

PARAGON WEBB
EP 101

by
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TEASER

EXT FLAT DESOLATE EXPANSE - DAY

A BALL OF SHADOW hovers in the dull yellow sky as if a hole had been punched into the ether of space where the Sun should have been. The camera pulls out from Shadow to reveal a desert landscape of cracked earth and jagged rocks that extends to the horizon. As it continues to pull out we see the shattered remnants of a rusted trumpet. Suddenly a man's hand enters and picks up the charred hunk of metal.

DAGON WEBB analyzes the trumpet, as if it could give him a clue as to why it is all alone in the desert. Dagon Webb is a young good-looking man in his late twenties wearing a dusty T-shirt. He is rough around the edges, with prison-made tattoos running the length of his forearms.

With a smile he puts the trumpet's mouthpiece to his lips and gives it a try. The sound it makes can hardly be considered a note, and Dagon laughs. He drops the trumpet into the jagged pile of rocks where he found it.

The dark glow of Shadow in the sky increases, a faint electronic HUM begins to emanate from its core. Dagon looks around the empty landscape as if a door would appear out of nothing and allow him to leave.

DAGON WEBB

Okay, I'm ready to wake up now.

Dagon sighs. Shadow shifts slightly toward Dagon, as if it were a giant iris straining to focus on his miniscule image.

SHADOW

(throaty male voice)

You are not sleeping, Dagon.

Dagon stares at Shadow in the sky, at a loss for words.

DAGON WEBB

What the hell are you?

Shadow chuckles, slow and deep.

SHADOW

Dagon, we will skip the pleasantries as I have answered this question countless times before. Yet it is impossible for you to remember even our simplest exchanges.

DAGON WEBB
I've never been here before.

SHADOW
Although you sometimes do surprise
me with thoughts that elude my
prescience, the last time I brought
you here you said the exact same
thing.

Dagon takes a seat on a dusty rock.

DAGON WEBB
What is this place?

SHADOW
A wasteland. Where I keep all of my
tools.

DAGON WEBB
What do you want?

SHADOW
Perpetuity.
(beat)
Outside time is passing, and you,
collectively, have very little of
it left. Your world and this one,
will soon be wed. Billions of lives
will be extinguished.

DAGON WEBB
You're talking about Armageddon?
Now I know this is a dream.

SHADOW
In two days time there will be a
fearsome weapon unleashed in field
in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The death
toll will be slight, but the losses
will soon escalate due to the
ensuing riots.

DAGON WEBB
And you expect me to do something
about it?

SHADOW
No, you are incapable of halting
the wave of destruction, but that
does not mean you are without
purpose. Wake now, there is someone
I would like you to meet.

Translucent traffic whirls across the cracked earth at break-neck speeds. Ghostly rain appears to pelt the ground surrounding Dagon as he covers his eyes.

INT CITY BUS, CHICAGO STREETS - RAINY DAY

Dagon struggles as if fighting off the vision, his arms clutched across his eyes. Outside the bus window we see it is raining heavily outside.

DAGON WEBB

Who are you!

Dagon startles the other BUS PASSENGERS before realizing he is no longer dreaming. RITU KATHURIA, a petite Indian woman turns her attention to Dagon. Dagon is lost in thought.

DAGON WEBB (CONT'D)

Who... who?

RITU KATHURIA

You alright, Son?

DAGON WEBB

(embarrassed)

I don't know. I guess.

Dagon turns to see Ritu, his eyes glaze over as if entering a trance. The Bus pulls to a stop and Ritu opens her umbrella. We hear the metallic PULSE of Shadow as it hovers in the sky behind Dagon.

Dagon suddenly leaps to his feet and darts for the closing bus doors. He collides with a MAN entering the door, and they begin to grapple as Dagon tries to push his way through. The doors close on his forearm.

BUS DRIVER

What the hell are you doing?

Dagon forces the door open and leaps outside into a giant puddle. The street is empty, Ritu is nowhere to be found.

:END TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT STREET / COLD OPEN - RAINY DAY

Dagon walks with his hood drawn in the pouring rain, the camera focusing on various close-ups of his movement.

Dagon appears deep in thought as he ducks PEDESTRIAN umbrellas and leaps over puddles. We see the opening credits appear along the graffiti covered walls as he passes. We see a bus stop ad that reads: "Survival of the Community: Your Introduction to the Refuge". It lists the conference address as the Chicago amphitheater. In the poster CHRIS WARD stands with his arms outstretched.

DAGON WEBB

I feel alone... suffocating. As if I were submerged beneath a frozen lake, trying to reach the layer of ice and break through. Sometimes when I dream I find myself trapped in an endless desert.

SOPHIE LOWE

Go on.

DAGON WEBB

The world is broken and dead, the earth shattered. There is nothing but the heat and rubble. Sometimes I hear a voice, but when I wake up I can never remember what it said.

SOPHIE LOWE

How does it make you feel?

DAGON WEBB

I don't feel anything really... except the loneliness, abandonment, and helplessness.

SOPHIE LOWE

Does that frighten you?

