

THE FEMPIROR CHRONICLES

Episode 1x08

"Empegen"

by

George Willson

TEASER

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

A 1989 Bentley Continental is parked outside this coffee shop along with several other vehicles. The shop is nestled between two other buildings fitting it into a typical cityscape.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

JAMES BOND (a.k.a. FRANCIS STUDEBAKER), an 18 year old boy with dark hair and grey eyes, sits at a table reading a newspaper with a cup of coffee next to him as he reads.

The door bell jingles as a customer enters the shop. CAREY JUNGER, 20 and stocky, walks through the shop and sits at James' table. James barely acknowledges him.

JAMES

You were telling me about this
drug making its rounds at the
college campus.

James puts the paper down, opens to a small article buried deep within the paper showing the headline: "Empegen: A Growing Concern?"

Carey nods.

CAREY

Yeah, this friend of mine has a
friend who got onto this stuff.
It's messed up. He said that the
stuff's only, like, two bucks a
pop, but his friend started doing,
like, two and three shots an hour.
He said he, like, knows people who
have done more.

JAMES

Why?

CAREY

It's freakin' addictive, that's
why.

JAMES

Obviously. But... Ok, this friend of a friend of yours. He said he knows people who do more than just this two or three per hour?

As they talk, a man walks briskly past the front windows of the shop.

CAREY

Oh, it's completely screwed up. I'm telling you. It's like it becomes their whole life or something.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

The man outside walks down the sidewalk around the corner, and then into an alleyway. His eyes are bloodshot and shifty. He's breathing heavily. He's a DRUGGIE.

CAREY (V.O.)

He said some people have been giving up everything to get more and more of this stuff. The two dollar shot just doesn't do enough for them. This guy says even the crank don't do that to him. This stuff is, like, the strongest stuff out there.

Druggie finds a SHADOW MAN in the alley.

DRUGGIE

Man, I need more.

SHADOW

More? You've purchased over a hundred shots in the last twenty hours.

DRUGGIE

But these people are following me. They go away when I take it. I gotta make 'em go away.

SHADOW

Will twenty make them go away?

DRUGGIE

Man, I only got thirty dollars.

SHADOW

Oh, now. Tell you what. I'll give you the last five on the house, ok? I wouldn't want those people bothering my best customer.

DRUGGIE

Oh, thank you thank you thank you!

Shadow hands over a plain brown bag. Druggie looks inside. He hands over the money and runs off.

SHADOW

Freak.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Druggie walks down the street cuddling the bag like it's a precious valuable.

CAREY (V.O.)

This guy knows people who've been on this stuff and disappeared.

JAMES (V.O.)

What do you mean?

CAREY (V.O.)

Like they're just gone. Vanished. All their stuff still there, but they're not.

INT. DRUGGIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Druggie enters and dumps the bag of syringes out onto the couch. He kneels next to the couch on the floor and takes the cap off the first syringe. He plunges the needle into his skin and presses the plunger.

His eyes roll back into his head in ecstasy.

CAREY (V.O.)
But that ain't the weirdest part.

Druggie does same for syringe after syringe in rapid succession.

CAREY (V.O.)
In the homes of some of them,
they haven't disappeared exactly.

Druggie's eyes grow wide. He hyperventilates.

JAMES (V.O.)
Exactly?

CAREY (V.O.)
No, they died.

JAMES (V.O.)
Overdose?

CAREY (V.O.)
No, it looks like, well, like...
spontaneous combustion.

Druggie emits a blood-curdling scream.

CAREY (V.O.)
But the rest...like I said...

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Carey takes a sip of his coffee.

CAREY
They just disappear.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Druggie steps out of his apartment looking very disoriented. He's dressed only in jeans and a t-shirt. He squints at the light beyond the shadows of his apartment steps. He walks down the steps and passes into the light.

He gasps and looks at his hands. They turn red under the sun like a rapid sunburn. He stumbles back into the shadows with a shriek.

He looks at his now sun-burned hands. He touches his head which also sports a burn on the exposed scalp areas under his hair.

He looks at people passing by, staring at him.

DRUGGIE

Help me.

He walks out to someone, but when the sun hits him, he shrinks back into the shadows. The person gives him a disgusted look and walks away rapidly.

DRUGGIE

Oh God, what's going on?

