

The Eldritch

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. HORROR CON - DAY

HORROR CON: 2022.

Convention center in Boston. Torrents of fans parading around in various COSTUMES, MONSTERS, and HORROR ICONS. Fans take pictures with COSPLAYERS and ACTORS.

MAX STEVENS (late 30s), OLIVIA MONROE (late 30s), KATIE REYNOLDS (late 20s), DYLAN RHODES (early 20s), and FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON (late 30s) sit at an EMPTY BOOTH. The banner above them reads: SALEM HORROR CLUB.

A photo of the five at Horror Con 2018 hangs on the banner. Olivia and Dylan are flipping each other off discreetly as they all smile.

Max sits at the ready. Olivia reads "THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH". Katie practices chords on her guitar. Funyuns relaxes in his chair. Dylan carefully observes the surroundings.

Olivia occasionally glances at Max. Max can't take his eyes off a LARGE AUDITORIUM in the distance. Doors closed. A sign in front says: DARK TALK WITH CYFRIN ARUELIAN.

Max is a gentle giant with a competitive spirit. He's in tremendous shape and has a OUIJA PLANCHETTE tattoo on his NECK. A bag sits next to him.

A man approaches. Dylan nudges Max. The man vaguely recognizes Max. Max's eyes perk up.

MAN

Excuse me, aren't you Max Stevens?

MAX STEVENS

Yes! Are you interested in joining the Salem Horror Club?

MAN

I'm looking for the Aurelian event.

MAX STEVENS

Oh. Right over there.

MAN

Thanks.

MAX STEVENS

Could you let me know what he says?

MAN

If I see you on the way, I'm  
already running late --

MAX STEVENS

You're more than welcome to join us  
for group meetings. We meet at the  
Salem --

MAN

You're coming off a bit too  
desperate, Mr. Basketball.

Max flinches. Dylan stares daggers through the man as he  
walks away. Max takes a breath and shakes it off.

OLIVIA MONROE

Go. We can handle this here.

MAX STEVENS

I'm not leaving you guys.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

I highly doubt anyone comes up.

Dylan sneaks off.

MAX STEVENS

But someone might.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

You're hoping Cyfrin might, bro.

Max stammers.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON (CONT'D)

You know where he's at. Go meet  
him.

Max pulls a copy of "THE REGENERATED" by CYFRIN AURELIAN out  
of his bag. The cover art is a MAN HOLDING A PLANCHETTE AND A  
SICKLE DUELING WITH A DEATH-LIKE FIGURE WITH A LARGE ALIEN-  
LIKE DRAGON at a GIANT TOWER.

Max stares at the door, nods his head, and quickly darts  
towards the auditorium.

Max approaches the door, the crowd exits the auditorium,  
almost in a trance.

Max navigates through the crowd, but has a limp in his left  
leg. Dylan, with his hood down, brushes past Max.

- AUDITORIUM

Max enters the auditorium. It's EMPTY. Max rushes up to the stage and sighs.

He goes to the stage and sees a copy of a program. It reads: MY LATEST WORK- "APOTHEOSIS" AVAILABLE SOON.

Dylan, Olivia, Funyuns, and Katie join Max. The doors shut behind them.

OLIVIA MONROE

I'm sorry, Max.

MAX STEVENS

Well, we at least know there's a new book coming.

DYLAN RHODES

I can find him. Just give me --

OLIVIA MONROE

-- I can get a book copy. I could've waited in line for it.

DYLAN RHODES

It's funny how you have all the solutions afterwards.

Olivia glares at Dylan. The door opens up behind them. The Man from earlier walks in.

MAN

I've been looking for you. Have you seen my wallet?

MAX STEVENS

I haven't.

MAN

My license is in there, my cash.

DYLAN RHODES

If I see you on my way, I'll let you know.

The Man sneers and leaves.

MAX STEVENS

Who's at the booth?

- HORROR CON

The group walks back to the booth. Everyone stops. We see an ORANGE BAG on the booth.

They rush to the booth. Dylan casually tosses a WALLET in a TRASHCAN. Max pulls the bag to the group.

A letter on top reads "TO MAX". Max waives everyone in. He opens the letter. It reads:  
 DEAR MAX, WE'RE SORRY WE MISSED YOU. AS AN ORGANIZATION, WE HAVE A CHALLENGE FOR YOU. THE DETAILS ARE BELOW, AS WELL AS THE FIRST PIECE. WE WISH YOU THE BEST OF LUCK, AND WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AT OUR BOOK SIGNING IN SALEM. IF COMPLETED, YOU COULD BE FEATURED IN ONE OF MY BOOKS AS WELL AS A CHANCE OF A LIFETIME. BEST WISHES, CYFRIN ARUELIAN.

Below the letter is a list. Each item has a different color ink. It reads the following:

FIND THE OBJECTS RELATED TO EACH:

1. THE FURY OF THE DEMON INSTANTLY POSESSED ME. I KNEW MYSELF NO LONGER. (POE, THE BLACK CAT) (BLACK)
2. A LONE MAN ON THE THE THRONE, SEEING ALL REALITIES THROUGH A MANIFESTED KEYHOLE. (AURELIAN, THE REGENERATED) (ORANGE)
3. I DON'T MEAN ONE OF THOSE TWO-PAGES-TO-THE-WEEK-WITH SUNDAY SQUEEZED-IN-A-CORNER DIARIES, BUT A SORT OF JOURNAL WHICH I CAN WRITE IN WHENEVER I FEEL INCLINED. (STOKER, DRACULA) (RED)
4. IT SEEMED TO BE A SORT OF MONSTER, OR SYMBOL REPRESENTING A MONSTER, OF A FORM WHICH ONLY A DISEASED FANCY COULD CONCEIVE. (LOVECRAFT, THE CALL OF CTHULHU) (PURPLE)
5. I TREMBLED, AND MY HEART FAILED WITHIN ME; WHEN, ON LOOKING UP, I SAW, BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON, THE DAEMON AT THE CASEMENT. (SHELLEY, FRANKENSTEIN) (GREEN)

Max smiles. He reaches in the bag, and pulls out a TOWER REPLICA. His tattoo flashes ORANGE. Blink and you miss it. He gets PRICKED by the tower and a trickle of blood pours out.

TITLE CARD: THE ELDRITCH

EXT. SALEM - MORNING  
 THREE WEEKS LATER

Halloween in Salem. Clear skies.

The town teeming with people wearing jackets over their costumes. Candy stations set up. Their breath condenses in the cool air.

Movie monsters and characters drape the town. The bookstore is fully decorated out with hay, pumpkins and spider web.

At the book store, a line wraps around the building. In the window, a banner advertising a meet and greet with CYFRIN AURELIAN.

Max ducks and dodges through people on his way to the Bookstore. He's carrying a small book under his arm. He's wearing a BOSTON CELTICS CAP.

His phone buzzes. He reads a text from Olivia: YOU BETTER NOT BE FUCKING LATE AGAIN!!!!

MAX STEVENS

I really tried this time.

Phone buzzes again. Olivia: IF YOU'RE THERE, YOU DON'T HAVE EVERYTHING.

Max takes a breath.

INT. BOOKSTORE - MORNING

Standing in front of a makeshift panel, CYFRIN AURELIAN (mid 40s) sits on a stool in front of a crowd.

He has a meek but commanding presence but speaks with charisma. This is a man of knowledge.

The crowd sits completely still.

Cyfrin reads from his book "THE REGENERATED". "I BIND YOU TO MY OBEYING COMMANDS" is written in THE WITCHES ALPHABET on the front of the book inside NINE KNOTS of DEVIL'S SNARE.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

- "A lone man on the throne, seeing all realities through a manifested key hole. All existence, life and death, flow through my words. Thane, you are apart of this existence. Willing or unwilling."

Cyfrin closes his book. The crowd claps.

In the background, Max falls through the door and scramble to a pair of empty seats.

Nobody notices them come in.

As they settle in, Max smiles and tries to make eye contact with Cyfrin.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)  
Thank you everyone, including our  
late giant over there.

The crowd chuckles. Cyfrin winks at Max.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)  
So, let's move on to Q and A.

Several people raise their hands. One stands up.

FAN #1  
How do you get your inspiration for  
your horror?

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
From real life. We all have fears,  
whether personal or existensial,  
and I try to represent them as --

Max internally fanboys and he can't stop grinning.

Max's phone buzzes. He sees another text from Olivia: WE NEED  
TO TALK WHEN I SEE YOU.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)  
-- I hope that answers it well  
enough.  
(to Max)  
Yes?

MAX STEVENS  
If you had one thing you could  
change in life, what would you  
change?

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
Halloween every day. But  
thankfully, that's why we have  
books.  
(to fan)  
Your question?

