light.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Oh my God. PLEASE... not like this.

Alexis slumps against the grating, poking her paw through where she had once held onto Lana's paw.

FLASHBACK - EXT. PIPE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Alexis yowls through the grate at the retreating troop.

ALEXIS

Thomas! It wasn't Lana's fault!

Thomas stares back at her, eyes hard.

THOMAS

(Turns to address Lana,
ignoring Alexis's plea)
She's already dead, Lana, thanks to
you. And dead cats don't talk.

He turns away. The troop reluctantly follows him into the rain, occasionally looking back at Alexis until their sound is swallowed. Alexis yowls after them to come back.

EXT. DERELICT CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS - PRESENT

The air is thick with the reek of spoiled food. Flickering fluorescent bulbs pulse from within the store.

Thomas and Lana stand in a tense standoff near the entrance.

THOMAS

What other options, Lana!? Stay
behind and die with Alexis?

LANA

They were my friends, Thomas. I should go back.

THOMAS

We were ALL their friends, Lana. And NO. I am NOT losing any more of us. First

Balthomere... now Alexis and Len?

LANA

If I recall, Balthomere's death could have been prevented.

Thomas bristles so hard his fur nearly sparks.

THOMAS

The FUCK is THAT supposed to mean? You wanna do this? Fuck you, then. Let's talk murder.

Geddy steps in, ears angled back.

GEDDY

Guys, really? C'mon, let's—

THOMAS

Fuck off, Geddy.

Thomas's tail lashes. His voice drops to a dangerous quiet.

THOMAS

Come on, Lana. Out with it. Let's start with the murders of Alexis and Len.

LANA

You know damn well that was NOT intentional!

THOMAS

Then we have an understanding. You
made the wrong choice.

Fed up, Geddy saunters into the shadows of the store. He finds a bag of cat food and swallows mouthfuls without chewing.

He sees a light in the back office. He noses the door open.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A WOMAN'S ROTTEN CORPSE sits slumped in a chair. Deep slits are in her wrists. A neat hole in her temple, the top of her skull shattered and blackened.

She still holds a silver pistol. Next to her, scrawled in dried blood rivulets: HOPE DIES FIRST.

GEDDY

(To himself)

So this is what it all comes down
to.

SFX: A GUTTURAL SCREAM.

A SHELL bursts from the janitor's closet—all bones, jagged nails, and a broken jaw.

It hooks its claws into Geddy's scruff and

hoists him up. Geddy kicks wildly. The unmoving shadow of the dead woman falls over him as the creature's mouth closes in.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Thomas and Lana stand locked in their standoff. Thomas's ears pivot. He freezes.

THOMAS
(A low snarl)
Wait... did you hear tha—

He scans the group, counting heads. His gaze snaps to Lana.

THOMAS
Where's Geddy?!

LANA
The store?

An unspoken truce forms in a heartbeat.

THOMAS / LANA
(In unison)
The store!

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

The troop breaks into a dead run. Paws slap rain-slick concrete, dodging broken glass and needle-strewn gutters. They slip into the yawning dark of the store.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

A lone fluorescent bulb in the back hums and sputters, casting jerking, unnatural shadows.

Thomas reaches the office first. The door creaks as it swings open.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

THE SLUG pulses on the floor in the strobe light. It's a MASS—slick, raw, and glistening like living muscle. Steam curls from popped blisters. The smell of scorched meat and decay is overwhelming.

Whispers—not words, but mental static—leak from the mass.
Beneath its translucent skin, melted skulls and limbs shift
and churn.

GEDDY erupts from beneath the desk, slamming into Thomas's
legs. His fur is matted with thick, black muck.

GEDDY
(Hysterical)
It got me, it got me!

SUE (a small calico) and Cleo back away, teeth bared.

GEDDY
It grabbed the Shell. Just—it just
pulled it off me like I didn't even
matter! Dissolved it right there.
The Shell was screaming and it just...
ate it. It's feeding. It's growing.

The mass convulses. Blisters shriek like kettles.

THOMAS
Everyone! Exit! Now!

EXT. TRAIN YARD - CONTINUOUS

They bolt through the emergency exit. Blocking their path is
a COLOSSAL TRAIN,

toppled on its side. It lies like a dead titan in the red
moonlight.

LANA
(Pointing to the busted
open train window that is
facing the exit door)
There! Through there!

THOMAS
Quick! On board!

Geddy dives through the shattered window, followed by Cleo, LILY (Russian Blue), ROGAN (Tortoiseshell), CHESTER (Tuxedo), Sue, Merrill, and Flynn. Lana and Thomas bring up the rear.

INT. TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

The air is stale. Debris—broken glass, bent metal, suitcases—is scattered everywhere. The walls groan and pop.

THOMAS

Keep moving! If that thing followed us, I don't want it anywhere near this car!

Geddy mutters, flinging clumps of black muck off his coat. Lily stares out a tilted window at the graveyard of cars outside.

CLEO

(Sharp with growing panic)

Where are the bodies? Why aren't there any bodies?

LANA

Thomas, do you think it's safe to keep going like this? We could cross the yard instead—

GEDDY

(Exploding)

Let's do what she says! I'm not staying in here! I'm not—

THOMAS

(With a humorless smirk)
We stay in the cars. Work our way forward. Out there, we'd get picked off in seconds. And we wouldn't want anyone else disappearing and getting me accused of murder, would we?

Lana scowls. She's about to snap back when Chester bristles.

CHESTER

(Voice cracking)
STOP IT! Both of you! Enough! Just... keep moving. Please.

Thomas inclines his head mockingly.

THOMAS

Very well.

They move into the next cabin. Dust swirls in the RED moonlight. Chester finds a bag of beef jerky and passes it around wordlessly.

Lana chews slowly. Her heart thuds in the silence.

SFX: A DEAFENING RUMBLE.

From down the line, the sound of straining metal and the sharp scream of steel tearing under pressure erupts.

THE TRAIN IS BEING PULLED APART BY AN UNSEEN FOE.

INT. TRAIN CAR - NIGHT

A wet, gut-sucking slurp rolls through the cabin. The metal car groans, shuddering on its side.

THOMAS

Move! Move, move, move!

The cats bolt. Geddy slams into Rogan in his panic. Lily trips over a seat frame.

CLANG. The sound rings out like a death knell.

JERRILL

(Panicked as they come to
a dead end)

Oh shit! The door's locked!

THOMAS

The windows! Out any windows you can
find!

The tilted cabin makes the windows high above them. Red moonlight glints off broken glass, protruding like clear jagged teeth.

THOMAS

Don't just stand there! Start
climbing!

SFX: SNAP!

A tentacle-seething like a BLACK CABLE-cuts the air. It narrowly misses Lily's head, grazing her ear with a steaming HISS.

ROGAN

LILY!

Her ear begins to FOAM, pink and frothy.

Rogan runs to her side.

She gingerly reaches up to touch it, feeling where its point is now missing.

Without hesitating, Cleo digs her claws into a rusted frame, leaping for a window-

SFX: WOOSH-SNAP!

Another glistening TENTACLE-seething like boiling tar-lashes in from the red dark outside. It wraps around Cleo's head. Her skull DENTS inward with a sickening crunch.

They watches in horror as Cleo's skin begins to FOAM, pink and frothy.

SFX: A WET POP.

The tentacle yanks Cleo's head and spine free. Blood sprays the cabin in thick streams. Her twitching carcass drops in a heap.

THOMAS

GO!

They swarm the windows. Glass saws into their paws. Geddy screams as a shard rakes across his left eye, spilling hot blood. He flings himself onto the roof and leaps into the yard.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - CONTINUOUS

A red haze hangs over the yard like dried blood. Thomas barks to them as they weave through warped rails and skeletal rebar fingers.

They reach a chain-link fence. Thomas strains against the links.

THOMAS

Nnnnngh! Flynn! Help me!

Flynn-blue eyes wide-shakes off a trance and presses his weight against the fence. The metal WAILS. A gap opens.

FLYNN

(Straining)

I'm trying! I'm trying, Thomas, I swear!

THOMAS

Go, Lana! Go!

Lana squeezes through halfway.

SFX: A WET WHIP CRACK.

The tentacle coils around Flynn's tail. He is dragged backward, his claws raking the dirt. He locks eyes with Thomas—pleading.

FLYNN

TOM! PLEASE!

(He screams as his tail
sizzles)

HELP!

Thomas grips the fence for a heartbeat to help him, gives him one last look, then INTENTIONALLY pushes his paws away.

FLYNN POV:

Flynn's eyes bulge in disbelief. He watches through blurred vision as Thomas stares back from the other side of the fence and fades into the red night as Flynn gets yanked violently away.

Lana, caught up in the chaos, doesn't see the betrayal. Thomas shoves her through and slams the fence shut. The tentacle drags Flynn into the black space between the cars. His cries fade.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - TUNNEL ENTRANCE

Thomas falls into step, catching up to Lana, chest heaving.

LANA

Flynn... where's Flynn?

THOMAS

He... he was right behind me. I don't know what happened to him.

GEDDY

(Bleeding from his eye)
Fuck that! He's dead! You saw what that thing did—he's gone!

THOMAS

I agree with Geddy. We keep going.
We can honor their deaths later.

Sue points toward a dark tunnel mouth ahead.

SUE

There—the tunnel.

LANA

What if there's something worse in
there?

THOMAS

No time to waste. We go through.

Lana stays just behind Thomas as they walk.

LANA

What exactly was Flynn doing when
you saw him last? You're sure he's
dead? I thought I saw you trying to
help him.

Thomas turns, eyes narrowing.

THOMAS

For fuck's sake, Lana! Are you
calling me a liar?

(He pauses)

Or a murderer?

CHESTER

GUYS! Shut the fuck up! Flynn's
gone. That's all that matters.

Thomas steps into the black mouth of the tunnel.

THOMAS

Let's head in. I'll take point.

Lana follows, eyes drilling holes in his back. The blackness swallows them both.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

The tunnel is a throat of cold, wet stone. Moonlight dissolves into a vague red smear behind the cats.

SFX: PLINK... PLINK... PLINK.

Water drips in a maddening rhythm.

Lily rubs at her ear.

Geddy rubs his eye.

SUE

What are we even running for?

