

Second Draft

Xesque
by
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Reg. #: Pending

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FADE IN.

1 EXT. -- CHINATOWN SKYLINE - DAY 1

LS - CITY SKYLINE

The vast muddle of grandiose state buildings and humbler plebeian dwellings stretches beyond the horizon. The SOUND of SIRENS, CAR HORNS and the SEETHING MASS OF HUMANITY greets us as plumes of SMOKE rise from chimneystacks to mingle with the smoggy haze.

WIPE (FROM BOTTOM TO TOP):

2 EXT. -- BUSY MARKET STREET - DAY 2

MLS - TRACK ON PROFESSOR

The weather-beaten, khaki-clad PROFESSOR strides through the bustling market streets.

PROFESSOR (V.O.)

I don't know what life is like without the voices. I've learned to put them into the background but they're always there ... I was in town for no other reason but to lose myself amongst the ocean of second-hand thoughts this city afforded me. Being out among strangers used to be hard. Now it feels good to be able to look into the eyes of the voices I hear.

MS - OLD MAN SELLING A HAT

The PROFESSOR walks by an OLD MAN at a HAT STALL in the middle of his sales patter with a WOMAN trying on a HAT.

WOMAN

Well, I'm not sure that it goes with my hair.

WOMAN (V.O.)

My face looks so fat ...

OLD MAN

Madam, its you, see, it matches your eyes...

(CONTINUED)

PROFESSOR (V.O.)

I don't know when I first started hearing the voices. There's a comfort to them. Like learning music; after a few lessons it becomes easier to hear the melodies and separate out the instruments from within the orchestra.

Bringing a MIRROR closer.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

And that bow is so ... you.

WOMAN (V.O.)

It is a nice bow...

OLD MAN (V.O.)

Buy the damn hat, you ugly old hag...

MCU - TRACK PROFESSOR

We HEAR the SOUND of RANDOM THOUGHTS. And as people bustle by the PROFESSOR, their thoughts come to the foreground.

PASSER BY 1 (V.O.)

The cats good, its a good cat. Ooh look at those melons...

PASSER BY 2 (V.O.)

God, I hate that wrinkly-faced bastard...

PROFESSOR (V.O.)

When I was a kid I didn't hear them at all. They crept up on me. Learning to focus on one or two at a time took a time ... learning not to take advantage is something I'm still working on ... but the background chatter surrounds and soothes me ... Had I known what was about to happen, I'd have vacationed in the Himalayas.

3 EXT. -- MARKET STALL - DAY

3

MS - SIMIAN BY MARKET STALL WITH BINOCULARS

The commanding and ominous figure of SIMIAN, dressed in a light, cotton suite and fez, observes the PROFESSOR through his binoculars.

4 EXT. -- BUSY MARKET STREET - DAY 4

MLS - POV SIMIAN - TRACK PROFESSOR THROUGH BINOCULARS

The PROFESSOR continues through the crowd, completely unaware of his observer.

5 EXT. -- MARKET STALL - COMPUTER - DAY 5

CU - COMPUTER SCREEN

SIMIAN scrutinizes his laptop. We SEE a rotating 3D IMAGE of the PROFESSOR with SCROLLING STATS and geometry.

He is pleased with what he sees.

6 EXT. -- MARKET STALL - DAY 6

MS - PICKPOCKET BY SIMIAN

SIMIAN places a firm hand on the shoulder of his subdued young cohort, a scruffy dressed PICKPOCKET who stands by him at the market stall.

MCU - PICKPOCKET

The PICKPOCKET raises her blank face as SIMIAN crouches, staring deep into her eyes. Almost imperceptibly, the PICKPOCKET nods her head.

As SIMIAN removes his hand from her shoulder the PICKPOCKET becomes alert and animated, like a hunting dog that has detected the scent of its prey.

MS - TRACK PICKPOCKET

Choosing her moment carefully, the PICKPOCKET dodges between, under and around people toward her target.

CU - PICKPOCKET

With practiced ease she lifts the PROFESSOR'S shirt, and slides his WALLET from his back pocket.

CU - PROFESSOR

The PROFESSOR'S eyes flair wide open as he detects something is awry.

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6

CU - TRACK PICKPOCKET

As the PROFESSOR swings round the PICKPOCKET streaks off through the crowd.

MS - TRACK PROFESSOR

The PROFESSOR gives chase, his progress hampered by his grater size.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. -- ALLEY - DAY

7

MLS - PICKPOCKET

Down the street and into an alleyway. The PICKPOCKET is almost at the far end of the alley.

CU - PROFESSOR

The PROFESSOR'S panting gives way to a slight smirk. He closes his eyes and raises his hand in the PICKPOCKET'S direction.

CU - PICKPOCKET

We HEAR the Professor's THOUGHTS OVERLAPPING until they build into a distinct instruction.

PROFESSOR (V.O.)

Don't ... Cease ... You don't want to do that.. STOP!

The PICKPOCKET freezes in mid stride. Panic takes over her face.

MS - TRACK PROFESSOR

The PROFESSOR, brushing himself down, walks to the PICKPOCKET and retrieves his WALLET from her raised hand.

CU - PROFESSOR

The instant the WALLET leaves the Pickpocket's hand, we HEAR a HIGH-PITCHED WHISTLE, accompanied by a THROBBING, RUMBLING ECHO, like feedback from a dropped chain. The Professor's head arches back and he lets out an BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM.

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7 CONTINUED:

7

The Professor's world becomes a DISTORTED, PSYCHEDELIC NEGATIVE.

MLS - FROM ABOVE ON PROFESSOR IN ALLEY

The PROFESSOR continues screaming as he raises his hands to his head, and curls up into the fetal position on the ground.

The PICKPOCKET scampers off through a rusted metal door, set into one of the alley walls.

FADE TO BLACK.

The SOUND of the DOOR SLAMMING reverberates through the professor's head, adds weight to the THROBBING of his HEART and combines with the SOUNDS OF THE CITY to become and OVERWHELMING WHITE NOISE.

FADE IN.

8 EXT. -- ALLEY - DAY

8

MCU - PROFESSOR

The world is quiet once again.

The PROFESSOR opens his eyes and carefully gets on to his hands and knees. He shakes his head, as though to cast out the last remaining elements of fuzziness. He looks towards the DOOR and frowns.

9 INT. -- SIMIAN'S BAR - DAY

9

MLS - BAR, SCATTERED CUSTOMERS, DOOR

The bar looks like it has been in stasis for the past fifty years. The few customers that are there sit by themselves, staring at their drinks.

MCU - DOOR

The PROFESSOR enters through the door, and nods at the BARTENDER.

CU - BARTENDER

The BARTENDER nods acknowledgement.

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9 CONTINUED:

9

MCU - FROM ABOVE: PROFESSOR SITS DOWN

The PROFESSOR takes a seat at a corner table.

MS - WAITER, PROFESSOR AT TABLE

The WAITER approaches, as though to take a drink order.

PROFESSOR

Jack Daniel's, on the rocks.

We HEAR an ELECTRONICALLY CHARGED ECHOING WHISPER build, until words become recognizable and finally the Waiter's own words sync up.

WHISPER (V.O)

... You're not here to...

WAITER

(A little awkwardly)
You're not here to drink.

The PROFESSOR looks unfazed by this unusual response.

WAITER (cont'd)

We wouldn't want anything to disrupt
your powers of concentration. Now
would we?

MS - CHANGE ANGLE

The WAITER moves on to another table, apparently unaware of what he just said.

MCU - PROFESSOR, BALCONY IN BACKGROUND

Something arouses the Professor's attention. He looks up towards a balcony area.

10 INT. -- SIMIAN'S BAR - BALCONY - DAY

10

MCU - BALCONY

The balcony is a simple raised area with steps at each side, and a curtained archway.

SIMIAN enters through the curtains, a sultry SIREN on each arm. He nods welcome to the PROFESSOR.

11 INT. -- SIMIAN'S BAR - TABLE - DAY

11

The PROFESSOR nods in return.

12 INT. -- SIMIAN'S BAR - BALCONY - DAY 12

MCU - SIREN 1

The SIREN on SIMIAN's left turns to him.

As with the WAITER'S strange dialog, again we HEAR the BUILDING WHISPER, but this time it is that of the PROFESSOR.

PROFESSOR (V.O)	SIREN 1
Move. Turn. Speak. Say: Is this how...	Is this how you welcome all your patrons?

CU - SIMIAN'S MOUTH

SIMIAN sneers at this comment.

MCU - SIREN 2

Now the SIREN on SIMIAN's right turns to him. And we HEAR the PROFESSOR'S suggestive TELEPATHIC WHISPER.

PROFESSOR (V.O.)	SIREN 2
Yes. Talk. Murmur. Lips. Speak: Is a drink too...	Is a drink too much to ask for?

CU - SIMIAN'S MOUTH

SIMIAN guffaws.

13 INT. -- SIMIAN'S BAR - TABLE - DAY 13

MS - WAITER, PROFESSOR AT TABLE

The WAITER approaches the PROFESSOR'S table again.

SIMIAN (V.O.)	WAITER
... My! The reports were right ...	My! The reports were right, you are powerful. It has been a long time since I have had the pleasure of such a challenger.

14 INT. -- SIMIAN'S BAR - POV CEILING FAN - DAY 14

MLS - ABOVE

SIMIAN and his escort sit at a table directly across the room from the PROFESSOR.

(CONTINUED)

The two men face each other.

CU - SIMIAN'S FACE

SIMIAN's expression is blank, unreadable.

CU - PROFESSOR'S FACE

The PROFESSOR looks poker-faced as well.

CU - SIMIAN'S FACE

SIMIAN grins and focuses on the PROFESSOR.

MS - PROFESSOR

The GOSSAMER MENTAL SPIRIT of the PROFESSOR stands, leaving his physical body behind at the table.

15 EXT. -- PSYCHEDELIC LANDSCAPE - DAY

15

MLS - PAN RIGHT TO DUO

SIMIAN and the PROFESSOR stand opposite in a surreal landscape where rocky formations reach into a sky which boils red. The HIGH-PITCHED WAILING of a million lost spirits surrounds them.

MCU - SIMIAN & PROFESSOR

SIMIAN

Welcome to my domain, Professor.

PROFESSOR

You are a truly gifted telepath. But why bring me here?

CU - SIMIAN

SIMIAN

I am Simian. I have been watching you since your abilities came to my attention.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

CU - SIMIAN'S MOUTH

SIMIAN (cont'd)

I had thought you might make a valuable asset to my organization, but I see you have no respect for my line of work ... knowing of my powers makes you a liability.

CU - PROFESSOR

PROFESSOR

This serves no purpose. Together we could do so much to rectify human-kind's mistakes ... instead of manipulation we could encourage cooperation.

MCU - BOTH

SIMIAN

Enough. You dare preach morals to me! This will be a short dual.

CU - PROFESSOR

PROFESSOR

Dual? Wait a minute...

16 INT. -- SIMIAN'S BAR - DAY

16

MLS - THE TWO TABLES

In the bar, the two men silently stare across the room at each other.

17 EXT. -- PSYCHEDELIC LANDSCAPE - DAY

17

MCU TO MLS - ZOOM OUT ON SIMIAN

SIMIAN steps away from the PROFESSOR and morphs into a SUITE OF BATTLE ARMOR.

SIMIAN

... and I reserve the right to choose weapons.

MCU - SIMIAN

A crackling FLAMING SWORD appears in SIMIAN'S hand.

(CONTINUED)

MLS - PROFESSOR

The PROFESSOR takes a step backwards.

PROFESSOR
Don't make me fight you, Simian.

MCU - SIMIAN

SIMIAN
It's your choice. But I would rather
you put up some sort of resistance
before you die ... give me a
challenge. It's been so long since
I've had one.

SIMIAN brings his sword down on the PROFESSOR with
lighting speed.

MLS - PROFESSOR

A SHIELD materializes in the PROFESSOR'S hands.

MCU - TRACK SHIELD

He brings it up in time to block the sword...

MLS - PROFESSOR

... The sword hits with a flash of searing light and a
deafening crash, the force of which throws the PROFESSOR
off his feet sending him flying back.

MCU - SIMIAN

SIMIAN guffaws.

SIMIAN (cont'd)
Come now, Professor. Are you just
going to let me wipe your nose, change
your diaper and send you right back to
kindergarten ... or are you going to
at least give me a little fun.

SIMIAN'S hand now fills with the heft of a BATTLE SPEAR.

MCU - PROFESSOR

The PROFESSOR struggles to his feet and adopts a crisp
karate stance.

(CONTINUED)

MLS - BOTH

SIMIEN charges.

MCU - SIMIEN

SIMIEN swings his spear at the professor's neck.

CU - PROFESSOR

A QUARTER-STAFF blocks the battle spear.

MLS - BOTH

The PROFESSOR uses the force of the blow to flip gracefully through the air and land behind SIMIEN.

CU - PROFESSOR

PROFESSOR
Give it your best shot.

MCU - SIMIEN

SIMIEN
Thank you. I believe I will.

He walks into the PROFESSOR.

MCU - PROFESSOR

The PROFESSOR deflects one blow, then another.

MLS - BOTH

SIMIEN executes a flip over the PROFESSOR'S head...

CU - PROFESSOR'S BACK

... and cuts into the PROFESSOR'S upper back, as the PROFESSOR turns to face the new direction. He visibly sags. The GASH fills with ruby RED BLOOD.

CU - 180 TRACK FROM PROFESSOR'S BACK TO FRONT

Although the PROFESSOR'S face is unmoving, his face fixed in concentration, a DEEP RED STAIN matching the gash on his back floods through the fabric on the back of his shirt.

19 EXT. -- PSYCHEDELIC LANDSCAPE - DAY 19

MCU - SIMIAN

Smirking, SIMIAN tosses the spear up into the air, and when it lands back in his hands it has transformed into a set of NUN-CHACKS.

SIMIAN

I see you've learned a valuable lesson. For us there is no divide between mind and body. When you die here, your material body dies with you. And trust me, your will be dead ... when I finish with my fun.

MLS - PROFESSOR

SIMIAN becomes a blur as he moves in a tight circle around the PROFESSOR, delivering rapid blow after rapid blow.

MCU - PROFESSOR

The PROFESSOR groans with each blow. He falls to his knees.

SIMIAN (cont'd)

You could never win against me. This is my domain, limited only by my imagination. Here, I have total power. It's a shame really; you have so much raw talent ...

20 INT. -- SIMIAN'S BAR - DAY 20

CU - PROFESSOR IN PROFILE

bRUIISING is showing on the PROFESSOR'S face, blood trickles from his nose, and PERSPIRATION beads on his brow.

CU - SIMIAN IN OPPOSITE PROFILE

SIMIAN is equally composed, but shows no outward signs of the distress.

21 EXT. -- PSYCHEDELIC LANDSCAPE - DAY 21

(CONTINUED)

MCU - PROFESSOR

The PROFESSOR is on his hands and knees, head lolling forward, when SIMIAN abruptly stops his barrage of blows.

MLS - BOTH ABOVE

SIMIAN stands with his hands in his POCKETS.

SIMIAN

You cannot hang on forever, Professor.
Eventually your physical being will be
able to take no more, and your mind
will suffer for an eternity in this
limbo.

CU - SIMIAN'S HANDS

He pulls his hands from his pockets, he has THROWING STARS.

SIMIAN (cont'd)

Allow me to demonstrate.

CU - SIMIAN

SIMIAN throws the throwing stars.

CU - POV THROWING STAR

The throwing stars fly directly towards the PROFESSOR'S forehead.

CU - PROFESSOR

At the last moment, the PROFESSOR lifts his head.

PROFESSOR

No!

CHANGE SHOT

The throwing stars stop their forward motion and rotate, suspended in the air millimeters from his sweating brow.

CU - SIMIAN

SIMIAN

What?!

(CONTINUED)

CU - PROFESSOR

PROFESSOR

You're wrong. Our power is only
limited by our imagination...

MCU - PROFESSOR

The PROFESSOR transforms into SIMIAN.

SIMIAN stares with terror at his throwing stars, which
are now, suspended millimeters in front of his own
forehead.

CU - PROFESSORS LIPS

PROFESSOR (cont'd)

... and my mind is free of all the
narrow minded hatred and bigotry that
stifles your own ... I can feel your
fear..I can use it. Your only try to
create it in others .. but I don't
need to. I sense you have enough of
your own. I only need to amplify it.

MCU - SIMIAN

We see the slightest flicker of forward motion in the
throwing stars as the professpr releases his telepathic
hold on them.

SIMIAN

No!

22 INT. -- SIMIAN'S BAR - DAY

22

MLS - BAR AND THE TWO TABLES

The PROFESSOR pushes his chair back from the table,
slowly stands and walks to the door.

SIMIAN still sits stock still.

The PROFESSOR opens the door, walks through it and closes
it behind him.

At the exact moment that the door shuts, SIMIAN falls
forward onto the table, which collapses and spills him
onto the floor.

The SIRENS rush to his aid.

23 EXT. -- ALLEY - DAY

23

MLS - SILHOUETTE OF PROFESSOR'S PROFILE IN SHADOWS

The PROFESSOR straightens his cloths and walks from the alley into the main Market Street.

PROFESSOR (V.O.)

That day I learned that not all telepaths would see the world through my eyes. In that brief moment when Simian's body died, I saw his mind pass into an eternity of suffering, and I vowed never to let anyone misuse such power again ... including myself.

FADE OUT.

24 THE END

24