

The 100 Handed: Lost Souls  
Episode 15  
The Dim

Written by

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Draft Three

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1501 PREVIOUSLY ON:

1501

V.  
Previously on The 100 Handed.

Swoosh.

MASON  
Our mutual friend got me out of a tight situation a while back. This should clear the debt. Ready to cross over?

V.  
Well, I'm ready. Show us the way to the Dim.

1502 TITLE SEQUENCE AND MUSIC INTRO

1502

WEXLER (V.O.)  
Soul-stealing Magi.

V. (V.O.)  
Flesh-eating Creeps.

WEXLER (V.O.)  
Yeah, it's just another day at the office for the Madhouse. My werewolf partner and I attempt to keep the peace without being torn to pieces . Weep at the wonder.

V. (V.O.)  
Howl at the horror.

WEXLER (V.O.)  
...and keep the light on, it's gonna get dark. This is the One-Hundred Handed.

1503 EXT. THE SHALLOWS - DUSK

1503

We're now in the Shallows: a shadowy, creepy realm that borders on the deeper regions of the Gloom. Time and space are looser here; we should feel disoriented, lost. The fabric of reality is off.

MASON

You may feel somewhat disoriented. If you've never traveled the Shallows in the Gloom before, you have to keep your wits about you, even you, Wolf-girl. Just stick close to me, I'll lead us through.

V.

You know the way?

MASON

(chuckling)

In every way that you don't.

WEXLER

If he was going to betray us, now would be the time.

V.

No. No, I trust him. He's got a good scent about him.

(beat)

Plus, he's a stand up guy. Rock solid.

MASON

Please don't.

V.

I've no doubt he'd help us if we were caught between a rock and a hard place.

MASON

If you keep that up, I will strand you out here and won't feel the slightest bit of concern.

WEXLER

Let's not antagonize our guide through the realm that is inimical to life as we know it.

V.

What else are we gonna do to...do to...woah.

An expansive ambient sound, as if we're entering a VAST space.

V. (cont'd)

This place is huge. I don't know how I know, but it just feels...big...too big...

WEXLER

(uncomfortable)

I know what you mean. Mason, are the Shallows always like this?

MASON

More or less. There's always fluctuations, but as far as the Gloom's concerned as a whole, this is about as safe as it gets.

(beat)

Then again, a five-inch puddle or a vast ocean, you can drown in either...

Mason's voice begins to echo. Louder, softer, louder, softer, etc.

MASON (cont'd)

Drown. DROWN. **drown.**

WEXLER

Why would you say something like that?

MASON

Something like what?

Another DROWN from Mason.

WEXLER

I thought...

(to self)

Focus, Evan, focus. You can do this, just keep your head on straight. The Gloom's going to try and get to you worse than any of them, just so it can get a lick of the Glimmer. Tap into the Center. Not much, just a little to keep your mind clear. Breath...

Wexler's voice fades as we settle our focus on V.

V.

(tired)

Good God, how much longer guys?

(beat)

Guys?

A deafening silence fills the soundscape. V is very, very alone.

V. (cont'd)

It's okay. You're fine. You're just lost in a black void that serves as the border to a realm that could only be dreamed up in a fifteen-year old boy's demented Pathfinder campaign.

1504 RIVKA'S ROOM - NIGHT

1504

Characters: Rivka, V, Roger

V. (V.O.)

As I wandered through the dark, impressions of shapes coalesced in the shadows. Not just shapes: scenes. I approached what looked like a child's bedroom, except that there wasn't a house around it. It looked like some kind of sitcom TV stage, but then I noticed a shifting under the covers.

The RUSTLING of blankets.

V.

(hesitant)

Hello?

More rustling.

V. (V.O.)

Just then, a small head with black hair popped out of the covers. A little girl, probably no older than six or seven. Her big brown eyes peered at me from over the blanket's edge.

V.

This isn't the place for little girls.

RIVKA

This is my room.

V.

Well, I suppose it is. What's your name?

RIVKA

Rivka.

V.

Nice to meet you, Rivka. My name's V.

RIVKA

That's not a name, that's a letter!

V.

It's both.

RIVKA

You're funny.

