

FADE IN:

EXT. PERSIAN GULF - NIGHT

An OFFSHORE OIL REFINERY belches flame like some hellish fortress. Hulking TANKERS lie at anchor under a full moon.

SUPER: PERSIAN GULF

We descend along the steel-clad legs of the refinery - and PLUNGE INTO THE SEA.

UNDERWATER - NIGHT

A strange undersea world of anchor chains, pilings and pipes, lit by firelight and moonlight.

A compact SUBMARINE cruises into view, hugging the sea floor.

INT. SUBMARINE (IN MOTION)

A stripped-down vessel purpose-built for this mission. A squad of EIGHT NAVY SEALS sits inside. They wear DRY SUITS - bulky scuba gear - and hold dive helmets in their laps.

TYLER COLT, 35, looks them over. A natural-born soldier: the more dangerous the situation is, the cooler he gets. Right now he's completely at ease. His calm steadies the men.

A SEAL named VAIL pilots the sub. The other SEALS ride behind Tyler: HACKETT, CARVER, BARROWS, WEISS, MUNROE, GOMEZ.

The electric sub is nearly silent. Exterior sounds echo through the hull: RUMBLING MOTORS. Metallic BOOMS and GROANS. The SEALS exchange looks at the hellish noises.

BARROWS

Oh, yeah, this is safer than a helicopter.

TYLER

Special Warfare's been dying to try this. But nobody's saying it's safe.

CARVER

So why'd you volunteer?

Tyler flashes a cowboy grin.

TYLER

Because it's never been done.

MUNROE

Go big or go home, right?

An UNDERSEA OIL PIPELINE looms out of the dark.

TYLER

No going home now. Suit up!

The SEALS pull on their dive helmets.

EXT. UNDERWATER - OIL PIPELINE - NIGHT

The 48-inch pipe runs level across the uneven sea floor. The sub noses UNDERNEATH the pipeline where it crosses a ravine.

A DOCKING PORT on top of the submarine MATES WITH THE PIPE.

INT. SUBMARINE

With a splatter of water, Tyler opens a topside hatch - revealing THE BOTTOM OF THE OIL PIPELINE. He plants a specialized gun against the pipe and FIRES. A PRESSURE GAUGE punches through the metal.

TYLER

Pressure gauge in. Flood it.

Vail pulls a lever. The SUBMARINE FLOODS to the top, leaving the SEALS underwater inside. Pumps bring the pressure up.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Pressure match.

He moves aside. Hackett fires up an UNDERWATER CUTTING TORCH. Cuts a large circular section out of the bottom of the pipe.

In the hole in the pipe, a rippling surface: the OIL-WATER INTERFACE. Oil flowing over the heavier water in the sub.

HACKETT

Look at that.

Tyler reaches up into the oil. His glove comes back stained black - dark beads of oil floating up. Surreal.

TYLER

Here we go.

He slings a DRY BAG over his shoulder. Picks up a DIVER PROPULSION VEHICLE (DPV) and thrusts it up into the pipe.

TYLER SWIMS UP INTO THE OIL AND DISAPPEARS.

INT. PIPELINE

There are lights on Tyler's DPV and helmet, but the crude oil is nearly opaque and they create only a dull brown glow.

He switches on his SONAR UNIT.

His faceplate LIGHTS UP with a HEADS-UP-DISPLAY. He can see his hands and the DPV in front of him; the curving walls of the pipe. All painted in swarming RED DOTS OF LIGHT.

TYLER

SONAR works. Come on in, boys.

INT. SUBMARINE

The other SEALs dive up into the oil.

INT. PIPELINE

Tyler activates his DPV. Impellers WHIR. He zooms up the pipeline, dragging his dry bag. The other SEALs behind him.

EXT. PIPELINE TRACKING SHOT

Underwater, we rush across the sea floor, following the pipeline into the shallows and up onto a moonlit beach. We fly over desolate dunes, tracking the pipeline: it runs straight as an arrow into the desert interior of Iraq.

INT. OPERATIONS CENTER

A hyper-modern command center. Windowless and hushed.

SUPER: LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, VIRGINIA

An Air Force Intelligence Officer, MCCALL, sits at a bank of monitors, tracking the SEALs in the pipeline. Others stand watching: a CIA OFFICIAL, an AIR FORCE COLONEL, a NAVY COMMANDER, and a SENATOR.

AIR FORCE COLONEL

Satellites spotted radiation. It's faint - but consistent with a breeder reactor refining uranium.

SENATOR

Inside Iraq?!

The CIA official pulls up a ghostly image of an underground complex - like an X-ray of the Earth itself.

CIA OFFICIAL

Ground-penetrating radar shows a bunker. This was taken yesterday:

Satellite images of trucks and armed men around the bunker.

CIA OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Iraqi regime says it's not theirs.

SENATOR
 (with profound horror)
 Al Qaeda? Making *nuclear weapons*?

NAVY COMMANDER
 We're about to find out.

EXT. IRAQI DESERT - PIPELINE - NIGHT

A HATCH COVER unscrews and OPENS. Tyler climbs out into the moonlight - a GLEAMING PITCH-BLACK FIGURE COVERED IN OIL. He drags his dry-bag out behind him. The other SEALS follow.

They strip off their dry suits, revealing FATIGUES & BODY ARMOR. The SEALS laugh quietly in the darkness. *Holy shit, we did that.* They open dry bags and pull out weapons.

Tyler puts on his helmet. Swings NIGHT-VISION GOGGLES into place. The four-barreled headset gives him an alien look.

TYLER
 Let's move.

EXT. DESERT TERRAIN - NIGHT

Tyler leads the SEALS across the sand at a dogtrot, running without lights. They pass a *kudurru* - an ancient Assyrian boundary stone carved with images of demons and death. Focused on worldly dangers, Tyler doesn't break stride.

EXT. IRAQI DESERT - BUNKER

The SEALS crouch on a rise overlooking the site. The BUNKER'S ENTRANCE is a low concrete bulkhead set into a rocky slope. Two military FLATBED TRUCKS sit outside.

TYLER
 Command, Crossbow. Eyes on target.
 No visible hostiles.
 (to the team)
 Dosimeters on. Watch your exposure.

They switch on the battlefield dosimeters on their shoulders. Tyler signals. The SEALS advance in two fire teams.

Tyler sweeps a truck with his team. Nobody there. He frowns at the objects in the truck bed: crowbars, hammers, picks and shovels. Not exactly the weapons of jihad.

They converge on the bunker.

IT'S NOT A BUNKER. What looked like concrete turns out to be quarried stone. THIS IS A TOMB. Ancient walls carved with cuneiform writing and *bas-relief* figures.

The SEALs stack up on each side of the entrance. On the ground at their feet: a JACKHAMMER. The tomb door is freshly BLASTED OPEN - the stone slab toppled inward. Tyler frowns.

TYLER (CONT'D)
 (quietly, into radio)
 Command. Bunker doesn't check out.
 This is not a modern structure.
 Radiation levels zero, repeat zero.

They hold a moment, waiting.

MCCALL (V.O.)
 Crossbow. Mission is go. Repeat go.

Tyler nods. Eases around the corner. Clear. They go in.

INT. TOMB - PASSAGEWAY

Tyler leads the squad, silent as ghosts. All of them at high alert. Their goggles gleam like cats' eyes in the dark.

He sees in eerie green monochrome. INFRARED FLASHLIGHTS and LASER SCOPES illuminate the scene in sharp detail. Their rifles sweeping as they search for enemies in the darkness.

ANCIENT CARVINGS on the walls: scenes of war and horror. Assyrian soldiers slaughtering enemies. Torturing prisoners.

A BURST OF STATIC in Tyler's goggles obscures his vision. He slaps the headset: it clears. He keeps moving.

ANTECHAMBER

The SEALs advance into a stone room. There are DEAD MEN ON THE FLOOR. Seven of them. Tyler signals a few men to guard the approaches while others check the bodies. The dead men are DESERT TRIBESMEN. They clutch guns, picks, sledgehammers.

TYLER
 These guys aren't terrorists.
 They're tomb robbers.

GOMEZ
 I think they killed each other.

AN ECHOING WHISPER in the chamber. A strange language. Tyler looks up in alarm. A BURST OF STATIC in his night-vision scopes. The WHISPER echoes again. Multiplying.

CARVER
 You hearing that?

The other SEALs look around, spooked. They're hearing it: sourceless voices on the edge of perception.

TYLER

Remember who you are. Stay tight.
Watch your flanks.

INT. MISSION CONTROL ROOM

STATIC obliterates Tyler's voice on the speakers. McCall pulls on headphones and frowns, listening.

MCCALL

Crosstalk on the channel.

We hear what he hears: A GUTTURAL CHANT partly masked by static. A language not heard in twenty-five centuries.

INT. TOMB - LABYRINTH

The passage opens up into a LABYRINTH. Tyler signals a hold.

TYLER

Fire Team B hold here. Team A
forward on me...

He trails off. Vail and Weiss are trembling. Drenched in sweat. Chanting the SAME INCANTATION that echoes around them. As Tyler watches, a third SEAL, Munroe, starts chanting too.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Hey. Munroe.

He flips up Munroe's night-vision goggles. Munroe's face is slick with sweat. Eyes rolled back. Deep in a trance. In unison, the spellbound SEALS RAISE THEIR GUNS AND START SHOOTING. Chaos. Screams and shots in the dark.

Tyler ducks. Carver drops to the floor beside him - hit.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Carver!

He drags Carver around a corner. Kneels over him. CARVER IS DEAD. A bullethole in his forehead. Empty eyes staring.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Hold your fire! Stand down!

He looks into the dark. Muzzle flashes. Chaotic movement. Behind him, CARVER GETS UP. Tyler turns, astonished.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Carver?

In Tyler's night-vision, CARVER'S EYES SHINE with an unholy light. GLOWING VAPOR rolls from his mouth like smoke. He's clearly dead - but it's not keeping him down.

Carver grabs Tyler. HURLS HIM twenty feet into a wall. Tyler hits hard and drops. Carver pulls a knife and comes for him.

Cornered, Tyler opens fire. Dead Carver absorbs multiple hits without slowing down. Goes for him with the blade. Tyler catches the descending knife. Strains with both hands against the undead soldier's terrible strength.

There's a GRENADE hanging on Carver's vest. TYLER PULLS THE PIN. Drives Carver back with both feet and runs for his life.

BOOM! The explosion engulfs Carver and knocks Tyler flying. Carver's body burns like a torch. Supernaturally flammable.

INT. MISSION CONTROL ROOM

The officials listen to the chaos in consternation.

CIA OFFICIAL
McCall. What's happening? McCall!

McCall sits trembling in his headphones. Sweat dripping down his face. He mutters under his breath in a dead language.

INT. TOMB - LABYRINTH

Tyler fights a retreating battle through the maze - firing at two UNDEAD SEALS who pursue him relentlessly.

TYLER
Fall back! To the entrance!

ANTECHAMBER

Barrows, battered and bloody, staggers in alone. Hisses:

BARROWS
Lieutenant! Anybody!

A RUSTLE. All around Barrows, the DEAD TOMB ROBBERS rise to their feet. Their eyes shining, mouths smoking luminously.

BARROWS (CONT'D)
Aw, hell.

He starts shooting.

INT. MISSION CONTROL ROOM

Shouts and gunfire echo tinnily in the control room. The officials approach McCall, baffled by his immobility. One of the Airmen on the security detail shakes McCall's shoulder.

AIRMAN
Sir?

McCall surges to his feet. PULLS THE AIRMAN'S GUN. Faces them, eyes rolled back. The other Airmen pull their own guns.

AIRMAN #2
Drop your weapon!

McCall PUTS THE PISTOL TO HIS HEAD.

SENATOR (O.S.)
No!

INT. TOMB - LABYRINTH - TUNNEL

BLAM! BLAM! Tyler backs out of a tunnel, firing his pistol.

A STORM OF STATIC in his goggles blinds him. He rips off his helmet. Utter darkness. An eerie hush. Tyler clips a tactical light to his pistol: sweeps the beam through the dark.

A WHOOSH OF FLAME! The passageway fills with firelight. Tyler spins in amazement to see...

THE SARCOPHAGUS CHAMBER

The heart of the tomb. Walls carved with old gods: figures with the heads of hawks or lions. PILLARS OF FIRE in two BRAZIERS. On a stone dais lies a SARCOPHAGUS of black iron.

The sarcophagus is covered with gold engraving - cuneiform writing and mystical symbols shining against the black iron. Egyptian symbols. The ANKH. The EYE OF HORUS.

Six iron CLASPS seal the coffin shut.

Tyler approaches the sarcophagus. The pillar of fire behind him takes the form of a HUMAN FACE, CRUEL AND CUNNING. It watches him. Tyler shivers, sweat gleaming on his brow.

A SUDDEN VISION:

Tyler sees himself laying his hand on the sarcophagus.

Like a sleepwalker Tyler steps forward. Printed in the iron, an ancient hand-shape called the HAMSA. An eye in the palm. He lays his hand in the imprint. Perfect fit.

BANG! Tyler snatches his hand back with a cry.

A barbed bronze SPIKE juts from the Hamsa hand. It withdraws like clockwork. TYLER'S BLOOD drains into the sarcophagus. Tyler looks at his hand: a star-shaped wound in his palm.

The pillars of flame LEAP HIGHER. The face in the fire SMILES WICKEDLY. The whispers in the tomb multiply.

A VISION:

Tyler sees himself turning clasps. Opening the sarcophagus.

Tyler shakes the vision off, trembling. He steps close to the sarcophagus. Reaches for an iron clasp with his right hand.

TYLER

No.

With his left hand he pulls his right hand back. DIGS HIS THUMB INTO HIS WOUNDED PALM. He SCREAMS. It clears his head. Tyler turns and runs.

Behind him the face in the fire ROARS IN SILENT RAGE!

TRACKING SHOT

We track Tyler as he runs - BURNING FLARE in his hand. A RUMBLE. The WHOLE TOMB SHUDDERS. Dust falls.

An UNDEAD TOMB ROBBER lurches out of the dark with a pickaxe. Tyler jumps off the wall. Sails OVER THE TOMB-ROBBER'S HEAD. The dead robber spins to face him. He stabs it with his flare: it IGNITES, BURNING WITH UNNATURAL HEAT, and FALLS.

Tyler runs. THE WALLS BUCKLE AND CRACK.

EXT. TOMB - NIGHT

Tyler dives out as the tomb entrance collapses behind him.

A CLOUD OF DUST billows over him. The dust TAKES THE SHAPE OF A CLAWING HAND, as if to drag him back underground. But the dust blows away.

Tyler lies gasping under the stars. The sole survivor.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER: TWO YEARS LATER

EXT. TRUCK STOP - DAY

A major outpost for long-haul truckers. A BIG RIG pulls in and stops at the diesel pumps.

Tyler gets out. He's wearing a dirty denim jacket. Shaggy hair. Ten-day stubble. Gone is the cocky can-do attitude of the Navy SEAL. He looks hunted and wary: a stray dog.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - DAY

Tyler sits hunched at the counter over steak & eggs. He rubs at the palm of his right hand: the STAR-SHAPED SCAR left by the sarcophagus. He's having trouble keeping his eyes open.

TYLER

Can I get some more coffee?

The kindly old WAITER behind the counter obliges him.

WAITER

Long piece of road?

TYLER

It never ends.

He props his head on his hand, haunted, staring into the cup. The coffee swirls hypnotically, darkening, black as ink...

EXT. ASSYRIAN BATTLEFIELD - DAY

A walled city burns. Siege towers toppled against its walls. Armies have been broken here. Frenzied horses drag shattered chariots. Fallen warriors and weapons litter the ground.

We move through this hell in a POV shot: staggering, erratic. We look down - and see a POWERFULLY MUSCLED BODY ornamented with gold - and PIERCED WITH MANY BLACK ARROWS.

INT. PALACE - NIGHT

POV shot: we lie on a bed as women pull ARROWS from our wounds. So many. In the distance: shouting multitudes.

INT. TEMPLE - NIGHT

POV: we lie on a slab of stone. Around us EGYPTIAN PRIESTS - bald and robed in linen - wrap us in black tarred bandages. We look to the side: the IRON SARCOPHAGUS lies waiting.

We look up: a priest uses a POLISHED COPPER POT to pour smoking hot bitumen down on our body. The pot drifts upward. When it is directly overhead, we see a REFLECTION: our face.

It's the face of ASHURBANIPAL, King of Assyria. Battle-scarred and cruel. Taut with agony and resolve. This is the face we saw in the fire, down in the tomb.

The kettle tips. Hot tar pours down. A HOWL OF AGONY.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - DAY

Tyler EXPLODES OUT OF HIS NIGHTMARE, lurching off his stool with a shout. OVERTURNS A TABLE. A crash of crockery.

Four TRUCKERS surge to their feet around the toppled table, splattered with eggs and scalding coffee. Furious.

TRUCKER #1

You damned tweaker!

He grabs a fistful of Tyler's jacket. Tyler raises his hands, still getting his bearings.

TYLER
Sorry. I just...

TRUCKER #1
You just crossed the line.

He THROWS A PUNCH. Tyler slaps it aside.

TYLER
Easy. I'll pay for it.

His lack of fear enrages them.

TRUCKER #2
Damn right you will.

They all come for him at once. Tyler takes them apart. They grab at him: he catches them in wristlocks. They swing: he blocks hard and counter-punches like a wrecking ball.

The first trucker goes down: the next one snaps open a FOLDING KNIFE. Tyler takes it away. Throws it across the room - burying the point in the WE AIM TO PLEASE sign.

Behind the counter the waiter stands frozen with a phone to his ear, staring at the action in disbelief.

VOICE ON PHONE (V.O.)
Nine-one-one. What's your emergency?

SOUNDS OF MAYHEM as the waiter stares. Another knife whizzes over his head and plants itself in the sign.

In the middle of the room, Tyler flips the last trucker high over his head and slams him down. Four truckers out cold.

A hush. Tyler looks around sheepishly at the stunned room.

TYLER
Sorry.

EXT. TRUCK STOP - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Tyler walks across the parking lot, inspecting his knuckles. He opens the door of his truck. As he swings up into the cab - a POLICE CAR behind him SQUAWKS ITS SIREN. Tyler sighs.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Tyler sits beside the Sheriff's desk, handcuffed.

SHERIFF

Waiter and a couple of customers say you weren't the bad guy. We're dropping the assault charges.

TYLER

Thank you, sir.

SHERIFF

But then there's this matter.

He hoists a heavy duffel bag off the floor. Starts pulling weapons out of it. Pistols. Sawed-off shotgun. A bowie knife.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Got permits for these?

TYLER

Got a warrant to search my truck?

The Sheriff shakes his head sourly. Taps at his computer.

SHERIFF

Ex-military. Psychological discharge. No fixed address. You looking to pull a Rambo? Shoot up my town?

TYLER

I'm passing through. Those are for self-defense.

The Sheriff eyes the arsenal on his desk.

SHERIFF

Defense against *what*?

Tyler stares back at him, haunted. *You don't want to know.*

EXT. AEGEAN SEA - DAY

We race over pale blue seas. Ahead: a craggy Greek isle. It has an ancient name, but these days it's known simply as...

LORENZO'S ISLAND

A quaint fishing fleet bobs at the docks - beside a GLEAMING WHITE MEGA-YACHT, the *LIBERTINE*, at its own pier. Above the harbor a VILLAGE rises steeply - a maze of blocky whitewashed houses. Crowning the island: LORENZO'S CASTLE.

INT. LORENZO'S CASTLE - GREAT HALL - DAY

A grand room adorned with fine antiquities and paintings. A STUNNING WOMAN IN A PRADA SKIRT SUIT strides in, heels clicking on marble. She carries a black leather valise.

This is JENNY HALSEY, 30. A brilliant archaeologist whose passion for her studies overrides every other impulse - including fear and rational self-preservation.

A uniformed butler, TOMAS, extends a guiding hand.

TOMAS

In the library, Doctor Halsey.

LIBRARY

Shelves of rare books. Statues and relics. A private museum.

Here waits LORENZO MONTANARI, 55, a billionaire of shady origins who fancies himself a great man. He greets Jenny with the covetous eyes of a collector of beautiful things.

LORENZO

Jenny Halsey. It's been too long.

JENNY

Lorenzo. What have you got for me?

LORENZO

Come and see.

He guides her across the library. On a table, arranged on a soft cloth, are the FRAGMENTS OF A STONE TABLET.

Jenny inspects them, fascinated: this is what she loves. She pulls on white gloves. Gently turns the pieces. A jigsaw puzzle of cuneiform writing and *bas-relief* figures.

JENNY

It's authentic. Babylonian.

She takes a leather case out of her valise. Lays out tools: brushes, blades and picks. Vials of solvent and epoxy.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Where'd it come from?

LORENZO

I can't say. My sources are not... law-abiding people.

JENNY

I mean where was it found?

LORENZO

In the ruins of Uruk. A palace.

JENNY

What about context? How deep was it? What was found with it?

Lorenzo shrugs eloquently. *Who knows such things?* She sighs.

JENNY (CONT'D)

So much is lost.

She puts a headlamp on. Bends over the table to examine a fragment. Lorenzo's attention turns to Jenny's shapely back.

LORENZO

Archaeology. Beautiful science.

He lays a hand on her hip. Jenny spins to face him, shining her headlamp in his eyes. He dodges. The beam follows him.

JENNY

Run along and let me work.

Lorenzo withdraws with a mocking bow. His footsteps fade.

Jenny pulls a CLOTH BUNDLE from her valise. Selects tools from her kit. Listens to be sure Lorenzo has gone.

She hurries across the library. Kneels by a cabinet and expertly jimmys the lock. From a chest inside she takes a GOLDEN AMULET - a mystic eye with sun-god rays.

She unwraps her bundle, revealing a PERFECT REPLICA of the amulet. She switches the real amulet with the fake. Returns to the table and stashes the real amulet in her valise.

HOURS LATER

The tablet lies intact, fractures barely visible. The image: a STATUESQUE WOMAN surrounded by DEMONS. Jenny is scribbling in a SKETCHBOOK: a drawing of the tablet, with translations and notes. Her pencilwork is exquisite.

Lorenzo looks over the tablet and grunts in approval.

JENNY

The goddess Ishtar descending to the Underworld. These are her words: *"If you will not open the gate, I will shatter the lock and break the door. I will bring up the dead to eat the living. And the dead will outnumber the living under the sun."* It's one of the oldest stories in the world.

Lorenzo nods - gazing at the tablet and standing very close.

LORENZO

Do you know how Ishtar reached the Underworld? Descending, she came to seven gates. At each gate, she had to give something from the upper world.

(MORE)

LORENZO (CONT'D)

She gave up her ring, her necklace,
her sandals...her dress. And naked
she came before the throne of hell.

JENNY

I know the story.

Lorenzo brushes hair from her cheek.

LORENZO

Have dinner with me. There's a place
in Monaco where angels come down
from heaven to taste the oysters.

JENNY

I've been gone too long already.

LORENZO

A drink.

JENNY

I'll take a rain check. And my fee.

He sighs. Pulls an envelope from his jacket. Hands it over.

EXT. LORENZO'S CASTLE - PLAZA - DAY

Jenny climbs into a LUXURY HELICOPTER. It lifts off at once.

INT. LUXURY HELICOPTER (IN FLIGHT) - DAY

The helicopter cruises over the sea. In back, Jenny peels off
her jacket. Unbuttons her blouse. MARCO, the pilot, notices.

