



"Pilot"

Written by

Tracy Nicoletti

WGA #1965521

tracynicoletti@gmail.com

DRAFT 7

02/08/21

EXT. WALES - DAY - ESTABLISHING

CHYRON: WALES, LONG AGO.

We open on the lush hills and valleys of the Welsh countryside. A sea of emerald and brown reeds undulate, bending and bowing as frigid wind sweeps overhead. Herds of sheep graze, undisturbed.

 HOWELL (V.O.)
Wales, the birthplace of magic.
Home to some of the greatest
legends the world's ever known.
Arthur, The Lady of the Lake,
Excalibur...

It's a quiet place. Sacred. Nearby, a forest shivers.

EXT. GLYN CLOTHI FOREST - DAY

Leaves bristle in the wind. One snaps loose, drifting slowly to the forest floor. It rests for a moment, before--

There's a SWIRL OF BLUE. And then, CRUNCH. The leaf is crushed underfoot, as BOOT meets EARTH.

The boot belongs to MYRDDIN WYLLT (30s). Wild hair. Bohemian robes. Sherlock meets Captain Jack Sparrow, a hurricane of brains, power, and crazy.

His eyes glow an unsettlingly bright BLUE. But after a beat, they muddy, darkening.

 HOWELL (V.O.)
To you, they may be stories. But to
us, it's history.

Myrddin exits the forest, heading for the leaning cobblestone tower that punctuates the horizon - CAERFYRDDIN. A GRAY OWL takes flight, flapping after him.

EXT. CAERFYRDDIN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Myrddin climbs up a cramped, spiraling staircase, into--

A LOFT. Complete with teetering old tomes and antiquated relics. The room comes to life around Myrddin as blue energy, his magic, snakes through it.

 HOWELL (V.O.)
There was a time when we could walk
between worlds. When the impossible
was within reach, and charms were
as common as currency.

The owl twitters, alighting on the windowsill. Myrddin scratches its head affectionately, before approaching a particularly large, dog-eared book. As he flips through the pages, outside, a terrible creature SHRIEKS faintly. But he pays no mind, eyes desperately searching the text. Lips quickly and quietly moving.

HOWELL (V.O.)

We called this other world Annwn.
The land of the fae, the wellspring
from which our magic derived.

His eyes glow bright blue, and energy swirls around him, as we cut to--

EXT. ANNWN - DAY

Strange BIRDCALL echoes through a misty wood. Six-legged STAG pad through the haze, stopping to graze on ferns. FAE zip by, their gossamer wings sparkling as they catch the light.

A trio of WOOD KIDS - made of straw and yew, with glowing yellow eyes - leap over fallen trees, giggling, as they chase after a WATER LEAPER.

HOWELL (V.O.)

But long ago, the doors between our
worlds closed. Our magic faded. No
one remembers why.

SOMETHING large and dark moves through the mist, accompanied by an unsettling RATTLE. It SHRIEKS, the same awful rattle Myrddin heard from the loft.

Spooked, the Wood Kids and Fae and Stag bound away, leaving us alone with the nightmare in the wood.

But soon the edges of the frame fizzle away, dissolving as that world is sealed off, returning us to the comfort of Glyn Clothi.

EXT. CARDIFF - WALES - DAY - ESTABLISHING

CHYRON: WALES, NOW.

In stark contrast to the ethereal woods, CARDIFF is bustling. A major hub of activity and commerce. People move through life at blinding speeds - hailing taxis and talking fast. Constantly on the go, living in fast forward.

HOWELL (V.O.)

We've forgotten who we are. But we
need to remember.

There's an overpowering volume to all of it - the music, the conversation, the impatient traffic. It's all so loud.

EXT. CARDIFF CASTLE - DAY

But in the middle of all the bustle, CARDIFF CASTLE sleeps, quietly decaying with time. It's grandeur juxtaposes the surrounding white-washed shop fronts and modern buildings.

HOWELL (O.S.)
Because something's out there,
pulsing at the edge of our world.

Uniformed SCHOOLCHILDREN run about the open green lawns of the castle, waving Welsh flags. Some climb atop sculpture displays of the RED DRAGON - Wales' national symbol. We push in on one of the dragons, as--

HOWELL (CONT'D)
RAWR!

Tourists SHRIEK and LAUGH, as HOWELL DAVIES (17) - trying desperately to channel early 2000s Criss Angel - growls theatrically, hands hooked like claws.

HOWELL (CONT'D)
Alright alright, you've heard the spiel. I know you came here to see some magic!

Tourists cheer as Howell rolls back his sleeves. He produces a single sheet of ORIGAMI PAPER and shows it to the audience.

HOWELL (CONT'D)
As you can see, I have a sheet of ordinary folding paper in my hand.

His eyes land on a pretty AMERICAN GIRL (16) in the crowd, and he zeroes in.

HOWELL (CONT'D)
You there. Care to verify that this is, in fact, ordinary folding paper?

The American blushes, shyly stepping forward. She tentatively takes the paper, twisting it in her hands.

AMERICAN GIRL
It is.

HOWELL
Now, hold it up high. Everyone can see that it is plain folding paper?

There's MURMURS from the crowd, nods. Howell then snatches the paper from the American's hand and stuffs it into his mouth. She gapes as he chews, exaggerating each and every crunch of his jaw.

And when he opens his mouth, a slightly soggy but perfectly formed ORIGAMI CRANE is on his tongue. He retrieves it, balancing it in his palm as he shows it off to the crowd.

The audience claps. Slightly impressed, mostly confused.

HOWELL (CONT'D)

Hold on. Don't clap just yet. We're just getting to the best part.

Howell suddenly claps his hands together. The crane flattens. There's a beat of silence, as everyone collectively holds their breaths in anticipation.

As Howell's hands slowly cup and part, we see a hint, a spark of GREEN. Blink, and you'd miss it. And then a SMALL BIRD peeks from between his fingers. A European Robin. It CHIRPS cheerfully, pecking at its feathers.

As the crowd OOHS and AAHS, Howell throws the bird up into the sky and it flies away. We follow it, as it soars up and away from the castle grounds, far above the expanse of modern-day, urban Wales.

As the soulful banjo and synth of The Eagles' "Journey of the Sorcerer" rises, we smash to--

TITLES: OTHERWORLD

EXT. DAVIES HOUSE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A quaint, two-story, semi-detached home in the Cardiff suburbs. White-washed walls, with a blue door and two bay windows that overlook the street.

An enclosed miniature lawn hems in small, pave stones that lead up to the front door. The garden's blooming with life, splashed with vibrant flowers and practically overflowing with plant matter.

As we push in on one of the second story windows, we enter--

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A teenage boy's room. Clothes carpet the wood flooring and various books, bottles, and toys are strewn across every available surface. The walls are plastered with vintage vaudeville posters. Homages to great magicians of old - David Devant, Harry Houdini, James Randy...

Howell sits cross-legged on his bed, focusing intently on a PING PONG BALL in his palm. He fluidly rolls it between his fingers, before making it disappear with a flourish.

He holds his pose for a moment, blinking. Another wave of the hand. Nothing.

Squinting, he bends over the textbook in front of him - "Secrets of Magic" by Lance Burton. The pages are covered in black and white photos - close-ups of hands, explaining the mechanics of the illusion.

There's a KNOCK at the door. He doesn't look up as he answers.

HOWELL

Enter.

Howell's older sister, TEGAN DAVIES (24) enters. She seems tired - gray wisps hide in her muddy brown hair, and deep creases drag down the corners of her lips.

TEGAN

Glad I caught you. Can we talk a moment?

Howell nods, pushing aside his textbook to make room on his bed. She sits on the edge, surveying the ungodly mess with disapproval.

Tegan shifts awkwardly. She grabs one of the ping pong balls on his bedspread, rolling it in her hands. She gestures to the book.

TEGAN (CONT'D)

What's this?

HOWELL

Just practicing. Trying out some new things.

TEGAN

Show me, then.

He takes another ping pong ball, and--

FLICK! It's gone. Tegan waits, expectant.

HOWELL

(after a beat, dejected)
Ta-Dah!

TEGAN

Doesn't it come back?

HOWELL
 It's supposed to.
 (sheepish)
 Haven't quite nailed that part.

 TEGAN
 Here.

She reaches behind his ear, and, using the one she grabbed earlier, makes a ball "appear". Howell stares incredulously at the perfect white sphere pinched between her fingers.

 HOWELL
 How'd you do that?

 TEGAN
 (teasing)
 Magic!

Tegan tousles his hair playfully. But her smile fades.

 TEGAN (CONT'D)
 So, uh... I wanted to talk to you.
 About that.

Howell nods slowly, studying her expression.