Druggie runs down the sidewalk, careful to stay in the shadows. He crosses the alleyway between buildings and the sun hits him again. He collapses in the shadows on the other side of the alley.

He looks at his hands again. They are more severely sunburned. He climbs to his feet and looks around.

DRUGGIE

Help me. Someone help me.

People pass by with only a cursory glance.

DRUGGIE

Please.

EXT. FEMPIROR CITY - DAY

The American Atlantic Fempiror City glistens in the dim daylight filtered through the ocean water.

INT. FEMPIROR CITY - TRAINING ROOM - DAY

KALTESH, 70 in appearance and dressed in an old Rastem style of dark lightweight clothing, vocalizes a rhythm with a "hut" sound.

Before him, MINDY PRATER and ALEX SMITH, both 17 and dressed in lightweight clothing, duel with wooden swords. Each strike matches the rhythm of Kaltesh's voice.

Alex is on the offensive, while Mindy defends herself. Maintaining his rhythm, Kaltesh orders:

KALTESH

Reverse!

Mindy takes the offense while Alex defends.

MINDY

This is where I take you down.

ALEX

You're not supposed to take me down.

Still in his rhythm:

KALTESH

No talking!

The duel continues.

ALEX

Besides, you'd never get past me.

MINDY

Is that a challenge?

ALEX

No.

Mindy smiles. She glances down.

MINDY

So, have I always turned you on?

ALEX

What?

Mindy swipes. Alex's sword flies from his hand. Mindy sweeps his feet. Alex goes down.

KALTESH

Mindy!

Kaltesh walks to her.

KALTESH

As boring as you may find this exercise, you are to do as you are told.

MINDY

Or what? As cool as the sword thing is, most agents use a gun.

KALTESH

True, but each weapon has its uses. David's sudden appearance has given the sword a renewed presence. There are quite a few agents who are coming in for additional training on it.

MINDY

Still...

KALTESH

I also have a voice in who becomes an agent. Defiance is not a trait we are necessarily looking for.

Mindy acts as if she wants to say something in return, but does not respond.

KALTESH

Take a break. We'll continue in a moment.

Mindy looks to Alex. He sits on a bench by the wall and drinks water. She smiles and walks to the bench. She sits next to him. She scoots to sit very close to him.

Alex looks at her for a moment and then back out at the room, distracted. Mindy leans over and blows in his ear.

Alex jumps up and turns to her.

ALEX

What was that?

MINDY

To get your attention. Worked, didn't it?

ALEX

Yeah, but it was...weird.

MINDY

You know, we're going to be here a long time. I was just wondering what you were planning to do with yourself.

ALEX

I dunno. I've been going with David.

MINDY

I know that.

ALEX

Then what?

MINDY

You know what.

ALEX

What?

MINDY

Seriously.

ALEX

Seriously what?

MINDY

You can't be that stupid.

ALEX

Maybe. Maybe not. Maybe I just want you to say it.

MINDY

Say what?

ALEX

Suit yourself.

Alex walks away from her. Mindy stands.

MINDY

Alex.

ALEX

I know what you want. But I've already had someone.

MINDY

And that's it?

ALEX

I don't know.

MINDY

Maybe you need to get with the present.

ALEX

Easier said than done.

MINDY

We're going to be here a long time.

Alex walks to her.

ALEX

So I have plenty of time.

Kaltesh enters. Alex walks over to his wooden sword and picks it up. Mindy watches him.

INT. HOSPITAL LAB - DAY

A bed is wheeled into the room. On it is Druggie, badly burned on exposed areas of skin. He is in a hospital gown showing where his sleeves ended and his skin is fine but charred.

A LAB TECH greets a man in casual clothes who came in with the Druggie. He's an AGENT of the Drug Enforcement Agency.

LAB TECH

What's this guy's problem?

DEA AGENT

Empegen. We actually found one alive.

LAB TECH

Very good. How'd we get ahold of him?

DEA AGENT

He managed to get into a county clinic without killing himself, and as soon as he said "Empegen," they called us.

LAB TECH

I knew that notice would work.

The Lab Tech walks over to Druggie. Druggie looks at him, pathetically.

LAB TECH

Let's get some vitals.

DEA AGENT

That was another thing. The doctor over at county took his temperature.

LAB TECH

Okay.

DEA AGENT

Forty-seven.

