

THE DOOM THAT CAME TO PORTMOUTH
EPISODE 1.1

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FADE IN

A vast, sun-drenched meadow that stretches out into forever. In the midst of it all, a small figure appears, wandering aimlessly through the tall grass. This is AIDEN TOWNSHEND, 17, handsome and boyish, but unsure and awkward. The wind whips his dark hair away from his face.

Aiden takes a slow step, then another, then another. His large, curious eyes scan his lonely surroundings. There's an emptiness. A dread.

AIDEN (V.O.)

I was no more than an irrelevant parcel
of flesh, caught in a place I should not be.

He takes a few more uneasy steps. The grass begins to blacken and rot right beneath him, an obscene blanket of decay spreading like wildfire through the meadow. The sky slowly begins to darken.

AIDEN (V.O.)

... threatened with being snared in some
great dredging net of doom...

The dead grass snaps beneath Aiden's feet as his steps quicken. His breathing becomes hard and laboured.

AIDEN (V.O.)

...an incidental shred of flesh pulled
out of its element of light...

The sky becomes completely darkened. Aiden stops dead as the blackness swallows him whole. Nothing can be heard except for the howling wind, and Aiden's terrified gasps.

AIDEN (V.O.)

...and into icy blackness.

The wind stops abruptly. Aiden remains perfectly still, frozen in terror. There is, for a moment, a rather tranquil moment of silence.

AIDEN (V.O.)

In the void, nothing supported my existence. Which I felt, at any moment, might be horribly altered, or simply...

TWO GLOWING RED EYES, both as large as the moon, open up in the sky, high above Aiden's miniscule, pathetic figure. The monstrous pupils narrow toward Aiden with fury.

AIDEN (V.O.)

...ended.

The whole ground begins to quake. Aiden stumbles over and falls flat on his face. A low, unearthly moan emanates from the ground as the entire meadow is slowly raised into the air, towards the crimson eyes. Aiden maintains a white-knuckled grip on the shriveled, dried grass as the landmass ascends.

AIDEN (V.O.)

In the profoundest meaning of the expression...

The higher the meadow is raised, the more apparent it becomes that it's an actual extension of the colossal body that the deep, hideous red eyes belong to. In the darkness, Aiden looks up and sees the vague outline of a huge mouth widening below the eyes. A bleak, terrifying scream erupts from it.

AIDEN (V.O.)

...my life... was of no matter.

Aiden can only stare in horror as a series of tentacles burst forth from the open mouth, slimy and writhing. They shoot towards Aiden and wrap around his body quickly, pulling the helpless boy back up towards the mouth, the screaming growing louder and louder...

BLACK OUT

Two blue eyes flutter open. These ones are human.

INT. CAR - LATE AFTERNOON - MOVING SHOT

These eyes belong to AIDEN, who has just been jolted awake in the passenger's seat. In the driver's seat is his father, HOWIE TOWNSHEND, 40, an overgrown jock who shares

the same darkly boyish good looks as his son. Aiden grimaces in the rays of sunlight, rubbing his eyes.

The car is trailing behind several moving vans.

HOWIE

Bad dream, sport?

AIDEN

Nothing out of the ordinary.

Aiden fishes around in his backpack and brings out a bottle of water. His shaking hands attempt to unscrew the cap.

HOWIE

Seem kinda shaken up. You nervous?

AIDEN

What do I have to be nervous about?

HOWIE

New town, new school. A whole new community. A strange, *mysterious* community. For all we know, Portsmouth holds a weekly Baby Eating contest.

AIDEN

Dad.

HOWIE

Or maybe they eat kittens. Though, god knows why, they're mostly just fur.

AIDEN

Dad. They don't eat kittens. And please don't ask anyone if they do.

HOWIE

You think I'd do that?

AIDEN

I think you're a lot more nervous than I am.

Howie breathes in slowly, tapping his fingers anxiously on the wheel.

HOWIE

I think you're right.

AIDEN

Dad, I've read the wikipedia entry, like, a million times. Portsmouth couldn't be any more boring if it was a librarian giving a lecture about beige. And, barring any potential hatred of babies, I don't think there's anything to worry about.

HOWIE

You think so?

AIDEN

I do not anticipate any mob lynchings, dad. Really.

Howie briefly looks to his son, and smiles.

HOWIE

What the fuck is a wikipedia entry?

Aiden cracks a smile, too, and then laughs.

EXT. ROAD - MOVING SHOT - CONT'D

The moving vans and Howie's car glide smoothly along the mountain-side road, overlooking a rather beautiful vista. The sun sets along the ocean horizon.

Within moments the cars pass a large sign.

"WELCOME TO PORTMOUTH, MASS.
POP: 24,700"

As the cars continue to ride into the distance, a HOMELESS MAN, unshaven and gaunt, stumbles onto the road near the town sign. He peers toward the ocean, then turns and begins to march towards the huge forest on the other side of the road.

EXT. FOREST - CONT'D

A thick maze of tall trees. The homeless man fumbles along a dirt path, digging into one of his pockets and pulling out a dirty stop-watch. He trips over an upturned root and falls flat on his face.

Blowing dirt out of his mouth, the homeless man notices movement a few feet in front of him. He looks up, fearfully, and sees a WOMAN standing before him. She's tall, lithe, ethereal. Long blonde hair falls upon her shoulders, her thin body draped in a long white dress. Her face is obscured in shadow.

HOMELESS MAN

Pardon me, ma'am..

Suddenly, from the trees behind her, dozens upon dozens of strange men concealed in black robes and long hoods appear. The homeless man tries scrambling to his feet. The mysterious woman raises a hand, and the homeless man suddenly freezes.

The woman raises her hand even higher, and the homeless man ascends into the air, his entire body frozen. He stares at the woman with helpless fright. His voice comes out choked.

HOMELESS MAN

God... have mercy...

A great pain shoots through him. He arches back and lets out a bellowing scream – blood begins bursting out of his eyes, his nostrils, his ears, his mouth...

The mysterious woman and the men in robes watch with cold interest.

BLACK OUT

Opening Credits

EXT. LARGE HOUSE - SUNSET

An old, but very large, Victorian style home shrouded in ivy. Hired movers begin carrying furniture out of their trucks and in through the front door. Howie's car pulls up in the expansive driveway, and both Aiden and Howie get out.

AIDEN

Is it possible for houses to grow?
I totally don't remember it being
this big.

HOWIE

Maybe you're just shrinking.

AIDEN

Maybe.

Howie runs up to give the movers a hand. Aiden looks off to see, in the near distance, the sun setting into the ocean, the sky streaked with dark oranges and deep reds. But something distracts Aiden. Transfixes him. A low, unearthly moan emanates from the water

It stops Aiden dead in his tracks; he takes a moment or two to react. He briefly looks behind him. Neither the movers nor his father seem to be reacting to the noise at all. Aiden stands there, puzzled, staring intensely out into the ocean.

Howie comes running up behind him.

HOWIE

Not gonna get much done enjoying
the pretty colours, there, sport.

Aiden continues to stand still, swallowing a large lump in his throat.

HOWIE

Aiden?

Howie places a hand on Aiden's shoulder, which startles him out of his haze.

AIDEN

What?

HOWIE

You were kinda spacing out, there.

AIDEN

Did you hear that?

HOWIE

Hear what?

He whips around, paranoid.

HOWIE

The movers didn't drop the TV,
did they? I'm not paying them
to re-enact their favourite fuckin'
Three Stooges gags-

AIDEN

No, dad. From the ocean. There
was this...

Aiden looks back to the water, as if to help him form his
words.

AIDEN

This, kinda... this moan.

Howie places his other hand on Aiden's other shoulder, now
seriously concerned.

HOWIE

No, kid, I didn't hear anything
like that. You feeling okay? Are
you getting those migraines again?

Still confused, but slowly coming out of it, Aiden shakes
his head.

AIDEN

No. No, I guess it was just the
wind or something.

Howie pats his son on the back and leads him toward the
front of the house.

HOWIE

C'mon. We'll crack open some beers
and watch these guys break our
valuables.

AIDEN

Father of The Year, ladies and
gentlemen.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Filled only with boxes, a single couch, and a TV hooked up
to a DVD player. Aiden lies on the couch, boredly

contemplating the TV dinner resting on his stomach. Howie is sprawled out on the floor in front of him, excitedly watching events on the screen.

HOWIE

Wai-wai-wai-wait, this is the best part, when he totally punches that guy with a fist of barbed wire - and then he - OH SHIT HE JUST DID!

Howie laughs hysterically, pounding the floor with an open hand.

HOWIE

That zombie Nazi had it coming.

Aiden sets his dinner down onto the floor and sighs. Howie turns to look at him.

HOWIE

C'mon, you love this scene.

AIDEN

I do, it's just... we've seen this movie four times this week alone. I don't think modern science is anywhere close to creating a numerical expression large enough to account for just how many times we've watched Chuck Norris decapitate undead Germans.

HOWIE

His tears can cure cancer.

AIDEN

I never should have told you about that list.

HOWIE

Well, we don't have to watch it. We could pop in one of your frou-frou DVDs about that island.

AIDEN

"Lost" is not frou-frou, dad. It has a polar bear in it.

HOWIE

Well, I bet it wears frilly panties.

AIDEN

Okay, I'm going to bed.

HOWIE

Ah, c'mon, at least stay up until that part where he punches a hole through Zombie Hitler's face.

AIDEN

I'll watch it with you tomorrow, I promise.

He gets up and walks toward the staircase.

AIDEN

G'night.

HOWIE

I don't get a hug?

AIDEN

Not when you're watching a man strangle a zombie with it's own intestines.

HOWIE

Fair enough. G'night.

INT. AIDEN'S BEDROOM – MOMENTS LATER

Aiden opens the door, flooding the dark room with the light of the hallway. It's a moderately sized bedroom, which, like the living room, is filled with boxes and only barely furnished.

A few videogame posters have been put up on the walls. Aiden flicks on the light switch and settles onto the floor, opening a box next to him. He sifts through numerous knick knacks before coming upon an unusually heavy shoebox.

He throws off the lid and finds a numerous amount of photographs, all lying face down. Written on the side facing up are little descriptions – "ME & ANGELA, GRADE 6 FIELD TRIP", "ME & DAD, GRADE 8 GRADUATION", "DAD AT PARK", etc. Aiden finds one that catches his eye – "MOM."

He turns it over, revealing an old, scratchy photograph, yellowed with age. A beautiful young woman is posing next to a tree. Her hair is big and poofy, and her arms rest on her very pregnant stomach.

Aiden's eyes stay on the picture for another moment, and then he turns it back over. His face is unreadable.

FADE TO

EXT. MEADOW – DREAMWORLD

The same meadow from the teaser. Aiden stands in the middle of it all, staring in wonder as red leaves flutter down from the heavens. He catches one and examines it.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
(a whisper; singsong)
Deep beneath the Innsmouth town,
they lie in wait, in sorrow drowned...

Aiden turns around, and sees in the distance, a gothic church resting upon a tall hill. The red leaf is blown out of his hand.

AIDEN
Mom..

He moves toward the church, but after his second step, the mysterious woman suddenly appears before him, grabbing his neck, and lifting him off the ground. Her face reflects a deep rage.

THE WOMAN
This is not enough!

SMASH TO

INT. AIDEN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Aiden jolts awake, sweating. He turns an eye toward his alarm clock: 7:47 am. A shrill noise emanates from the lower level of the house.

EXT. FRONT FOYER – FIRST FLOOR – CONT'D

Somebody is incessantly ringing the doorbell. After a few moments, Aiden comes bounding down the stairs, half-awake, in his boxers, with bed hair flared out in full effect.

AIDEN

If you aren't Ed McMahon, so
help me god...

He throws open the door, only to be greeted with a tall, athletic, pretty, and highly chipper blonde. This is ZELDA, 20, and her smile is huge. She's dressed in the primmest, WASPiest sweater vest and pant-suit ever.

ZELDA

Hi new neighbor! I'm Zelda Marshall,
here on behalf of the Portsmouth
Neighborhood Greeter Group! Or PNGG!
Though I fought to name it The
Official Portsmouth Association of
Greeters, which would have made it
OPAG, 'cause it's a lot easier to
say than PNGG! But hey, you can't
fight City Hall!

There's a long, awkward pause. Aiden squints at the woman before him. Zelda's gigantic smile remains.

AIDEN

Do you have a million dollar check
for me?

ZELDA

I don't think so. This basket is
just so big.

She lifts up a gigantic, flowery gift basket stuffed with coupons, condiments, and other crap.

ZELDA

You look pretty young, you're not
the owner of the house, are you?

AIDEN

No, that would be my dad. But he's
asleep right now. Not even a Fran
Drescher audiobook hooked up to
twenty-foot speakers could wake him.

Zelda's plastic smile immediately disappears, and is replaced with an expression of relief. She practically shoves the gift basket at Aiden, who accepts it somewhat clumsily.

ZELDA

Thank fuckin' god. No offense.

She rips off her sweater and pantsuit to reveal an obscene t-shirt and a pair of jeans.

ZELDA

I've done this so many god damn times this month I'm getting smile wrinkles.

AIDEN

But, I thought -

ZELDA

Don't let my perfect skin fool you, I'm just a volunteer. Well, I don't think it counts as volunteering when your mother basically threatens to set on you fire if you don't do it.

AIDEN

Well, I guess-

ZELDA

Anyway, I'm right across the street, if you, you know, have any questions or shit.

AIDEN

I'll keep that in mind, thanks.

She responds lightly -

ZELDA

Later bitch.

- then turns and walks away. Aiden watches her go, dumbstruck. Zelda turns back around briefly.

ZELDA

Nice boxers.

Aiden, suddenly realising his lack of clothes, looks down at his underwear and runs to slam the door, face red.

INT. KITCHEN – CONT'D

Aiden walks in and sets the gift basket onto the table, sighing with relief as he does so. Howie enters moments later, hastily tying a robe around himself.

AIDEN

Up before noon? I no longer
the unknowable.

HOWIE

There is that issue of me going
to the job that had us moving
here in the first place.

AIDEN

Right.

HOWIE

And you going to that thing
that I hear is really popular
with kids your age.

He crosses over to the fridge and opens it.

HOWIE

Remind me what that is, again?
I think it rhymes with "wigh school".

AIDEN

Does "not going to high school"
rhyme with "wigh school"?

Howie's face drops.

HOWIE

Aiden. You said you weren't worried.

AIDEN

What I say and what I feel aren't
supposed to coincide when you're
17, dad! You know this.

Howie closes the fridge, mostly out of frustration. He takes a seat at the table.

 HOWIE
Aiden, high school can be scary,
yes, but not always. It can be
very rewarding, too.

 AIDEN
Yeah, if you're on the football
team and can't walk through a hall
without being pelted with cheerleader
panties, but we can't all be like
you were, dad.

 HOWIE
I'm not asking you to be like me-

 AIDEN
No? What was the last thing you
said to my tenth grade math teacher?

Howie looks at his feet. Doesn't say a word. Aiden crosses his arms.

 AIDEN
Father.

Howie grimaces.

 HOWIE
"Stop giving Aiden Cs and Ds, he's
on the rugby team..."

Aiden raises an eyebrow. Howie grimaces harder.

 HOWIE
"...for fuck sakes."

 AIDEN
And was I on the rugby team?

 HOWIE
Maybe if you applied yourself.

 AIDEN
Did my school *have* a rugby team?

HOWIE

Maybe if your principal stopped
throwing away my petition letters.

AIDEN

Look – my point is – I’m not a
jock, probably never will be,
and no, I didn’t have a lot of
friends, probably wont in this
town, either. And that’s not
going to change, no matter how
many towns you move me too.

HOWIE

Whoa, wait, that is not fair-

AIDEN

I’m late for school.

Aiden leaves, bristling. Howie can only watch him go,
frustration on his face. He turns an eye toward the table
and squints at the flowery gift basket.

HOWIE

When the hell did we get this?

He reaches in and takes out the pink gift card – on the
inside is written, “LOVE FROM ACROSS THE STREET – ZELDA! ☺”

EXT. PORTMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL – MORNING

A large, old-looking educational institution, with a well-
maintained garden and sprawling willow trees littered all
over the front quad.

Students move in and about, like swarms of insects, all
buzzing excitedly. Aiden appears amidst all the crowds,
clutching his backpack, looking lost and helpless.

INT. PORTMOUTH HIGH – HALLWAYS – LATER

Aiden wanders through the crowded halls, eyes trained
directly onto his class schedule. He looks up and spies a
row of lockers. He heads toward an empty one, the second to
last in the row.

There's a student attending the locker beside Aiden's. This is KAYSAR, 18, a tall, handsome, distinguished looking Iraqi-American. Aiden addresses him nervously.

AIDEN

Hi – sorry – don't mean to bug you, I'm new here, I didn't know if this locker was taken, or... if you were holding it for a friend, or...

Kaysar responds only with a cold stare.

AIDEN

I mean, there's no lock on it, or anything. I'm not an idiot, I swear. I'm a junior. So I'm savvy, but I just didn't know if you-

Kaysar closes his locker, locks it, then walks away without saying anything. Aiden stands there, baffled. He looks to Kaysar's locker – it's been scribbled with graffiti, most of which are unintelligible racial slurs, the most readable one being, "GO BACK TO YOUR CAVE!".

Aiden stares at it in disbelief, muttering to himself.

AIDEN

Lovely.

INT. CLASSROOM – LATE MORNING

A tired looking teacher, MR. KATZ, stands before a bored looking class. Aiden sits at the rear of the room, gazing out of the window beside him.

MR. KATZ

...it seemed everyone but Lear himself understood how unfairly Cordelia was being treated. Even the Fool – who was constantly berating Lear about it. So why was the Fool the only one who could get away with taunting the King?

No one puts up their hand. Aiden continues to stare out the window, bored.

AIDEN'S POV: A sunny, suburban street. Across the road, behind a car, a MAN WEARING BLACK stares at Aiden. Almost curiously.

Aiden, suddenly realising that a complete stranger is staring at him, jolts back in his seat. Everyone in class turns their attention to him.

Mr. Katz furrows his brow, glancing momentarily at his seating plan.

MR. KATZ

Aiden, is it?

AIDEN

Oh, sorry. I thought I saw a bee.

Aiden looks around and sees all the other students whispering and smirking. A hand at the front of the room shoots up.

MR. KATZ

Yes, Kaysar.

Aiden looks up, surprised. Kaysar is indeed sitting at the front of the class, books open, his eyes wide and attentive.

KAYSAR

Lear let the Fool talk to him that way because everyone thinks the Fool is an idiot. Nothing he says makes any sense to them. It's all gibberish.

MR. KATZ

But of course...

KAYSAR

...the audience knows that everything the Fool says makes perfect sense. I think maybe in a way, Lear let the Fool talk like that because a small part of him knew that the Fool was telling the truth.

MR. KATZ

That's very good, Kaysar. You
raise an interesting point...

Aiden, relieved the attention is back off of him, looks
back out the window. The man in black is gone.

EXT. PORTMOUTH HIGH – QUAD – AFTERNOON

A lot of students are eating their lunch in the quad, on
tables and benches. It's packed. Aiden wanders out with his
sad little lunch tray, clearly overwhelmed.

He spies a long table occupied by about four students: two
guys, two girls, all very pretty. There's room for him.
Swallowing his nervousness, Aiden walks over.

AIDEN

Hi. Sorry, is it okay if I sit
here? I mean, it's either this
or the grass, and I have this
thing about ants...

One of the girls, TRACY, smiles and laughs.

TRACY

No problem.

Aiden nervously takes a seat. All eyes are on him. He looks
at his lunch tray self-consciously.

TRACY

You're new here, aren't you?

AIDEN

Yeah.

TRACY

I figured. You have that lost
puppy look.

The other girl laughs. Aiden tries to laugh, too.

TRACY

(pointing to all who correspond)
I'm Tracy, that's Katy, Harry, Barry.

Harry and Barry, both wearing letter jackets, nod
succinctly.

AIDEN
I'm Aiden. Nice to meet you guys.

TRACY
Are you a sophomore?

AIDEN
Junior.

KATY
No shit, you look a lot younger.

AIDENrr
Well, thanks. People tell me-
Harry spies something in the distance.

HARRY
Oh fuck no.

TRACY
What?

HARRY
Towelhead's actually coming
outside for lunch today.

The rest of them all follow Harry's gaze, all the way
across the quad, where KAYSAR is sitting alone, underneath
a tree, reading a magazine and eating a sandwich.

Aiden looks back at Harry, disgust on his face.

AIDEN
'Towelhead' is a family name,
I'm assuming.

TRACY
Aiden - no, it's totally cool,
Kaysar's such a dick. I mean, he
doesn't talk to anyone, and
whenever someone tries to talk
to him he starts screaming at them.
Like, what the fuck?

KATY
He's a sociopath.

BARRY

Thinks he's better than everyone
'cause his dad is rich. Probably from
all the crack he's peddling to Osaka.

Harry laughs, and they punch shoulders. Katy and Tracy
laugh too, although they try to look to embarrassed. Aiden,
however, stares at them in seething disbelief.

AIDEN

I'm sorry, I didn't realise this
was asshole table. My mistake.

He picks up his lunch tray and indignantly walks away. They
all stare at each other, bewildered.

TRACY

Aiden?

Aiden, ignoring them, walks all the way across the quad,
towards the shady area where Kaysar sits. Sensing someone
near him, Kaysar looks up from his magazine. Seeing Aiden,
Kaysar glowers and goes back to his magazine.

AIDEN

Hi. Kaysar, right? We're, uh,
we're in English Lit together.
And... also locker buddies.

Kaysar says nothing.

AIDEN

Though we don't have to call
each other locker buddies. I
normally go by Aiden. Sometimes
'Jackass'.

Still, Kaysar says nothing. Aiden sighs.

AIDEN

But mostly Jackass. Would it be
okay if I sat here?

KAYSAR

Who's paying you?

A moment of shock. Aiden tries to gather his thoughts.

AIDEN

Uh – to what?

KAYSAR

To sit here. Who's paying you to sit here, and pretend to be my friend, and then throw an egg at me or whatever it is people like to record on their cell phones and put up on YouTube and email to everybody at school?

AIDEN

If you wanted to check me for eggs, you can.

KAYSAR

I saw you coming from Harry's table, alright?

AIDEN

Oh, no, it's totally not like that at all, I was –

Kaysar isn't listening anymore. Frustrated, Aiden throws down his lunch tray.

AIDEN

Well, fine. Guess you're all assholes here, then.

He walks away. Kaysar doesn't even look up. In the near distance, behind a tree, the MAN IN BLACK watches.

FADE TO

INT. PORTMOUTH HIGH – HALLWAY – LATER

Students fling open their lockers and gab with each other. Aiden walks through, busily shoving textbooks into his backpack.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

It's the end of another beautiful school week, please remember to have a safe, fun weekend. Reminder

to Mrs. Watson's homeroom class...

Aiden weaves past throngs of students. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his cell phone, realising that it's vibrating. He answers.

AIDEN

Hi dad.

HOWIE (V.O.)

(from phone)

Hey sport, I wanted to apologize about earlier-

AIDEN

It's okay, dad, I was just-

HOWIE (V.O.)

No no no no, I want to apologize. Let me make it up to you. I'll come pick you up and we'll go to... to... Jamba Juice, or something.

AIDEN

I appreciate that, I think... but it's okay, I'll walk home.

HOWIE (V.O.)

On your first day? Bullshit. Besides, you sound tired. Are you tired?

AIDEN

A little. A lot.

He stops himself and leans against a wall.

AIDEN

I'm about to pass out.

HOWIE

I'll just be fifteen minutes.

Aiden looks up and sees a sign that reads "TO LIBRARY" with an arrow pointing further up the hall.

AIDEN

Alright, call me when you get here.

HOWIE (V.O.)

Will do.

INT. LIBRARY — PORTMOUTH HIGH — CONT'D

Aiden enters, and finds a nice, large, two-storied library that's filled with a lot more books than students. One drowsy-looking librarian is at the checkout table.

INT. LIBRARY — SECOND LEVEL — MOMENTS LATER

Aiden ascends the stairs and wanders through the maze-like stack of books. The whole second floor is deserted. He throws his backpack down and takes a seat in the corner, resting his head against the wall. He glances at his cell phone — "3:14 PM".

Slowly, Aiden closes his eyes.

FADE TO

INT. LIBRARY — SECOND LEVEL — HOURS LATER

The entire library is dark as night. Aiden jolts awake suddenly. He grabs at his cell phone, flips it open. "7:03 PM — NINE MISSED CALLS"

AIDEN

Oh *shit*.

Panicking, he gathers his things and starts navigating his way out of the stacks. He passes by row after row of books, going left and right, but never finding a way out. A blur of movement passes him from behind. Aiden turns and looks behind him — nope, nothing there.

After another moment of panicked searching, he finds an opening towards the staircase, and runs right for it.

INT. PORTMOUTH HIGH — HALL — CONT'D

Aiden bursts out of the library and into the empty, darkened high school. A few hallways are dimly lit with flickering fluorescent lights. Aiden hurries through, flipping open his cell phone and dialing rapidly.

AIDEN

C'mon c'mon c'mon...

He stops for a moment to calm himself down. The phone rings, and rings, and rings. Finally, someone answers.

AIDEN

Dad?

HOWIE (V.O.)

(from phone)

This is Howie Townshend, I'm not here at the moment, but please leave a message -

Further down the hall, Aiden sees three shadowy figures in long robes (from now on referred to as THE SENTINELS) emerging. His heart leaps into his throat.

HOWIE (V.O.)

-at the beep and I'll get back to you whenever I feel like it.

BEEP. Aiden stands frozen for a moment, watching the Sentinels advance toward him slowly. He closes his cell phone and runs like hell in the other direction.

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY - PORTMOUTH HIGH - CONT'D

Aiden races through and comes upon an intersection. He looks toward the left - another trio of Sentinels appear within it. He looks to the right - it's clear.

INT. INTERSECTING HALL - CONT'D

At the very end of the hall are the exit doors. Aiden gets to them in no time, throws them open desperately and hurries outside.

EXT. PORTMOUTH HIGH - FRONT YARD - CONT'D

Aiden runs along a lone pathway that cuts through the large garden inhabiting the front yard. He stops dead upon seeing, towards the end of the garden, a mysterious woman standing with her back towards him. It's the same woman (from now on referred to as MOTHER) from the start of the episode.

She turns, slowly, her piercing green eyes coming into view. She's very beautiful, but there's a haunted quality about her. Something very unsettling.

AIDEN

Who are you?

The woman narrows her eyes, wind softly whipping her blonde hair all around her face.

AIDEN

You're – you're with those guys,
aren't you? What the hell is going?

MOTHER

We have come to witness the rebirth.

She speaks in a very stiff, regal, British accent. It catches Aiden off guard.

AIDEN

Rebirth of what?

MOTHER

The world. Born anew in His image.
Absolute fury, on a scale the
world has never seen.

Aiden nervously begins backing away.

AIDEN

I... don't see this ending well...

Mother observes him curiously, raising an eyebrow.

MOTHER

In ignorance there is weakness,
in memory there is strength.
Remember, Aiden. Remember me,
remember the choice.

Aiden stops. Their eyes connect, and share a moment. Mother begins to smile, just as Aiden crumbles to his knees, a shrill pain coursing through his head. SERIES OF IMAGES: Aiden walking through the meadow... the sky above him darkening... fluttering red leaves... a church...

A scream erupts through Aiden's gritting teeth. His fingers claw over his head, trying desperately to assuage the unbearable pain. Mother takes a few eager steps toward him, a wolf's grin on her face.

Aiden looks up and sees that the entire perimeter of the front yard is lined with those strange men in black robes. They slowly close in on him.

MOTHER

Calm, lasting beauty comes only in
a dream... and in this solace the
world has thrown away its secrets...

She raises a hand and Aiden, pulled by forces he can't control, rises to his feet.

MOTHER

However lost you are, Aiden, know
that there is only one true path.

Suddenly, one of the Sentinels, flung from a great distance, lands before Mother with a sickening crack. His neck is broken. Mother immediately lets go of her psychokinetic hold on Aiden, who falls back to the ground, gasping for air.

MOTHER

What is-?!

The surrounding Sentinels all turn in unison just as the MAN IN BLACK charges at them, a blur of silver at his hand – a steel katana. The Sentinels try to fight back, but it's no use – the man in black is too fast, too swift, too deadly – he cuts through them in no time.

Mother looks up, furious. The man in black meets her glare, and for the first time we see his face. This is GHOST (36), a towering menace of masculinity, intense eyes, and a persistent five-o'clock shadow. He's dressed in a black, leathery high-tech stealth suit, the katana's scabbard slung over his back.

Ghost steps in front of Aiden, who's still on the ground, clutching his skull tightly.

GHOST

Gonna have to cut the party short.

He motions toward the sliced-up henchmen.

GHOST

Pun intended.

MOTHER

What in hell's name are you?

GHOST

Don't got a name, lady.

Her eyes narrow in contempt.

MOTHER

You're protecting this boy?

Ghost slices his katana through the air, flinging the blood off of it. A spray of crimson hits the woman in the face. She jolts back in shock.

GHOST

You can take that as a yes.

MOTHER

You stupid man.

She charges over to Ghost, angrily wiping the blood from her face. The man doesn't hesitate. He rears back his katana and jabs it right into the woman's stomach. She gasps.

GHOST

Now, I know this wont kill you.
But it hurts like hell, doesn't it?

Behind Ghost, on the ground, Aiden looks up in a daze. Mother angrily grabs the blade and twists it back out of her stomach. Through the cut in her dress, her wound can be seen, healing instantly. Her grip on the katana tightens, and the blade shatters immediately.

MOTHER

MEN!

Dozens upon dozens more Sentinels appear behind her, each as menacing as the next. Ghost, weaponless, nods in defeat.

GHOST

Alright. I can see this isn't going anywhere.

With great flourish, Ghost whips out his arms. Two semi-automatic rifles appear from holsters hidden in his sleeves.

GHOST

Doesn't mean it can't be fun.

He fires. The Sentinels charge at Ghost and Aiden. They take a good number of bullets before finally crumbling to the ground. Ghost aims next at the woman –

GHOST

Don't take my grand displays of violence as misogyny, but an enemy's an enemy.

– and sprays her down in a hail of bullets. Mother is blown back several feet from the force of it all. Now without opposition, Ghost turns around and helps Aiden get to his feet. The boy is still pretty out of it, reeling from his massive migraine attack.

AIDEN

Are... are you Batman?

GHOST

Uh, yeah. You trust Batman, right kid?

AIDEN

I... I guess...

GHOST

Good. You need to come with me. Your life depends on it.

Aiden takes a step, but trips over his own feet. Ghost catches him. Aiden's clearly not able to walk upright.

GHOST

You just had to make this difficult.

Ghost sighs to himself as he bends down and hoists Aiden into a fireman's carry. Aiden, even more disoriented, gets

a clear view of the bullet-riddled henchmen lying around him.

AIDEN

You just killed all of these people...

GHOST

The hell I did.

Ghost bolts the hell out of there. Slowly, agonisingly, the felled men begin to groan and strain as they stir back to life. Mother, lying painfully on her side, breathes heavily as bullet wounds all over her body begin to heal. She closes her eyes in absolute fury.

INT. GHOST'S CAR – MOVING SHOT – MOMENTS LATER

A non-descript black sedan charges through the streets. Ghost, at the driver's wheel, punches a few buttons into a panel below the cigarette holder. Aiden, in the passenger's seat, has passed out.

GHOST

C'mon, kid, snap the fuck out of it...

A computerized display appears on the right side of Ghost's windshield, where the face and shoulders of a man in a lab coat appears. This is DECRYPTER. 30s, geeky, shaggy hair.

DECRYPTER

What do you got for me, Ghost?
Find your client okay?

GHOST

Jean Grey back there hit him with
a pretty hard headache, but he's fine.

Decrypter takes a glance at the passed out teenager in the passenger's seat.

DECRYPTER

Doesn't look fine to me. You
sure you didn't slip his drink
with something? Wouldn't put
it past you.

Ghost reaches over and gives Aiden a good smack on the face. Aiden jolts back to consciousness.

AIDEN
OW-! Grandma?!

DECRYPTER
Bring him to HQ, Ghost. I want
to make sure she hasn't crossed
any wires.

GHOST
Will do, Otacon.

DECRYPTER
Ya know - I've asked you so many
times to stop calling me that.

GHOST
And yet.

Ghost presses the 'OFF' button on his panel, and the
display instantly disappears. Aiden stirs uncomfortably in
his seat, equal amounts groggy and baffled.

AIDEN
Okay... okay... you're gonna need to
confirm a few things for me. Just
to make sure I'm not insane.

GHOST
Alright.

AIDEN
You slaughtered a group of monks
with a samurai sword.

GHOST
Yes.

AIDEN
And then when more monks came,
you shot them with semi-automatics
that came out of our sleeves.

GHOST
Yes.

AIDEN
Then you stabbed a woman, shot

her too, then grabbed me, threw me into this car, where a disembodied floating head just appeared on your windshield and shouted at you.

GHOST

Yes. That was all real.

A beat.

AIDEN

Okay, that doesn't make me feel better.

GHOST

In my defense, I doubt they were monks. And that woman was trying to squeeze your brain out through your nose with her mind-powers. So I'm thinking you should be a little less fuckin' snippy and a little more grateful.

Another beat.

AIDEN

Who the hell *are* you?

Ghost considers his question for a moment. He sighs.

GHOST

I've been employed by an organization called Underground Dawn, as part of a select group of anti-paranormal personnel known as the Aeons.

AIDEN

Aeon? You mean, like, a period of time?

GHOST

No-

AIDEN

Or, Aeon like those monsters that you summon in Final Fantasy X?

GHOST

No-

AIDEN

Or Aeon like that Evanescence song?

Ghost slams on the breaks. Aiden, bound in his seatbelt, comes forward and nearly bashes his head against the dashboard. He's thrown back in his chair, silenced.

GHOST

Do I get to talk, now?

Aiden nods tightly. Ghost resumes driving.

GHOST

'Aeon' is more or less another name for 'bodyguard'. As in, I've been assigned to be your bodyguard.

He takes a quick sideways glance at Aiden, who could not look more frightened or confused.

GHOST

Though in your case I guess I'm more of a god damn babysitter. What are you, 13? 14?

AIDEN

17. And - I'm sorry - I'm having trouble with this. An... an organization... anti-paranormal... bodyguards... what the fuck is going on?

Ghost rolls his eyes and punches another couple of buttons on the dashboard panel. A computerized schematic of the entire Portsmouth area shows up on the windshield. Bright red dots are scattered liberally everywhere.

GHOST

Since you've moved to Portsmouth, paranormal and/or supernatural activity has increased astronomically.

AIDEN

I've only been here for two days.

GHOST

They've been around a lot longer.
But something about your presence
is making them much more active.

AIDEN

Me? Why?

GHOST

Don't know for sure. But the
head honchos got a few theories
brewin'.

Aiden looks beyond the computerized schematic, and sees
that they're now driving along a gigantic, empty field.

AIDEN

Where are we going?

GHOST

Down the rabbit hole.

A large section of grass supported by a steel platform is
raised, revealing a hidden passage beneath. Ghost's car
drives right into it, and the section of grass closed back
onto it. The whine of grinding metal locks it back into
place.

INT. TUNNEL PASSAGE — CONT'D

Ghost's car zooms through the dimly lit passage.

INT. GHOST'S CAR — MOVING SHOT — CONT'D

Aiden's breathing becomes shallower and shallower as the
car progresses through the tunnel.

GHOST

You hyperventilating?

AIDEN

No.

(then)

Yes. Just who the hell was that
woman? How can I trust you?
What's your name?

GHOST

They call me Ghost.

AIDEN
I meant your real name.

GHOST
So did I.

Ghost feels Aiden's eyes on him. He grips the wheel tighter and steps on the gas. Aiden's once again thrown back in his seat.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE – UNDERGROUND DAWN – MOMENTS LATER

A white, spherical parking lot, filled with black cars indistinguishable to Ghost's. Ghost parks in an empty space, goes around to Aiden's side, and opens the door.

GHOST
You gonna be okay to walk, or am
I gonna need to kick you all the
way to the elevator?

AIDEN
You haven't been in the bodyguard
business very long, have you?

Ghost shoots him an annoyed look.

AIDEN
Sorry, *Aeon* business.

GHOST
Just get up.

Aiden slowly gets out of Ghost's car, and takes a long look around. Ghost points him toward the elevator near them, where Decrypter stands, lab suit, clipboard and all. Ghost walks toward him; Aiden reluctantly follows suit.

DECRYPTER
Evening gentlemen.

GHOST
(nodding)
Evening. This is my client, Aiden..

Ghost digs around in his pocket and pulls out a small notepad. He squints at the teeny writing.

GHOST
...Townzend.

AIDEN
Townshend.

DECRYPTER
Very nice to meet you, Aiden.

They shake hands.

GHOST
This is Decrypter, Underground
Dawn's head medical doctor.

AIDEN
You were named in a Mad Libs
explosion, too?

Ghost glares at him, again, but Decrypter grins.

DECRYPTER
He's a clever one, Ghost.

GHOST
You two'll get along famously.

DECRYPTER
Right, then. Let's get a move on.

He ushers them into the waiting elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR — CONT'D

Decrypter presses a button the elevator panel. Aiden brings
out his cell phone and begins to dial frantically.

GHOST
What are you doing?

AIDEN
Calling my dad. I've sorta... been
missing for four hours, and I need
to let him know he can call off
the National Guard.

DECRYPTER

Cell phone signals don't work
down here, buddy.

Aiden puts his phone to his ear. No signal.

GHOST

Even then we couldn't let you
talk to him. Confidentiality,
things of that nature.

Annoyed and desperate, Aiden shuts his cell phone.

AIDEN

Is there any way I can talk to
him? Any way at all? Just to
let him know I'm okay?

DECRYPTER

Oh, this wont take very long.
You'll be out of here in no time.

The elevator comes to a stop. The doors part open,
Decrypter and Ghost step outside. Taking a deep, cleansing
breath, Aiden steps out with them.

INT. UNDERGROUND DAWN – MAIN LOBBY – CONT'D

Aiden finds himself in a breathtaking, modern, multi-
leveled structure. He stares in wonder. Men and women in
business suits, lab coats, and stealth suits mill about
busily.

DECRYPTER

Welcome to Underground Dawn.

Decrypter and Ghost begin walking further into the
compound. Aiden, still reeling with wonder, takes a moment
before he follows them.

EXT. TOWNSHEND HOUSE – DRIVEWAY – SAME

Howie's car pulls up in the driveway. Howie gets out, very
much in panic-mode, and races to the front door.

INT. FOYER – TOWNSHEND HOUSE – CONT'D

Howie bursts through, eyes wide with worry.

HOWIE
AIDEN! AIDEN, ARE YOU HERE?

No answer. He runs into the kitchen, brings his cell phone out of his pocket – it's dead. Howie hooks it up to the charger lying on the counter. He grabs the home phone and checks the display – "NO NEW MESSAGES".

Howie's breathing gets shorter as he rushes back into the foyer, then back out the door.

EXT. TOWNSEND HOUSE – FRONT YARD – CONT'D

Howie starts running to the car, when he looks across the street and sees Zelda dragging a garbage bag out to the curb. She's barefoot, wearing a wifebeater and bootie shorts. A lit cigarette dangles out of the corner of her mouth.

HOWIE
Excuse me, excuse me, miss?

Zelda looks up, squinting through the darkness of night to see Howie jogging up to her.

HOWIE
Are you Zelda?

ZELDA
Depends. Who are you?

HOWIE
I-I'm Howie Townshend, I just moved in across the street... I think you're the one who signed the card in that gift basket we got?

Zelda's cigarette immediately falls from her lips. She stubs it out with her foot, and doesn't even wince. Her demeanor immediately switches.

ZELDA
That's me! Zelda Marshall, here on behalf of the Portsmouth Neighborhood Greeter Group! Or PNGG! Though I fought to name it-

HOWIE

Zelda, my son is missing.

The desperation in his voice is immense. Zelda recognises his tone immediately, and drops her act.

ZELDA

Aiden?

Howie paces back and forth, his voice growing more and more hysterical as he goes on.

HOWIE

We, we had a bit of a fight in the morning, then I went to pick him up after school, and he wasn't there, it was his first day so nobody knew who he was or where he was, and then I drove around the neighborhood to try and find him, but then I got lost because it's a new neighborhood, and then I called him like a billion fucking times but god forbid he answers the phone that I pay for -

ZELDA

Okay, okay, Howie, you need to breathe. You need to breathe.

HOWIE

And then I call the police and give them Aiden's description and then my cell dies because I'm using up all the battery trying to find my SON, and then I come home and HE STILL HASN'T CALLED-

Zelda gives him a smack. The shock silences him.

ZELDA

You need to sort your shit out before you do anything else, is what you need to do, okay? Does Aiden have a history of this kind of that?

Howie starts breathing a bit more regularly, calming himself down.

HOWIE

No, no. Never. He's a good kid, almost painfully good. He's never been in trouble for anything. One time he snuck a quarter out of my change jar, and came to me crying because he felt so guilty.

Zelda can't help but raise an eyebrow at this.

HOWIE

He was seven.

ZELDA

You said your cell died? Are you charging it?

HOWIE

Yes.

ZELDA

Alright, go back to your house, and see if he's called your cell. We'll figure something out from there.

HOWIE

Like what?

Zelda thinks for a beat.

ZELDA

I... I don't know. I think it would involve me putting on a pair of pants.

Howie looks down at her and goes flush red.

HOWIE

Right. Right. I'll be right back.

INT. TOWNSHEND HOUSE — KITCHEN — MOMENTS LATER

Howie charges in and checks on his cell, still hooked up to the charger. He presses the on/off button, and the display comes to life. "MISSED 1 CALL: AIDEN 7:04 PM"

Before Howie can react, a dark figure appears behind him, brandishing a fire poker. It strikes him hard in the back,

then again on the back of his head. He howls in pain, collapsing onto the kitchen floor.

Howie, losing consciousness quickly, looks up and see his ambusher is one of the Sentinels. Mother glides serenely into the kitchen. She locks eyes with Howie, and nods graciously towards him.

MOTHER

Mr. Townshend. We must talk.

Howie stares at her, baffled, then immediately passes out. A smile begins to form on the woman's face.

BLACK OUT

TO BE CONTINUED.