 TEGAN (CONT'D)
 I know it's your thing, but--
 You're turning 18 soon. You should
 start thinking about getting a
 proper job.

 HOWELL
 I've been doing pretty well. The
 tips from the last castle show were
 quite decent, actually.

 TEGAN
 But relying on tourists' spare
 change and good will is no way to
 live, Howell. Not in the long run.

 HOWELL
 I know this isn't about money,
 Teeg... Cut to the chase.

Tegan clocks a FAMILY PHOTO on Howell's dresser. They're just KIDS in the picture, posed between two happy, loving PARENTS. Tegan's expression softens, saddens.

 TEGAN
 I know that magic is a part of you,
 and you love it.
 (MORE)

TEGAN (CONT'D)

'Course you would, why wouldn't you? And you go out there every day and make a name for yourself and I'm proud. I am.

(beat)

I just keep thinking, "what if?"
What if that happens again?

Tegan squeezes the ping pong ball in her fist as we cut to--

FLASHBACK:

A memory of the same bedroom. The darkness is all encompassing, swirling through the room like a mist.

LILIAN

HOWELL!

LILIAN DAVIES screams for her son, eyes wild, as SOMETHING drags her into the void. Her nails scrape across the hardwood floor.

HOWELL (5), is pressed against the wall in fear. He wheezes, gasping with terror, as we hear a familiar, evil RATTLE--

THE PRESENT

POP! Tegan startles, looking down at her clenched fist. She loosens her grip to reveal the ping pong ball, badly dented. She lets it drop and it rolls across the floor, coming to rest next to the faded scars from their mother's fingernails.

HOWELL

It won't.

TEGAN

I wish I could believe that.

HOWELL

I'm not a little kid anymore,
Tegan. I can control it now, for
the most part. Look--

Howell sits straight and closes his eyes. Takes a deep breath in, out. In, out. And when he opens his eyes, they GLOW, an ethereally bright green.

The room around them comes to life. Clothes lift off the floor and hang themselves in the closet. Books slide into his backpack, which zips itself shut. And Howell's outfit changes, turning sleepwear into a fresh-pressed ACADEMIC UNIFORM.

Tegan watches it all in awe. She rises, standing in the middle of it as the effortless magic swirls around her. But when she sees the photo, sees her mom's face, her smile falls.

TEGAN

Can you bring her back?

Howell looks up in surprise. Follows her gaze to the picture on his dresser, then to the claw marks on the floor.

HOWELL

You know I wish I could...

TEGAN

That's what I thought.

Tegan exits, leaving Howell alone. He hangs his head, deflating.

INT. DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

GARETH PARRY (28) - Tegan's fiancé, chubby, Dad-vibes - sits at the small table in his BATHROBE, drinking TEA and reading the NEWSPAPER. Tegan enters, throwing herself into a chair with a huff. Gareth slides her a CUP.

GARETH

Well, the roof didn't blow off. So that was rather a success, was it not? Said your piece and all?

She sips her tea, pensive.

TEGAN

Yeah. But it's like telling the forest it can't have trees. He'll do as he always does, and I'll keep on worrying.

GARETH

You're a brave girl. Years on, I'm still getting used to having him in the house.

TEGAN

Honestly, the magic's always terrified me. It's just not natural.

(beat)

Gosh, I could never tell him that. Can you imagine? He'd--

Gareth pulls her into a hug, quieting her. He kisses the top of her head.

TEGAN (CONT'D)

I wish Mom was still here. She was so good with that stuff. I'm not equipped for any of this.

GARETH

Don't be so hard on yourself.

TEGAN

I just... I'm trying, Gareth. But I can't keep waiting for the other shoe to drop. It's making me prematurely gray!

Tegan grabs a lock of her hair, showing Gareth. He laughs it off.

GARETH

Where? I don't see any?

INT. FOYER - SIMULTANEOUS

Howell silently slides down the BANNISTER. He hops off near the FRONT DOOR, he pushes one EARBUD into his ear. As he scrolls through his PHONE--

TEGAN (O.S.)

I just don't want us to end up like Mom.

Howell frowns, leaning back as he peers into the KITCHEN.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

GARETH

I won't let that happen.

TEGAN

(doing a Shrek voice)
You and what army?

But she chuckles, wiping a stray tear away from her eye. He tilts her chin up, and kisses her.

INT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Howell gags. Gross. He squints, focusing on the mugs of tea on the table. His eyes FLASH as--

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Gareth picks up his mug. Just as he's about to take a sip, the contents SPLASH his face.

Tegan's eyes dart to the front door as--

SLAM!

EXT. DAVIES HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON THE KICKSTARTER as Howell revs his MOTORBIKE. He pushes off from the curb, swerving out into the empty street as the engine roars.

EXT. ST. DAVID'S COLLEGE - DAY

A converted, multi-story English country home looms majestically behind wrought-iron gates. Like Cardiff Castle, this place seems old, immune to the passage of time.

Note: In the UK, college is where students go between high school (grades 10-11) and university.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Class is in full swing. Fifteen or so STUDENTS sit quietly, taking notes as the PROFESSOR lectures by the whiteboard.

PROFESSOR

Now, please take out your anthology books and turn to page 196: John Donne's "Song". As you'll note from your readings last night, there are many similarities to the ballad of Scarborough Fair.

Howell enters, late. He makes no attempt to be quiet, confidently striding to his desk and slamming his BAG and HELMET down.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

(thinly)

So nice of you to join us, Mr. Davies.

(clearing throat)

As I was saying, faith and infidelity are huge overarching tones in this piece, echoing Donne's own frustration with failed romances.

STACY TARVER (17) - coy, confident - makes eye contact with Howell as she sweeps hair behind her ear. She scribbles something down and gently tears a sheet from her notebook.

The folded note is handed to a neighboring STUDENT, before being passed down the row to Howell. He carefully unfolds it in his lap.

INSERT: "When can I see you again? I can't stop thinking about last weekend."

He smirks, catching her eye again. She blushes, hiding behind her hair.

As the teacher turns around to write on the whiteboard, Howell makes a show, waving his hands like a magician. A couple STUDENTS roll their eyes, clearly over it.

CLOSE ON Stacy's notebook. Ink bleeds through the paper, slowly revealing a drawing of a ROSE. As the color fills it, it looks more and more lifelike. Stacy touches it, startling. She picks it up, marveling.

Stacy looks over her shoulder and Howell winks, smirking.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Mr. Davies, if you would start us off by reciting the first few lines?

Without missing a beat, Howell rises, cracking open his book. He doesn't break eye contact with Stacy as he recites--

HOWELL

"Go and catch a falling star, and get with child a mandrake root. Tell me where all past years are, or who cleft the devil's foot."

INT. HALLWAY - ST. DAVID'S COLLEGE - LATER

After class, Howell runs to catch up to Stacy. She's surrounded by a group of friends, who quickly disperse when they see him approaching.

STACY

Oh, Howell. I didn't mean now--

HOWELL

(interrupting)

Why not? Who cares about Calc when there's me. You. And the privacy of the rooftop.

STACY

Oh, I...

(beat, nervous)

I didn't mean that.

HOWELL

Oh.

STACY

Yeah.

HOWELL

Why not? We had a good time, didn't we?

STACY

We did...

HOWELL

You still want to be with me, right?

STACY

I do, but...

HOWELL

So what's the hold up?

Howell backs Stacy up against the wall, leaning dangerously close. His lips almost brush hers.

STACY

Look, girls talk. About you.

HOWELL

(softly)

And what do they say?

STACY

They call you "Howell the Heartbreaker".

His nose sweeps across her cheekbone and he breathes into her ear.

HOWELL

Has a nice ring to it, don't you think? Alliterative.

Stacy continues to resist. He purses his lips.

HOWELL (CONT'D)

Oh come on. I was joking.

STACY
 And I'm not laughing.
 (beat)
 Is that all I am to you? Another
 notch on your bedpost?

She pushes him off of her in disgust. He trails after.

HOWELL
 Of course not.

She shoots him a look.

HOWELL (CONT'D)
 (insisting)
 What do you want me to say?
 (Shakespearian)
 "My heart belongs to you, and you
 alone. When you're away from me,
 I'm utterly consumed with
 emptiness."

Howell takes her hand and pulls her back into his arms.
 Traces her jaw lightly with his fingers. She doesn't budge an
 inch, sizing him up.

STACY
 That's a start.
 (then, coy)
 I like having you on a string.

HOWELL
 (laughing)
 Call me Pinocchio.

She boops the end of his nose.

STACY
 If only your nose grew when you
 lied.

Howell rolls his eyes. After checking his watch, he pecks her
 cheek and pulls away.

HOWELL
 Better scoot, or you'll be late to
 your beloved Calc.

STACY
 You're not coming?