The Lab Tech looks at him, confused.

LAB TECH
I'm sorry. Forty-seven?

DEA AGENT
Forty-seven.

LAB TECH
Degrees?

DEA AGENT
Yup.

LAB TECH
Fahrenheit?

DEA AGENT
Yup.

The Lab Tech looks at Druggie, concerned.

DRUGGIE
Man, I need some stuff. I'm dying
here.

LAB TECH
Do you have a sample of the drug?

The DEA Agent produces the brown bag. The Lab Tech takes the bag to his counter. He carefully dumps the contents on the counter. He uses a syringe to place a drop of the Empegen on a slide.

He slips the slide under his microscope.

INSERT MICROSCOPE VIEW

On the slide there are a series of clear molecules along with a low number of red molecules.

END INSERT

The Lab Tech rises, worry on his face.

DEA AGENT
What is it?

LAB TECH

I think Empegen has blood in it.

He and the Agent look at Druggie.

DEA AGENT

What kind of blood?

LAB TECH

I'll have to run some tests.

DEA AGENT

Let me know ASAP.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The sun shines over the calm water.

INT. OCEAN - DAY

The American Atlantic Fempiror City lights up the deep underwater world of the ocean floor. A vehicle that appears to have the general design of a Levi-Cart zips around the outside.

INT. SUBMERSIBLE CART - DAY

TRIEGA JAGAROM, the day lead of the Levi-Cart bay, drives the Cart through the deep. CHILDRESS rides with her. He watches the city out the window of the Cart.

TRIEGA

What do you think?

CHILDRESS

It's an amazing view.

TRIEGA

I mean of the Submersible Cart.

Childress turns to her. He nods.

CHILDRESS

Impressive.

TRIEGA

It wasn't that hard, really. Just modifying the basic levi-systems to repel water instead of the ground. Of course, we had to put a few more here and there so we had full three-hundred and sixty degree mobility. I just can't believe no one's ever-

Childress touches her mouth. She smiles.

TRIEGA

Sorry. I get, you know-

CHILDRESS

I know. It's ok. You've done a great job.

TRIEGA

Thank you.

They look out the front window. The Cart sits stationary in the water overlooking the city.

TRIEGA

It's her first one, you know.

CHILDRESS

What is?

TRIEGA

This trip. We've been testing her for months making sure everything works. This is her first real maiden voyage.

CHILDRESS

Do I need to make a report later?

Triega smiles and shakes her head. She takes his hand.

TRIEGA

Just enjoy the ride she gives you.

They lean towards each other. Eyes close. The radio squawks.

KAPLIN (V.O.)

I need all agents to report to
the conference room immediately.
All agents. Conference Room.
Now.

Triega and Childress hold their poses for a moment, now looking
into each other's eyes.

CHILDRESS

That was Kaplin.

TRIEGA

I know. You need to go to work.

CHILDRESS

Apparently.

TRIEGA

I'm not done with the tour yet.

CHILDRESS

I am interested in seeing more.

TRIEGA

Well, there's a lot more to show.

CHILDRESS

Then I guess I'll have to be busy
for a moment.

Their lips lock into a passionate kiss.

INT. FEMPIROR CITY - KAPLIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Kaplin picks up the phone on his desk.

KAPLIN

All right, Max, I've called them.
Now, tell me why.

MAX

We've got ourselves a big problem,
Henry.

KAPLIN

Care to be more specific?

MAX

A new drug has Fempiror blood
in it. I may be new, but that
sounds like your Tepish brood.

KAPLIN

Indeed. Well, you have my
attention.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. FEMPIROR CITY - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Several agents are milling around a large room with an equally large table in the center. David and Alex enter.

DAVID

Oh, this conference room.

ALEX

You'd think he'd be specific about which conference room when he makes an announcement.

DAVID

I guess you're just supposed to know.

David looks at Alex. He looks around them.

ALEX

What?

DAVID

Where did you leave her?

ALEX

I don't know.

Mindy runs in behind them.

DAVID

(to Mindy)

What happened to you?

MINDY

He said you were coming right back.

David looks at Alex. Alex shrugs.

ALEX

What?

David shakes his head. They all walk into the room, looking for chairs.

DAVID

You might as well get along
with her.

MINDY

Yeah, go along with me.