Lily allows Rogan to soothe her ear.

The rest of the cats stare at one another in confusion. Faint clouds of their breath linger in the cool air.

SUE (CONT'D)

(Her tail lashes)

I mean—at all? Where are we going?
What are we doing? What are we
hoping to find?

CHESTER

(Irritable)

What'd you do before this, Sue?
You're a feral. You should be used
to moving along. The rest of us had
homes.

SUE

I had a purpose! A reason—more than
YOU, you pampered shut-in. I may
have scrounged, but I miss my spot
beneath the barracks. I miss my
friends. So fuck off, Chester. What
purpose do you have for any of
this?

CHESTER

(Voice cracking)

What purpose?! Maybe I don't want to
die! Maybe I want food. Maybe I
want... to feel companionship again.
Maybe I want... love.

Geddy gives a sharp, wet laugh. He winces as he cleans his
injured eye.

GEDDY

Fucking love? Are you seriously
serious?

THOMAS

How about we just live for now?
Let's keep moving.

They fall into line. Above, the black clouds thin. The MOON—
split like a wounded sentinel—bleeds crimson into the sky.

EXTREME CLOSE UP - LANA'S EYE

The camera dives into the dark of
her iris. The tunnel vanishes.

EXT./INT. - VARIOUS SCENES - DAY/NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The camera PANS RIGHT through a three-dimensional photograph of the end.

SCENE 1: Static on a radio. Snow on a TV screen in a living room as we see a family panic.

SCENE 2: The moon CRACKS in the sky, shards suspended in the air.

SCENE 3: The oceans BOIL as the moon turns from silver to rust. White steam

frozen above a darkening horizon. Dead sea life scatters the beach.

SCENE 4: The daylight in the city turns black.

SCENE 5: A human falls, mid-collapse, as the first wave of sickness takes hold.

SCENE 6: As the pitch dark day begins to turn a screaming, almost neon RED, the dead humans littering the streets and the interior of homes, fields, and shopping centers begin to rise to their feet as SHELLS.

SCENE 7: The city BURNS. We see a montage of fresh Shells devouring other humans, pets, each other.

SCENE 8: FOREST SHOT—a lone Shell eats

it's own hand and arm, tearing still-bleeding flesh and muscle away to reveal the radial and finger bones beneath.

The camera continues its relentless crawl through the three days it took for the world to burn.

EXTREME CLOSE UP - LANA'S EYE (PRESENT)

The camera ZOOMS OUT. Reflected in her iris is the BURNING SKYLINE of the final scene of the memory. She blinks. It's gone.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

THOMAS

Let's pick up the pace, yeah? And
let's try to stick together this
time?

SFX: A HIGH, SCREECHING WAIL.

The sound warps against the concrete.

GEDDY

Oh fuuugg...

Geddy bolts. The troop follows in a frantic rhythm of claws
on stone.

SFX: WHIP-SNAP-THUNK!

THOMAS

FASTER!

JERRILL

(Panting, to Lana)
Lana! What next?

LANA

Why are you asking me?

JERRILL

Because we need you! We need you to
keep us alive!

Thomas glances sideways at them.

LANA

(To the group)

When we clear the tunnel, we split
into two groups—one left, one right—
up the walls to the top of the
tunnel! We double back and lose it!

THOMAS

(Snarling)

So you want to split us up?!

LANA

It's not splitting us! It's buying
us seconds!

THOMAS

Fine. We'll try it your way.

EXT. TUNNEL EXIT - CONTINUOUS

The cats burst from the mouth. Thomas veers left, Lana right. They scale the steep rock walls, fifteen feet up. They freeze when they reach the top and look down at the exit.

The SLUG slides into view. A massive, translucent ripple of muscle. Inside its flesh, bones and skulls drift in a sickening soup. FLYNN'S and CLEO'S remains float past.

A black proboscis lifts, waving like an antenna.

THE SLUG

(Attempting feline
speech)

Merr... mow? Mert... muh?

Geddy shuts his eyes, praying silently. The Slug lingers, then slides away toward the train yard.

Lana drops from the ledge and storms toward Thomas.

SFX: A LOUD SLAP.

Lana's paw cracks across Thomas's face.

THOMAS

What the hell was that for?!

LANA

WHY'D YOU DO IT?! Why did you leave Flynn behind?!

THOMAS

I didn't! He was right behind me!
That thing got him! We all saw!

LANA

You think I'm fucking stupid?!

THOMAS

And you think I'm a fucking LIAR?!
FUCK YOU, LANA!

Lana turns to the others.

LANA

If anyone wants to follow me, let's go.

Chester steps to her side. Geddy and Jerrill follow without a word. They walk away into the red night.

Thomas stands alone, chest heaving, watching their backs vanish. Rogan, Lily and Sue remain with him.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE KENNEL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A single BARE BULB swings from a frayed wire, casting swaying, dizzying shadows across cracked stone walls.

A MAN (40s, wiry glasses) looms over a scarred oak table. His thick fingers twist a strip of greasy meat from a bone.

Steam rises from the meat, mingling with the cigarette smoke. The Man tosses the morsel. It strikes YOUNG THOMAS (White Maine Coon) squarely between the ears. Thomas's jaws snap shut around the meat.

THE MAN

You dumb fucking animal.

Thomas retreats under a leaning shelf. He drags a BROKEN PAW. The chair

screeches across the floor as the Man stands.

THE MAN

Get over here, you little piece of
shit!

Thomas presses into the shadows. His heart hammers against his ribs. The Man's face splits into an oil-slick grin.

THE MAN

(A false, crooning
warmth)

It's okay, boy. I'm not gonna hurt
ya. That's my good Thomas. Oh, my
baby... I've got a surprise for you.

The Man's wiry glasses catch the flickering light. He scoops Thomas up before he can back away. Thomas goes limp as his thick, sausage fingers clamp the scruff of his neck.

INT. THE DOG ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Man kicks open a wooden door.

Rows of cages line the walls. PIT BULLS slam against the bars. Saliva-slick jaws.

THE MAN

(Laughing)

Just like your little brothers and
sisters. Food to train my fight
dogs! At least those DAMN KITTENS
were good for something!

The Man shoves Thomas's face toward a cage. A dog lunges, teeth snapping inches from Thomas's nose. Thick ropes of spittle fly.

The Man's laugh abruptly falters. Sweat breaks across his forehead. He VOMITS—a violent convulsion.

Thomas hits the ground, twisting and kicking upward. Claws catch the Man's skin. The Man SCREAMS—a high-pitched, childlike sound. His glasses clatter to the stone.

CLOSE UP - THE MAN

Black veins bulge and crawl up his face like vines. His eyes swell and SPLIT, oozing milky pus. Thick strings of mucus stretch between his fingers and his face as he rubs at them.

With a wet grunt, he staggers to the first cage. He reaches in and drags a pit bull out by the neck. He bites deep.

SFX: A WET GURGLE.

The dog's reduced to bones, muscle, and sinew, left to twitch on the dirt floor. Thomas bolts for the open door, shadows chasing him down the hall.

INT. BARN - NIGHT - PRESENT

Thomas BOLTS upright in the straw.

SFX: DRIP... TICK... DRIP.

A frayed rope hangs from a beam, creaking in the draft. Thomas's chest heaves.

THOMAS

Everyone up!

LILY

(Blinking awake)

Shouldn't we try to find Lana and the rest? I'm worried.

THOMAS

Then you should've fucking gone with them.

Lily flinches.

Rogan tenses.

Thomas's eye twitches.

THOMAS

(Coldly)

Fine. Who wants to go after Lana?

LILY

We all do.

Thomas stares at them, his breath hitching.

THOMAS

Then go.

Silence. No one moves.

THOMAS

That's what I thought. None of you have the fighting spirit. At least Lana stood for something.

(A beat)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Very well. Let's find your friends.

Thomas steps out into the acid rain.

EXT. GRAVEL PATH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The rain is harder. Geddy heaves up a wet hairball. He grooms the cut above his eye with slow, deliberate strokes.

Lana stares at the SPLIT MOON. It pulses with red light.

LANA

Jerrill.

JERRILL pads over.

LANA (CONT'D)

What now, genius?

JERRILL

(Smirking)

I have no doubt you'll figure it out. We all have faith in you.

LANA

(Ears laid back)

I'm starting to wish Thomas was here. It was easy to let him take control. Maybe I was wrong about him. About Flynn.

JERRILL

(Shifting his gaze to the horizon)

Maybe you were. Would it matter? Look around you. We're never going to find a home. We're never going to find people.

LANA

(Snaps her head toward
him)

You're wrong! Because if you're
right... then what else do we have?

JERRILL

(Walking away)

Each other. Good... or bad.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. RUINED STREET - NIGHT

Lana stops. The scarlet rain lashes her matted fur. She
closes her eyes.

LANA (V.O.)

Good, or bad. Maybe the lines are
just... blurred. Right and wrong.
Mercy and cruelty. The past is a
ghost, a distant whisper carried on
the wind, mocking us. All that's
left is the present. The knife's
edge.

Lana's ears twitch.

POV - LANA (SCENT-VISION)

The world shifts. The dull grays and reds of the ruins
dissolve. In their place, the air is alive. SCENT BEAMS—
spiraling ribbons of neon color—twist and braid through the
streets.

One thread is different. It's warm. Living. Tinged with a
pale, golden glow: HUMAN.

BACK TO SCENE

Lana opens her eyes. Her pupils are wide, swallowing the light.

LANA

C'mon. Follow the beams. Let's see
where they go.

Jerrill pads forward. Chester and Geddy slowly trail behind.

They follow the twisting ribbons of scent through the city.
It winds past burned-out cars and shattered storefronts, over
slick cobblestones turned crimson by the light bleeding from
the cracked moon.

SFX: CRUNCH OF GLASS AND DEBRIS AS THEY WALK

EXT. COLLAPSED AWNING - LATER

The cats stop before TWO HUMAN SKELETONS. They are locked in
a final, skeletal embrace. Pink, leathery scraps of

flesh cling to the bone. Ribs gape open. One skull is
shattered. Their SCENT BEAMS FADE, DISSOLVING INTO THE MUD.

Geddy huddles under a rusted tin sheet nearby, watching
Lana's reaction.

SFX: CLANG... CLANG... CLANG.