JENNY

Eyes on the sky, Marco.

She pulls a flannel shirt out of her valise. A pair of hiking
shoes. Kicks off her high heels.

EXT. JORDAN - ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE - SUNSET

An ancient temple open to the sky: a partial dome still
standing. Arab GUARDS stand sentry, AK-47s slung.

ARCHAEOLOGISTS toil in the last light of day. PROFESSOR
SHEPPARD, their gray-bearded leader, is in the midst of them,
brushing sand from a three-thousand-year-old skeleton.

The THUNDER of rotors. A cloud of dust rolls over them.
Lorenzo's luxury helicopter touches down beside the dig.

Jenny gets out - in khaki shorts and a flannel shirt. Hiking
shoes. Her hair mussed and tied back. As the helicopter lifts
off, she realizes she's still in makeup. She yanks a bandana
from her pocket. Rubs off lipstick and mascara.

Professor Sheppard comes to meet her, frowning.

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD
Where have you been?

Jenny lays a cloth bundle in his hands. He unwraps the AMULET. Astonishment grows into awe as he stares at it.

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD (CONT'D)
The Eye of Alexander! How did you-?

JENNY
Get it to the University. *Quietly.*

He wraps the amulet up again, making sure it wasn't seen.

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD
You're playing in the underworld.
The black market. It's not *safe.*

Jenny nods at the guards around the site. Grins up at him.

JENNY
It's not safe here. All the
interesting places are dangerous.

INT. POLICE STATION - JAIL CELL - DAY

Tyler tosses and turns in a nightmare on a jailhouse bunk.

SHERIFF (O.S.)
COLT!

Tyler SLAMS AWAKE, wild-eyed and gasping. Trying to focus. The Sheriff glowers at him through the bars.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
You're free to go.

TYLER
I am?

LOBBY

Tyler walks out into the lobby, carrying his duffel bag.

A man stands waiting: COLONEL GIDEON FORSTER, 50, in an Army uniform with minimal decoration. A dark, slim man with a hawkish eye and a Machiavellian air.

FORSTER
Tyler Colt. You're a hard man to find.

TYLER
I try to be.

FORSTER
Colonel Gideon Forster.

Tyler salutes ironically. Blows right past Forster and out the door. Startled, Forster hurries after him.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - POLICE STATION - DAY

Tyler emerges from the station. Pauses, blinking in the sun, to get his bearings. Forster catches up.

FORSTER
Tell me about Crossbow.

Tyler's jaw tightens. He knew this was coming.

TYLER
I got a load of cargo a day late.

He starts walking. Forster keeps pace.

FORSTER
Five minutes.

TYLER
What for?

FORSTER
I want to know what happened out there.

Tyler turns on him furiously.

TYLER
My men died and I lived. That's what happened. I've been through two courts martial, a congressional inquiry, an "observation period" in a psych ward, and an involuntary discharge. I'm done with lawyers. Done with shrinks. Done explaining myself to brass like you. Sir.

He walks on - but Forster stays with him. Keeps at him.

FORSTER
They said you snapped. Murdered your own men. But your controller back in Langley, McCall. He broke too. Nobody could see how to pin that on you. So they buried your case with the M.I.A. units, lost aircraft, friendly-fire incidents. The embarrassments.

(MORE)

FORSTER (CONT'D)

It took me a year of digging to lay hands on your file. But I read it. I've been looking for you ever since.

TYLER

Why?

FORSTER

Because I believe you.

Tyler's look betrays him: nobody's said that in two years.

INT. BAR - DAY

Tyler and Forster sit in a booth, working pints of beer.

FORSTER

I work for a secret division in the Defense Department. The Special Weapons Group. We do exotic warfare. Neuroweapons. Psy ops. I specialize in a class of weapons we call "energetic artifacts." Objects with strange properties. Power to affect the body or mind.

TYLER

The Pentagon's got a black magic division?

Forster scowls at that language. He lays a tablet computer on the table. Pulls up satellite images: radiation scans.

FORSTER

This is the "bunker" you raided.

TYLER

It wasn't a bunker. It was a tomb.

FORSTER

I know. And as far back as our satellite data goes, it's been dark. The radiation signature you were chasing came out of nowhere the day the robbers broke into the tomb. Twenty-four hours later it spiked again when you went in. Then it just faded away. The energy source was reacting to intruders. Uranium doesn't do that. There's an artifact in there.

Tyler looks at him warily, mystified.

TYLER

Okay...

FORSTER

The Special Weapons Group has begun to collect and study such artifacts. I have an Aztec scepter than can strike a man blind without touching him. An Old German ring that lets a man pass unnoticed through crowds. Things with real warfighting potential. The sarcophagus you describe could be the most powerful artifact ever found. I want it. I'm taking a team in to retrieve it. And I want you with me.

Tyler looks at him like he's insane. Slides out of the booth.

TYLER

I lost seven men. I almost died. You don't want me anywhere near you.

FORSTER

You're the only man who's gone in and come out again. You know the layout. Position of the artifact. You felt its power and *resisted* it.

Tyler leans over him angrily.

TYLER

There's something in that box. It wants out. Leave it in the ground.

He turns to go. Forster's hand whips out. Grabs Tyler's arm.

FORSTER

How you sleeping?

Tyler pulls away, but Forster hangs on - surprisingly strong.

FORSTER (CONT'D)

Nightmares getting worse, eh? You can't sleep. Can't hold down a job.

TYLER

I'm fine.

He rips his arm free - but Forster holds his gaze.

FORSTER

I've seen it before, Tyler. The imprint of the artifact. What they used to call a *curse*.

(MORE)

FORSTER (CONT'D)

If I can study the artifact, I can
set you free. Give you your life
back.

Tyler stares at him, torn. Almost trembling. He husks:

TYLER

I'm fine.

His harrowed look gives the lie to his words. He turns away.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - DAY

Steep mountain slopes shaggy with redwoods. Tyler's BIG RIG thunders down the road. He's making up time. He's fighting fatigue. Swigging coffee. Window open. MUSIC pounding.

He rounds a curve - and stares: along the guard rail, a RAVEN PERCHES ON EVERY FENCEPOST, all along the highway.

He PULLS HIS HAND OFF THE WHEEL suddenly as if burned. From the wound in his palm, BLACK TENDRILS spread up his arm.

TYLER

No!

The dark tendrils reach up his neck, spiderwebbing his face as he screams - covering his eyes!

EXT. UNDERWORLD - VALLEY OF THE BLIND

On a desolate plain stands a BLACK TOWER - a red BEACON shining at its summit.

Around the tower stand THOUSANDS OF PALE FIGURES. Hairless, clad in rags. THEY BREATHE IN UNISON. Their faces have smooth hollows where eyes should be. They are THE BLIND.

They stare at the black tower with sightless eyes.

The DEAD KING Ashurbanipal walks among them. This is how he looks in the Underworld: muscular and strong, wearing a loincloth. His scalp and face clean-shaven. His skin scrawled everywhere with ARCANES SYMBOLS to ward away danger.

He's trying to reach the black tower - and he's *terrified*. Moving with exquisite care to make no sound. Averting his eyes from the faces of the Blind.

At the slightest noise their faces turn minutely, blind eyes seeking, before returning their gaze to the beacon.

A hellish INSECT lands on the Dead King's back. It bites deep. A CRY OF AGONY escapes him before he can stifle it.

Around him the rhythmic breathing stops. As one, the Blind turn toward him. He spins away - but they're all facing him now. He looks one in the face.

DEAD KING
(in Akkadian)
No! No!

The faces of the Blind tear open into GAPING DEMONIC MOUTHS. They come for him, pale hands reaching...

INT. BIG RIG - DAY

Tyler SLAMS AWAKE behind the wheel - DOING 80 MPH INTO ONCOMING TRAFFIC! Another big rig coming straight at him. He swerves, JUST MISSING the other truck -

The road takes a TIGHT LEFT. A SHEER DROP beyond the guard rail. Tyler hits the brakes. Wrenches at the wheel. Grinds the big rig along the guard rail, throwing sparks.

Too fast. The rear wheels jump the rail. The trailer tips. Tyler works the wheel and throttle, trying to drag it back. No use. The trailer separates and TUMBLES OVER THE EDGE.

THE RIG ROLLS ONTO ITS SIDE. GRINDS TO A STOP on the brink.

Tyler climbs atop his overturned rig, watching the trailer roll slowly down the mountain, strewing cargo crates. He sighs heavily. Jumps down onto the roadway.

Unbalanced, the big rig TEETERS with a GROAN OF METAL. Tyler clutches at the tires, trying in vain to hold it back.

TYLER
No! No!

The rig tumbles down the mountain after the trailer.

HOURS LATER

The sun sets over the mountains. Tyler sits on the cliff's edge. Staring into the abyss. A hawk screams. He pulls out his phone and dials. Forster answers.

FORSTER (V.O.)
Tyler.

TYLER
Can you really help me?

Desperation in his voice. He's a man on the brink.

EXT. JORDAN - ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE - SUNSET

Jenny kneels in a trench with a brush. She's exhuming an old skull - a corroded bronze spearhead still lodged its eye socket. A PHONE RINGS in her pocket. She answers.

FORSTER (V.O.)
Dr. Jennifer Halsey?

JENNY
Yes.

INT. FIELD TENT - SUNSET

A heavy-duty canvas tent filled with shelves and work tables. Jenny hastily packs a bag with tools and supplies. Professor Sheppard looks on, brow furrowed with disapproval.

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD
Who's the client now? Some mobster?

JENNY
The Pentagon, actually.

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD
What do they want with you? You don't even know, do you? One of these days your confidence will get you killed.

JENNY
I know what I'm doing.

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD
You're smart. But you lack *reverence*. This work is a sacred trust. We trade in swords and crowns. Gods and demons. Powers that raised armies and toppled empires. The stone gods you dig up may not be *your* gods. But the mysteries they stand for are real. Respect them.

Jenny studies him, puzzled and amused. She doesn't get it.

JENNY
I got a plane to catch.

EXT. RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, GERMANY - DAY

From this base America projects air power to the Middle East. The runways rumble with fighter jets and cargo planes.

SUPER: RAMSTEIN AIR FORCE BASE, GERMANY

Jenny debarks from an American military transport plane. Forster greets her at the foot of the ramp.

FORSTER
Dr. Halsey. Colonel Gideon Forster.
Department of Defense.

RUNWAY

Forster walks with Jenny toward a complex of hangars.

JENNY
You want me to help you *plunder a
burial site*?

FORSTER
We're extracting an artifact of
military value. I need you to learn
everything you can about it. Age,
culture of origin, associated names
or entities.

JENNY
Colonel, I don't know where you got
my name. But this is not what I do.

Forster turns on her, his demeanor hardening.

FORSTER
I know exactly what you do, Dr.
Halsey. I have a file documenting
your dealings with dozens of
gangsters, smugglers and black
marketeers who pay you handsomely
for God knows what services.

Jenny stares at him in astonishment, caught flat-footed.

FORSTER (CONT'D)
I can pay your usual fee and be one
more client you don't talk about...
or I can send my file to Interpol.

He lets the threat hang in the air. She studies him. A beat.

JENNY
Twice my usual fee.

INT. HANGAR - DAY

A huge vacant space. At a folding table, Tyler studies a map
of Iraq. He looks up as Forster leads Jenny in.

TYLER
We need to get in and out fast, or
we'll catch more heat than we can
handle.

FORSTER

Tyler. Jennifer Halsey. Expert on
the Ancient Near East. Tyler Colt.

Tyler clocks Jenny and dismisses her. A decorative civilian.

TYLER

What are my assets? Apart from her?

Jenny stares at him. *Excuse me?*

FORSTER

Twelve specialists out of the Army
Corps of Engineers.

Tyler nods. Good start. He taps the map.

TYLER

This desert's held by tribal warlords.
Even with a fast turnaround we'll want
security. SEALs. Rangers.

Forster nods. Done. But Jenny frowns at the map.

JENNY

That's strange.

TYLER

What?

JENNY

Iraq's riddled with ruins, but
they're all in the river valleys.
No one built out here in the open
desert. Are we sure...?

Tyler turns on her in annoyance.

TYLER

If one more person calls me crazy...

Forster holds up a forestalling hand.

FORSTER

How do we operate inside the tomb?

Tyler gets back on task. Stares into space, thinking.

TYLER

This thing comes on like voices in
your ears. We need countermeasures.
Not just ear protection. Antisound.
We want to hear *nothing*. And no
radio links between the men.
Everybody wears a hazmat suit. Self-
contained air supplies.

FORSTER
Shielded for electromagnetics.

TYLER
Yeah. And no weapons. If the voices
get to us, we'll turn on each other.

Jenny looks at Tyler incredulously.

JENNY
Can other people hear these voices,
or is it just you?

Tyler glares at Forster, furious.

TYLER
Why is she here?

FORSTER
Because she knows more about the
ancient world than you know about
the modern one. Make it work.

A RUMBLE behind them. An armored Oshkosh cargo truck rolls
into the hangar. The Army Corps of Engineers. A dozen
ENGINEERS in field uniforms jump down off the flatbed.

Tyler stalks away to meet them. Jenny watches him go.

JENNY
We're following *him* into the desert?

FORSTER
Tyler served with the SEALs and the
CIA. He's been undercover with arms
dealers. Embedded with resistance
fighters. He's operated in every war
zone on the globe. Best of the best.

JENNY
So what happened to him?

Forster hands Jenny a thick folder.

FORSTER
He walked into that tomb.

Jenny opens the folder: the file on the Crossbow mission.
Pictures of the doomed SEAL Team. Tactical maps. Depositions
and transcripts. She starts reading.

LATER

The Engineers unpack HAZMAT SUITS & breathing apparatus. A
pair of UP-ARMORED HUMVEES drives into the hangar. A squad of
four ARMY RANGERS jumps out and starts unloading guns.

Tyler sits loading rifle clips from a box marked INCENDIARY AMMUNITION. He wraps each clip in red tape. Forster stands over him, mid-argument.

FORSTER

We don't need a helicopter. We all fit on the plane.

TYLER

That cargo plane's a fat target: we need a gunship to defend it. And that's my ride. No way in hell do I get on a plane with that thing.

FORSTER

Tyler...

TYLER

Helicopter.

Forster looks tense. He nods curtly and hurries away. Jenny approaches with the Crossbow file. Tyler recognizes it.

TYLER (CONT'D)

He gave you my file?!

JENNY

Unbelievable stuff. And I mean that literally. Did you draw this?

She points at a page: a reproduction of a hand-drawn map.

TYLER

Yeah.

JENNY

It's good work. Classic bronze-age tomb. But these guardian statues - they're turned around. They should face out. These face inward.

TYLER

That's how they were. Look, Doc...

JENNY

Jenny.

TYLER

That tomb's no place you want to be. I don't want you there. Walk away.

JENNY

I can't. Forster's got a file on me, too. But even if he didn't...that tomb is a major find. I'm going.

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

A colossal C-17 GLOBEMASTER CARGO PLANE sits on the tarmac, tailgate down. The Engineers back the cargo truck - loaded with Bobcat digging machines - into the cargo bay.

Forster leads Jenny and Tyler up the tailgate into the plane.

EXT. IRAQI DESERT - TOMB ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A digging machine ROARS up out of the tomb, loaded with broken stone.

The abandoned trucks of the tomb robbers are still here: windows shattered, tires flat, drifted into the sand.

Forster's convoy now stands beside them: two armored Humvees and the Oshkosh cargo truck. The four Army Rangers man defensive position around the site.

WORKLIGHTS illuminate the tomb as the Engineers excavate the entrance. Beside them, Jenny pores over the ancient carvings. She walks back to Tyler and Forster where they stand on a rise overlooking the scene. She's thrilled by the site.

JENNY

The tomb is Assyrian. That writing around the door? Curses. *Keep out. Abandon hope, ye who enter here.*

A shout from the Engineers at the tomb's entrance:

ENGINEER

We're through!

MINUTES LATER

The twelve Engineers gather before Tyler, Jenny and Forster. Everyone wears WHITE HAZMAT SUITS with air supplies. Headgear under their arms. They carry scientific instruments.

Tyler's packing an M79 grenade launcher and a bandolier of grenades. Pistol on his hip. Submachine gun on his back. His AMMO CLIPS ARE MARKED WITH RED TAPE: incendiary rounds.

TYLER

There is some next-level badness down that hole. Keep your gloves on. Check your seals. Watch your air supply. You start hearing voices? Walk out. Follow the cable to the surface. Go straight to the medic.

He points at the MEDIC beside his gear.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Watch each other for the signs:
The sweats. The shakes. Crazy eye.
Sudden aggression. That's why
nobody's got weapons.

ENGINEER #2

You've got weapons.

TYLER

It's not my first rodeo. I'm here to
watch your backs. Suit up!

The Engineers pull on ANTISOUND HEADSETS AND HAZMAT HOODS.
Tyler hesitates, staring at the tomb. Forster notices.

FORSTER

We have all your precautions in
place. We're good.

TYLER

Nothing here is good.

He pulls on his headgear: ALL SOUND IS SILENCED. A purr of
WHITE NOISE. He leads the team into the tomb, Forster and
Jenny right behind him. The Engineers bringing up the rear.

The last man carries a spool of yellow cable that unrolls
behind them. Like astronauts they follow Tyler into the dark.

INT. TOMB - PASSAGEWAY

Their floodlights bathe the walls in a harsh white glare. We
hear as they do: sand crunching underfoot. Their breathing.
The purr of ventilators.

Forster carries a MAGNETOMETER that detects electric and
magnetic flux across all bands. He sweeps the walls with it.

Jenny looks around in wonder. Steps aside to photograph the
walls. The light fades. The unspooling cable bumps against
her feet: she's lagged behind. She hurries to catch up.

ANTECHAMBER

It's a heroic act for Tyler to enter this chamber. Here his
men fell, and the dead rose. But there are no bodies on the
ground. The blood on the walls has faded. Tyler frowns.

He spots an age-browned SKULL FRAGMENT on the floor. Beside
it, an AK-47 engulfed in rust. He picks it up: the gun falls
apart in his hand - as if a thousand years have passed.

FLASHES as Jenny enters, taking pictures.

Foster's watching his instruments. He signals: keep moving.

LABYRINTH

Tyler leads the team into the maze. One of their floodlights FLARES and BURNS OUT. Moments later, another. An Engineer falters. Drops his gear. Stumbles back the way they came, groping along the yellow cable.

At an intersection Tyler pauses - remembering his way. Points down a passage. Forster sweeps with his magnetometer: field readings spike in that direction. He signals the advance.

SARCOPHAGUS CHAMBER

Tyler leads the team in. The bronze braziers are unlit. The gods of ancient Assyria glare down from the walls. The black iron SARCOPHAGUS lies on its plinth of stone.

Forster stares at his magnetometer: readings off the scale.

Jenny approaches the sarcophagus, overwhelmed. Reads the gold tracery. Agitated, she tears off her headgear. Tyler gives her the signal to put her headgear back on. She ignores it. He pulls off his own hood, furiously.

TYLER

You. Suit up.

JENNY

This is Ashurbanipal! The last great king of Assyria.

TYLER

Great. Put your headgear on.

JENNY

(tracing the engraving)
Assyrian text. Egyptian symbols!

TYLER

Hands off the box!

Impatiently, Forster signals the Engineers to start the extraction. Pulls his own headgear off.

FORSTER

What's the problem?!

TYLER

Your "expert."

JENNY

This is the greatest find since King Tut's tomb! We can't just grab the sarcophagus and leave...

A GHOSTLY WHISPER in old Akkadian. Tyler stiffens.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Did you hear that?

FORSTER

I *feel* it. Working on my mind!
I've never felt power like this.

He sounds daunted. Tyler's trembling. He pulls his pistol. Aims it at Jenny. Struggling to keep his voice under control.

TYLER

Headgear.

FORSTER

Tyler!

Tyler points the gun at Forster. He's at the end of his rope.

TYLER

Both of you. Now.

Forster complies. Jenny looks defiant...but obeys. Tyler holsters his gun and suits up, plunging back into silence.

The Engineers assemble a KEVLAR SHELL around the sarcophagus. Attach gas cylinders. Flood the shell with argon gas. And then, one by one, the team's FLOODLIGHTS BURN OUT - plunging them into UTTER DARKNESS. A second of terror.

PAFFF! Tyler holds a magnesium flare overhead. In the red glare he signals the team. *Go! Go!*

LABYRINTH

Tyler strides through the tunnels - a burning flare in one hand, machine gun in the other. Jenny at his side.

Forster follows, with the Engineers carrying the sarcophagus on their shoulders like pallbearers. A few hold burning flares aloft. Like monks in an otherworldly catacomb.

EXT. TOMB ENTRANCE - DAWN

The sky is brightening as the team carries the sarcophagus into the open air. Tyler waves them toward the cargo truck.

He pulls off his headgear. Looks at the Engineer sitting with the medic: the one who walked out.

TYLER

He okay?

MEDIC

Panic attack. He's all right.

FORSTER
 (shouting)
 Let's move!

EXT. IRAQI DESERT - PRE-DAWN

The convoy barrels across the desert. The Rangers lead the column in one Humvee. Then the cargo truck, hazmat-suited Engineers riding with the sarcophagus.

Lastly, the second Humvee: Forster at the wheel, with Tyler riding shotgun and Jenny in back. They've shed their hazmat suits. Tyler has his weapons slung.

They pass a boundary stone - a *kudurru*. Jenny notices: it's one of many marching in a VAST RING AROUND THE TOMB. She swings her camera around to photograph them.

EXT. DESERT HILLTOP - SUNRISE

The convoy crests a rise in the desert. Below on a salt flat: a C-17 GLOBEMASTER CARGO PLANE sits beside a BLACK HAWK.

INT. TYLER'S HUMVEE (IN MOTION) - DAY

The convoy speeds toward the waiting aircraft.

The Black Hawk's rotor is turning. The C-17's engines rumble. The plane's ramp is down: its cargo hold an empty cavern.

FORSTER
 It might be better for the team if
 you stayed with the package.

TYLER
 I am not flying with that -

KA-BLAM! AN EXPLOSION FLIPS THE LEAD HUMVEE INTO THE AIR. It lands on its roof on fire. Scratch one squad of Army Rangers.

A SECOND BLAST DESTROYS THE CAB OF THE CARGO TRUCK, crippling the truck: it grinds to a halt twenty yards from the plane.

FORSTER
 Warlords!

Four "TECHNICALS" roar in across the salt flat: pickup trucks with heavy machine guns mounted in back. TRIBAL WARRIORS with AK-47s and RPGs ride five to a truck.

An RPG just misses their Humvee - and BLOWS UP THE BLACK HAWK. The helicopter dissolves into flames. Jenny screams. Tyler stares at the wreckage in dismay. There goes his ride.

Bullets ricochet around them. Tyler takes command by reflex. He grabs Jenny's arm. His focus cuts through her terror.

TYLER

Get out and stay low. When I start shooting, run to the truck. They're gonna have to load the sarcophagus by hand. You're in charge.

She nods, white-faced. Gets out. Tyler stands up into the gun turret. Swings the SAW around. Bangs on the roof.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Drive! Drive!

He starts shooting. Jenny runs. Foster sets his jaw and puts the pedal down. The Humvee leaps forward. Tyler fires in long bursts, swinging the gun from one target to another.