FAN #2  
What's your writing process?

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
That's a good question. It all  
starts with intent. Know what you  
want, visualize it, and make every  
word count. --

- MEET AND GREET LINE

Moments later.

The line itself seems endless. Max towers above everyone in the line. He's next in line and squirming with excitement. He holds a copy of "Regenerated"

JENNIFER BUTLER (36), stands behind Max. She sees his Falling Tower tattoo.

JENNIFER BUTLER

Excuse me, sir. Why are you getting "Regenerated" signed when you have an "Abhorrence" tattoo?

MAX STEVENS

"The Regenerated" gives you a different look at Thane and Mar'vis the Dread's dynamic. You start to see gaps in Thane's morals. It really makes you question the good vs. evil dynamic.

JENNIFER BUTLER

Same with Hypermind. Mar'Vis is the best. I would've loved "Abhorrence", but, you know.

MAX STEVENS

What?

JENNIFER BUTLER

I love 'em, but he can't end a story for shit.

MAX STEVENS

It's subjective. Sometimes you have to sacrifice a few things to save the spectacle.

JENNIFER BUTLER

He should've sacrificed to save the damn cat.

Max and Jennifer giggle. Cyfrin waves Max forward.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

Next, please.

Max smiles and approaches him.



MAX STEVENS

Hi! It's so good to finally meet you, Mr. Aurelian.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

It's good to meet you too, Mr. Stevens.

MAX STEVENS

You know my name?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

I'm the all knowing and all powerful Lord of Darkness. I even know magic.

Cyfrin waves his hands together and pulls a pen out of his sleeve. Cyfrin and Max laugh. He is wearing a **HOMEMADE BRACELET** with **GEMS AND MAGNETS** embedded.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)

Of course I know you. You're Max Stevens, former power forward for UConn. One of the best I've ever seen! How's life treating you?

MAX STEVENS

I'm a gym teacher now but I'll be an assistant for UConn soon, and please, call me Max.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

It's always good to see you're shaping young minds, Max. Can I see your book?

Max hands Cyfrin the book. Cyfrin opens it and a letter falls out the cover. Max nods for him to read it. Cyfrin skims through the letter and pauses.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)

Did you bring the artifacts with you?

MAX STEVENS

They're on the way.

Funyuns slowly rises in the background. He's carrying a bag and starts to scoot towards them. Neither notices.

Cyfrin's hands lock up, lightly ripping the paper..

CYFRIN AURELIAN

NO!

Max is taken aback.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)  
 Nobody else knows this right? Let's  
 keep it private.

MAX STEVENS  
 I have connections at the Salem  
 Library. We can get in after hours.

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
 Can we try around six tonight?

MAX STEVENS  
 Got it!

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
 Perfect! I'll see you there. I'll  
 give you the book then.

Cyfrin jots something down on a notepad sitting on a news  
 paper. The headline reads: UNIVERSITY HOLDS VIGIL FOR MISSING  
 PROFESSOR BURKE.

Max smiles wide and shakes Cyfrin's hand. Funyuns races  
 through the crowd and exits the building.

MAX STEVENS  
 Thank you, Mr. Aurelian!

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
 Call me Cyfrin.

Cyfrin winks at Max. Max gives a thumbs up and walks away.

Max high fives Jennifer and exits the store.

EXT. BOOKSTORE - MORNING

Max exits the store and walks to Funyuns.

Funyuns is a Bohemian stoner with an unprecedented intellect.  
 He has an ELDER SIGN tattooed on his wrist.

Funyuns reads a collection from H.P. Lovecraft on the bench.  
 He has a large leather book bag next to him. He has a knife  
 with a wooden handle on his hip.

Max slides into the seat next to him.

MAX STEVENS  
 Funyuns, I have a qu --

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
We need the library.

MAX STEVENS  
How did you know?

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Feel my pulse.

Max puts his hand on Funyuns' wrist and pulls back.

MAX STEVENS  
Heart's racing.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
No worries, I have my healing  
wands.

Funyuns pulls a crystal out of his bag, opens the side and  
pulls out a joint. Max laughs.

MAX STEVENS  
I thought you were a spiritual  
healer?

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
A damn good one, but the right tool  
for the right job. I'll have the  
library ready. I was just there.

MAX STEVENS  
Thanks, but we still gotta figure  
out the scavenger hunt.

Funyuns opens his bag and pulls out a BAS RELIEF. His eyes  
flash PURPLE. Blink and you miss it.

Max's jaw drops.

MAX STEVENS (CONT'D)  
How did you --

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Through my own nefarious ways.

FLASHBACK- INT. LIBRARY - EVENING

The night before.

Funyuns approaches the library manager, JERRY(41), clean cut  
and nerdy. Funyuns holds a brown bag.

JERRY

Good to see you, Finn!

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

You too, Jerry. Hey, that chest you told me about is downstairs, right?

Funyuns tosses Jerry the bag. Jerry's eyes light up.

JERRY

Third door from the right.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. BOOKSTORE - MORNING

Funyuns winks at Max.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

So that leaves four more.

MAX STEVENS

You mean three?

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

You left the tower at home, didn't you?

Max's eyes widen.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON (CONT'D)

Oli told me. You might need to see her. I gotta get back to the univesity. Burk asked for me to take over the study before he vanished.

MAX STEVENS

On what?

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

Theories on magick and its relationship to reality. It's a cross department study.

MAX STEVENS

What have you found out?

Finn shifts up passes the joint to Max, who quickly declines. Finn jokingly passes it back over with a smile.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

I could say the whole science versus belief crap, or the dumb as hell science and magic are one in the same B.S., but I'll be real: We don't know shit, Max. What's real and what's possible aren't exclusive, but the evidence that links them is few and far between. So, we rely on theory.

MAX STEVENS

So what's your theory?

He puts his books in the leather bag. Other books inside include a text book on theoretical physics, Magick Theory and Practice by Aleister Crowley, and a textbook on non-Euclidean geometry. He throws the bag over his shoulder.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

Were you nervous?

MAX STEVENS

I never get nervous.

Funyuns smirks.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

Right. I'll have the library. We know how much this means to you. We'll make sure you win.

MAX STEVENS

No. We'll win.

EXT. SALEM - CONTINUOUS

Max drives through the town.

He passes by a library with OLD TIMEY GHOSTS performing in front of the building.

Adults and kids walk through the town with monster costumes.

A gothic night club advertises the band "WE'RE NOT FINE".

He passes a thick forest. We see a hidden cemetery in the middle of the trees.

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

Salem High School. Pumpkins and candy wrappers litter the school grounds. A few groups of students talk to each other. All are in costume.

We see a particularly jaded teacher sneaks to the back and pulls out a bottle of vodka.

Max pulls into a parking space.

- CAR - MORNING

Max turns his car off and leans back into his seat.

He looks at his cap in the mirror and smiles. He starts to drift away.

KNOCK at the window. He snaps into reality. Olivia kneels at the side of the window with a smirk.

She's a proud and just woman, but her confidence hides a past. She's strictly by the book. She wears a SCARF with THE RAVEN POEM etched on it.

Max smiles.

MAX STEVENS

Oli.

OLIVIA MONROE

Coach Stevens.

Max frowns.

MAX STEVENS

Ms. Monroe.

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - MORNING

Olivia and Max walk into her office. A plaque on her desk reads "VICE PRINCIPAL".

The office has numerous RAVENS and EDGAR ALLAN POE QUOTES.

OLIVIA MONROE

-- I'm happy you got to the Q and A, but if you're gonna take off, let me know, and be on time.

MAX STEVENS

I was still able to meet him. Looks like the library after hours. I had to take the risk.

OLIVIA MONROE  
Speaking of ...

Olivia hands Max a LETTER. The letter says UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT. He freezes and takes the letter, but the letter was OPENED.

Olivia has ROSY CHEEKS. Max rolls his eyes and grins. His face drops as he reads the letter.

MAX STEVENS  
So much for my two weeks notice.

OLIVIA MONROE  
I'm sorry.

MAX STEVENS  
(sigh)  
You'd think they'd want a former great on their coaching staff.

OLIVIA MONROE  
I know it won't make you feel better, but you are needed here.

Max squints.

MAX STEVENS  
Oli, is that what's been bothering you lately?

Olivia bites her lip.

MAX STEVENS (CONT'D)  
Say what's on your mind.

OLIVIA MONROE  
As a friend --

MAX STEVENS  
Oli --

OLIVIA MONROE  
AND as an educator... we need you.  
The kids need you.

Max pauses.

MAX STEVENS  
I'm just trying to take the next step in my career.

OLIVIA MONROE  
You can start by winning a title  
with your students.