(beat)

Are we in the bad dream again?

V.

The bad dream?

RUSTLE.

RIVKA

(intimidated)

Uh-huh. I don't like the bad dream. I don't feel safe in here when the Bad Things come. The Bad Things are always trying to get me when I go to sleep. I hate it. I hate them!

V.

Hey, hey, it's okay. The Bad Things isn't going to get you. You're in bed, you're safe.

(faux-surprise)

Oh wow, look at all those toys you have.

RIVKA

They help keep me safe.

V.

The toys?

RIVKA

Uh-huh. I wake them up.

V.

Wake them up?

RIVKA

Uh-huh. There's Sergeant Ramsey, she's a tough soldier in the Terra Coalition.

V.

Terror coalition? Do you think you should be talking about stuff like that so close to your bedtime?

RIVKA

(emphasizing)

Terra Coalition. Terra means Earth, and Sergeant Ramsey means business. Then there's Princess Lyra, who has a magical wand that turns into any instrument she wants and makes magical music! And Feralus the Hound-Knight, who can sniff out evil!

V.

Very impressive!

RIVKA

But most important is that.

She points.

V.

The night light?

RIVKA

Uh-huh.

V.

What's so important about that?

RIVKA

It keeps the Bad Thing away when everything else doesn't. The Light always wakes up, even when the others don't.

V.

Well, I'm glad you have it, and have you seen my...friends...

RIVKA

What are you talking about?

V. (V.O.)

I looked around. The Shallows were gone. Surrounding me was the girl's room, which was impossible because I'd simply wandered into her room without even needing the door. There hadn't been any walls keeping me out.

(MORE)

V. (V.O.) (cont'd)

(beat)

Except now there were four walls  
keeping me in--stuffed animals, pink-  
and-white dollhouses, pretty much  
anything you'd expect a girly-girl to  
have, she had.

RIVKA

It's just us.

(meek)

For now.

V.

This isn't good...

V OPENS a window. A BREEZE blows in.

RIVKA

Hey, it's going to get cold!

V.

Right, sorry.

She SHUTS it.

V. (cont'd)

There's just a neighborhood out  
there. Nothing but sodium-yellow  
street lamps and rustling trees.

RIVKA

Well, duh. What'd you expect?

V.

A trans-dimensional portal leading to  
a realm of pure shadow?

RIVKA

Um. Okay?

V.

(muttering to self)

Gotta be some way out of here.

V opens the door.

RIVKA

That's just my closet!

The door shuts.

V.

This...this isn't right. How the fuck  
do I get out of here?



RIVKA

That's a dollar into the swear jar.

V.

What the fu--ss is that about?

RIVKA

That sentence doesn't quite make sense.

V.

Okay, the precocious child thing was cute in the mid 2000's but the Little Miss Sunshine thing has definitely worn out its welcome.

A drawer opens, closes.

RIVKA

Stop making so much noise!

A muted voice from down the hall.

RIVKA'S FATHER

Honey, is everything okay?

Foot steps drawing nearer.

RIVKA

You've really done it now! You need to hide!

V.

Hide? What the fuck!? I don't even know where I am! I shouldn't be here!

RIVKA

Just...find somewhere!

The footsteps grow louder.

V.

(grumbling)

You're lucky I don't just knock your old man on his ass.

RIVKA

Bad words! Hide!

More footsteps right outside the door. Scrambling as V finds a hiding spot--she should be making miscellaneous moving noises/grunts to emphasize her jostling around. There's a gentle knock at the door.

RIVKA'S FATHER  
Honey, can I come in?

RIVKA  
Yes.

The door slowly opens. Rivka is playing with her toys.

RIVKA (cont'd)  
(making a voice for  
the Sergeant)  
We have to move now or the Kirriliac  
Dominion will over run us!  
(now making a high-  
pitched voice for  
the Princess Lyra)  
But Sergeant, I don't even belong in  
this world, I'm just trying to find  
my way back to The Chanting Land!

RIVKA'S FATHER  
Aw, honey, you know you can't get  
yourself so worked up right before  
bed.

We hear a step and a plastic rattling.