AT THE CARGO TRUCK

Jenny arrives at a run: the Hazmat-suited Engineers are huddled in panic. A few of them peeling off their headgear.

In combat sign language she orders them to keep their gear on and lift the sarcophagus. She gets them moving.

ON THE SALT FLAT

Tyler and Forster play defense, veering to cut off the tribal warriors' trucks as they approach. Tyler fires his GRENADE LAUNCHER, rolling an enemy truck.

He looks back: the Engineers lug the coffin toward the plane.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Tell 'em take off as soon as it's aboard!

FORSTER

What about us?!

TYLER

Tell 'em leave the ramp down!

AT THE C-17

Jenny leads the Engineers up the ramp with the sarcophagus. The C-17 LUMBERS INTO MOTION, engines howling. Jenny looks around in confusion: Tyler and Forster aren't on board yet.

JENNY

Wait!

IN THE HUMVEE

Tyler empties his grenade launcher. Drops it. Switches to the turret gun. An RPG whistles past - too close.

TYLER

Time to go!

Forster slews the Humvee around, chasing the C-17. They blow out a rear tire, losing precious speed. A fuel can on the exterior CATCHES FIRE. Tyler blasts away with the turret gun.

The C-17's nose comes off the ground. Takeoff speed.

Tyler ducks inside as the Humvee charges through the wash of the giant engines. It slams up the ramp, bullet-riddled and burning, an instant before the ramp lifts off the ground.

The engine wash rolls the pursuing trucks off their tires. They tumble across the salt flat as the C-17 climbs away.

INT. C-17 - CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

The burning Humvee skids to a stop in the cargo bay. Tyler and Forster leap out as the deck crew douses the flames with fire extinguishers. The ramp closes behind them.

EXT. SALT PAN - DAY

The last technical rolls to a stop. A bearded man rises to his feet: the WARLORD himself. He watches the plane get away. Pulls a battered SATELLITE PHONE from his robes and dials.

INT. OPULENT PENTHOUSE - DAY

Wide windows and marble. Grand views of a European city.

A PHONE RINGS. In the foreground, a MYSTERIOUS MAN answers: he wears a tailored suit and a gold ring marked with a FOUR-BARRED CROSS. We cannot see his face.

WARLORD (INTERCUT)
(in Arabic, subtitled)
Outsiders have discovered the tomb.

MYSTERIOUS MAN
(in Arabic, subtitled)
Kill them.

WARLORD (INTERCUT)
(in Arabic, subtitled)
*I tried. I failed. They have taken
the King of the Dead.*

The mysterious man lays the phone down on his desk.

MYSTERIOUS MAN
(grimly)
The day has come.

INT. C-17 (IN FLIGHT) - CARGO BAY - DAY

The SARCOPHAGUS is tied down in its high-tech kevlar case. Tyler stares glumly at it: stuck on a plane with that *thing*. Spooked Engineers sit on benches along the walls. Tyler gives them a hand signal as he passes: *Keep your headgear on.*

COCKPIT

A PILOT and COPILOT guide the C-17 into the safe upper air. Behind them, Forster, Tyler, and Jenny drop into jump seats.

TYLER

Bad op.

FORSTER

I didn't expect to lose men.

He has the look of a man who's won an auction with a bid he can't afford to pay.

TYLER

You in trouble?

FORSTER

I'll handle it. When they see what I've found - all will be forgiven.

He falls back in his seat and closes his eyes. Tyler looks at Jenny: she's scribbling furiously in her sketchbook.

TYLER

You did good back there.

Jenny waves him off impatiently without looking up.

JENNY

First sixty minutes are the golden hour for recall. Don't talk to me.

Her pen flies as she tries to capture all she's seen.

EXT. STORMY SKIES - DAY

The C-17 soars over the Mediterranean. The skies darken. Ominous clouds gather. Rain begins to fall.

INT. C-17 - COCKPIT

Tyler, Jenny, and Forster are asleep despite the turbulence. Jenny's notebook lies open in her lap: its pages covered with horrifying drawings from the tomb.

Tyler twitches - hounded by nightmares.

UNDERWORLD - ENDLESS STAIR

A spiral stair descends into darkness. TREE ROOTS have choked the stairwell, twisting through the rock. Terrifying noises from below: rumbles, crashes, muttering voices.

The DEAD KING, his skin inked with warding glyphs, struggles down the stair - fighting through the gnarled roots.

An EERIE LIGHT approaches from below. In terror the Dead King worms into a crevice in the wall. Hiding among the roots.

A DEMON climbs past, ascending the stair: a skeletal monster with a hawklike head. It carries a wicked hooked blade that glows with a blue light.

When the demon has passed, the Dead King tries to emerge from hiding - but THE ROOTS HOLD HIM FAST, twined around him. He struggles to free himself. The roots tighten, entangling him in strangling loops - and DRAG HIM SCREAMING INTO THE EARTH.

INT. C-17 GLOBEMASTER - COCKPIT

KA-TOW!! LIGHTNING STRIKES THE PLANE!

The THUNDERCLAP catapults Tyler out of his nightmare. Beside him Forster and Jenny wake, disoriented.

They're flying through an apocalyptic storm. Warning indicators flash and beep in the cockpit. Rain lashes the windows. Static on the displays. The compass spins wildly.

TYLER

What's happening?

COPILOT

Weather came out of nowhere!

FORSTER

Where are we?

PILOT

Hard to say. Nav is out. European airspace.

JENNY

Look at that!

A BLACK WALL OF CLOUD towers out of the storm ahead like a tidal wave: it looks dense and dark enough to crush them.

PILOT

Darkest cloud I've ever seen.

The COLLISION RADAR starts BEEPING. Tyler squints at the stormcloud. Something's not right. Horror fills his face.

TYLER
That's not a cloud.

WE ZOOM THROUGH THE COCKPIT WINDOWS...

...rocketing across the sky to the black stormfront. It's a FLOCK OF RAVENS. Millions of them, beating through the tempest at an impossible altitude with strange purpose.

The C-17 STRIKES THE RAVENS AT 450 KNOTS.

At this speed a raven might as well be a cannonball. The bombardment streaks the C-17 with blood. All four engines BURST INTO FLAME.

INT. C-17 - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

THE WINDOWS SHATTER. A carnage of ravens. Flying daggers of glass. Wind SCREAMS through the cockpit.

Tyler, Jenny and Forster duck behind the seats in front. They look up to see the PILOT AND COPILOT DEAD IN THEIR CHAIRS. They leap up: the flight deck is slick with rain and blood.

Tyler looks at the flight controls. Out the broken windows.

JENNY
Can you fly?!

TYLER
All four engines on fire!

He pushes them aft. Forster wrenches open the hatch against the howling wind and they dive into the...

CARGO BAY

They slam the hatch shut behind them. A THUNDERCLAP shakes the plane. The lights flicker.

EVERY MAN IN THE CARGO BAY LIES DEAD.

The Engineers, the Medic, the deck crew. Their hoods and headsets pulled off. Their hands grip wrenches, hammers.

In the center of the bay, the SARCOPHAGUS LIES EXPOSED. Its kevlar shell dismantled. Loosely cabled to the bucking deck.

Wind shrieks through the bay. A few tattered crows flap frantically around the interior.

Tyler runs aft, hugging the wall past the sarcophagus. By now running aft means climbing: the plane's in a dive. Forster kneels over the fallen men. Checks vital signs.

FORSTER
They're all dead!

TYLER
So are we if we don't find chutes!

Forster and Jenny join him in the search. Ransacking lockers.

Over the roaring storm and creaking airframe, they hear WHISPERS. The ghost voices from the tomb.

TYLER (CONT'D)
No. No no no.

FORSTER
Here!

Parachutes. They all struggle into harnesses.

EXT. STORMY SKIES - DAY

The C-17 plunges through the storm, all four engines burning. Flames stream from punctured fuel tanks in the wings. Through the clouds below, we see the city of ROME.

INT. C-17 - CARGO BAY

Wearing a chute, Tyler lowers the tailgate: a vertiginous view of the storm. Forster steps up beside him, parachute on, clutching his field case. Tyler slaps him on the shoulder.

TYLER
Go! Go!

Forster dives out into the gale.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Jenny!

She's twenty feet away, struggling with her parachute straps - when all around her, THE DEAD STAND UP. Heads lolling, eyes rolled back. They clutch at her blindly. Jenny screams.

JENNY
Tyler!

Tyler runs back down the tilted deck. Wrenches Jenny free of the clutching dead.

One of them PULLS THE RIPCORD OF HER PARACHUTE - popping the drone chute. Hands tangle in the silk. Her chute spills out behind her as Tyler pulls her away. She hits the end of her shrouds and jerks to a stop. Dead hands drag her backward.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Help me!

Tyler rips off her harness. Drags her to the open tailgate.

JENNY (CONT'D)
I don't have a chute!

TYLER
I know!

He hurls her out of the plane. Fires a burning bullet into a dead man who whose clutching hands are inches away. Jumps out into the storm as the dead man burns like a torch behind him.

EXT. FREE-FALL - CONTINUOUS

Jenny tumbles through the storm in free-fall, screaming. Tyler dives to her. Grabs her mid-air.

TYLER
Hold on!

They lock arms and legs around each other. He pops his chute.

EXT. ROME - DAY

The C-17 plunges out of the dark sky like a dying dragon, trailing flame. Raking over the rooftops in eerie silence.

It shears the steeple off a church. Topples a marble spire, losing a wing. Plunges into an ancient abbey. The engines break free and tumble on separate paths of ruin.

Flames boil. A pall of smoke adds its darkness to the storm.

AMONG THE CLOUDS

Forster, descending by parachute, watches the calamity on the ground. He spots Tyler's parachute below him. Pulls on his shrouds, banking through the stormwinds.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOFTOP

Tyler and Jenny - sharing one parachute - descend fast onto the roof. Tyler lets her go: she tumbles across the rooftop.

Lightened, Tyler is dragged across the roof. He fights to get out of his harness before he goes over the edge. At the last instant he gets free. The parachute flaps away like a ghost.

He stands in the rain, looking at the column of smoke boiling up from the crash site half a mile away. Furious. He can't believe he went along with this. He knew better.

Jenny joins him at the roof's edge. He turns to her - and she begins to PUMMEL HIM WITH HER FISTS.

JENNY
You threw me out of a plane!

TYLER
It was on fire!

JENNY
You threw me out of a PLANE!

Tyler fends off her blows. Pulls her in.

TYLER
You're okay. You're on the ground.
You're safe.

Jenny stops punching. Stares at him, breathing hard. She's just seen the impossible and her mind's in rebellion.

JENNY
What was THAT? The storm? Dead men.
Maybe...maybe they weren't dead.
Their vital signs were just...

TYLER
You know what you saw.

Forster descends expertly onto the roof behind them. Cuts his chute loose. He joins them, staring at the pillar of smoke.

TYLER (CONT'D)
That thing kills whoever gets close.

JENNY
And we just dropped it in the middle
of Rome.

EXT. ROME - CRASH SITE - DAY

Wreckage strewn across hundreds of yards. FLAMES gutter in the shattered fuselage. In crushed houses and cars.

An OLD MAN in a worn suit lies pinned under fallen masonry.

OLD MAN
(in Italian, subtitled)
Help me! Please!

A CLATTER. A stone slab shifts beside him. Another survivor! The old man wrenches at the slab with frail hands.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
(in Italian, subtitled)
Push! I will help you!

He strains with all his strength. The slab topples aside. An ARM reaches out: black and withered, like a burn victim.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
 (in Italian, subtitled)
Mother of God!

He claws at the rubble, moving stones.

Out of the wreckage crawls THE MUMMY. Skin BLACK AS TAR, body wasted to the bone. It rises to its feet, gaunt and terrible. A FANTASTIC LIGHTNING DISPLAY shreds the sky behind it.

BROKEN TUBES OF BRONZE jut from the Mummy's throat, wrists, and chest: jagged pipes of ancient forging. A flash of pale teeth in its slitted mouth. Black eyes glitter.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
 (in Italian, subtitled)
My God. My God!

THUNDER CRASHES. The Mummy bends over the old man with sinister purpose. The old man recoils.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
 (in Italian, subtitled)
What are you?!

The Mummy takes his head in its hands. It seems the creature DRIVES THE BRONZE PIPES IN ITS WRISTS into the man's throat.

The old man convulses - held by the Mummy's gaze. A strange, intimate bond as blood and life flows from the living to the dead. The ancient body fills out slightly. The Mummy takes its first ragged breath as the old man breathes his last.

Another victim calls out in the storm. A WOMAN. The Mummy's head turns hungrily. It stalks toward the voice.

Left behind, the old man's body stares at the stormy sky. Hands clawed, eyes wide, mouth frozen in a silent scream.

EXT. ROME - CRASH SITE - DAY

Paramedics and firefighters push into the wreckage under a relentless rain. Policemen herd news crews back as officials take stock of the disaster.

Out of a black car with diplomatic plates steps U.S. AMBASSADOR CHARLES SLADE. He surveys the scene, appalled.

Forster hurries up to him, drenched in his coat. His field case under his arm. He flashes his ID.

FORSTER
 Ambassador Slade. Colonel Gideon
 Forster, Department of Defense.
 Special Weapons Group.

Slade scowls under his umbrella.

AMBASSADOR SLADE
What do you know about this plane?

FORSTER
Covert flight out of Iraq. There were items of high intelligence value on board. I need to retrieve them. Discreetly.

The Ambassador stares at him incredulously.

AMBASSADOR SLADE
We've got half the police in Rome on top of us. And the media.

FORSTER
And if they find out what was on the plane, it'll be a national scandal. You'll end up working a war zone at the ass end of Africa. So give me some cover and let me clean this up.

The Ambassador seethes impotently - and gives in. He nods.

AT THE EDGE OF THE WRECKAGE

Tyler and Jenny stand in the rain, staring at the debris field. Tyler broods on the destruction. Anger in his voice.

TYLER
This thing's had its hooks in me since I found it. I wanted to end it. But it just gets worse.

Jenny looks at him, moved. Before she can speak, Forster appears. Passes them clip-on ID badges from his field case.

FORSTER
If anyone asks, you're part of the American investigation. Don't let anyone ask.

EXT. DESERTED SHOP - DAY

An empty shop at the edge of the crash site. A U.S. Embassy Marine guards the door. Forster leads Tyler and Jenny inside.

INT. DESERTED SHOP - DAY

A makeshift base of operations. Forster unpacks his field case: setting up a satellite phone and comm terminal. He looks edgy. Barely keeping it together.

FORSTER

I've bought us a few hours. The Special Weapons Group has no assets in the region. We're on our own.

(to Jenny)

I need you to do whatever an Assyrian priest would do to protect us from a curse. Sorcery affecting the mind.

Jenny looks from Forster to Tyler and back.

JENNY

Are you serious?

FORSTER

The artifact's power is real. It's reasonable to imagine the counter-measures of the time have potency.

JENNY

I *study* ancient mysticism. I don't *practice* it.

FORSTER

Humor me.

Jenny stares. But he's not letting her off the hook.

JENNY

Okay. Take off your shirts.

EXT. JORDAN - ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE - DAY

In the shade of a tarpaulin, Professor Sheppard and his team watch a BBC news broadcast on a portable television.

ONSCREEN: an aerial shot of Rome, showing devastation at the crash site. Emergency workers struggling through the rain.

BBC ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...a dozen casualties on the ground and an unknown number on the plane itself. Italian officials are demanding to know where this plane was bound - and what it was carrying.

Worry creases Professor Sheppard's face.

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD

Has anyone heard from Jenny?

INT. DESERTED SHOP - DAY

Forster stands shirtless: a PROTECTIVE SEAL inked over his heart. Other signs on his shoulders and back.

Jenny works on Tyler, using an image on her tablet computer as reference. He still has the ripped physique of a Navy SEAL, which is not lost on Jenny: the proximity's loaded for both of them. She talks to cover her nerves.

JENNY

The sorcery of Assyria was about dominion. Taking control of the mind. The body. Warding signs were the ancient defense.

She completes the warding sign. Wafts the smoke of smoldering herbs over him. Touches his brow and heart with an amulet.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(skeptically)

You walk in the grace of Ashur and Ishtar, blessed in the eyes of Anu. In theory, you're protected from hostile magic. Let's go.

FORSTER

Not until we're *all* protected.

Tyler picks up her ink and stylus. Grins.

TYLER

Take off your shirt.

Jenny laughs in disbelief - but Tyler's serious. She sighs. Takes off her shirt. Tyler gets to work. Glances at her iPad.

TYLER (CONT'D)

No sweat. All the guys in my unit used to have me do their face paint. I have very good hands.

EXT. CRASH SITE - DAY

Tyler, Jenny, and Forster fan out across the ruin, searching.

The sky darkens. Rainwater runs in torrents through the debris. Sirens and shouting voices swallowed by the wind.

IN THE CENTER OF THE FIELD

Tyler stands alone. He pivots, measuring angles: the trail from the impact point. The paths of the tumbling engines. The fragments of the fuselage.

We see FLASHES OF THE CRASHING PLANE as he games out the impact in his mind's eye. A severed WING rakes overhead. A howling ENGINE tumbles past him. The SARCOPHAGUS cannons through the air like a missile. Tyler turns.

It must be...*this* way. He skirts a burning mass of crumpled fuselage. Steps through a doorway in a free-standing wall. On the far side, only rubble. The search seems hopeless.

A sound. The CAWING OF CROWS. He looks up. The roof of the Abbey is COVERED WITH RAVENS. Tyler prowls forward nervously. Beside the shattered Abbey he stops and crouches. Picks up a FRAGMENT OF BLACK IRON. A PIECE OF THE SARCOPHAGUS.

The Abbey's WINE CELLAR has been laid open by the crash. He peers down into the dark. His hand strays to his gun.

Jenny appears beside him, making him jump.

JENNY

What do you see?

He passes her the fragment of engraved iron.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Oh, no.

Tyler throws Forster a hand signal across the field. *Here*. He pulls out a tactical flashlight. Shines it into the pit.

TYLER

We can climb down if we're careful.
There's handholds -

Jenny leaps into the crypt. Tyler blinks.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Okay.

He leaps down after her.

INT. CELLAR

The sarcophagus, having blasted through the ancient wall, lies shattered in the wreckage of wine casks and masonry.

Tyler lifts his tactical light. A hand on his gun. He sweeps the shadows and corners, braced for some dark manifestation.

Jenny kneels in the rubble with her own flashlight. She finds fragments of engraved black iron. Lays them out. Forster climbs down behind them.

TYLER

You feeling anything? Whispers?

Forster shakes his head.

FORSTER

Maybe it's over. Break the artifact,
break the spell.

TYLER

It was never the box. It was the thing inside. Ash...

JENNY

Ashurbanipal. If his remains are here, they won't be hard to find. He'd be buried in gold and jewels.

TYLER

No gold. They shaved off his beard and hair and sealed him in hot tar.

Jenny's head comes around sharply.

JENNY

How could you know that?

TYLER

I dreamed it.

A SCREAM makes Tyler spin. It came from up above.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Stay with her!

He rockets up out of the cellar, leaping from wall to wall with startling athleticism, and disappears into the rain.

EXT. RUINED ABBEY - DAY

Around the corner from the opened cellar, a knot of policemen and medics stand huddled in the downpour. Tyler joins them. They've found the Mummy's first victim: the OLD MAN, his alabaster-pale face set in a rictus of terror.

Twenty paces away, more police cluster around a DEAD WOMAN. She too has bloodless white skin, frozen in a silent scream.

Forster appears beside Tyler, taking in the ghastly scene. Tyler looks at him, shaken.

TYLER

This was him.

FORSTER

You don't know that.

TYLER

What then? Natural causes? They're just *really scared* of plane crashes? The thing in the box is out.

(realizing)

You left Jenny alone!

INT. CELLAR - DAY

Jenny has laid out the major fragments of the sarcophagus. She studies the engravings, poring over the text.

In the DRAINAGE TUNNEL BEHIND HER - *movement*. The MUMMY peers out of the darkness: a skeletal ghoul with broken pipes jutting from its wrists, neck and chest. It creeps closer...

Jenny, oblivious to its presence, begins to READ ALOUD IN ANCIENT AKKADIAN - frightened by what she's reading.

The Mummy freezes in astonishment. Cocks its head and stares at her with slitted eyes. Listening.

Tyler CRASHES DOWN into the cellar, making Jenny gasp. He pulls his pistol and flashlight. Sweeps the cellar.

JENNY

What are you doing?!

Tyler shines his light into the tunnel. The Mummy is gone.

TYLER

You see anything strange?

JENNY

Yes. The Assyrians wrapped their dead in shrouds - but they didn't embalm them like the Egyptians. But look:

She turns over a large fragment of the sarcophagus lid, which would have covered the head and torso of its occupant.

Molded to fit the body, the lid is VEINED WITH TUBES AND RESERVOIRS OF BRONZE. Some of the tubes - broken off - plunge into the space the corpse would have occupied.

JENNY (CONT'D)

This intricate mechanism. Reservoirs for some sort of fluid. Pipes designed to *penetrate the body!*
(reading the reservoirs)
"Blood of dreams. Blood of night.
Blood of returning."

One of the pipes runs to a CLOCKWORK APPARATUS on the sarcophagus lid: she works it with her hand, and A BARBED NEEDLE juts from a handprint on the lid.

JENNY (CONT'D)

"Blood of the Chosen."

Tyler looks at the scar on his palm. Closes his fist over it.

JENNY (CONT'D)

This is sorcery to raise the dead.

We FLY PAST Tyler and plunge into the dark DRAINAGE TUNNEL.

UNDERGROUND PIPES - CONTINUOUS

We race through ancient drainways. Across a flooded cistern. UP a vertical drain through a splatter of falling water.

THE MUMMY is climbing the drain. The jagged pipes in its wrists leaving scratches on the stones.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DUSK

Night is falling. A pelting rain beats the cobblestones.

An IRON GRATE BREAKS FREE from its cemented moorings. THE MUMMY CLIMBS OUT into the twilight. Rises to its full height: a gaunt black figure in the shreds of its burial wrappings.

It walks to the mouth of the alley and looks at Rome.

INT. FORSTER'S BASE

Alone in his abandoned shop, Forster paces restlessly - circling his comm terminal like he's afraid to look at it.

AMBASSADOR SLADE (O.S.)

Colonel Forster!

Forster jumps at the sound. Slade steps inside, shaking rain from his umbrella. Outside, four Marines stand guard.

FORSTER

Ambassador.

He's forcing his usual confident tone - but there's a crack in it. Ambassador Slade has blood in his eye.

AMBASSADOR SLADE

I tracked down your Special Weapons Group - which I'd never heard of, by the way. Got your supervisor. Know what he told me? There IS no go mission to Iraq. Nobody knows you're here.

(with savage triumph)

You're off the reservation! You're *single-handedly responsible* for that nightmare out there!

FORSTER

Yes. I am.

He sounds like a man before a firing squad.

The Ambassador looms in Forster's face, enjoying his ruin.

AMBASSADOR SLADE

I don't know whether we'll crucify
you in the public square or bury
you by dark of night, but either
way I'll enjoy it.

He turns to summon his Marines.

FORSTER

Ambassador!
(desperately)
I can explain! Just look at this.

He passes a TABLET COMPUTER to Slade and taps the screen.

AMBASSADOR SLADE

Nothing you can show me will...

He trails off. A SHIFTING DIGITAL PATTERN flickers on the
tablet's screen. Slade stares into the light, HYPNOTIZED.