The rain hits the tin with a hollow, rhythmic beat.

Chester looks at the skeletons.

CHESTER

Guess it's always the same, huh?
Death. Or worse. Maybe Sue was right
—what are we even looking for?
'Cause it's obvious we're not gonna
find it.

Lana looks down. Half-buried in the mud is
a WRISTWATCH.

SFX: TICK... TICK... TICK.

The sound syncs with the hollow clanging of the rain on Geddy's tin roof. TICK-CLANG. TICK-CLANG.

LANA

We're dying, Chester. No matter what. Good or bad, the end's the same.

LIGHTNING FLASHES. For one heartbeat, the cats are seen as stark, black shadows against a white world.

LANA (CONT'D)

Whatever it is we're looking for, we won't find it here. C'mon. Let's go.

GEDDY

Fucking a. Let's find some shelter. This shitty rain's killing me.

CHESTER

(Mumbling)

It's killing us all.

EXT. TOPPLED BILLBOARD - NIGHT

CLOSE UP - A SHELL.

Maggots writhe inside the hollow of its cheek, disappearing into the black pit of its missing eye. Vertebrae juts from its back, slick with pus. Every step makes the spinal column shift and twist beneath its rotting hide. Slime oozes from its arms, leaving trails behind on the broken concrete as it shambles past a TOPPLED BILLBOARD to join the others.

They gather in the street, drawn together by the same thing—

SFX: THE HUM—A LOW FREQUENCY ONLY SHELLS CAN HEAR.

Beneath the toppled billboard, Thomas crouches with his group: ROGAN, LILY, and SUE.

THOMAS (V.O.)

I didn't do anything wrong. He wouldn't have made it anyway. He wouldn't have made it anyway.

ROGAN

Thomas? Their beams lead right.

Thomas snaps out of it. He looks at the cluster of Shells blocking their path.

ROGAN

I think I see an opening. Past the Shells. Right side. That gap in the wall—see it?

Between the rotting bodies, a gap in a brick wall looms—marked by a sagging laundry line. Their only exit.

THOMAS

Alright. When I say go, we run. No stopping. No looking back. Like the wind.

The Shells shift. The HUM pulses in the air. One Shell drags its knuckles along the ground, sniffing.

THOMAS

(A beat)

GO.

They bolt. Paws splash through puddles. They weave like white and black streaks through the forest of rotting Shells.

A Shell jerks its head. A wet moan escapes its throat. They run faster.

EXT. BRICK WALL / ALLEY - NIGHT

The scene slows to a crawl. Every drop of rain hangs in the air—beads of poison sliding down Thomas's whiskers.

His eyes fix on the gap in the brick wall ahead. Small. Jagged. Barely large enough for one cat at a time.

SUE launches first—a sleek white, black, and orange blur melting into the gap.

ROGAN follows, tail whipping like a banner.

LILY is next. Her chest heaves so violently it looks as though her heart might leap free. She bounds after Rogan—

SFX: A WET, HEAVY THUD.

A wet, rusty nail punches through the meat of Lily's paw.

LILY

(A jagged scream)

She skids sideways, slamming into the wall.

ROGAN

Lily!

She scrambles to clear the distance to the gap, dragging the mangled paw. She is halfway through the opening when her body jolts violently backward.

SFX: TEARING.

POV - THOMAS

In SLOW MOTION: The Shell's skeletal hand grips Lily's tail like a leash. The nails curl inward. It YANKS.

Then comes the BITE. Into her shoulder.

SFX: THE POP OF A FOREARM SLIDING FROM ITS SOCKET.

Lily HOWLS, twisting. Dark BLOOD splatters across the bricks in HOT, STEAMING ARCS .

Another Shell moves in. Teeth like shards of pottery. It clamps down on her leg and TEARS IT FREE.

The pack descends, a mountain of rotting flesh blotting Lily from view. Her cries rise into the storm—no longer words. Just feral, terrified noise.

With wide eyes, Thomas's chest rises and falls as he watches: THU-THUMP. THU-THUMP.

He runs. He has to. Paws slam the wet earth. He dives for the gap while the Shells feast. Brick scrapes his fur as he LANDS HARD on the other side.

The screaming stops.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL - CONTINUOUS

The survivors stare at Thomas. Frozen in shock. Rogan's face is pale under his fur. Rain slides down his muzzle like tears.

THOMAS

(Voice cracking)

I swear—I didn't leave her! There was nothing—nothing I could do!

There were ten of them—on top of her

—

Thomas's throat seizes. He turns and VOMITS. Bile mixes with the rain.

ROGAN

(A half-sob, half-growl)

Why?! Why?!

SFX: BANG-BANG-BANG.

The Shells pound at the bricks behind them.

SUE

Let's go! She's gone. She's gone!

They bolt. Paws tear through the mud, carrying them out of the alley and into a field where the tall grass swallows them whole.

EXT. RIVER EMBANKMENT - HOURS LATER

The SCENT BEAMS ahead waver—Lana's trail.

Thomas marches, his mind a chant:

THOMAS (V.O.)

I didn't kill her. I didn't kill
her. I didn't—

SUE

Wait. Do you hear that?

SFX: A LOW, STEADY ROAR.

The grass parts to reveal an embankment. The river is swollen, churning with brown foam.

Rogan walks ahead without hesitation. His paws sink into the sludge. He turns to the group.

ROGAN

She was my life.

SFX: THE STATIC HUM OF CICADAS.

Rogan steps into the water. The current catches him instantly, tugging at his legs. He doesn't fight it. The river rises past his chest. His neck.

He thrashes violently for a minute before his tail vanishes beneath the surface.

SUE

ROGAN!

She runs to the edge, clawing at the soil. The river is empty.

THOMAS

(Flat; like stone)

There's nothing to be done. He made a choice. The same choice we could make. Honor it. Now keep moving. We'll follow the river until we find a crossing.

They exchange glances—unspoken grief. Sue obeys.

EXT. RUINED DEPARTMENT STORE - DUSK

The jagged skeleton of a store. Cracked walls. Blown-out windows.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

MANNEQUINS in rotted clothing slump in the corners. Their plastic faces are peeling.

THOMAS

This will do for the night.

SFX: THUNDER. LIGHTNING FLASHES.

The town is lit like a photograph—momentary, stark wreckage.

Sue curls against the dusty walls. Thomas stays at the window. The rain traces lines down the cracked frame.

CLOSE UP - THOMAS

His lips move without sound.

THOMAS (V.O.)

I didn't kill her. I didn't. I wouldn't. I'd never...

Lightning flares again. In the reflection of the dark, cracked window, Thomas's face looks like it doesn't believe him.

The ghost of Flynn, half dissolved, watches him in silence from directly behind his shoulder.

FADE OUT.

EXT. RUINED STREETS - RED DAY

The heavy rain hasn't stopped. It hisses against the asphalt like a warning. LANA leads the group, her eyes locked on the SCENT BEAMS—heavy, neon cables of blue and gold weaving through the air.

Geddy lags behind, his scarred eye narrowed at Lana.

LANA

And what would you do!? I've had it with your bickering!

GEDDY

(Smugly)

I'm telling ya, we won't find anything. Boss.

LANA

(Snapping)

Then what do you call those beams? They're human. We have to follow.

GEDDY

So what if they're human? Huh? What if they want to EAT us? Ever think about that?

Lana stops. She holds his gaze. A taut, long moment.

LANA

(Calmly defiant)

Yes. I have. It's a risk we'll have to take. If we have to run, it's no different than running from Shells.

Geddy rubs the ragged scar above his eye. The skin is tender, angry.

LANA (CONT'D)

If you don't like it, you can find
your own way.

The words sting. Lana doesn't take them back. Geddy chuckles—
a dark, dry sound.

LANA (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

GEDDY

You. You're starting to sound like a
certain other cat we know.

The name THOMAS hangs unspoken. Lana's gut twists as she
studies him.

LANA

Haven't you ever thought about what
you want, Geddy? Don't you want more
than this?

GEDDY

(Voice low and flat)

I already HAD more than this. And
it's gone. Forever. But there ain't
no going back. Ain't no more blue
skies. Ain't no more sunshine. Hell,
there ain't even any hope. But...
We've got each other. I suppose
that's enough for now.

Geddy smiles faintly before he turns away.

GEDDY (CONT'D)

I ain't no leader. So I trust what
you're doing.

LANA
(Shaking her head and
smirking)
You surprise me, sometimes.

GEDDY
Yeah. Me, too. All right then, boss.
Let's go find some humans.

EXT. DERELICT CITY - DAY

They move through the city's skeleton. Battered buildings lean like mourners. Playgrounds are rusted carcasses.

Parks are overgrown with weeds and scattered with occasional stumbling SHELLS.

They walk in silence. Grim graffiti, put there by the insane, desperate survivors and rioters during the collapse, is spray painted everywhere. Its presence is eerie and haunting. TRASH AND DEBRIS TUMBLE IN THE WIND.

FLASHBACK - SAME SCENE, DURING THE DOWNFALL OF SOCIETY

SHOT: WE SEE A TRANSLUCENT SCENE OF SURVIVORS AND RIOTERS WREAKING HAVOC THROUGHOUT THE CITY. THE SCENE IS OVERLAID LIKE AN ANIMATION CEL OVER THE PRESENT RUINS LIKE A VINTAGE, GRAINY PHOTOGRAPH. MEMORIES OF THE DEBAUCHERY, IMMORALITY, AND CARNAGE THAT THE HUMANS INFLICTED ON ONE ANOTHER AND THEIR ANIMALS PLAYS OUT AS THE CAMERA DOLLIES.

EXT. HUMAN CAMP - HOURS LATER - PRESENT

Lightning tears across the red sky, staining the black clouds violet for a moment. Lana stops. Her breath hitches.

LANA
There! Humans.

GEDDY

Look closer.

POV - LANA

A fire crackles. A DOG'S ROASTED CARCASS turns slowly on a spit. Squirrels, speared on sticks, drip fat into the flames. Animal skins hang from gnarled branches like GROTESQUE WIND CHIMES.

BACK TO SCENE

In the shadows: A GERMAN SHEPHERD is crammed into a small cage. His cries are thin, desperate.