RIVKA'S FATHER (cont'd)  
Oh sweetie, you dropped your Hound-  
Knight under the bed. Here, let me  
get him for you...

Rustling as he starts to bend over.

RIVKA'S FATHER (cont'd)  
You keep spilling your toys  
everywhere and they're gonna break--  
is that fur?

RIVKA  
He is a Hound-Knight.

RIVKA'S FATHER  
(straining)  
No, no...Rivka, are you hiding a dog  
under your bed or something? It's  
hard to see, but it almost looks  
like--

RIVKA  
Um, no uh...

Rivka screams as loud as she can!

RIVKA'S FATHER

What the huckleberry!

There's a COMMOTION as Rivka's Dad bolts up and stumbles. He TRIPS on a toy and crashes into the wall.

V.

(whispered)

Oh Jesus, that's not good. I guess that's why you don't leave Barbie's Bitchin' Pink Corvette just lying on the carpet.

RIVKA'S FATHER

God...dammit ugh.

RIVKA

Swear jar.

(beat)

Dad? Daddy?

(distraught)

Daddy?

V CRAWLS out from under the bed.

RIVKA (cont'd)

Daddy? Daddy? Daddy?

V.

Easy, kiddo, easy. Let me take a look.

(beat)

He's still breathing, I think he just konked himself out. He'll come to.

RIVKA

It's so dark, where's the nightlight?

V.

Hmm. I don't see it anywhere--

RIVKA

(frantic)

Where's the nightlight!?

V.

It's...I don't know kid! It's your room!

RIVKA

Pleasepleaseplease we need it.

V.  
Yeah, sure, lemme look. My vision's  
pretty decent in just the moonlight.  
(beat)  
Let's see...

There's a rushing sound, then it's gone.

V. (cont'd)  
What was that?

RIVKA  
(scared)  
It's here.

V.  
What's here?

RIVKA  
The Bad Thing. It comes if the  
nightlight isn't on.

V.  
(realizing, to self)  
Oh hell, it's a Creep that's been  
terrorizing you.

There's a SLITHERING sound, louder.

RIVKA  
I hear it.

V.  
Just hang on, I'll find it.  
(beat)  
There, looks like your old man fell  
on the nightlight and knocked it out  
of the socket, I'll just replace  
that.

There's the sound of a hand GRIPPING a forearm.

RIVKA'S FATHER  
(dazed)  
Rivka, honey, who's this?

The SLITHERING grows louder.

V. (V.O.)  
The girl's father gripped my wrist.  
He was still half out of sorts,  
barely coming too. Poor guy might've  
even had a concussion. I pulled my  
hand away.

(MORE)

V. (V.O.) (cont'd)

(beat)

And he fingers dug in even tighter.

For this next section, Roger's voice begins normal then grows increasingly DEEP and DISTORTED; let's convey the impression that he's growing to a freakish degree.

RIVKA'S FATHER

What did I say about friends spending the night sweetie?

RIVKA

The Bad Thing's got daddy!

RIVKA'S FATHER

The Bad Thing? The only thing that's bad is you, honey. You've been having friends over and that's against the rules!

V.

Fuck this, I've got places to be.

She SWIPES at Roger. He CATCHES her arm with a twisting sound.

V. (cont'd)

Agh, okay, okay, I'll admit that attempted sucker punch wasn't my proudest momen---agh!

Another TWISTING sound.

RIVKA'S FATHER

(demonic)

This is why, Rivka. Your guests have no manners.

V. (V.O.)

The girl's father stared at me, his eyes growing increasingly blank save for a sadistic hunger. His face began to bulge and protrude, as though his skin were little more than a burlap sack containing a writhing mass of snakes. The buttons popped off of his shirt as his chest and belly grew swollen and corpulent. The nightlight was just out reach--the grip he had on my arm was powered by something beyond raw muscle, and every time I made a grab for the nightlight his expanding body pushed me further away from it.

(MORE)

V. (V.O.) (cont'd)

His expanding body pinned me against the wall, knocking toys and stuffed animals to the ground.

Dull THUMPS and plastic clicking as teddy bears and dolls fall to the floor.

RIVKA'S FATHER

I know you, wolf-woman.

V.

(straining)

That's news to me.

