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" PROPHETS AND LOSS "

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#K2805

SLIDERS

"Prophets and Loss"

SETS

INTERIORS:

CHANDLER CENTER (CHANDLER HOTEL) (X)
ASSEMBLY ROOM
STAGE
PORTAL
ORACLE'S OFFICE
DETENTION BLOCK
CELLS
CUBICLE
TUNNELS/FLOOD CHANNELS
MAIN FLOOD TUNNEL
ANOTHER SECTION
SAMSON'S WAR ROOM
AIR CONDITIONING CONDUIT
VERTICAL CONDUIT
ANOTHER CONDUIT
TECH OPS ROOM

EXTERIORS:

COURTYARD
ANOTHER PART
CITY STREET
NEWSSTAND
CHANDLER CENTER (CHANDLER HOTEL) (X)
CLOISTER
FLOOD CONTROL CONDUIT
TUNNELS/FLOOD CONTROL CHANNELS
ROOFTOPS
PARK
TOWN SQUARE (X)
FIELD

7 CONTINUED

7

REMBRANDT
Doesn't sound like a football team.

MAGGIE
(reading)
'Jason Five, RadRat Sentenced to
Re-Config.'

REMBRANDT
What does that mean?

No one has a clue. Maggie continues to read as they pass a large poster on a wall. Under a big photo of Charles Darwin, in big print: DEMON DARWIN. HERETIC. ORACLE LECTURE SERIES STARTS FRIDAY. CHANDLER CENTER.

(X)

QUINN
I guess the Charles Darwin of this world did something really terrible.

REMBRANDT
Chandler Center. Could that be the hotel?

(X)

8 ANGLE ON CADMUS

8

who has been following them. He pauses now and takes out a miniature communicator -- like a cell phone -- punches in a code, then talks.

CADMUS
This is Cadmus. Three intruders have just transported into the cloister by some unknown method. Two men, one woman. They're headed for the center. Have central enforcement mark them for surveillance. They could be useful to us, or... they could be dangerous.

Cadmus snaps the communicator shut and starts off up the street, following the Sliders, and we...

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN

9 EXT. CHANDLER HOTEL - DAY 9(X)

In this world, the sign over the door says: CHANDLER CENTER -- THE ORACLE -- LOS ANGELES. Quinn, Maggie and Remy approach on the sidewalk, moving among the crowds of polite, well-groomed people. They stop and look things over. (X)

MAGGIE
What do you suppose the 'Oracle'
is?

QUINN
Could be some kind of church.

Suddenly, there is a loud, musical chime filling the air. The people on the sidewalk all stop whatever they're doing and head for the entrance of the Chandler Center. (X)

10 WITH THE SLIDERS 10

as they watch the people all move toward the center. A young woman passes them, pauses and looks back, sees they're not heading for the center, and turns back to talk to them. Her name is JANE.

JANE
Aren't you coming to the assembly?

QUINN
Ah...well, we're new in the area...

JANE
Why don't you join me? Newcomers
are always welcome at our
assemblies.
(extending her hand)
My name is Jane. I'm soon to be a
Welcomer.

MAGGIE
(shakes hands)
I'm Maggie. And this is Quinn and
Rembrandt.

REMBRANDT
Good to meet a Welcomer. Always
liked getting welcomed better than
not getting welcomed.

And they follow her, along with the last of the others, into the center.

11 INT. CHANDLER CENTER - DAY 11 (X)

The inside is arranged like a church or large meeting hall. Several hundred seats in rows, now filling with people. There is a raised platform at the front. Two white-suited men sit in high-backed chairs facing the audience. Behind the men, upstage on the platform, is a large archway with some kind of chamber inside. This is the Portal. Ethereal, new age music is playing as the audience assembles.

12 A NEW ANGLE 12

to pick up the Sliders making their way to some seats with Jane. An usher hands each of them a brochure.

13 CLOSER ON JANE AND THE SLIDERS 13

as they take their seats.

JANE

(sotto)
Our Chief Oracle is Gareth, a truly
gifted man.

14 ANGLE ON STAGE 14

Cadmus standing behind Gareth. Cadmus is taking note of the Sliders' arrival.

JANE'S VOICE

The other man is the Chief
Counselor, Cadmus. They are both
'sighted' leaders.

15. BACK TO SCENE 15

with Jane and the Sliders.

JANE

A special provenance from the
Master Oracle himself. 'Sighted'
leaders can make law.