HOWELL
 Life is short and I hate maths.
 (beat)
 (MORE)

HOWELL (CONT'D)

See you on the pitch later? I'll be
the one in red.

Stacy bites back a laugh as she watches him walk away.

As Howell trudges along, EDDO WILKENS (17) - tubby, total
Matt Lucas look-alike - jogs up behind him.

EDDO

You sly minx. Stacy Tarver?

He emphasizes Stacy's name, relishing each syllable.

HOWELL

Eddo. What's occurrin'?

The boys do an elaborate fist bump.

EDDO

(scoffing)

"What's occurrin'". What's occurin'
with you?! I need details man!

HOWELL

We hung out.

EDDO

You know what I mean.

Howell smirks. He's not saying any more.

EDDO (CONT'D)

You're a rubbish friend, you know
that?

Howell laughs and shakes his head, slinging an arm around
Eddo's shoulders.

HOWELL

Absolute trash. But you still love
me.

He plants a big kiss on Eddo's cheek. Eddo flinches away,
wiping his cheek off on his shirt sleeve.

A BOHO BRUNETTE walks by the boys in the hall. She hip-checks
Howell and winks. Howell turns around, a goofy grin on his
face as he walks backwards, checking Maggie out.

EDDO

So you're coming tonight, right? To
The Magic Circle? I've been
practicing and I think you're
really going to like the new stuff.

HOWELL
 (distracted)
 Hmm? Yeah, I'll be there.

EDDO
 Good. 'Cuz tonight's the night. I
 can feel it. It's gonna happen for
 me.

He cocks his head, cracking it, before doing a full body
 shake to release nerves. Like an actor before a big play.

EDDO (CONT'D)
 The Magic Circle. Every magician's
 dream. And they contacted me for an
 audition.

HOWELL
 Don't overhype it or you'll psych
 yourself out. It's just one
 audition.

EDDO
 Right. You're right. One
 audition... that will decide the
 next five years of my magic career.

Eddo spring shuffles a deck of cards nervously.

EDDO (CONT'D)
 How come you don't want to join,
 anyway? Wouldn't that sort of thing
 be right up your alley?

HOWELL
 Bright lights, big stages, gaudy
 costumes? That's not my scene.

They pass by--

EXT. CAMPUS CAFÉ - CONTINUOUS

A small queue of STUDENTS wait to order, while others sit and
 study at tables. A large, wall-mounted TELEVISION DISPLAY
 showcases the menu items - coffees, pastries, sandwiches.

HOWELL
This is more my scene.

Howell approaches the menu display. He places his hands over
 one of the photos, a TURKEY CLUB. Making a show of it, he
 "struggles" to wrap his fingers around something.

And then he pulls a real TURKEY CLUB out of the digital display. There's a blank space where the menu photo used to be. Howell takes a giant bite out of the sandwich, putting a noticeable dent in the side of it, before offering it to Eddo.

EDDO

(awed)

Dude. Did you just--?

Eddo takes a tentative nibble, surprised.

HOWELL

When people see a magic show, they go in knowing it's all a trick. But out here? You can surprise people.

Like before, Howell places his hands against the display screen, mashing the turkey club into the glass. But instead of disappearing, it just makes a greasy mess. As he lets go, the remnants slide down the screen and splat sadly onto the pavement.

EDDO

Is that part of the trick?

HOWELL

No.

Howell and Eddo move on, as a crowd of PIGEONS swarm the half-eaten sandwich.

EDDO

How--how did you do that? Just conjure up a whole flippin' sandwich, on a whim?!

Howell shrugs.

HOWELL

Magic.

Taking a PING PONG BALL out of his coat pocket, Howell rolls it around in his hands. As his wrists flick and twist sinuously, the ball disappears.

EXT. ENCHANTED FOREST - DAY

We're back in the misty woods from the teaser again. Swirling fog shrouds the scene, like smoke trapped inside glass. As we PUSH IN, it breaks, revealing the forest edge. And past that--

EXT. ANNWN - CONTINUOUS

A world, parallel to our own. A home to impossible things.

With a SCREECH, a blue and white GRYPHON soars by, flapping its giant wings. We follow it over MARSHES and SNOWY PEAKS, to--

EXT. CALEDON - DAY

A city that looks out of place and time. Something straight out of a fantasy book.

Tan and marigold buildings cluster in a small valley, growing larger and more ornate as they sprawl up a nearby mountainside. Thick forest surrounds the city to the east, while marshlands stretch to the west.

Steam trolleys course through the streets, accompanied by horses and carriages.

INT. ROYAL LIBRARY - CALEDON - DAY

Giant, floor-to-ceiling STACKS run the length of the room, tapering into a vanishing point seemingly miles away. It's an impressive collection, housing centuries worth of research and knowledge.

A wobbling tower of BOOKS carefully weaves between the shelves, pausing every so often to toss one of the tomes up onto the shelves. Once the book is in the air, it flaps its pages like a bird, soaring to its home to roost.

As the pile dwindles down, GRYFFITH SULLIVAN (21) - serious, a stickler for rules and order - appears.

Perched on a nearby shelf sits IONA PRYDD (21) - sarcastic, bark with bite.

IONA

What exactly do you think you're going to find here anyway, Gryffith?

GRYFFITH

(scanning a shelf)
An answer, hopefully.

IONA

This library's as dusty as Madam Clevenger. I doubt they'll have any useful information to help you with your "problem". If you can even call it that.

Gryffith glares at her as she laughs. Nearby, a PLASTIC, POPPING SOUND can be heard. Together, they lean around the corner of one of the stacks, heads cocked sideways.

A single PING PONG BALL bounces down the polished tile floor, rolling to a rest a few feet away. Iona jumps off of her shelf, vanishing in a swirl of PURPLE. She reappears next to the ping pong ball, crouching.

IONA (CONT'D)

This's what all the fuss is about?
A toy?

GRYFFITH

If it were just one, I wouldn't be worried. But there's been dozens, Iona. Hundreds, probably.

IONA

Where are they coming from?

GRYFFITH

That's what I'm trying to find out. They've been popping up everywhere. Here, the Archives, the Broken Unicorn...

(beat)

...my shower.

IONA

(teasing)

Aww it's cute. They're following you.

She makes a "rawr" sound as she boops him with the ball.

GRYFFITH

I think they're an omen.

IONA

An omen?

He continues walking down the stacks, scanning titles. Stumbling across one of interest, he makes a beckoning motion with his hands. It drifts down to him, falling like a feather.

When it lands in Gryffith's hands, we can see the title. "The Complete Compendium of Prophecies" by Myrddin Wyllt.

GRYFFITH

Do you remember learning about Starfall?

IONA

Big cataclysmic event. The rise of
the Red Dragon... Like they'd ever
let us forget.

Gryffith leafs through the heavy book. The pages are browned,
adorned with medieval wood block style prints. Drawings
depicting streaks of stars, buildings on fire, and screaming
citizens.

GRYFFITH

It's also the day Myrddin
disappeared and the Bridge closed.

He nods his head towards the ping pong ball in her hands.

GRYFFITH (CONT'D)

We haven't had contact with the
Otherworld for more than 500 years.
But I think... maybe this is a
message. A warning, from the other
side.

Iona shudders. She sets it down on a shelf, backing away in
unease.

IONA

That's not possible.

GRYFFITH

That's not for you to decide.

Iona's eyes connect with his, alarmed.

IONA

You're not suggesting we take this
to--

GRYFFITH

(nodding, resolved)
Madam Clevenger.

EXT. RUGBY FIELD - ST. DAVID'S COLLEGE - SUNSET

The setting sun bathes the field in an orange glow. The empty
risers shimmer like the caps of the ocean. On the field, the
St. David's Dragons scrimmage.

Howell darts down the field, football tucked under arm.
Bodies crest and crash around him like waves, diving for the
tackle. But Howell's always just out of reach.

A larger bloke, TOM CURRY (17) - built like a brick wall - comes from the side. He slams Howell to the ground, but not before Howell passes the ball to a teammate.

TOM
(low, snarling)
Heard you're messin' 'round with my
sister, Davies.

HOWELL
(smirking)
We've hung out.

Tom clocks Howell in the face. The REFEREE blows the WHISTLE, running over to separate them. Tom SPITS on Howell.

TOM
Stay away from her. You corrupt
everyone you touch.

HOWELL
You flatter, Tom.

TOM
What do women see in dirty busker
like you, anyway?

HOWELL
(considering)
Good looks. Great in bed.
Mysterious. Ladies seem to love
that.

TOM
You think you're so charming. But I
see right through you. Your spell
doesn't work on me.

HOWELL
No? Well, how about this one?

Howell's eyes FLASH green. Tom opens his mouth to retort, but freezes. He struggles to move, every muscle and bone locked.