JERRILL

(Murmuring)

Three humans. One dog. That cage—
simple latch lock. Easy enough to lift.

LANA

We can't leave them.

JERRILL

I'll lead them away. That warehouse
—

(He gestures to a
building further back—the
paint is peeling like
sunburnt skin.)

JERRILL (CONT'D)

I'll pull them inside.

GEDDY

You guys are fucking crazy.

CHESTER

I can handle the latch. Let's go.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The humans—ONE WOMAN AND TWO MEN—sit around a fire, their skin mottled with old scars, their smiles yellow and wide. One of the men stands and unzips his pants. He PISSES into the flames while the other two laugh.

Jerrill comes into view from behind their filthy canvas tent. He prances before them.

THE WOMAN cooes, her yellow smile wide.

WOMAN

Oh, kitty... come here, precious...

Jerrill bolts toward the warehouse. The humans follow, laughing. The door yawns like a black mouth.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jerrill skids to a halt. The darkness is MOVING. SHELLS—dozens of them—crawl over each other in silence.

Jerrill ducks behind a dumpster. The humans charge in blind.

The laughter turns to SCREAMS.

SFX: WET, FRENZIED TEARING.

EXT. CAMP - MOMENTS LATER

The cage is open. The GERMAN SHEPHERD licks Lana's face.

Jerrill sprints back, panting.

JERRILL

Quick! That warehouse is swarming!
Once they frenzy, they'll catch our
scent. Move!

They run. Paws splash through poisoned puddles. The storm
swallows the camp behind them.

FADE OUT.

EXT. DEAD STREETS - NIGHT

The unabated HUM is ceaseless in the brain of the SHELL. An
invisible tether wrapped around its rotten spine, dragging it
toward the only thing that matters: FOOD.

The Shell licks its teeth. Its lips are gone, exposing pale
gums and cracked enamel. MAGGOTS squirm inside its mouth,
feeding on the rancid flesh between teeth. When its jaw
works, they POP with wet, rubbery snaps.

The hum plucks it forward through dead streets, guiding
skeletal feet over puddles that STEAM with rainwater and
chemical runoff.

POV - THE SHELL

Its feet are just bones. Yellowed metatarsals shining through
split skin. Finger joints are pale white knobs jutting from
gray meat-knuckles worn smooth from scraping on concrete.

The Shell brushes muck off its dripping head. Its SCALP
sloughs forward—a wet flap hanging from half-exposed skull.
It claws at it absentmindedly. The whole thing PEELS AWAY,
trailing strands of hair and tissue. It shoves the dripping
mass into its mouth.

BACK TO SCENE

The Shell chews with loud, gleeful smacks.

It lifts its ruined head and SNIFFS.

It digs a bony hand into the mess of its face, hooks a fingernail beneath its dangling eye, and YANKS. The optic nerve stretches like hot taffy and snaps when it puts the eyeball into its mouth. It disappears between its teeth and—

SFX: A MEATY POP.

Its jaw clacks together in a metronome of hunger. A wet rattle bubbles from its throat.

SHELL

Unnnnngh . . . Un-narangh!

It shuffles forward. Its tattered clothes flap in the wind. The ribcage gleams. The vertebrae shift visibly, joints wrapped in a thin film of sinew.

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE / AMUSEMENT PARK - CONTINUOUS

The hum tugs the Shell toward a squat department building. Next door sits an AMUSEMENT PARK—skeletal rides and warped stalls reaching toward a bleeding sky.

The Shell pushes the doors open with a loud, aching squeal.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

Thomas and Sue jolt awake. Eyes flash in the dark. Before the Shell can register them, they are GONE—streaks of fur bolting past its knees and out into the rain. They run in the direction of the amusement park.

The Shell groans. It tears a long strip from its forearm—skin peeling like wet bark—exposing the pale radial bone. It crams the strip into its mouth.

SFX: SMACK, SMACK, SMACK

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - CONTINUOUS

SUE

That was too close!

The cats sprint into the skeletal shadow of the park. The turnstile groans. Metal squeals in the dead wind.

They creep into the entrance of a place once called JOYLAND, according to the busted out sign above them. A rollercoaster looms overhead—a rusted dragon's spine arching into the clouds. steel bones streaked with orange corrosion.

A CAROUSEL HORSE grins from the gloom. Teeth chipped. Eyes glassy. The paint has peeled from its flanks in strips, leaving raw wood exposed like skinless muscle.

SUE

(Voice flat)

Thomas? Their beams lead the OTHER way.

THOMAS

(A grin that doesn't reach his eyes)

I don't know about you, but I need food and water. Aren't you disgusted from drinking that toxic crap?

She follows him. Bones crunch beneath paws—bits of random animal and human bones, glass, debris.

INT. PARK BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Thomas leaps to a sink. A thin stream of water trickles.

THOMAS

(Smiling)

Jackpot! Come get some.

They drink greedily. The water is metallic, but cold. Thomas glances at his reflection in a cracked mirror and FREEZES.

The cat staring back is a GHOST. Fur matted. Coat dulled to ash. Eyes ringed with shadow. He barely recognizes himself.

THE GHOST OF FLYNN, HALF DISSOLVED, appears behind Thomas.

THOMAS (V.O.)

(Eyes sorrowful)

Flynn... I'm... I'm sorry.

FLYNN'S GHOST

(Resting a paw on

Thomas's bony shoulder)

You didn't know any better. You never do, do you?

THOMAS (V.O.)

(Shaking)

I... I... You should've TRIED,
Flynn! I should've... I should've
TRIED. I should've... died. I'm
sorry. I should've died.

FLYNN

(Nodding)

Yeah. But you never do, do you? You never do. But I'll be here for you, Tom. When you do. I'll never leave you behind. Forgiveness. Think about forgiveness.

FLYNN disappears as Thomas shakes the water from his face. He leaps off the counter.

EXT. MIDWAY - CONTINUOUS

The wind carries a different sound. Not the hum. Closer.

THOMAS

Watch it on your right.

A CLOWN Shell shuffles around the corner. Greasepaint clings in white patches to its jaw. Oversized shoes are split, spilling gray toes.

It trips, sprawling onto the pavement. It lands nose-first on a cracked red ball.

SFX: A RIDICULOUS, ABSURD HONK.

Then, the shadows move. Shells spill out

of every gap—under platforms, from torn tents, through shattered game stalls. Like ants from a rotten log.

SUE

Uh, Thomas?

THOMAS

I got eyes. Let's find those beams
and get the hell out—

(He abruptly stops.)

SFX: A SOUND LIKE WET FABRIC PULLED OVER GLASS.

From the mass of bodies, a SLUG emerges. An enormous, quivering mound of translucent flesh. Surface rippling as things inside shift.

Bones and skulls float in its jelly-like body. Shell torsos half-dissolved—faces

stretched in silent screams—drift like drowned corpses.

The slug's pale PINK GLOW pulses in time with an internal heartbeat. A black proboscis curls in the air like a worm sniffing for blood. It is feeding off the Shells—digesting them alive. Piercing WHISPERS IN NO KNOWN LANGUAGE spew from it like a PREHISTORIC INCANTATION OLDER THAN THE EARTH from its bubbling surface.

THOMAS

Run. Follow the beams. Now.

A tentacle whips out with a piercing snap. It shears a Shell in half without slowing, dragging both pieces into its body.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

RUN!

CHASE SEQUENCE - PARK WIDE

UNDER ROLLERCOASTER RIBS—The cats slalom between supports. The Slug compresses, smearing through, steel SCREECHING as beams bend.

OVER PRIZE STALLS—Sue vaults a counter. A tentacle PUNCHES THROUGH, spearing a giant teddy bear that bleeds a giant cloud of stuffing.

COTTON CANDY STAND—Sticky pink webs hang like tumor tissue. A tentacle whips through, sugar sloughing into a pink froth that sizzles on the asphalt.

FUNHOUSE ENTRANCE—Plywood teeth. Hand-painted clowns. The cats duck inside.

INT. FUNHOUSE - HALL OF MIRRORS - CONTINUOUS

Lightning strobes through roof cracks. The cats multiply in warped panes—a hundred Thomas's, stretched and starved.

SUE

I hate this I hate this I—

SFX: CRACK.

A tentacle spears through a mirror. Glass explodes. It whips blindly, carving a HUMMING "Z" along the glass, melting it.

THOMAS
(Wincing from the heat)
Stay low, hug the wall!

They slither along a jagged corridor of broken glass. In mirrored shards, REFLECTIONS betray horrors seconds before they happen:

SHOT: The Slug's body bulging down a parallel aisle.

SHOT: Sue's tail almost snagged.

SHOT: A slick black tentacle like a tight cord narrowly missing the top of Thomas's ears.

SHOT: Profile view of the cats running. In the parallel aisle behind them, its cables lash 3D POV into the camera several times, right into the lens, all the while missing the fleeing cats by inches.

THOMAS
Left— LEFT!

They veer. A tentacle lances where their heads were. It retracts, dragging a dangling carnival mask that dissolves into gray fizz. They burst through an emergency flap—

EXT. MIDWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sheets of rain. The MUSIC of a carousel starting up—slow and sour.

EXT. CAROUSEL - NIGHT

The platform shudders. A horse jerks half a turn. Painted flank peels like sunburn, revealing wet wood and wriggling worms.

SUE

(Referencing the
whooshing sound of the
impending Slug that's
accompanying the music,
her ears twitching)

That's not wind—

The Slug pushes against the carousel, cutting her off. The platform TILTS.

WHIP! A tentacle lashes up. One horse's HEAD is RIPPED CLEAN OFF, whirring away like a decapitated piñata before smashing.

THOMAS

MOVE!

They leap as the carousel TIPS, horses tumbling in a rain of painted bodies and broken poles.

EXT. SERVICE HATCH - NIGHT

THOMAS

Down the hatch!

INT. SERVICE TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

Tight, dripping concrete. Black water snakes along a trench. Acid rain leaks through seams, ticking on metal.

The Slug's WHISPERS muffle overhead. It is following by weight alone, flattening soil until the ceiling rains dust.

SUE

It's right over us— it's—

SFX: WHOOOMP.

The ceiling bows. A tentacle PUNCHES through concrete, groping, sizzling on pooled water.

Thomas throws himself into a SIDE PASSAGE. The tentacle scrapes the wall where his skull was.