Shielding his eyes, Forster turns off the tablet and takes it
back. The Ambassador stands STIFF AS A STATUE, hand
outstretched, mouth open. Staring at nothing.

Forster packs up his things. Slips out the back of the shop.

INT. CELLAR - DUSK

Tyler stares at Jenny across the shattered sarcophagus.

JENNY

We won't find the king's remains.
If there was moisture in this
sarcophagus, as these tubes imply -
the body would have rotted away to
nothing in two thousand years.

TYLER

I think we won't find his body
because he went for a little walk.

JENNY

Tyler...

TYLER

Let's get out of this hole.

EXT. RUINED ABBEY - DUSK

Tyler climbs out of the cellar. Pulls Jenny up into the rain.

JENNY

A two-thousand-year-old man can't -

She GASPS! Tyler spins to find TWO MARINES behind him.

MARINE #1

Tyler Colt. Jennifer Halsey. You're under arrest by order of the DCIS.

JENNY

The what?

TYLER

Pentagon criminal investigations. On what charges?

MARINE #2

Impersonating an active-duty serviceman. Falsifying orders. Fraudulent requisition of material and personnel. Desecration of a religious site. Crossing borders for illegal purposes. Conduct resulting in the death of military personnel...

Tyler closes his eyes in dismay.

TYLER

Forster. What did you do?

The Marines pull handcuffs. Reach for Tyler and Jenny.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Listen, you can't take us in. We set something loose here...

MARINE #2

Tell it to the judge.

Tyler becomes a blur of motion. He gets each Marine by a wrist. Twists them together. Takes their handcuffs away. They go for their guns. He takes the guns away.

Seconds after the fracas started, the Marines are handcuffed together on their knees. Tyler points both guns at them.

MARINE #1

They'll lock you up for the rest of your life.

PAFF! PAFF! TRANQUILIZER DARTS appear in the Marines' necks. They slump unconscious.

FORSTER

Not just yet.

He slips a slim dart pistol into his jacket.

JENNY

What the hell is going on?!

Forster's shoulders crumple. His facade finally collapsing.

FORSTER

I couldn't get approval for the mission. Too speculative. Too costly. So...I set it up on my own.

TYLER

You forged your orders.

FORSTER

Indelicate phrasing. But yes.

Tyler seizes him by the collar. Slams him against the wall.

TYLER

People died! We were in combat! We crashed a plane into a goddamned city! We'll all go to prison!

JENNY

Tyler!

Strangling, Forster croaks something unintelligible.

TYLER

What's he saying?

JENNY

I think he's saying, "You need me."

Tyler gives Forster some air.

FORSTER

(hoarsely)

You need me. To clear your name. I did this. I'll take the heat. I'll get you out of this. I promise.

Tyler releases him reluctantly. Forster gulps air.

Two Italian POLICE OFFICERS run toward them, shouting. They stiffen in fight-or-flight panic...but the officers run right past them, shouting into radios in Italian.

JENNY

They said the Devil killed again!

EXT - NARROW STREET - NIGHT

Forster, Tyler, and Jenny hurry through the gathering dark. They see a cluster of policemen: a MURDER SCENE. A muscular man lies dead, pale and frozen in a tableau of horror.

The policemen argue. Some point away down the street: on a distant corner, a second knot of policemen stand under a streetlight. A second murder scene.

STREET CORNER

Tyler, Jenny and Forster arrive at the second murder scene, stopping a discreet distance away. This victim is an OLD WOMAN, pale and frozen in terror like the others.

FORSTER

Why these people? Men, women,
young, old...

Tyler looks back the way they came - and he sees it.

TYLER

He's not choosing victims. They're
just in his way. He's moving in a
straight line. Where does this go?

They stare at him in confusion. Tyler turns and runs down the street - emerging at the end of the block into...

ST. PETER'S SQUARE

A wide plaza surrounded by a colonnade. Beautiful even on this rainy night. Across the plaza: A MIGHTY DOMED CATHEDRAL. Jenny arrives beside Tyler. They stare at the church.

JENNY

St. Peter's Basilica. *The Vatican.*

Lightning flashes. Thunder BOOMS. A SCREAM echoes across the plaza. A terrified PRIEST flees weeping through the square.

PRIEST

Il diavolo! Il diavolo! Dio ci salvi!

INT. VATICAN LIBRARY - GALLERY - NIGHT

A hall beautiful as a Fabergé egg even in this dim light: its walls and arched ceiling adorned with frescoes and gold.

At the end of the gallery, a towering double door of bronze. As we watch, the doors RUST AND CORRODE. Dark veins of rot spread. The doors GROAN, BUCKLE - and BURST OPEN!

The Mummy walks in. He stands tall now: gaunt shoulders straight, skull-like head lifted imperiously.

He walks down the gallery, and *corruption walks with him* - veins of decay spreading over the floors and walls. Tiles and windowpanes crack. Paint peels. When the Mummy is roused, his touch carries all the wasting power of twenty-six centuries.

There's a RUMBLE in the air. It seems the floor sags under his weight. The Devil has come to the house of God.

EXT. ST. PETER'S SQUARE - NIGHT

Tyler winces, rubbing the scar on his palm as if it burns him. He passes his hand through the air experimentally, like a man testing the wind. Points across the square.

TYLER

That way.

FORSTER

You're sure?

Tyler trots ahead. Forster and Jenny hurry after him. Behind them, policemen flood into the plaza. Sirens wail.

COLONNADE

Like a bloodhound on the scent, Tyler leads Forster and Jenny through a high archway into a narrow Vatican City street. Jenny catches up to him, looking nervous.

JENNY

Tyler. The Assyrians were the bloodiest empire in history. They used terror as a weapon. Skinned people alive. Impaled them on stakes. Sealed them up in walls. Made heaps of human heads.

Tyler turns on her, more than a little freaked out.

TYLER

Where are you going with this?

JENNY

Ashurbanipal was the cruelest king Assyria ever had. We'd be better off waking up Genghis Khan or Attila the Hun. If this is him...

TYLER

So you do believe it. Jenny. Let the cops take you somewhere safe. You shouldn't be here.

Jenny's not having this chivalry for a second.

JENNY

Without me you have no idea who you're dealing with. And if there's a two-thousand-year-old man walking around, I'm not going to miss it.

FORSTER

Good. We need to stay together. This is proof of a power greater than death. We have to bring it back.

They come to a GUARD LYING DEAD before a grand building. Behind him, the bronze double doors are blasted inward.

JENNY

This is the Vatican Library!

TYLER

He came straight here. I think it's no accident we crashed in Rome.

VATICAN LIBRARY - READING ROOM

A great hall ringed with balconies. Walls lined with books.

The Mummy has two ACOLYTES by the throats, bronze pipes impaling their necks. Their feet dangling above the marble floor. They die in his hands.

A CLATTER. The Mummy drops his victims and looks up. A DARK BEARDED PRIEST stares in shock across the hall. But he does not flee. He is a trained EXORCIST. He's faced evil before.

The Exorcist clutches his rosary. Lifts a Bible off a shelf. Brandishing the Book he begins A PRAYER OF EXORCISM. His voice resonant. His tongue like a lash.

Shreds of darkness unravel from the Mummy's body, blowing away like ash on the wind. The prayer has real power.

The Mummy snarls - and exerts his own power. Veins of corruption spread outward like a spiderweb across the floor. The Mummy SPEAKS AN INCANTATION - his harsh Akkadian words clashing with the priest's sonorous Latin.

The Exorcist falters, sweat beading on his brow. Swallows. Coughs up a PUFF OF DUST.

He struggles to speak, and chokes. Dry sand pours from his mouth. He falls to his knees, vomiting sand in impossible quantities, and DIES. Sand spilling from his open jaws.

The Mummy steps over him.

VATICAN LIBRARY - CORRIDOR

Tyler, Forster and Jenny stride down a long passage.

FORSTER

What do the legends say about how to fight the dead?

JENNY

The Assyrians were terrified of the dead coming back. They buried the dead with food so they wouldn't get hungry and crawl out of their graves. If they do come back - you fight them with fire.

Tyler pats his pistol with its clip of incendiary rounds.

TYLER

Already worked that out. What else you got?

JENNY

Salt was used for purification. It might help.

TYLER

Now you tell me.

JENNY

And don't look a ghost in the eye. It'll drink the life out of you.

READING ROOM

Tyler leads Forster and Jenny into the reading room - and stops cold. The two ACOLYTES and the EXORCIST lie dead on the floor. Furniture overturned. Corrosion everywhere.

Tyler draws his gun. They cross the hall cautiously.

A WHISPER in the hall. Ancient Akkadian voices, chanting... The policemen cross themselves and mutter prayers.

FORSTER

Tyler...

The DEAD PRIESTS ON THE FLOOR STAND UP: the two Acolytes behind the policemen, the Exorcist behind the Americans. Their eyes rolled back. Their heads at unnatural angles.

Forster retreats before the Dead Exorcist, firing round after round into the undead priest. The Dead Exorcist BLEEDS SAND from every bullethole and keeps coming.

TYLER

Forgive me, Father.

He FIRES two incendiary rounds. THE DEAD EXORCIST IGNITES, A WALKING TORCH. Burning fiercely, he collapses.

Tyler turns. Shoots the Dead Acolytes. They too burn with unnatural ferocity, dropping lifeless to the marble floor.

The Americans stand breathing raggedly. Their eyes meet.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Score one for fire.

SECRET ARCHIVE - ENTRANCE

The Mummy's trail of decay leads to a marble portico. A heavy door stands askew on its hinges, broken open.

JENNY
The Vatican's Secret Archive. Only
a handful of people have seen it.

SECRET ARCHIVE

Tyler, Forster, and Jenny enter the Library's inner sanctum. Walls and pillars of pale stone. From the central chamber, archways lead to RELIQUARIES.

In the center of the chamber, on an ancient marble podium, lies a GRAY-HAIRED PRIEST in an ornate red-trimmed cassock. The Vatican Library's ARCHIVIST. He seems dead. As they draw near HE LIFTS HIS HEAD, moaning.

Tyler's gun snaps up - but Jenny pushes it aside. She rushes to the Archivist, cradling his head.

JENNY
He's alive!

A HORRENDOUS CRASH. A DEMONIC ROAR, too grating and monstrous for a living throat. It's coming from one of the reliquaries.

Tyler and Forster move toward the terrifying sounds.

Forster pulls out his DART PISTOL. Ejects the clip of sleep darts and loads a new clip: darker darts with longer needles.

TYLER
What's that?

FORSTER
Cocktail of synthetic poisons.
Stop any metabolic process known
to science.

BACK AT THE LECTERN

The dying Archivist clutches Jenny's shoulders with desperate strength. His body shakes. His voice a hoarse whisper.

ARCHIVIST
(in Italian, subtitled)
Listen! Listen to me!

JENNY
 (in Italian, subtitled)
I'm here, Father.

RELIQUARY

An antiquarian's treasure house: a stone hall of many shelves filled with ancient books, wooden chests and metal coffers.

Tyler and Forster enter. DEMONIC ROARS AND CRASHES echo.

At their feet lies a PRIEST in trousers and undershirt. Tyler checks his pulse, gun at the ready. The body is lifeless.

The Reliquary is cross-shaped: they turn the corner to see THE MUMMY PILLAGING THE ARCHIVES. Smashing chests and overturning shelves. He wears a BLACK PRIEST'S CASSOCK. Cursing and snarling in furious Akkadian as he searches.

Forster stares at this apparition in stunned horror.

FORSTER
 We should've left it in the ground.

The Mummy turns. Walks toward them across the Reliquary - and locks eyes with Tyler.

MATCH-CUT FLASH: King Ashurbanipal, bearded and armored, on a Babylonian battlefield.

MATCH-CUT FLASH: The Dead King, shaven and bald, in a hellish valley of the Underworld.

MATCH-CUT FLASH: the Mummy in the Reliquary, glaring at him.

ASHURBANIPAL
 (in Akkadian, subtitled)
You!

Tyler FIRES SIX INCENDIARY ROUNDS into the Mummy's chest. But the Mummy doesn't burst into flame like the lesser undead. The flaming bulletholes gutter out and close up.

TYLER
 Ah, hell.

Forster empties his clip of poison darts into the Mummy's body. The Mummy plucks them out and drops them, laughing: a sound like stone grating on stone.

TYLER (CONT'D)
 (aside to Forster)
 Got any salt?

CENTRAL CHAMBER

Jenny cradles the dying Archivist. The life going out of him. They speak Italian, but we hear English:

ARCHIVIST
He must not find it!

JENNY
Find what, Father?

ARCHIVIST
The King's Legacy. He will open the gates of Hell!

RELIQUARY

Tyler and Forster retreat before the advancing Mummy. Too late Tyler sees they've backed into a dead end. Cornered.

Forster pulls a HIGH-TECH DAGGER out of his jacket. ELECTRIC ARCS crackle down the eight-inch blade.

FORSTER
One last card to play.

He charges the Mummy.

TYLER
Forster! No!

He brings his gun up. Sidesteps to clear his line of fire and shoots. *BLAM!* Puts one in the Mummy's forehead.

The shot throws the Mummy off-balance for a precious instant. Forster PLANTS HIS KNIFE IN ITS CHEST with a triumphant roar. Electric arcs sizzle over the Mummy's shuddering body.

The triumph is fleeting. The Mummy seizes Forster by his wrists, forcing him to his knees. The burning bullethole in its forehead closes up. It yanks the dagger from its chest.

FORSTER
(to Tyler, in agony)
Run!

Tyler fires three rounds into the Mummy. His pistol's slide kicks back. Empty clip. The Mummy raises the knife high.

FORSTER (CONT'D)
RUN!

The KNIFE SLAMS DOWN into Forster's chest. ARTIFICIAL LIGHTNING crackles over him. Forster falls dead.

The Mummy looks up at Tyler - and EXERTS HIS POWER. The Reliquary darkens. Decay and corruption spread outward from him. The air fills with whispering voices.

Tyler RUNS.

CENTRAL CHAMBER

The Archivist whispers his last words in Jenny's ear - and falls back, dead. His limp fingers leave a RING OF ANCIENT KEYS in Jenny's hand.

Tyler sprints in, jacking a fresh clip into his gun.

TYLER

Go! Go!

JENNY

Where's Forster?!

TYLER

Dead.

Jenny is shocked silent. He takes her hand and pulls her into motion - frantic but unsure where to go. Darkness approaches from the Reliquary. Ghost voices whispering.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Police have the place surrounded.
We go out, we go to prison.

Jenny holds up the keys. Pulls him away.

JENNY

We're not going out. We're going down.

TYLER

That's what I'm afraid of.

CATACOMB GATE

Jenny pulls Tyler down a long stone staircase into darkness.

TYLER

We're rats in a hole down here.

JENNY

Trust me.

At the bottom, a MASSIVE BRASS GATE decorated with ornate crosses. Jenny fumbles for the key that fits the heavy lock.

JENNY (CONT'D)

The old man was the Head Archivist
of the Vatican Library.

(MORE)

JENNY (CONT'D)

He said "the Dead King's looking for his Legacy." And he told me where to find it.

A SHADOW falls over them. The Mummy stands at the top of the stairs in his black cassock. He descends toward them.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Oh my God. He's real.

TYLER

Go! Go! Go!

Jenny gets the gate open. They leap through. Close it behind them. But THERE'S NO WAY TO LOCK THE GATE FROM THE INSIDE!

Jenny reaches through the bars. Trying to fit the key into the lock. It skids past the keyhole.

JENNY

Please please please!

She locks the gate and yanks her arm back - JUST AS THE MUMMY MAKES A GRAB FOR HER! The Mummy wrenches at the gate - but the massive bars resist his strength.

Jenny's frozen in terror, but her curiosity's stronger still.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(in Akkadian, subtitled)
Are you Ashurbanipal, King of Assyria?

The Mummy glares at her with pure malevolence.

THE MUMMY

(in Akkadian, subtitled)
I am. GIVE ME MY CROWN!

He lunges through the bars at her. Jenny recoils with a shriek. Tyler pulls her away. They run into the darkness.

The Mummy grips the gate. RUST AND CORROSION spread outward from his hands. METAL GROANS. STONE CRUMBLES.

INT. GROTTA

A warren of vaults dug into the stone beneath the Library.

Tyler switches on his tactical light. Every turn in the labyrinth is marked with LATIN WORDS AND ROMAN NUMERALS. Jenny turns left, right, left, reading the signs.

Behind them - a SCREECH OF METAL. A CRASH OF STONE.

TYLER
He's through.

Jenny skids to a stop in front of a vault.

JENNY
This one!

Tyler kicks the old wooden door in.

INT. VAULT

A BRONZE CHEST is bolted to a plinth of stone. Secured by an ancient padlock. On its lid, a stylized FOUR-BARRED CROSS. Jenny touches the engraved symbol.

JENNY
The Djed pillar. Symbol of endurance.

Jenny fumbles with keys. Tyler pushes her aside. SHATTERS THE LOCK WITH A SINGLE GUNSHOT. He wrenches the chest open.

Inside, nested in shaped beds, they find a CROWN and a SEAL. The crown is a simple circlet, set with red stones. The seal, a carved cylinder of bronze the size of a rolling pin.

Beside them, an EMPTY IMPRINT: the chest was also meant to hold a SWORD with a distinctive blade. But the sword is gone.

Jenny PICKS UP THE CROWN.

GROTTO - PASSAGEWAY

Hunting through the darkness for his prey, the Mummy FEELS THE THROB OF POWER as his crown is claimed by another.

He ROARS. For the first time we see him *move in haste*: it's terrifying. He lurches along monstrosly but frighteningly fast - breath rasping in his lungs. Snarling ancient curses.

VAULT

Tyler and Jenny hear him coming. He pulls her into motion.

An inscription on the wall catches her eye.

JENNY
This way!

ANCIENT PORTAL

An old iron door bars their way. Jenny tries a key. No luck. The rage of the Mummy grows louder, closer. Tyler raises his gun, aiming blindly into the darkness behind them.

Jenny finds the right key. The door opens. They dive through.

CATACOMBS

Winding tunnels dug out of raw limestone. Tyler and Jenny run through the labyrinth, taking turns haphazardly.

TYLER

You know where you're going?

JENNY

I'm taking anything that looks like it leads up.

They turn a corner - and the walls of the catacombs are suddenly LINED WITH BONES. Notches in the walls hold skulls and bones in heaps. Longer niches hold moldering coffins.

In places, the walls are PAVED WITH SKULLS. Arches and fanciful decorations all of bone. Several intact SKELETONS have been posed like statues in rotted priest's robes.

Tyler looks around like he's fallen into a nightmare.

TYLER

Are you *kidding me* with this?

Spooked, Jenny takes refuge in scholarship. It's her way.

JENNY

Under pagan Rome, Christianity went underground. They worshipped and buried their dead in the catacombs. There's miles of this.

WHISPERS fill the tunnels around them. Ancient incantations. Tyler's eyes go wide as he sees where this is going.

TYLER

We can't be here.

They run. Tyler in the lead now, tactical light clipped to his pistol. Dragging Jenny between walls lined with coffins.

The whispers grow LOUDER. The catacombs BEGIN TO STIR around them. SCRAPING AND BANGING inside the coffins. The LIDS LIFT AS BONY FINGERS CLAW OUT. Jenny screams in terror.

They run faster. Bony hands reach out of coffins to pluck at their sleeves, erupt from the floor to clutch their ankles.

TYLER (CONT'D)

There!

His light finds a SPIRAL STAIR leading up. Jenny SHRIEKS behind him. He spins: she's trapped, seized by bony hands.

Tyler fires five rapid rounds, severing five skeletal arms with five bullets. Jenny staggers free. In the passageway behind her, WE SEE THE MUMMY LURCHING TOWARD THEM!

SPIRAL STAIR

Tyler drags Jenny up the narrow ancient stairwell. The growl of the Mummy's fury close behind them.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

The stair emerges in a marble mausoleum centuries old. Dim light filters in from outside through small metal gratings. On the side walls, moldering coffins are stacked three deep.

Tyler throws his shoulder against the massive bronze door, straining. The hinges groan. It doesn't budge.

WHISPERS echo below. Black creepers of rot climb the walls. The coffins rattle and rock. The Mummy is coming.

JENNY

Oh, God!

She throws herself against the door. They strain together.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

An ancient graveyard on the banks of the Tiber: marble monuments pale in the moonlight.

A mausoleum's door grinds open. Tyler and Jenny squeeze out and heave the door closed behind them.

A marble ANGEL STATUE stands before the mausoleum. Tyler throws himself against it. Walks his feet up the mausoleum opposite, straining with all his strength.

The angel topples against the mausoleum door.

Just in time. A split second later, the bronze door BOOMS as some powerful force drives against it. The Mummy's voice RAGES inside the mausoleum: thundering Assyrian curses.

TYLER

Go. Go!

They flee through the tombstones. Behind them, the mausoleum RESOUNDS with heavy blows. The door BENDS. The walls CRACK.

RIVER BRIDGE

Tyler and Jenny emerge from the cemetery onto a STONE BRIDGE over the river. They start across, breathing hard.

On the river below, a PARTY BARGE floats by - café tables and a little dance floor, dance music pumping.

TYLER

Come on!

He times the moment. JUMPS OFF THE BRIDGE!

PARTY BARGE

Tyler lands on the tail of the barge. This seems to be lovers' lane: he startles several couples out of amorous clinches. Tyler looks up. Spreads his arms.

RIVER BRIDGE

Jenny hesitates on the parapet, losing her nerve. Tyler walks aft on the barge below: he's running out of boat.

An ECHOING CRASH OF STONE from the cemetery. Jenny jumps.

PARTY BARGE

Teetering on the tail of the barge, Tyler catches Jenny and swings her to safety. The lovers stare at them in amazement.

Jenny looks back. A DARK FIGURE stands on the bridge, watching them as a bend in the river sweeps them out of view.

PARTY BARGE - DANCE FLOOR

Tyler and Jenny press through a packed dance floor. Spirits are high. A woman in a white gown whirls past. Tyler and Jenny realize they've crashed a wedding reception.

PARTY BARGE - THE BOW

Jenny and Tyler sit at a café table. Tyler snags a BOTTLE OF WINE and a couple of glasses from a neighboring table. Pours. They gulp wine, catching their breath. Watching Rome slide by in the balmy night. A moment of surreal safety.

Jenny swings her shoulder bag into her lap. Pulls out the BRONZE CYLINDER from the Vatican's crypt.

TYLER

What is that?

JENNY

A cylinder seal. Let's see what it has to tell us.

She clears space on the white paper tablecloth. POURS WINE OVER THE BRONZE SEAL. Rolls it on the tabletop. It PRINTS A PAGE OF BLOOD-RED CUNEIFORM on the white paper.

Jenny studies the text - her eyes widening as she reads.

TYLER

What is it?

JENNY

A warning twenty-five centuries old.
"We are the Rebel Temple. We stand
watch lest the Dead King rise."

TYLER

The Dead King.

JENNY

"Ashurbanipal, Lord of Massacres,
Conqueror of Egypt and Babylon."

(she reads for a moment)

It says he captured priests in Egypt.
Learned their magic. "He resolved to
descend to the Underworld, steal the
power of the gods, and rise again as
God-king over all the world."

(shaken)

That's what the Archivist said. He
would open the gates of Hell.

They exchange grim looks.

TYLER

Anything about how to stop that
from happening?