MAX STEVENS  
There's nothing wrong with making a  
business choice.

OLIVIA MONROE  
This isn't business. Let me tell  
you --

MAX STEVENS  
Oli, don't --

OLIVIA MONROE  
-- You're not a loser!

Max turns his head away. Olivia snatches him back.

OLIVIA MONROE (CONT'D)  
You were never a loser. You had  
talent, but that's not what made  
you.

She points at his hat.

OLIVIA MONROE (CONT'D)  
None of that... ever defined you.

Max adjusts his hat. Olivia looks away.

MAX STEVENS  
We have the Bas Relief.

Olivia takes a breath.

OLIVIA MONROE  
Funyuns pulled through?

MAX STEVENS  
Apparently the manager likes  
pastrami.

Max looks at his tattoo and grins from ear to ear. Olivia  
holds his hand and does a double squeeze. They smile.

OLIVIA MONROE  
Someone's excited.

MAX STEVENS  
The man has helped me through a lot  
and he doesn't even know it.

(MORE)



MAX STEVENS (CONT'D)

Now I have the chance to be in his story? Cosmic when you think about it.

OLIVIA MONROE

True. That's what Poe was to me. He helped me through my childhood.

MAX STEVENS

And through a rough few years here.

Olivia glares at Max.

OLIVIA MONROE

Don't even.

MAX STEVENS

The past is the past.

OLIVIA MONROE

It's his fault.

MAX STEVENS

It's both of you. What else do we need?

Max reaches into his pocket, pulls out the letter, and hands it to Olivia. She glances over it.

OLIVIA MONROE

So far, we have the bas relief, and the tower you were given, we need cat fur...

Olivia side smirks as she reads her name.

OLIVIA MONROE (CONT'D)

... the old papers, I think Katie said she had it. Just need the final item... Fuck.

Max smiles.

OLIVIA MONROE (CONT'D)

No!

Max keeps smiling.

OLIVIA MONROE (CONT'D)

Do I need to pull rank?

MAX STEVENS

That's only at work.

OLIVIA MONROE  
Rogue is a son of a bitch! Why is  
he even here?!

MAX STEVENS  
DYLAN'S a good kid. Give him a  
chance.

The intercom buzzes.

INTERCOM  
Vice Principal Monroe, Coach  
Stevens, you have a visitor.

Max smiles.

OLIVIA MONROE  
Please let it be Katie.

- HALLWAY

Max and Olivia exit the office. Dylan leans on the wall. He's  
been waiting.

Dylan blends into the surroundings on purpose. Highly  
intelligent but completely untapped.

He wears a FRANKENSTEIN SHIRT under a worn jacket. He holds a  
SMALL BROWN BAG.

DYLAN RHODES  
Skipping class?

OLIVIA MONROE  
Rogue --

MAX STEVENS  
How's it going, Dylan?

DYLAN RHODES  
I found it.

Max smiles.

MAX STEVENS  
I hope you're doing okay, bud.

DYLAN RHODES  
Oh, you meant it.

OLIVIA MONROE  
Putting that high school diploma to  
good use?

DYLAN RHODES  
It's next to your doctorate.

MAX STEVENS  
Cut it out, both of you.

Dylan smiles.

DYLAN RHODES  
Inmates running the asylum now?

MAX STEVENS  
Dylan, enough.

DYLAN RHODES  
To answer your query, I exist. You?

MAX STEVENS  
Doing great, buddy.

OLIVIA MONROE  
We both know why I'm standing here.

Dylan snarls at Olivia, reaches in the bag and pulls out a RAW PIG HEART and casually flips it to Olivia.

DYLAN RHODES  
Think fast.

Olivia scrambles back as fast as she can. The heart bounces on the floor.

OLIVIA MONROE  
What the fuck is wrong with you?!  
It's still bleeding.

DYLAN RHODES  
I thought girls saw more blood than boys?

MAX STEVENS  
Come on! You know better!  
(calm)  
Where did you get that?

DYLAN RHODES  
Butcher's mart.

OLIVIA MONROE  
Probably stole it.

Dylan holds up a receipt.

DYLAN RHODES

A heart, cat fur... why even ask  
for this?

Olivia shrugs.

OLIVIA MONROE

Not sure, but it's for "the chance  
of a lifetime". I can go for that.

DYLAN RHODES

Taking the easy way out? You're not  
that bad an educator.

Olivia snarls. Dylan picks up the heart. We see his shirt  
flash GREEN. Blink and you miss it.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)

Keep me posted on everything.  
Meeting up with Katie for her  
concert. Don't like the douche she  
plays with, but his lyrics are  
amazing.

MAX STEVENS

You're definitely there for the  
music. Think you can get a hold of  
Katie about the pages?

Dylan nods.

OLIVIA MONROE

You're still stuck on Autumn, huh?  
That's stupid.

Dylan walks away casually tossing the heart like a baseball.

DYLAN RHODES

Wasn't it Funyuns who got you  
through college?

Olivia flinches.

OLIVIA MONROE

I hate you.

DYLAN RHODES

C's get degrees.

MAX STEVENS

So that's another item down.

DYLAN RHODES

Find the fur, Ms. Monroe.

OLIVIA MONROE  
How am I supposed to get it?

Dylan takes the paper bag and slides it towards Olivia. She opens the bag and pulls out HAIR CLIPPERS with small splatters of BLOOD. Max snorts.

OLIVIA MONROE (CONT'D)  
(concerned)  
Where did you get this?

DYLAN RHODES  
(cold)  
Same place.

Max and Olivia are visibly disturbed.

OLIVIA MONROE  
But why --

DYLAN RHODES  
I rather not think about it, but I feel like I can sleep at night knowing he doesn't have it.

Dylan bows out. Olivia storms down the hall.

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

Olivia approaches a trash can and looks at the bag. Max walks to his car in the background. She opens the top and begins to place the bag in.

A cat meows behind Olivia and startles her. Olivia turns to see a black cat sniffing the air and looking at the bag.

Olivia looks at the bloody bag, frowns, and mouths "Damn!".

Everything goes BLACK. We hear a BLOOD CURDLING SCREAM from Olivia. Silence.

INT. BAR MIDDAY

In an underground bar, a band sets up on stage. A sign hangs above them reading "WE'RE NOT FINE". They all have an emo aesthetic and wear all black.

The bar has a noir vibe with a lot of smoke and shadows. The environment is dark and devoid of colors. Tables all have glasses with a black rose on them.

ANDY ANGST (31) orders a couple of roadies around. Andy looks like he never sleeps. He holds OLD PAPERS covered in lyrics.

Andy approaches a Bass player, a Keyboard player, and the Drummer, who are practicing on set.

ANDY ANGST

I'm glad you're here. We started here, and we can restart here. This isn't just about Andy Angst. This is our story. "We're Not Fine" couldn't exist without you --

Andy looks around. The bandmates all flash a grin. Andy's face drops.

ANDY ANGST (CONT'D)

Which room?

- PRIVATE ROOM

Katie pushes a young man into a chair and straddles him.

Katie is a female Cassanova and a free spirit. Could charm her way out of any situation. She's wearing a DRACULA T-SHIRT and a RED SHAWL.

Andy bursts into the room.

ANDY ANGST

Katie, you miserable rake!

KATIE "RAKE" REYNOLDS

Rupert, get out.

YOUNG MAN

Your name is Rupert?

ANDY ANGST

My name is Andy!

KATIE "RAKE" REYNOLDS

Cut the shit. Andy Angst is your stage name. You're not a brooding teen anymore. You're a partner in your parent's real estate agency.

ANDY ANGST

Katie!

YOUNG MAN

Can you give us five minutes?

Andy face palms. Katie rolls her eyes. The young man hangs his head and walks out.

ANDY ANGST

You got us in trouble last time for this. Stop plowing the employees.

KATIE REYNOLDS

You think you can control me because --

ANDY ANGST

This is our comeback, Katie.

KATIE REYNOLDS

We were playing in our late teens at the end of the Emo era! We've all done different projects! You saw the underground sales. You don't even like any of us!

ANDY ANGST

My motives, real or not, are none of your concern. You said yes. You can't keep banging employees.

Katie's phone buzzes. She rolls her eyes.

KATIE REYNOLDS

Fine. I'll just harass patrons at the bar. Take some of that mascara off. It looks like you applied it with a tar roller.

Andy grumbles as he leaves the room.

- BAR

Katie storms out of the room and goes to her guitar on stage.

DYLAN RHODES (O.S.)

You'd have pounded the boy flat. He did you a favor for once.

Katie turns to see Dylan at the speakers. She jumps off the stage and hugs him.

KATIE REYNOLDS

Dylan! You're here early!