Alex scoffs. David sits. Mindy watches Alex. He looks at her, and finally sits next to David. She sits next to Alex.

Alex glances at her. She looks around the room at everyone. Alex looks at David. David looks back. Alex jerks his head toward Mindy. David shrugs.

ALEX

Why doesn't she get it?

DAVID

Neither one of you really get it
yet, so stop complaining.

Alex scoffs again and sits back in the chair, crossing his arms.

Kaplin enters. He is followed by Max Rider, a man of 35 dressed in a black suit. The agents quickly find their seats.

ALEX

Who's that?

DAVID

Max Rider. He's with the Department
of Fempiror Relations.

ALEX

There's a Department of Fempiror
Relations?

MINDY

There's a what?

DAVID

Sh!

Kaplin and Max stand at the head of the table.

KAPLIN

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming at such short notice and during the day. I have with me Max Rider of the Department of Fempiror Relations who will take it from here. Max?

Kaplin sits and Max stands before the assembly.

MAX

Thank you, Mayor Kaplin. How many of you have heard of Empegen?

Some hands go up. The door to the conference room opens and Childress walks in. He gives an apologetic wave to Kaplin and Max and sits among the agents.

MAX

Empegen, as you may know, is a highly addictive drug sold in small doses forcing the user to buy it in larger and larger quantities to maintain their addiction. Well, this morning, Empegen became our problem.

INT. FEMPIROR CITY - HOSPITAL - DAY

Druggie is laid out on a hospital bed. Dr. Fenrik checks him over.

MAX (V.O.)

This investigation was in the hands of the DEA until Fempiror blood was discovered as a trace element in the drug. Your Dr. Fenrik is helping the only known survivor to date of the drug. A large number of successive doses turn the user into a Fempiror.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Police tape has been placed around a charred heap of a body and clothes. Investigators stand around it, studying it.

MAX (V.O.)

As you can imagine, most of these new converts die the next day when they wander into the sunlight, and can't figure out what's going on until it's too late. Until this addict was found, we didn't know what we were looking at.

INT. FEMPIROR CITY - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Max maintains his position in the front of the assembly.

MAX

The bottom line here is to find the source of this drug by whatever means necessary. Because of the discovery of Fempiror blood, the DEA will no longer have a part in it. Too dangerous. It's up to you now.

Max steps back and glances at Kaplin. Kaplin stands before them.

KAPLIN

This is our priority at this time. Beth and Al are working together to find blue/red interactions but we haven't found much. The Tepish know about our Tracking System, and since they are the likely makers, they are going to avoid us. If you have contacts, use them.

AGENT

What does Kevin Krill know about this? Can't he help?

Kaplin looks over to Kevin, who stands, as if on queue.

KEVIN

If Empegen is a Tepish creation, then it's something Erech never informed me of. I've found that he kept me in the dark on a great many things, and actually misinformed me on a great deal more. As an informant, I've not been very useful, and this is just another example of that. Sorry.

Kevin sits. The agents erupt into a fit of talking. Kaplin stand before them again.

KAPLIN

All right. Quiet down.

The agents' chatter stops.

KAPLIN

We've followed several leads that Kevin has given us, and none of them have panned out. And yes, I find that just as suspicious as you do. Bottom line is we're not getting any help from him on this. We're on our own. Any other questions?

Kaplin looks around the room. No one responds.

KAPLIN

Dismissed.

The agents all get up and head for the door.

EXT. OCEAN - DUSK

A tube emerges from the ocean surface. Levi-Carts fly out of the opening and towards the city.

INT. LEVI-CART - DUSK

Alex closes the communicator and turns to David.

ALEX

He said he'll be waiting for us
at the coffee shop.

David nods.

ALEX

Can I ask you something?

DAVID

You just did.

Alex rolls his eyes.

ALEX

How do you ... you know ... get
over someone from before?

David's face softens. He looks at Alex.

DAVID

Is this about your girlfriend?
What was her name?

ALEX

Isabel. And why are you talking
about her in the past tense?

DAVID

Because to you, she should be in
the past.

ALEX

You don't get it.

DAVID

Oh, I do. Believe me, I do. Look,
once upon a time I didn't listen.
I did whatever I wanted to do, and
as a result, I hurt someone I
loved more than anything in the
world.

ALEX

Did you ... change her?

David stares forward, his eyes lost in a silent memory. He nods.