JENNY

In fact, yes. "He lies in a secret
tomb sealed by mighty spells. Its
walls must not be broken." Whoops.

(perplexed by this:)

"He is cased in a coffin that thirsts
for blood. It must not drink."

Tyler turns his hand over to look at his scarred palm.

TYLER

(tightly)

What else?

JENNY

"If the Dead King rises, he will
seek his crown and his sword. For
in these relics he has invested
the greater part of his power."

The crown and sword are pictured: Jenny pulls the bronze
circular from her bag and lays it on the paper: it matches.

JENNY (CONT'D)

"The crown, upon the Dead King's brow, will magnify his dominion over the living and the dead, the earth and the sky. The crown must be denied him."

TYLER

Check.

JENNY

"The sword, in the Dead King's hand, will shatter armies and strongholds."

TYLER

The sword must be denied him.

JENNY

Right. "When his power is made whole, he will go to his Necropolis and open the Underworld Gate. Loosing the host of hell into the Upper World."

She and Tyler exchange grim looks.

JENNY (CONT'D)

There's more I can't read. I'll have to make a better print. But Tyler. This sword...

She's staring at the drawing on the scroll. The distinctive half-swept blade and guard. She looks up, eyes wide.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I know where this sword is.

INT. LORENZO'S CASTLE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A bedroom worthy of the Medici court. Lorenzo lies in bed in his dressing gown, reading the Marquis DeSade. Two stunning girls in lingerie on either side of him.

His phone rings. His eyebrows rise as he sees who's calling. He answers, purring - shooing the girls out of bed.

LORENZO

Jenny Halsey. I knew you'd call.

EXT. ROME - PARTY BARGE - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

Jenny talks on the phone, a finger in her other ear.

JENNY

I've come into an artifact I think you'd appreciate.

LORENZO (V.O.)
You were never in the selling game.

JENNY
I am tonight.

Tyler looks around warily as Jenny talks. He sees a black SUV full of *carabinieri*, Rome's paramilitary police force, roll past on the riverbank. He turns his back to them.

JENNY (CONT'D)
It has to be soon. There's some heavy players in the market for this piece. Can you pick me up?

LORENZO (V.O.)
What, now? Where are you?

JENNY
Rome.

Tyler fidgets with his hands: his scar is burning. He hears the CAWING OF RAVENS. Looks around.

LORENZO (V.O.)
Ah! So terrible, the plane crash!
Let me take you away from all that.
One hour. The usual place.

Tyler gasps. Ahead of the riverboat, a bridge BLANKETED WITH RAVENS. As he watches, THE MUMMY STEPS UP ONTO THE BALUSTRADE - waiting for the current to bring the boat to him.

Tyler vaults onto the boat's topdeck. Shoves the pilot aside and WRENCHES THE WHEEL. The riverboat heels over and CRUNCHES into the bank. The whole boat staggers and screams.

Tyler leaps onto the bank. Holds out his hands.

TYLER
Jenny! Come on!

Belatedly seeing the danger, she runs to the rail - as the pilot rights the boat. She leaps the widening gap between the boat and the bank - and Tyler hauls her in. They run.

EXT. BACK ALLEYS - TRACKING SHOT - NIGHT

Hand in hand, Tyler and Jenny flee through a maze of streets.

They duck down a narrow lane - but the shadows darken ahead of them: GHOST WHISPERS echo. They dive around a corner.

Dead ahead, a black SUV disgorges *carabinieri* with submachine guns. Tyler and Jenny fade back into the shadows. They sprint down a side street. Duck into an alley.

A DARK MAN in a suit steps out of the shadows like a ghost and SEIZES JENNY FROM BEHIND - a DAGGER at her throat. With his other hand he aims a gun over Jenny's shoulder at Tyler.

Tyler pulls his own gun. A standoff.

TYLER

Let her go or I'll kill you.

DARK MAN

Give me what you have stolen.

JENNY

We haven't stolen anything...

DARK MAN

You lie. You're meddling in matters beyond your understanding.

TYLER

Tell me about it. Drop the gun.

His muscles are gathering for sudden action.

DARK MAN

I'll kill you both before I let you keep the Dead King's crown.

His finger tightens on the trigger. Tyler takes aim.

TYLER

Pull that trigger and we'll have the police and worse on our backs.

JENNY

Wait. I'll let you have it.

She reaches into her bag. Pulls out the crown - and HOOKS IT BEHIND THE KNIFE AT HER THROAT, protecting her neck.

Tyler rushes in. Kicks the gun out of the Dark Man's grip. The Dark Man releases Jenny. Comes at Tyler with the knife.

Tyler deflects the slashing attack with his pistol. Ducks another wicked cut. Gets inside and BREAKS THE DARK MAN'S NOSE with a brutal punch. The Dark Man drops, out cold.

Tyler takes his knife. Jenny grabs the fallen gun. They run.

EXT. MARINA - HELIPORT - DAYBREAK

A lavish marina where the Tiber River flows into the sea. Tyler and Jenny wait nervously at a HELIPORT at the water's edge. The look around: the marina is empty, the coast clear. A distant helicopter draws closer: their ride.

Tyler pulls out the dagger he got from the Dark Man. Inspects it in the sunlight: bronze hilt, engraved blade of Damascus steel. Jenny takes it carefully from his hands.

JENNY

This dagger's a thousand years old.

Carved into the pommel: a FOUR-BARRED CROSS. Jenny pulls the cylinder seal from her bag. It's marked with the same cross.

JENNY (CONT'D)

The same symbol. Who was he? He knew about the Dead King. And the crown.

TYLER

Let's get to the sword. Before someone else does.

A THUNDER OF ROTORS as Lorenzo's helicopter comes in to land.

AT THE WATER'S EDGE

A drainage tunnel opens on the waterway. THE MUMMY LOOMS OUT OF THE DARK. Clammers up the bank to the Marina.

INT. HELICOPTER (ON THE HELIPAD)

The pilot, Marco, frowns over his shoulder as Tyler gets in.

MARCO

Mr. Montanari said one.

JENNY

Turns out, two.

Marco shrugs and nods. Jenny and Tyler settle in - oblivious to THE DARK FIGURE LURCHING CLOSER outside the windows.

EXT. HELIPORT - CONTINUOUS

The helicopter lifts with a smooth surge of power. The MUMMY HURLS ITSELF OFF THE GROUND AND GRABS THE LANDING SKID!

INT. HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

The helicopter swings under the added weight.

MARCO

Che cavolo?!

He wrestles with the controls as they climb over the water.

Jenny SCREAMS as her door is wrenched open. The MUMMY reaches inside. CLAWS AT THE BAG on her shoulder. It drags Jenny halfway out the door: a terrifying view of the water far below. The gun falls out of her bag into the sea.

Tyler lunges across Jenny. PLANTS THE ANCIENT DAGGER IN THE MUMMY'S SHOULDER. The Mummy SHRIEKS, a hideous sound, and falls away, crashing into the sea below with a huge splash.

Jenny pulls her door shut as Marco gets the helicopter leveled out. He looks back at them in shock.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Who was that?

TYLER

We thought he was with you.

UNDER THE SEA

The Mummy sinks to the bottom, snarled in its black cassock. It pulls the dagger from its shoulder and lets it fall.

Close by, a HEAVY ANCHOR lies embedded in the sea floor. The Mummy claws its way to the anchor chain. Climbs. Breaking the surface, it looks up to see a rusty CARGO SHIP. Crewmen toiling on the deck.

EXT. GREEK COASTLINE - DAY

Atop rugged cliffs, quaint white villages overlook a cobalt sea. Lorenzo's helicopter soars over this sun-drenched vista.

INT. HELICOPTER (IN FLIGHT)

Jenny takes off her headset. Signals Tyler to do likewise. They talk over the engine noise, out of Marco's hearing.

JENNY

When we get to Lorenzo's - follow my lead. I'm on thin ice with the guy already. He's dangerous.

TYLER

Dangerous how?

JENNY

He's got a mountain of money, an army of bodyguards, and some very shady friends out of Sicily and Corsica.

TYLER

What's he to you? Boyfriend?

JENNY

Client.

TYLER

Forster said you worked the black market. I thought he was lying.

JENNY

(exploding in exasperation)
I do NOT! I authenticate and
restore antiquities for private
buyers. I do good work!

TYLER

For bad people.

JENNY

I document relics that would
otherwise vanish from the
historical record!

TYLER

For a big fat fee.

In a huff, Jenny puts her headset back on, cutting off the conversation. Tyler grins to have gotten under her skin.

EXT - LORENZO'S ISLAND - TERRACE

Impeccably dressed, Lorenzo Montanari watches the helicopter touches down. BODYGUARDS flank him. He smiles as Jenny steps out. Then Tyler gets out. A shadow crosses his face.

Jenny comes to him. They trade kisses on the cheek.

LORENZO

You brought a *man* with you. How
unfortunate.

JENNY

Tyler Colt. He's a colleague.

LORENZO

Is he. What are you *wearing*?

They're still in the clothes they wore in the tomb.

JENNY

It's a long story. Which you kind
of need to hear.

LORENZO

I love stories. Tomas! Find them
something to wear.

JENNY

Lorenzo. This is urgent.

LORENZO

So is breakfast. And no one sits at
my table dressed like that.

HALLWAY

Tyler and Jenny follow Lorenzo's butler, Tomas, through the castle. They converse in undertones.

TYLER
So what's the plan?

JENNY
We try to make a deal for the sword.

TYLER
And if he won't deal?

JENNY
We try the truth.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

A dazzling sun room. Panoramic views of the Mediterranean. Lorenzo stands waiting. Bodyguards against the walls.

Tomas brings Tyler and Jenny in: transformed. Tyler wears a linen shirt and jacket. Jenny, a clingy sun dress. They both look ravishing - and it's not lost on either one of them.

The table is laid with a breakfast suitable for royalty. Dish after dish. Eggs, roasted meats, fruit, pastries. Flowers.

TYLER
Special occasion?

LORENZO
Breakfast is always a special occasion. I love breakfast.

They sit. Jenny and Tyler realize how long it's been since they ate. They dig in. Servers pour coffee, juice, champagne.

As they eat, a man with a face like a hatchet blade enters behind them. VITTORIO. He looks Tyler and Jenny over. Catches Lorenzo's eye: nods at Tyler and PANTOMIMES A GUN HIDDEN UNDER THE JACKET. Lorenzo nods minimally. Vittorio sits down.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
Vittorio, my head of security.
You know Dr. Halsey. This is Tyler
Colt. Her *colleague*.

Vittorio makes no move to eat or drink. His voice is icy.

VITTORIO
Are you also an archaeologist?

Tyler hesitates, his mouth full.

JENNY

He is.

Tyler blinks. *I am?* Lorenzo smiles, enjoying this game. He sees a bloody steak and eggs to ribbons as he talks.

LORENZO

I'm fascinated by the ancient world. Jenny could tell you. The blend of civilization and savagery. Babylon. Assyria. They didn't *defeat* enemies. They *annihilated* them. Razed cities to the ground. Poisoned the wells. Salted the earth. Defeat was a *holocaust*. My question to you, Mr. Colt: how was it possible? The Assyrians were human. How could they perpetrate such atrocities?

Jenny leans in to cover for him. But Tyler washes his food down with a slug of champagne and gets there first.

TYLER

The king. He was first into battle. Rode off the field red with blood. When he took prisoners, the king did the torture and the execution with his own hands. Once the king did evil, the people followed.

LORENZO

(surprised and impressed)
Pleasure to meet a fellow scholar.

Jenny seizes the opportunity to get them back on mission:

JENNY

Perhaps you'd show him your collection.

LIBRARY

Lorenzo walks Jenny and Tyler through his private museum. Vittorio trails them, making Tyler nervous.

LORENZO

Scythian spear...Elamite helmet... that sword is Assyrian. Probably worn by a king or prince. Look at the workmanship!

Jenny elbows Tyler subtly, nodding at the sword. *That's it!* Tyler takes it in: a bronze-hilted sword. The steel blade is straight near the hilt, then curves to a swept point. It hangs in a thick glass case.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
 Folded like Damascus steel, centuries
 before its time. But to business! You
 have a story for me, no?

They gather around a table. Jenny pulls the CYLINDER SEAL out of her bag. Lorenzo inspects it reverently.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
 Where did you get *this*?

MINUTES LATER

Lorenzo rolls the cylinder seal across a slab of soft clay. It prints its message with a sculptural beauty only hinted at in Jenny's paper version. He reads the text intently.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
 Incredible! Assyrian myths fixate
 on the Underworld. Ishtar descended
 and came back. And Gilgamesh. But
 to claim a *king of Assyria* would
 rise from the dead!

He bends over to read the bottom of the print - the section that was too indistinct to read in Jenny's version.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
 "Should the Dead King rise, seek
 the Rebel Temple in Byzantium, and
 they will rise against him."
 (in wonder)
 The Rebel Temple. Could it be the
 same one, after two thousand years?

JENNY
 You've heard of it?!

Amazed by this revelation, Jenny and Tyler don't notice Lorenzo's BODYGUARDS moving into the room behind them.

LORENZO
 Shadowy group in Istanbul. Supposed
 to be holy warriors like the Knights
 Templar, but older. Very secretive,
 very rich. They buy up the best
 relics. Mystical artifacts. You
 think you're the high bidder, then
 BOOM, the Rebel Temple swoops in. If
 you played the black market, you'd
 know the name.

His tone hardens as he turns on Jenny. TYLER CLOCKS THE MEN AROUND THEM. He comes to high alert: something's up.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

But you do play the market, don't
you? Selling stolen goods - like
the Eye of Alexander!

He grabs Jenny by the throat.

Tyler goes for his gun. Vittorio grabs his arm from behind.
With his other hand, Tyler snatches the CYLINDER SEAL off the
table. BRAINS VITTORIO. Spins and BASHES LORENZO IN THE FACE.

Lorenzo staggers back. Tyler brings his gun up - and freezes.
He STANDS IN A RING OF GUNMEN, pistols aimed at his head.

Lorenzo steps back to Tyler, a red weal of CUNEIFORM printed
across his cheek. He takes the gun from Tyler's hand.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Not in my house.

He belts Tyler in the head with the gun. Tyler goes down.

LIBRARY - LATER

Tyler sits handcuffed to a chair, a welt on his cheekbone.
An IRON BREASTPLATE has been cinched to him: heavy chains
encircling his ribcage. A handwheel juts from the front.

Jenny sits in another chair, unbound but helpless. Lorenzo
looms in her face. Brandishes the Eye of Alexander.

LORENZO

The Eye. Designed by Aristotle for
Alexander the Great!

He hurls it to the floor, glass gems shattering.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Fake! I spent *years* tracking it
down. I paid *millions*. And you took
it from me! Planted this *forgery* in
my collection. Didn't you?!

He SAVAGELY TWISTS THE HANDWHEEL ON TYLER'S BREASTPLATE. The
chains ratchet tighter, digging cruelly into his flesh and
forcing a pained wheeze out of Tyler's lungs.

JENNY

Yes! I took it!

Lorenzo smiles at Tyler.

LORENZO

The *Traitor's Waistcoat*. Used by
Torquemada himself, torturing
heretics in Seville. Unique piece.

(MORE)

LORENZO (CONT'D)

See if you can keep breathing long enough for your ribcage to let go.

He turns his glare on Jenny.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

I don't know what price you got for the Eye, but I'll get it all back. In dollars -
 (eyeing her lewdly)
 - or some other currency. *No one takes what's mine!*

JENNY

It was stolen! I took it *back*. It's safe in the Jordan Museum!

Lorenzo looms over Jenny.

LORENZO

I doubt that. I have sources in Rome. I've heard about you and Mr. Colt. You plundered a tomb in Iraq. Robbed *the Vatican!* Left a trail of bodies across Rome. You're the most wanted criminals in Europe!

He runs a fingertip down her throat.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Which means I can do whatever I like with you.

Tyler's voice is a strangled whisper:

TYLER

Lorenzo, I swear to God...

Lorenzo spins and CRANKS the handwheel hard, silencing him.

JENNY

Please don't turn it any more.

LORENZO

I thought you were an innocent abroad. I was taking my time with you! And all the while, you were deep in the game.

He reaches into Jenny's bag. Pulls out Ashurbanipal's crown.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

This is from that Iraqi tomb, isn't it? Where's the rest?

Tyler begins to LAUGH - a painfully thin, airless sound. Lorenzo stares at him in astonished fury.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
What's funny, Mr. Colt?

TYLER
(a hoarse whisper)
He's here.

We follow the line of his gaze out the window over the ocean. A DARK, UNNATURAL STORM bears down on the island. RAVENS WHEEL above a CARGO SHIP cutting through the turbulent sea.

EXT. CARGO SHIP - DAY

We fly across a deck littered with dead crewmen. Drained of blood and contorted in postures of horror, eyes staring.

On the bridge the PILOT stands at the helm, stiff as a zombie, eyes rolled back. Muttering in ancient Akkadian.

At the bow of the ship stands a broad-shouldered figure.

It is the Mummy - TRANSFORMED. He has drunk the lives of dozens. He still wears his tattered priest's cassock. His skin still black as night and ravaged by fine wrinkles.

But his body is FLESHED OUT and POWERFUL, muscular shoulders straining the cassock's seams. His face no longer lipless and skeletal, but the IMPERIOUS VISAGE OF A RISEN KING - staring through the wind at his destination.

INT. LORENZO'S CASTLE - LIBRARY

Lorenzo scowls at the inbound ship.

LORENZO
Who the hell is that?

JENNY
Lorenzo. The story on the Seal is true. Ashurbanipal has risen. You're holding his crown. His sword hangs in your library. He's coming for them.

Lorenzo stares at her, confounded. He's not buying it, but the urgency in her voice is real. There has to be an angle.

LORENZO
I don't know who's on that ship, but I own this island and every soul on it. No one lands without my word.

He hands his pistol to Marco, the young pilot.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Marco. Watch them. Vittorio. With me.

He strides out - Vittorio and the other guards on his heels. Marco, holding a gun on Tyler and Jenny, glances nervously out the window at the approaching ship. He cocks the gun.

GREAT HALL

The grand entryway of the castle. With swift efficiency, Vittorio hands out automatic rifles to the guards.

Lorenzo takes a rifle. Realizes he's still holding the crown. He perches the crown on a marble bust of Socrates.

LORENZO

Sound the bell!

EXT. LORENZO'S ISLAND - MONTAGE

Ominous clouds gather above the island. A BELL TOLLS in the castle. A signal: *danger from the sea.*

VILLAGERS RUSH OUT of houses with rifles and shotguns. They stand post in the streets. Gather at the harbor.

EXT. CASTLE BATTLEMENTS

From atop the walls, Lorenzo watches the villagers muster in the island's defense. Beside him, Vittorio and his guards. Lorenzo frowns at the incoming ship. It's not slowing down.

EXT. CARGO SHIP - BOW

With the jagged pipe in his left wrist, the Mummy SLASHES HIS RIGHT PALM. Dark BLOOD wells forth. He extends his hand and CLENCHES HIS FIST. Blood spatters into the sea.

EXT. LORENZO'S ISLAND

Above the castle, THE STORMCLOUDS TAKE ON THE FORM OF A VAST DARK HAND. THE FIST CLOSES. A RAIN OF BLOOD BEGINS TO FALL!

Red droplets streak the whitewashed walls. The horrified faces of the villagers. A great WAIL OF TERROR goes up. The islanders break and run in superstitious dread. Vanishing into their houses. Barring doors and shuttering windows.

In a stroke, Lorenzo's defenses are undone.

The rain swells to a downpour, painting the village crimson. Red torrents run down the streets to the sea.

CASTLE BATTLEMENTS

Lorenzo stares in shock, heedless of the unnatural rain that drenches him. Vittorio and the guards flee into the castle.

HARBOR

The cargo ship comes in at full speed - SMASHING the little fishing fleet at anchor and CRUSHING the wooden docks.

The Mummy LEAPS FROM THE BOW onto the buckled timbers. Walks past Lorenzo's yacht, the *Libertine*, now drenched with blood.

INT. LORENZO'S CASTLE - LIBRARY

Marco stands at the window, gawking at the events outside. His gun hand falls to his side.

Tyler catches Jenny's eye. Nods at Marco and mouths: *NOW!* She stares at him. Mouths back: *NO!* Tyler nods. Mouths: *NOW!*

Jenny goes for it. Tackling Marco against the window and clutching the gun. Marco swings her around like a terrier.

Tyler rises. The chair on his back, the breastplate still crushing his ribs. He charges into the fray. They all go down - Tyler on his face with a grunt of pain. The gun spins away.

EXT. VILLAGE STREET

The Mummy walks up toward the castle through the rain of blood. A dark cloaked figure. Unchallenged and unopposed.

INT. LORENZO'S CASTLE - LIBRARY

Jenny and Marco grapple on the floor for the gun.

Tyler struggles back to his feet, chair still shackled to his back. Waddles over to Marco and kicks him into submission. Sits the chair down with its foot-rail across Marco's throat.

Jenny gets up holding Marco's gun. She rushes to Tyler. Pulls the LATCH on the Traitor's Waistcoat. The breastplate falls away - leaving dotted lines of blood on his white shirt where the links have broken the skin. Tyler gasps in relief.

TYLER

Thank you.

But he's still handcuffed to the chair. Jenny goes around behind him. Points the gun at Tyler's wrists. Marco, trapped under the chair, finds himself staring up the gunbarrel.

JENNY

I could shoot the chain...

Lorenzo turns like a puppet: the crown sits on the bust of Socrates, a few paces away. He fetches the Crown. The Mummy takes it solemnly: PLACES IT ON HIS HEAD.

VAST POWER SURGES INTO HIM. The wind of it ripping at his cassock. When the transfer is complete his EYES HAVE CHANGED. No longer a hard glittering black: they have gray whites and inky irises. Not quite human - but no longer altogether dead.

He is more than the Mummy now. He is ASHURBANIPAL, Lord of Massacres, King of Assyria, risen again.

A distant GUNSHOT rings out, turning Ashurbanipal's head. Two shots. Three. He walks toward the sound. Lorenzo follows.

LIBRARY

Tyler stands before Ashurbanipal's sword, Marco's gun in his hand. Three bulletholes in the thick glass. He kicks through the case. Grabs the sword.

WHISPERING VOICES. Tyler and Jenny look at each other.

TYLER

We gotta go.

EXT. LORENZO'S CASTLE - TERRACE

The helicopter sits where they left it, windows streaked with blood. The rain has stopped, but the sky is heavy with cloud.

INT. HELICOPTER

Tyler sits in the pilot's seat. Jenny climbs in beside him.

JENNY

You're a pilot?

TYLER

Uh, sometimes on missions they let me sit second seat on the way home.

JENNY

Oh. My God.

Tyler studies the instrument panel. Gets the engine started. Gets the rotor turning. Throttles up. The helicopter lifts unsteadily. Spins once and drops hard to the deck.

Jenny watches the castle anxiously.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Why are we not flying?

TYLER

Give me a minute! This is...*fancy*.

He tries again. The helicopter lifts.

EXT. LORENZO'S CASTLE - TERRACE

Barely airborne, the helicopter slides over the cliff's edge and drops out of sight. Moments later it reappears in controlled flight, escaping over the sea.

Ashurbanipal slams out onto the terrace. Strides to the railing, watching the helicopter dwindling in the distance.

Lorenzo stops behind him - terrified but unable to disobey.

LORENZO

They have your sword.