THOMAS

The pipes—squeeze!

They wedge through a choke point. Whiskers flatten. Ribs scrape. Behind them, the tentacle WORMS IN, skin pitting where acid drips from cracks.

SUE

It's touching me it's touching me—!

Thomas hauls her by the scruff. The tentacle GRAZES HER HIP—fur blisters, skin turns milky.

SUE

(Shrieking)

Thomas!

Thomas shoves her through. The tentacle SNAPS BACK like a tape measure, leaving greasy slime.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT PUMP ROOM – CONTINUOUS

A maze of dead pumps. A DUNK TANK sits beneath a roof leak, filled with BLACK RAIN and bloated things.

SUE

What is that—?

A FACE bobs up. Skin sloughed. Milky eyes. It opens its mouth; rain water pours in, then out. It sinks.

THOMAS

Keep going! Don't look.

They skirt the tank's lip. Above, the Slug's mass creeps across the ceiling—a sagging shadow that sprinkles PINK DEW.

SFX: WHIP-CRACK!

A tentacle punches through, SPLASHES the dunk tank. Black water arcs, splattering their backs. They flinch as if BRANDED.

Sue stumbles. Goes to one knee. The tentacle lashes again—

THOMAS

NO—!

Thomas slams his shoulder into Sue, shoving her clear. The tentacle SPEARS THE CONCRETE where her spine was. Thomas's shoulder BLOOMS WHITE with

pain, skin webbing under the splash.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

AUUUUNNGH!

EXT. GAMES ALLEY - NIGHT

Stalls: RING TOSS, WHACK-A-MOLE, SHOOT THE STAR. Prizes dangle in mildew.

SHOT: WHACK-A-MOLE—A mallet juts from a Shell's skull like Excalibur in rotten stone.

SHOT: RING TOSS—A tentacle lashes across glass bottlenecks. Rings SPIRAL into the night. One ring lands around a rebar spike: CLANK.

SHOT: SHOOTING GALLERY—A cracked clown target sloughs off in a pink slide as Slug-dew hits it.

THOMAS

FENCE— there!

EXT. PERIMETER FENCE - NIGHT

A chain-link fence topped with barbed wire. Thomas hauls himself over.

Sue slips on slick vinyl. A tentacle flashes—just misses her tail.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Keep moving!

EXT. FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

The Ferris wheel groans. The Slug PUSHES into its supports.

SFX:METAL SCREAMS AND TWISTS, GROANING LOUDLY.

Bolts PING into the rain.

A FERRIS WHEEL CAR breaks loose, plummets—SMASHES through the games roof, exploding into shrapnel and seat belts.

SUE

LET'S GO LET'S GO LET'S GO!

EXT. PERIMETER FENCE - CONTINUOUS

Thomas and Sue clamber over. Sue gets her paws tangled in barbed wire—A TENTACLE LANCES UP. It brushes her flank. Her fur FIZZES.

SUE

(Yowling as she kicks free from the wire and flips to the other side)

AAAANH!

They hit the street. Their skin smokes where rain and slug slime mingle.

Behind them, the Slug surges against the fence, DEFORMING the chain-link into a sagging smile. It withdraws back into the park, dragging a school of dissolved bodies in its wake.

EXT. OPEN STREET - LATER

The rain softens to a mean drizzle. The WHISPERS fade to a background fever.

SCENT BEAMS arc ahead, thicker now—taut as cables. Thomas studies them. His tail flicks once.

THOMAS

(Soft, assessing Sue)
Are you okay? We're close.

She nods, breathing shakily.

Thomas glances at his reflection in a puddle—for a heartbeat, FLYNN SMILES BACK. The reflected Thomas—and ONLY the reflected Thomas—BARES TEETH IN A TWISTED GRIN. He blinks; it's gone.

He turns into the rain.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

The Ferris wheel gives a last shudder. Inside, under the carousel, the Slug curls like a sleeping thought as everything dissolves into a hissing puddle of froth around it.

FADE OUT.

EXT. RUINED DOWNTOWN — RED TWILIGHT

A skyline of a broken downtown city. Windows like empty sockets. Rain hisses against everything, turning the streets into veins of black glass.

A TORN BILLBOARD creaks overhead. plastered to it and smudged: a dead celebrity actress selling a dead product to dead people.

Far below: a derelict OFFICE TOWER. Ten floors of busted-out windows like a honeycomb of graves.

INT. OFFICE TOWER – 10TH FLOOR – DUSK

Overturned chairs. A flat-screen

spiderwebbed with cracks. Paperwork fossilized in puddles.

LANA sits on a lopsided sofa, listening to the rain like it's speaking to her.

JERRILL watches the hall.

CHESTER and GEDDY perch on the sill, looking down on the city like it owes them money. Geddy picks at his eye.

A low, territorial rumble behind them—

JAMESON (a big German shepherd) steps from the shadows. Jagged scars along his muzzle. Calm. Coiled.

JAMESON

(A low, weary rumble)

Call me...

A beat. Rain cracks like static.

JAMESON (CONT'D)

...Jameson.

LANA

It's nice to meet you, Jameson. I'm Lana. I'm... sorry you lost your companion. That's awful.

JAMESON

(Sadly)

What isn't awful anymore, anyway?

GEDDY

(Curling his lip)

Fucking a. That's what I've been
trying to say this whole time.

Chester watches from the window at a pack of Shells as they
stumble in an alley. One of them, its SHOELACES TIED TOGETHER
AS A SEEMING PRANK ADMINISTERED BY A HUMAN, keeps TRIPPING
over its own feet and sprawling

face-first onto the asphalt. He snorts under his breath each
time it gets back up, only to stumble and fall again.

CHESTER

(Watching the alley
below)

You know what I miss?

Geddy rolls his eyes.

CHESTER (CONT'D)

Things flying in the sky.

GEDDY

(Sighing)

Yeah.

Jerrill stands beside Lana, half-listening to the
conversation while keeping his eyes on Jameson.

SFX: A FAINT ELEVATOR DING FROM BELOW

STAIRWELL — OUTER DOOR

SFX: A SCRAPING. A CLACK OF DRAGGING HIGH HEELS. A BREATHY
MOAN VIBRATES THROUGH THE DRYWALL.

JERRILL

(Under his breath)

We've got company.

Geddy bolts beneath a desk.

Jerrill and Lana tense, claws out.

Chester bristles, hissing.

LANA

Jameson—!

But the German Shepherd is already moving.

INT. 10TH FLOOR — LOBBY ALCOVE — CONTINUOUS

A SHELL staggers from the stairwell. A former secretary. Her dress is tattered; a string of pearls is fused to the rot of her neck. Its high heels are still strapped to swollen feet. Torn stockings still hanging from blackened skin and exposed thigh bone.

It sees the life in the room. Opens a mouth lined with slick, gray gums.

SHELL SECRETARY

NYARGHHHH—!

Jameson HITS her like a quiet explosion. No bark. Pure, practiced efficiency. Teeth

clamp her ankle—CLACK. One high heel pops off as she loses her balance.

She topples backward, slamming her skull on the marble threshold.

SFX: AN EGG-LIKE POP

A starburst of black-red blooms under her hair. Jameson drags the body across the gritty marble toward the gap-toothed window. He nudges the mass through a bead curtain of rain and broken glass.

EXT. OFFICE TOWER — CONTINUOUS

The corpse hits the street ten floors below—SPLAT.

INT. 10TH FLOOR – CONTINUOUS

Silence. Chester barks a laugh he didn't mean to let out. Geddy emerges from under the desk, wide-eyed.

GEDDY

Fucking a! That's my boy—

JAMESON

(A faint curl of the lip)
Don't call me "boy."

Lana and Jerrill exchange a silent nod. The dog is a weapon.

JAMESON (CONT'D)

Now then... where were we?

SFX: THUMP... THUMP... THUMP.

Many feet. Coming up.

LANA

We need to move... Quiet. Fast. No heroics.

JERRILL

(Under his breath)
Catch that, Geddy?

GEDDY

(Snorts)
I'm a hero in recovery. No worries.

EXT. STREET – BELOW THE TOWER

A different pair of shapes move beneath a fallen billboard.

THOMAS and SUE hunker under the billboard's torn vinyl. They look up at the tower just as the secretary's body SPLATS in front of them. They both flinch.

SUE

...What the hell was—

THOMAS

(beat)

Top floor.

Thomas tastes the air—that feline synesthesia flares:

living color-beams spiraling from above—familiar signatures braided with new ones.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

They're up there.

He breaks cover.

SUE

Thomas—!

But he's already loping for the tower's yawning entry. Sue follows.

INT. OFFICE TOWER — LOBBY — NIGHT

A clock still ticks on a wall. Rain threads through a skylight cracked like ice over a pond. Elevators dead and open-mouthed. The stair doors wedge with swollen paint.

Thomas surges up the stairs, breath measured. He hits the sixth floor landing and pauses. Listens.

BELOW: something drags its knuckles.

ABOVE: a dog's quiet growl.

They push on.

INT. 10TH FLOOR – CUBICLE FARM – CONTINUOUS

A maze of gray partitions. FAMILY PHOTOS are stuck to fabric walls, faces washed to ghosts.

A coffee mug slips from a desk and SHATTERS on the tile. The sound ricochets.

A CHOIR OF MOANS answers.

INT. STAIRWELL A – 10TH FLOOR LANDING

The door HEAVES out. Shells cram the stairwell. Jameson SLAMS his shoulder to the door.

JAMESON

Let's go left! The other hallway!
I'll try to buy you guys a little
time!

LANA

(Nods worryingly)
Just a few seconds and then you're
back with us!

INT. MAINTENANCE CATWALK – BETWEEN BUILDINGS – CONTINUOUS

Lana leads the group across a narrow steel grate. Wind howls through the gap. Behind them, the tower door erupts. Shells slam against the catwalk's anchor point—the bolts BEND with a squeal.

GEDDY

Jameson! Get out of there!

The catwalk drops away with a long SCREEK.

Jameson LEAPS away from the swarm, hindlegs folding, hauling himself forward as the metal clatters to the alley in a storm of sparks.

INT. ADJACENT BUILDING — FLOOR 10 — CONTINUOUS

Water runs down the walls. A bank of VENDING MACHINES flashes idiot lights.