Katie smirks.

KATIE REYNOLDS (CONT'D)  
This is about the papers or Autumn.

DYLAN RHODES  
I apparently don't like seeing my  
bestie, but Max did ask to come  
early.

Dylan gestures at Andy who exits a backroom. Katie smiles.

Andy walks past Dylan and bumps him.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)  
Hey, Rupert.

Andy steps into Dylan's face.

ANDY ANGST  
You go near my sister again, and  
I'll strangle you with every wire  
in this bitch!

Dylan looks into his eyes.

DYLAN RHODES  
You know y'all wear the same brand  
of Mascera, right?

Katie snickers.

ANDY ANGST  
Our sets at four. You can see the  
rake then.

KATIE REYNOLDS  
Hey, you mind if I can borrow a few  
sheets of your vocals paper?

Andy scoffs and approaches the stage.

DYLAN RHODES  
What's twisting his tit?

KATIE REYNOLDS  
He's always fussy. Tell Max I'll  
have them tonight from Autumn.

DYLAN RHODES  
Wait. Is that back room unlocked?

- ROOM

Dylan slides through the door. He spots the papers.



Dylan saunters to the desk, accidentally bumping the table and scattering pages on the ground.

Dylan dives on the ground scooping pages up. He sees a few different colored pages. He picks them up.

We see they are all lyrics from filler songs from popular Emo Bands and unreleased songs.

DYLAN RHODES

The fuck?

Dylan lazily shuffles the pages together and puts them on the table. We see Andy staring blankly at Dylan.

Dylan and Andy lock eyes and are frozen in place.

Dylan breaks eye contact and looks at the pages.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)

Great artists steal.

Andy doesn't move.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)

You may have some lyrics akin to  
the idea of "honor amongst thieves"

--

- BAR

Dylan sprints by Katie.

DYLAN RHODES

Call Autumn. I don't think I can  
make your show tonight.

Andy stumbles out the back room in a rage. A pair of MASSIVE bouncers come quickly approach Dylan.

Dylan sprints out the building, barreling into the door on the way out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Max sits on his couch looking at the rejection letter.

The living room is nothing special and is decorated with HORROR POSTERS and BASKETBALL AWARDS.

He looks up when he sees the WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU line. He does this over and over.

Max looks at his numerous TROPHIES and ACCOLADES displayed on the wall. A pair of NAISMITH PLAYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS sit in the middle.

The shelf next to it is STUFFED with HORROR MOVIES, FIGURINES, AND BOOKS.

He pulls his phone out of his pocket and writes a text: OLI, I'LL BE BACK AT THE SCHOOL ON MONDAY.

Before he hits send. Max drops his head into his hands.

He looks to the shelf and sees the TOWER.

He walks over and picks it up.

He scans the room. We see that the room is a shrine to his past. He looks at the tower.

His phone BUZZES. He sets the tower down. It's Olivia: A PHOTO OF HER COVERED IN DEEP SCRATCHES HOLDING A BAG OF HAIR.

A second message: YOU BETTER NOT FORGET THE FUCKING TOWER!! LOVE YOU!!

Max DELETES his original message: LOVE YOU TOO!

Max grabs a bag and sprints out the door.

Beat.

Max sprints back in, grabs the tower, and leaves back out.

INT. OFFICE - SUNSET

Funyuns sits in his office making notes in a BOOK.

The office is DIMLY LIT. BOOKS, PAPERS, and CRYSTALS are scattered across his desk. A nametag on his desk reads: FINN MOON PHD. PHYSICS, ASTRONOMY, and METAPHYSICS.

A PHOTO of FUNYUNS and PROFESSOR BURKE (late 50s) sits on the desk. Burke is wearing a HOMEMADE BRACELET with GEMS AND MAGNETS embedded.

A massive poster of H.P. LOVECRAFT sits on the wall. A copy of the NECRONOMICON is open on the shelf next to the poster.

Funyuns closely reads a section on COSMIC MAGIC.

An open book on ASTRONOMY sits nearby. A LARGE DARK MASS sits in the middle of the stars. Looks like a nebula, but is it?

KNOCK at his door. He doesn't flinch.

The UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT enters.

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT  
Dr. Moon? I need --

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Do I have permission to go into  
Burke's office?

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT  
You know we can't --

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Burke needed me to do the research,  
and the university is actively  
preventing me from doing so.

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT  
It wasn't my call. The Police are  
the only ones allowed in until the  
investigation is complete.

Funyuns sits back and sighs.

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT (CONT'D)  
What your departments were doing  
was intriguing, but my hands are  
tied.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
It's not just the study. It's him.  
He is a friend of mine. I made his  
bracelet myself.

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT  
I'm sorry. And I know this may be  
too soon, but I stand by what I  
said before. You'd be an amazing  
dean.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
I'm happy where I'm at.

The President takes a breath.

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT  
I'm just saying you're appreciated.  
It's getting late. Take care.

The President leaves.

Funyuns sits up and looks at Burke's picture.

- BURKE'S OFFICE

Funyuns stands in front of Burke's office. He jostles the doorknob and closes his eyes.

Nothing.

He bows his head. He sees a LETTER peaking out under the door. He picks it up and opens it. It says "TERMINUS" written in the WITCHES ALPHABET.

Funyuns strains his eyes.

EXT. LIBRARY - EVENING

Max paces in front of the library with Olivia. Katie leans against a bench with her bass at her side. Olivia holds a bag full of CAT HAIR and is covered in SCRATCHES.

The library is a medium sized white building. Dead ivy wraps around the pillars. Old oak trees sprinkle the vast courtyard in front of the building. Skies are CLEAR.

Jerry waltzes out of the library carrying a bag full of sandwiches. Funyuns walks out behind him.

KATIE REYNOLDS

He's carrying those sandwiches like  
he's gonna fuck 'em.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

Okay, we're ready to go. I just  
need to lock everything up after.

OLIVIA MONROE

He left you the keys?

Funyuns searches his pockets.

Dylan walks out, leans on the pillar, and laughs.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

Shit! Oh, well. So, did you get the  
pages, Katie?

Katie points at a car pulling into the lot.

AUTUMN BUTLER (26), skips out of the car to Katie and they hug. She has an aura of innocence and spunk.

Dylan flinches and slides to the other side of the pillar.

KATIE REYNOLDS  
Hey, Autumn! Great to see you!

AUTUMN BUTLER  
You too! I got the papers! Sorry, I  
couldn't make the show tonight.

KATIE REYNOLDS  
Eh, you didn't miss much.

AUTUMN BUTLER  
So, is the Rogue here?

KATIE REYNOLDS  
Behind the pillar.

Autumn sneaks around the side of the pillar and hugs him. He jumps. He grins wide before collecting himself. Autumn brushes her hair away from her face.

AUTUMN BUTLER  
Thought you'd get away?

DYLAN RHODES  
Hey, Autumn...

AUTUMN BUTLER  
Still the nerves, huh?

Dylan freezes.

AUTUMN BUTLER (CONT'D)  
I'd let you take your time, but I'm  
running a bit late.

Dylan motions to speak, but can't. He smiles and nods. She jumps up, hugs him, and kisses his cheek. She walks to Katie.

AUTUMN BUTLER (CONT'D)  
I'll be at the next concert, and  
tell him my days off.

Autumn hands Katie the folder and winks. Katie jumps and hugs her. Autumn sets her down, she waves to the group and leaves.

MAX STEVENS  
Oooooook.

KATIE REYNOLDS  
I have that effect.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (O.S.)  
Looks like we're ready to start.

Everyone jumps around to see Cyfrin standing in the doorway.

MAX STEVENS

How did you...

CYFRIN AURELIAN

Back parking lot. I love the aesthetic here. I'm glad I met you Max. You have heart.

Cyfrin walks inside.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Shall we?

Max smiles as everyone surrounds him.

Max gives Olivia a bearhug. Olivia's eyes roll to the back of her head.

MAX STEVENS

Yes!!

Olivia lets out a whimper.

MAX STEVENS (CONT'D)

Oh, yeah. Sorry.

Max gingerly sets Olivia down. She gives a weak thumbs up.

Katie slings her bass over her shoulder and winks.

Dylan walks over to Max with the heart in a bag. Olivia grits her teeth.

MAX STEVENS (CONT'D)

Don't say it.

DYLAN RHODES

You have heart.

Max laughs as everyone walks inside.

FOG surrounds the building as they enter.

INT. LIBRARY - EVENING

In the main lobby, Funyuns, Olivia, and Dylan grab move chairs and set up candles and random decorations.

Cyfrin and Max arrange different RUNES, DEVIL'S SHOELACE, and EXOTIC STONES into bags.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

Max, can you hand me the stones  
over there?