INT. HELICOPTER (IN FLIGHT) - DAY

The helicopter reaches cruising speed, high over the waves. The castle far behind them. Tyler and Jenny breathe easier.

She turns the cylinder seal in her hands. Staring at the four-barred cross stamped on each end.

JENNY

The Rebel Temple still exists. And this is their symbol. That means the man in Rome was one of them.

TYLER

Why would he try to kill us?

JENNY

We dug up the Dead King. Set him free. From their point of view we're the bad guys. We have to find them. Convince them we're on the same side. They're the only ones who can help.

EXT. LORENZO'S CASTLE - TERRACE

Ashurbanipal stares at the horizon - brow furrowed under his crown. A RUMBLE as he gathers power. He raises his hands, clawing at the air - and SLAMS A FIST DOWN ON THE MARBLE BANNISTER! The marble CRACKS under his hand.

On the horizon, LIGHTNING STRIKES - the branching bolt like a SKELETAL HAND CLAWING OUT OF THE STORM.

Ashurbanipal's fist falls again. And again. With every blow, THE HEAVENS TEAR OPEN far away. Distant thunder rolls.

INT. HELICOPTER (IN FLIGHT) - DAY

Tyler flies east along the Greek coastline - toward Turkey and Istanbul.

A BLINDING LIGHTNING STRIKE right in front of them. So close the thunder is simultaneous. Jenny SCREAMS!

Another bolt. Closer still.

Tyler DIVES toward the sea, bleeding off altitude and seeking safety. He levels off forty feet above the waves, just offshore. The bolts come faster and faster. He veers wildly.

KA-TOW! The chopper is struck!

The instruments burn out. The motor dies. Auto-rotating, the helicopter plunges into the sea.

EXT. LORENZO'S CASTLE - TERRACE

Ashurbanipal turns away from the railing, satisfied. For the first time he notices the LINE OF CUNEIFORM printed on Lorenzo's cheek where Tyler hit him with the cylinder seal. He reaches out and turns Lorenzo's chin. Reading.

ASHURBANIPAL
(in Akkadian, subtitled)
Seek the Rebel Temple in Byzantium.

Ashurbanipal smiles.

EXT. GREEK COASTLINE - OFFSHORE

Tyler breaks the surface beside Jenny, gasping for air. He holds up the sword. They swim for the beach.

EXT. GREEK COASTAL HIGHWAY

Jenny stands on the shoulder, going through her bag. Dead tablet computer. Sodden notebook.

Tyler stands with Ashurbanipal's sword wrapped in his jacket. Hitchhiking in his bloodied shirt. Jenny sees what poor luck he's having. She hikes up her skirt. Sticks out her thumb.

A FREIGHT TRUCK squeals to a stop beside them.

INT. FREIGHT TRUCK (IN MOTION) - DAY

In the back of the truck, Tyler and Jenny lean on sacks of rice, exhausted. The highway hums under the tires. She gently prods his abused ribcage. He winces.

JENNY
No broken ribs.

TYLER
(grinning wearily)
That was nothing. I've had worse.

She laughs, falling back against the rice sacks.

JENNY

Very upbeat for someone so beat up.

TYLER

I've been lost for a long time.
I guess being on the run with you
feels better than being lost.

Without intending to he's just said exactly the right thing.
Jenny turns into him, emotion in her eyes.

Tyler starts to snore. Jenny laughs. Tucks herself under his
arm. Closes her eyes.

UNDERWORLD - SEA OF FIRE

A vast ocean of fire under a smoky blood-red sky. Black
islands and pinnacles of stone rise from the flaming sea.

The Dead King is crossing the flames. Leaping precariously
from spire to spire. In the distance, his goal: a luminous
WHITE PALACE on a craggy peak above the fire.

Below him, the sea of fire tosses and heaves like liquid. It
recedes suddenly, revealing the sea floor - a solid mass of
pale bodies writhing and howling for mercy - then rises like
a wave, washing up the rocky spire to engulf the Dead King -

INT. FREIGHT TRUCK (IN MOTION)

Tyler slams awake, gasping. Reflexively Jenny throws her arms
around him, calming him. She studies him as he gets a grip.

JENNY

Tell me about the nightmares.

TYLER

I see the Dead King. I am the Dead
King. And I'm in Hell.

JENNY

Keep talking.

INT. LORENZO'S CASTLE - BEDROOM

Ashurbanipal stands at a mirror. Drops his cassock. Studies
his powerful body. His withered skin. Lorenzo beside him.

Like a man trimming his fingernails, Ashurbanipal begins to
PULL THE BROKEN BRONZE TUBES FROM HIS FLESH. He hands them to
a horrified Lorenzo as he talks. He speaks in Akkadian:
spellbound, Lorenzo understands him. We hear English.

ASHURBANIPAL

Twenty-five centuries in Hell. I saw the Upper World through the nightmares of the living. Empires rising and falling. Machines crawling over the land. Flying in the sky. The curse of Babylon eating up the world.

LORENZO

Babylon fell two thousand years ago.

ASHURBANIPAL

It has fallen many times. It always rises again.

He waves at the world around them. Loathing in his voice.

ASHURBANIPAL (CONT'D)

This is all *Babylon*.

INT. FREIGHT TRUCK (IN MOTION)

Jenny and Tyler sit facing one another. She's looking over notes she's made in her damp notebook.

JENNY

The places in your nightmares: I've read about them. They're landmarks in the Underworld. The Valley of the Blind. The Black Tower. The Endless Stair. The Sea of Fire.

TYLER

Seriously.

JENNY

And across the Sea of Fire - the Eternal Palace.

TYLER

That's where he's trying to go. Centuries and centuries, trying to get there. What's in there?

JENNY

The Lord of the Underworld. That's where he lives.

EXT. ISTANBUL - DAY

The truck enters Istanbul. We rise away from it - flying over the Hagia Sofia. The Blue Mosque. The Topkapi Palace. The jewels of a city that has stood nearly three thousand years, called Byzantium...then Constantinople...now Istanbul.

SUPER: ISTANBUL

EXT. ISTANBUL STREET - DAY

The city's business quarter. Gleaming towers on wide avenues. Tyler and Jenny walk up. He carries the sword wrapped in his coat. She has her bag slung over her shoulder.

JENNY

This is the fine-arts district. Every major auction house and antiques broker is here. If the Rebel Temple's as active as Lorenzo said, someone here will know how to reach them. I say we go door to door until we...

Tyler taps her on the shoulder. Points across the street.

High up on a gleaming office tower: a CORPORATE LOGO IN THE SHAPE OF A FOUR-BARRED CROSS. The Djed pillar.

EXT. REBEL TEMPLE - ENTRANCE

On a sign beside the door, Tyler and Jenny see the Djed pillar repeated beside a phrase in Turkish calligraphy.

JENNY

Isyankar Tapinak. Rebel Temple!

Tyler tries the glass doors: locked. The marble lobby inside is deserted. He presses a button on the door panel. The VIDEO SCREEN on the panel lights up. A bored-looking young man in a suit looks back at them. His name is DAYAN.

DAYAN

Isyankar Tapinak.

JENNY

(in Turkish, subtitled)
We need your help.

DAYAN

(in Turkish, subtitled)
Sorry. Visitors by appointment only.

Tyler leans close and speaks to the camera.

TYLER

The Dead King has risen. He already has his crown. WE have his sword.

He holds the sword up to the camera. Dayan stares like he's seen a ghost. The screen goes dark.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Hopefully we'll get a few words in before they kill us.

DOORS BURST OPEN at the back of the lobby. A phalanx of grim dark-suited men stride toward the front doors. One of them is the Dark Man from Rome: a bandage across his broken nose.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Maybe not.

The leader, MALIK, 35 - slim, dapper, and handsome - wrenches the door open angrily. Tyler holds up a soothing hand.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Easy. We're friends.

Malik takes a hissing breath. Seizes Tyler's wrist, staring at the scar on his palm. He has an Oxford accent: this is the Mysterious Man we saw on the phone at the top of the film.

MALIK

Blood of the Chosen!

INT. REBEL TEMPLE - GRAND HALL

Malik walks Tyler and Jenny into a stunning marble hall with elegant lighting. Priceless relics on display in glass cases.

Two dozen BROTHERS OF THE REBEL TEMPLE surround them. They wear bespoke suits with exquisitely patterned ties. Manicured hands. Immaculate haircuts. It looks more like a boutique investment bank than a mystical order.

TYLER

(aside to Jenny)

Not what I expected.

She shakes her head, looking around. *Me neither.*

Malik turns to them, righteous and stern.

MALIK

Your names.

TYLER

Tyler Colt. This is Jennifer Halsey.

MALIK

The archaeologist. Your monograph on Scythian magic was very good.

JENNY

(astonished)

Thank you.

She looks around in wonder at the antiquities on display.

JENNY (CONT'D)

You have pieces here I've spent years searching for. Nefertiti's Scepter. The Chalice of Antioch.

MALIK

Why have you come here?

JENNY

Because of this.

She reaches into her bag.

Quick as cats, the Temple Brothers whip WEAPONS from under their coats. Tyler and Jenny find themselves the center of a quivering ring of knives, swords, and pistols.

Verrrry slowly she pulls out the cylinder seal.

JENNY (CONT'D)

The Vatican Archivist gave us this. Your message. We hoped you'd help.

MALIK

You raised the Dead King.

TYLER

He raised himself. We're trying to put him back in the ground.

Malik takes their measure with his eyes. He believes them.

MALIK

I am Malik. Leader of the Temple. These are my brothers. The sword:

He holds out a hand imperiously. Tyler gives him the blade.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Belbasa. See to it.

BELBASA, 70, steps forward: gray-haired but hale, a keen glint of intelligence in his kindly eyes.

BELBASA

At once.

He carries the sword away.

MALIK

Where is the Dead King now?

TYLER

This morning...an island off the Greek coast. But he'll be coming.

MALIK

Yes. He will follow the sword. It calls him. But don't be afraid. Our defenses are strong.

JENNY

What is this place? The Rebel Temple. Who are you?

INT. REBEL TEMPLE - HALL OF REMEMBRANCE - DAY

Malik leads Tyler and Jenny to an exhibit hall. Stone tablets and bas-relief sculptures tell the Rebel Temple's story.

MALIK

Our forefathers were Egyptian priests. When Ashurbanipal invaded Egypt, he enslaved them and took them back to Assyria.

Sweat rises on Tyler's brow as he listens. Somehow he knows this story. He has FLASHES OF A WAKING DREAM as Malik talks:

PRIESTS cross the desert in chains, driven by ASSYRIAN WARRIORS with whips and spears.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Ashurbanipal was obsessed with the Underworld. He made the priests teach him all they knew. How to defend himself from demons. Steal power from the gods. They knew it was wrong - but they were slaves. And the price of defiance was too hideous to bear.

In a cavern, chained priests writhe and howl under torture.

MALIK (CONT'D)

For years they toiled in bondage, building a great Necropolis. And inside the Necropolis, a portal. A mystic engine that would open the gates of the Underworld.

Tyler sees it. *In a vast stone hall, a mandala of gold cut into the floor. Intricate clockwork exposed beneath it.*

MALIK (CONT'D)

When the king was mortally wounded in battle, his plan was set in motion. The priests allowed him to die - but wove spells of protection around him. Spells of return.

The dying Ashurbanipal is horribly embalmed alive. The iron sarcophagus with its impaling pipes closes over his body.

Jenny sees Tyler's distress. Lays a hand on his shoulder. He shakes off the vision, blinking the images away.

Malik walks them past a series of BRONZE PANELS depicting a descent to the Underworld.

MALIK (CONT'D)

The king meant to bargain with the Lord of the Underworld: he would open the gates of hell, turning the powers of darkness loose upon the Upper World. And in exchange, Ashurbanipal would live again. An immortal god-king. To rule the world.

Tyler and Jenny stare at the Underworld images. The demons of Assyrian hell are hideous creatures. Deformed men, skeletal ghouls, monsters with the heads of hawks or lions.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Only when Ashurbanipal lay in his tomb did the priests find the courage to defy him. They revealed his plans to his son, who had taken the throne. He liked being king. He didn't want his father back any more than they did. So he buried the Necropolis and hid the Dead King's body in the desert. Not even our forefathers knew where. For centuries we paid the tribal warlords to guard the great desert. Until now, that was enough.

Malik spreads his arms. Bringing the story home.

MALIK (CONT'D)

After twenty years in the Assyrian court, our forefathers could not return to Egypt. So they came to Byzantium and founded the Rebel Temple. Here we've kept watch for twenty-five centuries, that the evil our forefathers created might never again darken the waking day.

OCULUS CENTER

A cutting-edge database facility. Rows of humming servers. Walls of flat-panel displays. Dayan sits at the terminal: this is his domain. Malik, Tyler and Jenny stand watching.

MALIK

The Oculus. The Eye of the Temple.

DAYAN

We track relics. Artifacts. People
with certain gifts. Mystical sites.
Anything beyond the ordinary.

ONSCREEN: Dayan flies across a map of the world sparkling
with markers for people. Artifacts. Places haunted and holy.
It's an occult Google Earth running on next-gen technology.

Tyler and Jenny trade impressed looks.

TYLER

Heard of the Special Weapons Group?

MALIK

(amused)

The Pentagon's little band of
dabblers.

TYLER

Do they have something like this?

MALIK

How they wish.

INFIRMARY

A strange combination of modern medical clinic and
alchemist's laboratory. Science and sorcery side by side.

Tyler and Jenny sit on benches with their shirts off. The
symbols on their skin faded almost to invisibility. Tyler's
ribs marked with bruised prints of Lorenzo's torture chains.

The wise old man, Belbasa, fusses around them. He's assisted
by the Dark Man with the broken nose. His name is RABBU. He
glowers darkly at Tyler, who watches him nervously.

BELBASA

Rabbu. See to his injuries.

Rabbu cleans and bandages Tyler's ribs with deliberate
roughness. A tiny revenge. Tyler winces and toughs it out.

Belbasa opens a wooden chest, fumbling through mystic
paraphernalia. He peers at the faded symbols on their skins.

BELBASA (CONT'D)

You did well with these. But mine
are better.

He produces a collection of METAL INK STAMPS bigger than the
palms of his hands. He stamps intricate protective mandalas
on their shoulders, chests and backs in black and red ink.

BELBASA (CONT'D)

These will keep the Evil One out of your minds and bodies. But even these barriers can be broken. If the spirit is weak. If he gets too close.

JENNY

What about you?

BELBASA

Rabbu. Show her.

Rabbu grins and hikes up his shirt. His powerful torso is BLANKETED WITH MYSTIC TATTOOS.

RABBU

Ours are permanent.

Belbasa takes Tyler's hand. Examines the wound in his palm.

BELBASA

Does this hurt you?

TYLER

Only when he's nearby.

BELBASA

You're bound to him by blood magic. That's why you dream his dreams. He chose you as he lay in his coffin: you were strongest. It will help you find him. Pray God it will help you kill him.

TEMPLE LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Belbasa leads Jenny in. She wears borrowed clothes: a man's shirt and trousers belted tight at her slim waist.

The library holds codexes, papyruses, tablets and scrolls. Half a dozen Temple brothers pore over the records.

JENNY

What are they looking for?

BELBASA

Words of power. Protective magic. Anything to fight the Dead King.

JENNY

They look frightened.

BELBASA

After two thousand years, what man believes this day will come in his lifetime? No one was ready.

EXT. ISTANBUL AVENUE - DAY

A black ROLLS ROYCE PHANTOM V glides down the avenue. A fantastically expensive car. The license plates read LORENZO.

INT. ROLLS ROYCE (IN MOTION) - CONTINUOUS

Behind the wheel is Marco, Lorenzo's pilot - eyes blank white and staring. Enslaved by the Dead King.

In back rides Ashurbanipal, crowned and dressed as a king might dress himself from Lorenzo's closet: black silk pajamas and slippers, a dark dressing gown belted at the waist.

EXT. ISTANBUL AVENUE - (CONTINUOUS)

We rise above the Rolls Royce as it moves down the avenue. Misfortune and mayhem travel with it like an invisible wave.

As the car passes - two lovers walking hand in hand begin to fight viciously. A man walking two mastiffs is attacked by his dogs. A policeman hurrying to rescue him fumbles his gun: it goes off when it hits the ground - killing the policeman.

The Dead King smiles. The car rolls on. Chaos in its wake.

INT. REBEL TEMPLE - GALLERY

Rabbu and Tyler walk through a gallery overlooking the city.

TYLER

Sorry about the nose.

RABBU

It's nothing. I'm sorry we fought. If we had spoken, we might still have the crown. But we have the sword - and here it's safe. There's a holy seal on every brick in the Temple. Every girder, tile and window.

He touches the window in front of them: an intricate RUNE ENGRAVED IN THE GLASS.

RABBU (CONT'D)

This will stop the Devil himself.

TYLER

Will it stop a brick?

RABBU

If we come under physical assault, we take refuge in the Stronghold. Beneath the Temple. The fortress of our forefathers. They were frightened men: they dug deep and built strong.

TYLER

Okay. Defense is half the battle;
talk to me about fighting back.

TEMPLE ARMORY

A steel-walled hypermodern room. Racks and shelves hold a strange mix of ancient and contemporary weapons. VIALS OF WHITE POWDER beside FRAGMENTATION GRENADES. Sleek KEVLAR VESTS beside MYSTICAL MEDALLIONS.

Rabbu pulls out a rolling rack filled with SWORDS. Tyler picks up a broadsword: Damascus steel, carved with Aramaic script and mystic symbols.

RABBU

Consecrated blades. Demons can't be hurt by common steel. These will cut - and kill.

Tyler swings the sword in a swift figure-eight, testing the balance. Thrusts and returns gracefully to guard.

RABBU (CONT'D)

You're a swordsman!

TYLER

Not really. Trained a little katana, escrima stick, basic knife-fighting. Do you have anything a little more up-to-date?

Rabbu pulls open a rolling rack of HIGH-TECH MACHINE GUNS.

TYLER (CONT'D)

That's what I'm talking about.

INT. REBEL TEMPLE - COUNCIL ROOM - DAY

The great meeting hall of the Rebel Temple: the penthouse, with panoramic views of Istanbul. Dark clouds are rolling in.

Swords and rifles lie on the council table. The Temple brothers, wearing kevlar vests under their suit coats, sit gravely. Tyler and Jenny among them. Malik is on his feet.

MALIK

Ashurbanipal is trapped in his own dead flesh. He is in constant pain. Full of suffering and vengeance. He will stop at nothing to live again.

Jenny nods, shaken. She believes. She takes Tyler's hand.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Long ago, priests of our order gave him the power to open the gates of hell. Now it falls to us to stop him.

(grimly)

It won't be easy. The King has his crown. It will magnify his power.

EXT. ISTANBUL AVENUE - OFFICE TOWER - DAY

The Rolls Royce pulls up beside an office tower. Ashurbanipal gets out. Walks up to the building - and without breaking stride, WALKS UP THE WALL.

INT. REBEL TEMPLE - COUNCIL ROOM

Malik is warming to his theme. Rousing the men's spirits.

MALIK

Many of our brothers are far away. There's no time to call them home. But we are twenty-five swords.

JENNY

Twenty-seven.

MALIK

So be it. We are enough. The final battle will be here. In our Temple. The Dead King will come. For this.

He holds up Ashurbanipal's sword with its hilt of bronze.

MALIK (CONT'D)

And we will destroy him.

He turns, taking stock of their resolve. As he steps aside - A DARK FIGURE IS REVEALED ON THE ROOFTOP ACROSS THE STREET! Tyler sees him first. Exploding to his feet.

TYLER

THERE!

EXT. THE OPPOSITE ROOFTOP

Ashurbanipal takes a deep breath. BLOWS BETWEEN PURSED LIPS. A GREAT WIND RISES, blasting through the city.

His FINGERS CLUTCH THE AIR as if gripping an invisible staff. The winds twist into A CYCLONE AROUND THE REBEL TEMPLE!

INT. REBEL TEMPLE - COUNCIL ROOM

The walls shudder and groan. THE WINDOWS SHATTER. A dozen Temple brothers are sucked out into the whirlwind, twenty stories up. Hurricane winds rip through the council room.

Tyler grabs Jenny, pushing her toward the door. Malik and Rabbu help them. The POWER GOES OUT as the building creaks.

MALIK

Down! Down to the Stronghold!

STAIRWELL

Our heroes run down an endless marble stairwell. Malik carrying Ashurbanipal's sword. The walls shudder.

EXT. THE OPPOSITE ROOFTOP

Ashurbanipal looks on the destruction in cold triumph: every window in the Rebel Temple is broken. Precious parchments and tapestries spinning in the wind.

INT. REBEL TEMPLE - STRONGHOLD

Beneath the opulent office tower, an UNBREAKABLE FORTRESS. The first Rebel Temple. Granite walls six feet thick.

Malik leads Tyler, Jenny, and the surviving brothers in: a dozen men - including Dayan, Belbasa and Rabbu. A STEEL DOOR A FOOT THICK swings shut behind them. MASSIVE BOLTS are thrown. Emergency lights and ventilation kick on.

Tyler looks around. Guns and swords in racks. Emergency supplies. Flak vests, provisions, cots and blankets.

Malik gives Jenny the Sword of Ashurbanipal.

MALIK

He must not get the sword.

She nods solemnly. The Temple brothers form a defensive line inside the massive door, guns and swords at the ready.

Tyler squeezes Jenny's shoulder.

TYLER

I won't let anything happen to you.

He takes his place beside Malik. Waiting for the Dead King.

EXT. ON THE OPPOSITE ROOFTOP

Ashurbanipal stands facing the ruined Rebel Temple. At his back lies the BOSPORUS - the mighty waterway separating Europe and Asia - spanned by magnificent suspension bridges.

Ashurbanipal punches a fist into the air.

A COLOSSAL COLUMN OF WATER ERUPTS out of the Bosphorus - towering over Istanbul like the fist of an angry god.

He smashes his fist down.

The column of water lashes over the city and descends on the Rebel Temple like a focused tidal wave. The battering waters funnel into the whirlwind. A WATERSPOUT ENGULFS THE BUILDING.

INT. REBEL TEMPLE - STRONGHOLD

A ROAR LIKE THUNDER. The defenders exchange mystified looks.

Every vent in the Stronghold starts GUSHING WATER. Rapidly FLOODING THE UNDERGROUND CHAMBER. Water jets in through seams in the walls. Sprays in around the massive iron door.

TYLER

We'll drown in here! Are there other ways out?!

MALIK

Tunnels. Below us.

The water's waist-high and rising. Tyler shakes his head.

TYLER

Already flooded. What else?

Dayan scans the fortress, his engineer's mind churning.

DAYAN

The Hall of Pharaohs!

He POINTS. There's one ceiling vent not gushing water.

DAYAN (CONT'D)

Strong doors. No windows.

The water is chest-high now. Tyler hurries to the vent. The ceiling's nine feet high: he can't quite reach it.

MALIK

Rabbu!

The big man wades to him - half swimming in the rising water - and lifts him up. Tyler unbolts the grate. Swings it back.

TYLER

Jenny. You first!

Jenny wades to him in chin-deep water.

The Temple brothers gathered under the shaft lift her up to him. She clutches Ashurbanipal's Sword to her chest.

Tyler takes her in his arms. She looks up the dark shaft.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Right behind you.

Jenny nods fiercely. Climbs into the shaft.