TOM
(through his open mouth)
Wha--what's goin' on?

HOWELL
(mocking)
I thought my spells don't work on
you, Tom?

Howell claps a hand on Tom's shoulder.

HOWELL (CONT'D)

Good luck seeing your way out of that one.

He walks off-field, as the team swarms around Tom. But he stops short when he notices Stacy in the risers.

STACY

What did you do to him?

HOWELL

Stace-- You're early.

STACY

He-- he isn't moving. If this is another one of your tricks, it isn't funny. Let him go.

Howell sighs, rubbing his eyes. He refocuses on Tom, taking slow, deep breaths. The emerald luminance floods back into his eyes, swirling through his iris. And then--

TOM IS THROWN UP INTO THE AIR. His body rag-dolls, violently whipped around like a rider on an invisible bull. Stacy SCREAMS, running towards her brother. Tom's RUGBY MATES back away, scared. Even Howell looks mortified.

STACY (CONT'D)

(terrified)

Howell! Stop it! You're hurting him!

HOWELL

I CAN'T!

Howell squeezes his eyes shut, gripping his head. But it doesn't stop. In fact, the green energy (magic) begins to envelop his hands too.

A STUDENT on the sideline raises his phone and starts recording.

STUDENT

Woah, he's like freaking Magneto.

STACY

(shouting)

HOWELL!

A memory surfaces of Howell's mother. Her terror almost identical to Stacy's.

LILIAN (V.O.)

HOWELL! HELP ME!

TOM DROPS LIKE LEAD, his arm crunching beneath him. Stacy rushes to help him, pulling him as far away from Howell as she can manage.

Howell's eyes snap open. The color fades, returning to normal. He stares down at his shaking palms.

HOWELL

I--I'm sorry. I--

But when his eyes meet Stacy's, her expression silences him.

High in the risers, A DARK SHADOW watches the scene unfold. As a group of students pass in front of the camera, the figure vanishes.

INT. CALEDON PALACE - ANNWN - SUNSET

GRYFFITH and IONA burst through a set of large, ornate wooden doors as they enter into the HALL OF MAGIC - a grandiose, wood-paneled ballroom. RENAISSANCE PAINTINGS of knights and dragons decorate the domed ceiling, reminiscent of the Sistine Chapel.

An elderly woman - MADAM CLEVINGER (60s), scarily stern, regal - is seated at a large MAHOGANY DESK at the end of the room. A small pair of SPECTACLES ride low on her Romanesque nose.

As she gestures, a FOUNTAIN PEN autonomously scribbles across the PARCHMENT PAPER in front of her.

GRYFFITH

(bowing, rushed)

Madam Clevenger.

Madam Clevenger looks up from her work, the pen pausing.

MADAM CLEVINGER

Ah, Gryffith. To what do I owe the pleasure?

(then, distastefully)

Iona.

IONA

(equally distasteful)

Ma'am.

Gryffith approaches the desk, producing Myrddin Wyllt's book of prophecies, which he's kept pinned under his arm.

GRYFFITH

I wanted to bring a matter to your attention.

(MORE)

GRYFFITH (CONT'D)

Something that, if my interpretation of Myrddin's prophecy is correct, could be gravely important.

Mild intrigue crosses Madam Clevenger's face. She leans forward, adjusting her spectacles as he spreads the book before her.

MADAM CLEVENGER

Which prediction?

GRYFFITH

Starfall.

Madam Clevenger's eyes flash up, narrowing as she looks deep into Gryffith's.

GRYFFITH (CONT'D)

Strange items have been appearing, for quite some time now.

(beat, then hushed)

Items from the other world.

MADAM CLEVENGER

You're sure?

GRYFFITH

Positive.

MADAM CLEVENGER

Show me.

Iona hands Madam Clevenger the PING PONG ball from the Library. Madam Clevenger inspects it, holding it up to the light.

MADAM CLEVENGER (CONT'D)

Seems rather ordinary.

IONA

A child's toy, we think.

With a sweep of her hand, Madam Clevenger clears the papers off her desk. She places the ball on the flat surface, murmuring an incantation as she hovers her hands above it.

The ball trembles, before rising several inches into the air. GREEN LIGHT begins to spark around it, flashing and crackling like LIGHTNING. The ENERGY grows larger, striking out and scorching holes through the portraits on the walls. The wall crumbles in one place where the energy makes contact.

Suddenly, A SHOWER OF PING PONG BALLS appear and rain down on the room. HUNDREDS. Some other random LOST ITEMS appear as well. TOYS, SOCKS, PENCILS, KEYS.

MADAM CLEVINGER

Extraordinary.

An emaciated third of a TURKEY CLUB SANDWICH lands on Madam Clevenger's desk, splattering mayonnaise everywhere. Losing focus, Madam Clevenger lets the ping pong ball drop to the floor with the rest.

Gryffith conjures a HANDKERCHIEF and begins dabbing at the mayonnaise on Madam Clevenger's elegant robes. But she waves him away. She stands, wading through the lost items to pluck a SCHOOL ID CARD from the pile.

It's Howell's, from year 8. His PHOTO (12) grins back.

MADAM CLEVINGER (CONT'D)

You were right to bring this to me.
This boy's a wonder. I haven't seen
raw talent like that since...

She trails off, thoughtful. Then, coming back to herself--

MADAM CLEVINGER (CONT'D)

Who else knows of this?

GRYFFITH

No one, ma'am.

MADAM CLEVINGER

Good. Keep this between us.
(to IONA)
That includes you.

Madam Clevenger flicks her wrist and Iona's MOUTH is zipped shut. Iona struggles against the seal, but it breaks within a few seconds. She GASPS, glowering at Madam Clevenger.

MADAM CLEVINGER (CONT'D)

(forcing a smile)
A precaution, you understand.
(then)
Monitor the marshes tonight. And
keep an eye on The Wastelands. If
the Red Dragon so much as sneezes,
I want to know.
(gravely)
If you're right, we're in for one
hell of a night.

Iona and Gryffith nod, bowing.

INT. THE MAGIC CIRCLE - CARDIFF - NIGHT

A ROARING fire lights a dingy, domed-ceiling antechamber. Above, a large, circular SKYLIGHT offers a view of twilight. There's an air of timelessness to the space, with a hint of must and regality.

A ROUND, STONE TABLE sits in the center, around which sit a rather strange ensemble. EUGENE BLACKFIELD (60s) - white-haired, sombre - sits at the head of the table. At his side, EVELYN TALON (30s), a black widow type. Sitting opposite are Evelyn's partner, ADAM LA CHANCE (30s) - boyish, charming - and THE MYTHIC (???) - gothic and ever-brooding.

Before them sits a reconstruction of the scene at the St. David's rugby pitch. It plays across the surface of the table like a hologram - vaguely transparent, ethereal.

EVELYN

What makes you think he's the One?

SPEKTOR (O.S.)

Look at his eyes. The Mark is there.

BLACKFIELD

The Mark of Myrddin is blue.

The Mythic hums in agreement. The hologram dissipates as--

The SHADOWS at the edge of the room coalesce into a familiar shape - the FIGURE from the rugby pitch. It steps into the light, to reveal DAVID SPEKTOR (late 40s). Oily, 40s gangster vibes. He lights a CIGARETTE.

SPEKTOR

So he's not a Wyllt. But he wields old magic. Part Fae, I'd wager.

Doubtful grumbles pass around the table.

LA CHANCE

The Bridge has been closed for millennia. There's no way a Fae could have left Annwn.

SPEKTOR

That we know of.

Evelyn scoffs, crossing her arms.

SPEKTOR (CONT'D)

The seal is weakening. That is fact.

(MORE)

SPEKTOR (CONT'D)

(taking a pull of his
cigarette)

And you know what's waiting on the
other side.

As Spektor exhales, the SMOKE curls into a nebulous creature -
the NIGHTMARE IN THE WOOD. Its RATTLE shivers through the
room, extinguishing the fireplace and torches. Even Evelyn's
stoicism drops and a flash of true fear shines through.

SPEKTOR (CONT'D)

We can either lay down and
surrender to it, or we can fight.
To do so, we'll need the boy, Wyllt
or not. The choice is yours.

Blackstone steeples his hands, expression intense. He
swivels, turning to face the LARGE PAINTING mounted behind
him. It's partially obscured in shadow, but we can tell it's
a portrait of a wizened and bearded man. Think Dumbledore or
Gandalf, captured in acrylic.

This is MYRDDIN (80s). Radiating power even in still life.

BLACKFIELD

(resigned)

Alright. Bring the kid in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tegan and Gareth cuddle on the couch, watching TV. But when
they hear keys stir the front door lock, Gareth pauses the
program. They look over the couch into the entry way as
Howell shuffles inside, looking drained.