DAVID

Yes. I didn't know what I was doing at the time, but yes, I changed her. If I have one regret in my life, it's what happened to her because of me.

ALEX

What happened?

David closes his eyes for a moment and sighs.

DAVID

She died.

ALEX

Oh.

Alex looks out the window silently for a moment. David looks at him.

DAVID

It takes time for some memories to fade, and sometimes, they never let go at all. The most important thing for you to do right now is to live in the present. Like I said, I know what it's like, but I also know how important it is to let them go.

Alex nods.

ALEX

It's hard.

DAVID

I know.

The Levi-Cart flies onward.

INT. TEPISH BLOOD ROOM - NIGHT

CRAIG BERENGER, a well-built man in his 30's, walks between a grouping of beds where several people are hooking up to machines that are drawing blood from their arms.

A voice sounds over an announcement system.

P.A. VOICE (V.O.)

Attention. Group R, prepare for blood draw. Report to room seven at this time. Group R, prepare for blood draw. Report to room seven at this time.

Craig exits the room and enters

A LARGE WAREHOUSE

where people stand by machines that hold individual capsules. Blood is drawn through transparent tubes and combines into a series of these machines.

Empegen, a clear fluid, fills each capsule. A small drop of blood is dripped into each capsule. The blood dissipates through the fluid which maintains its clear appearance.

Craig walks to a group approaching him. At the head of this group is ERECH, the Elrod Malnak of the Tepish. At his side are MAURICIO SALAZER, his Cortz Sufru who appears around 28, and MARCUS PORTERGRAF, the Triver Shradna Tra of the region.

Marcus steps forward first to greet Craig.

MARCUS

Craig, good to see you again.

CRAIG

Hello, Marcus.

He looks at Erech.

CRAIG

Is this...?

MARCUS

(to Erech)

My Lord Elrod Malnak, may I introduce Craig Berenger, my Hashakröd of this area, and the Tepish responsible for the Empegen distribution.

Craig kneels to Erech.

CRAIG

My Lord. I hope you are pleased.

ERECH

I am. But I also understand that the demand for the drug is out running the supply you're providing.

CRAIG

Yes, sir. We have Fälskrüz on the blood draw machines twenty-four hours a day. We continually manufacture the basic drug we are adding the blood to. The only way to get more out there is to have more plants manufacturing the drug.

Erech turns to Marcus.

ERECH

Marcus, is this facility outputting at maximum capacity?

Marcus smiles.

MARCUS

I believe we can generate more than we are, but not nearly enough to meet the demand, my lord.

ERECH

Very well. New York is using a lot of the supply. Marcus, who is your Hashakröd in that area?

MARCUS

That would be Quincy Lorneson.

Erech smiles.

ERECH

Ah yes. He wasn't too happy about that appointment, as I recall.

(to Craig)

We'll get you to brief Quincy on how this is done, and set him up to oversee another manufacturing station.

CRAIG

Thank you, my lord.

Erech's smile drops.

ERECH

Do not take this as an invitation to diminish your own production. If I find a significant drop, we may need someone else that can handle your position.

CRAIG

Yes, sir.

ERECH

We must keep up with the demand, or the addicts will go elsewhere for their fix. We are finally achieving our goal of destroying humanity, and I will not allow that to be forgotten.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

David's Levi-Cart is parked in front of the coffee shop along with James' Bentley.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

David and Alex sit opposite James at a table. They each have a cup of coffee and sip periodically.

JAMES

And that's it.

DAVID

Well, we've learned they aren't just disappearing, they're being changed. So either the Tepish have been picking them up, or they fall victim to the sun.

JAMES

So this is a Tepish thing. That actually explains a lot. It's consistent with what you've told me about them.

DAVID

What we need is a dealer so we can find the source.

JAMES

Well, this guy who told me about the people he knew said they often came around here, so I figure there's a dealer somewhere close.

DAVID

I guess we'll start checking all the dark and seedy places around here. Bound to find him eventually. Thanks, Mr. Bond.

JAMES

No problem.

David and Alex stands to leave, but Alex doesn't follow David. David turns to him, but he's looking at James.

James averts his gaze for a moment. He sighs.

JAMES

She's doing fine.

ALEX

You still know me.

JAMES

It's the only question you haven't asked yet.

