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# Spellbound: the Process of Adaptation

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Spellbound:  
The Process of Adaptation

by

Amanda Sonju

An undergraduate honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the

requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Science

in

University Honors

and

Film

Thesis Adviser

Karin Magaldi

Portland State University

2015

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# Background

## Introduction

At the beginning of a screenwriter's career, they are most often required to write adaptations of other works or asked to work on television shows writing in the voice of the show-runner. This is, in effect, a test to prove their malleability as a writer. Very few are fortunate enough to write of their own volition and receive a paycheck- at least not at the start. Screenwriters need to have the deep knowledge of story and character as well as the ability to analyze other formats in order to translate an idea to film convincingly.

Unfortunately, this reality is overlooked in writing courses. Character and Plot can be glossed over in order to teach form. To add insult to injury, writing styles are sectioned off. In college classes screenwriting is reserved for film majors, novel writing for English majors, graphic novels for Art majors...the list goes on and on. Reference materials continue this trend and reserve materials for novelists, playwrights, and screenwriters exclusively. One reference used for this project, *The Plot Whisperer*, is designed to aid creative writers of any style but the book is hidden away on a reference shelf for novelists.<sup>1</sup>

It is my belief that, without an understanding of how a work is created, a screenwriter runs the risk of losing something in translation. Any writer skilled in their form can weave the smallest of elements together to tell an amazing story. But how do you find jewels without knowing the mountain? A screenwriter that has only been taught screenwriting may not have the proper mindset to find the original author's secrets.

As a new writer, I need to have the ability to adapt for film in order to be successful. I have been lucky in finding classes that, while not directly offered to film students as part of the curriculum, were still applicable to my major. Through those classes offered by my thesis advisor, Karin Magaldi, and the television series course instructor, Thom Bray, I found instruction that delved more deeply into character and plot development than was traditionally taught to film majors.

But that still wasn't enough.

My idea began simply: I wrote a screenplay for a television pilot in Thom Bray's class and mulled over the idea of turning

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<sup>1</sup> Alderson, *The Plot Whisperer*.

the pilot into a novel for self-publishing. In my dealings with rehashing the material in both forms, I became acutely aware of the need for instruction on adaptation.

A search on adaptation will generally lead to blog posts by Scriptwriter Magazine or Writer's Digest with vague references to "knowing the difference between markets" and a single hint to "read the book twice" among discussion of a scrapped adaptation by an author.<sup>2,3</sup> Among the thousands of hints and tricks the web can offer, there is not a single in-depth resource on adaptation.

It is generally assumed that a writer will understand instinctually how to convey an idea regardless of the distribution method. The reality, however, is that the process takes knowledge of writing that spans forms. How characters are used as archetypes, maintaining running plotlines (particularly for series), and the ability to abbreviate a scene are just a few things that screenwriters need a comprehensive understanding of before translating a work.

A prime example of this type of abbreviation comes in adapting the *A Song of Ice and Fire* novel series written by author George R.R. Martin.<sup>4</sup> Martin is infamous among his readers for taking several pages to describe the setting of a scene in order to create tension and mood, long before he gets to the action. A screenwriter for the television series *Game of Thrones*, however, has to maintain that same tone with just a single sentence or line that is read by a director, found by a location scout, arranged by a cinematographer and art director, then photographed by camera operator and finally color corrected and/or visual effects added by a digital artist to appear onscreen with that same intensity for a viewer.<sup>5</sup>

Anyone who has seen a poor film or television series based on their favorite book or graphic novel knows the dangers a screenwriter faces with a poor adaptation. The object of my thesis, therefore, is to discover for myself some of the necessary elements to writing a successful one.

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<sup>2</sup> "Adapting a Book Into a Screenplay."

<sup>3</sup> Folsom, "Turning a Novel into a Screenplay"

<sup>4</sup> "*A Song of Ice and Fire.*"

<sup>5</sup> *Game of Thrones.*





# Thesis

## *The Storyline*

Spellbound is a steampunk mystery series centered on Katerina Dalca, her partner Oliver Johnson, and Katerina's brother, Silas Abner.

When we first meet the protagonist, Katerina, she has been estranged from her family for over a decade. Her sister, Emily, is found dead and her brother Silas is the prime suspect. Silas is exonerated quickly in favor of the city's serial killer, however, he convinces the captain to take him on as a consultant without a clear reason. That is, until Katerina is suddenly marked as a theurgist- a section of the populous known for their ability to use magic- and the absolute worst fate imaginable for Katerina.

Katerina struggles against using her new magical powers in an effort to not become a full theurgist. Despite her distrust of her brother, she needs him to track down The Butcher. A connection between Emily and Dr. Miranda Day, a psychologist healer treating several of The Butcher's victims, leads to a confrontation with the killer in which Katerina inadvertently uses her powers to save the doctor, risking her sanity as her powers haven't been sealed.

Katerina discovers the reason she couldn't be marked before (resulting in years of torture by her grandfather) was due to Silas. Silas insisted it was for her protection but Katerina orders him out. During a conversation with the doctor and an investigation of Tesla Corp, she discovers that The Butcher is her fiancé who has kidnaped Silas and offers to return him, unharmed, if Katerina transferred her powers to him. She makes the decision to seal her powers in order to save her brother.

Katerina takes on The Butcher. During the struggle, it is revealed that Silas' cost for preventing Katerina from being marked by their grandfather meant that he had lost his powers. A fire breaks out after Katerina casts a spell to save Silas, however, The Butcher disappears. Katerina, Silas, and Oliver agree that she needs to keep her new powers secret. After speaking to the captain, Silas becomes employed by the department to train (keep an eye on) Katerina.

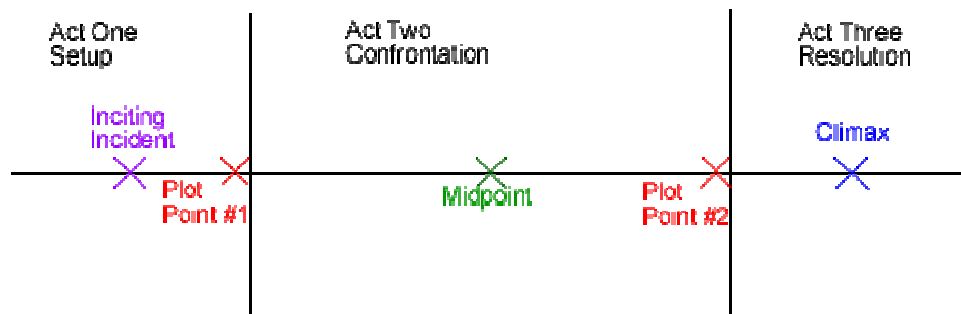


## Preparation and Development

### ***Plot development***

The typical structure for novels is known as the three act structure. It is the most well-known and utilized formula. It is also remarkably vague, as evident in Figure 1.1.

FIGURE 1.1



I determined early on that I work better using a four act structure. The four act structure includes the same basic points as the three act structure, but breaks the second act into two parts at the midpoint.

Operating in that mode, I found Thom Bray's models the most helpful when developing my outlines. His models were designed for Portland State University's Television Writing series of classes and, in addition to breaking his traditional model using a four or five act structure, Mr. Bray adds viewer expectations in each act to maintain the optimal pacing between commercial breaks. Figure 1.2 is an example of Mr. Bray's blocking. The complete models can be viewed on pages 115 and 116.

FIGURE 1.2

#### ACT II: Conflict

The complication from act one is acted upon, sometimes solved and a new complication arises, or further complicated. At the end of the Act, the protagonist or someone the protagonist cares about is in jeopardy. (Emotional, physical, psychological)

The plot points in a four act structure in this case are, what Mr. Bray identifies as, what we see happen to the protagonist at the end of the act. In the case of Act II, the plot point would be to end on either the protagonist or someone the protagonist cares for is in jeopardy.

While developed for television, I eventually used the four act model in revising the novel outline as well. By associating the same expectations of a viewer with that of a reader (plot-wise), I was able to revise my novel outline to maintain pacing and keep my plot-line engaging.

### *Novel*

The novel centers around three things for the protagonist: solving the murder of her sister, accepting her new powers and adjusting to a new relationship with her estranged brother. These elements have never altered from draft to draft, however, limiting the story in this way lead to some difficulties.

In the revised novel outline on page 18, there is more information on the motives of central villain, The Butcher. Katerina is lead to The Butcher via Dr. Marina Dey, a psychiatrist heading up a project all of the victims were involved with. Through Dr. Dey, the audience is introduced to the ramifications of being marked as a theurgist incorrectly via the wanderers.

The novel is designed to be the first in a book series. Spellbound will introduce the reader to Katerina's world but will leave room for more storylines delving into the history of the marks, the significance of Katerina becoming a crown and her ultimate decision between eliminating magic or setting it free.

The novel's ending hints at a connection between The Butcher and Katerina's grandfather, Sebastian Abner. The setup is created between Katerina and her Grandfather in Spellbound but it is too complicated to shove into one novel. Sebastian's desire to control it and Cruthers' desire to set magic free and the choice that leaves Katerina will spur on the rest of the series.

### *Television Series*

The first draft of the pilot episode beginning on page 48 followed the same story structure as the novel. But while revising the novel I found that the flaws in the first draft of

the pilot could be solved by breaking apart the novel into single episodes. This employs the same model used for shows like *Game of Thrones* and *True Blood*.<sup>67</sup>

In outlining the new pilot, I opted to begin the television series with the case leading up to the hook at the beginning of the revised novel (as seen beginning on page 97). In following the case involving the character of Mickey Calhoun, I'm given more time to introduce the main characters and ease the viewer into the world without clunky exposition.

The series would then continue by following the basic structure of the novel through to the season finale. The elements that allow the book series to continue would also leave room for each additional season of the series to follow another book or diverge as necessary.

### *Character Development*

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*Viewers of mysteries and thrillers like tightly-plotted narratives, clever red herrings, and a certain element of surprise. And you should always strive to weave as many of these aspects into your whodunit or crime story as possible.*

*But these factors are not what makes a mystery - any mystery - memorable. Think of TV's *The Rockford Files*, or *The Closer*. Think of films like *Chinatown* and *Silence of the Lambs*. As best-selling crime author Michael Connelly wrote, "The best mysteries are about the mystery of character."<sup>8</sup>*

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Author Dennis Palumbo wrote those words regarding writing mysteries, however, I think it applies to all genres. Successful stories rely on their ability to create a relatable character. It is a concept that applies as much to film as it does to the written word. Although character development in novels is equally important, this development (particularly in the area of

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> *True Blood*.

<sup>8</sup> "Taking the Mystery Out of Writing Mysteries."

backstory) can be crucial for a television series. Having that information set early on can aid the development of a character and add storylines as the series enters later seasons.

When working on character development I followed the formula set forth in the Snowflake method.<sup>9</sup> Figures 1.3 and 1.4 show the character descriptions for my two central characters: Katerina Dalca and her grandfather, Sebastian Abner.

### FIGURE 1.3

**Name:** Katerina Dalca

**Role:** Protagonist

**Goal:** To solve her sister's murder

**Ambition:** taking down theurgists, who she sees as all corrupted.

**Values:** Justice, eliminating corruption, fighting for the weak

**Conflict:** She becomes her worst fear. She has to work with her new powers to solve the murders of theurgists despite a deep-seeded mistrust of their kind.

**Epiphany:** Her brother would do anything to protect her. Not every theurgist is like her grandfather.

**Backstory:** Their parents died when she was Eight. Katerina, Emily and Silas went to live with their Grandfather, Sebastian Abner. Katerina was very close to Sebastian as a young child but after moving in with their Grandfather, Silas started to act distant. When Katerina was twelve, she went through the marking ceremony. An older, trained, theurgist passes a small amount of energy into the person to open their chakra. The process can kill someone who cannot be marked but should be momentarily painful for someone who can. Unfortunately for Katerina, the energy courses through her body and is intensely painful, but she isn't marked. Their grandfather is furious. He has the process repeated over the years with more and more energy and frequency. Katerina begs Silas to help her. He tries at first to convince their grandfather to stop, but over the

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<sup>9</sup> Ingermanson, *How to Write a Novel Using the Snowflake Method*.



years he becomes more withdrawn. One night, after Katerina's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, he forces Emily to try to the point that it almost kills her (Emily). Katerina runs away and takes a job in the morgue as Cruthers' assistant, changing her name to her mother's maiden name, Dalca.

**Characteristics:** Romanian and Irish descent. Long curly black hair, violet eyes. She prefers trousers to skirts.

#### FIGURE 1.4

**Name:** Sebastian Abner

**Role:** Story Arc Villain

**Goal:** He hires James to create a crown artificially (which is illegal in the Theurgist community). He also has James pursue Katerina to keep tabs on her.

**Ambition:** To be a crown or control one

**Values:** Strength, Order, Control, Reverence

**Conflict:** James goes crazy with the power through a mechanical suit he developed for his experiments. He goes crazy and starts killing not only for more power, but begins take body parts to satisfy his curiosity. James stops reporting to him and is risking exposing Sebastian's plans with the killings.

**Epiphany:** Katerina has been marked. He now has what he wants but she hates him and he no longer has James. He needs to find a way to bring her under his control.

**Backstory:** As a young man, Sebastian had a heated political discussion with Leonard Cruthers on the issue of whether or not magic should be restricted. After the discussion, Sebastian became obsessed with the theoretical mark of the crown- a chakra that has the ability to control every chakra and, therefore, every magical ability. He was fixated on the idea of a way to control magic (and the users of magic) completely as a way to bring order to the world. He researched genetics and family histories for decades. He married a woman with strong bloodlines who died in childbirth with their son, Richard. When Richard was old enough, he was forced to marry a woman, Alexandria Dalca, who was rumored to be a descendant of the last man able to

control all of magic (the warlord responsible for the separation of magic into chakras). She had three children, the youngest, Katerina, showed signs of magic much earlier than any other child was known to and he knew she would be a crown when she was marked. In his continued research, he came across mention of the warlord's spell book and concluded that Alexandria must know where it was. When he confronted Alexandria, told him she would never allow Katerina or any of her children to be near him and denied knowledge of the book, so he had her and Richard killed. After the children came to live with him, he discovered that Katerina couldn't be marked. He tried repeatedly and nearly killed her and Emily in the process. To add insult to injury, he discovered that Silas had suddenly lost his abilities and concluded that the book must be involved. Despite his searching, he could never find the spell book. After Katerina ran away, he attempted to find scientific means to creating a crown by employing Tesla Corp scientists. When he met one young scientist, James Janus, he decided to use him both for his brilliance and to keep an eye on Katrina. Meanwhile, as his experiments are illegal according to the theurgist council (of which he is member) he uses illegal activities like counterfeiting and prostitution to fund his projects and uses the money from his hotel empire (the Empire is the crown jewel) to make it seem legit.

**Characteristics:** Al Capone/Hitler/JFK rolled into one. He is handsome, charismatic and eloquent. He is a Sociopath in every sense of the word. Silver hair, statuesque physique. A persuader. Think: Donald Sutherland or Christopher Plummer.

Sebastian acts as a minor character in the novel to avoid overwhelming the reader, however, as you can see evident by the extensive backstories, there is a central conflict in the relationship between Katerina and Sebastian that necessitates his inclusion in future stories and allows him to emerge as the primary villain. Because he becomes central to the long-term plan, introducing him more prominently in the television series becomes crucial.

## **World building**

Rules within a story are as necessary as the laws of physics in the real world and just as binding. Once established they cannot be broken without leaving the audience feeling confused and/or cheated. Imagine how the readers of the Harry Potter series would have reacted if muggles everywhere had known about magic in the film adaptation of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (knowing some hard-core fans as I do, I imagine lots and lots of rioting).<sup>10</sup> Keeping this in mind, it becomes equally as important to keep track of the rules for reference.

In my story, the world is set in a steampunk world and part of the central conflict involves magic-wielding people known as theurgists. Knowing how the history of the world diverged from our own as well as what the magical abilities are and how they came to be inform decisions on how to describe a character's attire, the marks on their arms, technology, and virtually every detail of the story.

In my world, Nicola Tesla founded Tesla Corp, basically the Angel Bay version of GE, and the death of Thomas Edison in an experiment lead to the alteration of the use of electricity and bringing about the steam-punk elements in the story. Electricity is controlled by the corporation, run by Tesla's nephew, and is only available to the very rich. This creates a visual division, both in the novel description and in the screenplay, between rich and poor. Tesla Corp and, more specifically, the science division, also features prominently in the story as the place of employment for James and Annabelle.

The most important piece of world building in my story involves the use of magic. Figure 1.5 includes an excerpt from my notes on the history of magic in Spellbound:

### **FIGURE 1.5**

Thousands of years ago magic wasn't inhibited. A warlord learned to use all powers and tried to conquer the world. A group of theurgists defeated him and cast a spell to prevent the same thing from happening ever again. The magic

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<sup>10</sup> Chris Columbus film director et al., "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone."

was tied to the members of the council (ten, in total) and was passed down only in their bloodlines.

The magic was further divided by chakra. By the time a person with magical abilities became an adult (in this case, twelve) their personalities were seen as set. Their most prominent chakra controlled their magic and is opened in a ceremony by a specific group of theurgists. (this was one of the few unmodified spells and, therefore, should only be known by a controlled few)

The known spells of the time were deliberated on and either modified or destroyed. The passing of the old spells was outlawed along with attempting to control more magic than was available to one through their chakra. By virtue of the spell, no one should be able to be a crown (able to control everything)

How Katerina becomes involved:

Sebastian spent his life looking into the warlord's descendants and forced his son to marry one- Alexandria Dalca- in an attempt to circumvent the rules of magic and succeeds with Katerina. Alexandria also had another virtue, her spell book is that of her warlord ancestors and contains spells that could change everything in the hands of a theurgist powerful enough to control all magic (a crown). When Katerina is marked she becomes a target for Sebastian and others who would use her to alter magic again.

The history of the magic lead to the division which, in turn, leads to the markings on the wrists indicating the type of magic a theurgist is able to control. Because the magic is also associated with a chakra and The Butcher kills and removes body parts of each type of theurgist, the division of magic required its own notations. The breakdown can be seen in Figure 1.6.

**FIGURE 1.6**

Name	Mark Color	Associated Body Part	Types of Abilities
Crown	Purple	Blood	Complete control over all magic,

			"cosmic consciousness" (after training)
Seer	Dark Blue	Brain	Clairvoyance, intuition, control of thoughts/actions, intellect
Persuader	Light Blue	Larynx	Communication, Persuasion, Power, Organization, Truth
Healer	Green	Heart	Healing, hope, compassion, empathy, growth, nature
Muse	Yellow	Adrenaline glands	Energy, technology, creativity, luck, recognition/ fame
Pleasurer	Orange	Sexual organs	Emotions, sexuality, intimacy, reproduction, relationships, desire
Founder	Red	Spine	Survival, security, athleticism, strength, contests/ challenges

The police structure also underwent a bit of alteration to feel as if it belonged in a blended Modern-Victorian era world. The police force rankings were combined using American and United Kingdom terms:

**Constable (Bobbie)**

**Sergeant**

**Detective**

**Chief Inspector**

**Commander**

**Commissioner**

Once I had a clear course of action with my characters and completed building the world they lived in, I delved more deeply into the act of adaptation.

## Adaptation in Process

### ***Initial Discoveries***

The differences in writing styles between novel and screenplay are fairly obvious and, in the simplest of terms, are a matter

of length. Describing the scene where we are introduced to Emily in the novel looks like this:

The amber glow of the electric lights deepened the rich mahogany-lined walls. A smattering of business men lounged around in velvet seats, presumably waiting for a late train bound for home. The portrait of upper crust breeding, Emily melded into the ostentatious surroundings like a china doll on display.

The screenplay, however, feels much more clipped:

Emily is perfect- from the tailoring of her gown to the curl in her hair. The portrait of upper-crust breeding, she stands in the ostentatious grand lobby like a china doll on display.

Bouncing back and forth between writing styles was difficult. First, there are the verb-tense considerations. Using third person involves the use of past-tense whereas screenplays are required to follow action. Meaning that everything happens in the present tense and requires the writer to write as if it is being described in almost a play-by-play format.

Second, as previously stated, the screenplay format also requires brevity. Being able to condense the information into a script is difficult, but I have also found the reverse to be equally as hard. In the script, where I can omit information to allow for an actor or director's choices, I was forced to expand upon the same information to create that place or emotion in a reader's mind.

Third, time constraints are an issue. Not only do I have to make information available in as few words as possible, I also have to ensure that a character's emotional states and transformations happen within about a minute on screen and through dialogue. That does not leave a lot of room for an audience to connect. In the novel I was allowed more time to fully explore those unspoken areas of story thorough description. I discovered I needed to find more than just the

basest, stereotypical arcs for the secondary characters to push Katerina's reactions. By exploring these things more fully, the process led me to inevitable revisions.

### ***Revisions and Alterations***

As alluded to earlier, the storyline underwent some pretty significant revisions during this process. The original outline for the novel on page 29 follows the original script fairly well, however, in writing the outline for the novel, I became aware of the story's simplicity (and not in a good way). I was trying to reimagine the storyline to make a more compelling novel and found a lot of clichés that needed to be changed.

Naming conventions were the first revisions made. Using "Morgan" as Katerina's last name as well as calling the magical sect "Casters", seemed trite. After a bit more research, I changed the main character from Katerina *Morgan* to Katerina *Dalca* to enhance the character's backstory involving a Romanian mother. "Casters" was changed to "Theurgists" based on the dictionary definition of Theurgy: "The interference of ordinary life by supernatural or magical means." That definition aligned more appropriately with my vision of this heavily corrupted band of the populous and the archaic word felt more at home in my steampunk world.