A SHELL in a maintenance vest shambles forward.

Jameson snaps its neck with a twist. It falls to the floor, twitching.

SFX: PAWS PADDING FROM THE RECESSED SHADOWS IN THE DISTANCE.

Lana's head cocks. She knows the cadence of the paws approaching.

LANA

If that's you, you'd better be friendly!

THOMAS pads from the shadows. Soaked. Eyes like broken glass.

THOMAS

I hope I'm not interrupting anything.

Lana crosses to him. They BUNT foreheads—a soldier's hug.

LANA

(Smiling)
Welcome back.

THOMAS

(Too fast, eyes going wide)
No time! A horde's closing. We move now or we don't move at all.

He looks past her. Counting the troop. He sees their familiar faces plus the obvious new addition.

LANA
Where's Lily? Rogan?

The question guts him.

THOMAS
(Bent with sorrow)
...Gone.

Lana nods once, brutally.

LANA
Then we don't waste their
sacrifices. Let's get in file.
Jameson? Would you take the center?

Jameson nods, looking at Thomas and Sue.

EXT. SERVICE ALLEY – NIGHT

The group explodes into the alley. The alley is lit a dull pink from the rust coating the still-flickering street light.

A janitor Shell erupts—a mop duct-taped to its hand. Jameson drives him back, knocking him down with a wet POCKET OF AIR sound.

EXT. INTERSECTION – CONTINUOUS

A MIGRATING WAVE of Shells drifts through the street. In the middle, a CHILD'S TRICYCLE spins on its side.

SFX: TIK... TIK... TIK...

Lana tracks the animal scent beams.

LANA
We have to thread our way through.
If you fall or get caught... DON'T.

They burst like scythes through the herd. They press into the shadow under a

busted awning that reads WELCOME.

THOMAS

You've done... amazingly.

LANA

You and I can talk later.

JAMESON

Let's stay low to the ground and go south. If we cut under the billboard line, we can sleep.

EXT. WIDE ON THE STREET

The tricycle wheel ticks itself silent. Above, a torn cloud exposes a sliver of the cracked moon. The fracture glows—just for a second—like a wound splitting.

FADE OUT.

INT. BRICK HOUSE - NIGHT

A storm is building. Thunder booms so hard it makes the walls tremble, dust sifting down from the rafters. A brilliant flash of RED lights up the room, briefly throwing every shadow into stark relief.

A flat-screen TV dominates one corner, its dark glass reflecting the flicker of lightning.

Tattered curtains flap in the wind.

A coffee table is overturned and cracked.

CHESTER and SUE stand at the window, their eyes scanning the skeletal cityscape outside.

LANA rests on the couch, back straight despite her obvious fatigue.

In the far corner, JAMESON lifts a leg and pisses without shame.

GEDDY barks out a laugh and joins him in the corner to relieve himself. He casually goes back to picking at his scar.

THE COUCH

Thomas hesitates before leaping onto the couch beside Lana. She gives him the smallest of nods—an unspoken truce.

For a long moment, they study each other:

Thomas's once-white coat is now a dull, matted gray. His frame is thinned to the bone. His eyes are vacant.

Lana's fur is patchy and dulled, her silver sheen long gone. Scars ladder across her shoulders and face. Her gaze is HARD now, COMMANDING in a way it had never been before.

THOMAS

(A weak smile)

It's... good to see you?

LANA

It's good to see you, too. Good or bad, it's none of my business what happened between you and Flynn. Or what happened to the others. The point is... they're gone. To the Forever Sea. And we need each other. Good or bad.

THOMAS

(Eyes clouding, his voice
drops to a whisper)

Good or bad... Lana? I... I was
wrong. Flynn... didn't deserve what
happened. I can never forgive myself
for letting him go. I was selfish. I
deserve what... whatever comes to
me. I'm, I'm sorry Lana. I'm so
sorry. I'll understand if you want
me to go. If you... want me to leave
the group.

She places a paw on his shoulder and draws him into a brief
hug.

LANA

Like I said... good or bad, we need
each other.

THOMAS

Partners? I won't get in the way of
you leading the troop. But I'll be
here if you need me.

Lana nods.

THE WINDOW

Thomas pads over to join Chester and Sue at the window.

THOMAS

What do you see?

CHESTER

(Without looking away)

Pfth. A whole lot of fucked-upness.
You know... the usual. I see a bleak
future.

THOMAS
(A small chuckle)
Indeed. And a whole lot of
fucked-upness coming our way.

He gestures toward the storm.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
It's going to fall heavy on us.

SFX: A DULL THUMP AT THE DOOR.

Jerrill steps inside, shaking rain from his whiskers.

JERRILL
We're good. For now.

CHESTER
I'll take over watch. You guys get
some sleep.

LANA
Very well. Be careful.

EXT. BRICK HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The moment Chester steps outside, his eyes adjust quickly, turning the red dark into the familiar NEON BLUE of his night vision.

His stomach grumbles.

He pads along the outer wall, scanning alleys and yards.
Nothing.

As he circles the property, something catches his eye: STORM
CELLAR DOORS SLIGHTLY OPEN.

He approaches slowly, muscles taut, paws silent against the wet ground. One step onto the creaking stair and he freezes, scanning for movement. Nothing.

INT. STORM CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

He sees it. On the bottom shelf, dusty but whole—A BAG OF CAT FOOD.

He drops low, slinking down the steps, and tears into the bag with frantic claws and teeth. The first mouthful hits his tongue like a memory, salt and fat flooding his senses. He PURRS without meaning to.

He runs back upstairs and BURSTS into the house to announce the jackpot.

MOMENTS LATER

Within seconds, every cat and Jameson is in the cellar with him, feasting.

In that moment, nothing matters but their laughter and respite as they happily eat.

FADE OUT.

EXT. RUINED CITY - DAWN

The sunrise is a mournful decay. A bleeding sun limps above the ruins, cloaking everything in shades of rust and old blood. Clouds drag like funeral veils.

The air tastes of metal. Rain taps in slow, patient intervals.

A sliver of the red, daytime moon shows through a rip in the clouds—its face bears a CRACK like an old scar, stretching wider.

INT. HALF-COLLAPSED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

GEDDY pads back inside. JAMESON stirs from his corner, stretching with a groan that is half-canine, half-weary soldier.

JAMESON

Everything good?

GEDDY

(Tail twitching)

Good? Is anything ever good?

JAMESON

(A humorless chuckle)

Fair. But what do your senses tell you? What visions do you see?

(His voice drops to a
quiet pitch)

What do the beams whisper?

GEDDY

Death. Every color leads to the same place—black. The trees are skeletons. Everything rots, Jameson. And the hum never stops.

Jameson is silent. The tip of his tail sways.

JAMESON

Even so, we keep moving. We walk through this broken nightmare because there's nothing else left to do. Death surrounds us—fine. Then make living worth it while you have it.

He tilts his head, a strange glint in his eye.

JAMESON (CONT'D)

Want to hear something?

GEDDY

Sure.

JAMESON (CONT'D)

Væ mitibus, quia damnati sumus;
salus nostra tormentum est.

GEDDY

The hell does that mean?

JAMESON

It means, 'Woe to the meek, for we are damned; our salvation is torment.' We ARE the meek, Geddy. WE inherited this Earth. But it's a hollowed-out carcass. A vast cauldron of rot. A SHELL.

Jameson looks toward the door.

JAMESON (CONT'D)

I've seen the oceans—nothing lives there now. The water boils. The tide itself smells of graves. All the life that once called the 'Big Blue' home are now corpses on the beach, picked to bones by the Shells. So what do we do? We keep walking... until the road runs out. And when that happens? Maybe we'll find ourselves there at the end, waiting for us.

GEDDY

Can't argue with that.

THOMAS (O.S.)

Indeed.

Thomas stands behind them. Ash-gray. Eyes steady.

THOMAS

Are we ready to move? Or wax more poetic?

Geddy and Jameson look sideways at one another.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY - LATER

The troop moves as one. Paws squelch in wet muck. The city looms ahead like the ribcage of a dead giant.

SFX: A LOW, COLLECTIVE MOAN

The discordant sound reaches them. Thousands of throats. Clicks. Wet rattles.

SUE

(A whisper)

What the hell is that?

THOMAS

Shells. A lot of them.

They navigate between husks of cars.

Chain-link fences sag inward, coated in black ivy.

They enter the JUNKYARD. Mountains of rusted cars lean into one another. The smell of oxidized metal and stagnant water claws at their lungs. Broken and empty barrels are strewn about.

Beyond the yard: another TRAIN YARD and a brick FACTORY. To its right, frozen mid-fall over a bridge: a TANKER TRUCK. Its rear wheels are hooked on a fractured edge; the cab hangs over an abyss.

They creep to the edge of the ravine.

POV - THE RAVINE

HELL. Thousands of Shells packed into a writhing organism. Heads tilted upward, scenting the air. Some are slick tendon and bone; others are bloated with fluid, skin stretched to bursting.

A ripple goes through the horde—Shells consuming Shells that have stumbled.

LANA

(Breath hitching)

Oh my God...

THOMAS

They're... trapped.

THE EDGE

A scream. SUE loses her footing and slips down the ravine slope, paws clawing at the mud.

LANA

Hold on!

She and Thomas grip her hindquarters.

They dangle above the gnashing swarm. bony fingers hook into Sue's mane and clamp around her skull, YANKING.

SFX: A SUDDEN, VIOLENT TUG. A WET RIP.

Lana falls backward, still holding Sue's lower half.

Her INTESTINES spill like pale ropes onto the mud. KIBBLE from last night's feast spills out, half digested. Steam curls from the heat of her spilled organs against the rain. Her tail twitches once. Still.

LANA

(Voice cracking)

NO!

Thomas hauls her away from the edge. Blood is speckled across her face and chest.

THOMAS

(Voice straining, panting
hard as he holds her
back)

IT'S ALWAYS THIS WAY, LANA! ALWAYS!
YOU KNOW THAT!

The others watch, mesmerized by the shock, mouths agape and eyes wide. Jameson turns away.

LANA

We could have—

THOMAS

There's no could-have, Lana! It'll
be our turn someday, too! But not
today.

He holds her close, cradling her. They both shake into each other, heaving with sorrowful cries. Several moments pass.

Thomas finally points beyond the ravine, past the other train yard. GOLDEN SCENT BEAMS arc—vivid and LIVING.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

(Voice cracking)

There. That's no ghost, Lana. That's
a camp. A living human.

Lana's jaw clenches. Her eyes stay locked on the ravine and the kibble.

Thomas shifts his gaze to the TANKER TRUCK. The reservoir of gasoline sways on the precipice.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

(A murmur)

I have a plan. And Jameson's going
to be a big part of it.

RED LIGHTNING cracks, illuminating the horde.

FADE OUT.

EXT. THE RAVINE EDGE - DAY

Rain continues its patient erosion. THOMAS crouches low against the cold, rusted flank of the TANKER TRUCK. Flakes of rust coat his matted fur.

The massive rear tires sit on the fractured lip of the ravine; cement crumbles beneath them in lazy sprinkles.

SFX: THE TANKER GROANS.

A heavy, living sound. Aching metal.

LANA, JERRILL, and CHESTER search a gutted storage shed nearby.

GEDDY pads up to THOMAS.

JAMESON stands still as a statue, sizing up the truck like a fortress wall.

THOMAS

(Low, charged)

Think you could get underneath and dig into the ravine?

JAMESON

Shouldn't be too difficult... if the ground under there's as soft as it looks.

THOMAS

(To Geddy)

We dig until the supports give. Let the tanker's weight finish it. If the tank ruptures... the whole nest goes up.

GEDDY

(Muttering)

Dangerous. Could take days.

THOMAS

We're in a safe zone, for now. We
could use the respite. We all could.
Especially after...

His chest trembles as he swallows hard. He collapses,
thinking about everything he and Sue went through... the way
she smiled drinking water from the sink.

GEDDY

(Tail flicking, looking
away from Thomas)

I got a bad feeling. Like the kind
that crawls up your spine and
doesn't leave.

THOMAS

(Collecting himself)

If it gets us closer to those
humans? It's worth it.

GEDDY

The last time we found humans, they
were the other monsters. You're
starting to sound like Lana. Did you
two switch bodies?

THOMAS

Lana has faith. And even if she's
wrong—we're all going to die anyway.
Might as well give it everything
before we do.

GEDDY

You've lost your mind.

THOMAS
(Forcing a half smile)
Probably.

INT. FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

Blue washes over Lana's vision—night sight sharpening into ghostly hues. The air smells of mildew and old grease.

LANA
(Whisper)
Stick together. No wandering.
Distractions... distractions get you
killed.

They move down a long corridor. Metal floor panels groan.

SFX: PLIP-PLOP... PLIP-PLOP.

Water dripping in a steady, taunting rhythm.

They enter a BREAK ROOM. Carpet squishes. Discarded paper trays lay collapsed. Lana leaps onto a counter. A single faucet "weeps." She drinks—the metallic tang sharp on her tongue.

She paws open a cupboard. Rows of CEREAL BOXES. Faded colors. Damp cardboard. Merrill and Chester dive in—CRUNCH.

LANA
Hey! Save some for everyone.

They each pick up several cereal bags with their mouths. They head back out.

EXT. THE RAVINE - LATER

Jameson wriggles free from under the tanker, shaking dirt from his fur.

JAMESON

(Muffled)

That's going to take a lot out of me!

LANA

(Approaching)

It seems everything is taking a lot out of all of us.

She sets the bags down. Thomas, Jameson, and Geddy dive in. A small, dry victory.

Lana turns away. She looks down into the ravine.

POV - THE RAVINE

The horde is a single, vibrating note. A collective hum. The mass shifts, revealing rotting faces that are mostly skull, and others disturbingly human that are fresher.

The wind shifts. The smell hits: copper, rot, and a chemical burn.

Lana doesn't blink.

FADE OUT.

EXT. THE RAVINE EDGE - DAY

The rain comes down harder. It burns, but no cat or dog flinches anymore. They are past flinching. Empty cereal bags lay plastered to the concrete, softened by water and pawprints—the last echo of their short-lived bounty.

GEDDY

(Quietly)

Fleeting.

The word barely carries over the hiss of the acid rain.

LANA

What's fleeting?

GEDDY

Everything. Like this meal. Like us. One day... the skies will be blue again.

He gestures to the heavens. Black clouds roll over the bleeding expanse of sky. Lightning flashes, licking the horizon. The red mist is so thick it's nearly solid.

GEDDY (CONT'D)

A million years will pass... and even this nightmare will be over.

THOMAS

(A humorless smile)

In the meantime, we're the ones stuck dealing with it.

JAMESON

(A grunt)

No shit.

Jameson's breath steams in the chill.

GEDDY

Doesn't it make you feel so... small? Like the universe doesn't care what happens to us. And maybe that's fine. Maybe that's... the point.

LANA

Everything culminates in death. Even our world.

GEDDY

But not before civilizations rise and fall.

(His eyes stare into the distance)
It's said... it says... I mean, they say the great wheel cycles into the Forever Sea... that death is only the beginning. They say that we'll return. I know we will.

LANA
(A faint smirk)
You're a philosopher now?

GEDDY
Sometimes I know a thing or two.

JAMESON
(Stretching his aching legs)
I told you that exact thing this morning.

GEDDY
(Shoulders hunched)
Well I could've thought of it.

CHESTER
(Dryly)
Geddy—shut up.

JERRILL
(Freezing)
Shhh—You hear that?

SFX: HUMMMMMMMM.

A low drone vibrating in their bones. Below, the crowd of Shells PARTS in shuddering waves.

JERRILL
No... No way. No fucking way!

THE SLUG rears up. Monstrous.

Through its translucent underbelly: twitching limbs, half-digested torsos, and shattered skulls suspended in the inner pink light of its quivering jelly.

It drops, flattening and dissolving dozens of Shells.

SFX: A WET, SPLINTERING CRUNCH.

Black tentacles erupt outward like taut steel cables, snatching at anything in reach. Some drag in corpses, others still-existing Shells that writhe and struggle. The Slug's wet proboscis undulates, tasting the air in frantic spasms.

Then the whispers come.

Every sound is like being stabbed through the eardrum with a needle of ice.

GEDDY

(Paws over ears)

Fucking a!

CHESTER

(Panicked)

What do we do?!

THOMAS

(A roar)

THE TANKER! DIG!! DIIIIIG!

THE TANKER

Thomas, Geddy, and Jameson dive into the hole beneath it. Mud flies.

SFX: THE TANKER SHRIEKS.

LANA

Get out of there!

Even after the others scatter out from beneath the tanker, THOMAS and GEDDY keep digging.

LANA
THOMAS! GEDDY! GET OUT!!

THOMAS
(Frantic)
Come on... COME ON! Almost—!

Geddy looks over at Thomas, eyes wide with sheer panic.

CRUNCH. The world LURCHES. The tanker drops like an ax.

POV - THE RAVINE FLOOR

The cylinder rolls, crushing them. Thomas is a GROTESQUE SMEAR.

Geddy's single golden eye POPS LOOSE. Their bodies are emptied out like burst sacks.

SPARK. The tank ignites.

LANA
RUN! TO THE FACTORY—NOW!

THE PURSUIT

SFX: WHIIIR-SNAP!

A tentacle coils around JAMESON'S HEAD MID-SPRINT. It SQUEEZES. His skull gives way. His YELPS dissolve into WET GURGLES as his face melts into a SOUPY PULP. His legs kick twice, then dangle limp before the rest of him slides into the Slug's body like meat into boiling water.

JERRILL is yanked skyward when he turns to look by another thin tentacle. The Slug's touch turns his black fur to PINK FROTH as he convulses violently, uncontrollably. His eyes stay open as his jaw works uselessly until there is no jaw left.

The Slug slams into the tanker.

The world turns white with a loud WHOOM. Shrapnel flies in all directions.

INT. FACTORY ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

LANA

(Voice breaking)

Did you—did you see that?!

Chester quakes.

CHESTER

(Hoarse)

Let's... go. Nothing left.

EXT. THE RAVINE - NIGHT

Lana and Chester step into the reek of burning rubber and cooked meat. The Slug sags like rotten fruit, dead and burning like a toxic chemical.

LANA

(Pointing)

There. The blast opened a path.

They cross over scorched limbs. Remaining Shells give no chase, too damaged to pursue.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - NIGHT

They walk in silence.

SFX: MURMURS FROM SHELLS AHEAD.

The scattered Shells begin to thicken.

CHESTER

Lana? There's too many of them!

LANA

I know.

Lana stops. She turns to face the broken remains of her family.

LANA (CONT'D)

Here's the plan. Run. And don't get caught.

FADE OUT.

EXT. RUINED STREETS - DAY

The sunrise is a smeared wound.

ALEXIS collapses to her belly. Wet earth clings to her fur, painting her into the rubble.

In her mind's eye: THE BEAMS.

Once-brilliant columns of light are fading like dying stars. Colors bleed into mud-red, yellow, green... then BLUE.

ALEXIS

(A choked sob)

Len...

FLASHBACK - INT. STEEL PIPE - NIGHT

Cold steel. Rain drums against the metal.

ALEXIS (V.O.)

I don't want to DIE like this... No...

Alexis paces the pipe. On one end: a steel grate. On the other: A HUNDRED SHELLS crammed into a ditch, hungry and howling.

Beside her: LEN. Her love. Her anchor.

Alexis's eyes are wide, feral. She pushes. Her paws slip on his wet fur. Her claws tear tufts from him as she shoves him toward the opening.

THE DITCH

The Shells plunge in. Hands grab. Len vanishes in pieces. Flesh becomes ribbons. His face is gone in a blink.

Alexis turns away, scrambling up the cliff. She doesn't look back.

EXT. RUINED STREETS - DAY (PRESENT)

Alexis drinks from a shallow basin coated in an oily film. She gags and retches between gulps. Her throat burns.

She moves through the shattered maze.

GRAFFITIED WALLS loom.

A SHELL rummages through a trashcan—a parody of a memory with no laugh track.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - LATER

Desolate. SKELETAL RIDES. Eyeless horses peel on a carousel.

Hundreds of Shells stagger between the rides. Alexis moves low and slow.

INT. PARK BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alexis leaps onto a cracked porcelain sink. She drinks from a rusted faucet.

SFX: PLINK... PLINK... PLINK.

The water tastes of rust and mildew.

EXT. RIDGELINE - DAY (TWO DAYS LATER)

Alexis creeps up a hill. Below, a GLISTENING PATH carved through the street. It hisses where the rain hits it.

She sees it: THE SLUG. It pulses with a wrong, unnatural PINK GLOW. Its translucent body writhes with absorbed corpses. Arms, legs, and faces tumble in

slow rolls within the jelly.

Alexis backs away.

EXT. THE RAVINE - DAY

Alexis reaches the high ground overlooking the factory. Past another train yard.

POV - THE RAVINE

She sees them. LANA. THOMAS. GEDDY. And a DOG she doesn't know.

The tanker truck teeters on the edge.

ALEXIS

(A scream, stolen by the
wind)

STOP!

The tanker drops.

SFX: CRUNCH.

Thomas and Geddy vanish. Crushed. The Slug surges—tearing through the dog and Jerrill. It then slams into the tanker.

SFX: WHOOMP.

The world fractures into fire and black smoke. The Slug rains down in chunks of quivering meat.

ALEXIS

(To herself, frantic)

Lana... Lana...

Alexis doesn't think. She slides down the ravine, paws skidding on wet concrete. She sprints toward the gap in the fire.

FADE OUT.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - NIGHT

The wind is cold. The air is tense. CHESTER stands before Lana, his tail sagging. His voice is hollow.

CHESTER

It's your dream. Not mine.

The words shatter the air like brittle glass.

CHESTER (CONT'D)

They died for your dream. They died needlessly. We could've moved on and none of this would have happened.

The Shells are closing in—a gradual tightening of the circle.

CHESTER (CONT'D)

I'm done, Lana. Done. Geddy—

(His voice breaks)
Geddy was right. I'm, I'm going to
find the Forever Sea. I'll return...
when there's, when there's,
suh-something left... to return to.
When there's, when there's—love.

Chester turns his back. He walks away with deliberate,
unhurried steps. She watches him disappear into a group of
SHELLS.

Lana stands still as stone. Her breath mists. Her legs
finally give out. She lowers her head and CRIES. A raw,
primal yowl that echoes off the derelict buildings. She claws
at the gravel. She throws her head back and SCREAMS into the
hissing rain.

The Shells stir.

ALEXIS (O.S.)
(Tentative)
Lana?

Lana freezes. She turns. Her heart stops. ALEXIS steps from
the fog between two overturned cars. Her fur is patchy, her
breathing shallow.

LANA
(Words tumbling,
desperate)
Alexis? Oh my God... you found...
You found me... the pipe... How?

ALEXIS
We'll talk after we get around these
Shells. I thought I'd never find
you.

They press their foreheads together in a ragged nuzzle.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)
C'mon. Let's get out of here and go
find some humans.

LANA
You... you believe in that?

ALEXIS
I do.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - LATER

A relic. Cracked windows. A faded sign.

INSIDE: mold, rust, and a faint sweetness. A wide, dark bloodstain dominates the floor.

POV - BEHIND THE COUNTER

A SHELL is suspended from its suicide noose. Its feet dangle. Its head lolls

forward, swaying with the rhythm of the creaking door.

ALEXIS
Clear.

In the corner: a dusty bag of DOG FOOD. On its packaging: a happy German Shepherd mid-leap. Lana's jaw quivers.

LANA
They're all gone, Lexi...

ALEXIS
(Voice cracking)
I know. I... I saw everything.
Everything.

They tear the bag open. CRUNCH. They eat in a silence muffled by the moans outside. Alexis pauses. The words stick like thorns in her throat.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

I... I used Len's body to distract the Shells. That's how I got away. I used him... as food for the Shells. So I could get away.

She shudders. Paws trembling.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

I watched them tear him apart and I ran.

Lana rests a paw on her shoulder.

LANA

We all die eventually. What we do to survive... good or bad, is all we have. You did no wrong, Alexis. You had to survive. And I'm glad you did.

ALEXIS

...Yeah? You mean that?

LANA

I do.

EXT. PARK - HOURS LATER

Rusted swings creak in the wind. Human footprints dot the mud. Recent.

LANA

We're close. Let's keep going.

ALEXIS

What if they're... bad?

LANA

That's the risk we have to take,
Lexi.

Alexis flinches.

ALEXIS

Please... I'm sorry, but please don't call me Lexi. That's
Len's name for me. And Len's alone. I can't... I can't take
hearing it anymore.

LANA

(Softly)

I understand. It's okay. I'm sorry.

ALEXIS

I'm sorry.

LANA

No being sorry. It's completely
understan—

CHILD (O.S.)

(high-pitched, excited)

Kitties!

Lana and Alexis spin toward the sound.

FADE OUT.

EXT. PARK – DAY

Alexis and Lana stare in shock at a HUMAN BOY (ZACHARY, 8
Y.O.).

His silhouette is small against the bleeding sky, framed by
the skeletal outline of ruined buildings.

LANA

(Low breath)

Oh my God.

Alexis hisses, ears flat, claws flexing into the mud.

ZACHARY

(Voice cracking)

It's okay, kitties, I won't hurt
you!

His brown hair is plastered to his forehead, matted and tangled. His once-black coat, now faded, is frayed at the sleeves. His galoshes flap loose on his thin legs. He carries a bloody baseball bat and wears a backpack.

Lana steps forward.

ALEXIS

Lana! Be careful!

The boy crouches to extend his hand—palm open, trembling.

ZACHARY

Good kitty. I won't hurt you.

Lana sniffs, then allows herself to be lifted into his arms.

ALEXIS

(Circling his boots)

Lana, are you crazy?!

ZACHARY

(Looking at Lana and
Alexis with kindness)

It's okay, girls. I promise I'm a
good guy. I'm not like the others.

He begins to walk away.

ZACHARY (CONT'D)

Let's go to a safer place.

Alexis follows.

EXT. DERELICT SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

They walk through alleys and the ruins of shops and homes. The rain eases, dripping steadily from broken gutters. The clouds tear apart in seams, revealing a strip of scarlet sky.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

They reach the edge of the block—a small camp—that consists of two sagging canvas tents that are connected to a brick building. Toys are scattered in the dirt. Empty cans rust in heaps.

ZACHARY

Let me feed you guys!

He reaches into his backpack and pries open a can of Spam, slicing off thick chunks and setting them down.

The salt and grease hit Lana's tongue like a memory of another lifetime.

ALEXIS

(Gasping, chewing too fast)

Real food, Lana! Real... food.

(voice cracks)

I wish... Len was here.

ZACHARY

(Tilting his head)

What's wrong, kitty? You look sad.
Aww, come here.

He picks Alexis up with the same gentle steadiness he did with Lana.

INT. BRICK ROOM - LATER

A bead curtain clicks. Scavenged planks hold treasures: a cracked snow globe, a tin car, figurines arranged with precision.

Zachary pulls out a battered notebook. The pages are filled with drawings of Shells and creatures that look like the SLUG.

ALEXIS

This boy, Lana... This boy is surviving all alone! He's just a little boy.

LANA

I know. We have to protect him.

Alexis's gaze drifts to the blood-stained baseball bat resting near the door.

ALEXIS

From the look of things... he's been protecting himself just fine.

ZACHARY

Oh! I'm a writer! Tommy said I'll be a great writer someday. I miss Tommy and Lisa.

His gaze grows sad but his eyes light up as he looks at Lana and Alexis.

Lana PURRS. The first time in a long time.

ZACHARY (CONT'D)

Oh! My name is Zachary. It's nice to meet you... uh... hm... I know! Lana and Alexis! Do you like those names?

Lana continues to purr, her eyes growing heavy.

ZACHARY (CONT'D)

Of course... the two of you couldn't have made it this far on your own....hm. I KNOW! I'll make up the friends you had who helped you. Hm. Ah! SUE! And... THOMAS! And... GEDDY!

His eyes grow sad, as though looking into a projector from the past.

ZACHARY (CONT'D)

I used to have a friend named Geddy. Before... yeah. Before. I'm writing all about what's happening. I'm writing it into a book. And now... I can include you two! I can tell your story now too.

(He grins wide)

I can call it... 'Apocalypse Meow!' But I'll have to put a dog in there! A German Shepherd. Ah... Tommy drank this stuff called 'Jameson.' We'll call your dog-friend Jameson.

Zachary wipes the tears welling in his eyes while Alexis rubs against his arm.

ZACHARY (CONT'D)

Tommy and Lisa... they were killed by the man with the greasy hair. He told me, 'Hope dies first.'

(He springs to his feet.)
But I don't think that's true. Not
anymore. Come on, Lana! C'mon,
Alexis! Let's go look for more food!

EXT. SIDEWALK - DUSK

The streets outside are quiet but for the dripping of rainwater into the gutters. The crimson sky deepens to violet along the horizon.

Zachary skips over the cracks in the pavement, counting softly. The bat swings at his side.

Lana and Alexis walk beside him, their paws brushing against the cold concrete. They catch each other's gaze—a tired, knowing smile passing between them.

In the dying light, their long shadows stretch until they almost reach the boy's.

ADULT ZACHARY (V.O.)

Somewhere in the ruins of the world,
under skies the color of old blood,
the dead still wandered. But in one
corner of it, a boy with a baseball
bat, a silver Bengal, and a calico
walked side by side.

CLOSING IMAGE:

The trio moves further into the distance, becoming silhouettes against the horizon.

ADULT ZACHARY (V.O. CONT'D)

They did not know if the road ahead
would bring warmth or cold, kindness
or cruelty. Only that they would
keep walking.

FADE TO BLACK.

ON SCREEN:

We see the notebook from the brick room. It is old now, the edges frayed and yellowed.

ADULT ZACHARY (V.O. CONT'D)

That boy only knew he needed to make sense of a world that made no sense. Only knew a vow he made in that moment all those years ago: to immortalize these two creatures who finally gave him a reason to go on; a reason to love. And in that boy's notebook, in uneven handwriting, the words had already been written...

A hand—an adult man's hand—rests on the cover. We see the title in that shaky, eight-year-old script:

APOCALYPSE MEOW.

FADE OUT.

THE END.