AIRSHAFT

Jenny worms upward, one-handed, clutching the sword. Tyler climbs into the shaft below her, pushing her higher.

At the top of the shaft, she finds a THICK METAL GRATE locked from the inside. She strains at the bolts. Shoots them back.

HALL OF PHARAOHS

A windowless hall of Egyptian artifacts: treasures of gold and alabaster. A burial mask as grand as Tutankhamen's. Statues of stone. A towering OBELISK.

A METAL GRATE in the floor swings open. Jenny's arm reaches out, holding Ashurbanipal's sword. Her head rises into view. She finds herself staring at TWO BLACK-SLIPPED FEET.

Jenny looks up and SCREAMS. Ashurbanipal seizes her by the arm and hauls her out of the shaft.

AIRSHAFT

Tyler feels Jenny lifted away. Looks up. Sees Ashurbanipal.

TYLER
No!

He has a rifle slung on his shoulder; in the claustrophobic shaft he can't bring it to bear.

TYLER (CONT'D)
UP! UP!

STRONGHOLD

Nearly flooded now. A pyramid of Temple brothers lifts Tyler up. The bottom-most men are underwater, holding their breaths. They strain to push him higher.

HALL OF PHARAOHS

Ashurbanipal plucks the sword from Jenny's hands. His BODY BUCKS AND SHAKES as power flows into him like electricity. Wind plucking at his robes.

A SCRAPE behind him. He spins: Tyler is head and shoulders out of the shaft.

With one sweep of his sword, Ashurbanipal SLICES THROUGH THE STONE OBELISK. It topples toward Tyler. Tyler's eyes go wide.

TYLER
DOWN! DOWN!

He ducks back into the shaft. The massive obelisk slams down atop him - sealing the shaft irrevocably.

STRONGHOLD - FLOODED

Tyler drops down into the water among the Temple brothers. The water's only a few inches below the ceiling. They tread water and gasp for air.

TYLER
No way up. Blocked.

Desperate faces. They're going to drown.

DAYAN
Freight elevator! Only shot!

MALIK
Go!

They swim underwater across the flooded chamber. The freight elevator, without power since the whirlwind, is shut. They claw at the door with their fingertips, all together.

ELEVATOR - FLOODED

The doors open. Tyler swims in. Punches the ceiling hatch open and swims up through it. Behind him, Rabbu shoves one brother after another up through the hatch.

ELEVATOR SHAFT - FLOODED

Malik breaks the surface in the elevator shaft. Gulping air. Above him, Tyler is climbing the shaft with mad haste.

EXT. REBEL TEMPLE - ENTRANCE - DAY

The sky is still gray and forboding, but the magical storms have ended. Water lies in deep puddles in the streets.

Tyler explodes out of the front doors, assault rifle in his hands. Sword on his hip. No sign of Ashurbanipal or Jenny. He spins in the street, scarred hand extended. Feeling for the dead king. We spin with him, scanning the streets.

He stops. Pointing. *That way.*

MALIK (O.S.)
Tyler!

He races out of the building. In an executive parking spot sits a BLACK MASERATI, dripping but intact. Malik points a remote. Presses a button. THE ENGINE STARTS.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Praise God!

Tyler rips open the driver's side door. Malik the other side.

INT. MASERATI (IN MOTION) - MOMENTS LATER

Tyler drives like a demon. Beside him, Malik sits rigid with fury and frustration. Tyler feels through the air with his scarred hand, trying to locate their quarry.

He throws the car into a long screeching turn.

EXT. ISTANBUL STREETS - DAY

Traffic jam. Frustrated Turks grinding down a wide street.

Suddenly A TRANCE STATE OVERCOMES THE DRIVERS IN THEIR CARS. They SWERVE TO THE ROADSIDES - cars crunching into each other - clearing an aisle down the middle of the road.

Ashurbanipal's Rolls Royce speeds down this open lane. Traffic parts before it like a wave.

INT. ROLLS ROYCE (IN MOTION)

Marco, deep in trance, is behind the wheel. In back, Jenny sits beside Ashurbanipal. With one hand he clamps her wrists together inescapably.

ASHURBANIPAL

(in Akkadian, subtitled)

You are the one who speaks my language.

JENNY

(in Akkadian, subtitled)

Yes.

ASHURBANIPAL

Good.

He holds up a BUNDLE OF DRY HERBS: they spark and smolder under his gaze. He draws the fume into his lungs. Turns and BLOWS GRAY SMOKE OUT THE WINDOW.

INT. MASERATI (IN MOTION)

Tyler and Malik turn a corner. A DENSE FOG sweeps the city.

They drive down the aisle cleared by the Dead King - cars piled up on both sides. An eerie scene.

TYLER

He's close.

As the Maserati passes, spellbound drivers hit the gas -
SMASHING INTO THE MASERATI from both sides!

MALIK

Go! Go!

Tyler puts the pedal down. The Maserati leaps forward - a
WAVE OF CARS CRASHING TOGETHER a split-second behind it.

Ahead - the towers of the BOSPORUS BRIDGE loom in the mist.

EXT. BOSPORUS BRIDGE - DAY

Istanbul's mighty suspension bridge. A hundred feet wide. A
mile long. Two hundred feet above the water.

The bridge is empty of traffic. Under Ashurbanipal's
influence, drivers sit spellbound at both ends of the span.

The Rolls Royce drives onto the bridge. The stopped cars come
together violently behind it, barricading the entrance.

INT. ROLLS ROYCE (IN MOTION)

Ashurbanipal leans close to Jenny's face. His voice rumbles
with hypnotic power:

ASHURBANIPAL

Don't move.

Jenny gasps in something like pain as compulsion takes hold.
The Dead King opens his door - and TEARS IT OFF ITS HINGES.

EXT. ROLLS ROYCE (IN MOTION) - CONTINUOUS

Ashurbanipal stands on the running board, sword in hand. As
the Rolls Royce races down the RIGHT EDGE OF THE BRIDGE - he
SLASHES THE VERTICAL CABLES ONE BY ONE!

AT THE FOOT OF THE BRIDGE

The Maserati reaches the pileup blocking entry to the bridge.
Tyler leaps out, assault rifle in hand. He leaps from car to
car over the logjam. Runs up the bridge.

Malik follows, sword in hand, trying to keep up.

AT THE CENTER OF THE BRIDGE

The Rolls Royce stops. CREAKS and GROANS of metal as the
bridge's deck warps, deprived of many supporting cables.

Ashurbanipal steps down onto the roadway. The fog obscures
the city and the water: They're on a platform in the sky.

INT. ROLLS ROYCE

Jenny sits fighting the compulsion he's laid on her.

JENNY

Get out of the car, Jenny. Move!

Tears of frustration. She can't. More desperately:

JENNY (CONT'D)

Marco! Drive! *Please! Go!*

But Marco's eyes are blank white orbs. Nobody home.

AT THE CENTER OF THE BRIDGE

Ashurbanipal raises his sword in both hands, chanting under his breath. The air darkens around him as he rouses his power. CRUMBLING CORROSION spreads across the roadbed.

He CHOPS DOWNWARD! The magical blade bites deep. A JAGGED FISSURE RUNS ACROSS THE DECK from edge to edge.

RUNNING ONTO THE BRIDGE

Tyler and Malik stumble as the road bucks beneath their feet. A titanic GROAN OF METAL.

AT THE CENTER OF THE BRIDGE

Ashurbanipal walks to the left side of the bridge - where the main cable descends closest to the deck. In one leaping blow, HE CUTS THROUGH THE TWO-FOOT-THICK STEEL CABLE!

The BRIDGE DECK BREAKS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SPAN!
Ashurbanipal's side of the bridge SAGS TOWARD THE WATER.

RUNNING ONTO THE BRIDGE

Tyler and Malik find themselves running *down* as the bridge drops beneath them.

AT THE CENTER OF THE BRIDGE

Ashurbanipal pulls Jenny out of the Rolls Royce as the expensive car begins to roll. It falls over the broken end of the span, Marco still a zombie at the wheel, and disappears.

Jenny watches it go in numb horror.

TYLER (O.S.)

(an echoing shout)

Jenny!

Her heart leaps. Even in her hypnotized state she answers.

JENNY

Tyler!

But the waters of the Bosphorus are close now. The severed bridge now a descending ramp almost touching the water.

The *LIBERTINE*, LORENZO'S YACHT, LOOMS OUT OF THE MIST. Still red-streaked from the rain of blood. Ashurbanipal pulls Jenny against him and LEAPS ONTO THE YACHT'S DECK.

The state-of-the-art yacht's motors RUMBLE, churning up a wake. It accelerates with astonishing power.

Tyler and Malik reach the end of the bridge in time to see the yacht disappearing into the fog. Tyler pulls his rifle to his shoulder - but the yacht is gone. No targets.

EXT. LIBERTINE - DECK

Jenny picks herself up. Tyler's howl echoes behind them.

TYLER (V.O.)

Jenny!

She gets up. Lorenzo stands before her. Haggard and unshaven, in the suit he had on when we last saw him.

LORENZO

Jennifer Halsey. Welcome to hell.

INT. REBEL TEMPLE - DAY

Tyler and Malik rush into the ruined Rebel Temple. The Temple brothers are picking up the pieces.

TYLER

Where's he taking her?!

OCULUS CHAMBER

Windowless, the Oculus room has fared better than most - but still the floor is wet, the computer screens cracked, the machines running on emergency power.

Dayan sits at in the control seat. Tyler, Malik, Belbasa, and Rabbu stand watching.

ONSCREEN: The a detailed map of the ancient city.

DAYAN

Nineveh. Capital of the Assyrian Empire. Destroyed by Babylon in 604 BC. Today...

Centuries race by. Roads cut across the map. Cities bloom.

DAYAN (CONT'D)

It's the city of Mosul in northern Iraq. These are the ruins of Ashurbanipal's palace. And buried here is the Necropolis our forefathers built. That's where he's going. To open the Underworld gate.

TYLER

That's an Iraqi Army Base now.

He turns to Malik, fire in his eye.

TYLER (CONT'D)

I have to get there first. I need money. Transport. Weapons.

MALIK

Anything. I'll go with you.

BELBASA

And I, brother.

RABBU

And I.

Dayan rises too, fire in his eye. Tyler nods his thanks.

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN SEA - DAY

The powerful *Libertine* cuts a high-speed wake across the open sea. The spray rinsing the bloody streaks from its hull.

INT. LIBERTINE - BEDROOM - DAY

Ashurbanipal drags Jenny into the master suite. Flings open the closet, where Lorenzo has a rack of women's clothes.

ASHURBANIPAL

You will dress like a woman.

Jenny looks at the hanging clothes: too scandalous to wear. She opens a drawer: it's full of SEX TOYS. She slams it shut.

JENNY

Lorenzo, you *pig*.

She chooses a dress - a white goddess number that shows more skin than she'd like. Ashurbanipal shows no sign of leaving. Reluctantly she unbuttons her shirt and takes it off.

Breath hisses through the Dead King's teeth as he sees the protective mandalas printed on her skin.

ASHURBANIPAL

Witch! Would you defy me?

He takes her roughly by the shoulders. BLOWS ON HER SKIN. The mandalas blow away in puffs of dust.

He looks down at her body, hands stirring on her shoulders. His voice rumbles in his chest, brooding and slow:

ASHURBANIPAL (CONT'D)

I cannot feel your skin with these
dead hands. I cannot taste food or
wine with this dead tongue. But soon
I will live. Not as a man but as a
god. The world will bow to me or
burn. After two thousand years...

(sensuously)

...you will be the first thing I
taste, when I live again.

Jenny would scream, if she were free. She would claw out his eyes, or leap into the sea. But she is a slave.

LOUNGE

Ashurbanipal leads Jenny into a lavish sitting room. She's wearing the white dress - stunning and scandalous.

Lorenzo sits at a desk, speaking into a satellite phone. His voice a robotic parody of itself.

LORENZO

Safe transit for three. Lorenzo
Montanari and two others. Tell the
general. My usual rate.

Ashurbanipal seats Jenny at a table before a RITUAL SCROLL. It bears an INCANTATION written in flowing Assyrian Aramaic.

ASHURBANIPAL

My priests are long dead. I need a
reader for the ritual. This one is
too stupid.

He waves contemptuously at Lorenzo.

ASHURBANIPAL (CONT'D)

Read and learn.

His voice reverberates with magical compulsion - but it's unnecessary. There's nothing Jenny would rather do.

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN SEA - DAY

Malik pilots an expensive SPEEDBOAT (far smaller than the *Libertine*) along the Turkish coast, skipping over the waves. Tyler at his side. In back, Belbasa, Rabbu and Dayan lean against a heap of bags and gear.

Tyler points at a nautical chart: a notch on the coast of Cyprus. He shouts over the wind.

TYLER
We stop here.

MALIK
What's there?

TYLER
Place I used to work.

INT. LIBERTINE - LOUNGE - DAY

Studying the incantation, Jenny stiffens, staring at the text. Studying it intently. She sees something important.

She looks up. Ashurbanipal is not in the room. Lorenzo sits slackjawed and staring. Jenny closes her eyes. Whispering.

JENNY
Get up, Jenny. Get up.

She can't. Her body is not her own. But a PEN lies nearby.

With a herculean effort of will, she draws a MANDALA on the palm of her hand *in mirror image*. She goes over the lines again and again, laying down ink - then presses her palm hard to her breastbone, PRINTING THE MANDALA ON HER SKIN.

She GASPS as if a weight has been lifted. Rises. Forces herself away from the table and walks out.

Lorenzo turns his head like a wind-up doll to watch her go.

BRIDGE

A zombie-eyed HELMSMAN drives the boat. Doing 70 knots.

Jenny steals onto the bridge in her white dress. She eyes the helmsman warily - but he's deep in trance. She lifts a SATELLITE PHONE off the console and dials.

INT. MUSEUM LABORATORY - DAY

Behind the scenes at the Baghdad Museum, Professor Sheppard is uncrating antiquities with a few Arab colleagues. His PHONE RINGS. He answers hastily when he sees who it is.

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD
Jenny!

INT. LIBERTINE - BRIDGE (INTERCUT)

Jenny speaks urgently, clutching the phone.

JENNY

Sorry to call. You're the only phone number I have memorized.

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD (V.O.)

Are you in trouble?

JENNY

You were right. About everything. Can you still travel to Baghdad?

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD (V.O.)

I'm in Baghdad now.

INT. LIBERTINE - GALLEY

Ashurbanipal sits cross-legged on the floor. In front of him: a wide shallow basin of water. He pours oil on the water. Passes his hands over the basin, chanting.

Floating oil droplets spin into strands and beads. Intricate patterns. The plan of an ancient city.

LORENZO (O.S.)

My Lord.

Ashurbanipal looks up angrily. The oil pattern dispersing. Lorenzo stands like a sleepwalker in the door.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

It's the girl.

BRIDGE

Jenny crouches, whispering into the satellite phone.

JENNY

...after the second, before the third. But most of all, he must...

Ashurbanipal rips the phone from her grip. Crushes it in his hand. Hurls the fragments overboard. Stares at her in fury.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(defiantly)

Tyler's going to come for me.

ASHURBANIPAL

I know.

EXT. CYPRUS - SECRET HARBOR

A hidden lagoon used by mercenaries and soldiers of fortune. A motley assemblage of motorboats moored to the rough docks. The Rebel Temple's speedboat is by far the finest.

Dayan, in his suit and kevlar vest, waits tensely in the boat, exchanging looks with the tough customers on the docks.

EXT. CYPRUS ARMS BAZAAR - DAY

Tyler leads Malik, Belbasa and Rabbu through an OPEN-AIR ARMS MARKET - weapons of every kind sold out of trucks and tents. The Temple brothers, in their bespoke suits, turn heads.

TYLER

Belbasa. Rabbu. Incendiary bullets.
All you can carry.

(off their nervousness)

Relax. Anybody who'd come here
dressed like you must be a stone-cold
badass. You terrify these people.

IN FRONT OF A MERCENARY HELICOPTER

Tyler negotiates with the PROPRIETOR, Malik at his side.

PROPRIETOR

Five thousand dollars a day, plus
two pilots at a thousand a day.

TYLER

I'm not renting. I'm buying.

Malik opens a briefcase full of cash. The Proprietor smiles.

EXT. SYRIAN SHORE - DAY

The mercenary helicopter roars in over the sea and into the dry Syrian hills, hugging the terrain.

INT. MERCENARY HELICOPTER (IN FLIGHT) - DAY

Tyler flies with a sure hand: this is a bird he understands. He's come out of the arms bazaar dressed like a soldier. Malik, in the number-two seat, looks pale.

MALIK

Must we fly so low?

TYLER

We're not exactly cleared for
Syrian airspace.

EXT. MOSUL - DAY - ESTABLISHING SHOTS

The fertile Tigris-Euphrates valley: cradle of civilization. Mosul sits on both banks of the Tigris: an Arabian-Nights clutter of houses, terraces, cafes and archways. Stunning mosques and palaces rise above the ancient rooftops.

SUPER: MOSUL

EXT. MOSUL ARMY BASE - DAY

An Iraqi Army base on the edge of the city, fortified with blast walls and gun turrets. A TANK in the compound. Dozens of soldiers stand guard or move about the interior.

A MOTORCADE pulls up to the base entrance: a LIMOUSINE flying Syrian flags, escorted by armed trucks.

Confusion at the gate. No one was expected. The guards shout challenges. There's no answer: the drivers and soldiers of the motorcade stare straight ahead with blank white eyes.

Ashurbanipal steps out of the limousine in a black Arab robe. He walks up to the gate. The guards blanch when they see his dead skin. They raise their guns in confusion.

Ashurbanipal smiles. His sword slides from beneath his robe.

He moves with blinding speed. *SLASH. SLASH.* Two soldiers fall dead. *CHOP.* The steel gate falls apart. He flings it open.

Machine guns start firing as he walks into the compound.

INT. MOSUL ARMY BASE - HEADQUARTERS

BASE COMMANDER SAIF AL-RAHAL - a lion of a man with a thick mustache - spins toward the door at the sound of gunfire. Beside him an American Army Ranger, LIEUTENANT QUINN, comes to alert. They grab weapons and run outside.

EXT. MOSUL ARMY BASE - CONTINUOUS

Saif Al-Rahal and Quinn emerge into the sunlight to see a MILITARY TRUCK tumbling across the compound in flames.

Ashurbanipal walks through the smoke. The TANK, a Russian T-90, rumbles to meet him, lowering its main gun to engage him.

Ashurbanipal SLASHES two-foot sections off the descending gunbarrel. What's left of the gun lowers far enough to aim at him. The Dead King STABS HIS BLADE INTO THE TANK'S HULL.

INSIDE THE TANK

The DRIVER screams as the sword blade thrusts through the thick armor and stops an inch from his face.

ON ASHURBANIPAL

As he heaves upward. The entire tank FLIPS END OVER END - the main gun firing, too late, mid-air - and lands upside-down.

A VOLLEY OF BULLETS stitches across Ashurbanipal's body as a gun turret opens fire on him. He clenches his fist.

Hurls it as if throwing an invisible stone. The gunners scream and cover their eyes, blood seeping between their fingers. Blind.

More soldiers join the fight, aiming an annoying number of guns at the Dead King. Enough games. He thrusts his sword into the earth, muttering in Akkadian. Spreads his fingers and drives his hands outward as if toppling walls.

All over the base, soldiers COLLAPSE like marionettes whose strings have been cut. Silence falls.

Ashurbanipal beckons. Jenny and Lorenzo get out of the limousine and walk into the base, following Ashurbanipal toward the yawning mouth of an ancient cave.

INT. MERCENARY HELICOPTER (IN FLIGHT)

Tyler stares down at the Mosul Army Base on approach. The overturned truck and tank, spewing smoke and flame. Lifeless bodies strewn everywhere. The entire base is down.

TYLER

We're too late. He got here first.

EXT. MOSUL ARMY BASE - DAY

The helicopter sits on the ground, rotor spinning down. Tyler and the Temple Brothers get out carrying assault rifles. The Temple brothers wear swords.

Belbasa kneels over the fallen soldiers. They're in a stupor: eyes rolled back, whispering in tongues.

BELBASA

Not dead! Enchanted!

He opens the kit he carries. Stamps sacred seals on their chests in black ink. Anoints them with oil. Waves burning herbs under their noses. The soldiers revive, disoriented.

Rabbu hands out kits like Belbasa's for reviving soldiers.

RABBU

Help the others!

They hurry to rouse the other soldiers. Tyler spots soldiers in Army Ranger uniforms: Quinn and his men.

TYLER

American military advisors!

Fumbling with the strange paraphernalia, he wakes Quinn. Quinn wakes and goes for his gun. Tyler catches his hand.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Lieutenant Quinn! Tyler Colt, Navy
SEALS. What happened here?

Quinn blinks as if waking from a dream.

LT. QUINN
A man came. A dead man.

TYLER
Was anyone with him?

LT. QUINN
Guy in a suit. Girl in a white
dress.

Tyler closes his eyes in relief. Jenny's alive.

LT. QUINN (CONT'D)
They went down to the caves.

INT. NECROPOLIS - UNDERWORLD GATE

Huge doors of bronze grind open. Ashurbanipal walks into a cavernous hall, Jenny and Lorenzo following obediently. TORCHES burst into flame as he enters, illuminating the hall. Ashurbanipal gestures: the giant doors slam shut behind him.

A great MANDALA is carved in the floor - the grooves in the stone filled with gold. Seven interlocking circles.

An elevated LECTERN overlooks the mandala. Ashurbanipal lays the SCROLL on the lectern. Places Jenny in front of it. She's sleepwalking now: hopelessly in the grip of his compulsion.

ASHURBANIPAL
Read the ritual.

Lorenzo stands behind her. Ashurbanipal hands him an ancient BRONZE DAGGER from Lorenzo's own collection.

ASHURBANIPAL (CONT'D)
Watch her.

He descends to the floor below. Walks onto the mandala.

Jenny reads. Ancient Akkadian ringing from her lips. As she reads, THE MANDALA MOVES, one circle turning at a time. The runes around their edges form sequences. A combination lock.

She completes a phrase. Chanting, Ashurbanipal steps from rune to rune in a ritual invocation. THREE STONE PILLARS stand above the mandala: as Ashurbanipal walks the magical phrase, the runes BURN INTO THE FIRST PILLAR.

EXT. MOSUL ARMY BASE - DAY

Standing with Tyler, Quinn sees Malik reviving Saif Al-Rahal.

LT. QUINN

Saif! Base commander. A good man.

Tyler shakes Saif's hand as he rises, speaking urgently.

TYLER

Commander. The man who did this to you is down in the caves. We're going after him.

SAIF

He was no man. He was a *jinn*.

MALIK

Yes. Your weapons will not work against him.

Dayan, Rabbu, and Belbasa unload gear from the helicopter. Every CONSECRATED BLADE from the Temple armory. Wooden boxes containing VIALS OF WHITE SALTS. Modern ammo cases.

MALIK (CONT'D)

These are sacred blades. They will bite even a *jinn*. Holy salts: harmless to men, deadly to demons. Incendiary bullets for your guns.

Saif lifts a Temple sword, admiring the steel. He smiles.

SAIF

Allah hu Akbar.

MALIK

Praise God.

A SHOUT from the gates. A battered LAND ROVER speeds onto the base in a cloud of dust. Twenty guns come up. PROFESSOR SHEPPARD gets out, hands in the air. His voice trembles:

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD

I'm looking for Tyler Colt.