TEGAN

How was school?

HOWELL

Fine.

Howell mounts the stairs, heading for his room.

TEGAN

Listen, about this morning, I--

HOWELL

I don't want to talk about it.

TEGAN

But we're okay, yeah?

Howell stops short. Curses under his breath, before disappearing into his room. Gareth and Tegan exchange quizzical looks. But then--

There's a KNOCK at the FRONT DOOR. Loud, ominous.

INT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Tegan pushes the door open to reveal SPEKTOR, flanked by two brutish MEN. Secret Service types, dressed like POLICE, but the outfit isn't quite right.

TEGAN
(tentatively)
Evening?

SPEKTOR
Is this the Davies residence?

TEGAN
It is.

SPEKTOR
Is Howell Davies home?

Tegan draws the door tighter around her frame, sizing the men up.

TEGAN
What's your business with him?

SPEKTOR
None of your concern whatsoever.

INT. HOWELL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Howell sinks down onto his bed, mashing his earbuds back in. Upbeat electric rock filters around him as Battle Tape's "Belgrade" plays over the scene.

He bounces a ping pong ball against the wall. Pop pop. Catch. Pop pop. Catch. And then--

Something rolls through the room like an invisible wave. The ping pong ball slows to a stop, frozen mid-air. Howell frowns, sits up. Removes an earbud.

He taps the ball and it drifts slightly, as if in zero-G.

INT. FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Spektor and his two bodyguards push into the house, past Tegan. Her body is stiff, rigid, also suspended in time.

SPEKTOR

(low)

Check this floor. We'll take
upstairs. Make sure he doesn't get
away.

INT. HOWELL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

As multiple pairs of footsteps thunder up the stairs, Howell scrambles to action. He grabs a CRICKET BAT, readying a swing as he backs towards his window. He freezes as the BEDROOM KNOB rattles.

MAN #2 (O.S.)

It's locked.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Outside, Spektor signals to Man #2, who kicks the door in.

They enter, just in time to see Howell drop out the window into--

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Howell lands hard in Tegan's garden bed, smashing her tomato plants. He takes off running, leaping over the neighboring fence like a gazelle.

INT. HOWELL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

From the bedroom window--

SPEKTOR

(radioing)

The kid is northbound on foot,
heading towards the river.

MAN #1 (V.O.)

Copy.

EXT. SUBURBAN ROAD - NIGHT

Howell frantically sprints down the sidewalk on the main thoroughfare road. His pursuer's flashlight bobs and dances as they hustle after him, like a firefly in the dark.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Howell comes upon a small BRIDGE, spanning the RIVER TAFF. On the other end, two UNMARKED BLACK CARS swerve to block the path.

Several more MEN exit the cars, cautiously approaching Howell. He skids to a stop and tries to double back, but he's boxed in.

HOWELL

Look, it was a mistake, ok? I didn't mean to hurt him. Just please, don't arrest me.

SPEKTOR

They're not here to arrest you, Howell. We just want to talk.

HOWELL

If you're not the cops, then what's all this for then?

Howell gestures towards the guards, the unmarked cars.

SPEKTOR

I had to be sure you wouldn't run.
(then)
My colleagues at the Magic Circle were most impressed by your little show today. You're very talented.

HOWELL

Look, I don't know what you think you saw... but you're wrong.

Howell edges backwards towards the bridge's SAFETY RAILING. He grasps the rusted metal, glancing over his shoulder towards the raging currents below. Winces at the thought.

SPEKTOR

I'm not. You have something most people could only dream of.

HOWELL

Dashing good looks?

SPEKTOR

Power.

Two MEN approach. One grabs Howell, spins him around and shoves him against the railing, while the other cuffs his hands.

HOWELL

Oi! Buy me a drink first, eh? You gotta liquor me up if we're gonna do rough stuff.

Howell shakes his wrists. One minute the handcuffs are there, the next they're gone.

HOWELL (CONT'D)

Whoops!

MAN #2

Real funny.

Man #2 catches Howell's wrists and zip-ties them together.

EXT. CALEDON STREET - ANNWN - NIGHT

As Gryffith and Iona make their way through the city, a PAIR OF HANDCUFFS appear and drop to the ground in front of them.

Gryffith picks them up, looking at Iona with raised eyebrows.

EXT. BRIDGE - CARDIFF - NIGHT

Howell is escorted to the nearest car. Man #2 protects Howell's head as he's lowered into the back set.

MAN #2

No more funny business, understood?
Don't like dealing with jokers.

HOWELL

I think I'm more of a jack, myself.

As Man #1 adjusts the rear view mirror, Howell flashes a charming smile. And in the literal blink of an eye, his body turns into a human-shaped HOUSE OF CARDS. They collapse, fluttering into a loose mound on the seat.

MAN #1

What the--?

Man #2 throws open the rear door. Picks up one of the CARDS, to reveal--

A JACK OF HEARTS tossing a middle finger.

MAN #2

Son of a--

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Howell sprints away from the bridge, hopping onto a City Bus just as it's about to pull away.

INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

Moving straight to the back, Howell pulls up his hood. He sinks low in the seat, glancing through the rear windows. The black cars peel down a perpendicular street and out of view.

EXT. THE MAGIC CIRCLE - NIGHT

In stark contrast to the antechamber we saw before, the exterior is an understated nightclub, with plain black walls and a simple ticketing booth just right of the entrance. A BOUNCER guards the door, standing protectively in front of a velvet stanchion.

Eddo waits curbside, dressed to the nines in a suit and bowtie. He looks nervous, sweating and wringing a colored scarf.

BOUNCER

They're ready for you inside.

EDDO

One more minute. He'll be here.

Eddo checks his watch for the millionth time, sighing loudly.

INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

Howell anxiously eyes the next stop. His knee shakes, his fingers toying with the string on his hoodie.

The SOUND OF A CHILD'S LAUGHTER echoes around him. Howell reacts, eyes wide, searching for the source.

SMASH to--

FLASHBACK: INT. DAVIES HOUSE - DAY

HOWELL (5) runs through the den, shrieking with happiness. Several paper ORIGAMI CRANES flap after him like sparrows. A few rest on his shoulders.

His MOTHER - (30s) catches one of the cranes as Howell flies by, cupping it in her hands. As it twitches, her expression immediately darkens. She crumples it, as we smash back to--

INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

Howell shakes his head, dazed, as another memory screams into his head.

TEGAN (PRE-LAP)

(echoing)

Howell!

FLASHBACK: INT. HOWELL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The window's been thrown open. Torrential winds stir papers around the room. The curtains billow like sails as rain hammers down outside.

TEGAN (10) shakes HOWELL (5). His eyes are wide and unseeing, and he wheezes with frightened gasps.

TEGAN
MOM! Something's wrong!

SHADOWS swirl around them as a familiar, ethereal, terrible RATTLE fills the room. Black silhouettes peel away from the walls and crowd Howell's bed.

TEGAN (CONT'D)
(shrieking)
MOM?!

Smash back to--

INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

The overhead lights in the bus flicker. Howell grips his head with both hands, as a KEENING WHITE NOISE overpowers everything else.

All of the bus's glass WINDOWS SHATTER, exploding inward. The broken shards rain down terrified PASSENGERS. Feeling a trickle, Howell wipes his nose on the back of his hand. It returns smeared with blood. He blots his nose again and his fingers come away cherry red.

Panicking, Howell tugs one of the yellow emergency stop cords.

EXT. CALEDON MARSHES - ANNWN - NIGHT

The gaslamp lights of Caledon don't reach the marshes. Here, everything - the grass, the swamp, the trees - seems black in the nighttime.

Only the dim yellow-green light of the WOOD SPRITES and the pale gray glow of the KELPIES (water horses) help indicate where the landscape ends and the sky begins.

Gryffith splashes through calf-deep mud, carrying a GLOWING, MOON-LIKE SPHERE. He draws his CLOAK closed near his neck, shivering against the cold.

It's eerily still. Gryffith trains an ear forward, listening. But there's only the sound of CICADAS and croaking WATER LEAPERS.

EXT. SKIES ABOVE THE MARSHES - NIGHT

Iona circles overhead, unseen. Her long, feathery black cloak has been transformed into giant RAVEN WINGS. Gliding with the currents, she soars effortlessly as she surveys the darkened marshes from above.

Tucking her wings, she dives down towards Gryffith.

EXT. CALEDON MARSHES - NIGHT

IONA splashes down, startling GRYFFITH. With a yelp, he staggers back, almost falling into the mud.

GRYFFITH

You're supposed to be monitoring the Wasteland.

IONA

We both know there's nothing out there. It's dead.

GRYFFITH

Maybe. But I wouldn't ignore Madam Clevenger's orders. You're on thin ice already.