RIVKA'S FATHER

I see into your fears. Your nightmares. Your terrors. I will smother you. You find that repulsive don't you? Trapped. Trapped like the animal you are.

V.

(straining)

Screw...you...

RIVKA'S FATHER

You don't even know, do you? I can tell, I can tell by the look in your eye. You don't know who you are. It's so easy for me to see into what deeply terrifies you. Claustrophobia. Crushing.

V.

(crushed)

I...don't know...what you mean...

RIVKA'S FATHER

Of course not. But it doesn't matter. So many have been trying to get to this little girl, and all it took was for you to wander into her nightmare and me to follow. And now I feast.

A harsher, more CRUSHING sound.

V. (V.O.)

I swung a few more times with my free hand, but his body swallowed my arm into himself. My skin crawled and crept in revulsion, my breath began to grow labored and shallow as his weight pressed against my lungs. Something popped deep in my body.

(MORE)

V. (V.O.) (cont'd)

A bone, maybe. Maybe something more vital.

(beat)

My vision began to constrict, a black snake coiled around the outer edge of my sight, then constricted until I could only see out from a pinprick.

RIVKA'S FATHER

That's it. Just give up, your muscle, your might has no place here. Wolf-woman, so proud of her prowess brought low by the shadows in her mind.

V.

(agonized)

You...aren't...real...

RIVKA'S FATHER

(cackling)

I'm real enough for you.

V. (V.O.)

Just as I began to lose consciousness, a light, brighter than anything I'd ever seen, blazed in the room. It illuminated the Dreamhowler from behind, the grotesque musculo-skeletal system darker and visible against the light-filled soft-tissue.

The father-monster begins to HOWL in pain.

V. (V.O.) (cont'd)

His form began to knit itself back into a human configuration. Shadows began flitting out of his mouth, his eyes, all of them darting like minnows under the window-sill into the starless night. I caught my breath without even thinking about it. Rivka's father lay before me curled in the fetal position. Behind him, the nightlight glowed, yes, but I could feel...some kind of fire or light behind the visible light. It licked at the Gloom inside of me, and I crumpled to my knees. Before I passed out, I saw Rivka, her small eyes glowing the white hot glow of magnesium ablaze.

(MORE)

V. (V.O.) (cont'd)

Next to the nightlight, was the military action figure, its plastic arms around the base of the nightlight as if it had just plugged it in.

V.

(pained)

Rivka...did you...do this?

RIVKA

Thanks for coming and playing, but you should go now. The Bad Things are always coming but the nightlight keeps them away. It looks like it's hurting you.

V.

(weak)

Y-yeah, I think it is. I don't want it to.

RIVKA

Goodbye, doggy-lady. Maybe we'll get to play in real-life sometimes.

V. (V.O.)

I had something snarky I was going to say to her, probably a quip that would fly over her ten year old head, but the room began to take on the stage-like quality that it had when I first found it. The nightmare was becoming looser, less substantial. My hands sunk into the floor. I felt fingers wrapping around my hands, tugging on me.

V.

Let go, let go of me I won't go!

A magical schloop, as if she's just been sucked through a portal, followed by a colliding/tumbling.

1505 EXT. THE SHALLOWS - NIGHT

1505

V.

I'll kill you this time, fucking kill you!

WEXLER

V! It's me!



A swipe, followed by a flesh-cutting sound. Wexler GRUNTS in pain.

WEXLER (cont'd)

Gah!

V.

I'll...

(gathering her bearings)

Oh fuck me Wexler, I'm so sorry.

WEXLER

It's fine.

V.

You're bleeding.

WEXLER

Hasn't stopped me before.

V.

(starts to babble)

I...I don't know what happened. There was this girl and her room was like a TV stage and I just walked on and got stuck and

(increasingly distraught)

then there was a creature that possessed her father I think it was a Dreamhowler and it began crushing me and I...I...I don't ever want to feel like that.

MASON

You're okay, wolf-sister. You stumbled into a nightmare, that's all. You'll be fine. You're a creature of the Gloom and you have power here.

V.

(shaken)

I think I broke something but my insides feel like they're knitting together.

MASON

The Gloom inside of you is drawing power from nearby.