Tyler steps forward, astonished.

TYLER

Here.

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD

I have a message from Jenny Halsey. I, uh...I don't know what it means.

TYLER

Talk.

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD

(reciting from memory)

There are three spells in the ritual.
The first spell raises the city of the
dead. The second restores the Dead
King to life. The third makes him
immortal. Between the second spell and
the third - he can be killed.

Tyler and Malik exchange fierce looks. There's a chance.

INT. NECROPOLIS - UNDERWORLD GATE

Jenny - looking every inch the priestess with her white dress
and transported eyes - finishes reading the first spell.

The runes of the mandala LOCK INTO PATTERN. Ashurbanipal
paces a mystical phrase across the interlocking circles.

On the pillar, the first spell is completed: luminous runes
filling its surface. A RUMBLE. The walls shake. Ashurbanipal
laughs in triumph.

EXT. MOSUL ARMY BASE - DAY

Tyler and the Temple Brothers are rigged for battle. Swords
on their hips. Rifles on their shoulders. Army Rangers and
Iraqi soldiers load incendiary rounds.

Malik hands Tyler a TEMPLE SWORD in a scabbard.

TYLER

The dude chopped down a *bridge*.
What am I going to do with this?

MALIK

The power was in his blade, not his
arm. I know I failed you. I promise
you: the Temple steel will not.

Tyler gives in. Straps the sword around his hips.

A RUMBLE. The earth shakes! Dark clouds blot out the sun.
WALLS AND PILLARS erupt from the ground! RIFTS open in the
earth, sand draining into subterranean chasms. The shifting
ground topples gun turrets and swallows vehicles.

MALIK (CONT'D)

The first spell! The Necropolis rises!

TYLER

Move out! Go! Go!

He leads a charge toward the caves, Malik at his side. The Temple brothers behind them, other soldiers following.

But THE DEAD CRAWL FROM THE CHURNING EARTH! The restless souls of the Underworld. Some are SKELETAL FIENDS. Others, twisted MUSCULAR GHOULS wrapped in chains. Even some of the pale EYELESS HORRORS from the Valley of the Blind.

They attack the living with clawed fingers and fangs, turning the soldiers' advance into a chaotic melee. The air fills with screams. The horrified soldiers begin to break and run.

Swords flashing, the Temple Brothers stand their ground where soldiers flee. American and Iraqi soldiers rally behind them.

Wounded, the dead bleed black ichor. Burning bullets hurt them: but they take a lot of damage and keep coming. The Temple blades are another matter: they put the dead down.

Tyler hesitates, seeing the men embattled all around him.

MALIK

Kill the King and end it all!

Tyler nods. They run together for the caves.

AT THE HELICOPTER

Professor Sheppard cowers, left behind. A vial of holy salts in his hand. He stares in frozen horror at the chaos.

A DEMON crawls out of the ground in front of him! A wasted black figure with the skeletal head of a hawk. Eyes of fire. A barbed whip coiling from its hand.

The demon draws back its whip. Sheppard HURLS THE SALT VIAL! It SHATTERS. The finely ground salt EATS INTO THE DEMON like hot embers. It disintegrates, shrieking and burning.

Sheppard frantically fills his pockets with the vials. Picks up a whole crate and runs after the Temple Brothers.

PROFESSOR SHEPPARD

Wait for me!

INT. MOSUL CAVES

Natural caverns, squared off by ancient masons. The Iraqi Army has made a munitions dump of them: crates of equipment and ammo stacked against the walls. A hodge-podge of modern equipment and Soviet-era hardware in mothballs.

Tyler and Malik run through the caves, seeking a way down. Tyler feels the air with his scarred palm. Hunting.

MALIK

He built the Necropolis here because the boundary between worlds is weak in this place. The Dead King's spells will tear that boundary. The Underworld will cross over into this world. Watch your step.

TYLER

No sweat. I've been to hell before.

They come to an ANCIENT STONE GATEWAY flanked by Assyrian GUARDIAN STATUES. The stone gate has been raised: beyond, a passageway lit by burning braziers leads deep into the earth.

TYLER (CONT'D)

There!

But as they approach the gateway, the GUARDIAN STATUES COME TO LIFE! Step down from their pedestals. Ten-foot DEMONS with heavy maces. Behind them, the STONE GATE BEGINS TO CLOSE!

Malik engages both Guardian Demons - strafing one with his rifle while slashing at the other. Both Demons attack him.

MALIK

Go! *Run!*

Tyler runs. Diving under the descending gate just before it closes. Malik fighting a desperate battle against the giants as the gate blocks him from view.

Tyler runs down the long firelit causeway.

UNDERWORLD GATE

Jenny finishes a phrase of the second spell. The circles turn: Ashurbanipal speaks his invocation, deep in a trance.

Behind him, the GREAT BRONZE DOOR INCHES OPEN. It's Tyler, straining with all his might to move the massive slab Ashurbanipal pushed open so easily. He squeezes inside.

Jenny sits staring into space at the Lectern. Ashurbanipal chants on the mandala. Tyler runs silently up the stairs.

Lorenzo steps from behind a column - DAGGER PLUNGING TOWARD TYLER'S CHEST!

Tyler catches Lorenzo's wrist. Drives him back against the wall - and PUNCHES HIM hard in the jaw. Again. And again. Finally the sleepwalker light in Lorenzo's eyes goes out: he drops, unconscious, the dagger clattering away.

Tyler kneels beside Jenny: she's a million miles away.

Taking out the kit Belbasa gave him, he stamps warding runes on her skin. Anoints her with oil. Wafts burning herbs under her nose. Nothing happens. At a loss, he KISSES HER. HARD.

As their lips part, her eyes widen in astonishment.

JENNY
(whispering)
Tyler!

Tyler points at the pillars. The first spell complete; the second spell nearly done. The third pillar still blank.

TYLER
I got your message. Does that mean
one spell down, two to go?

JENNY
Yes, but -

TYLER
Finish the second spell. Make him
mortal. As fast as you can.

JENNY
Tyler! Ashurbanipal has to buy his
soul back from the Underworld with
a life. You're the life. The Blood
of the Chosen. He has to kill you.

Tyler blinks. Stares down at his scarred hand.

TYLER
Well, that's important information.

JENNY
I tried to warn you not to come. I
got cut off before -

ASHURBANIPAL
(in Akkadian, subtitled)
At last!

His voice thunders in the hall. He grins evilly up at Tyler. Tyler brings his rifle up.

ASHURBANIPAL (CONT'D)
(in Akkadian, subtitled)
Blood of my blood.

He LEAPS AT TYLER - a staggering leap - thirty feet onto the stone stair. Tyler FIRES - stitching the Dead King's chest with a dozen burning bullet holes.

Ashurbanipal's sword SLASHES - CUTTING TYLER'S RIFLE IN TWO!

Tyler tumbles down the stone staircase. Ashurbanipal walks down after him with a sneer. The bulletholes closing up.

Tearing her eyes away from Tyler's plight, Jenny turns back to the Lectern. Reading the second spell as fast as she can.

Tyler draws his Temple sword. Backing onto the mandala as Ashurbanipal advances. The Dead King strikes! Their blades clash - and the Temple steel holds. They fight, the wheels of the mandala turning treacherously under their feet.

Jenny finishes the pattern! As they fight, Ashurbanipal and Tyler stagger across the rune sequence. The runes FLARE INTO EXISTENCE on the second pillar. The SECOND SPELL IS COMPLETE!

GOLDEN LIGHT ERUPTS from Ashurbanipal - blinding Tyler. A transformation sweeps over his body. Withered gray skin becoming flushed and smooth. The handsome face restored.

The Dead King lives. Ashurbanipal laughs in triumph.

ASHURBANIPAL (CONT'D)
(in Akkadian, subtitled)
Alive!

He dodges suddenly as Tyler strikes - the blade grazing his cheek. A drop of blood wells from the shallow cut.

TYLER
Mortal.

Ashurbanipal shouts up to Jenny - his erstwhile slave.

ASHURBANIPAL
(in Akkadian, subtitled)
Quickly! The third spell...
(in sudden horror)
NO!

Jenny stands with a the scroll in one hand - and a BURNING TORCH IN THE OTHER! About to set the scroll on fire.

Lorenzo pops up behind her like a marionette on strings. He tackles her. They go down, fighting like cats.

Ashurbanipal slashes at Tyler. Tyler fights for his life.

EXT. MOSUL ARMY BASE - DAY

The battle has spread to every corner of the base. Fierce skirmishes everywhere. And now, on the heels of the risen dead - DEMONS erupt from the earth. They are taller than the Dead, and less human: they have bestial fangs or talons, stunted wings, multiple limbs. Eyes of white fire.

Where the Dead attack with their claws and teeth, the Demons carry hellish weaponry. Flails, maces, whips and swords.

Quinn and Saif fight back-to-back against a host of the Dead. Wielding Temple blades with more ferocity than technique.

The Temple Brothers fight like heroes of old. Mighty Rabbu with a broadsword in each hand. Dayan working a sword-and-submachine-gun combo. Professor Sheppard hides behind Belbasa's sword and lobs vials of holy salts into the fray.

But as more Demons rise from the earth, the Temple brothers lose ground, hard pressed. A host of Demon threatens to overwhelm them.

Suddenly a ROCKET-PROPELLED GRENADE streaks into the midst of the demons. A shattering BLAST staggers them. Malik arrives beside his brothers, dropping the smoking grenade launcher. He survived his battle in the caves.

MALIK

The Rebel Temple! Hello, brothers!

RABBU

They come up faster than we can cut them down! We cannot win!

MALIK

Just hold! Contain the evil here! Trust Tyler to do his part.

INT. NECROPOLIS - UNDERWORLD GATE - LECTERN

Lorenzo is on top of Jenny, STRANGLING her. Knocking her head against the floor. SHE FALLS LIMP, unconscious or dead. He leaps to the lectern and begins to read the Ritual Scroll.

On the mandala, Tyler and Ashurbanipal fight viciously, sword to sword. The wheels begin turn treacherously underfoot.

Tyler leaps back. PULLS HIS PISTOL in an attempt to end the fight once and for all - but Ashurbanipal closes the distance with supernatural speed and KICKS THE GUN FROM HIS HAND.

The gun falls just outside the mandala. Tyler dives for it -

- and a BOLT OF LIGHTNING CRACKS ACROSS THE CAVERN.

EXT. UNDERWORLD - PLAIN OF MISERS

An arid red plain. THOUSANDS OF PALE HANDS reach out of the dry earth, clutching at whatever comes near. Tyler and Ashurbanipal have crossed over into the Underworld.

Tyler's dive lands him in the thick of the dead hands. He struggles desperately to escape, fighting to rise.

Ashurbanipal lunges to finish Tyler off - and stumbles to his knees. The hands drag him down five feet away. They fight, swords clashing, as they struggle to get free.

INT. NECROPOLIS - UNDERWORLD GATE - LECTERN

Lorenzo reads the ritual in halting Akkadian.

Jenny gets up off the floor behind him. Shaky on her feet. She looks at the third pillar. THE THIRD SPELL IS ALMOST COMPLETE! In moments Ashurbanipal will be immortal.

She leaps at Lorenzo. Clamps both hands over his mouth.

He twists her to the floor. But Jenny keeps her grip on his head. Plants a foot in his gut. CATAPULTS HIM OVER HER HEAD!

Lorenzo crashes down onto the mandala, stunned. AN BOLT OF LIGHTNING FLASHES IN THE CAVERN - and he's gone.

EXT. UNDERWORLD - VALLEY OF THE BLIND

Lorenzo picks himself up.

He's surrounded by THOUSANDS OF PALE FIGURES. Hairless and eyeless. Staring blindly at a red BEACON atop a BLACK TOWER. They breathe in eerie unison.

LORENZO

No.

Some of the Blind twitch - faces turning toward him.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

No!

They all turn now. Blank faces TEARING OPEN INTO FANG-FILLED MOUTHS! They come for him.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

NOOOOOO!!!

UNDERWORLD - PLAIN OF MISERS

Tyler, on his feet now, backpedals slowly as Ashurbanipal presses the attack. He parries one blow after another - and Ashurbanipal KNOCKS THE TEMPLE SWORD FROM HIS HAND!

The sword falls into the dead hands. They pass it from hand to hand, carrying it away from Tyler. He dives after it.

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING

INT. NECROPOLIS - UNDERWORLD GATE

Tyler sprawls across the mandala, empty handed. Back in the Upper World. Ashurbanipal chases him across the mandala - sword clashing on the stones as Tyler scrambles and rolls.

From the Lectern, Jenny watches aghast.

JENNY

Tyler!

Ashurbanipal looms over Tyler, sword held high. Tyler twists away - just as the rotation of the mandala CARRIES HIM PAST HIS FALLEN PISTOL! Tyler snatches up the gun.

LIGHTNING FLASHES!

UNDERWORLD - SEA OF FIRE

Tyler empties the clip into the king's body. Ashurbanipal staggers back in shock. Tyler gets to his feet.

They stand ATOP A STONE PINNACLE. The whole spire slowly sinking into the SEA OF FIRE.

Ashurbanipal's wounds bleed bright red blood. He is dying. Tyler walks up to him. Feebly, Ashurbanipal swings his sword. Tyler takes the sword away. Reverses the swing and KNOCKS THE CROWN FROM ASHURBANIPAL'S HEAD. It falls into the fire below.

The king is backed up to the brink. Tyler raises the sword.

ASHURBANIPAL

(in Akkadian, subtitled)

This is not over.

TYLER

No idea what you're saying.

He plants the sword in Ashurbanipal's chest to the hilt. Kicks him over the edge. Ashurbanipal, King of Assyria, Lord of Massacres, falls into fire.

INT. NECROPOLIS - UNDERWORLD GATE - LECTERN

Frantically, Jenny runs a finger across the Ritual Scroll, searching for answers. Speaks a phrase of ancient Akkadian.

The wheels turn. A FLASH OF LIGHTNING. Nothing.

UNDERWORLD - SEA OF FIRE

Tyler drops to his knees, breathing in gasps. The spire sinks slowly into the fire. In moments he will be engulfed by the flames. He watches his destruction come.

INT. NECROPOLIS - UNDERWORLD GATE - LECTERN

Jenny speaks another line. The wheels turn. Nothing happens.

Finally, desperate, she tries a last line of magic, shouting the ancient syllables until the walls echo with it.

The wheels pivot and lock. A SHATTERING THUNDERBOLT!

Tyler kneels on the mandala, smoke rising from his clothing.

JENNY

Tyler!

She runs to him, dropping to her knees beside him. Throws her arms around him. He pulls her close - and suddenly they're KISSING. Their shared ordeals translated into passion.

A RUMBLE. The floor shakes under them. They both look up.

TYLER

We'd better go.

EXT. MOSUL ARMY BASE - DAY

The DEAD DISSOLVE INTO POOLS OF DUST. The DEMONS DISINTEGRATE INTO BURNING EMBERS. The defenders lower their swords and guns in disbelief.

The NECROPOLIS RECEDES. Walls and pillars sinking back beneath the ground. Fissures in the earth closing up.

The Temple Brothers look up: THE FACE OF ASHURBANIPAL FORMS IN THE DARK CLOUDS, full of fury. But even as it forms, the clouds shred and blow away, revealing a golden sun.

MALIK

The Evil One has fallen!

A mighty cheer from all the warriors on the field. Iraqi soldiers, Army Rangers, even Professor Sheppard.

A ROAR LIKE THUNDER! A dust cloud billows from the mouth of the caves. The smile dies on Malik's lips. *His friends!* He runs toward the cave entrance. The Temple brothers and Professor Sheppard follow.

Before they get there, Tyler and Jenny walk out of the dust, arm in arm. The Temple brothers race to them, nearly taking them off their feet with their jubilant embrace.

EXT. ATHENS - REBEL TEMPLE SAFE HOUSE - DAY

A palatial house in the center of Athens. In the distance, the Parthenon gleams in the sunset.

Tyler sits shirtless on a wooden chair as Belbasa puts the finishing touches on a full set of Rebel Temple tattoos: mandalas and warding symbols on his chest and back.

Jenny and Malik sit watching, sipping wine. Belbasa finishes. Tyler pulls a shirt on, wincing. Malik embraces him.

MALIK

Now you are a Temple brother. Our doors will always be open to you. We have safe houses like this one in many cities. You will never be homeless.

TYLER

Thank you.

He sits beside Jenny. Slides an arm around her.

JENNY

What about you and your brothers?

MALIK

We must replenish our numbers. Rebuild our temple. The Evil One has fallen. Other evils will rise. The Rebel Temple will keep watch. Never again to let down our guard.

They rise, parting ways. Tyler grips Malik's hand.

TYLER

Good luck, Malik. Stay strong.

MALIK

We will. Godspeed.

EXT. ATHENS - STREET

Tyler and Jenny stroll, arms around each other. They wear sunglasses. Tyler in a hat, Jenny a head scarf. Incognito. The sun is setting. The streets full of flowers. A guitarist plays on a street corner. It's all ridiculously romantic.

JENNY

So we saved the world and we're wanted fugitives. What now?

TYLER

I was thinking Mexico.

JENNY

Lot of good archaeology. Mayan ruins.

TYLER

Also a lot of good hiding places.

She laughs. And around them - THE MARKETPLACE FALLS SILENT. People talk, motor scooters zip past, the guitarist plays - but all Jenny and Tyler can hear is THE RUSHING OF WIND.

TYLER (CONT'D)
You hearing this?

Jenny nods, wide-eyed with awe.

MAJOR KRAKAUER
Sorry. That's me.

They turn. A lean man in a suit stands behind them. Chiseled features, graying temples, shrewd eyes. He is DYSON KRAKAUER. He waves his hand to indicate the aura of silence.

MAJOR KRAKAUER (CONT'D)
Antisound. I'd rather not be overheard. Mr. Colt. Ms. Halsey. The world's in your debt. I want you to know we appreciate what you've done.

TYLER
Who's "we?"

MAJOR KRAKAUER
The Special Weapons Group. Department of Defense. Major Dyson Krakauer.

He hands them each a card. Jenny stares at hers in amazement.

MAJOR KRAKAUER (CONT'D)
You're in a bit of legal trouble. We can fix that.

JENNY
You can clear our names?

MAJOR KRAKAUER
In the blink of an eye.

TYLER
What's the catch?

MAJOR KRAKAUER
The Egyptian city of Heracleion sank into the sea three thousand years ago. It's an archaeological dig now. Our instruments have detected some unusual...energy signatures.

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN SEA - DAY

Tyler pilots a little MOTOR LAUNCH across the ocean, Jenny by his side. Ahead, the archaeological site at Heracleion - a cluster of research ships anchored off the Egyptian coast.

JENNY

We're supposed to be scientists,
so follow my lead here. You can do
your frogman stuff. Leave the
archaeology to me.

TYLER

No. You follow *my* lead. This is
your first mission in the field!

JENNY

What about all that saving-the-
world stuff? That counts. That was
like *five* missions.

Tyler pulls alongside the main research ship. There's twenty
SCIENTISTS on deck, too busy to wave at the newcomers. All
eyes are on a WINCH CABLE being reeled in from the depths.

At the end of the cable, a CARGO NET breaks the surface a
dozen feet from Tyler and Jenny, rocking their little launch.
In the net: an EGYPTIAN SARCOPHAGUS carved of black stone.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Look at that!

TYLER

No. No no. We are not doing this.

JENNY

Come on! Get me closer!

She leans way out over the gunwale, staring. Yanks on Tyler's
sleeve - and the launch TIPS, throwing them into the water.
They end up CLINGING TO THE CARGO NET, nose to nose with the
sarcophagus, as scientists cheer from the research boat.

TYLER

This is not happening.

Jenny's reading inscriptions, wide eyed. She stares at him.

JENNY

Tyler. She was a queen.

FADE OUT.

THE END.

THE TRUE HISTORY OF
ASHURBANIPAL, KING OF ASSYRIA
LORD OF MASSACRES

THE BLOODY EMPIRE

Assyria began as the city-state of Ashur on the banks of the Tigris, in what's now northern Iraq. Founded in the 25th Century BC, it endured for two thousand years. For three hundred years—from about 900BC to about 600BC—Assyria was the greatest power in the world. Its conquering armies ranged from Egypt to India.

Assyria never knew peace. Situated in the heart of Mesopotamia, with no natural boundaries to aid in its defense, Assyria was locked in perpetual war with Egypt to the East, Babylon to the South, and a host of city-states and tribal nations that forever challenged its borders.

To survive, Assyria asserted its power—subjugating rival kings and expanding its domain to become history's first empire. A host of military innovations powered these conquests: iron blades, siege weapons, mounted archers...but Assyria's most effective innovation was ***the use of horror as a weapon.***

Assyria's enemies, defeated in battle, suffered atrocities that beggar the imagination. They were skinned alive, sealed into walls, impaled on stakes, decapitated. Limbs were lopped off, tongues and eyes torn out, and all these grisly trophies placed on display outside conquered cities. The wrath of Assyria was so terrible that entire towns committed suicide when the Assyrian army appeared outside their walls.

No king of Assyria wielded the weapon of horror more ruthlessly than Ashurbanipal.

THE HAUNTED KING

Ashurbanipal ruled for almost sixty years – from 685BC to 627BC – consolidating Assyria's strength and breaking the power of Egypt and Babylon. He developed a reputation for staggering cruelty. The walls of his palace at Nineveh were decorated with scenes of battle, torture, and execution.

But Ashurbanipal was no savage. He was trained as a scholar as well as a soldier—the only Assyrian king in two thousand years who could read and write. He filled his palace's vast library with histories, scientific texts, and mystical documents.

As a young man, Ashurbanipal had suffered a life-changing vision. In a dream, he descended to the Underworld. Nergal, the Lord of the Underworld, showed him a revelation: the body of a king would lie in the Underworld and be protected by the powers of darkness—and his kingdom in the upper world would flourish. The Lord of the Underworld ended his revelation with this charge: *"Set this word like a thorn in your heart. Go forth to the upper world until I think of you!"*

Ashurbanipal's strange account of this revelation is today known as *The Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Crown Prince*. It prefigures the Revelation of St. John the Divine, and is unlike any other document of its time.

Traditionally Assyrians placed the god Ashur at the top of their pantheon: but as king Ashurbanipal gave prime position to the goddess Ishtar, who according to myth descended to the Underworld seeking power and returned again by buying her freedom with the soul of another.

Interestingly, Ashurbanipal's reign was marked by a proliferation of Egyptian symbols in Assyrian art: the ankh, the lotus, the winged disk. It is possible that Ashurbanipal brought back documents or even scholars from his conquest of Egypt. Obsessed as he was with the Underworld, the great mortuary cult of the Egyptian pharaohs must have made an impression on his mind.

THE EMPIRE'S END

Little is known of Ashurbanipal's passing. The manner of his death is a mystery. He has no known tomb.

A power struggle erupted on his demise: four different kings claimed the throne for a handful of years as Assyria's power dwindled. In 604BC, less than twenty-five years after Ashurbanipal died, a resurgent Babylon overwhelmed Assyria, slaughtering its rulers, razing its cities, and scattering its people. The two-thousand-year-old empire was erased from history.

If Ashurbanipal dwells in the Underworld now, he has witnessed the utter undoing of all he fought for. It is difficult to believe his eyes are not cast upward—that he is not striving even now, like Ishtar, to return in vengeance to the upper world.

—Jon Spaihts