Iona rolls her eyes.

IONA

You'll need my help if you expect to hold your own out here. Especially if it shows up.

She flaps, rising up. She jets forward, quickly covering ground, inarguably efficient.

Gryffith sighs, continuing on foot. He holds his ORB high. Where the white light touches the water around him, SHADOWS hiss and retreat.

And then a RATTLE breaks the still, silent night.

GRYFFITH

(shouting)

Iona!

He sees her silhouette rise, rolling as she swoops back towards him.

IONA

I see it.

Beneath her, the shadows collect, HISSING as they conglomerate, like hundreds of writhing snakes, into a hulking NIGHTMARE.

Iona's wings shed feathers, turning back into a CLOAK. As she falls back towards the ground, Iona's eyes flood with bright purple. She gestures, BLASTING the marshes with her magic. The Nightmare reacts, turning its head towards her in rage. It cries out, streaming after her.

Gryffith throws his ORB into the air, suspending it in the sky. In the cascading moonlight, he dances through the reeds, clearing the shadows with his own zen-like magic.

IONA (CONT'D)

Damn this thing's annoying.

Iona dodges a large tendril as it lashes out, but doubles back to slash it with her hand. The severed "arm" melts back into black mud, squirming off into the marshes.

Before she can hit the water, Iona's cloak transforms back into wings, which carry her higher into the air. The Nightmare continues to race after her, stretching its neck up into the sky.

EXT. CITY CENTRE - CARDIFF - NIGHT

The CITY BUS swerves over, whining as it brakes. It looks apocalyptic, with broken windows and flickering lights. Several ONLOOKERS stop and gawk.

As the doors open, Howell all but falls out onto the sidewalk. He scrambles, limping away from the bus, sleeve held to his bleeding nose.

The KEENING fades to an effect not unlike that of a flash-bang. All sound is muffled, and Howell struggles to keep his balance. His vision swims, pitching and rolling.

As he looks up to the sky, the stars blur into streaks of white.

INT. STAGE - THE MAGIC CIRCLE - NIGHT

Inside nightclub portion of The Magic Circle, Eddo performs on a small stage. The AUDIENCE is sparse, populated only by STUFFY, UPPER-CRUST MAGICIANS and the group we met earlier -- Evelyn, La Chance, The Mythic, and Blackfield. They cough and shift in their seats, bored.

With a fake smile plastered to his face, Eddo sweats bullets as he juggles ten LINKING RINGS.

EDDO
 (nervous laughter)
 You know, in juggling, you're only
 as good as your last toss.

All of the rings are tossed into the air, where they tangle together. Eddo catches them as they fall, and pulls them out to reveal a neat, connected chain.

EDDO (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 Nailed it.

The audience politely golf-claps. Cut to EDDO'S POV as he scans the room. Nothing but empty CHAIRS, TABLES, and STRANGERS. Crestfallen, he realizes Howell never showed.

INT. GREEN ROOM - THE MAGIC CIRCLE - MOMENTS LATER

In a small dressing room, Eddo packs away his PROPS in a large leather BRIEFCASE. One wall is crowded with brightly-lit VANITIES. MAKEUP palettes, WIGS, and COSTUME pieces are strewn about haphazardly.

Another MAGICIAN walks past, heading to the stage. They nod to one another politely, and Eddo offers a weak smile.

EDDO
 Good luck out there, mate. Tough
 crowd tonight.

As he continues packing away his things, Blackfield ghosts in.

BLACKFIELD
 You did well. Definitely seeing an
 improvement in your work.

Eddo starts at the sound of his voice, holding a hand to his chest as he turns to face Blackfield.

EDDO
 Christ on a cracker, you scared me.

BLACKFIELD
 (offering his hand)
 It's Eddo, isn't it?

EDDO
 (accepting)
 Yes, sir. Eddo Wilkens.

SPEKTOR
Henry Blackfield. Chairman of The
Magic Circle.

EDDO
(star-struck)
Oh god. Yes. Hello! It's an honor.

Eddo rigorously shakes Blackfield's hand, to the point of discomfort.

BLACKFIELD
No need for the formalities. Call
me Blackfield.
(beat)
Is Eddo your stage name? Reminds me
of Nando's. Delightful chicken, but
doesn't quite conjure thoughts of
dark magic and illusions, does it?

EDDO
(crestfallen)
I suppose not.

BLACKFIELD
Tell you what. We'll work on it.
You'll need something with more
pizzazz if you're going to be part
of The Magic Circle.

Beat. It takes a moment to register. Eddo blinks.

EDDO
Are you serious?! I'm in?

BLACKFIELD
I'll need to discuss it with the
Board. But you've got potential.

Eddo goes mental. HUGS Blackfield and grabs his SUITCASE.

EDDO
Thank you! THANK YOU! You won't
regret this.

As Eddo dashes off, Blackfield waits a beat. When he's sure
the room is empty, he walks through the FLOOR-LENGTH MIRROR,
into--

INT. BOARD ROOM - THE MAGIC CIRCLE - NIGHT

The antechamber. Except now the starry sky shines through the
skylight.

BLACKFIELD

It is done.

The Mythic nods solemnly.

EVELYN

(disgusted)

I can't believe we've stooped to opening our doors to such trash.

BLACKFIELD

I don't like this either, Evelyn. But Howell Davies has proved to be rather elusive. He has more control than we thought. Should Spektor fail, perhaps this boy can help Davies see reason.

THE MYTHIC

(gravelly)

The veil grows thinner by the hour. Our window of opportunity is closing, and we still have so much work to do. We need to get to him quickly if things are to turn in our favor.

INT. PRET A MANGER - NIGHT

Inside a small, minimalist cafe chain (think a British version of Starbucks), LLEWYN JONES (19) rings up a CUSTOMER'S packaged sandwich. As he SCANS the item, he looks up, and sees A BLOODY HAND smear across the glass shop window.

LLEWYN

Oh my god!

He drops his scanner, rushing to the front doors. CUSTOMERS inside turn, gawking.

EXT. PRET A MANGER - NIGHT

Llewyn runs outside and sees HOWELL collapsed on the pavement.

LLEWYN

Sir? Are you alright?

HOWELL

I'm fine... Please. Don't call anyone.

LLEWYN

But you're bleeding--!

Howell groans in pain, struggling to push himself to his feet. Nearby, a fire hydrant BURSTS, sending a geyser into the air. A bunch of CAR ALARMS begin to sound off around them.

LLEWYN (CONT'D)

What the--?

Howell blinks as the WATER rains down on him, his eyes glowing that unreal shade of GREEN.

EXT. CALEDON MARSHES - ANNWN - NIGHT

A blood-red MOON rises over the horizon, bathing the marshes a deep ocher hue. As the purifying light of Gryffith's ORB begins to stutter, he conjures a LIGHTSWORD.

GANIEDA (O.S.)

Return to me, my love.

As Gryffith SLASHES, the Nightmare retreats, crawling back into the marshes. Golden, cat-like eyes alight in the darkness, floating against the black. And as they step forward, GANIEDA (30s) appears. Bewitching, with wild, curly, blood-red hair and bone-white skin.

GRYFFITH

(darkly)

Ganieda...

GANIEDA

My, my. This is Clevenger's best?
The old bat's losing her touch.

In a blink, she's in Gryffith's face, claw-like fingers trailing his jaw. Her serpentine tongue slithers out, tasting Gryffith's skin.

GANIEDA (CONT'D)

I do like the taste of your fear.

Gryffith balks, swinging at her, but his sword just cuts through empty air. As he whips around, searching for Ganieda, her amused LAUGH echoes around them.

IONA

Gryffith! The signal!

Iona swoops down, landing at his side. Her cape flutters around her as she summons a protection circle.

As Gryffith shoots a SPARK up into the sky, Iona scans the shadows, defensive.

EXT. BALCONY - CALEDON PALACE - NIGHT

At the Royal Palace, a glass and marble balcony looks out over the city. The gas lamps of Caledon twinkle with warmth, and all seems quiet.

Madam Clevenger surveys the scene with hawk-like intensity. Behind her, several young SORCERERS await orders - SABRA MONTES (22), CAIN HOLLYWELL (25), LALO SYLEE (16), and KAULDWILL ESPEON (mid-30s).

From their mountainside perch, they can see Gryffith's flare, burning bright over the Marshes.

MADAM CLEVENGER

Looks like young Gryffith was right. Such a shame.

(beat)

Prepare the shield. We must be ready. Who knows what will come through the Veil...

KAULDWILL

Will they be alright out there? If Ganieda--

MADAM CLEVENGER

Ganieda has no doubt already engaged them. They're both talented Swynwr. I trust they can hold their own.

KAULDWILL

(nodding, then instructing)

Swynwr! Yn barod!