MAX STEVENS

Sure.

Max hands Cyfrin a box of assorted stones, all with SYMBOLS  
carved into them. These are obviously ritualistic.

Max watches Cyfrin mix different stones into each bag. He's  
completely star struck.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

Mind if I ask a personal question?

MAX STEVENS

Sure.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

What happened after UConn?

Max pauses. Olivia watches from the background.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)

I didn't mean any offense to it--

MAX STEVENS

It's okay. I was selected first  
overall. They said I was a mix of  
Dennis Rodman and Shawn Kemp. A  
week before training camp, drunk  
driver hit me, lost my leg, and I  
lost my dream. I was so fucked up  
that I left everything behind. The  
ironic thing is the driver that hit  
me was wearing my jersey. That  
said, my friends here are the only  
reason I got through it.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

I'm sorry to hear.

(beat)

Do you miss it?

MAX STEVENS

Every second of it. The  
competition, the roar of the crowd,  
but most of all, I miss being a  
hero. Every night out there there  
was a battle. I had a goal. My team  
had a goal. I had things to  
accomplish. Now, I wait on the  
sidelines watching faces change.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

Those faces take on your image now.  
The generations before you shaped  
you, and now you can shape the  
future. You're doing something  
great.

MAX STEVENS

Why doesn't it feel like it?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

Because you were robbed. It was  
supposed to be your story, but it  
ended before it started. What  
happened to you was terrible, but  
it started a new story.

Cyfrin pats Max's shoulder.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)

Life isn't about destiny. A good  
story isn't about destiny otherwise  
we already know how the story ends.  
It's about the choices the  
characters make. Make it your own.

Max smiles at Cyfrin. Olivia watches with a smile before  
turning to Dylan.

Funyuns edges a table over one side at a time. Katie rushes  
over and helps him move it.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

Thanks. So, how long before Andy  
realizes the pages are gone?

KATIE REYNOLDS

I'm not worried about it. Dylan  
replaced Andy's hair gel with corn  
syrup before and he finished the  
bottle.

Funyuns snorts. Dylan looks at Katie and smiles.

Olivia slams a CANDELABRA down behind Dylan, making him jump.  
Dylan spins to a seething Olivia.

OLIVIA MONROE

If your stunt screws Max, your ass  
is mine!

Dylan loads the candles and turns to walk away. Olivia  
quickly grabs his shoulder and spins him around.



OLIVIA MONROE (CONT'D)  
 Rogue, I don't think you  
 understand...

Dylan rips her hand off of his shoulder and steps in her  
 face. He bites his tongue for a few seconds before calming.

DYLAN RHODES  
 Point out the rules to the  
 competition to me, or do I have to  
 run everything through you, Ms.  
 Monroe?

Katie puts her hand on Dylan's shoulder.

KATIE REYNOLDS  
 Walk away, man.

Dylan takes a step back.

DYLAN RHODES  
 I'm not gonna be who you think I  
 am. You still have trouble looking  
 at me.

Olivia freezes and looks away. Dylan shakes his head.

Cyfrin and Max join them.

MAX STEVENS  
 Hey, are we ready?

DYLAN RHODES  
 Just placing a few more candles.

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
 I apologize, I've been rude.  
 (extends his hand)  
 Cyfrin Aurelian . You're Olivia and  
 Dylan, yes?

Olivia and Dylan shake hands with Cyfrin.

We see Funyuns picks up a few bags and smells them. He looks  
 inside and double takes before slipping away.

Dylan watches Funyuns and looks over to Cyfrin.

OLIVIA MONROE  
 It's a pleasure.

DYLAN RHODES  
 Do you mind if I talk to you for a  
 second?

Cyfrin nods and the two walk away from everyone.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)

This seems a bit overcomplicated.  
Why a scavenger hunt?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

I use it for a form of artistic discovery. In my writing classes, I was told to find inanimate objects and write about them. It inspires creativity. I decided with it, why not reward creativity?

DYLAN RHODES

With such secrecy and items THIS specific?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

If everyone knew, it would lead to more issues. You question specifics, but why did you get what you got?

DYLAN RHODES

I go with my gut.

Cyfrin pauses and looks closely at Dylan.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

What was your gut instinct here?

DYLAN RHODES

Not to put all of my cards on the table.

Cyfrin smiles and nods.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

You just did.

Dylan chews his tongue.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)

I hope Max has enough for it.

Dylan nods and walks away. Cyfrin keeps an eye on him.

- LIBRARY ISLE

Dylan lightly jogs to Funyuns, who is looking through a few books on magic. Funyuns looks up and closes his book.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
I don't trust him either.

DYLAN RHODES  
Did you read his energy or  
something?

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
He doesn't even pass the eye test.  
Something feels off. Could just be  
a Halloween thing, the lifted veil,  
but I can't quite put my finger on  
it.

DYLAN RHODES  
It has bad timeshare scheme written  
all over it.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Not sure about that, but something.

DYLAN RHODES  
Keep an eye on Max for me.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Will do, and watch my back.

Dylan looks at Funyuns's hip and sees a knife.

DYLAN RHODES  
What's with the knife?

Funyuns nods. He pulls out a ritual knife with a handle made  
out of a twisted wood. The blade is short and curved.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Black Laurel. It's supposed to  
break magic curses. I keep it on me  
out of habit.

Dylan's eyes widen.

DYLAN RHODES  
You don't think...

MAX STEVENS (O.S.)  
We're ready.

Dylan and Funyuns look at each other and Funyuns gives him a  
a small black velvet bag.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Keep it close. Also, Dylan?

Dylan raises his eyebrows.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON (CONT'D)  
 Just ask her out, buddy. We all  
 know you have a thing for Autumn,  
 and so does she. It's mutual.

Dylan smiles.

- LOBBY

Max, Cyfrin, Olivia, Funyuns, Katie, and Dylan sit together  
 at a table with a large candelabra in the middle.

BAGS sit in front of Katie, Olivia, Funyuns, and Dylan.

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
 I appreciate everyone coming out.  
 Now, what did you all bring for the  
 scavenger hunt?

Everyone opens their bag. Katie opens and pulls out a BLOOD  
 RED CANDLE and OLD PAPERS. Olivia pulls out a BLACK CANDLE  
 and a BAG OF CAT HAIR. Funyuns pulls out a PURPLE CANDLE and  
 a BAG OF RELIEF. Dylan pulls out a GREEN CANDLE and the HEART.

Cyfrin immediately grabs Olivia's candle and looks it over  
 and sighs with relief.

Everyone looks puzzled.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)  
 You'd be surprised how often  
 someone accidentally grabs a really  
 really dark blue. Either way, the  
 point of the idea is to find  
 inspiration in horror. Each item  
 you have represents something  
 important to Horror, as well as an  
 author or work that inspired you. I  
 almost forgot. Max?

Cyfrin hands Max a BAG. Max pulls out an ORANGE CANDLE, Max's  
 BOOK, and the original manuscript for THE REGENERATED.  
 BURKE'S BRACELET is used as a bookmark in it.

Max smiles and Cyfrin pats his shoulder and nods.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)  
 You deserve it, man! Okay, everyone  
 place the candles and objects on  
 the table. We'll start with you.

Cyfrin points at Olivia.

OLIVIA MONROE

As soon as I saw the line on the list, I immediately knew it was my favorite author, Poe. Getting the hair wasn't easy.

Dylan snorts. Olivia shoots him a look.

DYLAN RHODES

You seriously didn't think about going to a groomer?

Olivia opens her mouth to speak and stops. She facepalms. She realizes she lost that exchange.

KATIE REYNOLDS

The romantic and gothic elements of "Dracula" was a major influence on both my music and life. I know that several pages from the original manuscript were lost, so I think the page quote represented it.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

I love... Lovecraft. His works inspired me both scientifically and metaphysically, and we all know about the bas relief.

OLIVIA MONROE

What about it?

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

It played a major role in "The Call of Cthulhu".

DYLAN RHODES

I haven't read Shelley's books, but I know what she did with her husband. I'm a huge fan of Universal Monsters, and I can relate to a monster that was manufactured.

Dylan looks at Olivia.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)

You asked for a heart, so I gave you one.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

Out of all of these scavenger hunts I've done so far, you're the only one who got it right. In fact, all of you chose the perfect items. You wouldn't believe some of the things people brought in. Most people don't even know what a bas relief is. One guy tried to bribe me with alcohol.

MAX STEVENS

It didn't work?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

No, I just bought it off of him afterwards.

Everyone laughs.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)

Just kidding, just kidding. I'm sober. Well... Final play, Max.

MAX STEVENS

As a lifelong fan, your characters and real life experiences inspired me. The broken and fractured characters helped me through my injury and to move on with my life and inspire people, a struggle present in The Regenerated.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

Struggles that made you into one of the best men I've ever known.

Max and Funyuns high five.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

You all are a close group. It's great to find real friends.

MAX STEVENS

The best of them. Also, I almost forgot.

Max reaches into a bag and retrieves his replica of the Tower. Cyfrin smiles.

The SKY turns DARK.

The table starts to glow bright orange and the candles spontaneously ignite. Cyfrin smiles. Everyone at the table starts to rise from their seats.

MAX STEVENS (CONT'D)

Cyfrin?

DYLAN RHODES

Funyuns? What's this?

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

What the fuck?!

MAX STEVENS

Cyfrin, what's going on?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

Congratulations, Max. You win.

Cyfrin's hand glows orange and he slams his hand down on the table. An ORANGE FIRE burns into an endless knot and an elder sign on the table. The objects raise and disappear mid air.

A purple portal materializes in the center.

Funyuns pulls his Black Laurel knife out of his pocket. Cyfrin flinches. Funyuns locks eyes with Cyfrin.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)

Don't do it, Finn.

DYLAN RHODES

How do you know his name?

Funyuns stabs down, but is caught by a glowing purple hand. The hand wrenches the blade away and throws him back.

Cyfrin LEVITATES from the table and his eyes glow orange.

Dylan sneaks away. Max stand up and charges at Cyfrin.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

This is the real prize.

Max reaches out as Cyfrin's hands glow orange and hits Max with an energy blast.

Max is thrown backwards through a bookcase and his prosthetic leg is blown off and left near the table.

Dylan hits Cyfrin from behind with a chair. The chair, but disintegrates within a foot of Cyfrin, and he turns around.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)

You have heart.

Cyfrin creates an orb that glows purple. Cyfrin is engulfed in an orange light and disappears. Everyone shields their eyes as the glow radiates out and explodes.

EXT. LIBRARY - EVENING

The library glows PURPLE and ORANGE. A massive purple explosion rocks the building. The purple light condenses.

- LIBRARY NIGHT

Fire burns the ruins of the freshly destroyed library. Fire, ash, and books rain down from the sky. Fog and smoke blanket the area. Wreckage tumbles everywhere. The purple light dimly shines from the center.

Dylan stumbles out of the wreckage. His clothes are shredded and he's holding a Max's prosthetic leg.

DYLAN RHODES

(shouting)

Max? Finn?

MAX STEVENS (O.S.)

Dylan! Here!

Dylan turns to a shattered bookshelf to see Max, Katie, and Olivia, taking cover behind it.

All three are covered in bruises and cuts. Max is missing his left leg. Olivia clutches her injured left arm.

Dylan rushes over and slips on a book, falling face first into the ground. He scurries over to them like a rat. Once behind the shelf, he hands Max his prosthetic leg.

DYLAN RHODES

I rescued your foot, Max.

MAX STEVENS

Much appreciated.

Max puts the prosthetic back on. Dylan smirks.

DYLAN RHODES

I wonder if the old saying about big feet crosses over with prosthetics.



Max snickers.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)  
I'm just saying it's cheating.

OLIVIA MONROE  
(whispering)  
Keep it down! He could hear us!

DYLAN RHODES  
He already knows we're here.  
(looks around)  
Where's Funyuns?

MAX STEVENS  
Over there.

Max points to a fallen wall. Funyuns leans on it casually and waves at Dylan.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Yello.

DYLAN RHODES  
(smiles and nods)  
He seems relaxed.

The fog and smoke instantly clear and a purple glow illuminates the area revealing a crescent moon.

Funyuns' face drops. Max takes a deep breath and looks at everyone and nods. They stand together and turns to the glow.

As they turn to the glow, FOUR HUMAN SILOUETTES hover within. THREE MEN and ONE WOMAN in PERIOD CLOTHING. As they reach the ground, the glow fades, but hide their faces.

Funyuns looks on the ground and finds his ritual knife.

Cyfrin teleports back into the rubble of the burning library and walks in front of the hidden figures.

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
I can't believe it actually worked!

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
What the hell is this?

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
Let's call it a mix of dark magic, cosmic power, and imagination. I just needed the right ingredients. You nailed it for me.

MAX STEVENS

What the hell did you do?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

I enlisted a few helpers, and you all were smart enough to get what I needed. You followed directions.

OLIVIA MONROE

What are you talking about?

Cyfrin smiles as the glowing orb disappears, leaving the area illuminated by the fires alone. The four people step forward, each glowing a different color.

The fire reveals EDGAR ALLAN POE, MARY SHELLEY, BRAM STOKER, and H.P. LOVECRAFT. Cyfrin joins the other four.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

Allow me to introduce to you your heroes: Mary Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe, Bram Stoker, and Howard Phillips Lovecraft. A bit of necromancy can go a long way.

Funyuns drops to one knee and starts taking notes in his worn out journal.

MAX STEVENS

Why are you doing this?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

Remember the lady that you talked to in line? You know, this one?

Jennifer materializes in front of Cyfrin, unconscious.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)

"I love 'em, but he can't end a story for shit." Every book, no matter what I do, what my themes are, are berated because I didn't write the ending they wanted. My muse was detail and world building, but everyone wanted a finite tale. I loved building the world so much that I never wanted to stop. I thought, wait... I know real magic. Books, the cosmos, necromancy, etc.. True power exists and is infinite. I've mastered it. So you know what I decided?

DYLAN RHODES

That self improvement is too much effort?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

Why let it end? What I've done is created my own living work. I can create every detail in my very own living book. I can't be criticized if the book never ends. Every monster, theme, detail, location, and we can constantly live it, with me as the ultimate creator, and if something gets old, I'll just change it. A living book and I'm the one Au-Ruler.

The group collectively groans. Cyfrin looks surprised.

OLIVIA MONROE

You're a professional writer. You can do better than that.

MARY SHELLEY

Where the hell did you bring us?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

The 21st century. Your new world.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

A modern world.

Bram picks up OLD PAPERS. WRITINGS instantly appear on them. He double takes and thumbs through them. He folds the papers and puts them in his pocket.

EDGAR ALLAN POE (CONT'D)

Why did you bring us here?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

To build this world. Your abilities helped shape a world, now you have the power to change it. Literally. You were resurrected with magical powers, but more on that later.

BRAM STOKER

You've done this on your own?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

No, they helped me.

Cyfrin points to the group. Lovecraft backs away from the group and goes behind a wall.

BRAM STOKER

Do they have magical powers?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

The hippy might.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

What year is this?

CYFRIN AURELIAN

2022.

Edgar looks around and he gets a sharp pain in his head and drops to the ground. He starts seeing images of the nearby RAVEN, and eventually enters its mind. His eyes glow BLACK.

We see from Edgar and the Raven's point of view. he can see the entire landscape. He sees cars, lights, and modern homes and buildings.

After a few seconds, Poe is back in his own mind and his eyes return to normal. A BLACK CAT approaches Edgar.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Everything is... polished.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

You've been gone for nearly 200 years, Mr. Poe.

Mary walks to a nearby car. As she steps, the dead grass is resurrected. She approaches the car and slowly examines it.

MARY SHELLEY

The technology here is incredible.

Mary observes her surroundings and finds the regenerated grass. She approaches Cyfrin and Edgar. She looks down and finds the HEART, which starts BEATING the second she picks it off the ground. Her eyes glow GREEN.

MARY SHELLEY (CONT'D)

What am I now?

DYLAN RHODES

To hell with this!

Dylan charges Bram and throws a punch. Bram catches his fist mid punch like it's nothing. He grabs him by the wrist and throws him back several feet. Max rushes to Dylan.

MAX STEVENS

Dylan!

BRAM STOKER

This feels good.

Bram approaches Dylan. Max steps in front of Bram. Bram flies into a rage and his eyes glow RED.

MARY SHELLEY

We're in a new world, and your first reaction is to fight?

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Why did you bring us back?

MAX STEVENS

We didn't know! We thought it was a scavenger hunt!

EDGAR ALLAN POE

How dumb can you be? You even have the candles here!

DYLAN RHODES

Aurelian pulled the strings, and you wanna take his side?

BRAM STOKER

And what have you given us?

DYLAN RHODES

Apparently, life.

MARY SHELLEY

So you admit it?

KATIE REYNOLDS

We were lied to! It wasn't us!

H.P. LOVECRAFT

Enough!

Lovecraft teleports behind Max. His eyes glow a deep PURPLE. He paces around the environment and observes. Lovecraft looks at his hand, which glows with an ELDER SIGN.

DYLAN RHODES

Holy shit, it speaks.