The second, and more crucial, points of change came in the story itself. The plotline of the original script felt bland and focused on a singular storyline. After stopping the outlining process, I attempted to write the novel free-form and didn't get very far. The first six chapters of this attempt begin on page 32 and by page 36 you can start to see a divergence in the storyline. A scene involving a disciplinary meeting with a psychologist was inserted to give more of a sense of how Katerina reacted to the thurgists in her everyday life but feels forced. Another character, Eddie, and his machine were added to advance the story but only proved to hinder it. By the time Katerina's brother, Silas, is introduced, the weaknesses of the initial storyline bring the novel to a grinding halt.

The plotline served its purpose for the initial draft, but eventually I had to give up and do a complete rework. In the end it proved to be the skeleton on which the more fully realized story rested. I went back and did more of the initial groundwork

covered in the first section. In doing so, I explored more deeply the serial killer's motives and objectives and it altered how the victims were killed. This led to another character addition, Dr. Marina Dey, as well as a group of outcasts from theurgist society known as wanderers. The domino effect this created led to a more fully realized story. In going back to revise the pilot, I discovered that I had more dimensions to work with and determined to rework the course of the first season around the novel.

On pages 107 and 109 you will find both the novel and the scripted versions of the same scene. The scene involves Katerina working undercover in an attempt to catch her latest suspect, Mickey Calhoun. In the process of chasing after Mickey, the two come across one of the Butcher's victims.

While both scenes happen in both the novel and the screenplay, they occur at different points in relation to the mode. The scene in the book becomes the inciting incident for the novel. In the revised pilot, it occurs in the third act. The pilot focuses on Mickey as a suspect in order to give more time to introduce the world and Katerina.

In addition to the benefits mentioned earlier in altering the appearance of Sebastian in the series versus the novels, giving more time to Katerina's sister, Emily, creates sympathy for her. It is through Emily's death that the rest of the story takes shape, so it behooves the script to give her screen-time in order for the viewer to relate to her and want to know who killed her. This same act can be done through narrative in the novel that the screenplay doesn't have.

## Adaptation in Future Application

In the preliminary stages in writing- character development and world building- remain same process regardless of the style. Without these elements, a story is not a story. During the adaptation process, if severe alterations are made a character or if rules of a world are ignored, fans of the source material could see it as a betrayal and lash out against your work. When reading (or viewing) the initial work, it is important in this process to make detailed observations about the core elements.



For a character this entails following the same process as you would in development of an idea. Attempt to evaluate their role, their values and their history. This ensures that, if a change is required for the sake of the new work, you can still maintain the basest elements that fans identified with in the first place.

As discussed earlier, the role of Katerina's grandfather, Sebastian, moves from vaguely-discussed character in the novel to central antagonist later in the series. Without a thorough evaluation of a character's role in the novel and hints at further connection, the grandfather could be left out of the series initially. The result leads to having the character "shoehorned" in later- causing confusion, fractured storylines and frustration for the viewer.

An example of a mistake in character evaluation leading to the destruction of a film comes from Christopher Paolini's *Eragon*.<sup>11</sup> In the 2006 film, screenwriter Peter Buchman removed the character of Ronan, the protagonist's cousin, from the movie adaptation.<sup>12</sup> While the move to erase Ronan's storyline to give the hero, Eragon, more prominence may have seemed prudent at the time, the act eliminated half of Paolini's book. The choice not to add elements that are pivotal to the series conclusion, based solely on the first book in the series, effectively killed any chance to continue the films before it began. As if that wasn't enough, the resulting film was left to be ravaged by critics as a pale imitation of *The Lord of the Rings*.<sup>13</sup>

It is imperative to know the rules of the world you are working with. Original source material with rabid fan bases will know when you have messed up and, with the rise of the internet, they have the power to decry your film to millions. It is okay to alter something in order to tell a good story as long as you have a solid grasp of the basis. Examples include movies under the Marvel Cinematic Universe banner, *The Dark Knight Trilogy* and the *Star Trek* reboot. An example of arrogance where this is concerned is, ironically, from the master of world building, George Lucas. An entire empire fell with just one word: *midi-chlorians*.

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<sup>11</sup> Christopher. Paolini, *Eragon*.

<sup>12</sup> Davis et al., "Eragon."

<sup>13</sup> Jackson et al., "The Lord of the Rings."

Revisions will happen regardless of the mode of delivery. A screenplay adaptation is not exempt from this. The storyline and plot of the source material will need to be analyzed, not just for story, but for strengths, weaknesses and idiosyncrasies that will arise once the screenplay is ready to be written.

## Conclusion

The moral of this tale is to really understand story and the source material- how it works, how it is used and how it can be manipulated. Without a thorough grasp a screenwriter runs the risk of putting hard effort into something that can be destroyed by internet trolls.

# Creative Materials

## Revised Novel Outline

### Act I:

#### Ch 1

Katerina is introduced. She is an Angel Bay homicide detective. She is beautiful, feisty and keeps her distance. There is a short list of people she likes and an even shorter list of theurgists she will work with. Her partner, Oliver, has been in love with her for a while, but keeps it very close to the vest. He is practical and goes by the book. He knows she is engaged and, although he doesn't like James, he knows to keep his distance. In the course of trying to apprehend her current murder suspect, she stumbles upon the disposed of body of a serial killer that has been rampaging the city. The find traumatizes the suspect.

Katerina and Oliver are waiting for the detectives involved in the butcher case. They don't get along with Katerina and there is a fight. After the fight, Katerina's phone keeps ringing but she refuses to answer. She doesn't tell Oliver who it is.

James is introduced. There is a bit of a lover's quarrel over Katerina getting home so late. James wants to know if she is trying to delay the wedding.

Oliver calls the next morning to tell her the suspect is being removed from custody. She moves quietly so as not to wake James.

Katerina arrives to find Silas Abner, the grandson of Sebastian Abner- the most powerful theurgist in the country- taking the suspect. He claims the man has gone mad and needs to be in a special sanitarium designed for theurgists. Silas is a persuader and has a way with words even without casting a spell. Katerina believes that Sebastian- through Silas- is trying to cover up the murders of the proprietors of a counterfeit ring.

(FORESHADOWING) Oliver is surprised to find out that Katerina knows the haughty playboy and will not say how.

#### Ch. 2

Katerina gets chewed out by the Captain for losing the suspect and for going after him in the first place. On her way out, a bobby tells her there is someone important in her office.

Katerina gets back to her office and finds Emily. Emily tries to warn her she is in danger. She tells her about fuzzy visions. Katerina is already angry about Silas showing up and tells her to talk to the detectives assigned to the case. Emily gets frustrated and tells Kat she hasn't spoken to Silas in months. She tells Katerina to look into Dr. Marina Dey. Before she leaves, she tosses a small box (containing a key to the stored spell book- but that comes in a later book) and tells Katerina she'll figure it out.

Katerina tosses the box into her bag and looks at a picture of herself as a teenager with a distinguished looking gentleman leaning on a silver cane. She decides to speak to Cruthers and leaves the office.

She arrives at the "theater" just in time to catch one of Cruthers' lectures. He is lecturing on the chakras and how they relate to the body according to theurgist mythology. After the lecture, he and Katerina discuss the case. Kat has a bad feeling that something big is going on. Cruthers asks if it has anything to do with her history with theurgists. He also mentions Oliver's concern with her association with Silas. They discuss their history with working at the morgue. He tells her he has no intention of divulging her secret, but he cautions her that if Oliver was so inclined, it wouldn't take too much digging.

### Ch 3

Katerina gets home and is exhausted. James isn't home, yet. She assumes that he is still angry with her. She feeds the cat and debates calling Emily.

Emily is frantically searching Silas' library for a book. She knows the butcher is after her. She finds what she is looking for- an old book with an inscription that hints as to what is hidden in the book. She loosens the binding and takes out the spell. She kneels in the center of the floor with the locket in her hands and starts to cast using her locket as a talisman. Her cell rings. It's Katerina, but Emily cannot answer. The butcher enters behind her.

Katerina wakes to the police device chiming for her. She sneaks out of bed quietly so as not to disturb James. She realizes as she calls for a cabbie that she has been called to Silas' house.

When she arrives, Oliver is waiting. Cruthers attempts to take her aside but Oliver is too quick. He pulls off the sheet, revealing Emily's body. The captain enters. Katerina quietly tries to excuse herself from the case. The Captain responds by asking to know why and why the prime suspect is demanding to speak with only Kat. Oliver finds Emily's cell phone and shows the history to the Captain. She is startled and wants to know why Katerina was in apparent contact with the victim. Silas chimes in behind them. He reveals that Katerina is their sister.

#### Ch 4

Silas tries to talk to Katerina alone but she won't have it. He tells her that she had found him at the club and started screaming at him. He had never seen her so upset. She stormed out of the club, but he couldn't catch up to her. He was worried and went out to find her. When he came home he found her dead in his library. He realizes they think he's the butcher. He wants to talk to Katerina alone about Emily, but she still won't so he switches tactics and tells her it won't be long before Grandfather knows and sends his lackeys. Oliver comes to Kat's rescue, but Silas uses it to infuriate him. The lawyers show up and, after apologizing quickly in a whisper, punches Oliver so that he is arrested before the lawyers can get involved and keep him away from Katerina. Oliver uses the incident to try and have he and Katerina removed from the case.

Kat feels uneasy about Silas deliberately wanting to be taken into custody and asks to stay on the case. The Captain allows it but tells her that this is an important case to the department and there is absolutely no room for error. She leaves them to examine the scene. Oliver is upset but keeps his mouth shut for the most part. They go over the evidence with Cruthers. Kat discovers a piece of paper near Emily that has been torn and Emily is grasping onto something tightly and points it out to Cruthers.

Katerina and Oliver question Silas back at the station. They discuss the fight, the missing year with Emily and that he suspected that she had been staying at their parents' old home. Kat asks him about the spell on the page. He lies and says he doesn't know without seeing the whole page. He reluctantly gives up information about what Emily was up to but is still holding back a lot. He tells them that Emily told him the Butcher was going to kill her.

## Ch 5

Kat and Oliver are called to Cruthers' theater. He gives them the news that Silas is most likely correct as to the murderer. He finds a puncture mark on her neck behind her ear. Traces of a serum that have been found on other victims is present as well as bruising too large to be from Silas' hands.

Silas appears in the doorway. The attorneys have had him released. He addresses Cruthers as Leon. Katerina is shocked first as Silas' presence then by the realization that they know each other. Silas demands to speak to Kat. She is furious. Oliver tries to step in and Silas orders him to leave. There is a confrontation, to which Cruthers tells Silas to back off—Oliver can be trusted. Kat explodes. Cruthers reveals that he is an old friend of their mothers and shows her the mark he has been keeping carefully hidden (he is a healer? Check values against the chakras). Silas informs Kat that when she ran away she managed to accidentally stumble on her godfather and that he has been keeping track of her as well as receiving his help with matters involving their grandfather from Cruthers over the years. He tells Kat about his suspicions that Emily was hiding their mother's spell book and that she told him she was convinced that the butcher would do anything to get his hands on it. He goes on to explain to Oliver that their mother's spell book has spells in it that are too dangerous to be in the wrong hands and that he cannot find the book.

Cruthers shows Katerina the torn page and hints at it's age. He also shows her what was in Emily's hand— the locket. Katerina takes it and Silas tries to stop her but it is too late. The moment she touches the locket, Emily's spirit appears and apologizes to Katerina before her spirit takes Kat's wrists and marks her.

## Act II

### Ch 6

Katerina wakes on the floor of the medical theater with the gentlemen surrounding her. The guys start discussing matters as if she wasn't there. Silas wants Cruthers to seal the mark. Katerina comes unglued. She doesn't want Cruthers or anyone else sealing the magic. She insists that, if she keeps from

performing a spell, that it will go away. Begrudgingly, Cruthers acknowledges it is possible, but no one has successfully done it. Silas warns her she could end up as one of the wanderers. Katerina gets in his face and tells him to fuck off. She storms out of the theater. Silas tells Cruthers to keep an eye on her and, while thinking out loud, hopes he can keep it from their grandfather.

Katerina rushes to her office and finds some old leather braces to hide the marks on her wrists. She is worried the Captain will fire her if she sees them (rules/ laws in place against theurgists being cops due to fairness???)

Oliver knocks hesitantly. She gives him a brief run down of events from her childhood. He is sympathetic. He tells her to focus on the case.

She and Oliver go over the Butcher case with Garcia and Malone. She discovers their ineptitude. All of the victims had traces of the underground tunnels on them. Neither of the men have enough knowledge of the hierarchy of theurgists to recognize the pattern forming. Katerina remembers what Emily said about Dr. Dey. She does research and discovers the woman was a psychiatrist out of Tesla Corp working with wanderers in the city. She recognizes the woman as a friend of Emily's from school. The Dr. has connections to several of the victims in a scientific article about the serum.

Oliver and Katerina go to Tesla Corp to have the serum analyzed and ask why a psychiatrist would be- At the end, Sebastian reveals that Sebastian is up to something and the money from his empire is being funneled to a secret project that Emily had discovered was linked to Tesla Corp working with the substance.

## CH 7

They meet Annabelle, a chemist, and ask about the serum. They get a vague response about the serum helping wanderers. Katerina asks about Emily and gets a brush off that doesn't sit well with Kat. Annabelle reveals she knows about Katerina because she used to date Silas. She hints that Silas used her (it is revealed later in what way: he wanted more information on James, who he knew was being paid off by their grandfather but didn't know why). When Kat asks more about the serum, Annabelle gets sketchy and politely, but abruptly, kicks them out of her office.



Kat runs into James while at Tesla Corp. He tries to apologize for the fight. She tells him about the case. He notices the bracelet, but she brushes it off. She doesn't know why but it bothers her that he noticed and talks about theurgists. She shocks him inadvertently and uses the excuse that it is static electricity and rushes off.

Kat meets Oliver and gets in a cab and directs the driver to the hospital. Above them Annabelle makes a phone call and says to the person on the other end that "We need to talk". Outside, watching Kat get into the cab with Oliver, Silas answers.

## Ch 8

Katerina and Oliver go to the facility. The place feels off to Katerina, but she cannot say why. The head of the facility tells them that the psychologist worked there for many years but had begun working off site about a year ago. She was working on a project funded by a grant from one of Sebastian Abner's foundations. When Katerina asks why a Tesla Corp employee needed a grant from Abner, the man gives a press-release-type answer about research being performed to benefit the entire country, not just ones that the company can profit off of and doesn't adequately answer the question. Katerina leaves, furious that she is being stonewalled.

Oliver and Kat arrive back at the station house and are told the Captain wants to see them. They go into her office to find Silas. The captain tells them that Silas will be assisting on the case. Silas and Kat get into an argument where Silas points out that the theurgists won't talk to her. He then tells them that Annabelle called him about their conference. When Kat probes into why a woman being interviewed by the police decides to call him, Silas says that he is going to be filling Emily's position (whether he likes it or not). Katerina starts to shout and reminds the Captain that Silas is a persuader and questions whether or not he is using a spell. The Captain orders Silas and Oliver to wait outside the room. She digs into Katerina, explaining that she wants to know why the grandson of a hotel magnate holds so much sway. She orders Katerina to keep him close and use him for the investigation, then seethingly tells her never to question whether or not she is under a spell again.

Katerina takes Silas and Oliver into her office. Silas starts by showing her records that he had convinced a techie at the Empire

to give her. A week before Emily stopped coming to work, she received an email from the psychologist that contained the serum formula and a cryptic message. He stated that the techie found that Emily had tried to cover her tracks and thoroughly delete the email, but that it was first accessed by Sebastian's office (which was why the techie was able to recover it). He said that Annabelle agreed to talk, but not at Tesla. She would meet them at the Lotus.

## CH 9

Katerina and Oliver have to dress up to go to the club. Oliver drools a bit when he meets Katerina at her home. Katerina leaves a note for James. Silas shows up to take them to the club in his roadster.

They enter the club to find Annabelle waiting. She tells them that the psychiatrist had tried to contact her about a month ago. When Oliver asks why she didn't just tell them that earlier in the day, she says that she has concerns about talking at work. There are some theurgists that don't like Katerina and others that would, surprisingly, be on her side in cleaning up the corruption. She said the psychiatrist told her that she and "a friend" were gathering proof that Sebastian was paying to have illegal experiments done, but didn't say what the experiments were. She did, however, mention that the facility supplied the study with wanderers by paying crooked bobbies to round them up from the tunnels.

## CH. 10

Katerina is concerned about Dr. Dey and decides to search Emily's flat for any hints as to the doctor's whereabouts. At the flat, they find the doctor completely incoherent. The doctor has become a wanderer, which shouldn't be possible once a mark is sealed. She is muttering to herself about a mechanical man and potions and ancient spells (an illusion to the spell book). They notice too late that the Butcher has arrived to take care of the doctor. He is giant and has a brace with several glowing lights (each the color of a chakras- but not complete). The butcher attacks them and Katerina blasts him through the wall inadvertently. They go to look out and the butcher has disappeared.

## ACT III

### Ch 11.

Katerina should be a wanderer after performing that spell unsealed but isn't. That worries Silas. Oliver and Silas cover for Katerina with the bobbies but Captain Sen isn't that easily fooled. She pulls Katerina from the case. Silas tries to stand up for Katerina by saying that he is withdrawing his help if Katerina gets pulled, but the Captain calls him on it. Katerina is furious that Silas would get involved. Silas convinces Katerina to trust him.

### Ch. 12

Oliver takes Dr. Dey into protective custody. He is listening to her mutterings and something stands out about James and Tesla corp. He gives the woman over to a bobbie and leaves to follow his hunch.

### Ch 13

Silas is stuck on the phrases Dr. Dey repeated about the spell book. He believes that the butcher is really after it. He takes Katerina to their parent's old home to try to find it. When they reach the home, Annabelle is already there. She is determined to help. Katerina starts to question why the book is so important. Annabelle lets it slip that there is a way to control theurgist's powers. When Katerina asks more about it, Silas reveals that he helped their mother "cork" her powers so that she could never be marked.

### Ch 14

Oliver sneaks into Tesla Corp and finds paperwork connecting James to the project with Dr. Dey. He calls Katerina to tell her about the connection and what the serum was used for. He tells her to come right away.

Katerina is reeling. She tells Silas to never speak to her again and storms out of the house to find Oliver. Silas tries to follow, but is drugged unconscious by the butcher.

## Ch 15

Katerina meets Oliver at Tesla Corp. She is trying to convince herself that James is a potential victim but Oliver believes that he may be in league with the Butcher. They are searching the office when Dr. Dey appears from a secret room. Katerina follows her down to the Butcher's lab but Dr. Dey is too fast and disappears. Katerina is nauseated as she looks around at the body parts and slowly realizes that Oliver is right. Suddenly, there is a shot and Oliver falls. Katerina spins around finds James in the doorway. Before she can react, he stuffs a cloth over her mouth. As she starts to lose consciousness, he tells her he wishes she hadn't seen the place.

## ACT IV

### Ch. 16

Katerina wakes up tied to a chair in Silas' house. James is cleaning the mechanical device that Katerina had seen on the butcher.

James tells her about being hired by Sebastian to perform the experiments on wanderers with the end result of creating a person that could control all of the magic. Dr Dey was brought on because of her formula that was intended to re-open the seal and give the wanderers a fresh chance at being sealed (potentially restoring their memory). In tests, however, the magic disappeared but the madness remained. James found that, through his device, that magic could be collected. However, because the wanderers tended to be illegitimate children of theurgists their magic also tended to be too weak to work with. James first tried to remove the magic from Dr. Dey. She fought back, casting a spell to knock him out but making her a wanderer in the process. His first victim was addictive. He found that as a mundane, he finally had the power of a theurgist- his machine worked. He didn't however, share that information with Sebastian. James didn't think it was fair that magic only traveled along bloodlines, now he could have it, too. He added to his research, deciding to dissect the parts connected with the chakras to find out why magic didn't affect everyone. When Katerina told him about the spell book he decided that it probably had the answer to his problem.

After monologuing, he puts on the suit, morphs into the butcher.

#### Ch 17

Later in the lab, the doctor tries to revive Oliver who hit his head as he fell. His wound missed his heart and went through his collar bone. Oliver wakes and struggles to understand Dr. Dey. He panics when he realizes that Katerina is gone. Oliver rushes up the stairs with the Dr. to find Annabelle who tells him she was looking for Silas, whom she thought went with Katerina.

#### Ch 18

The butcher reveals Silas and threatens to kill him if Katerina doesn't find the book. Kat thinks quickly and \*\*\*something--- she does something and pretends to have the book\*\* At some point James realizes what she is and tries to take her energy. Silas gets free and takes the serum but when James tries to take his powers, Silas doesn't have magic. In the meantime, Katerina seals herself and uses her powers to destroy the machine. In James' flailing a fire is started and spreads. Katerina is weak from using magic and cannot lift Silas who's unconscious. Annabelle and Oliver arrives to help Katerina. Annabelle slips some of the serum into her pocket before helping Silas. James attacks and, this time, Oliver shoots him.

#### Ch. 19

Bobbies sift through the ashes and don't find James' body but don't tell that to Katerina. Oliver goes to the hospital. Annabelle takes custody of Dr. Dey and tells the group that she has officially quit Tesla Corp. Silas is out of his home and Katerina doesn't want to go back to the place she shared with James, so they both decide to go back to their parent's old home.