SUBTITLE: Swynwr! Ready!

The sorcerers tense, standing straight with fists to their hearts.

SWYNWR GROUP

Ready!

MADAM CLEVENGER

Gan ewylllys, rydym yn eich diogelu.

SUBTITLE: By will, we protect you.

SWYNWR GROUP
 (in unison)
Gan ewylllys, rydym yn eich diogelu.

SUBTITLE: By will, we protect you.

Their eyes GLOW, a rainbow of energy, as they raise their hands skyward. A TRANSLUCENT, SHIMMERING shield builds above them, creating a SEAL over the Palace.

The magic continues to spread down the mountain and into the town, encapsulating everything it touches.

EXT. CALEDON MARSHES - CONTINUOUS

Gryffith and Iona stand back-to-back, tensed for an attack.

GANIEDA (O.S.)
 Well, well, another one. Now it's a party.

IONA
 This city's protected. You are not welcome here.

GANIEDA (O.S.)
 (chuckling)
 Oh, I don't care about your quaint little town. I'm here to cross over.

Ganieda moves through the shadows. One minute, she's human. The next, a giant, scaly, red tail flashes into view.

IONA
 The Bridge was destroyed centuries ago. The other world's gone.

GANIEDA
 And yet, it seems we both got the same message. Someone's re-opening the door.

Iona squints, peering into the darkness. She shields, as FIRE explodes towards them. As FLAMES dance across the marsh, the RED DRAGON emerges, just like the one that's on the Welsh flag. It rears it's head, ROARING.

Above them, the sky rotates like a planetarium's ceiling. STARS and CONSTELLATIONS shift, spinning on some invisible axis.

EXT. SKIES ABOVE CARDIFF - NIGHT

The CONSTELLATIONS are shifting here too, rotating through space. The MOON is anchored in the center of the sky, while everything else swims around it.

Several of the stars begin to drop, streaking across the heavens down to earth.

It looks beautiful, like a meteor shower. But also ominous and not right.

EXT. DAVIES HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON HOWELL'S MOTORBIKE. A HAND courses over the handles, touching the seat. Reveal Eddo, still in his SUIT. He hefts his PROP CASE as he approaches the FRONT DOOR.

Sighing, he KNOCKS on the door. It swings open, unlocked, to reveal Tegan, still frozen in time.

EDDO

Teeg? Hey, I--

He trails off. Tegan doesn't respond or react. He waves a hand in front of her face.

EDDO (CONT'D)

Are you takin' a piss at me? Is this like some kind of laugh you and Howell have going?

Tegan's dead silent. Eddo gently pushes the door open and steps inside.

INT. FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The stillness is unsettling. Eddo starts when sees Gareth staring straight at him, dead-eyed.

EDDO

Jesus, mate. You scared me!

Gareth doesn't respond either. Doesn't blink or laugh or move a muscle. Eddo is creeped out.

EDDO (CONT'D)

Howell? You in?

Nothing. More silence. Eddo climbs the stairs, to--

INT. HOWELL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Howell's empty bedroom. He stops by the bed, where the ping pong ball's floats mid-air. He reaches out and touches it.

EDDO

What in the flyin' hell--

EXT. CARDIFF CITY CENTRE - NIGHT

A CROWD has gathered around the broken-down CITY BUS from earlier. PASSENGERS give statements as POLICE OFFICERS survey the damage. Broken windows, some places where the bus' frame has crunched. It looks worse than it is.

D.I. BANNER (40s) - chain-smoker - and CONSTABLE REES (late 20s) - female, totally over the misogynistic chain of command - circle the wreckage.

D.I. BANNER

Let me get this straight. The windows just... imploded. No bomb? No firearms? Just--
(gestures)
Boom?

CONSTABLE REES

That's what witnesses are saying.

D.I. BANNER

Windows don't just implode, Rees. Not without pressure, or chemical agents, or a reaction. Science, understand?

CONSTABLE REES

(with tried patience)
Yes, I get that, sir.

D.I. BANNER

So where is my bomb?

BUS DRIVER (O.S.)

She's right. There wasn't one.

D.I. Banner turns around, revealing the BUS DRIVER (40s) - an exhausted, dark-skinned sass pot with a thick Welsh accent, a shock blanket and weak tea.

D.I. BANNER

Excuse me?

BUS DRIVER
 (sipping tea)
 There wasn't no bomb.
 (beat)
 Saw what happened with me own two
 eyes.

D.I. BANNER
 (dismissive)
 We'll get to your statement
 shortly.

As D.I. Banner begins to escort Constable Rees away --

BUS DRIVER
 A boy did that.
 (waving a hand at the
 bus)
 Young man, maybe 20s. Decent
 lookin'. Sat in the back, all
 shifty-like. Got on at Llandaff
 Road, right as I was closing the
 doors. You'd think the hounds of
 hell was chasin' him, the way he
 were runnin'.

The bus driver smiles a toothy smile.

CONSTABLE POWELL
 Did you see where he went?

BUS DRIVER
 (pointing the wrong way)
 Took off on foot, heading that-a-
 way.

D.I. Banner doesn't wait for her to finish. He runs off in
 the direction the bus driver pointed.

CONSTABLE REES
 (sighing, to BUS DRIVER)
 Thank you.

The driver sips her tea as she watches them rush off. When
 she's sure no one is looking, she moves into a nearby
 alleyway.

Her face ripples, changing. Revealing The Magic Circle's
 EVELYN. She pulls out a mobile phone, pressing it to her ear.

EVELYN
 They're diverted. Heading back
 towards Llandaff. Should I follow?

She listens to the VOICE on the other end.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

Understood.

Pocketing the phone, she magically adjusts her wardrobe. The baggy, bus driver costume shrinks into a pant suit and flats.

As she ties her hair up into a pony tail, she stalks off after D.I. Banner and Constable Rees.

INT. QUEEN'S ARCADE - NIGHT

Just off of High Street, sits the Queen's Arcade. An indoor shopping mall, basically a long, wide, enclosed alleyway with storefronts. It's brightly light, warm, and inviting. A popular spot with TOURISTS and LOCALS alike.

Howell threads through the CROWD that throngs the pavilion. Desperate to lose himself in the faceless mass. But his eerie, glowing green eyes and bloody nose make him stand out like a sore thumb.

A MOBILE PHONE RINGS, a quaint jingle that is almost lost in all the NOISE. Howell checks his pocket. It's his.

He clocks the name on the screen. Presses it to his ear.

HOWELL

Eddo! I--I'm so sorry about tonight. Something happened, and I--

EDDO (O.S.)

I know. I'm at your house.

HOWELL

Is Tegan okay?

EDDO (O.S.)

She's-- I dunno how to explain it, but... it's like she's been frozen.

(then)

Where are you? It's so loud.

HOWELL

Queens Arcade. I didn't know where else to go. Can you meet me? My house isn't safe.

EDDO (O.S.)

(hesitant)

Uh, sure...

Howell hangs up, clocks the TIME. Presses forward, through the crowd.

BLACKFIELD (PRE-LAP)
You were right to come to us. The
Circle sticks together.

EXT. DAVIES HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON EDDO'S PHONE. As we PULL OUT, reveal Eddo's standing with SPEKTOR and BLACKFIELD outside of the Howell's house.

SPEKTOR
He's seen my face already. You
should go with him.

Blackfield nods.

EDDO
I can't believe Howell would do
something like this...

BLACKFIELD
Magic is wild. Like an unbroken
horse, it yearns to be free. It
does not care about love or family.
If the wielder has not been
trained, magic can do great and
terrible things.

EDDO
I mean, I knew he was talented.
I've seen him do amazing things.
But real magic...? It shouldn't be
possible.

SPEKTOR
And yet, it is. If your friend can
trust us, we'll do our best to help
him.

EDDO
Thank you.

A BLACK SEDAN pulls up to the curb. Spektor opens the door for Eddo and Blackfield.

EXT. CALEDON STREET - ANNWN - NIGHT

As the magical barrier extends through the town, PEDESTRIANS react. DOORS shut. WINDOW BLINDS come down. PEOPLE clear from the streets as a WAR HORN sounds the alarm.

EXT. THE MARSHES - NIGHT

The Red Dragon flaps its monstrous wings, as its head rears back. A STREAM OF FLAMES pour from its mouth, aimed directly at Gryffith and Iona.

Dissolving the protection sigil, Iona grabs Gryffith and flies him away from the FIRE. Dropping Gryffith, Iona's eyes glow PURPLE as she throws her CLOAK HOOD over her head.

GRYFFITH

Iona! No!

But she doesn't hear him. Her robe shifts, transforming back into RAVEN WINGS. The feathers cover her face as it warps, twisting into a monstrous, crow-like creature.