ALEX

Does she miss me or anything?

JAMES

Alex, we all miss you in one way or another. I may see you occasionally, and we see Carla here and there, but you're gone.

ALEX

Is she ... with anyone else?

JAMES

Alex...

ALEX

Please tell me.

James looks away. Alex sits across from him.

ALEX

Come on, James. We've been friends for too long-

JAMES

Have we? Really? I have to admit I find our talks enlightening, but when have you come out just to say hi?

ALEX

I had to fight to get out when I did.

JAMES

You had to get Kaltesh to find a Levi-Cart to bring you to me. I'm not so restricted that I can't get to your city. Carla has Mitch out there.

Alex opens his mouth, but falls silent. David stays where he is and watches, silently.

JAMES

I will help you guys out whenever you need me. I keep my ear low to the ground, and I know how important that is. If you want to be business colleagues, that's fine, but I prefer to know my friends a little better than that. I don't want to feel used.

Alex nods.

ALEX

I'm sorry. I've just been-

JAMES

-going through a lot. I know. Join the club.

ALEX

Ok, fine. I left, but I didn't. It feels like you lost a friend, but you know what I'm going through? I'm changing my entire life. Whatever I had planned is gone. I have to learn a new lifestyle entirely, and forget all about the hopes and dreams I had before. I'm sorry I haven't been able to talk to you much, but

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

at least your whole life didn't
come crashing down around you one
day. I appreciate that I'm missed,
but this change has been hell for
me. I'm dealing with it the best I
can.

James looks away. Alex stands in silence for a moment before
turning to leave with David. James looks up.

JAMES

Hey Alex.

Alex stops, but doesn't turn.

ALEX

What?

JAMES

Keep in touch.

ALEX

Sure.

He exits with David. James stares at his coffee with a sad look.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Alex walks toward the Levi-Cart. David follows close behind and
stops him.

DAVID

Hey, that was uncalled for in
there.

ALEX

He started it.

DAVID

That doesn't matter.

ALEX

Doesn't it? I'm doing the best I
can.

DAVID

You know what? So is he. You need to let Isabel go. I know how hard it is, but it has to happen. Don't take out your frustrations on him.

ALEX

I'm not frustrated.

DAVID

If you say so.

Alex walks to the other side of the car and stops at the passenger door as David reaches the driver side.

ALEX

So, how are we going to find this dealer guy anyway?

David looks at him with a smile.

INT. LEVI-CART - NIGHT

David drives the Levi-Cart down a street.

ALEX

But I don't even look like a junkie.

DAVID

Most junkies don't when they start. You have to convince him that you'd been getting hits from someone else, but he's not around anymore.

ALEX

Who should I say?

DAVID

Just use my name.

ALEX

David the dealer. It's catchy.

DAVID

Don't get used to it.

ALEX

I still don't look right for it.

DAVID

After you're stripped of your gear, you should look about right.

ALEX

Wait a minute. How do I protect myself?

DAVID

A Rastem can use more than his weapon to protect himself.

ALEX

Maybe so, but Kaltesh hasn't taught me that yet.

DAVID

I had trouble with it myself. Just act natural.

Alex takes a deep breath and nods.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Alex walks alone down a very dark alley. A cat leaps from a nearby trash can, upsetting the lid, causing Alex to jump. He takes a deep breath and walks onward.

ALEX

Hello? Is there anyone here tonight?

Someone steps out of the shadows behind Alex.

SHADOW

Who are you?

Alex spins. The shadow figure from the teaser holds a gun in front of him trained on Alex. Alex gulps.

ALEX

I was looking for someone.

SHADOW

You found someone.

ALEX

Can you help me?

SHADOW

Depends.

ALEX

I ... um ... I need something.

SHADOW

What?

ALEX

How do I know you can help me?

SHADOW

Tell me what it is.

ALEX

Empegen.

SHADOW

I can't help you.

ALEX

He said he gets it from you.

SHADOW

Who? Where is he?

ALEX

He left town or something. I'm desperate.

The shadow turns. He walks to Alex, standing very close.

SHADOW

Who are you?

ALEX

Alex?

SHADOW

And how are you feeling, Alex?

ALEX

I don't know. Kind of weird.
I'm hoping you can make me
feel better.

SHADOW

How much money do you have?

ALEX

A little. How much is it?

SHADOW

Tell me how much you have, and
I'll tell you how much it is.

Alex reaches into his pocket. He pulls out a twenty dollar bill.
He shows it to the Shadow.

SHADOW

That's good. That'll get you
ten.

ALEX

Okay. Where is it?

SHADOW

Why so impatient?

ALEX

I'm telling you. I don't feel
very good right now, and my
friend wasn't home. I came all
the way out here.

SHADOW

If I give you an extra, would
you share it like your friend?

ALEX

Sure, anything.

Shadow takes the twenty and disappears into the building behind
him. Alex jitters impatiently. Shadow returns with a paper bag.

SHADOW

Here. Twenty-two shots. Twenty for you, and two for someone else. Remember to share.

ALEX

Sure. Thanks.

SHADOW

I'm sure I'll see you again.

Shadow turns and finds David standing directly behind him. He fumbles for his gun, but David quickly grabs him, putting any fight out of him.

SHADOW

Hey. Let me go.

DAVID

First, you tell me where you get it.

SHADOW

So the little guy isn't-

ALEX

No.

DAVID

And you're not an addict.

SHADOW

Hell no. I ain't stupid. I just sell the stuff. Two bucks each. No more.

David exerts some pressure on Shadow's neck. Shadow struggles fruitlessly.

DAVID

Your supplier.

Shadow gasps for air.

SHADOW

It's complicated.

DAVID
I'm listening.

EXT. DENNY'S - NIGHT

David walks through the front door to the twenty-four hour breakfast joint.

INT. DENNY'S - NIGHT

David walks straight through to the bar and sits. A waitress approaches.

WAITRESS
What can I do for you?

DAVID
I'm interested in a new generation liquor.

WAITRESS
The new stuff is expensive.

DAVID
I've been over the rainbow.

WAITRESS
The house's frame never held together.

DAVID
Well, the flight was ok, but the landing was a witch.

WAITRESS
We might have something in the back.

DAVID
Mind if I help you look?

WAITRESS
I'm not that kind of girl, but I'm open to new ideas.

She turns and walks through a door to the kitchen. David walks around the counter and follows her.

Se leads him past the kitchen and to an office on the rear wall of the building. She opens the door for him, and he enters. She closes it behind him.

INT. DENNY'S - TOM'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The light comes on. Two men stand behind David in the rather spacious office. TOM COLLINS, a man appearing to be in his 40's, sits behind a desk. He narrows his eyes at David.

TOM

Who are you?

DAVID

I'm interested in learning more
about Empegen.

Tom's eyes narrow.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. LEVI-CART - NIGHT

Alex sits in the shotgun seat of the Levi-cart. He looks out the window to the nearby Denny's and sighs. He leans his head back and closes his eyes.

INT. DENNY'S - TOM'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Tom stares at David.

TOM

Who sent you?

DAVID

I talked with one of your dealers.
He told me where you were, and
what to say when I got here.

TOM

Who was it?

DAVID

I will have to say that your
little code to get back here is
rather silly for a drug dealer.
One might call it cute, even.

TOM

Who told you?

DAVID

Now, now. You know contacts are
held in the strictest confidence.

TOM

That's nice.

(to the two waiting men)

Throw him out.

The men step forward. David turns and punches one, knocking him to the ground. The other grabs him, but David breaks his grip and decks him. He falls to the floor as well leaving only David standing.

Tom stands.

TOM

That was very impressive.

He draws a gun from his desk. David pulls out his sword. Tom fires three shots. David deflects the bullets with his sword. Tom laughs.

TOM

Of course. You're not even human. No wonder you took down my men so easily. Rastem?

DAVID

Have been for a couple hundred years now. I'm David.

TOM

Tom Collins. Kepinürsk of the Tepish Order.

DAVID

So you work at Denny's? Not a bad job for a Tepish. Better than transmutation though the drug trade's a bit shady. Pay very well?

TOM

You think you're funny don't you?

DAVID

I consider myself inquisitive.

TOM

I've always wanted to stand against a Rastem.

Tom draws a sword from beneath his desk. It is a slender, medieval broadsword, crafted straight as an arrow.

DAVID

So now's your chance.

TOM

So tell me, David. What happened to the Tepish who transmuted you?

DAVID

He fell to another Rastem. If you tell me where the drugs come from I'll let you off easy.