H.P. LOVECRAFT

This symbol is from the Necronomicon. Aurelian, you have quite the developed ability.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

You all do, Mr. Lovecraft.

Lovecraft looks behind Cyfrin and sees the bas relief Finn brought. He teleports it over to his hand. He brushes the image of Cthulhu. His eyes stop glowing.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)  
You're only scratching the surface  
of your powers.

Lovecraft nods at Mary, Bram, and Edgar and they all approach Lovecraft, who's eyes are glowing again.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)  
Everyone, we have a few things we  
need to discuss.

Cyfrin looks at Max. Max is in complete shock.

MAX STEVENS  
Why us?

Cyfrin approaches Max.

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
Because you're a mirthful write-  
offs.

Max's eyes grimace with pain and anger.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)  
You didn't think it's because  
you're special, did you? A team of  
a dropout, a stoner, an academic  
fraud, and a failed musician? All  
lead by a man who says lost the  
only thing he was good at by the  
hands of an ordinary man and a  
bottle of whiskey.

Max's hand shakes as he fights back tears.

CYFRIN AURELIAN (CONT'D)  
You should be happy, Max. Not  
everyone can help their heroes.

Max pulls himself together and charges at Cyfrin. Lovecraft holds two fingers up. Cyfrin, Lovecraft, Mary, Edgar, and Bram VANISH.

Max wipes sweat off of his face and takes a breath. Funyuns approaches Jennifer.

KATIE REYNOLDS  
Uh... What the hell?

DYLAN RHODES

Did we just raise the dead?

Funyuns checks Jennifer's pulse.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

She's still alive, but we need to  
get her to a doctor. Katie! Dylan!

Katie and Dylan rush to Jennifer and pick her off the ground.  
Funyuns walks up to Max. Max slumps into the ground.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, bro.

MAX STEVENS

This whole thing was a sham!

Funyuns and Max look at the ruins.

MAX STEVENS (CONT'D)

Let's get out of here.

Max and Funyuns jog towards the group.

DYLAN RHODES

What about the library?

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

Oh, fuck! Jerry! How do I --

Everyone turns around and Jerry is staring at the library.  
Jerry's mouth is frowning and his face is in utter shock. His  
eyes are wide open.

DYLAN RHODES

I don't think you'll need to.

Funyuns rushes to Jerry.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

Jerry, buddy, I can explain...

Jerry sheds a single tear.

JERRY

I came to give you the keys to lock  
everything back up.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

It wasn't supposed to...

JERRY

It went purple...

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Buddy, I'm sorry...

JERRY  
Was that Poe?

Funyuns and Jerry stare at each other in silence.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Want me walk you to your car?

Jerry nods his head.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON (CONT'D)  
Need anything?

JERRY  
A drink would be nice.

Funyuns nods his head yes and walks him to his car.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
Why were they mad at you?

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Do you get upset when someone wakes  
you up early?

JERRY  
Yes.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Take that and imagine being dead  
for nearly and/or over a hundred  
years.

JERRY  
My library is gone...

Funyuns helps Jerry into the car.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

In the Salem Hospital waiting room, Olivia paces back and forth as Dylan and Katie sit in chairs. Olivia's arm is in a sling and she has bandages all over her.

KATIE REYNOLDS  
So we've raised the dead and gave  
them super powers? How does that  
work?



DYLAN RHODES

I'd say more mystical than super.

OLIVIA MONROE

Why does that matter?

DYLAN RHODES

I don't know! Hell, why did they instantly take his side? I don't know what to say!

OLIVIA MONROE

How about apologizing? If you didn't bring the damn heart, this wouldn't happen!

DYLAN RHODES

How the fuck should I know that we would raise the dead? Just because I didn't trust him...

OLIVIA MONROE

Which means you knew something?

Dylan storms out.

DYLAN RHODES

I'm grabbing a drink!

Dylan turns to the cafeteria and slams open the door. Katie looks at Olivia disgusted.

KATIE REYNOLDS

What did you do that for?

Olivia backs into the wall and slides down. She takes her blazer off and throws it.

OLIVIA MONROE

I didn't mean to take it out on him. He didn't know.

KATIE REYNOLDS

None of us did. It's the tale as old as time. A writer tricks people into summoning masters of horror.

Olivia looks out the window and sees a Raven staring at her. Katie nods at Olivia.

KATIE REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

Everyone's on edge right now. I'm gonna check on Max.

- HOSPITAL ROOM NIGHT

Max and Funyuns sit in chairs next to Jennifer. Funyuns is studying vigorously. Max looks at his tattoo. Katie walks in and looks at the lady.

Katie looks at the monitor.

KATIE REYNOLDS  
How's... Jennifer doing?

MAX STEVENS  
She's in a coma, but the doctors don't know why.

KATIE REYNOLDS  
How are you holding up?

Max wipes his face and slumps forward.

MAX STEVENS  
It's funny. I've always wanted to meet him. So much to say. I was damn near swooning.

KATIE REYNOLDS  
Well, you met the real him today. Like his books, it didn't end well.

Max snorts. Katie looks at Funyuns, who is looking intently at a page.

MAX STEVENS  
What do you have, so far?

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
It seems to be a mix of necromancy, another form of dark magic, and something else entirely.

KATIE REYNOLDS  
You're a new ager, can't you do some kind of incantation or smudging or something?

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Spiritual and natural medicine and practices aren't the same as magic. Plus, we don't even know what for. I've never seen anything like it.

MAX STEVENS

That's why we're here. We may be able to find out something from Jennifer. I hope she's okay.

Jennifer lies motionless on the bed.

KATIE REYNOLDS

What did she see?

Katie looks at Jennifer.

KATIE REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

Finn, can I ask too much of you?

A light switches in Funyuns' head and he flips through the pages to a section on healing.

Katie sits at the foot of the bed and starts to play "ALL HALLOWS EVE" by Type O Negative on her Bass. Funyuns looks through his bag and gets out a bunch of CRYSTALS.

- HOSPITAL CAFETERIA

Dylan sits at the table in the cafeteria nursing a soda. The entire room is empty.

Olivia enters the cafeteria and slowly approaches Dylan. She looks at him with frustration and bites her lip.

Katie's guitar is faintly heard.

OLIVIA MONROE

I thought you came in here to drink? You always drink with us. Where's the bottle?

DYLAN RHODES

Anything to take a shot at me, huh?

He shows her his soda. Olivia winces.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)

I only drink with friends.

Olivia pulls up a chair. She takes her phone out, checks it, and sets it on the table.

OLIVIA MONROE

I'm sorry. I just needed one.

DYLAN RHODES

That's the first time you've ever apologized to me.

OLIVIA MONROE

Don't put your baggage on me.

DYLAN RHODES

You did.

OLIVIA MONROE

You still won't accept it was your fault.

DYLAN RHODES

And you still can't take responsibility for your part. You never gave me a chance, Ms. Monroe.

OLIVIA MONROE

Don't call me that.

DYLAN RHODES

Don't you call me "Rogue"?

OLIVIA MONROE

You only do what benefits you. That's how you were as a student, and that's you now. You take any advantage you can to better yourself.

DYLAN RHODES

You didn't say that when I got us free access to Horror Con, twice.

OLIVIA MONROE

I thought Max won them.

DYLAN RHODES

Nope. I met the event coordinator a few years back under... circumstances. Cool guy.

OLIVIA MONROE

Nobody ever told me.

DYLAN RHODES

I didn't need to. I still have the photo. One of the few with you and me actually smiling.

Dylan pulls out his phone and shows the photo to Olivia. Olivia's eyes open wide.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)  
 You don't have this picture?

OLIVIA MONROE  
 It's on my phone. It's my screen.

DYLAN RHODES  
 Probably photoshopped me out.

Dylan picks up Olivia's phone. He opens her screen to find the picture on it, but every app she has is lined up over his photo alone no matter how many times he swipes.

He smirks and looks up. Olivia looks mortified.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)  
 That is a whole new level of petty.

A white glow emanates from the windows.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)  
 Get down!

Dylan and Olivia duck under the table. Dylan covers Olivia. As the glow intensifies, the room begins to shake.

The architecture starts to twist and mold into a GOTHIC AESTHETIC. Intense BLACKS and REDS color the atmosphere.

Dylan and Olivia emerge from under the table in shock.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)  
 What the hell did he do?

Dylan pulls out his phone and dials.

- HOSPITAL ROOM

As Katie plays, Max stares out the window. Funyuns is arranging different crystals on Jennifer. He's constantly looking through his book as he does.

The light GLOWS and the ENVIRONMENT changes around him. The TREES TWIST, the MOON grows FULL. Distant HOWLS erupt over the guitar playing in the background. Katie and Funyuns both look up.

All three approach the window. Katie never stops playing.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

As the GLOW covers a graveyard, TOMBSTONES TWIST and CRACK. Metal creaks from the gate and the grass DIES.

EXT. OCEAN - MIDDAY

Off the coast. Deep underwater, countless YELLOW EYES flash and glow from the abyss. A massive pair of YELLOW EYES flash, revealing hundreds of DEEP ONES.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

As the flash travels through the forest, CREATURES pour out of thin air. In the middle, NYARLATHOTEP emerges towering over the treeline before turning into a tall man.

EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Autumn walks to the library rubble. She's frantic.

AUTUMN BUTLER  
Katie!! Dylan!!

Her phone buzzes, revealing Dylan's name. She tries to answer, but loud howl jostles her.

As she shakes in fear, DRACULA appears under a tree. The shadows cover his elderly face as she tries to run inside. His pale hand gingerly touches her shoulder.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Dylan rushes out the hospital door frantically dialing on his phone. After several futile attempts, he yells in agony.

Olivia follows behind him and grabs his shoulder.

OLIVIA MONROE  
Still no answer?

DYLAN RHODES  
Maybe she's talking to her brother.

As Dylan pulls his phone out, faint screams resonate out. Olivia looks up and freezes.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)  
Fuck, I just want to know, she's  
okay...

Olivia taps at Dylan with panic. He looks up to see a pair of DEEP ONES chasing after an injured man. He's covered in deep bites and cuts.

Around them, countless ZOMBIES, DEEP ONES, and various other creatures swarm people, several of them are killed.

The man falls to the ground. The Deep Ones surround him.

Dylan looks around quickly and finds an OLD BROOM. He grabs it and snaps it into a point.

DYLAN RHODES (CONT'D)  
Grab him and be prepared to run!

Dylan rushes the Deep Ones and attempts to stab at them. The dodge several times.

Olivia tries to help the man, but he pushes her away and staggers.

Dylan squares up with the Deep Ones, but they look to their left, and run away in fear.

Dylan looks puzzled as Olivia joins him.

OLIVIA MONROE  
The hell are they running from?

Several loud cracks erupt next to them. They look over to see the injured man transform into a WEREWOLF.

Olivia and Dylan sprint full speed to the hospital.

INT. UNKNOWN LIBRARY - NIGHT

In a massive library, Aurelian, Bram, Mary, Edgar, and Lovecraft sit in tall hooded chairs.

Mary reads a book, Edgar admires the room's appearance, and Lovecraft sits completely detached from the rest of the occupants.

The room is black and red. Images of monsters and animals blanket the room and are illuminated by candelabra. A television sits over the fireplace.

Bram's eyes glow RED as he wraps up. When he stops, his eyes go back to normal. He picks up a glass of brandy.

MARY SHELLEY  
I like what you've done with the  
place, Bram.

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
It's not just here, Mary.

Cyfrin turns on the television. News clips are showing a sudden change in the world around them.

Mary, Edgar, and Bram's eyes grow wide.

BRAM STOKER  
What the hell is this?

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
Television. An easy way to spread information to the world or entertain. You have a lot of catching up to do.

BRAM STOKER  
Everything I do is built upon the shadows. What can we do with everyone watching?

Edgar stands up and admires the television.

EDGAR ALLAN POE  
With every eye on us, we can show them what to fear. We create the world now.

MARY SHELLEY  
It's an evolution.

Lovecraft stands up and walks to the window.

MARY SHELLEY (CONT'D)  
So, what can we do?

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
You have complete power over your works, as well as several key components. You are the physical embodiment of necromancy, Bram can recreate a gothic environment, Edgar can enter and control minds, Ravens, and Black Cats, and Lovecraft...

Lovecraft glows PURPLE.

H.P. LOVECRAFT  
And Lovecraft is the cosmos.



CYFRIN AURELIAN  
I still don't know the full extent  
of your powers.

H.P. LOVECRAFT  
What is the extent of your ability?

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
I'm still learning mine.

H.P. LOVECRAFT  
Apparently, lying isn't one of  
them.

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
Smart. But this is early to me as  
well.

MARY SHELLEY  
As everyone here.

EDGAR ALLAN POE  
You've also lied to your little  
fans back there. On several  
matters.

Cyfrin sits up and smiles.

MARY SHELLEY  
So, what's your plan, Aurelian?

Something rushes past the curtain. Bram turns around to find a younger looking Dracula standing next to him. Blood trickles from his mouth. Bram stands up and smiles. Mary and Edgar smile. Lovecraft pulls the bas relief out and holds it.

CYFRIN AURELIAN  
I'll show you, but first, Edgar, I  
need your help.

Cyfrin gestures at the television. Edgar smiles and his eyes glow BLACK.

Cyfrin places his hand on the table and it glows ORANGE. It radiates out and surrounds the room.

- TOWER

The orange glow radiates outwards and surrounds the building, which is a gigantic version of Max's TOWER.

Cyfrin, Edgar, Mary, Bram, and Lovecraft step out the door.

CYFRIN AURELIAN

It's about time you get acquainted  
with the modern world.

The five VANISH instantly.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM NIGHT

Funyuns sets the last of the crystals and pulls a singing bowl out of his jacket and rolls it. His eyes are strained and sweat drips from his brow. Katie tunes her guitar. After five rounds, he sets the bowl down. Max walks over.

MAX STEVENS

I'm sorry man. I'm not trying to  
exhaust you.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

It's not you. I just don't know  
what the hell he's using. Hell, we  
don't even know what we can do.

KATIE REYNOLDS

So this could be permanent?

MAX STEVENS

Not if we can do something about  
this. We've been through worse.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

When?

Funyuns pauses. He nods in agreement.

MAX STEVENS

Okay, bad choice of words, but...

KATIE REYNOLDS

I'm in.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

We're all in, but we have to find  
out how he pulled this off. He's  
working with next level magic.

The TV turns on by itself.

REPORTER (O.S.)

I've never seen anything like this:  
the City of Boston is under attack.

The TV plays footage showing countless Deep Ones rising out of the ocean and terrorizing the city. A male reporter weaves inbetween people near the Bunker Hill Monument.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

It's unbelievable. The city is being overrun by these amphibious creatures. No word on the number of casualties, but death and destruction has engulfed Boston.

The reporter comes to a stop in front of the monument.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Police forces are overwhelmed and the streets are in chaos. Officials are urging citizens to avoid downtown and the coast and are scrambling to enact an evacuation...

In the background, DAGON rises and scrambles up the monument. It roars out as the camera cuts to black. The screen cuts to a news anchor. An image of a RAVEN is in each of his eyes.

ANCHOR

In other news, there are reports of a grave robber in the Salem area. This just in...

Katie turns the TV off. The TV turns back on. She and the TV go back and forth for a while.

Funyuns looks at Katie and shakes his head.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

We can get through this together. Breathe, brother.

MAX STEVENS

Finn, you never answered my question. What's your theory?

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON

The Universe can be compromised, if not broken. Ability is reality. It just takes intent.

Max's eyes perk up.

MAX STEVENS

He said that at the signing today...

Funyuns raises his brow.

MAX STEVENS (CONT'D)  
Intent is the start of everything.  
We just need to know where he  
started.

Funyuns turns around.

FINN "FUNYUNS" MOON  
Didn't he give you a book?

Max quickly looks around.

MAX STEVENS  
I think it's still at the library.

Olivia and Dylan slide into the room and slam the door. Dylan leans on it as Olivia slumps to the floor. Dylan locks it and starts looking around the room. Both speak quickly and with hushed tones.

DYLAN RHODES  
Guys, we gotta go now.

KATIE REYNOLDS  
We can't go with out Jennifer. We  
still need to talk to the doctor.

OLIVIA MONROE  
They all left, as we need to.

Olivia has a distressed look in her eyes.

KATIE REYNOLDS  
We're still trying to figure out  
what's going on. What the hell is--

A low growl rumbles behind the door. Dylan and Olivia look at each other, Dylan pulls out his knife and hands it to Olivia.

OLIVIA MONROE  
He smells us.

MAX STEVENS  
What the hell?

DYLAN RHODES  
Werewolf. We need to barricade the  
door and go out the window.  
Thankfully we're on the 1st floor.

Several claws pierce the door.

MAX STEVENS  
(whispering)  
Let's keep it down...

Jennifer's eyes jolt open. Max rushes over to her. Jennifer screams uncontrollably. Katie presses the nurse button repeatedly.

JENNIFER BUTLER  
He's coming!

MAX STEVENS  
Who?

Jennifer's eyes grow wide. A silhouette of a Raven appears in Jennifer's eyes. It sputters over and over.

CUT TO BLACK.