Iona shoots up into the air, her movement much faster than the dragon's. Like a Night Fury, she streaks through the sky, nearly unseen. Her TALONS dig into the dragon's long NECK, using her momentum to throw it into the ground.

The dragon ROARS, gearing up for another burst of flames, but Iona bites its throat. The dragon's pained growl carries over the wind as we fade back to --

EXT. CARDIFF CASTLE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON the statue of THE RED DRAGON, as we hear its fading cries. The castle looks much less welcoming at night.

Howell buttons his coat, shrugging against the biting, windy Welsh night. He hides in a darkened corner, his back to the ancient stones.

EDDO (O.S.)

(shouting)

Howell?

Across the street, Eddo and Blackfield exit the sedan. Howell curses under his breath, ducking further into shadow.

HOWELL

I'm here.

EDDO

I can't see you. Where are you?

HOWELL

Don't worry. I'm close by.

Blackfield surveys the area, suspicious. Peers towards the castle, squinting as he monitors the shadows.

EDDO
You're acting real weird, mate.
What's goin' on?

HOWELL
Who is he, Eddo?

EDDO
A friend. He's with the Magic
Circle.

HOWELL
They are not friends, Eddo.

Eddo looks to Blackfield, quizzical.

BLACKFIELD
The Circle can help you, Howell, if
you let us.

Howell laughs darkly.

HOWELL
I don't need your help.

BLACKFIELD
Yes, you do. You have no idea
what's at stake. Forces greater
than you are at play here.

HOWELL
Yeah? Like what?

BLACKFIELD
The safety of two worlds hangs in
the balance. You're the key to
Annwn.

A moment's beat. Eddo blinks. What.

HOWELL
Annwn? That's just a story. It's
not real.

BLACKFIELD
Isn't it? You can do things that
many people think mere illusion.
Are you, too, only a story?

HOWELL
We're all just stories in the end.
And mine will be a choose your own
adventure.

Howell reaches skyward. Closing his eyes, he closes his fist around a cluster of stars.

EDDO

Mate, I don't know about any of this... other world stuff. But I trust them.

(genuine)

We can figure this out, together.

BLACKFIELD

Listen to your friend. It's your destiny to follow the path of Myrddin! Embrace The Circle. Don't make an enemy of us.

HOWELL

Too late.

With great effort, Howell pulls his hand back and smashes his palm flat against the ground.

EXT. SKIES ABOVE CARDIFF - SIMULTANEOUS

A WHISTLING NOISE bleeds into the scene, growing louder with every second. Like the sound of an incoming projectile.

A STAR whizzes past, dazzling like a SPARKLER. As it streaks towards the Earth, another joins it. Before long, several more stars fall alongside the first.

EXT. CARDIFF CITY CENTRE - CONTINUOUS

The pulse of the city keeps on rushing by. PEOPLE worm through the streets, never bothering to look up. But A LITTLE GIRL glances skyward. And what she sees can only be described as brilliant, burning SNOW hurtling towards them through space.

She tugs on her FATHER'S jacket, pointing. He looks down at his daughter, before following her finger to the sky. His eyes widen.

FATHER

Get inside. Now!

He pulls her into the closest store--

INT. CAFÉ - CONTINUOUS

The father and daughter quickly move away from the WINDOWS, past seated PATRONS. Stirred by the commotion, they lean towards the glass, looking skyward.

We can see the sky reflected in the glass. It looks like the End of Days, heaven ablaze.

EXT. SKIES ABOVE CALEDON - ANNWN - SAME

STARS streak across the heavens. Flickering, white points plummet towards the Earth, leaving a TRAIL of color in their wake.

As the stars leave their post, the night sky looks unsettlingly NAKED.

EXT. BALCONY - CALEDON PALACE - CONTINUOUS

BLAM! It's like white-hot hellfire is raining down on the town. The force is like a nuclear weapon, unrelenting. The Swynwr flinch, turning their faces away from the light, as Kauldwill shields them.

INT. CALEDON HOME - CONTINUOUS

Several TOWNSPEOPLE gather inside a family home, huddled together. WHITE LIGHT filters through the WINDOWSHADES, which rattle from the force of each hit.

EXT. BALCONY - CALEDON PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Madam Clevenger holds position, resolved. Her eyes betray no emotion as the world blazes around her. BUILDINGS on the outer perimeter fall, the first casualties. Places their barrier couldn't reach.

EXT. THE MARSHES - SAME

The orange light from the growing fire in Caledon illuminates Gryffith's distressed face. He clambers to his feet, slogging through the mud towards the duelling dragon and raven.

A STAR lands between Iona and the Red Dragon, exploding like a FIREWORK and breaking them apart. The Red Dragon ROARS, lunging for Iona again. Its talons scrape Iona's chest, tearing new battle wounds.

Another star plummets towards them, ripping through the dragon's LEFT WING. The hole sizzles, the leathery flesh charred but not beyond repair.

EXT. CARDIFF CASTLE - NIGHT - SIMULTANEOUS

STARS crash to the ground around Eddo, Blackfield, and Howell. The ground shakes, rumbling with every impact. Frozen like a deer in headlights, Eddo watches a star race directly towards him.

HOWELL

Eddo! Move!

But Eddo's paralyzed with fear. Howell darts out of his hiding place, running full tilt across the street towards his friend. CARS veer and honk as they slam their brakes.

Blackfield barely has time to react.

BLACKFIELD

NO!

The STAR COLLIDES WITH HOWELL. Everything around him blanches, lost in white. Eddo cowers, shielding his eyes.

Beneath their feet, the ground stirs, twisting as a PORTAL swallows them both. They fall through, down, down, down. Away from Cardiff, the castle, Blackfield...

Away from their world, into the unknown.

EXT. THE SKIES ABOVE CALEDON - ANNWN - NIGHT

Suddenly, Howell and Eddo are miles above the ground, falling through the darkness. Howell flips through the air like a rag doll, unconscious. His arm is singed, burned from star-fire.

Some feet away, Eddo flails about like an inept skydiver, trying to right himself.

EDDO

(yelling)

Howell?! HOWELL! Help!

FALLING STARS plummet beside them as the ground races to meet them.

EXT. THE MARSHES - CONTINUOUS

EDDO's scream carries across the wind, reaching Iona. Her giant, raven head swivels, turning skyward. The FEATHERS melt away from her face, exposing her human expression.

IONA

What the hell--?

The Red Dragon snaps, capitalizing on the distraction, but Iona twists away. She takes off, flapping furiously as she races towards the BOYS.

Eddo, seeing a large, raven-like creature gunning towards him, SCREAMS even louder.

EDDO
 (panicked)
 I don't want to die like this!

Iona snatches Eddo in her talons, circling back towards the ground. Gliding to a stop, she all but throws Eddo into the mud.

The Red Dragon, having noticed Howell, rises up into the sky. She's slow, but intent, claws extended. Just as she's about to make a grab for Howell--

ZOOM! Iona barrels into her, knocking her away. The Red Dragon snarls, jaws tearing into Iona's wing. Iona CRIES OUT in pain.

EXT. SKY ABOVE THE MARSHES - CONTINUOUS

Just as Howell's about to hit the ground, he SUDDENLY STOPS. His body whiplashes, like a car slamming on the breaks. He hangs limply in the air a good twenty feet above marshlands.

Gryffith wades towards Howell, gently guiding his body down.

GRYFFITH
 Oi! You okay?

He claps Howell's cheek. Howell's eyelids flutter weakly.

EDDO
 Stay back!

Eddo slobes towards them, brandishing a STICK. He thrashes it wildly at Gryffith.

EDDO (CONT'D)
 Who are you? Where are we? And what
 in the bloody hell just happened?

GRYFFITH
 No need to be afraid. You're safe
 now.

Eddo looks between Gryffith and the battling dragon and raven, unsure which is the greater threat.

EDDO
 Yeah, feeling real safe right now.
 (then)
 This is a nightmare. Yeah, that's
 it. I just have to wake up and
 this'll all be over.

Eddo slaps himself, alternating cheeks until they burn red. Gryffith reaches out and stills Eddo's arm.

GRYFFITH

Trust me, this isn't a dream.

Gryffith slings Howell's arm around his shoulders and lifts him into a fireman's carry. Iona, still in raven form, splashes down beside them, startling Eddo.

IONA

We have to go.

Gryffith loads Howell onto Iona's back and climbs after. He extends a hand to Eddo.

GRYFFITH

You coming?

Behind them, the Red Dragon ROARS in anger. Eddo quickly takes his hand and climbs aboard.

GRYFFITH (CONT'D)

Welcome to Annwn, kid.

Iona takes off, and the quartet heads back to Caledon - a sight to behold as it burns white from star-fire. The shattered remains of the Swynwr's shield tower above it.

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW