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"PROPHETS AND LOSS"

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5 CONTINUED 2

5

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. ORACLE CENTER.

QUINN

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

6
THRU OMITTED
7

6
THRU
7

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. Have central enforcement mark them for surveillance. They could be useful to us, or... they could be dangerous.

(X)

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

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

15 CONTINUED

15

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 Remy, as if studying them more
closely. Remy 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.

GARETH

Welcome to this assembly of the
Oracle, followers of the way.
This is a very special assembly
because we have a group of
Welcomers going through the portal
to the other side, to the next
world to make it ready for us.

(X)

At this, there is a gasp from the audience and then
applause.

17 JANE AND THE SLIDERS

17

Jane applauds with the rest, then leans over to explain to
our people.

JANE

You're in for a special treat.

18 ANGLE ON GARETH

18

as he continues.

GARETH

There is a wonderful new world
waiting for us beyond the portal.
A beautiful place you might think
of as this earth, so alike will it
be. But there we will know true
peace, and contentment, leaving
behind all cares and concerns.

19 ANGLE ON THE SLIDERS

19

as they look at each other. Is this guy talking about
sliding?

43 CONTINUED 2

43

QUINN

That's a power indicator. The time I have left before I have to change the batteries.

GARETH

If it's a communicator, it must communicate with something... where's the other one?

QUINN/MAGGIE

(at the same time)

There's not one...We lost it.

A pause, then Remmy steps forward.

REMBRANDT

Actually, they're both right. We lost it, so there's not one.

Gareth just smiles at Remmy, quiets him by holding up his hand. Then he turns and hands the timer to Cadmus.

GARETH

(to Cadmus)

Have our technical staff take a look at this.

Cadmus nods and hands the timer to one of the Enforcers, who exits. Gareth turns back to the Sliders. Smiles at them again.

GARETH

Forgive my rudeness. My name is Gareth and I am the Chief Oracle for the Los Angeles area. Your sudden appearance has caused us to forget our manners.

(a pause)

I've told you who I am. Don't you want to tell me who you are?

(X)

QUINN

My name is Quinn Mallory. This is Rembrandt Brown, and Maggie Beckett. We're from...out of town.

GARETH

So it would seem? The question is...how far?

MAGGIE

Oregon, actually. Way up in the interior. This is our first trip to L.A.

CONTINUED

46 CONTINUED

46

REMBRANDT
You know, Q-Ball, before I started hanging with you, I hardly ever went to jail. Now? Everywhere I go...

He sits up and looks at the prisoner in the next cell. He's lying flat on his back.

REMBRANDT
(to the prisoner)
Hey, pal, what are you in for?

The prisoner looks over at him. A young man, somewhat disheveled, long hair, beard, raggy clothes.

PRISONER
Thinking.

Rembrandt nods. Makes about as much sense as anything else here.

REMBRANDT
What do they do to you for that?

PRISONER
Re-config.

REMBRANDT
Saw something about that in the paper. How does it work?

The prisoner stands and comes closer to Rembrandt. He has haunted, glazed eyes like a man who has been tortured or maybe begun to be chemically re-configured.

PRISONER
Chemical re-configuration.
Intravenous feed of a drug soup.
Wipes your brain clean. Then they feed you what they want you to know. (X)

REMBRANDT
So, you just... 'forget' everything.

PRISONER
After chemical re-config, you're a mindless robot. No cares, no fears, no anger... (X)
(MORE) (X)

CONTINUED

46 CONTINUED 2

46

PRISONER (CONT'D)

(a beat)

No ideas, no challenges, no love.

(X)

REMBRANDT

Paper didn't say anything about chemicals.

PRISONER

They don't want you to know.

Rembrandt thinks about that and we move to...

47
THRU OMITTED
48

47
THRU
48

49 BACK WITH QUINN

49

as he paces. Rembrandt crosses over closer.

QUINN

I estimate we've only got about fifty hours to the slide.

REMBRANDT

Well, you better think of something good. I'm not staying here for twenty-nine years with nothing but white noise between my ears.

50 AT MAGGIE'S CELL

50

in another section of the prison. She has a visitor. A female Enforcer escorts Jane down the corridor to her cell. Jane is carrying a picnic basket. The Enforcer opens the cell door and Jane goes in, putting the basket on the table. As she talks, she takes out packages of food, etc.

JANE

I brought you a few things to make you more comfortable.

(X)

CONTINUED

50 CONTINUED

50

Jane takes out a small vase and some flowers, crosses up to the sink to put some water in the vase, then comes back down and arranges the flowers.

(X)

MAGGIE

You shouldn't have.

(X)

JANE

I do it with joy. As I do all my work for the Oracle.

MAGGIE

Tell me about the Oracle.

Jane reacts to that with surprise, as if she can't believe everyone doesn't know this. Maggie sees the reaction.

MAGGIE

My friends and I still have a lot to learn.

JANE

The Oracle is a way of life that removes care and doubt. It's a system of belief and behavior based on obedience to the Master Oracle.

MAGGIE

The Rationalists I've heard about think it's a system of repression and thought control.

JANE

I think that's sad. Through care and love I have seen even the most militant come around to our way of thinking.

(X)

MAGGIE

(indicating the brochure)
Yes, I was just getting to the 'care and love' part.

JANE

All part of our training.

CONTINUED

50 CONTINUED 2

50

MAGGIE

You told me you were a 'Welcomer.'
When do you expect to go to the
'other side'?

JANE

No Welcomer knows the day or the
hour. I have already settled my
earthly affairs, and ceded all my
assets to the Oracle.

(X)

MAGGIE

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

JANE

It will be no good to me where I'm
going, and the Oracle can use it
here for many good works.

(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. But
on the other side, there will be
no pain, no confusion. Only love
and light.

(X)

(X)

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.

CONTINUED

50 CONTINUED 3

50

MAGGIE

Jane, if you knew this 'traverse'
to the other side might cause your
death, would you still go?

JANE

Of course.

Jane is smiling at her with such innocence and love.

(X)

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

Then what is it?

(X)

CADMUS

The best guess is that it's some
kind of switch. It turns something
on. Or off. But we don't know
what.

(X)

(X)

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.

CONTINUED

51 CONTINUED 51

CADMUS
What do you want us to do with
these three?

(X)

GARETH
Chemical re-config. First thing
tomorrow.

Cadmus reacts to this and exits.

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

Morning activity with a few people up and about, Oracle workers in jump suits, Enforcers, a few civilians. We see Quinn, Maggie and Rembrandt surrounded by Enforcers, being led out of a door on the far side of the cloister and brought across the courtyard.

53 WITH THE SLIDERS 53

as they walk along, well guarded by the Enforcers.

REMBRANDT
What do you think will happen now?

QUINN
Breakfast. I hope.

REMBRANDT
Just as long as they don't do that
chemical thing.

MAGGIE
Where do you think the timer is?

QUINN
No idea. And no idea what to do
about it.

REMBRANDT
Not what I wanted to hear.

Suddenly, there is a shout and an explosion.

54 WIDER ANGLE 54

as smoke grenades drop into the courtyard. It's a raid. Armed, dark-clad men in masks leap apparently out of nowhere in the courtyard and come up from the central well. They're everywhere. In seconds, the courtyard is filled with smoke and confusion.

CONTINUED

59 CONTINUED

59

He holds out his hand. After a moment of hesitation, Quinn takes it.

QUINN

Then we're not prisoners?

SAMSON

You're guests of the RadRats.

Other raiders approach Remmy and Maggie, welcoming them, offering food and drink. Remmy is relieved to find that they may be among friends here. At least they have food.

CUT TO

60 INT. MAIN FLOOD TUNNEL - DAY - SOMETIME LATER

60

Samson is showing the Sliders around the chamber. It's a motley, jumbled, crowded headquarters. Rows of bookshelves cobbled together, and they all bulge with books of all kinds. There is a small laboratory with some battered-looking computers, various electronic instruments, chemistry and mechanical experiments in various stations being worked on by RadRats. As they pass by a row of jury-rigged computers, Quinn leans down to note the work being done on one of the screens.

SAMSON

This is all we could save from Oracle book burners. But it's a start. And there are more like us every day.

Samson moves to a desk area that is obviously his space. The Sliders take seats nearby.

SAMSON

We've got hidden labs and libraries all up and down the coast. The Big O thinks he's got everything on rails, but one morning he's gonna wake up and smell the napalm.

QUINN

What about the Rationalist Party. Do you work with them?

SAMSON

Their minds are in the right place, but their hearts have a way to go. The only real change will come through revolution.

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED

60

REMBRANDT
Lot of that goin' around.

SAMSON
Now, then, what about you?

MAGGIE
(cautious)
What about us?

SAMSON
A great philosopher once said:
'First things first.' Who are you?
Where do you come from?

A pause. The Sliders look at one another, not sure to trust him.

SAMSON
Don't give me that Oregon business
you laid on the Big O.

MAGGIE (X)
How did you know about that?

SAMSON
We have sources. We know how you
came into this world. You were
seen doing it.

REMBRANDT (X)
We were?

SAMSON
At first some of us thought you
might be Welcomers, coming back
from the other side. That the
Oracle's portal really does work.

A pointed look at one of his followers, who looks at his shoes, ashamed. (X)
(X)

QUINN
The portal is an incinerator.

MAGGIE
And the Welcomers are being robb .
I met one. She's given everything
she owns to the Oracle.

SAMSON
We know what the portal is, and we
suspected the rest.

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED 2

60

QUINN
As for the 'other side.' There
isn't one far as I know.

SAMSON
Who can say? You came from
somewhere didn't you?

Quinn looks at Maggie and Rembrandt, decides to come clean.

QUINN
We came from earth, but not this
earth. My name is Quinn Mallory,
this is Maggie Beckett and
Rembrandt Brown. I invented a
device that allows us to pass
through a vortex into parallel
worlds.

Samson is blown away.

SAMSON
And you came here to help us?

QUINN
Not exactly.

SAMSON
What else could it be? As the poet
said, 'God gives, but man must open
his hand.'

REMBRANDT
Which poet was that?

SAMSON
One of the big ones.
(to Maggie)
What's your job on the team?

MAGGIE
We're not really a team, but on my
world, I was a Marine captain.

SAMSON
Great. We can always use another
fighter.

QUINN
Wait a minute. We're not here for
your fight. We have no control
over where we go or how long we
stay. And the Oracle has the only
device that does have control
over that.

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED 3

60

MAGGIE

If we don't get it back -- the timer -- when the time runs out, we'll be stuck here a very long time.

(X)

SAMSON

Then you'll have no choice but to join us.

(X)

The Sliders react to that. Obviously a mistake to tell these guys the whole truth. Quinn gets an idea.

QUINN

Let's make a deal. You and your raiders help us get the timer back, and for however long we're here, we'll help you.

Samson shrugs. What can you do for us?

QUINN

When you were showing us around, I noticed one of your people is working on focussed laser parameters. Mechanics.

(X)
(X)

SAMSON

Yes?

QUINN

He's doing it wrong.

Samson thinks it over.

SAMSON

You've got a deal.

QUINN

We have to move fast. If you get the timer back for us, we wouldn't have much time left here.

Samson rises and summons a few of the RadRats whom we saw working in the lab areas.

SAMSON

Then we must get started right away. As Norm Crosby once said: 'Waste not, want not.'

REMBRANDT

(to Quinn)
I thought that was Ben Franklin.

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED 4

60

QUINN
Different world, different quotes.

Two or three RadRat "scientists" have gathered at Samson's desk.

SAMSON
We need to work up a plan for a
raid on the Oracle compound.
(to Maggie)
Care to join us, Captain?

(X)

(X)

Maggie nods, Samson turns to Quinn.

(X)

SAMSON
I'm sure our technicians have a
lot of questions for you,
Professor.

(X)

(X)

(X)

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

QUINN
Well...

SCIENTIST TWO (FEMALE)
In parallel universes is there
matter, or just 'ghosts' of matter?

SCIENTIST ONE (MALE)
And what about the Anthropic
Principle?

QUINN
One of my favorites.

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED 5

60

Quinn smiles. He enjoys this.

CUT TO

61 EXT. ORACLE CENTER - CLOISTER - DAY

61

Gareth and Cadmus are moving through the wreckage from the RadRat raid. Repair is underway to the smoke and fire damage.

CADMUS

We found a tunnel beneath the compound. We're closing it up.

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

CONTINUED

63 CONTINUED

63

SCIENTIST ONE (MALE)
The value of pi doesn't figure in
this equation.

SCIENTIST TWO (FEMALE)
Of course it does.

SCIENTIST ONE (MALE)
(petulant)
It's always pi with you, isn't it?

Quinn steps in. Scientist Two turns to him.

SCIENTIST ONE (MALE)
And another thing, how can light
be both a wave and a particle? (X)

QUINN
Quantum physics is pretty weird. (X)

The scientists get excited and go back to their work. Quinn
moves away from them, checks his watch, anxious.

QUINN
(to Remmy)
These people better come up with a
good plan. And fast.

REMBRANDT
I'm not sure about these RadRats.

QUINN
Compared to the Oracle, they look
like the good guys to me.

REMBRANDT
Maybe. Did you see the way the
head man's eyes lit up when he
thought we'd have to stay here.

QUINN
He's fighting for a cause.

REMBRANDT
It's all politics, man. And that
stuff gets all up your head and
twists it around. Power. That's
what it's all about. The guys in
white suits have got it, and the
RadRats want it. It's folks in the
middle, like us, who always get
hurt.

CONTINUED

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

76 INT. DETENTION BLOCK - DAY

76

This time Samson and the Sliders are all in the same large cell. The only piece of furniture is a long bench, so obviously they won't be here long.

SAMSON

I'm certain my pack is already planning a rescue mission. When we didn't return at the appointed time, they're trained to move.

MAGGIE

How are they going to get past all the security the Oracle has piled on us now?

SAMSON

Trust me. They won't give us up.

REMBRANDT

There's some stuff here I don't understand.

(rises and crosses to the bars of Quinn's cell)
Ever since we got here everybody seems to know what we're doing before we do it.

(to Samson)

You say we were seen sliding in. Then, the Big O's heat is on us right away in the Assembly Room. Then your people bust us out of here. And when we come back for the timer, here's the Big O again like they were in on the plan.

QUINN

More than coincidence.

(to Samson)

Who's running this show?

SAMSON

We have undercover agents very high in the Oracle. I don't know who they are or when they'll move. But they will. 'The biggest campaign is built on the smallest detail.' Julius Caesar. The Second.

CONTINUED

76 CONTINUED

76

REMBRANDT
(angry at Samson)
And I'm getting enough of this
quoting.

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

80 CONTINUED

80

QUINN
Just for the sake of argument.
Let's say your people can break us
out of here. Then what? Without
the timer, we're stuck here for
twenty-nine years.

SAMSON
Would that be so bad?

REMBRANDT
I'm gonna say 'yes.'

SAMSON
We're going to win.

MAGGIE
How can you be so sure?

SAMSON
Because we're right.

(X)

QUINN
Okay, let's say you get what you
want. What will you do to the
Oracle and the people who believe
in it?

(X)

SAMSON
Nothing. They're free to believe
whatever they want. They just
won't be free to impose those
beliefs on others against their
will. After all, God himself
created our minds. He must have
wanted us to use them.

MAGGIE
Who are you quoting this time?

SAMSON
Me.

They hear approaching sounds. Enforcers?

81 A NEW ANGLE

81

as Jane enters, followed by one of the Enforcers keeping an
eye on things.

CONTINUED

85 CONTINUED

85

And she goes with the others to the portal. Maggie is emotionally torn by this. Remmy leans down to her.

REMBRANDT

Maybe she's right. We'll certainly know soon enough.

86 ANGLE ON PORTAL

86

as the gate closes and Cadmus moves to the console. The music swells, and Cadmus hits the switch. We see the flash of the incinerator and the Welcomers are gone.

87 MAGGIE

87

Crushed by this. Both Remmy and Quinn try to comfort her.

88 GARETH

88

is back at the podium addressing the believers.

GARETH

I'm sure you know that we apprehended the Radical Rationalist Samson and some of his followers in the Oracle compound this morning. We have decided that our re-configuration methods here are inadequate. So we are sending them with the Welcomers to the other side in the hope that the wisdom gained there will provide the means for their salvation.

(X)

(X)

He turns to Samson and the Sliders, who are nudged to their feet by the Enforcers behind them. Remmy is hit again with one of those little "sting guns" when he is reluctant to move. The music starts again as they are moved toward the portal.

As they pass the podium, Samson breaks free for a moment and rushes to the microphone.

SAMSON

(to the TV cameras)
This is a fraud!
(points to portal)
That thing is an oven! Your friends aren't on the other side. They're dead!

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.

SAMSON

Don't you understand, I've started
something. Millions of people saw
me on television.

(X)
(X)

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. ORACLE CENTER - DAY

101

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. 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.

(X)

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. But a science 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)

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