Maggie nods her understanding. Jane looks at Maggie carefully, then at Quinn and Remmy, as if studying them more closely. Remmy notices, gives her a nod and a smile. Jane lowers her eyes, thinking, then gives her attention to the stage once more.

16 ANGLE ON STAGE 16

As the music dies down and Gareth moves to a podium.

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED

20

GARETH

All witness now the traverse of the
Welcomers.

Four people, two men and two women, enter and cross toward Gareth. They are wearing red robes. Two large, muscular young men in gray slacks and blazers walk behind them. We'll see more of them later. They are Oracle ENFORCERS. Cadmus and Gareth move to each of the Welcomers, embracing each one in turn. The Welcomers then turn and walk upstage to the portal. They go inside the chamber and turn back to face the audience. Gareth and Cadmus close a gate on the front of the portal. There is a wide window in the front of the gate, so we can see the Welcomers in the chamber. Gareth then goes to what looks like a control panel to one side of it. The music reaches a crescendo and Gareth throws a switch. There is a loud electric zapping sound, and through the window, we see a dazzling light display that looks a bit like the vortex our Sliders use. The light flashes, there is a lot of smoke, and when it clears, the Welcomers are gone.

21 THE AUDIENCE

21

rises spontaneously to its feet, applauding and cheering.

22 THE SLIDERS

22

react to what they've just seen. Amazed and concerned. Are these Welcomers "sliding" to new worlds?

CUT TO

23 EXT. CHANDLER CENTER - DAY

23(X)

Quinn, Maggie and Remmy come out of the assembly with the rest of the congregation. Jane is with them.

JANE

I hope you will join our assembly.

MAGGIE

We're just passing through.

JANE

I see. Well, you're welcome any time. The center never closes.

She smiles and walks away. The Sliders turn and head out toward the street.

24 WITH THE SLIDERS

24

as they pause on the sidewalk and watch the people come out of the center. Then they look up at the building that they know better as a hotel.

QUINN

I've got to get a look at that portal mechanism.

REMBRANDT

Maybe you should just ask them. They seem awful friendly.

QUINN

I'm not sure about that. There's something not right about these people. If they hate Darwin, what would they make of someone like me?

They start to walk away from the center.

QUINN

Jane said the place is always open. Let's wait until there are not so many people around and have a look.

25 NEW ANGLE ON JANE

25

She's been standing some distance away observing the Sliders carefully, a worried expression on her face. After they start to walk away, she turns and crosses back into the center.

CUT TO

26 EXT. PARK - DAY - SOME TIME LATER

26

Remmy and Maggie are sitting on a bench, Remmy working on a bagel and a cup of coffee, Maggie reading the brochure she picked up at the Chandler Center. Quinn isn't there.

(X)

MAGGIE

They believe that life here is only to prepare you for life in the next world.

REMBRANDT

That's pretty much what I was taught in church.

MAGGIE

The faithful will all be gathered up on the Day of Accounting.

CONTINUED

26 CONTINUED

26

REMBRANDT

Same again. Day of Judgment. Day of Accounting. What does it say about the 'unfaithful'?

Quinn approaches, carrying several paperback books and magazines.

MAGGIE

(looking around)

I haven't seen any. Everybody seems to agree that the way of the Oracle is the way to go.

As Quinn arrives and takes a seat on the bench.

REMBRANDT

You mean the whole country follows one set of rules? No denominations? No political parties? No crazy guys holed up in Idaho with automatic weapons?

QUINN

Well, there are the Rats. (indicates a magazine) It's what they call the Rationalist Party. The Oracle apparently tolerates disagreement with their way as long as the Rats keep it on a low flame. (another magazine) They even have debates on television. Naturally the Oracle always wins.

27 INSERT - MAGAZINE

27

A picture of an Oracle/Rationalist Debate. The Oracle is Pat Robertson. The Rationalist, Hugh Hefner.

CUT TO (X)

28 EXT. PARK - TOWN SQUARE

28(X)

The Sliders are walking down the sidewalk. Around them, the people go about their business -- all of them neat, friendly. (X) (X) (X)

MAGGIE

Is it a religion, a life style, what?

CONTINUED

28 CONTINUED

28

QUINN

Near as I can figure, it's pretty
much all of those. On Earth Prime
we had a right wing political
movement that wanted to establish a
system based on family values.

(X)

CONTINUED

REMBRANDT

Yeah, their family values.

QUINN

Obviously on this world, those people have won the argument.

(another magazine)
According to this, they've got a lot of rules. No real freedom of speech without Oracle approval. No abortion. No sex without Oracle license. Right dress and behavior at all times.

(X)
(X)
(X)

REMBRANDT

Sounds like a weekend at my Aunt Miranda's.

MAGGIE

How did the people let this happen?

QUINN

Must not have been paying attention when they should have been. When you don't vote, you get what you deserve.

(X)
(X)
(X)

REMBRANDT

Well, they at least have technology -- cars, planes, CD players. Schools must be pretty good.

QUINN

All controlled by the Oracle. No social sciences. They call that stuff 'Humanism.' And they teach nothing but Creation Science.

(X)
(X)

MAGGIE

That explains 'Demon Darwin.'

QUINN

No 'Big Bang,' no relativity, no black holes, no chaos theory. But if that portal is a sliding machine, they don't follow their own rules.

REMBRANDT

How's that?

CONTINUED

28 CONTINUED 3

28

QUINN

Quantum physics predicted parallel universes. What we do isn't possible without some understanding of subatomic particles moving from one place within the atom to another without going through the space in between.

Rembrandt looks at him a long moment, then.

REMBRANDT

I have no idea what the hell you're talking about, and I seem to slide just fine.

Quinn grins at that, and we....

CUT TO

29 EXT. STREET - NIGHT (N1)

29

Very few people out. The Sliders make their way along the street toward the Chandler Center, and go inside.

(X)

30 INT. CHANDLER CENTER - THE ASSEMBLY ROOM - NIGHT

30(X)

The lights have been dimmed and the room is empty except for two people sitting in the front row of seats. The Sliders enter cautiously and look around. They take seats in the rear row. After a moment, an Enforcer, one of the muscular young men we saw earlier during the Welcomer ceremony, comes out onto the stage and walks down steps into the auditorium. He looks at the two people in the front row and smiles, then comes up the aisle toward the Sliders.

31 ANGLE ON SLIDERS

31

As the Enforcer approaches, they quickly take brochures out of holders on the backs of the seats in front of them and start studying. The young man passes them, smiling at them, and moves on. Quinn looks over his shoulder to see that the Enforcer has gone.

REMBRANDT

I guess those guys make regular rounds.

QUINN

I'm going to take a chance and check out the control panel.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

31 CONTINUED

31

QUINN (CONT'D)
If this thing is a sliding
machine, maybe I can boost
something to fix our timer.

Remmy and Quinn start for the stage.

QUINN
(to Maggie)
Give us a signal if one of those
guys comes back.

MAGGIE
(a shade sarcastic)
Like what, a flare?

QUINN
How about a sneeze?

Quinn and Remmy pass the two people who have been sitting
in the front row and are now leaving. The people smile at
them just like everybody else does.

32 ON THE STAGE

32

Quinn quickly goes to the control panel we saw Gareth
operating during the assembly. Remmy comes to the portal.

33 MAGGIE

33

moves toward a window to keep watch.

34 QUINN

34

uses a pocketknife tool to unscrew the panel and lift it up.
He quickly checks out the wiring and transistor trays.

35 REMBRANDT

35

is looking at the portal, opens the gate and goes inside.
He looks around in the compartment, looks down at the floor
and reacts to something he sees.

36 OMITTED

36

36A REMMY'S POINT OF VIEW - ANGLE ON FLOOR

36A

We see a slight residue of some kind.

39 ON STAGE

39

as Quinn and Remmy come out of the portal. Maggie comes down the aisle to join them. She notices their concern.

MAGGIE

What's wrong?

QUINN

This is some kind of high-powered incinerator.

MAGGIE

What?

REMBRANDT

Those people were burned to death.

Just as they react to this news, the lights suddenly go on.

40 OMITTED

40

41 WIDER ANGLE

41

to show that Enforcers are coming in all of the doors and moving fast. Cadmus comes through the door at the back of the stage.

42 THE SLIDERS

42

react to being caught, and seeing no path of escape...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

43 INT. CHANDLER CENTER - ORACLE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

43 (X)

Quinn, Remmy and Maggie are being spread-eagled and efficiently frisked by a couple of Enforcers as Cadmus stands nearby supervising. The Enforcers put what little they find in the Sliders' pockets onto a tray on a nearby table. Gareth is sitting across the room behind a large desk, apparently busy with paperwork. Maggie is especially annoyed by the frisking. An Enforcer finds Quinn's timer and hands it to Cadmus, who looks it over. After they're finished, the Enforcers move away and the Sliders turn toward Cadmus.

QUINN

Why are we being held? What have we done?

CADMUS

Why were you in the Assembly Room tonight?

MAGGIE

The door was open. Other people were coming and going freely.

CADMUS

Yes. The Assembly Room is always open for meditation and self-renewal. But you were up on the stage looking at the controls to the portal.

QUINN

I was curious about how it works. I'm...well, I'm kind of a scientist.

Gareth looks up from his work.

GARETH

Well, you've just answered your question...what have we done?

He rises and crosses to Cadmus and takes the timer to look it over. His manner is friendly to the point of being unctuous. He talks to the Sliders as if they're naughty children.

QUINN

And that would be...?

CONTINUED

50 CONTINUED 2

50

MAGGIE

(surprised)

Wait a minute. You've given the Oracle all your assets. All your money?

JANE

Money. Property. A few stocks I managed to buy. It's not much, but it will be no good to me where I'm going, and the Oracle can use it here for many good works.

(X)
(X)

Maggie turns away, thinking, not sure how to proceed. She can't just blurt out that the portal is an incinerator.

MAGGIE

I know that you believe you're going to a better place. We all would like to believe that. But this portal to the 'other side.'

Maggie pauses, unsure how to go on.

JANE

I understand your doubts, Maggie. I had them myself in the beginning. But the more I learned, the more I gave myself to the Oracle, the more I realized it had to be true. There is nothing here for me. I have no family. No real friends. No profession. But on the other side, I will be reunited with my mother and father. There will be no pain, no confusion. Only love and light.

Maggie has never met anyone like this. Much as she believes Jane is misguided, she can't help but respect her attitude and unquestioning faith. After a pause.

MAGGIE

What do they have planned for us?

JANE

I don't know. The elders are meeting now.

(picks up an apple from the basket)

Won't you try some fruit? You must be hungry.

Maggie takes the apple and looks at. Jane is smiling at her with such innocence and love, Maggie can't help but smile back.

CUT TO

51 INT. CHIEF ORACLE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

51

Gareth is behind his desk. Cadmus enters.

CADMUS

So far, the technical unit can't make out what the 'communicator' is.

GARETH

How do we know it's not some kind of bomb. That thing could be the detonator.

CADMUS

We've X-rayed it, and scanned it with the magnetic imager. There is no explosive material in it.

GARETH

Maybe it will detonate a bomb somewhere else. A much larger bomb.

CADMUS

The scan revealed no transmitting device. The best guess is that it's some kind of switch. It turns something on. Or off. But we don't know what. Naturally we'll have it under observation in the shielded isolation chamber when it counts down to zero.

GARETH

These people worry me. They could be part of some Rationalist infiltration. I'm getting reports of increased RadRat activity all along the Pacific coast.

CADMUS

What do you want us to do with the strangers?

GARETH

Chemical re-config. First thing tomorrow.

Cadmus reacts to this and exits.

CUT TO

52 EXT. CHANDLER CENTER - CLOISTER - DAY - THE NEXT MORNING
(D2)

52(X)

Morning activity with a few people up and about, Oracle workers in white suits, Enforcers, a few civilians.

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED 4

60

QUINN

It's just Quinn.

Samson pauses a moment, looking at Rembrandt.

SAMSON

And what is your job on the team?

REMBRANDT

I'm a singer.

Samson takes that in for a moment, then...

SAMSON

Interesting.

Samson moves away, Maggie following. The scientists immediately bore in on Quinn, all talking at once.

SCIENTIST ONE

I don't understand how photons can have momentum but no mass.

QUINN

Well...

SCIENTIST TWO

In parallel universes is there matter, or just 'ghosts' of matter?

SCIENTIST ONE

And what about the Anthropic Principal?

QUINN

One of my favorites.

Quinn smiles. He enjoys this.

CUT TO

61 EXT. CHANDLER CENTER - CLOISTER - DAY

61(X)

Gareth and Cadmus are moving through the wreckage from the RadRat raid. Repair is underway to the smoke and fire damage. Cadmus and Gareth examine one of the "spider hole" trap doors.

CADMUS

We're closing down all the tunnels we found beneath the compound.

Gareth rises and crosses back toward the Assembly Room. Cadmus follows.

CONTINUED

99 CONTINUED

99

SAMSON
I knew it would be somebody.
(then, re: the timer)
Can that thing get me back?

QUINN
Yes. But we'd all have to go. If
we miss the vortex we'd be stuck
here.

REMBRANDT
I don't know if I want to let
those guys take another shot at
cooking me.