DAGON WEBB

No, sometimes I'm very calm. Almost like, if I wanted, I could leave.

SOPHIE LOWE

But you don't.

DAGON WEBB

No, I do nothing but wait.

INT SOPHIE LOWE'S OFFICE - RAINY DAY

SOPHIE LOWE sits across from Dagon in a small office, she is a young and beautiful therapist who inadvertently intimidates her male patients with her looks. The gears of a tape recorder spin as it records.

SOPHIE LOWE

Dagon, it is not unusual for someone who is going through a metamorphic change in their lives to feel as you do. It is quite normal to feel alone from time to time.

(beat)

We all do.

DAGON WEBB

I guess you're right, I'm sure it'll pass.

SOPHIE LOWE

Are you a religious man, Dagon?

DAGON WEBB

No. I never really got into that.

SOPHIE LOWE

These dreams, are they lucid?

DAGON WEBB

I don't think I have much control over anything... neither here nor there.

SOPHIE LOWE

You say that you're not frightened and that you feel as though you can leave, than that means that you have some form of control.

DAGON WEBB

If my life has taught me anything it's that what I feel like doing and what I wind up doing are two entirely different things.

SOPHIE LOWE

You must establish your control to remember what the voice tells you.

Dagon sits forward defensively and checks his watch.

DAGON WEBB

Well... it looks like I've used up two of our sessions.

SOPHIE LOWE

It's okay, Dagon. I don't have any other patients scheduled this afternoon.

DAGON WEBB

Thank you, but I do have to get to work.

SOPHIE LOWE

Well then, I will notify Officer Miller of our meeting. And I will see you again next week.

Sophie leans forward and hits stop on the tape recorder.

DAGON WEBB

You realize that he has a really twisted sense of humor sending me to work at a soup kitchen, right?

SOPHIE LOWE

It wouldn't have been my first choice for you, that's for sure.

DAGON WEBB

Well, thanks for your help Doctor.

SOPHIE LOWE

Call me Sophie.

DAGON WEBB

So what's your diagnosis, Sophie

SOPHIE LOWE

Dagon, it's my pleasure to help.

DAGON WEBB

Ooh, that's not very reassuring.

SOPHIE LOWE

It will take some time for you to fully readjust to your new environment. But you describe nothing out of the ordinary for someone in your position.

DAGON WEBB

(unconvincing)
That's great to hear.

Sophie smiles and grabs a business card and pen from her desk. She writes her home number on the back of the card, and hands it to Dagon.

SOPHIE LOWE
Dagon, if you feel you need to talk
to someone, please call me.

Sophie hands him the card. Dagon is taken aback by her advance.

DAGON WEBB
I'm sure the dreams will stop.

EXT GRACE'S GIFT SOUP KITCHEN - LATER

Dagon walks along the sidewalk that is flowing with excess rainwater. Water streams down the edges of his drawn hood. He approaches the Plexiglas window of the soup kitchen, looking inside before entering.

INT GRACE'S GIFT SOUP KITCHEN - LATER

Dagon pulls off his hood and a stream of rain water coats the floor of the lobby. Behind the counter GRACE, a white-haired petite elderly woman in an apron and a hair net, and RAUL, a short and muscular powder keg, are glued to a news report playing on a small television in a steel cage.

DAGON WEBB
What are you watching?

As Dagon takes a step in, a pool of water follows.

GRACE
Hang up your coat, Dagon!

Dagon hangs his coat up on the peg, before walking over to the counter.

DAGON WEBB
(smiling)
Yes, ma'am. Sorry I'm late.

RAUL
Damn, shut it Webb. We're watching
this.

NEWS ANCHOR

...The group, as of yet, have not claimed responsibility for the recent wave of bombings and it is unclear if there is any connection with the large scale hijacking nearly three months ago.

RAUL

The hell there isn't.

GRACE

Shh!

NEWS ANCHOR

The last official message sent by the group was shortly after the coordinated strike in Moscow where a cache of depleted uranium was hijacked. With heightened threat levels in the U.S. many citizens are preparing for the worst by constructing fallout shelters. Although the Department of Homeland Security, FBI, and CIA have jointly claimed that they are doing everything in their power to prevent an attack on American soil, recent legislation has skated through Congress removing the need for building permits for home fallout shelters. The Department of Homeland Security has approved several shelter designs and they are available for download on our website. Our own James Seward is live at the location of a shelter currently under construction...

Grace turns off the Television.

RAUL

That's cool, at least we don't need a permit to dig our own graves.

GRACE

Let's get started. These hungry mouths aren't going to feed themselves.

The dining area is vacant.

RAUL

If no bums have come in by now,
they ain't coming.

A glare erupts in Grace's eye and she takes a wooden spoon and smacks Raul with it.

GRACE

What did I tell you about calling
them that?

RAUL

You're right, Grace. I shouldn't
have called them *bums*. Especially
not with killer over there, I might
set him off again.

Dagon ignores Raul as he barges through the double doors that lead into the kitchen and ties an apron around his waist.

GRACE

Dagon, I'm sorry about that, how
are you doing?

DAGON WEBB

I'm fine, Grace.

INT HALFWAY HOUSE, DAGON'S ROOM - LATER

Dagon opens the door to his apartment. Light streams in from the hall and highlights the empty floor. As Dagon turns on the light we see nothing but bare wood floors and windows staring out into the night.

FRANK MOORE

They call it home, but the state
doesn't even throw a god-damned TV
into the deal.

Dagon turns around to find FRANK MOORE, an overweight man in his late sixties, with his head poking through the door.

DAGON WEBB

How are you doing, Frank?

Frank taps his bulging belly.

FRANK MOORE

(smiling)

I'm hanging in there alright.

(beat)

First rounds on me.

INT HALFWAY HOUSE, FRANK MOORE'S ROOM - LATER

Frank passes Dagon a mug of coffee and pours a generous helping of Irish whiskey into Dagon's mug.

FRANK MOORE
It's decaf, old ticker don't take
to the real stuff too well.

Frank coughs loudly, a haggard wretch.

DAGON WEBB
You're not going to keel over on me
now are you?

FRANK MOORE
I'm on borrowed time as it is.

DAGON WEBB
Tell me about it.

Frank looks at a photo of a YOUNG SOLDIER in Vietnam.

DAGON WEBB (CONT'D)
Is this you?

FRANK MOORE
Yeah, that scrawny mess was half of
me.

DAGON WEBB
Where'd the other half come from
then?

Frank laughs as he turns on the nightly news.

FRANK MOORE
Probably a 100 pound venereal
disease.

Dagon chuckles as a TELEVISION ANNOUNCER reads the headlines.

TELEVISION ANNOUNCER
...Today marks day 90 of the
standoff. Earlier today the
Secretary of Homeland Security has
urged that we remain vigilant in
the face of these recent threats.
The President furthered the point
in a conference earlier this
evening.

The news report cuts to a taped package, as THE US PRESIDENT leads a press conference.

US PRESIDENT

America will not stand idly by and watch a rogue faction without honor, try and usurp our democracy. We must come together as an international community to end this menace once and for all.

FRANK MOORE

Have some oatmeal, my Doctor makes me eat it everyday. It's good for the heart he says.

DAGON WEBB

What are you going to eat then?

FRANK MOORE

I'm gonna have a danish.

Frank bites a danish nearly the size of his forearm.

DAGON WEBB

How do you feel about all this, Frank?

FRANK MOORE

You mean, 'Am I scared?'. I'm an old man. I can die on the way to the bathroom and it won't make a lick of difference to me.

DAGON WEBB

What about the war?

FRANK MOORE

It ain't a war, son. It's not Us vs. Them, there's just one messed up middle.

INT COURTROOM - FLASHBACK - DAY

A title card reads: "Chicago board of corrections: April 15, 1995" over the stark wooden features of a featureless courtroom. A YOUNG DAGON, at 16 years-old, sits in the witness stand as he is on trial for murder. His eyes are red with dried tears and he is shaken by a feeling of dread.

The PROSECUTOR, a young and arrogant attorney, shakes his head in disgust as he slowly appraises Dagon.

PROSECUTOR

Dagon Webb, would you please tell
the court what you did on the night
of November 13, 1994?

Dagon is mentally distraught as he thinks of the events that
led him to this point. The Prosecutor passes before Dagon
impatiently, waiting for an answer.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)

Shall I refresh your memory? Would
you like to explain to the jury why
you strangled that man to death!?

Dagon's face streams in tears, his words spaced in sobs.

YOUNG DAGON

I tried to help Shep, I brought him
food, but...

PROSECUTOR

But you didn't help Shep did you?
You murdered him, in cold blood!

The Prosecutor prances about proudly, dominating Dagon's
testimony.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)

You wrapped your vicious claws
around his neck and squeezed the
very life out of him!

The Prosecutor pantomimes, making the JURY MEMBERS wince.

YOUNG DAGON

I never wanted to hurt anyone. It's
like a bad dream, I'm sorry... I'm
so sorry.

Dagon wipes a tear from his eye on his sleeve and sees... the
ghostly visage of SHEP BARKER, composed mostly of shadow and
little else, shakes its head disappointed as he sits with his
back to the wall. He appears faintly in the room, like an
afterthought, or a smudge on the paint.

SHEP

It's a shame, kid. I might forgive
you, but they sure as hell wouldn't
have believed it.

The colors of the room begin to bleach out, the walls and
furniture become a stark white losing all texture. The only
figures still visible are Young Dagon and Shep.

YOUNG DAGON
You? You're alive!

SHEP
Not quite, kid.

YOUNG DAGON
Then why are you here?

SHEP
It ain't in my power to leave.

YOUNG DAGON
I'm dreaming aren't I?

SHEP
I've had a lot of time to think
about the nature fate. It makes you
wonder, if we ever had the chance
to choose at all.

A machine-like hum begins to reverberate from the wall behind Shep. It builds to a crescendo as Shadow appears in the center of Shep's chest.

SHEP (CONT'D)
You have the power to make the
choices your own.