V.

The girl...

WEXLER

We should get moving. I'm glad you're safe, V, but the longer we're out here, the more likely we are to run into another Dreamhowler, or worse.

MASON

It's not much farther. Just stay close. No wandering.

The faint sound of a CITY ahead.

WEXLER

Is that...?

MASON

There it is!

WEXLER

The Dim.

MASON

We made it, safe and mostly sound.

Increasingly BIZARRE and ALIEN city sounds fill the track.

MASON (cont'd)

May I present to you: the largest city of shadow-dwellers in the Southwest.

(theatrical)

Welcome to the Dim!

1506 EXT. CITY (THE DIM) - NIGHT

1506

Soundscape: We're in Austin, but it isn't the Austin we know. This is the Dim. It's weird, ethereal, spooky. In the distant we hear HOWLS, CACKLES, anything to let the listener know we're not in Kansas anymore.

V.

It's...big.

MASON

Our dim shadow of the Gross material world's Austin.

V.

I've heard of people having shadows, but a city?

MASON

Oh yes, all manner of non-human entities have a corresponding shadow. The hatred, greed, unbound lust, all of this is of the Gloom and this creates a corresponding shadow-image here in the Dim.

V.

I don't like this place.

WEXLER

Look on the bright side. At least you don't have to wear a freaking Prop imbued with the Gloom.

V.

How's the inner-tube holding up, anyway?

V SQUEEZES the inner-tube. Wexler SLAPS her hand away.

WEXLER

Easy!

V.

What?

WEXLER

It's a magic circle, V. If you pop it, it ceases to be a magic circle.

V.

So won't it become like a magic... melted do-nut?

WEXLER

Part of the magic is the circle.

MASON

Well said.

V.

Uh, okay.

WEXLER

It's...look, I don't have time to get into the nuts and bolts, let's just keep me from being horribly mutated by the pervasive corruption of this place, okay?

V.

You're the boss.

They start to WALK.

V. (cont'd)

So we're basically in, like, Shadow Austin?

MASON

If only. That implies some sort of one-to-one ratio. This city has it's own sprawl. It is its own beast, a labyrinth to put King Minos to shame.

V. (V.O.)

He wasn't wrong. We passed by storefront after storefront, neon signs flickering in the windows. I didn't know what was powering them-- electricity didn't exactly seem like Ohm's law of the land. Shadows shifted behind the windows, among the displays. Creeps of every shape and size trafficked the area. Wexler was noticeably anxious, but none of this seemed to phase Mason in the slightest, and I don't mean he was just putting on a stone face. Mason was attuned to this place, the way a busker knows his corner, his people. Wexler didn't seem to derive any confidence from Mason's composure. I didn't blame him, but it was strange to see all the same. Wexler was out of his element, without his traditional weapons and at the mercy of the beings he so long hunted.

V.

How you holding up?

WEXLER

(uneasy)

I'm fine.

We hear the SCAMPERING of a small Imp.

V.

Is that a...?

MASON

Hide you fool.

SHUFFLING as V and company CROUCH and hide.

V.  
What the hell--

MASON  
Shhh! That Imp was running from  
something.

The CLACK of sole on stone as FANG and FEED chase after,  
fading soon into the background ambience.

WEXLER  
Jesus!

Wexler DRAWS his gun, AIMS.

V.  
Relax, they're already gone.

WEXLER  
What was that?

V.  
You mean we just ran into something  
that even you don't know about?

WEXLER  
I'm not the Monster Manual, V.  
There's plenty I don't know. 'sides,  
they were moving too fast.

MASON  
An Imp, and two others. Humanoids,  
but I didn't a get look other than  
one of them was big.

V.  
Crazy, I wonder what they were up to.

WEXLER  
Hunting that imp, perhaps.

MASON  
Depress the crosswalk button, *s'il*  
*vous plait*.

V.  
I'm not a butler.

WEXLER  
And I'm not a creature of the night.  
The less I have to touch things in  
this place, the better.

V PUSHES the button.

CROSSWALK

Please. Wait.

V.

Uh-huh, I know what the red hand means.

CROSSWALK

Please. Wait. Before. Being. A bitch.

V.

Anyway, I see you're...wait, did the crosswalk just talk back?

WEXLER

It would seem so.

V.

Look, bub, I don't know who you are, but this is the 21st century. You can't just call women 'bitches'.

The Crosswalk BEEPS a countdown.

CROSSWALK

Five...four...three...two...one...

V.

Hello? I know you heard me. You can't just pretend to go back to being a crosswalk. I've got wolf-hearing, yeah? I heard you talking shit.

She RAPS on the metal pole.

WEXLER

Just leave it, not worth the trouble.

V.

I'm not gonna--leave it. Oh.

The Crosswalk FLIPS to walk.

CROSSWALK

Walk sign. Is. On.

V.

Fine let's just.

V takes a FEW STEPS.

WEXLER

Watch out!

Wexler SNATCHES her back. A large vehicle ROARS past.

WEXLER (cont'd)  
Jesus, V, keep your eyes peeled!

V.  
What the, but the...

CROSSWALK  
Ha. Ha. Ha.

V.  
I'll give you something to laugh at.

She SLAMS her fist into the button. The Crosswalk SPARKS,  
it's voice WARPING.

CROSSWALK  
(malfunctioning)  
Walk sign. Is. Oooooooooooooon.

V.  
That'll be the last time a crosswalk  
crosses me.

WEXLER  
We really have to work on your  
diplomacy.

V.  
I don't negotiate with haunted  
traffic infrastructure.

They CROSS.

V. (cont'd)  
It's bizarre. That thing was  
something out of a David Foster  
Wallace story.

MASON  
An Affect-Object. That thing was  
simply the leftover negative  
emotional energy from the city, from  
its pedestrians.

V.  
A crowd-sourced creature.

WEXLER  
The Gloom in one mind gets tangled up  
with the Gloom in another mind...

MASON

...and eventually knots up tight,  
snapping the threads connecting the  
various minds and collecting in a  
denser web of Gloom.

V.

And it's totally mindless and  
autonomous?

WEXLER

Yeah. Solomon...explained when I was  
an Inkling, that it's like there's  
two threads or streams running  
through the human mind.

V.

The Glimmer and the Gloom.

WEXLER

Naturally.

V.

Why don't we see any of the Glimmer?

WEXLER

You do. That's Imagomancy. The  
Glimmer is also strongest in children  
and the elderly.

V.

Bullshit. The Imagomancers don't use  
the Glimmer the way the Magi use the  
Gloom. You have to rely on Solomon to  
use spells, the Magi can practically  
mainline dark magic.

WEXLER

Ah. That. The Glimmer is...harder to  
harness than the Gloom these days. I  
don't know the full scope of it  
myself, but it's long and tangled and  
we've more pressing matters.

V.

Never thought you'd be one to miss an  
opportunity for backstory.

WEXLER

Don't try to be meta, V.

A BREEZE blows through, carrying a PAPER. They STOP WALKING.



V.  
Agh. Damn flyers.

WEXLER  
What's written on it?

V RUFFLES the page.

V.  
Missing persons poster. A bit old-school.

WEXLER  
Creeps can be. Many of them are quite old.

V CRUMPLES it.

V.  
Is it littering if I chuck this? Does the Dim have, like, an ecosystem that'll be damaged?

MASON  
Well, sort of...

The crumpled paper SCRAPES the sidewalk. There's a light SHUDDERING, like leaves in a breeze, then POP POP POP POP! The paper grows legs, then SKITTERS off.

V.  
(dumbfounded)  
Did...anyone else just see that?

WEXLER  
You mean the litter that grew spider legs? Uh-huh. Oh, oh, there it goes.

A car horn BLARES.

WEXLER (cont'd)  
Whoops, watch out for the traffic and--

A car runs the flyer-spider over.

WEXLER (cont'd)  
(pained)  
Ooof. Absolutely brutal, brief existence.

V.  
I...is that my fault?

WEXLER

I think so.

MASON

Definitely in some fashion. The further out you get from your plane of existence, the more ripples your intentions make.

V.

Okay.

(frowning her brow)

Ripples in what?

MASON

Excuse moi?

V.

You said ripples. Ripples in a pond happen in water, right? So what are ripple in the Dim? Hell, ripples in general for that matter?

MASON

We don't have time, we must move.

V.

Come on, you can't just--Mason, Mason!

MASON

Anyway, let's continue on shall we? My friend awaits.

AGONIZED cries of pain from THE IMP come from around the corner.

V TAKES off.

WEXLER

V, what the hell, where are you going?

V.

(heading away)

Someone's hurt!

WEXLER

There are no 'someones' here, it's all Cre--goddammit, she's already around the corner. Wait up, will you?

Wexler TAKES OFF after her.

MASON

Monsieur? Mademoiselle? Sacre bleau!  
Vincula is not going to be happy  
about this...

1507 EXT. ALLEY (THE DIM) - NIGHT

1507

Soundscape: Tighter, now that we're in an alleyway. It's still the Dim so we can make it extra eerie.

WEXLER (V.O.)

V was fast. She'd always been quick, but the partial transformation gave her more physical power than ever before. Good for her, but I wasn't doing so hot. Even with the magic-circle inner-tube Mason Crackclaw had given me, the Prop wasn't strong enough to keep the presence of the Dim from bearing down on me. The cliché for an oppressive environment, is pressure, but this was different. The Dim wasn't like having a weight press down on me. It was like having my own mind turn in on itself. Was I doing the right thing by following her? Was she running headlong into a trap? Would we ever find our way out? Did she want us to get into trouble? Had the Gloom in her been stoked by the Dim's malignant atmosphere, a cancer of nightmares awakening within her?

(beat)

Paranoia. Doubt. Mistrust. I had to focus my mind, keep the Gloom from twisting my thoughts against me. When I turned down the alley, that all went out the window.

WEXLER

V, are you okay?

V.

Easy, Wexler.

WEXLER (V.O.)

It took me a moment to quell my Gloom-addled brain. In the middle of the alley were three figures.

(MORE)

WEXLER (V.O.) (cont'd)

One was about the size of a toddler, with leathery bat-like wings and two horns the size of ice cream cones protruding from its forehead. It was an imp, a winged Hellbound, except that one wing had been torn off, and the other fluttered uselessly. Looming over the imp were two figures dressed in slacks and suspenders. The first one turned its attention to us. He was a pale man, paler than me, and I swore I saw his tongue flicker in and out at the sight of me. His massive companion towered over him, thick tufts of chest hair protruding over the collar of his button-up shirt.

V.

Let it go.

FEED

(yawning)

This gonna take long, Fang? I'm hungry and I'm all out of snacks.

FANG

The quicker we do this-s-s-s, the quicker you can eat.

The imp writhes.

FEED

This thing's lookin' pretty good though.

FANG

We were told to kidnap, not consuh-suh-suh

(clearing throat)

Not consuh-suh-suh . . . not eat!

FEED

Aw, but I'm hun-gry.

V.

Hey, assholes, did you hear me? Let the creepy bat thing creature go.

FEED

(mouth full)

Who're you? She looks familiar.

WEXLER

V, something's not right about these  
guys.

FANG

Fur, snout...claws-s-s.  
(beat)  
Check the picture, Feed.

RUSTLING sounds as Feed gets out his phone.

FEED

(slowly)  
Hang on, Fang.

Smartphone button press sounds as Feed attempts to open his  
phone lock.

FEED (cont'd)

One. Moment.

FANG

Hurry up.

More futile button pressing.

FEED

So. Hungry.

There's a loud chomping and squeak as Feed devours half of  
the imp. Blood begins to spatter in the alleyway as it  
drains from the gory stump of the imp.

FANG

Oh come on, Feed!

The smartphone tapping stops.

FEED

Wha?

Emphasis here on the blood TRICKLING out of the body.

FEED (cont'd)

Aw. Shit. I ate 'em.

WEXLER

(whispering)  
Having second thoughts about the  
heroics, V? I had to get rid of my  
tattoos.

V.

I--I don't know what got into me.  
(MORE)



CREDITS (cont'd)

Want to help V find more agreeable  
ways of dealing with hostile  
architecture? Find us online at  
[100handed.com](http://100handed.com).