(X)

SAMSON
Don't you understand, I've started
something and with Cadmus in place,
we can finish Gareth, maybe more.
Millions of people saw me on
television, heard what I had to
say.

MAGGIE
I agree with Samson. I think we
should go back, and help him finish
the fight.

Samson embraces her. Remmy is unhappy. Quinn is thinking.
Maggie moves away from Samson and heads up a little rise to
look over the hill. Quinn gets the idea.

QUINN
The people there think the portal
is a way into a better world. And
no one has ever come back. What if
someone did? That someone would
have such a powerful message that
nothing the Oracle said could stop
it.

(to Remmy)
Samson has to go back, and we have
to go with him. We have to do the
right thing.

REMBRANDT
You sound just like my mother.
(then)
You know I'm with you.
(to Samson)
I was wrong about you.

Samson nods. Quinn notices that Maggie has moved away. He
crosses toward her.

100 WITH MAGGIE AND QUINN

100

as Maggie looks around. Quinn picks up on what she's doing.

QUINN

You didn't expect to find Jane here, did you?

MAGGIE

Expect? No.
(then)
I was hoping.

Quinn nods. They turn and rejoin the group. Quinn punches in the numbers on the timer. The vortex materializes and the Sliders jump in.

101 INT. CHANDLER CENTER - DAY

101(X)

Cadmus is at the podium trying to control a chaotic situation. Gareth is being restrained by a couple of Enforcers. To one side of the stage, an Enforcer with an automatic weapon is holding some of his colleagues at bay. The audience is a melee of emotions. People who believe in the Oracle are weeping or yelling at Cadmus. Those who might be leaning Rationalist are shouting at them and urging Cadmus on. We see some of the RadRats from the underground now openly joining the others, shouting their slogans. Cadmus is holding up both arms, trying to calm everybody, and the television cameras are eating everything up.

CADMUS

My friends....my friends...
Please... please...be calm and
listen...

Shouts from the audience: "The Oracle Rules!" "Free Gareth!" "Listen to Cadmus." "The Rats will be Heard!" etc.

CADMUS

(working the camera)
Hear me out! You have all been misled by your leadership. I can't escape the blame myself. I stood by here and watched my friends and neighbors sacrificed to the greed of the Oracle and said nothing because the time was not right. But the time has now come. The truth will come out and the Rationalist cause will be heard.

102 ANGLE ON THE PORTAL

102

as the vortex suddenly appears and Samson comes through it, followed by Quinn, Maggie and Rembrandt.

103 THE CROWD 103

is suddenly hushed. Nobody has ever seen anything like this. Many of the Oracle supporters drop to their knees, certain this is some kind of miracle. The Rationalists are stunned, don't know how to react.

104 ON THE STAGE 104

Cadmus is as knocked out as anyone. Samson crosses quickly to the podium, to the mike.

SAMSON
I have returned to continue the fight for the rational and the right.

There is cheering from his supporters and a shout of "The Oracle is Right!" from someone. Samson quiets everyone with a wave of his hand.

SAMSON
No. The Oracle is not right.

Rats in the crowd cheer.

SAMSON
The Rationalists may not be right either.

Rats in the crowd boo.

SAMSON
But, for a change, we are going to have a free and open forum to find out.
(points to the portal)
I am not a Welcomer come back from the 'other side.' What you just saw was not a miracle, but the result of pure science. A kind of science that is not to be feared, but to be embraced for what it can teach us about our world, and ourselves. As Charles Darwin said: 'Accurate knowledge is the true wealth of the world.'

(X)
(X)
(X)

As Samson continues, we move to...

105 THE SLIDERS - A MOVING SHOT 105

with Quinn, Maggie and Remmy as they go off to one side of the podium and toward a side exit.

CONTINUED

105 CONTINUED

105

QUINN

(checking the timer)

We've only got two minutes here
this time. Let's take it outside.
I don't know if these people need
any more shocks.

REMBRANDT

How are they gonna handle what
they've got?

MAGGIE

I think we've started some kind of
revolution here.

QUINN

It was bound to happen. We just
nudged it along. It's their world
and they're going to have to deal
with it. Thomas Jefferson once
said that politics is like the
weather. Every so often you need a
good storm to clear things out.

MAGGIE

Are you going to start quoting
stuff now?

(X)
(X)
(X)

Quinn smiles and shrugs. As they reach the exit.

(X)

MAGGIE

(to Rembrandt)

Who was Thomas Jefferson?

REMBRANDT

Big man in my world. Got his face
on some of the money.

And they're gone.

FADE OUT

THE END