Katerina questions Silas about not having powers. He reveals he gave them up in order to protect her from Sebastian. He tells her about Sebastian's plans for the money he is embezzling, hints to other illegal activities in connection with Tesla, and why he wants to be or control a crown. She finds the box from Emily in her bag and opens it to reveal a key.

## Epilogue

Sebastian Abner is in his penthouse above the Empire Hotel. He receives a note telling him that Katerina has been marked.

## Revised Script Outline

### Teaser

Katerina Dalca chases a large man, Mickey Calhoun out into the alley. She approaches a rickety wooden fence that blocks a trash pile from view of the alleyway. She hears the man scream. She enters and finds him covered in blood and backing away from the trash pile. She moves toward where the man is looking to find a body lying on the trash minus the victim's spine.

### Act 1

Katerina and her partner, Oliver Johnson begin investigating the murder of two men who were murdered while transporting currency paper. Hints are made toward a serial killer, The Butcher, and a powerful theurgist family, the Abners. Katerina is disgusted by the Abners but doesn't tell her partner why. Meanwhile, Emily Abner is introduced. The duo are directed toward the driver's girlfriend.

### Act 2

The investigation leads to the shanghai tunnels where they encounter a wanderer (a theurgist who's mark wasn't sealed and has gone mad) and a healer who is attempting to help them. The healer is the girlfriend of one of the victims but doesn't want to help Katerina because of her past with theurgists. She eventually tells them about a cousin that threatened her to tell him the route the men took to deliver the paper. The investigation leads them to a counterfeiting ring on the edge of town. Katerina gets caught alone and one of the counterfeiters casts a spell that knocks her out.

### Act 3

The men are subdued and taken into custody. They are lower level but finally give up that there is someone very powerful pocketing the money and direct Katerina and Oliver to Mickey Calhoun. Mob enforcement gets involved and directs Katerina to go undercover to get information out of Mickey before he is taken in as they have yet to uncover who the big boss is. While undercover, Katerina is outed by the barkeep and Mickey makes a

break for it. In her chase, she discovers the body of one of the Butcher's victims.

#### Act 4

Katerina gets a call from Emily but ignores it. Emily is shown taking care of a wanderer, Dr. Miranda Day, and trying to reach Katerina. She is cursed out by the "gore twins"- the detectives on The Butcher case. Her main suspect, Mickey Calhoun, is so shocked by the body he goes into a catatonic state. She agrees to go home and finds her fiancé, James, waiting up for her. They fight. Emily wakes in the middle of the night to find her visitor missing. In the morning, Katerina gets an urgent call to the station. Silas Abner is removing Mickey Calhoun from their care under the direction of his grandfather, Sebastian. Katerina fights it but loses. Emily is shown in the tunnels under the streets looking for Dr. Day. Katerina gets told off by the captain, Mira Sen, and sent home. She leaves the office to find the gore twins taunting her and telling her about a lead they have regarding the butcher- Dr. Day. Katerina has an idea and leaves as she was ordered to do, to the surprise of Oliver.

#### Act 5

She drives to The Empire Hotel and confronts Sebastian Abner for being the director of the ring of counterfeiters. He reminds her that he is very powerful and can do whatever he wants. He also hints at their relationship. Katerina leaves and Sebastian orders Silas (who was hiding in the wings) to find Emily- who has been missing. At the same time, Emily is meditating and has a vision of Katerina becoming a theurgist and fighting The Butcher. She sits down to write a letter. Katerina discusses her conversation with Oliver later that evening at the bar but doesn't mention the reference to their shared past. Late that night, she goes home to find that James isn't home. There are flashes between her and Emily as the latter tries to find a book in Silas' house and begins to cast a spell while Katerina gives in and calls Emily. Emily doesn't hear the call because a menacing shadow enters behind her. The last image is of Dr. Day sitting alone in the tunnels, singing to herself.



## First Draft Outline

- o The Butcher is in his workshop. He checks the clock.
- o Emily starts a spell and is murdered by the butcher.
- o Katarina gets called to the scene.
- o She reveals Emily is her sister.
- o She opens the wine cellar with her own key.
- o Sabastian sends for her to come to the penthouse.
- o A bobby comes up and arrests Silas because the fingerprint on the latch matches his.
- o Eddie shows Katerina what the Iris showed.
- o Katarina questions Silas and confronts him with evidence- his fingerprints in the room, his **\*\*something\*\*** left in the tunnel. Silas talks about the fight at the club. He is surprised that the cellar was open. He reveals that the tunnels are of no use because the conservatory was built over the exit. Kat asks where he was last night, before he can answer Sebastian sends a lawyer to prevent Silas from talking further. Silas refuses to answer and, instead, provokes Kat to the point that she has him held. He smiles as she puts on the cuffs, to let her know he was doing it on purpose.
- o Oliver and Katarina are told by Cruthers that he's found the same solution in the other victims.
- o Katarina tells Oliver and Cruthers about going to live with their grandfather after their parents died. She touches Emily's mark. Zombie Emily sits up and passes her powers to Kat. Oliver tries to grab her but is shocked with a force that tosses him across the room. When it's over, Kat has the mark of the crown.
- o She goes to confront Silas. He tells her that he saw Emily last night and after she left he spent the whole night looking for her. He tells her not to cast and explains the orders to Oliver (the rules that govern the marks) - specifically, the well will close if she can withstand casting for 24 hours. She gets upset and she feels a surge of energy. Silas explains it's the magic trying to find a way out and makes her calm herself. She asks Silas to cast a spell to prevent her from casting. He tells her he can't. She storms out. Silas begs Oliver to watch out for her - that her mark puts her in danger.
- o Katarina covers her mark. She tells Oliver about her Grandfather.

- o Oliver and Katarina talk with Garcia about the Butcher murders. No evidence is ever left at any of the scenes in addition to bodies being mutilated. Neither are the same for Emily's death, which makes Katarina suspicious.
- o The Captain, Mira Sen, sends for them. She tells them that the solicitor has gotten Silas released. Oliver and Kat agree that Silas is being set up, but they don't know why or what the link is between this murder and the others. Katarina thinks about telling the captain about the mark, but decides not to. The captain directs them to a chemical specialist at Tesla Corps to analyze the solution.
- o Kat and Oliver decide to split up. Kat goes to interview the specialist. Oliver goes to the victim's families.
- o Katerina goes to interview Annabelle. She is genial enough, and knows who Kat is courtesy of a former relationship with Silas. Annabelle turns ice cold when she looks up the chemical signature and ushers Kat out right away.
- o Kat is leaving the building when Edmund stops her and pulls her into an empty office. He shows her the evening paper: a headline with Emily's face. He hugs her and asks what he can do. Katarina relaxes in his arms momentarily, and a slight surge of energy shocks Edmund. He gets excited and tries to look at her mark, but she pulls away. She gets angry that he is so excited and leaves.
- o As she heads down the front steps, Annabelle stares out the window and types a number into her phone. She says, "we need to talk"
- o Outside, watching Kat leave from his car, Silas responds, "Yes, we do."
- o Back at the office, Kat relates her experience with Annabelle to Oliver, who tells Kat that he stumbled onto something. He discovered the link between victims was an experiment performed by Tesla Corp. In middle of their conversation, she receives a message to meet Silas at his place right away.
- o Katarina reluctantly shows up at Silas' house, where he is waiting with Annabelle. She tells Kat that she cannot speak at the office in fear of losing her job. She gives her the information she can find on the experiments and the address of the research assistant- a healer. Silas tries to convince her not to continue with the investigation.
- o Kat and Oliver go to interview the healer. Her door is open and they go inside to find the place trashed. They come across the Butcher leaning over the healer with sparks

shooting out of her arm. They try to shoot the Butcher, but bullets bounce off. Oliver gets knocked out in the struggle. The Butcher comes after Katarina and knocks away her gun. Silas, who followed Kat, comes in and attacks the Butcher to get him away from her. The butcher is about to kill Silas when the power reigns up in Kat and she blasts the Butcher through the wall.

- o Kat gets suspended after the Captain flips out. Silas steals notes and a flash drive from the scene before getting kicked out.
- o Silas follows Katarina who's furious at him. He calms her down and takes her home.
- o The ride home is awkward and revealing of their complicated relationship.
- o Annabelle is at Kat's place when they arrive. She has concerns that Tesla Corp may be up to no good and doing a lot of "off the books" experimenting on casters.
- o The trio goes inside to compare information between the files that Silas stole and the information that Annabelle has. Kat puts together that the butcher is stealing powers from the casters. Kat still doesn't understand what that has to do with Emily. Silas panics over the lost spell book. He reveals that the book has spells that pre-date the Consilium- spells that they wouldn't want in anyone's hands. He also reveals the truth behind Kat's new powers and the reason she couldn't be marked before. Kat loses it and kicks them both out.
- o After they leave, Katarina notices an old map of the city that decorates her wall. It is of the old city. She compares it to where the bodies of the victims were found and notices they all line up along old Shanghai routes. She also notices that the conservatory has also been built in the park facing Tesla Corp- the center of the crimes. She calls Oliver and leaves a message to call her back right away.
- o Katarina goes back to the Empire and traces the tunnel back to its origin. It should dead-end at the new conservatory, instead a new section of tunnel has been built. It leads to an underground lab.

Chapter One

The Butcher checked his watch. The second hand ticked down to eleven-thirty. *Just enough time*, he thought as he pulled a surgeon's knife from his bag and flipped open the front page of the newspaper. He lightly traced around the evenings headline:

## BUTCHER CLAIMS ANOTHER VICTIM CITY ON ALERT

The body of Melinda Miller, a Muse from Langdon, was found in a trash pile near Duchantes Street around ten in the morning. Detectives have made little headway in the case, excepting official confirmation the gruesome murders are that of a serialist. Bobbies on the scene continue to express horror and frustration over the lack of evidence at the scene. Earlier today, the Mayor announced he has proposed a city-wide curfew on Theurgists until the murderer is apprehended.

A crooked smile formed on his misshapen face. He carefully tacked the article on the wall and admired his work.

A series of articles hung neatly above the line of glass jars. He adjusted one slightly, sending a human spine swishing about in the formaldehyde solution. A black card was fastened to the jar. *XC3F-2/5* stood out in neat white print followed by the date: 8 August 2014. Two jars with gruesome contents sat on either side, marked in a similar fashion. He drummed a large finger on an empty jar.

"Perfect order, ruined," he muttered to himself, turning to the computer sitting on a side desk. Pulling a handkerchief out of his breast pocket, he wiped away at the tarnish beginning to form on the brass embellishments. He tapped a metal key and the screen hummed to life. A map with several red dots appeared. The Butcher entered in commands until a single dot showed. *XC3S-1/1* flashed above the mark. *So inquisitive*, he thought. *Pity she couldn't wait her turn.*

#

Gas lamps flickered on their posts, dimly lighting the frost covered street. Emily's boot

heels made hard, rhythmic sounds as they met the cobbled stone. She moved quickly- the empty street made her feel exposed. She fought to remain calm, but a cackle of laughter from a nearby apartment sent her heart into her throat.

She clutched the locket at her neck as she turned to look. She held her breath and tried to convince herself she was overreacting when something moved in the dark. Her pulse pounded in her ears as a wave of panic rolled over her.

A roadster raced up the street, its headlamps lighting up the night. The alley was empty.

Tires squealing and electric engine whining, the joyriders took the corner on two wheels. A few moments later, a horse's frightened whinny pierced the air, followed by the angry cursing of a cabbie.

Emily forcibly let out a breath and wrapped the cloak tighter around her body. It wasn't the late November air that brought a chill through her, and she knew it.

*Keep it together. You're almost there.*

The soft glow of electric light spilled out across the marble stairs of the Empire Hotel. A bored night doorman paced in front of the grand entrance. As Emily approached, a too-eager smile appeared on his face.

"Good evening, miss," he said, swinging the leaded-glass door open for her. Emily barely registered his presence as she swept through the door.

The amber glow of the electric lights deepened the rich mahogany-lined walls. A smattering of business men lounged around in velvet seats, presumably waiting for a late train bound for home. The portrait of upper crust breeding, Emily melded into the ostentatious surroundings like a china doll on display. She surveyed the lobby for familiar faces and silently thanked God that she didn't recognize any one. She made her way through the hotel as she had done countless times before.

#

Emily rounded the corner to find a bouncer standing guard at a pair of solid wooden doors. Without a word, he flashed a circular red tattoo on his inner right wrist under a black box and the doors parted. She crossed the threshold into the club and paused a moment to allow her eyes to adjust to the dark. Hard, white marble stood out against soft black leather in the candlelight.

The club was packed- too full for anyone to notice her slip along the far wall to a door marked NO ADMITTANCE in gold filigree. A metal box with a black glass surface jugged out from the wall. Emily looked around to verify she wasn't being watched before lowering her glove to reveal a dark blue tattoo on her right wrist. She held it up to the box for scanning. A brief moment later there was a faint click of a lock and the doorknob gave way beneath Emily's hand.

She let the door close behind her and let out a breath she didn't realize she was holding. Rickety wooden stairs led down to, what amounted to, little more than a large hole in the ground. The space itself was less of an actual room and more of a remnant of the Shanghai trade. Overhead, a trap door that once served as a quick and dirty gateway to a life of servitude for poor, unsuspecting sailors was now sealed with pine boards and several layers of shellac. Emily stepped onto the smooth hard dirt floor and walked toward a stone wall at the back of the room. Without a moment's pause, she grasped a single small rock. The hinged stone popped open, revealing an oblong keypad. The keys comprised an inner circle of sequential numbers from one to seven, surrounded by an outer layer of symbols. As she pressed the keys in turn, they locked into place until the last key was pushed. She heard the last key click into place in the lock and a hidden door to her left swung open. Colored glass glittered in the flickering light as bulbs flared to life. Rack

upon rack of expensive wines filled the large hidden room from floor to ceiling.

"Where is it," Emily muttered to herself as she felt her way along the racks. Finally, she spotted it: a small break between two shelves near the floor at the back of the room. She knelt down and pried the wood panel off, leaving a space wide enough to fit her arm. She grasped around until her fingers found leather. She pulled what looked like an old-fashioned journal from its hiding place. The casing was dry and cracked and closed with a large, tarnished lock. Emily slipped off her gloves and opened the volume. She expertly flipped the hand written pages to the spell she needed.

Her hands reached up and unclasped the silver chain holding the small oval locket that hung about her neck. She pried it open with a fingernail. One side held an old wedding photo of a beautiful couple. The other had three smiling children, a boy and two girls. She brushed the photo of the children with her thumb.

"Forgive me," she whispered.

Emily placed the locket on the book. She took a deep breath, laced her fingers behind her neck at the base of her skull and closed her eyes. Deep blue sparks radiated from her hands as she chanted softly in Latin.

She was focused so intently on the spell, she didn't notice the figure emerging from the shadows behind her.

On the floor above, the barkeep went about his evening. He never heard her scream.

## Chapter Two

Everything about Katerina Dalca was a contradiction. Born of an Irish father and Romanian mother, even her genes couldn't agree. Dark violet eyes stood out against smooth, honey-colored skin. A messy chignon held back a mass of long black waves. Stray tendrils framed her face, giving her features an almost ethereal beauty. She held herself like that of a high-born woman, strong and proud, but there was something rough about her. Her clothes were surprisingly elegant, despite choosing trousers over the traditional women's skirts. She straddled the line between gentry and commoner- equally belonging to both but never comfortable in either.

She stood in the middle of a small bedroom on the second story of a modest brownstone. Early morning light streamed in through heavy pane glass windows. She tapped her boot on the hardwood floor and surveyed the damage. The room had been tossed. Blankets that should have been covering the bed lay in a heap on a chair in the corner. The contents of of a drawer were scattered across the dresser. Clothes littered the floor. She knelt down by the bed. Shoving aside a pair of men's shoes, she peered underneath.

"Damn it! Where is it?"

Finding nothing, she stood and went to the closet. She began rifling through pockets, piece by piece, and didn't notice the man entering the room behind her. Two arms, strong for their size, wrapped around Katerina's waist and lifted her off the ground. Katerina shrieked.

Edmund Janus laughed softly and put her down. He let her go, but only slightly. His hands

followed the line of her corset as she turned to face him.

"Could you have made a bigger mess? Another early morning I see," he said, leaning in for a kiss. Katerina pulled back.

"Another late night?"

"I know, I'm sorry. I fell asleep at the lab again." He ran his fingers through his light brown hair. The sheepish gesture made him look more boyish than he already did. He was short for a man, only a few inches taller than Katerina's five feet three inches, and lean. Wire-rimmed glasses and freckles completed the look, effectively hiding his thirty-five years. Katerina leaned in, catching a familiar scent on his white lab coat.

"Lavender?" Katerina arched an eyebrow at him.

"It was part of the experiment."

Katerina shoved him away.

"It was! Come on, you know me. I would never do anything to hurt you." He shrugged helplessly as Kat resumed her search, picking up the bedding and tossing it back on the bed.

"I know. The sad truth is I would prefer if it another woman. At least then I would know I was being stood up for something more substantial than whatever was at the bottom of a test tube."

"This is important, Kat. We're on the edge of a breakthrough. I can feel it."

Katerina moved to the dresser and slid most of the mess back into the open drawer, leaving a mobile telephone made of glass and copper and small revolver with a rosewood handle.

"Besides, it isn't as if you're always around. You are always running off for this call or that." Edmund continued.

"It was our anniversary, Edmund," she said, shoving the revolver into the holster at her side and turning to him. "We were supposed to be making plans."

"Katerina, I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking." He sighed and took her by the hand. His thumb gently slid across the small diamond ring on her finger. "This isn't about our anniversary, is it? Or last night or any night. You know I'm not the one who has been avoiding setting a date. If you don't want to tell your family..."

Katerina jerked her hand away in disgust and turned leave. Edmund grabbed her by the corset strings and pulled her back. One arm circled her waist, holding her against him. His other hand traced a line from her ear down to her collarbone, pulling slightly at her thin cotton blouse to reveal her shoulder.

"We don't have to tell anyone. We could leave tonight." His lips slowly traced the path on her skin left by his fingers. Katerina's breath caught. She leaned into him and reluctantly let the sensation wash over her. "I have some money saved. We could take an air cruise to London...or Madrid...or Morocco...anywhere your heart desires."

Her pulse raced faster with every brush of his lips.

"You would really leave your work for that long?" She angled her head to look into his deep brown eyes.

"If it means finally having you for my wife? Yes." He reached around to turn her body toward him. "The question is, detective, would you?"

She leaned in to kiss him, gentle at first, but deepening as his grip on her tightened. Her hands slid underneath his lab coat to unbutton his trousers. She reached in and touched the hard muscle of his abdomen and began to make their way down.

The phone beside them let out a shriek. The lovers froze.

"No...no. No!" Edmund let out a sound of disgust and buried his head in Katerina's shoulder as she reached for the phone. "Detective Johnson. Perfect timing. As always."

"Hello?"

"Hey Dalca, did you forget what today was?" The man's voice on the other line sounded amused.

"I'm going to take a shower," Edmund muttered and slipped off his coat. "A cold shower."

"Of course not," Katerina replied. She smiled as Edmund took a silver pocket watch out of his vest and set it neatly on the dresser before stalking out of the room. Katerina traced the filigree letters engraved into the watch: E.L.J.

"Can I tell Forrester when you'll be arriving," Johnson asked.

"Frigid, in fact!" Edmund called.

"Huh?"

"Forrester. She's been waiting for you for over an hour."

"Shit! I'll be right there." Katerina heard a bark of laughter as she tapped the small brass button to end the call.

"Kat?" She looked up to see Edmund standing in the doorway. "This was in the washroom. You might need it." He gave her a half smile and tossed to her what looked like a small leather billfold. She caught it with one hand and flipped it open. *Angel Bay Metropolitan Police Force* stood out against the bright metal badge.

"Thanks... I love you" She called after him.

"You'd better!" she heard Edmund reply from across the hall.

#

Katerina burst into the station. It wasn't much- the iron-fisted budget committee saw to that. It took a team of men to maintain the nearly two hundred year old building, not that they were always successful. The heavy, laborious machines of brass and steel the committee had the nerve to call computers were several mods out of date. In fact, hers had been so old she needed a new console when the picture tube finally burst. Her shoulders relaxed. Minuscule wages, little to no propriety, and a frustrating lack of resources, yet there was nowhere else she would rather be. She crossed the common area to find her partner, Oliver Johnson, leaning in the doorway to her office.

Oliver had been stuck with her from the beginning. He had transferred to the department from the Capital six months before Katerina became a detective. When he arrived there was a mad scramble of doe-eyed females to team up with him. Oliver was as handsome as they come- caramel skin, muscular frame, and hazel eyes- however, their hopes of garnering a suitor rather than a partner were quickly dashed. Rumors spread that he was cold and exacting. In a very short time, no one on the force wanted to work with him. When Katerina was promoted a few months later, her reputation had proceeded her. Their paring should have been a mutual punishment but, to everyone's surprise, they worked well together. She appreciated his no-nonsense ethics and, once he realized she wasn't after a husband, found he could be downright charming.

"Please tell me something, anything, came up to get me out of this," she said.

"Not a chance, Dalca. Forrester has all sorts of horrors planned for you. Be prepared, she may actually expect you to talk about yourself." Oliver's mock horror was spoiled by an irrepressible grin. Katerina punched him in the arm and peered into her empty office.

"Where is she?"

"Chambers. She thought you might have more privacy there."

"Forced psychoanalysis in a room used to interrogate criminals. Perfect."

#

Katerina found Miss Gertrude Forrester in the very last chamber. It was a small wood-paneled room- one of the few without an attached observational. She was a plump, impish woman



in a tight gray suit. Innumerable ruffles, multiple petticoats, and a penchant for waist cinching gave her the appearance of a puffed pastry losing its filling. Katerina noticed series of pea-green interlocking circles on her forearm, peeking out from underneath her sleeve. *Healer, my ass*, she thought, shoulders tensing.

"Detective Dalca, so good of you to finally join me. Your failure to appear at three previous meetings will, of course, be mentioned in my report," she said in a petulant tone. She looked up at Katerina with a smile that had all the warmth of a paper mâché mask on a Ringling Brothers clown. "Let's get started, shall we," she continued, her voice sticky sweet.

Katerina sat in the opposing chair without responding. Due to changes in staffing regulations, Internal Review had recently begun replacing suspensions for "unbecoming conduct" with these visits from Forrester.

"Detective, this department has a policy of tolerance. I am here to address the open hostility that you show the theurgists that you come across in your investigations. We need to improve upon your ability to deal with those individuals different from yourself if I am to recommend that you continue in your position." Katerina watched as Forrester wrote something in Latin on her large notepad. As she wrote, the black ink faded into the same sickly-colored green as the mark on her arm.

"If I want to continue in my position, I need to catch bad people doing bad things. The ability to use magic just makes them more dangerous."

"A criminal is only dangerous when you don't have the tools to handle them, Katerina. May I call you Katerina?"

"No."

"No?" Forrester pouted.

"No." Katerina leaned across the table and snatched the sheet of paper that Forrester had been writing on. "I don't handle pretension well, Miss Forrester. Why don't we just cut to the chase."

"Fine." Forrester leaned back in her chair. Her phony smile dropped and was instantly replaced by a malicious smirk. She was annoyed, but impressed. "The Review Board has decided that you are a bit of, well, a menace to certain individuals in this city."

"Individuals who happen to have the Chief Inspector in their back pocket."

"Exactly. So here is what is going to happen. You and that devilishly handsome partner of yours are going to start working on cases more suited to your...abilities. Leave theurgists to the grownups, okay?"

"Not a chance."

"Excuse me?"

"I'm going to be involved whenever, and wherever, I want. Every time a Founder acts as an enforcer with a pain curse. Every time a Pleasurer sterilizes one of her clients. And especially when a healer is sent to place a behavior modifier on whatever uncompromised police force we still have." She stood. Forrester's face turned a violent shade of red. "You can tell the Review Board that I was a 'menace' long before they came across me and I will be long after they've been replaced. I'm good at it. I enjoy it."

"Oh, yes. You have quite the history, don't you, *Katerina*? As it happens, very little is known about you before you applied to work as, what was it, a morgue assistant? Nothing, in fact." Her eyes narrowed to a fine slit as she stood to meet Katerina's gaze "There is no Katerina Dalca before ten years ago. So, unless you want life to become very unpleasant, you will fall in line."

"I could, but I won't." Katerina said flatly. "Besides, you don't have that power."

"I most certainly do..."

"No. You don't. If you did, you wouldn't be using a lame-ass charm. Your orders were to subdue me. And, now that you've failed, they'll send someone better suited for the task."

Forrester was livid. She opened her mouth to say something when the door swung open. Oliver looked from Forrester's murderous expression to Katerina's self-satisfied one. He attempted to hide a bark of laughter with a fake cough.

"Dalca, we've got a case."

"Coming," Katerina said sweetly.

Oliver shook his head as he walked out. Katerina turned back to Forrester before walking out the door. "Give my regards to your superiors."

"You're going to regret this," Forrester spat.

"I hear that a lot."

A few steps out the door, Katerina heard Forrester let out a loud shriek. Several heads popped out of various chambers along the corridor. A second later, Forrester rushed past her, ruffled skirts flying.

"Out of my way," she growled at a fresh-faced Bobbie unfortunate enough to be delivering files at that moment. Forrester shoved him, sending papers flying. Every Bobbie, detective, and Sargent in the room was frozen in rapt attention as Katerina made her way over to a waiting Oliver. Forrester's face was an impressive shade of purple as she stepped onto the elevator. "Your captain will be hearing about this," she screeched.

"Get in line," Oliver mumbled.

The elevator door cranked shut and, for a moment, only the lift grinding into motion could be heard in the stunned silence.

"Two minutes, forty-five seconds," a young woman in a freshly pressed jacket called. "Pay up, pricks!"

There was a round of grumbling as a large pile of bills were placed in her outstretched hand. Katerina's jaw dropped as Oliver reached for his wallet to pull out a note.

"You had a pool going?"

Oliver shrugged and added his penance.

"Good on yeah, Dalca." A man with fiery red hair and a thick Scottish accent held up his hand for a high-five as he passed her.

"So," she said, facing Oliver, "what's this case you were talking about?"

#

Fifteen minutes later, Katerina was sitting in the back of a carriage with Oliver. She shifted in her seat, anxiety growing the closer she got to downtown. At first she had been relieved to be called away from the nasty Miss Forrester. She knew she would pay for provoking her, but right now she didn't care.

"The captain didn't say *anything* about why she wants us there?"

"For the hundredth time, no."

"Nothing?"

"Just there is a body at the Empire and she wants us to meet her there." Katerina shifted again. Oliver sighed and turned to face her. "Look, I know you have this thing about magic and this place is spell-caster central, but the captain wouldn't be asking for kicks. She always has good reason."

"That's not what I'm worried about," Katerina said.

"Right. Abner." He raised an eyebrow. "Tell me again why you think that the king of theurgists has it out for you?"

"They don't have kings. Sebastian Abner just has power."

"Uh huh. And you would know, how?"

*Some things you are just better off not knowing,* she thought.

She was spared an uncomfortable silence by the carriage jerking to a halt. Oliver gave a card to the cabbie as she stepped out to face the Gothic monstrosity that was The Empire Hotel.

"That's odd," Oliver said, coming up behind her. "A body is found in the hottest spot in town. This place should be swarming with reporters."

"Must be someone important if Abner went to the trouble of keeping it quiet."

"Big enough to get the captain out here. You think it's the Butcher?"

For months Angel Bay had been witness to a gruesome killing spree- nine so far. At first the murderer had been content with stopping the heart and severing the victim's right arm but he had recently graduated to removing organs, leading the press to nickname him "The Butcher."

"It's Garcia's case. The Captain'd have no reason to call us."

Katerina hesitated a moment at the top of the steps. Without a beat, Oliver swept past and held open the door for her with a wry smirk.

Crossing the lobby, Katerina noticed a balding man whose blandly superior features were drawn and haggard. He kept dabbing at his red eyes with a handkerchief.

"Felix DePugh. Hotel manager. He's the one that called it in," Oliver said, noticing the direction of her gaze.

"M-Miss Katerina?" Felix's already pale face turned nearly translucent at the sight of her.

"Hello, Felix," she answered, kindly. Felix rushed to her, a fresh wave of tears welling up in his eyes. He wrapped his arms around her and held her tightly.

"Thank you," he whispered. "Thank you so much for coming."

"It's my job." Katerina glanced at Oliver over Felix's shoulder. She couldn't tell if he was more curious or amused.

"No," he said, pulling back. "It is more than that..."

"Mr. DePugh? Would you mind making the call, please." A statuesque Indian woman appeared behind them. Yards of vibrant silk wrapped around her athletic frame and long, black hair piled neatly atop her head. She placed a gentle hand on Felix's shoulder and gestured to the desk.

"Oh. Yes, of course." Felix smiled sadly at Katerina and patted her cheek.

*Call? Alarms went off in Katerina's head. Who did Felix have to call?*

"Captain." Oliver said, unconsciously straightening at the sight of the woman.

Captain Mira Sen could command in a whisper what others couldn't do with a shout. She spoke with only the barest trace of an accent as she addressed Oliver.

"Detective Johnson, you'll find Officer Briggs near the hotel's elevators. He will guide you down to the Lotus Club. I need to have a moment with Detective Dalca."

"Yes, ma'am." Oliver shot Katerina a worried look as he hurried away. She responded with a half smile.

"Ma'am, if this is about Forrester..."

"No, Katerina. I'm afraid I have some bad news."

## Chapter Three

At one hundred and ten stories and encompassing nearly three square blocks, the Empire lorded over the city. Just past the grand lobby stood a bank of elevators, a short way beyond that began a series of maze-like corridors. The building was designed to lead the wealthy and uninitiated to a series of flashy but unimportant lounges and shops, possibly even a gaming room or two where fortunes could be lost. But, for those with a mark, talent, and the right bloodline, the hotel held something better: The Lotus Club. That was where a theurgist could find the best training, the best clients, and, if the price was right, the best sex.

Katerina moved down the hallway in a daze. The Captain, following behind, remained silent as they reached the massive double doors. Katerina had almost forgotten how impressive they were. The doors made of African Blackwood spanned five feet each, stood twelve feet high, and were a foot thick. Distressed carvings covered every inch, depicting a bloody battle scene that looked like an ancient world war. The artistry was so detailed that distinct panels couldn't be found by any of the world's best experts. In fact, they were so well crafted that even the line where the two doors met flowed with the carvings so that, when closed, they appeared to be a solid piece of wood.

As they approached, the Captain made a small, surprised sound. Katerina turned.

"It is very strange. I could have sworn that scene was...different this morning...somehow..." She trailed off as she failed to recall the changes.

"It does that," Katerina said quietly.

A bobbie rushed to the door at the sight of the captain and strained to pull it open. The door didn't budge. Katerina heard a disgusted snort at her side. She turned to see a large bouncer watching the bobbie's face turn red with exertion.

"Mediocres," he muttered.

He crossed the distance to the wall in a single stride and placed his forearm under the box for scanning. The doors slid open, knocking the bobbie to the ground. The captain gave the bouncer a cold glare. He smiled back at her innocently- a smile that faded as she entered the club. Katerina looked up to see two cameras on the ceiling placed on either side of the door. Tiny gears clicked as the lenses trained on her.

"Welcome back," the bouncer whispered. Her shoulders stiffened at the venom in his voice.

#

As Captain Sen let the door to the cellar close behind them, Katerina was surprised to hear only two voices drifting up the stairs. She caught snippets of Oliver's low voice first, then the second: an older, resonant timbre that belonged to the stage rather than a crime scene. She could picture Cruthers well before she saw him- tall and lean, with a shock of white hair, and regal bearing carefully constructed to hide his dependence on the slender golden cane perpetually at his side.

She felt as if the world was moving in slow motion as she followed Captain Sen down the creaky wooden stairs. She caught sight of a black leather boot jutting out from beneath a cotton sheet and gripped the banister as a wave of nausea hit her. She looked away to find the captain staring up at her with concern. She took a deep breath to steel herself before taking the rest of the stairs.

"I was beginning to wonder if I'd come back to find you packing your things," Oliver said as Katerina reached the bottom stair.

"Oliver..." Katerina started.

"You weren't kidding when you said this would be high-profile," he continued without hearing her. He flipped open the sheet to reveal the body. "Emily Marie Abner. Granddaughter to

the man himself. Get this: she's one of them."

Oliver pulled off the sheet and held up Emily's right arm, revealing a dark blue mark on her lower right forearm above the wrist. Katerina tore her eyes away from the Celtic knots that formed the delicate design on her pale skin. Emily's dark auburn hair was a tangled mess of curls framing the unusual angle of her head, indicating a broken neck.

"I know," Katerina said, voice barely above a whisper.

"What do you mean, 'you know'?" Oliver looked at Katerina with a wry smile. "This woman had every moment of her adult life analyzed by the dailies and she never once showed an ounce of power. You really going to tell me you had this one pegged?"

"I know," Katerina said firmly, "because she's my sister."

## Chapter Four

"Is this a joke?" Oliver stared at each of them in turn, then down at the body as if he half expected Emily to spring back to life. His face hardened and he turned to the Captain.

"Ma'am, with all due respect, if this is true then we have no business on this case."

"Let me worry about that," she said, exchanging a glance with Katerina, "Bring Detective Dalca up to speed."

She turned and headed up the stairs. Katerina opened her mouth to say something to Oliver, but he cut her off.

"Miss Abner entered the hotel just before midnight," he said, flatly. "She was let into the club by the bouncer, didn't speak to anyone- just came directly down here. Entry log has the door opening for her at 11:52 pm."

"Wait, security has handed over the logs? Without a fight?"

"Security logs and witness statements were provided to the first officers on scene- Garcia and Montoya."

"What were the gore twins doing here?" Katerina felt the adrenaline kicking in. She circled around Emily's body, taking in the scene: body lying at an angle in the dirt; dress torn; caked mud on her body and dress; hair tousled as if it had been grabbed and pulled; bruises on her right arm.

No blood.

"A call went out that another theurgist had been found murdered," Cruthers chimed in. "They arrived under the assumption that it was The Butcher's doing. Unfortunately for them, it appears Miss Abner's neck was snapped in a struggle."

"Imagine their disappointment," Oliver said, dryly. "No guts and hostile witnesses. I bet they were over the moon when they got pulled from this case."

"I thought you said they got statements."

"I said the statements were provided. As in, ready and waiting. Aside from that, no one will speak to an officer on Mr. Abner's orders."

"You find your favorite grandchild murdered in your basement and you take the time to organize the evidence before calling it in?" Katerina's heart skipped a beat. *Sounds about right*, she thought.

"It gets better. Notice anything," Oliver asked.

"No mess."

"According to the logs, that door doesn't open between 11:52 and 6:05 this morning when the body was discovered. The liquid on her dress is wine but there are no broken bottles and no signs of a fight. She certainly didn't fall and break her neck, so where was she killed?"

Katerina stared down at the dirt. It was hard packed and reflective in certain areas from two centuries of use. It was too hard for footprints and too solid for the kind of dirt on her dress.

"Here's what I think: Abner kills her, dumps the body down here and pays the staff to cover it up," Oliver continued. Cruthers made a small sound at the back of his throat and shot Oliver a warning glance. He shrugged his shoulders sheepishly and thought about apologizing, but Katerina wasn't paying attention. She was focused on a half covered semi-circle on the ground along the far wall.

"He would never do it himself," she said, more to herself than Oliver. She walked over and stooped down before a large wooden crate.

"Help me move this," she called over her shoulder. "Careful, it's been moved recently. There may still be fingerprints."

After moving the crate a few feet, Oliver watched as Katerina felt along the wall.

"The Empire was built on the Shanghai trade... literally," she explained, finding the hidden latch. She flipped it open to reveal the keypad. "And you don't make money kidnapping sailors without discreet way of getting them to port."

*God, I hope this still works.*

She pressed a series of keys and the door slid open. Cruthers let out a low whistle. Bulbs popped to life, revealing utter chaos.

Shelves were toppled over, glass and wine scattered across the floor. Near the back of the room, a shelf that appeared to be attached to the wall stood at an odd angle. Katerina carefully made her way across the room, grasped the side of a shelf and tugged. It stuck for just a moment before giving way to reveal access to an underground tunnel system.

"Cruthers, can you..."

"I am on top of it, my dear," Cruthers interrupted her, pulling his receptor out of his pocket. It looked like a small compact that, once opened, had keys on one side and a split screen on the other. All of the calls that had come into the department scrolled across the screen to the right. After a few clicks, a dispatcher appeared to the left.

"Good morning, Cruthers. I have a completion notation by forensics at your location. Is this a new request?"

"Yes, Sally. Please inform the team that we have located the primary crime scene and that I will be remaining on site to supervise collection."

Katerina's head snapped up. She looked over at Oliver, who appeared as surprised as she was. Cruthers hand picked and trained every member of the department's forensics team- and he trained them to perfection. Their obsession with detail came as much from his guidance as their desire to please him. As it was, he only left his lab for the "interesting" cases. He did not need to attend a crime scene, let alone supervise one. He looked up at Katerina and gave her a small nod.

It was for her.

She returned the gesture and quickly turned away, fighting back the lump in her throat.

"Yes, sir," Sally responded. "Will there be anything else?"

"No. Thank you."

"Wait..." Katerina said. Cruthers paused. "Ask them to bring an Iris."

#

Twenty minutes later, the cellar was crawling with white uniforms. Several had casts with them. The little scanners were busy composing three dimensional models of fingerprints, footprints and any other tidbits the team could forward on to the department for processing.

A small man carrying what looked like an over-sized Fabergé egg tapped Katerina on the shoulder.

"Where do you want it," he asked.

"Over there," she said, pointing to a spot along the wall where the mess seemed to concentrate. He bobbed his balding, sandy blond head. A simple yellow mark flashed as he readjusted the contraption in his hands. Eddie was one of the few theurgists on the force and, Katerina had to admit, one of the good ones. He was shy and not a particularly powerful Muse but he had a knack for tech, especially the spell-related kind.

Cruthers motioned to the officers to clear the scene for Eddie. Eddie picked a level spot where Katerina had pointed to and, being careful not to disturb anything, set the diamond-encrusted egg on a delicate tripod. He pressed a button on the top and the object flared to life with a million blinding lights, like a disco ball lit from the inside. Katerina had to blink several times before her eyesight returned.

"Is this your first time with an Iris?"

Katerina nodded.

"Okay. So, imagine that everyone has a bubble of electricity around them, that's unique to them...like a fingerprint."

Oliver made a scoffing sound that he covered up with a fake cough as Katerina turned to glare at him.

"An aura," she offered. Eddie beamed at her.

"Exactly! Like a fingerprint, an aura leaves an impression. And the Iris is like a cast for auras- it uses a spell to recreate anything that happened at any given time."

"If this thing is so great," Oliver said, "why haven't you used it to catch the Butcher?"

"Tried. Nothing happens," Eddie mumbled. Oliver threw his hands in the air.

"Well, see...it's tricky." He rushed to explain. "You have to give me an exact time. When you're talking about time and energy, you have to pick your moment carefully. The spell soaks up all of the past energy in a space so it can only be used once and I can only give you ten, fifteen seconds, max. It's always a guess with those guys and we've just never gotten a view of the killer. But we'll definitely see the victim 'cos she was a theurgist and we tend to have stronger auras 'cos of the energy we use for our magic. Mediocres are a bit of a gamble 'cos they don't have as much energy, and sometimes if too much time has passed they might be a little fuzzy, but it's still been only a few hours so we should be good. If you know what time you want."

"Excuse us for a moment," Oliver said, grabbing Katerina's arm and pulling her out of the room. She squirmed out of his grip and braced herself. She could feel the tension rolling off him.

"Did the earth start turning backwards as I slept or have you completely lost your mind," he demanded.

"Look, I'm sorry. I know I should have told you..."

"I'm just your partner. Your personal life is your business."

*Just your partner?* Katerina felt as if he had reached out and slapped her.

"I don't know what's happening here, but *this*," he said, gesturing to the Iris, "is not you. We use facts to solve crimes, not magic. Cruthers couldn't establish a window of time she was killed in, let alone an exact moment. What exactly is your plan here? Take a wild guess and hope the killer shows up?"

"I'm not looking for the killer."

"Excuse me?"

"I want to know what she was doing down here."

"Private cellar. Fancy dress. I'm going to go with getting a bottle of wine and before meeting someone upstairs."

"Who? Why didn't they report her missing? How did the killer know she was here?"

"Maybe he's married or maybe he's the killer."

"No, I'm telling you, it doesn't add up. Even if it was a simple romance gone bad, Emily is- was- a control freak. She wouldn't be *here*. Not where grandfather could interfere."

"How do you know," he asked softly. "When was the last time you spoke?"

"She used to send letters every month or so. She stopped last year."

"And when was the last time you *spoke* to her. Face to face."

"Eleven years."

"Jesus." He ran his hands through his hair and sighed. "You don't belong on this case. You know that, don't you?"

"I have to."

"No, you don't."

"Excuse me, Miss Abner."

The voice came from a tall, elegant woman who had appeared on the stairs behind them.

"It's Dalca," Katerina corrected.

"Your grandfather is ready to give you his statement," she replied, icily.

"We'll be up when we're done here," Oliver said.

She looked over Oliver with an obvious disdain and made it a point of addressing Katerina.

"Mr. Abner will speak with Miss Dalca exclusively." She drew out Katerina's name like a bad taste in her mouth. "Those were the conditions your Captain agreed to."

Oliver's jaw tightened.

"I'll be there in a moment." Katerina said with all of the grace she could muster.

"I've been sent to escort you.."

"I know the way," Katerina spat. The woman glared at Katerina as she left.

"I don't believe this. What the fuck is happening here?"

"Oliver..."

"Four years. For four years you've been telling me what a bastard Sebastian Abner is. And now, all of a sudden, you're *Miss Abner*, investigating a murder at his command and I'm just supposed to act like everything is normal?!?"

A few curious heads appeared in the doorway at the top of the stairs as his voice raised to a fevered pitch. Katerina narrowed her eyes at them in warning and the bobbies scattered. She looked back at Oliver.

"I didn't agree to this for him," Katerina said, quietly.

"Look, I'm sorry about your sister. Truly. But every instinct I have is telling me that we need to be as far away from this case as possible."

"I need to know what happened. If that means facing my grandfather, so be it."

"Uh-huh. Well, you clearly don't need me here so I'll be at the station, in the real world, when you've returned to your senses."



Oliver stormed up the stairs, slamming the door behind him.

Katerina felt numb. Her eyes rested on Emily. *Shy, beautiful Emily*. Cruthers bent over slowly and covered her face with the sheet.

"You should have told him," he said gently.

"You already knew, didn't you," Katerina said, wiping away a tear.

"When a wild-eyed sixteen year old appears in the City Morgue to demand a job, one does his research. It may surprise you, but I knew your grandfather very well in our youth. I am familiar with the sort of man he has become and will always respect you for your determination to leave that world at such a young age. I never felt the need to pry, your reasons for distancing yourself from your siblings are your own. However, under the present circumstances, I think you should consider confiding in Detective Johnson."

Katerina nodded. Eddie's ruddy face poked out the stone door.

"Good. I believe Mr. Filchner is ready with the iris."

"Set it for five minutes after she arrives. That should give us a place to start." She turned and headed up the stairs.

"You won't be staying for the results," Eddie asked, nervously.

"I'll see you back at the station house. I have a date with the devil."

## Chapter Five

The lift came to a smooth stop. A young man in a neat suit pulled a lever to open the gate. The gold leaden door to the penthouse was opened by the woman Katerina recognized from the basement.

"Wait here," she said, coldly.

Katerina walked into the open foyer and immediately felt her eyes begin to itch. The penthouse was temperature controlled to protect the expensive furnishings and priceless works of art that filled the cavernous rooms. It was difficult to imagine anyone actually lived there, even for her. Every inch was designed to replicate the feel of a museum, beautiful and oppressive.

Katerina paused before an enormous oil painting. Two young girls and a teenage boy were positioned before a stately gentleman with cold, gray eyes.

"You would have been, what, six then?" Sebastian Abner's smooth, resonant voice sent a chill down Katerina's spine.

"Eight. It was after mom and dad died." She could still feel his fingertips digging into her skin as he forced her to keep still.

"Such promise," he said coming to stand beside her, "And look at you now. A detective."

She turned to face him. Time had not made him soft. His carefully tailored suit, athletic frame and coiffed silver hair cut an intimidating figure.

"Careful, Grandfather. Your disappointment is showing."

He gave her a smile that could have nearly passed for genial.

"Gretchen," he said to the woman, "feel free to take the rest of the morning for yourself."

"Yes, Mr. Abner."

She shot a disgusted look at Katerina as she swept out of the penthouse.

"Come along," he said, leading her to a large sitting area at the end of the hallway. He gestured to a large leather sofa and poured himself a drink from the bar.

"Please, Katerina, have a seat. We have some catching up to do."

"I'd rather stand. This isn't a social call."

"Always such a contrary child," he said with a mock playfulness. He sank into the sofa with a practiced relaxed air. The appearance of ease was perfectly maintained but his body remained taut, like a panther preparing to strike.

"Where were you around midnight?"

He chuckled softly.

"Leading with the big questions, I see. Have it your way. I was on a conference with a silk company I own in Beijing from midnight to a quarter past three."

"Awfully late for a business meeting. What was so important that it necessitated your participation?"

"Everything requires my participation. I maintain complete control over *all* of my interests."

Katerina's stomach clenched.

"I am sure Felix will be happy to provide the evening's phone records, if you would like to stop at the front desk on your way out," he continued.

"Yes, well, your records have been awfully convenient."

His eyes narrowed to fine slits. Katerina pretended not to notice.

"Felix called the police, correct?"

"Yes. Poor Felix was the one to discover her."

"What time was that?"

"Just after six. I had asked him to look after one of our VIP guests, personally. He had gone to the cellar for a bottle of champagne to make mimosas and found her body lying on the ground."

"What was she doing in the basement?"

"No one knows."

"Was anyone in the hotel expecting her?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"When was the last time you saw Emily?"

"We had lunch six weeks ago. Everything was fine."

Katerina raised an eyebrow.

"You hadn't seen your CFO in over a month?"

Something flitted in Sebastian's cold, calculating eyes. She had stumbled on a question he hadn't rehearsed.

"Emily had taken leave of her position late last year. The move was only temporary, so we didn't feel the need to make it public."

*Around the time she stopped writing*, Katerina thought.

"Why the change," she asked.

"She was under a considerable amount of stress between the company and your brother's antics. She wanted a vacation."

Silas Abner's escapades were legendary. There was hardly a week that went by that he didn't end up in the gossip columns regarding one tryst or another. But Silas was nothing new.

There was something he was keeping out, she could feel it.

Before she could say another word, the front door swung open and slammed closed with a deafening bang. Sebastian leapt to his feet.

"Grandfather," Silas yelled, slurring slightly, "I'm not gonna..."

Silas marched across the foyer, struggling to keep upright as he made his way to the parlor. His curly dark hair stuck out at odd angles and expensive suit was a wrinkled mess as if he had spent the night in yesterday's clothes. Katerina caught the scent of alcohol long before he made it across the room.

"Oh, shit," he said, catching sight of Katerina, "you really came."

"What is that supposed to mean," she spat.

"You know better than to think the police were the first call he made," Silas drawled.

"You're drunk. Why don't you go sleep it off before I ask you where you were last night."

"Assk me no questions, I'll tell you no lies." He said, grabbing Katerina by the shoulders to steady himself.

"Silas," Sebastian warned.

"Right, the solicitors wouldn't like that, now would they? Can't go messing up the story...gotta get it straight..."

Katerina's pulse quickened.

"Silas, this is an official investigation. Anything you say-"

"Silas be quiet," Sebastian shouted.

"Control the..." Silas trailed off.

"That's enough! This conversation is over. If you have any further questions, direct them to our solicitors." Sebastian's calm veneer was replaced by thinly-veiled hatred. He yanked Silas by the arm, pulling him off Katerina and momentarily knocking him off balance.

"Hey," he shouted.

Katerina heard the commotion outside a moment before Felix burst through the door.

"WHAT," Sebastian roared.

"Sir, I tried to stop them-"

Oliver stalked in behind Felix, accompanied by a handful of bobbies.

"What do you think you are doing," Sebastian demanded. "I made it implicitly clear to your Captain-"

"We aren't here for you, sir," Oliver interrupted and turned to Katerina. "Cruthers caught me before I got off site. The Iris got more than you bargained for."

Oliver nodded to a bobbie to his left, who took a perplexed Silas by the wrist and snapped on handcuffs.

"Silas Abner, you are under arrest for the murder of Emily Abner."

Katerina gasped. Silas wavered but did not struggle against the bobbies. His eyes seemed to lose focus for a second before he grinned childishly at Katerina.

"I missed you, Kitty Kat," he said before losing consciousness.

#

Katerina stood on the stairs and tried to catch her breath. She could see Silas slumped between two bobbies as the carriage pulled away. A coroner wheeled out a stretcher carrying Emily's body and a roller coaster of emotions hit Katerina all at once.

Her best friend was furious with her, her sister was dead and her brother was a suspect.

*What else could go wrong?*

\*

## First Draft: Pilot Script

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. STREET-NIGHT

By all accounts it is a modern age, just not the one we're used to. In this universe, streets are cobbled, women wear corsets, and Tesla won the energy wars. And...there's magic.

The fog-covered street is empty. LAUGHTER is heard from a nearby building. A woman's boot makes a harsh CLICK against the stone as she comes into view. EMILY ABNER pulls the cloak tighter against her red satin gown to ward off the night air.

We suddenly see a silver pocket watch resting in the center of a large palm. The seconds of an ornate hand tick by. The watch closes with a SNAP, suddenly obscured by stout fingers.

Emily pauses. She searches for the source of the noise. Oil-burning street lamps flicker along the drive but illuminate very little. A horse and chaise obstruct her view as it makes its way down the street. She quickens her pace.

She reaches the steps of an elegant hotel and is little-relieved by the glowing light. She pauses at the top for another look behind her. Nothing.

The DOORMAN greets her with an overly-enthusiastic smile.

DOORMAN  
Good Evening, Miss.

She brushes past him without a second glance.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY-NIGHT

Emily takes off her cloak and tosses it to a nearby BELLHOP with as little regard as given the doorman. The Bellhop bows slightly and scurries off to the front desk. He has a furtive discussion with the hotel manager, FELIX, and DESK CLERK, motioning toward her. Felix is clearly agitated by her arrival.

Emily is perfect- from the tailoring of her gown to the curl in her hair. The portrait of upper-crust breeding, she stands in the ostentatious grand lobby like a china doll on display.

The amber cast of electric lights deepen shadows. Mahogany-lined walls and plush velvet seats add to the rich tone. A handful of BUSINESS MEN are scattered about the room, busying themselves with the evening NEWSPAPER.

Attempting to compose herself, Emily absentmindedly rubs her gloves at the wrists.

She catches sight of the front page: "CASTERS ON HIGH ALERT-BUTCHER CLAIMS ANOTHER VICTIM" is plastered above the sepia photograph of a body covered with a heavily stained white sheet. There is a distinct absence of mass where the victim's right arm should be.

Emily shudders slightly and crosses the lobby toward the bar.

FELIX

Darling! We weren't expecting you.

Our Manager gives the Desk Clerk a dirty look as if he has made some horrendous error and comes rushing at her.

FELIX

Forgive me. Mr. Abner has already retired to the penthouse. It is quite late you know. But, we'll buzz you up right away, of course.

He motions for a guard inconspicuously stationed at a private lift.

EMILY

No!

His plastered smile falters a moment at her sharp tone.

EMILY

Thank you, Felix. That won't be necessary. I'm here on other business. There is no need to disturb him.

FELIX

Certainly, miss. If you need anyth...

EMILY

I know my way around. Please don't let me keep you from your duties. Good evening.

She hurries away from him before he can respond. He gives a sidelong at the Desk Clerk who simply shrugs. He looks back after her, concern showing on his face.

INT. HOTEL BAR- NIGHT

The sparsely lit bar makes a perfect setting for those with lecherous intent. Just as ornate as the rest of the building, couples find relative privacy in the high-backed booths before sneaking off to their rooms. Seductive MUSIC overpowers the HUSHED VOICES of a handful of lovers.

We see one such COUPLE sitting so close a piece of paper couldn't fit between them. The woman allows her partner to nuzzle her neck. She traces her finger across his arm, leaving a trail of ORANGE SPARKS on his skin. An orange geometric tattoo can be seen on her right forearm.

Emily glides past the lovers to a door marked EMPLOYEES ONLY. She notices the BARTENDER watching her. She NODS to him before entering.

INT. BASEMENT-NIGHT

Emily descends a set of rickety wooden stairs. The cellar is a hollowed out hole in the ground once used in the Shanghai trade.

The dirt floor has been packed smooth by a few hundred years of foot traffic. Although the hotel is fully electric, the basement still employs kerosene lamps...an odd choice given the large stock of alcohol filling the crates piled up around the room and along the stone walls.

She looks around the space as if searching for someone.

EMILY

Hello?

She goes to stack of empty crates at the back of the room. She goes to fit a key in a hidden lock, but stops as she notices that there is a small gap between the stones. She pulls on a crate, revealing a hidden wine cellar. A small section of shelving stands at an odd angle, opening to the city's old tunnels.

EMILY

Doctor?

We see the back side of a MAN with an oppressive figure as he steps out of the shadow behind her. She turns.

She GASPS in horror and tries to back away. He reaches out for her, his shadow darkening the screen. She opens her mouth to scream.

MAN

I'm afraid the doctor isn't in.

TITLES

ACT I

INT. BEDROOM- DAY

Early morning light floats through amber-colored windows. A small gray kitten is curled up on the windowsill. The master bedroom of the small brownstone would be small for one, but is crowded by two. Despite the close quarters, photographs of a loving couple make it warm and inviting.

KATARINA MORGAN, late 20s, eagerly searches for something. She bears a strong resemblance to our Emily, but a bit shorter and not nearly as controlled.

The tailored cut of her dress is suggestive of a born lady but the messy twist of her thick dark hair is less refined. She resides in both worlds; an heiress that prefers the servants to the masters.

A pair of heavy brown boots quietly make their way down the hall. Katarina doesn't notice as the man sneaks toward her. He wraps his arms around her waist and grabs her tightly. She SCREAMS.

DR. JAMES JANUS LAUGHS and spins her around. He puts her down and gives her an affectionate kiss.

JAMES

Another early morning?

She smirks at him.

KATARINA

Another late evening?

He looks sheepish.

JAMES

I'm sorry, darling. There has been so much going on at the lab.

KATARINA

I know but, if you keep coming home at dawn smelling of lavender, I may get suspicious.

JAMES

You know I would never do anything to hurt you.

She takes the intricate SILVER POCKET WATCH dangling from his breast pocket. She turns it over in her hands and runs her fingers over the inscription: ALL MY LOVE, ALWAYS KEM.



KATARINA

Of course you wouldn't. After all,  
I carry a pistol.

She places the watch in his breast pocket and rests her hand over his heart. A diamond engagement ring sparkles on her finger.

KATARINA

Speaking of which, have you seen...

She catches sight of what she has been searching for and pulls away.

KATARINA

Ah, found it.

She holds up a POLICE BADGE and heads out of the room.

INT.PARLOR- DAY

James follows Katarina down the stairs. The parlor of the home is equally tight and just as cozy.

JAMES

I'll be home at a reasonable hour  
tonight, I swear.

KATARINA

You might but I can't promise I  
will. I received a call from the  
captain this morning ordering me to  
the Empire Hotel.

JAMES

The Empire? But I thought...

KATARINA

I was informed, in no uncertain  
terms, that it would mean two weeks  
suspension if I refused.

JAMES

Then I guess we'll have to steal  
moments where we can.

He grabs her and pulls her in for another kiss. The PHONE RINGS. James GROANS and picks up the receiver.

JAMES

Hello?

Katarina tries to pull away to leave but James holds her tight. She smiles and rests her chin on his chest.

WOMAN  
(V.O.)  
Is this the Morgan residence?

The snooty voice on the other end pronounces Morgan with a hint of disdain.

JAMES  
Not for much longer.  
(beat)  
Yes. This is Katarina Morgan's home.

Katarina's attention piques. She adjusts her head to listen to the woman on the phone.

WOMAN  
(V.O.)  
Please hold for Mr. Abner.

Katarina pulls out of James' grasp and races out the door.

KATARINA  
Gotta go!

Before the hold music starts, the front door slams behind her. James stands there as the music plays, stunned.

EXT. HOTEL- DAY

Katarina arrives at the Empire Hotel in a carriage. The street has lost its menace in the daylight and exchanged it for the intimidation and desire of high society.

She pays the DRIVER and is about to exit when a sleek black electric ROADSTER pulls up to the hotel. The DOORMAN rushes to open the vehicle door.

Katarina sits back to hide from view as SEBASTIAN ABNER exits the vehicle. He is tall, with a full head of silver hair and is incredibly fit for a man pushing eighty. The Doorman is quick to usher in the impressive and slightly menacing figure.

DRIVER  
Are you stayin' or goin'? 'Cause I got runs to make.

Katarina exits the cab. A small CHIME is heard. She pulls a glass and metal cell phone from her pocket. The word JAMES lights up the screen. She turns off the phone.

She makes her way across the street to a waiting DETECTIVE OLIVER JOHNSON. He is a lean, muscular black man nearing forty with intelligent eyes and a no-nonsense manner.

JOHNSON

I'm surprised you came without a fight. Took you're sweet time about it though, didn't you?

KATARINA

I'm here now. What have we got?

JOHNSON

Female. Thirty-five. Caster. Bartender found her in the cellar early this morning. I was expecting press seeing as the hotel's owned by Sebastian Abner, but it looks like the old man's called in a few favors to keep it quiet.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY-DAY

KATARINA

Caster? Is there a link to the others?

JOHNSON

Doesn't look like it.

A haggard Felix is speaking to a couple of BOBBIES at the far end of the lobby.

KATARINA

So what am I doing here?

JOHNSON

The woman was in an argument a few nights ago. We tracked the guy down but, here's the kicker, he won't talk to anyone but you.

KATARINA

Me? Why?

JOHNSON

I guess you'll find out.

They head toward Felix. He spots Katarina and suddenly looks as if he's seen a ghost.

FELIX

I...um...M-miss Katarina. Are you here for...

She shows him her badge.

KATARINA

Detective. I'm here about the murder.

JOHNSON  
(to a bobbie)  
Where is he?

The Bobbie gestures to the bar. Felix opens his mouth to say something but doesn't get the chance.

KATARINA  
It's nice to see you again, Felix.

Katarina heads to the bar. Johnson follows.

JOHNSON  
First name basis with the help?  
Here I thought you didn't care for  
this end of town. Something about  
too many casters.

KATARINA  
You have no idea.

INT. HOTEL BAR- DAY

The bar is nearly empty. A GROUP OF BOBBIES crowd around a small table. A roar of LAUGHTER emits from the group.

KATARINA  
So, who is this guy anyway?  
Husband? Boyfriend? What?

JOHNSON  
That's the best part. It's the  
prodigal son himself, Silas Abner.

The crowd around the table parts. We see SILAS ABNER lounging in the center telling stories and playing with cuffs that should have been around his wrists. His hair is tousled and his expensive suit is wrinkled, as if he spent a very long night out.

KATARINA  
Oh, hell.

Silas spots Katarina. A Cheshire cat grin spreads across his face.

SILAS  
Well, if it isn't my favorite kitty  
Kat. Finally decided to grace us  
with your presence, huh?

A few of the Bobbies start to LAUGH.

BOBBY #1  
(under his breath)

Kitty cat?

Katarina gives him a withering look that stops the snickering cold.

KATARINA

I believe you all have work to do.

The Bobbies scatter.

JOHNSON

Do you two know each other?

SILAS

(to Katarina)

He's joking, right?

JOHNSON

You are awfully chipper for a man being questioned in a homicide investigation.

SILAS

It's a fine line between comedy and tragedy, detective.

JOHNSON

What is that supposed to mean?

KATARINA

It means being a jackass is par for the course. Put those back on him.

She gestures to the cuffs. Johnson takes them off the table and holds them up in front of Silas.

Silas petulantly holds up his hands, exposing a circular sky blue tattoo on the inner side of his right wrist. The patterns are fine and geometric. It is almost as if the artist couldn't decide on Celtic, Chinese, or East Indian patterns so he put in all three.

SILAS

I have to say, little sister, for a woman without powers, you certainly have a way with these boys. Is this really necessary?

KATARINA

The cuffs temporarily disable your abilities so we can...

JOHNSON

Wait. I'm sorry. Did he just call you 'little sister'?

SILAS

Morgan was our mother's name.

(to Katarina)

You know, if you really wanted to hide, you probably shouldn't have had your photograph in the newspaper all those times.

Detective Johnson gapes at Katarina as if he's looking at her for the first time.

JOHNSON

You're an Abner?

SILAS

I really expected a fine officer such as yourself to know who he was working with.

Johnson clenches his fists as if he is pondering wrapping them around Silas' neck. Katarina takes a seat directly across from her brother.

KATARINA

That was a long time ago. Now, thanks to you, I have a murder to solve. You were seen arguing with the victim. What was it about?

SILAS

I don't know.

KATARINA

I'm here to talk. If you aren't ready, I have a rather uncomfortable cell to put you in until you are.

SILAS

You don't really think I had something to do with this, do you? Come on, you know me.

KATARINA

Like I said, that was a long time ago.

SILAS

Get off it! Alright? We get it. Jesus, I really thought you would let it go just this once.

She stands to leave.

KATARINA

Oh, give me a break, Silas. You have been getting into scrapes since you were ten. Persuasion and

well-paid barrister will take care of your problems, just like always. You don't need me.

SILAS  
You think you're here for me? Oh, God. You don't know.

KATARINA  
Know what?

Silas jerks to his feet.

SILAS  
(to Johnson)  
You were going to let her go down there without telling her?

JOHNSON  
No! I mean...at least not...

Katarina places herself between the two men and faces Johnson.

KATARINA  
Tell me what, Johnson?

He's suddenly unable to meet her gaze.

JOHNSON  
Look, Morgan. I didn't know. The lady...the woman in the basement...

SILAS  
(Softly)  
It's Emily.

INT.BASEMENT-DAY

CRUTHERS  
Emily Marie Abner.

Medical examiner and crime scene investigator rolled into one, the old man going simply by CRUTHERS, moves blithely around the scene.

BOBBIES move busily around the room, but carefully avoid getting in his way.

JOHNSON  
Bartender saw her come down her a little after midnight. Didn't see her come back up and thought it was a bit strange. He came down to check on her after closing and found her like this.

Cruthers pulls the sheet back, revealing Emily sprawled out in the dirt, head at an odd angle. Katarina takes a deep breath and squares her shoulders.

CRUTHERS

As you can see, her neck's been snapped.

He moves to show her the dead woman's arm. Her right wrist bears a mark similar in style to Silas', however, the pattern is composed in a deep indigo blue.

CRUTHERS

She's been marked. A rare one. Pity. Such a beautiful girl. I never knew she was a caster.

KATARINA

No one did outside of the family.

Cruthers gives her a questioning look. Behind her, Johnson MOUTHS, 'don't ask'.

KATARINA

Must have been a slow night if the barkeep kept track. Did he see anyone else?

JOHNSON

No one. We figure the perp must have snuck in earlier in the day and left when the bartender was occupied.

KATARINA

That door is solid oak. There is no way anyone could tell if the coast was clear. He left through another exit.

(to a Bobby)

Bring Silas down here.

The Bobby runs up the stairs.

JOHNSON

What are you talking about?

KATARINA

This wasn't where she was killed. She was placed here.

Silas trots down the stairs. He spots the body and shudders slightly.

JOHNSON

The bartender saw her come down.



There's nowhere else it could have been.

SILAS  
That you know of.

KATARINA  
(to Silas)  
I need your key.

Silas holds up his hands- still in cuffs. Katarina rolls her eyes and takes a ring of keys from his pocket.

Kat goes to the hidden door. She flicks open the small brass plaque that hides the keyhole and pulls the door open. Inside, bottles have been knocked off the shelf. Rope fragments and a pair of women's gloves lie on the ground.

JOHNSON  
A secret cellar?

SILAS  
Whatever you say about the old man, he has excellent taste in wine. And severe trust issues.

KATARINA  
It's not the only secret.

Katarina goes to the false shelving. She pulls a lever and it slides open.

CRUTHERS  
Oh, my.

JOHNSON  
How did you...?

KATARINA  
Her dress is dirty and her wrists are bruised but the ground is undisturbed. And there's this.

She picks up one of the gloves.

SILAS  
Her gloves. She always hid her mark.

She goes back to the body and crouches down. She gently takes Emily's right hand and angles it to show the bruising.

KATARINA  
These are rope marks. Can you think of a reason someone would tie up a Seer?

JOHNSON

To find out what she knows.

Suddenly, the hand grips Katarina's right arm at the wrist. Katarina tries to pull away but cannot. The corpse bolts upright as the lights go out.

Bright BLUE SPARKS shoot out around the hand gripping her arm.

Katarina's body convulses with the force of an electric shock.

JOHNSON

Morgan!

SILAS

No! No one touch them!

As Emily begins to speak, her haunting voice echoes against the stonework.

EMILY

Lux vera. Visus verum. Dabo vobis  
omnia.

(True light. True sight. To  
you I give all)

The lamps spark back to life as the body crumples to the ground.

Katarina clutches her arm and gasps for breath.

Where Emily's hand gripped her arm, Katarina finds a deep purple mark tattooed into her skin.

KATARINA

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

ACT II

INT. STATION HOUSE- DAY

The room is full of wood, brass, and brick. Floor to ceiling pane glass windows fill an entire wall, flooding the room with light. On wooden desks, brass metal holds up monitors attached to typewriter keyboards. DETECTIVES and BOBBIES mill about the room, going about their day.

The elevator door opens. Katarina drags Silas in by the ear, still cuffed and bending at the hip to match her diminutive height.

The officers in the room stop to watch their progression.

KATARINA

In there.

She shoves Silas into an interrogation room and motions a FEMALE BOBBIE standing nearby.

KATARINA

Watch this door. No one in the observation room. No interruptions. Understand?

FEMALE BOBBY

Yes, mam.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM- DAY

Katarina SLAMS the door behind her. Silas is pacing around the stone-walled room.

KATARINA

Spill it.

SILAS

What?

KATARINA

What in the hell was that?

SILAS

If you're referring to that zombie trick, you are asking the wrong man.

He sits. He holds out his arms, waiting for her to take the cuffs off. She regards him a moment before obliging.

SILAS

It wasn't a spell, Kat.

She sits across from him.

KATARINA

What do you mean, it wasn't a spell. What else could have brought her back like that?

SILAS

How should I know?

He leans back in the wooden chair, arms crossed.

KATARINA

I wasn't the first one to touch her body, Silas. This was intentional and right now it's the only lead I

have to find out who killed our sister. Is it possible...

SILAS

That he killed his favorite just to get to you? Not a chance. No caster has that kind of power.

Katarina mimics her brother's movement. Her brow furrows in concentration.

SILAS

Hey, its been a rough morning. Can't we get coffee or something?

INT. KATARINA'S OFFICE- DAY

Katarina's office is comprised of a small desk and a large stack of FILES. Silas takes a FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH off the desk. It is of a much younger Katarina flanked by Silas and Emily in front of a large manor house.

Katarina enters and hands him a CUP of coffee.

SILAS

When was the last time you spoke?

She notices the photograph he's holding. She takes it from him and places it on a small shelf.

KATARINA

We wrote every few months or so. Why did you ask for me, Sye?

SILAS

She told me to.

KATARINA

What?

SILAS

What I said earlier, about not knowing what the fight was about was true. Until the other night, I hadn't seen her for almost a year. I thought that she ran away, too. When she showed up at the club...

He runs his fingers through his hair.

SILAS

That controlled manner that she had was just...gone. She was screaming and yelling and none of it made sense.

KATARINA

Was that the last time you saw her?

He stands and begins to pace the room.

SILAS

No. I thought it would be the way she ran off, but then she appeared on my doorstep last night. She was scared. Really scared. She made me swear if anything happened to her that I'd find you.

KATARINA

Did she give you any clue as to what she was afraid of?

SILAS

Nothing. I went to get tea. When I came back into the parlor she was gone.

He sits down wearily.

SILAS

I searched all night. I wanted to call you.

A tear falls down his cheek. Katarina reaches out to take his hand but stops herself.

SILAS

Why didn't she stay?

INT. STATION HOUSE- DAY

Katarina follows Silas out of the office.

There is an awkward pause. Katarina begins to say something to Silas but then looks as if she changed her mind.

KATARINA

Go home. I'll be in touch if we come up with anything.

SILAS

Listen, about your mark. When it happens...

KATARINA

It won't.

SILAS

It's not that simple.

KATARINA

I can survive twenty-four hours, if  
just to be done with it for good.

His expression is pointedly skeptical. She SIGHS.

KATARINA

Go get some sleep. I promise I'll  
call when I find something.

She turns and walks away.

He looks at the elevator. Instead of walking toward it, he  
crosses the room to the door marked CAPTAIN.

INT.STATION BASEMENT HALLWAY- AFTERNOON

Katarina and Johnson walk down a sparsely lit plaster-lined  
hallway towards Caruthers' domain.

JOHNSON

So, he was with her in the hours  
before her death and you still  
don't think he had anything to do  
with it?

KATARINA

There is no motive.

JOHNSON

Maybe he needed information about  
when the Old Man was going to kick  
off and she refused.

Katarina's eyebrows raise. He smiles sheepishly.

JOHNSON

Sorry. That's gonna take some time  
to get used to.

KATARINA

He wouldn't need ropes. Sye's a  
Persuader. You saw it. A little  
banter with the bobbies and voila!  
No more cuffs.

They reach the large metal door with MORGUE in gold  
calligraphy scrawled across the frosted glass window.

JOHNSON

What makes you so certain that he  
didn't mess with your head?

KATARINA

It doesn't work on me. Never has.  
And if had he used it on you, we  
wouldn't be having this  
conversation.

INT. MORGUE- AFTERNOON

Katarina and Johnson enter the morgue. Subway tiles reach from the floor to the ceiling. The afternoon light streams down from the ground-level windows. Rows of rounded metal doors line one wall where bodies are carefully stored away.

Cruthers lays out a series of CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHS on a clean examining table.

KATARINA

You said you found somethi...

She stops short as she realizes Cruthers is not alone.

Silas sits casually on the edge of the desk. He is freshly shaven in a crisp new suit.

KATARINA

What do you think you're doing? I told you to go home!

CRUTHERS

Young Mr. Abner has convinced the Captain to take on a consultant.

Katarina gives her brother a murderous look.

SILAS

Wait! Don't kick me out yet. Just listen.

CRUTHERS

He came to me with a theory that proved useful. It appears our Miss Abner is another Butcher victim.

JOHNSON

That's impossible. The body was left intact.

CRUTHERS

True, but her chemical panel came back with the same compound found in the others.

KATARINA

What compound?

JOHNSON

Each victim appears to have been

given an injection prior to their deaths.

Katarina picks up a PHOTOGRAPH off of the table. It is of an arm, relieved of its torso. The shoulder looks like it was burned off the body.

KATARINA  
Were any of the others restrained?

CRUTHERS  
No. Just her.

She begins to count off on her fingers.

KATARINA  
So, walk me through this. He kills only casters...dismembers the right arm...uses surgical tools to cut out organs...

JOHNSON  
Never the same ones.

KATARINA  
And, before that, injects them with... what? Some kind of sedative?

CRUTHERS  
Who knows? I haven't been able to identify it.

JOHNSON  
That's why we've stalled. Nothing about this case makes sense.

Silas hops off the desk and snatches an IMAGE of the chemical compound off the table. He heads for the door.

SILAS  
C'mon, Kat. We're going for a ride.

EXT. TESLA CORP- AFTERNOON

The Tesla Corp resides in a large Art Deco skyscraper surrounded by gabled buildings at the heart of the city. A massive Tesla coil rests at the top, an oppressive reminder of the corporation's technological achievements.

Silas pulls up in a flashy silver roadster.

KATARINA  
What are we doing at Tesla Corp?

SILAS



Finding out what that chemical is.

He gets out and tosses the keys to the waiting VALET.

INT. TESLA CORP HALLWAY- AFTERNOON

The building packs EMPLOYEES like bees in a hive. Silas and Katarina weave through the hallway past rooms filled with bottles and tubes, exotic liquids and people in lab coats.

Silas stops in front of a door. The frosted glass is marked DR. ANABELLE STEPHENSON. Silas hovers before the door a moment. Katarina looks from the sign to Silas.

KATARINA

Okay Casanova, what did you do to her?

Before he could protest, the door swings open revealing a statuesque blond in a white lab coat.

ANNABELLE

Oh! It's you. What do you want?

She leans on the door frame, arms crossed.

SILAS

I- we- need a favor.

ANNABELLE

Of course you do.

She looks over Katarina.

ANNABELLE

I suppose you're his latest victim.

SILAS

She's my sister, Annabelle.

Annabelle looks puzzled, but only for an instant. She straitens up.

SILAS

Emily is dead. We think she was drugged, but we don't know what it is.

He hands her a DRAWING of the chemical compound.

ANNABELLE

It's synthetic, I can tell that much. It may take some time to identify. I'll do the best I can.

SILAS

Thanks, love.

He attempts to kiss her on the cheek. Her glare stops him. He awkwardly nods and turns to leave with Katarina.

ANNABELLE

Silas?

They stop.

ANNABELLE

I'm sorry. For you both.

EXT. TESLA CORP- AFTERNOON

Katarina and Silas head down the stairs.

KATARINA

We need to get back to the station and figure out why Em was so different from the others.

Silas signals the Valet for his vehicle.

JAMES

Katarina!

James rushes toward them.

JAMES

I've been trying to reach you all day.

Katarina shuffles awkwardly under Silas' gaze.

KATARINA

I'm sorry. We've been absorbed in the case.

JAMES

We?

He notices Silas for the first time.

KATARINA

Dr. James Janus, meet my brother, Silas.

At the mention of 'brother', James wraps a protective arm around Katarina's shoulders. He sticks out his right hand.

JAMES

Her Fiancée.

Silas sizes him up before taking his hand for a too-firm handshake.

SILAS

Pleasure.

JAMES

(to Katarina)

Can I speak with you, please?

EXT. TESLA CORP GARDEN- MOMENTS LATER

James pulls Katarina to a small garden at the side of the building.

JAMES

What is going on? First I have to field an out-of-the-blue call from your grandfather, not pleasant by the way, then I hear on the radio that your sister has been killed. Now, I find you here with your brother- a man you haven't spoken to in ten years.

KATARINA

I know, I'm sorry. I...

She nervously brushes a strand of hair behind her ear. As she does, James notices the mark on her wrist.

JAMES

You've been marked!

He grabs her arm excitedly. His finger traces the lines.

JAMES

How? I thought you didn't have the bloodline. I mean, this is amazing. I've never seen one like this. Have you tried anything? Do you know what you can do?

KATARINA

It disturbs me how much you know about casters.

She jerks her arm away from his grasp.

KATARINA

I have to go.

JAMES

Darling...

She storms away.

INT. SILAS' ROADSTER- MOMENTS LATER

Silas is waiting in the roadster. Katarina slams the door as she gets in.

SILAS  
Were you going to invite me to the wedding?

KATARINA  
Don't. Just take me back to the station.

He slams the vehicle into gear and speeds away.

INT. KATARINA'S OFFICE- EVENING

Katarina puzzles over crime scene PHOTOGRAPHS of her sister and the other victims. She stands and gazes out the window at the darkening city. She catches sight of the PHOTOGRAPH of her and her siblings in the reflection. She turns and takes it off of the shelf.

KATARINA  
How did you do it?

There is a soft KNOCK at the door. Silas enters.

SILAS  
Can we come in?

KATARINA  
We?

He holds the door open for Annabelle.

ANNABELLE  
We haven't been formally introduced. I'm Annabelle Stephenson. It's nice to finally meet you.

Katarina's eyebrows raise. Silas pretends not to notice.

SILAS  
Tell her what you told me.

Annabelle takes a seat.

ANNABELLE  
Your sister. She was a Butcher murder, wasn't she?

KATARINA  
How did you know that?

ANNABELLE

I ran a check on the compound you gave me through our database. I was expecting to rule out what it couldn't be. What I found was an exact match.

She pulls out a few cream-colored pages filled with test results and places them on the desk.

ANNABELLE

It's part of an experiment. Most of it is confidential, but what I could piece together about the participants seemed to match descriptions of the victims.

KATARINA

Do you know their names?

ANNABELLE

No. But there was a letter from a research assistant in the file...a friend of mine. She didn't come into work today and she isn't responding to calls.

SILAS

She's a Healer.

Katarina takes the papers and looks at them.

KATARINA

The compound. What is it for?

ANNABELLE

Some sort of amplifier, I think. The tests measured the amount of energy flow during a transfer between casters.

KATARINA

Like when a caster is Marked?

ANNABELLE

I suppose so.

Katarina frantically begins to flip through the PHOTOGRAPHS.

SILAS

What? What are you thinking?

KATARINA

The arm.

She finds the image of a DETACHED ARM she was looking for.

KATARINA

There. Do you see those marks?

She points to the ragged, gelled black marks where the arm met the shoulder.

SILAS

Yeah. Cruthers said the cut was cauterized somehow.

KATARINA

Those aren't burns, they're scorch marks. The killer isn't making them use their powers.

SILAS

He's taking them. We have to find that assistant.

INT. APARTMENT HOUSE HALLWAY- EVENING

Silas and Katarina move down a dimly-lit hallway. An emergency lamp is burning in place of the electric lights.

KATARINA

You shouldn't be here.

SILAS

You didn't call your friend, Detective Johnson. I'm not letting you go in alone.

Before Katarina can argue, a woman's SCREAM is heard at the end of the hall. Katarina and Silas look at each other. They race to the end of the hall. A few residents peak their heads out of their doors. Bronze LETTERS mark out 15B on a door that has had the lock smashed in.

INT. HEALER'S LIVINGROOM- MOMENTS LATER

Katarina enters with her pistol drawn. She motions to Silas to stay outside. He follows anyway.

KATARINA

Miss McPhillips?

The apartment is dark and disheveled. Furniture lies in pieces everywhere. Silas tries a light, but it doesn't work. Katarina moves slowly through the apartment. She hears a sound down the hallway.

INT. HEALER'S BEDROOM- MOMENTS LATER

Katarina KICKS open the bedroom door. The BUTCHER, giant and distorted beyond human recognition, is hunched over the convulsing HEALER. Green sparks emanate from her right arm,

which is grasped tightly in his large hands. She WHIMPERS.

KATARINA

Let her go!

The Butcher stands. His head reaches the ceiling while his mass blocks out the light of the nearby window. He comes at Katarina. She lets off a shot, that rebounds off him without a flinch. He knocks her to the side in his escape out the door.

INT. HEALER'S LIVING ROOM- MOMENTS LATER

Silas attempts to tackle the Butcher and gets tossed to the floor for his trouble. Silas attempts to scramble away, but fails to move fast enough.

The Butcher picks up Silas by the throat. Katarina enters and watches in horror as the Man grabs Silas' head with his other hand and squeezes, as if he is trying to take the head off of an action figure.

KATARINA

NO!

Katarina raises her hands. As she screams, a blast of purple ENERGY shoots from her hands.

The man drops Silas and holds up his hands in defense. The bolt hits him in the chest, knocking him through the brick wall in an explosion of bricks and mortar.

Katarina runs to Silas, who is trying to regain his breath. He holds up his hand to signal he's alright.

Katarina moves past him to the opening. Behind her, Silas stands slowly and follows her gaze out the gaping hole.

Four stories down, the Man has left an empty crater in the sidewalk. The Tinny SIREN of an approaching Police carriage can be heard. The tires of a large black ROADSTER SQUEEL as it barely misses the carriage and races away.

ACT III

INT. HEALER'S LIVING ROOM- LATER

BOBBIES swarm the living room. A makeshift support beam runs the length of the large opening in the wall to support the ceiling. Glass bulbs POP as photographers record the disastrous scene.

Katarina stands with her arms wrapped around her, staring off into space. Silas comes up and places a hand on her

shoulder. She shrugs it off quickly and goes to Johnson.

KATARINA

Did you get prints off of the  
electrical box?

Silas takes a step and hears the CRUNCH of papers. He looks down to discover he is standing next to a desk that has been turned over.

JOHNSON

Naw. They were cut, not pulled. And  
nothing left behind, far as we can  
tell.

Silas bends down to take a closer look at the PAPERS. He picks up the crumpled paper he stepped on. In faded type, he reads: TEST SUBJECTS REPORTED FEELING IMMENSE SURGES OF POWER UPON ADMINISTRATION OF THE SERUM.

JOHNSON

Captains' in the hall. She wants to  
see you.

KATARINA

Of course she does.

Silas watches Katarina leave the room. He checks to make sure no one is looking before shoveling the surrounding paperwork into the file.

Something glistens under the table. Silas picks it up- a small silver flower that looks like it is splitting. He rubs it with his thumb to separate the halves- it is a small flash drive.

He pockets the device and takes another look around before hiding the file in his jacket.

INT. APARTMENT HOUSE HALLWAY- MOMENTS LATER

CAPTAIN MIRA SEN, 50's, ushers an elderly man, the apartment OWNER, toward the elevator.

OWNER

I expect the district to put my  
building back to order!

CAPTAIN

Yes, sir. We'll handle everything.

She smiles serenely until the elevator doors close. She heaves a weary SIGH as the CHIME sounds.

Her sari was traded in for a corset ages ago and her accent has been worn down by years of ladder-climbing, but the small paisley jewel on her forehead belies the fierceness



with which she battles for what is most important to her.

She turns toward Katarina and her eyes narrow.

CAPTAIN  
You. Home. Now.

KATARINA  
Captain, I'm fine...

CAPTAIN  
Did that sound like a request?  
You're off the case.

She storms past Katarina.

KATARINA  
WHAT? Ma'am, this man killed my  
sister.

She spins around on her heels, inches from Katarina's face.

CAPTAIN  
As well as five others. Instead of  
giving me this guy, he's still on  
the loose and there's an eight-foot  
hole in the wall.

Silas, Johnson, and several BOBBIES peek out the door to  
watch the argument.

CAPTAIN  
Until THAT is under control...

She jabs a finger at Katarina's wrist.

CAPTAIN  
...you're off the streets. Do I  
make myself clear?

Katarina nods. The Captain turns and marches toward the  
apartment. Silas moves into the hall as everyone else  
scatters to allow her in.

There is a long moment as Silas and Katarina look at each  
other. Katarina glares at him. She whips around and slams  
the stairway door as she leaves.

EXT. STREET-NIGHT

Katarina runs out the door and hails for a carriage. Silas  
runs out after her.

SILAS  
Katarina, stop.

KATARINA

Go to hell.

SILAS

Don't do this. Not now. We have to...

KATARINA

We? No. There's no 'we'. You dragged me into this.

She starts to pace in front of him.

KATARINA

My whole life I couldn't be marked. Then, suddenly, it works?

SILAS

Kat, I don't...

KATARINA

One day. Just one. This thing would have closed off for good. I'd finally be free.

She hits him.

KATARINA

Why did you make me a part of this?

Silas clenches his jaw.

SILAS

We're family. Or did you forget that? That...thing...killed Emily. He took her powers along with all of the others and YOU just blasted him though a goddamn brick wall! Who do you think he's going to go after next?

Katarina pauses, dumbfounded.

SILAS

We have to find him before he finds you.

KATARINA

I'm off the case, remember? I'm not allowed to investigate.

He smiles ruefully.

SILAS

Since when has that ever stopped you?

INT. KATARINA'S PARLOR- NIGHT

There is a KNOCK at the door. Silas opens to find Annabelle on the doorstep. He leads her to the couch where Katarina is pouring over papers.

KATARINA

You know this is obstruction.

SILAS

Why? You're an officer. It'll make it into the station eventually.

Katarina looks up to see Annabelle.

KATARINA

Thanks for coming.

ANNABELLE

I'm glad you called. I've been working on a theory.

Annabelle sits next to Katarina, who shows her the paperwork.

ANNABELLE

What do you know about casters and how they, you know, work?

KATARINA

Casters manipulate energy. Usually in the form of spells.

ANNABELLE

But spells don't diminish your ability.

SILAS

No. Only the marking process does that. A small bit is transferred into a potential to 'open the flood gates' as it were.

Silas stirs the fire with a poker.

KATARINA

Unless you gift your abilities.

He stops and stares at Katarina.

SILAS

Which no one does because it's suicide.

She avoids his gaze.

ANNABELLE

What do you mean, 'a potential'?

KATARINA

Someone who has the bloodline and shows signs that they can be marked.

ANNABELLE

Bloodline...you mean it's genetic.

Silas sits.

SILAS

Yeah, I guess. Not everyone in the family gets it, though. The older families tend to be more reliable.

ANNABELLE

Like yours.

He touches his nose in a "you got it" gesture.

ANNABELLE

So it's a recessive gene. That explains why there aren't more of you. What happens if they aren't from the bloodline?

Katarina and Silas exchange a look.

KATARINA

Imagine sticking your hand on a Tesla coil.

ANNABELLE

Do they always die?

SILAS

If they don't, it isn't very pleasant. Why?

Annabelle stands and begins pacing before the fire.

ANNABELLE

The history books will tell you that Thomas Edison died in an accident assisting Nicola Tesla in bringing electricity to the world.

KATARINA

Is there another version?

ANNABELLE

There are stories around Tesla Corp

that I don't think I believed until today.

She stops and faces them.

ANNABELLE

Electricity was a side effect. What they were actually doing was trying to discover how casters do it. Specifically, he was trying to make himself a caster.

SILAS

You're kidding.

ANNABELLE

It gets worse. In the pages I've found, it doesn't look like much has changed in the last hundred years or so. It looks like these experiments were designed to control a casters ability. They were trying to block it, but something went wrong.

Silas' face goes slack.

KATARINA

The only way to stop an ability is if they don't cast in the first twenty four hours. Once that first spell is cast, it's impossible to stop.

Annabelle bites her lip. Katarina notices the expression on Silas' face.

KATARINA

What?

SILAS

Nothing. I need a drink.

He jumps up and walks out of the room.

INT. KITCHEN- MOMENTS LATER

Silas rummages through cabinets. Katarina enters.

SILAS

You have to have something stronger than tea.

Katarina stares at him, waiting for an explanation. He stops and leans on the island.

SILAS  
It's not impossible, just takes a  
lot of juice.

He sighs.

SILAS  
Seers can do more than fortune  
telling. Most don't have the power  
or the training but they have the  
ability to...insulate powers.

KATARINA  
How long?

He runs his hand through his hair.

SILAS  
One caster? A few hours. If Emily  
knew what was coming... Well, it  
might explain how...

He gestures to Katarina's wrist.

SILAS  
...that happened.

KATARINA  
Where did she learn it? And how do  
you know about it? Grandfather  
couldn't have taught it to her.  
That's a party trick he'd exploit.

Silas grips the countertop until his knuckles go white.

SILAS  
Mom. We saw her do it a long time  
ago.

Katarina's jaw drops in horror. There is a long pause.

KATARINA  
M-me?

SILAS  
She was trying to keep you safe.

Katarina runs out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY- MOMENTS LATER

Katarina goes to the door. She grabs her jacket from the  
hook. Silas comes up from behind and places his hand on her  
shoulder. She jerks away.

KATARINA

Don't touch me! Years! Grandfather tried for years to mark me. Every time he got more desperate until he...

She is shaking too hard to put her jacket on.

KATARINA

And you!

She shoves him with all of her might.

KATARINA

A Persuader for a brother and you just sat there. You were the only one who could stop it and you never said a word!

SILAS

You have no idea what I've done to protect you!

KATARINA

Probably about as much as you did for Emily.

Silas freezes, stunned. There is a pregnant pause. Katarina puts on her jacket and opens the door.

SILAS

Where are you going?

KATARINA

To get James. If anyone can make sense of this, he can. Don't be here when I get back.

She closes the door behind her. Annabelle stands in the entryway to the parlor.

ANNABELLE

She doesn't know.

Silas shakes his head.

ANNABELLE

You need to tell her. All of it.

INT. TESLA CORP HALLWAY- EVENING

Katarina walks down the empty corridor. The only light comes from a closed door at the end of the hall.

She reaches the door and looks around. DR J.E. JANUS marks

the window.

INT. JAMES' OFFICE- MOMENTS LATER

The lab is compulsively neat. Equipment is arranged in rows- largest to smallest- and every surface shines. A tangle of tubes sits on the center island, waiting for use.

KATARINA

James?

The lab is empty. Katarina takes a few steps in and looks around to be certain. She turns and is about to cut the lights when she notices a photograph of Emily on the far wall.

She comes around the island to find a WALL OF PHOTOGRAPHS. A few are of Emily and the other victims. Katarina fumbles for her phone. She flicks through and finds the number she needs.

INT. PARLOR- SAME TIME

Annabelle sits on the couch, holding the flash drive. Her phone RINGS.

ANNABELLE

Hello?

Cut to: Katarina pacing in front of the photos.

KATARINA

Annabelle? It's Katarina.

Cut to: Annabelle

ANNABELLE

Oh, hi! Silas left. I hope you don't mind that I stayed behind. I got a good look at those papers and I think I might be right.

Cut to: Katarina

KATARINA

Right about what?

Katarina pauses in front of photographs that look like macabre BEFORE AND AFTER SHOTS.

ANNABELLE

(V.O.)

The formula was designed to block abilities, instead it does the



opposite. There's continuous flow  
without control that gets stronger  
the higher the dose.

Innocent head shots of participants mutate into  
unrecognizable monsters from one photo to the next.

ANNABELLE

Once the researchers discovered  
this, they began testing on  
transferring the powers into people  
without powers by injecting them  
with the serum.

There are notes neatly scribbled around the area of the  
photographs: NO USE OF ABILITIES. NO CONTROL. EXTREME  
STRENGTH AND PHYSICAL CHANGES. SIDE EFFECTS TEMPORARY.

CUT TO: Annabelle. She hears a small NOISE from down the  
hall. Annabelle stands. She starts to walk toward the noise,  
when the kitten appears, brushing up against her leg. She  
bends down and gives him a pet.

ANNABELLE

That's when everything went  
sideways. They started upping the  
doses and the subjects would have  
all of this power and no way to  
control it.

The kitten is enjoying the attention when there is another  
SOUND from inside the townhouse. The kitten's ears go back  
and he hisses before running away.

Cut to: Katarina.

KATARINA

Annabelle, listen. You need to go  
home. I think James is involved.

There is a beat. Annabelle SCREAMS.

Katarina runs out the door. The photograph in the center is  
of the Butcher. Underneath, in illegible handwriting, is  
scrawled: HIGHLY ADDICTIVE.

INT. PARLOR- LATER

Katarina enters the townhouse, pistol drawn. She sees  
Annabelle's boots peeking out behind the couch. She looks  
around before going to check on Annabelle.

Katarina sets her gun down and leans over her. Annabelle is  
breathing, but unconscious. She fails to notice the Butcher  
coming up behind them.

He grabs her around the waist and lifts her up. Her feet kick over the STAND by the fireplace, knocking the POKER into the fire. She struggles as he moves across the room to his bag.

The Butcher slams Katarina into the wall and the breath rushes out of her lungs. He takes a syringe from his bag.

Katarina lifts up her hand, trying to force herself to cast. Nothing happens.

She panics and struggles harder to get out of his grasp. She desperately grabs for any sort of purchase. She wraps her hand around something and yanks.

She opens her hand to find the SILVER POCKET WATCH.

Katarina has a brief vision of placing the watch in James' pocket that morning.

She lets it fall to the floor.

KATARINA

James?

ACT IV

INT. PARLOR- SAME TIME

KATARINA

James, stop! You don't know what you're doing.

Katarina struggles to get away from the Butcher/James.

JAMES

I wouldn't be too certain of that.

His voice is deeper, rougher than we've heard from him. He grins mercilessly at Katarina.

Suddenly, he ROARS with pain. He drops Katarina and the syringe. The tube of liquid rolls away from him.

Silas grabs Katarina and pulls her up.

There is a red-hot POKER sticking out of James' calf. James rips it out and rushes at them in a full tackle.

Silas pushes Katarina and takes the full force of the hit. The two men grapple.

SILAS

Get Annabelle out of here!

Katarina tries to pull Annabelle out of the way. James knocks Silas into a wall and stuns him. He leans over Silas.

Katarina grabs for the nearest object- a KEROSENE LAMP- and cracks it over James' head. The oil soaks into his clothes but he doesn't flinch.

James leaves a stunned Silas where he is and goes after Katarina who is looking around for her gun. She spots it and makes her move.

James pulls the rug out from under her, literally, and Katarina falls. He is on top of her too quickly for her to move.

JAMES

Poor little rich girl. Never wanted to be a caster. Here. Let me help you with that.

He pins her to the ground with one hand while the other searches for the syringe.

JAMES

Hey! Big guy. Looking for this?

Before James can process what is happening, Silas plunges the syringe into his leg and depresses the pump. James roars with rage.

KATARINA

SILAS NO!

James moves off of Katarina and races toward a waiting Silas. He grabs Silas' arm.

Nothing happens.

SILAS

Surprise!

James' jaw drops. He ROARS in anger. He whips Silas around by the arm and slams him to the ground. Silas curls up, holding his dislocated shoulder.

Katarina closes her eyes and takes a steady breath. She opens them and events seem to have slowed. James picks up the gun and stands to his full height. He aims it at Silas.

KATARINA

James!

He turns to look at her. She lets off a controlled blast, knocking him into the fireplace.

His jacket catches alight. The fire moves quickly with the aid of the kerosene-soaked items.

James stumbles around, spreading fire as he goes. The room goes up quickly.

Katarina tries to go after him, but a wall of flame stops her. They stare at each other a moment through the flames.

Silas pushes himself up.

SILAS

Kat, we have to get out of here!

Kat turns back to James. She cannot see him.

Annabelle is stirring by the door. Silas and Katarina help her up and out of the burning house.

EXT. KATARINA'S HOUSE- MOMENTS LATER

The trio exit the building. SIRENS ring out in the night. Johnson pulls up in a carriage, followed by the fire brigade in a motorized fire truck.

Johnson stops to look over the scene. Windows from the first floor burst in an explosion of flame.

A FIREMAN takes Annabelle to a waiting stretcher while the OTHERS rush to get the hose.

Katarina stares at her home. Silas places his hand on her shoulder and squeezes lightly.

This time, she doesn't shrug him off. Instead she turns into him and lets him envelop her in a hug. She starts to CRY.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM- THE NEXT AFTERNOON

Annabelle is tucking her blouse into her skirt, preparing to leave. The room is sparse, except for an extravagant bouquet of ROSES sitting on the nightstand. There is a soft KNOCK at the door and Katarina enters. She is wearing the same soot-covered clothes and looks like she hasn't slept.

KATARINA

Hey. How are you feeling?

ANNABELLE

Better. And unemployed.

KATARINA

What?

Annabelle tugs on her jacket.

ANNABELLE

Lovely hospital visit from HR.  
Apparently, looking for a murderer  
among your colleagues is frowned  
upon at Tesla Corp.

KATARINA

Oh, Annabelle. I'm so sorry I got  
you into this.

ANNABELLE

Please. I've been looking for a way  
out of my contract for ages.

Annabelle moves to the door and looks around to be certain  
no one is watching.

ANNABELLE

Here. I saved something for you.

She hands the flash drive to Katarina.

ANNABELLE

There's some things on there that  
you may need later on.

KATARINA

What do you mean?

ANNABELLE

Not here. How about I come by the  
station tomorrow. We can have  
lunch.

Katarina gives her a rueful smile.

KATARINA

You may not be the only one out of  
a job.

ANNABELLE

I have a feeling you'll be fine.  
Oh, and thank your brother for the  
garish display of affection.

She gestures to the flowers. They roll their eyes at the  
same time and LAUGH.

ANNABELLE

It's not a coincidence that his  
ex-girlfriend worked three doors  
down from your intended, you know.

Katarina flinches at the mention of James.

KATARINA

That's not creepy at all.

ANNABELLE

Try being the mole.

She cocks her head at Katarina.

ANNABELLE

Look, I know there's a history there. And Silas, well...he's immature. And stubborn. And, let's be honest, he can be a real putz. But, he's a good man and he'd do anything for the people he loves. Whether they know it or not.

Katarina nods and stares at the flowers.

EXT. KATARINA'S HOUSE- AFTERNOON

Katarina arrives in a carriage at her home. The exterior is singed, but still intact.

Instead of finding bobbies and residual firemen, she discovers teams of black-suited OFFICIALS with TESLA CORP BADGES on their lapels removing boxes of materials from the home.

KATARINA

Hey! What do you think you're doing?

A RAT FACE man with greasy hair and a pinched nose looks down at Katarina from over wire-rimmed glasses.

RAT FACE

Removing Tesla Corp Property.

KATARINA

You can't do that! This is my home. And an active crime scene.

RAT FACE

Not anymore.

He produces a paper from his clipboard.

RAT FACE

An order from the District Judge. If you have a complaint, I suggest you take it up with your Captain.

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE- LATER

The Captain is sitting serenely in her chair as Katarina rages.

KATARINA

You're telling me that a corporation with no legal power can halt an active murder investigation?

CAPTAIN

They can when they own half of the continent and every elected official from here to the Capitol.

KATARINA

What about James?

The Captain sits up in her chair.

CAPTAIN

No body was recovered.

KATARINA

You take me off the case for letting him go and now that he's loose you want me to drop it?

CAPTAIN

The district wants you to drop it. You're resourceful. You solved this case without my sanction. I'm sure he'll come to justice. Without an official investigation, of course.

Katarina's eyes go wide with surprise. The Captain gestures to the chair.

CAPTAIN

I do have a question- why was he taking the organs?

KATARINA

The murders themselves were just to feed his addiction but the organs I think he took to find the Chakra.

Katarina sits.

CAPTAIN

Chakra?

Katarina squirms a bit in her seat.

KATARINA

Uh...chakras, the source of power, are traditionally linked to vital organs...

The Captain holds up a patient hand to stop Katarina.

CAPTAIN

I know what they are. What do chakras have to do with casters?

KATARINA

It's complicated but, the simplest explanation is to say that a caster's ability lies in the energy stream that it draws from. The Elementals are the most common types of casters- Founders, Pleasurers, Muses and Healers. The religions of the East Indies were the first to categorize the different wells, what they called Chakras, to include the rarer casters, Seers and Persuaders, into the six levels...

CAPTAIN

Seven.

Katarina starts.

KATARINA

Excuse me?

CAPTAIN

There are seven chakras. I'm amazed I've never noticed before. You must be Sahsrara.

KATARINA

I...no one knows what I am.

A brief moment of worry crosses over the Captain's face.

CAPTAIN

The marks are an indication of the chakra, correct?

Katarina nods.

CAPTAIN

In my religion, the Sahsrara- the crown- is the culmination of spiritual practice. It is the mastery of all of the chakras.

Katarina stares down at her arm with a mixture of horror and awe.

KATARINA

You think I can control them all?



The Captain sits back in her chair and regards her carefully before answering.

CAPTAIN

I know the complete history of every person in my station, regardless of how hard they try to hide it on their applications.

KATARINA

Captain...

Again, she raises her hand to stop her.

CAPTAIN

I've never asked you why you chose to give us another name than your given one. I always assumed you would tell me when you were ready. Now...

She stands and moves to sit on the edge of the desk beside Katarina.

CAPTAIN

...it is a very short list of ordinary individuals who can readily say what a caster can do beyond what they can be paid to do. IF this theory has validity and IF the rumors I have heard surrounding Sebastian Abner are correct, then I would strongly recommend against advertising your powers until you have better control of them. Do you understand what I'm telling you?

KATARINA

Yes, Ma'am.

CAPTAIN

Good. On that subject- you are being re-instated. Provided that your companion accompanies you in all of your investigations until that control is established.

Katarina's forehead wrinkles in confusion.

KATARINA

Companion? But, I already have a partner.

CAPTAIN

Not a partner. From what I've heard it's more like a magical chaperon.

KATARINA  
Chaperon? Oh, no. He didn't.

Katarina turns to look out the window behind her.

Silas lounges in the center of a group of BOBBIES, Cruthers and Johnson among them. His arm is wrapped up in a sling.

EXT. STATION HOUSE- LATER

The group scatters as Katarina approaches. She pushes Silas' feet off the desk.

KATARINA  
A chaperon? Really?

SILAS  
What? I thought you could use the help.

She tries to maintain her look of annoyance, but gives way to an exasperated SIGH. He stands and wraps his good arm around her shoulders.

SILAS  
You look like crap. C'mon. I've got a spare bedroom.

She lets him lead her out the door.

INT. SILAS' LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

The room is sleek, tidy, and expensively furnished, but not quite the extravagant bachelor pad one would expect of a boisterous, wayward scion frequently appearing in the gossip column.

Silas sits quietly staring at the fire with a decanter of scotch on the table and a glass in his hand.

Katarina enters in her night clothes. She hovers by the entryway. There is a brief pause before he notices she's there.

SILAS  
How did you sleep?

KATARINA  
Well. Thanks. I found a pile of my clothes by the bed when I woke.

She moves around the couch.

SILAS

Yeah. I might've snuck a few things away from those Tesla Corp fellows while you were sleeping.

There is a small MEW from the little gray kitten on his lap.

KATARINA  
Nicodemus!

She takes the kitten and snuggles him as she sits. There is another pause while she pets the kitten.

KATARINA  
Sye...when he grabbed you...

SILAS  
And nothing happened?

He sighs and stares down at his drink.

SILAS  
The right mark and an ancient name—you'd be surprised what people agree to when they can tell themselves they didn't have a choice.

KATARINA  
You're the reason the spell lasted so long. You gave up all of your powers?

SILAS  
Door's open, but no one's home. Don't ask how I survived it. Mom never said and Em never found out.

Nicodemus stretches out of Katarina's grasp and pads over to Silas. He twirls once and curls up on Silas' lap for a nap.

KATARINA  
Does he know?

SILAS  
Grandfather is many things. A fool is not one of them. As long as his attention was on me, he couldn't hurt you. Eventually, he gave up. He preferred the appearance that I was too lazy to teach rather than incapable.

Katarina stands and walks about the room. Over the mantle she finds a silver frame holds the same PHOTOGRAPH that appears in her office. She picks it up and stares at it for a moment.

KATARINA

Why didn't anyone tell me?

SILAS

After Mom and Dad died, Em and I made a pact. We thought that, if you could make it without being marked, you would never have to know. We didn't think he would take it as far as he did.

Katarina turns to face him. She bites her lip, as if choosing her words carefully.

KATARINA

There is a possibility that I have powers that others don't.

Silas sits up. Nicodemus hops off of his lap and scurries away.

SILAS

I know.

Katarina starts.

SILAS

Mom did what she did to protect you. Not from what you could be, but what you could be made to do.

He stands, GRUNTING at the motion of his shoulder.

SILAS

The longer we can hide this from him, the better.

INT. SEBASTIAN'S OFFICE- SAME TIME

Sebastian Abner stands on the balcony, staring out over the city lights. Even alone, his posture is commanding. He turns and walks through the darkened penthouse.

A low fire gives little warmth to hard, uninviting surfaces. Everything Sebastian owns, from his cars to his suits, is specifically chosen to intimidate.

He moves to a large, black mahogany desk. He flicks a switch on a small bronze LAMP. The soft BUZZ of electricity is heard as the bulb flickers to life.

He sets his GLASS of bourbon aside and picks up a small ENVELOPE sealed with a wax seal. He slides a sharpened gold LETTER OPENER behind the seal, slicing it in half.

He reads the note. There is no change in his cold expression. He tosses the letter back on the desk and picks up his glass.

Scrawled in a neat hand, the note reads: IT IS DONE.

FADE OUT

## Second Draft: Pilot Script (Act I)

EXT. ANGEL BAY- NIGHT

Electric lights from elegant houses light the cobbled street as CARSON, 20, speeds through Angel Bay in his electric roadster. He whips around the corner and nearly hits a cabbie driving a horse-drawn carriage. The driver SHOUTS. Inside the vehicle, Carson doesn't notice. The glowing light from his glass MOBILE illuminates his face as he continues his conversation.

CARSON

Forty-five thousand. You were the one who said you could come up with the money.

As he crosses over the river, the street is dimly lit by oil lamps, giving the lower side of the city an ominous feel.

CARSON (CONT'D)

Well, sweetheart, of course you can get fertilization treatments for less but that doesn't mean they will work.

He slams on the brakes and parks in front of a modest house.

CARSON (CONT'D)

How long have you been trying now? Uh-huh. And do you want to hang your hopes on a mediocre doctor that can give you a fifty-fifty shot, tops, or do you want a baby in your belly by morning? Two for the price of one, honey. A healer's spell to prep the body and a pleasurer's to ensure conception. And then, of course, there's the amazing sex.

Carson gets out and leans back against the car, barely listening to the woman on the other end of the line. Raised, red tribal tattoos marking his wrist flash briefly as he pulls a small BRACELET out of his pocket.

CARSON (CONT'D)

If I throw in a little security charm of my own, will that ease your mind?

He focuses on the bracelet and silently casts a spell. Red SPARKS settle on the silver. He examines his work and places it into a small JEWELRY BOX.

CARSON (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Well, I'm outside, so make up your

mind fast. Theurgists shouldn't be out late at night. Or haven't you heard? That's what I thought. I'll be right up.

He smiles and taps the glass of the mobile as gas fades to grey. He places it in a vest pocket and adjusts his bowler HAT.

He moves toward the front door of the house and is stopped by a large hand shoving a chloroformed RAG over his face. The box falls to the ground.

EXT. ALLEYWAY- LATER THAT NIGHT

Carson's body has been discarded in a trash pile, blood and tissue glimmering in the moonlight where his spine should be. Detective KATERINA DALCA, 27, stands over his remains, holding her gun.

EXT. CITY HALL- MORNING

EARLIER THAT DAY.

SEBASTIAN ABNER, 70s, stands in front of City Hall flanked by the MAYOR and his grandson, SILAS ABNER, 35. The police COMMISSIONER stands at a podium in front of a flock of REPORTERS clamoring to have their questions heard.

REPORTER

Chief! Is this the work of a serial killer?

COMMISSIONER

As of right now, only those marked with magical abilities have been targeted, however, we don't have enough information to categorize these incidences as those of a serialist.

REPORTER

Wouldn't four murders in as many weeks be an indication? How many more do you need?

The Chief turns to Sebastian, who inclines his head.

COMMISSIONER

I would like to turn questioning over to Sebastian Abner who has graciously offered his services as our liaison with the theurgist community during this difficult time.

Sebastian takes the podium. The reporters start to SHOUT. Sebastian holds up his hands. They are immediately silent.

INT. STATION HOUSE- SAME TIME

The common area is normally a beehive of activity. Instead, BOBBIES and SERGEANTS surround one corner desk.

A young bobbie, DUSTIN, with the look of a rookie in his crisp blue uniform, taps a few metal keys and the footage of the press conference resolves on the monitor.

SEBASTIAN

I would like to reassure everyone once again that both the Commissioner and the Mayor are working diligently to secure the streets for all of Angel Bay's residents. In the interim, the Empire Hotel will be open only to theologians as a place of sanctuary until such time as this *butcher* is apprehended.

Dustin scoffs.

DUSTIN

Yeah, like any of us poor slobs could afford that trip.

Katerina slaps a file folder on the desk, startling the assembly.

KATERINA

Don't you all have work to do?

Most scatter. Katerina's partner, OLIVER JOHNSON, 31, smirks.

OLIVER

It's your lucky day, Dalca. The king all out in the open. If you hurry, you can pull a Wilkes-Booth.

KATERINA

Don't tempt me.

OLIVER

Aren't you the least bit curious why our Commissioner feels the need to hold a press conference with a hotel magnate about a serial killer?

KATERINA



Why wouldn't he? Commissioner  
Edwards lives in Abner's pocket.

He nods to the monitor as Silas stifles a yawn on the  
screen.

OLIVER  
Looks like prodigal grandson has  
returned. What do you think he did  
to end up on the old man's leash  
today?

DUSTIN  
Who cares? I'd rather see that  
delicious sister of his.

Katerina shoots Dustin a glare. A woman clears her throat  
softly. They turn to find EMILY ABNER, 31, standing behind  
them. Katerina stiffens. Dustin grabs the file off his desk  
and scurries away.

KATERINA  
Miss Abner.

EMILY  
*Miss Abner?* Is that how we are  
going to play this?

Oliver looks at Katerina questioningly. Katerina remains  
focused on Emily. Emily sighs.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
I need to speak with you, Katerina.

OLIVER  
(After a pregnant pause)  
Okay... I guess I'm going to get  
some coffee.

Oliver walks off. Katerina continues to glare.

EMILY  
Can we be alone. Please?

INT. KATERINA'S OFFICE- MOMENTS LATER

Emily follows Katerina into her office. The small room is  
cluttered with files but is missing the usual family  
photographs. The desk deliberately faces away from a scenic  
view of a SKYLINE that includes the modern TESLA CORP  
building and the Gothic EMPIRE HOTEL.

Emily sits and straightens her skirts.

EMILY  
Really, Kat. I wouldn't be here if

it wasn't important.

Emily motions for Katerina to sit. Katerina comes around the desk to face her but continues to stand.

KATERINA

What are you doing here, Emily?

EMILY

A friend is missing.

KATERINA

Not my department.

EMILY

You cannot be serious. I know we've had our differences but I thought...

KATERINA

Differences? Is that what you call it?

EMILY

Don't think of it as a favor then. She's in trouble.

KATERINA

One of your visions?

EMILY

No. I... my visions have been *foggy*, at best. Something is changing.

Emily absentmindedly rubs at the blue marks on her wrists.

KATERINA

How do you know she is in trouble, then?

EMILY

I just do!

She pulls a PICTURE from her bag and sets it on the desk.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Her name is Marina Dey. She has been missing for over a month and, with the butcher murders... I just...

Katerina picks up the photograph and looks at it.

KATERINA

Can't Silas or...

EMILY

No, damn it!

She slams her hands on the table. Katerina's hand goes to her gun. Emily takes a shaky breath.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Let's just say that Grandfather wouldn't be sorry if this one stayed missing. You're the only chance she has.

Katerina SIGHS and starts to write on a piece of paper.

KATERINA

Go to Detective Cho in missing persons...

EMILY

That's all? For Christ's sake, Katerina!

Katerina puts her hand on Emily's.

KATERINA

I'm homicide. If I'm investigating, it means she's already dead. Cho's good. She'll help you. I promise.

Emily yanks her hand away and stands.

EMILY

Since I will undoubtedly never see you again.

She pulls a key out of her bag and tosses it on the desk.

KATERINA

What's that?

EMILY

You were always the clever one. You'll figure it out.

She stands.

KATERINA

Your picture.

EMILY

Keep it.

Emily storms out the door, nearly knocking over Oliver.

OLIVER

I don't suppose you want to tell me what that was about.

KATERINA

No.

OLIVER

Well then, we have a case.

EXT. STREET- DAY

Katerina and Oliver stroll past a SERGEANT blocking the crime scene from view of onlookers. An ARMORED VEHICLE that appears to be a cross between a roadster and gypsy caravan is standing empty in the middle of the road with blown out tires. A white canvas covers the BODY of the driver.

CRUTHERS, 70, leans on a slender golden cane as he speaks with an INVESTIGATOR.

Oliver pulls a billfold-sized COMMUNICATOR out of his pocket and flips it open. He taps the screen to the left and the gaslight flares to life. He watches as a news scroll updates.

OLIVER

Looks like the victim is the driver.

KATERINA

Bank vehicle?

OLIVER

(lets out a low whistle)  
Federal reserve.

KATERINA

So what are we doing here?

The duo reach Cruthers, who dismisses the investigator.

CRUTHERS

Good day detectives.

KATERINA

What do you have for us, Cruthers?

Cruthers removes the canvas to reveal a balding man with blackened and bloody wound radiating across his chest.

CRUTHERS

Anthony DeMaris, aged forty-three, was en route to the air station when his caravan appears to have struck a nail strip. The burn marks on the chest would suggest our victim was dispatched using an energy pulse. His left shoulder

also feels to be dislocated, which I will be able to confirm during autopsy.

KATERINA

So he was pulled from the vehicle, then killed.

CRUTHERS

That was my conclusion as well.

OLIVER

Was this a professional hit?

Dustin strolls up to the body.

DUSTIN

Definitely.

Cruthers raises an eyebrow. Dustin's confidence disappears.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

It's just, I called down to the city and the guy said the street monitors went dark about an hour ago. Some kinda glitch in the system hit, you know, right when our guy was bumped off. So that means a pro, right?

CRUTHERS

Our killer may have had assistance, constable, but professional he was not. Fingerprints were found on the door and the use of a blast suggests lack of control. A hired assassin would know better than to leave traces of his activities.

KATERINA

Our killer may be working for someone else.

OLIVER

Fall guy?

KATERINA

Possibly. What do you say we take a crack at the next of kin before the feds take over?

EXT. SHANGHAI TUNNEL ENTRANCE- DAY

Oliver and Katerina walk along the docks on the lower side of the bay. The head underneath the bridge, toward an opening that once served as the secret exit point for the

Shanghai trade but was now claimed by TRANSIENTS and WANDERERS.

DANIELLE, 22, hands a sandwich to a WANDERER with faded green marks on his wrists and jumps back as he shocks her slightly.

KATERINA

Danielle DeMaris? I'm Detective Dalca and this is Detective Johnson.

DANIELLE

I know who you are. That Muse you put in the hospital last year was my cousin. Is feeding wanderers illegal now?

OLIVER

We're here about your husband.

DANIELLE

Ex-husband as of last week.

KATERINA

He was murdered this morning.

DANIELLE

I suppose I should be sorry but I'm not. Tony was a bastard, through and through. What happened? The mob finally get to him?

OLIVER

Why would you ask that?

DANIELLE

Like I said, Frank's my cousin. He's a peach compared to the rest of the family. I thought I could get out of all that marrying a mediocre. Come to find out my shiny new husband was looking for a way in.

She unbuttons her collar to show residual bruising on her neck.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

This was his going away gift when I told him I was leaving him. You want to know what happened to Tony, start with Mickey Calhoun. I overheard the two of them planning some sort of heist about a month ago. Tony sounded like he was gettin' cold feet and Mickey was

threatening to go to their boss.

KATERINA

Which boss was this?

DANIELLE

Dunno. I thought it might be Oswald at first but Mickey wouldn't talk about his pop like that. Whoever it was had them both on edge.

Katerina glances past Danielle and sees DR. MARINA DEY standing near the entrance to the tunnels, staring back at her. The woman has the strange look of a wild animal.

KATERINA

Hey! Marina, isn't it?

Dr. Dey turns and walks into the tunnel. Katerina runs after her but when Katerina reaches the entrance, the woman is gone.

## Novel Speakeasy Scene

Katerina adjusted her corset. She could barely breathe and her chest was nearly spilling over, but it was having the affect she wanted. In the dim light of the oil lamps, she could see she had the rapt attention of the meat head sitting across from her. Mickey Calhoun was large, with deep set eyes and a permanent squint that made him look every bit as dim-witted as he was.

Katerina suspected the speakeasy could afford electricity, but chose lamps to cater to their less-than-reputable clientele. She twirled a raven curl around her finger and nonchalantly glanced up at the barkeep, who was busy fending off drunks at the bar. The woman wasn't paying attention to Katerina and that was fine by her.

She freed her finger from the curl and traced a small, intricate series of interlocking squares wrapping around Mickey's right wrist. It was raised slightly, as if the band had been burned into place, and was an unnaturally vibrant shade of red.

"So, you're a founder," she said.

"What do you know about Theurgists?" he asked, leaning in closer.

"What can I say? I have a thing for spell casters. My last boyfriend was a pleasurer with a surprising lack of imagination," she said, biting her lip.

"Careful, Dalca," a deep voice chimed in through the receiver carefully hidden in her ear. "You want him to show you the goods, not eat you alive."

Her gaze flitted to a handsome black man in the far corner of the bar. He was nursing a drink and watching her carefully. His voice was stern but a hint of a smile appeared on his face.

*Next time, Oliver, you're the bait,* she thought.

"Damn, you have pretty eyes," her companion said. Katerina heard a snort of laughter from the tiny receiver tucked in her ear. "They look purple. Is that some kind of healer's spell?"

"Nope. God given."

She glanced around the room and locked eyes with the barkeep. The woman's brow furrowed.

*Shit.* She had to get this guy on track. *Fast.*

"Why don't you show me a little something, big boy," she cooed.

"I can't go giving it away for free, sweetheart. Not even for a mediocre as pretty as you."

"Please? I can't very well go back to my boss vouching for you without seeing what you can do, now can I?"

"Why don't we take this back to my place and I'll give you the full show."

*Ugh.* Katerina felt bile rising in her throat.

She snuck another glance at the barkeep. The woman was talking to a greasy-looking man in dated suit and faded bowler hat.

"Show it to me. If it's any good, I have a roadster outside and a pair of cuffs," she said a little too breathlessly. Her heart was racing. The man in the hat had pulled a tin mobile from his vest pocket and placed it to his ear.

Mickey interpreted Katerina's anxiety as eagerness and fumbled in his vest pocket for a small notepad. Taking advantage of his distraction, Katerina made a small gesture to the bar for Oliver's benefit. He gave her a nod and casually rose from his seat. She watched him make his way over to the man in the hat before turning her attention back to her table mate.



He was mumbling something in Latin and rubbing a small sheet of paper between his thumb and forefinger. Streaks of red sparks traveled across the paper, contorting and flaring into a bright, white light before fading into dark green ink.

"Mick, don't do it. She's a bobbie!" The man in the hat yelled before Oliver could stop him.

'Mick' looked from the man to the freshly minted hundred dollar note between his fingers, slowly processing what was happening.

"Detective, actually," she said, flashing him her badge. "Michael Calhoun, you're under arrest..."

He didn't wait for her to finish. Mick shot out of his chair and turned over the table. The guy in the hat slammed his fist into Oliver's side. Oliver gasped as the wind rushed out of his lungs. As if on cue, several patrons decided to join in the fun. Before Oliver could catch a breath, half the bar was embroiled in a fight.

"I've got Calhoun." Katerina yelled to Oliver. She fumbled underneath her skirts for the cherry wood revolver strapped to her calf and made a mental note to wear trousers to a sting no matter how annoyed her partner got. She raised the gun just in time to see Mick running through the back door. She released the safety and forced her way through the rowdy crowd. As she reached the back stairs, she froze.

The exit was barred by large metal gate that opened from the street side. In the opposite direction, a sizable corner of the courtyard had been sectioned off for trash collection. There, Mick was attempting to use a broken chair to scale the tall wooden fence- less than five feet from the open gate.

"Idiot," she muttered, trying to hold back laughter as he finally pulled himself over the top and toppled over the other side. She calmly walked over to the gate and had her hand on the handle when she heard a blood-curdling scream.

She yanked it open to find Mick scrambling to the gate on his hands and feet, covered in blood and screaming his head off. He looked up at her for a split second before his body convulsed and the contents of his stomach emptied out along the fence. She walked over to the pile of trash where Mick fell and felt her insides run cold.

"Dalca?" She heard Oliver yell from the bar.

"Johnson, grab a lantern from the kitchen and make a call to Garcia. We got more than we bargained for."

Katerina stood in the moonlight. A blond boy Katerina guessed couldn't have been more than eighteen was sprawled out on the heap like a rag doll. He might have been handsome, but Katerina barely glanced at his face.

Instead, she was staring down at a hole in his back where his spine should have been.

## Pilot Speakeasy Scene(s)

INT. SPEAKEASY EVENING

The bar is seedy and poorly-lit by kerosene lamps. There are touches of modern life- MOBILE phones and REVOLVERS- but with a steampunk twist.

A MAN slaps a PINT down on a NEWSPAPER that reads: BUTCHER STRIKES AGAIN above the sepia photograph of Bobbies standing around a body covered in a sheet.

PROSTITUTES in tight corsets with ORANGE BANDS branded around their wrists mingle with rough-looking MEN.

A lady BARKEEP with a build like a linebacker keeps watch over her girls as she tends bar.

In one corner of the bar KATERINA DALCA (early 30s) is sharing a small table with a meathead, MICKY CALHOUN (40s), more intent on ogling her cleavage than listening to her talk.

She frees her finger from the raven curl she had been twirling and traces it along the small, intricate series of interlocking squares on the meat head's inner right wrist. The skin is raised slightly, as if it had been burned into place, and is an unnaturally vibrant shade of red.

KATERINA

So, you're a founder?

MICKY

What do you know about theurgists?

KATERINA

What can I say? I have a thing for spell casters. My last boyfriend was a pleasurer with a surprising lack of imagination.

OLIVER (O.S.)

Careful, Dalca. You want him to show you the goods, not eat you alive.

Katerina looks toward the far corner at a handsome black man, OLIVER JOHNSON (mid 30s), who is watching her with a slight smirk. She subtly reaches up to her ear with her middle finger and adjusts the small metal receiver in a gesture she knows he can see.

MICKY

Damn, you got pretty eyes. They

look kinda purple. That some kind  
of healer's spell?

KATERINA

Nope, God-given.

Katerina glances casually over her shoulder at the barkeep. The Miranda catches Katerina's eye and her brow furrows, as if trying to place her. Katerina snaps back to Micky.

KATERINA (CONT'D)

Why don't you show me a little  
something, big boy?

MICKY

I can't go giving it away for free,  
sweetheart. Not even for a mediocre  
as pretty as you.

KATERINA

Please? I can't very well go back  
to my boss vouching for you without  
seeing what you can do, now can I?

MICKY

Why don't we take this back to my  
place and I'll give you the full  
show.

Oliver lets out a snort of LAUGHTER.

Katerina sneaks another look at the BARKEEP. The Miranda is talking to a GREASEBALL in a cheap three piece suit and worn bowler hat.

Katerina turns back to MICKY.

KATERINA

Show it to me. If it's any good, I  
have a roadster outside and a pair  
of cuffs.

Micky reaches into his pocket and fumbles for a small notepad. Katerina looks over him at Oliver and gestures to the bar.

Oliver nods and gets up.

Micky pulls a piece of paper out of his notepad and starts rubbing it between his fingers and mouthing a spell. Sparks of red light begin trailing across the paper in detailed lines, fading into a dark green ink as they settled into place.

GREASEBALL

Mick! Don't do it, she's a bobbie!

Micky looks up, confused, then down at the freshly minted money in his hand. Katerina pulls a revolver and badge from her boot and slaps them on the table.

KATERINA

Detective, actually. Michael Calhoun, you're under arrest for counterfeiting, racketeering and the murders of Andrew Boyle and Gabriella Reese.

Micky jumps up, tosses over the table and runs. Oliver wrestles with the Greaseball to get cuffs on him.

KATERINA (CONT'D)

(to Oliver)  
I've got Calhoun.

OLIVER

Katerina, no! The Captain said...

Katerina doesn't hear him. She races after Micky, who has already run out the back door.

The Greaseball MUTTERS something in Latin. There is a burst of red light and Oliver is knocked back several feet.

EXT. ALLEYWAY- NIGHT

The back door leads to small courtyard. A metal gate blocks the far end from the street. At the other, a flimsy fence squares off a section of the courtyard meant for trash collection.

Micky balances on a broken chair, attempting to scale the fence. His every movement leads to either the chair or the fence wobbling.

Katerina bursts through the door. She pauses for a moment to take the scene in. She spots an opening in the fence that Micky clearly missed in his panic- only feet away from where Micky is perched.

KATERINA

Idiot.

She lowers her weapon and watches as he manages to finally pull himself over the top. He lands with a wet THUD.

She walks over to the opening.

KATERINA (CONT'D)

You know Micky, I really don't think you thought this one through.

Where did you think you were going?

She just about reaches the opening when she hears a blood-curdling SCREAM from the other side.

She raises her weapon and enters.

Micky is hunched in the corner, covered in blood and screaming like a mad-man. He is staring at something in the trash pile. He looks up as she enters and the scream stops only long enough for him to pass out.

Katerina walks over to where he is looking, weapon drawn. The breath she was holding comes out in a rush.

She is standing over the BODY of a young man discarded in the trash. He has a green mark around his wrist and his limbs are sprawled out at odd angles. Wet blood glitters in the moonlight where his spine should have been.

KATERINA (CONT'D)

Shit.

EXT. TRASH PILE- NIGHT

Katerina holsters her weapon. Two detectives, THOMAS and REYNOLDS, come racing in.

THOMAS

Goddamnit Dalca! We needed him to lead us to his boss! What in the hell did you think you were...

His eyes followed her gaze. He darts to the corner and vomits.

Reynolds looks over as Thomas moves away. He looks like he might follow suit but manages to keep it down.

OLIVER

I got O'Donnell...

Oliver trails off as he enters. He looks over the scene, then at the body.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Katerina snaps her fingers in front of Reynolds. He registers her slowly.

KATERINA

Reynolds! Go call it in.

He leaves in a daze.

OLIVER

You alright over there, Thomas?

The man gives Oliver and Katerina a murderous glare, then catches another glimpse of the body and returns to vomiting.

Oliver nudges Micky with the toe of his boot.

KATERINA

We should take care of him before  
the gore twins make an appearance.

Oliver nods.

OLIVER

Those morons will love this one.

Katerina's cell phone CHIMES. She pulls it out and taps it. Small golden gears turn in the glass box. There is a brief flicker before the gas catches light and EMILY scrolls across the screen. Katerina taps the screen again. The chimes stop and the light fades.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

I'll take the feet.

# Supplemental Materials

## ***The Proposed Model for Four Act Structure***

By Thom Bray

### **TEASER: Action**

Problem is introduced, usually through some action.

### **ACT I: Determination (or Confusion)**

The problem is introduced, or if a TEASER is used, the problem is re-stated, & initially complicated. Protagonist & antagonist set in motion towards one another. Protagonist's DRAMATIC NEED is identified.

### **ACT II: Conflict**

The complication from act one is acted upon, sometimes solved and a new complication arises, or further complicated. At the end of the Act, the protagonist or someone the protagonist cares about is in jeopardy. (Emotional, physical, psychological)

### **ACT III: Despair**

The protagonist examines dramatic need in relation to the movement of the plot. Usually, there is self-doubt and despair. All is lost, hero(ine) has no chance.

### **ACT IV: Redemption**

Climax is reached; protagonist resolves the problem; dramatic need is resolved, protagonist discovers something. This emotional movement brings UNDERSTANDING, which = THEME. (E.G.: Plot resolved, protagonist comes to understanding, theme comes into focus.)

### **TAG (Optional): Reflection**

Characters reflect on their journey.

REVIEW



## **Proposed General Model for FIVE ACT STRUCTURE**

BY Thom Bray

### **Teaser (ACTION) (2-5 Pgs)**

An action that engages the audience and is the inciting event that pushes the story into the acts that follow.

### **Act One (INTRODUCTION/ CONFUSION/ DETERMINATION) (9-11pgs)**

The World of the Play is introduced or restacked to the audience (We meet characters, see franchise, etc.). The problem becomes the focus of our characters' concentration. A plan of action.

### **Act Two (CONFLICT & JEOPARDY) (9-11pgs)**

Conflict between characters as problem is worked. Obstacles thrown up, worked around as the problem is worked and the plan of action revised. Act ends on jeopardy for main character, or someone main character cares about.

### **Act Three (OBSTACLES & REVELATION) (9-11pgs)**

As the problem is worked, more obstacles are set in motion. More adjustments to the plan. A revelation sets main characters towards a confrontation with bad guy/emotional problem/ murder-case of week.

### **Act Four (CLIMAX I + DESPAIR) (9-11pgs)**

The initial climax; a confrontation. The main characters FAIL or new and even more DAUNTING obstacles emerge. DESPAIRE! But Finally--- because of the main character's skill/insight, a solution is discovered/thought of, leading to--

### **Act Five (CLIMAX II: REDEMPTION/TAKE DOWN) (9-11pgs)**

The final payoff. The take down. The characters succeed and/or some sort of resolution is found. Genre specific. Could end on cliffhanger, or resolve episode but raise a cliffhanger question for next week.

Be sure to end each act on an interesting question/insight that the viewer wants to come back to see resolved: Such as, will the good guy get killed?

What is the meaning of the revelation?

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