TOM

I don't think so.

Tom swings first. David easily blocks the heavy handed blow. Tom continues to take the offensive, while David blocks and parries every blow.

Tom steps back. David watches him.

TOM

You're not even trying, are you?

DAVID

Nope.

Tom seems to be out of breath. Suddenly, he lunges at David. David blocks the swing, and in one move, knocks Tom's sword from his hand. It flies across the room and embeds itself in the wall.

David hits Tom in the fact with his hilt. Tom goes down and looks at David.

TOM

How?

DAVID

He who makes the first blow places himself at an immediate disadvantage. Now, tell me where your supply comes from?

Tom spits in David's face. David rolls his eyes. He hits Tom in he face.

BLACK OUT.

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

TOM AWAKENS.

His hands and feet are tied down. Wind rushes over him. He looks to either side. His eyes grow wide.

The city rushes far below him. He is strapped to the hood of the Levi-Cart. Alex drives. David sits hanging out the passenger side window.

Tom talks in a panic.

TOM

What are you doing?

DAVID

Thought we'd come to a better place to talk.

TOM

This is crazy.

DAVID

All right.

David dips into the car. He nods to Alex. The Levi-Cart kicks into high gear and blasts across the night sky. Tom screams in terror. The Cart slows back down. David sits back on the passenger side door.

DAVID

So what so you say? You ready?

Tom laughs.

TOM

You think this is supposed to scare me?

DAVID

No, but maybe this will. Alex?

David leans forward and cut one of the wrist straps. Alex leans out and cuts the other Tom's hands are free. David and Alex dip back into the Cart. They punch up the speed again.

Tom screams and frantically grapples for a handhold as the wind blasts over him.

IN THE LEVI-CART

Alex looks at David.

ALEX

How long this time?

DAVID

Just enjoy the ride.

ALEX

What was his title again?

DAVID

Kepinürsk.

ALEX

And that is?

DAVID

He is three levels below Erech,
and two above a Fälskrüz.

ALEX

How do you keep all that straight?

DAVID

Two hundred years of dealing with
them.

ALEX

Oh.

DAVID

Listen.

TOM (O.S.)

All right! All right! Stop!

OUTSIDE THE LEVI-CART

David sits back on the passenger side door.

DAVID

What's that now?

TOM

All right. I'll talk. Just let me down.

DAVID

Sure. No problem. Where are we going?

TOM

I always make my connection at a place near the West side bridge.

DAVID

Thanks.

David dips back in. The Levi-Cart turns and speeds off. Tom screams the whole way.

EXT. WEST WIDE STREET - NIGHT

The Levi-Cart sets down on the side of the road. Plain store fronts line the street on either side. Tom leans up and works to free his feet.

He succeeds and leaps off the hood. David is already out of the Cart and stops him.

DAVID

Care to tell us which place it is?

Tom points.

TOM

That one. With the red sign. It's not a store but it has an elevator that will talk you down.

DAVID

Thanks, Tom. You make your race proud.

TOM

You're letting me go, right?

David takes out his communicator. Tom struggles, but David holds him tight dragging him to the back of the Cart.

DAVID

Hey, Beth.

BETH (V.O.)

What's up?

DAVID

We're at the location now. If we don't come back, I guess we found something.

BETH (V.O.)

Understood. Please be careful.

TOM

Hey! You were going to let me go!

DAVID

Sure thing.

BETH (V.O.)

Do you still have that Tepish?

DAVID

Of course.

David whacks him in the head again. Tom goes down and out.

DAVID

Talk to you later.

BETH (V.O.)

Ok.

David pockets his communicator and turns to Alex.

DAVID

All right, Alex, let's tie him up and then see what we're in for.

INT. STORE FRONT - NIGHT

A foot crashes through the front window. A hand reaches in and turns the deadbolt. The door opens and David and Alex enter. The store appears to be quite empty. They walk across the barren floor to the back where there is a button in the wall.

David presses it and an elevator opens. He and Alex step in.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

David presses the only other floor listed on the buttons. He waits patiently as the elevator moves. Alex looks at him.

ALEX

What do you think we'll find
down there?

DAVID

I don't know.

ALEX

Aren't you afraid?

DAVID

Not really. After awhile, you'll
have the confidence to know that
you can handle whatever comes
your way. You're doing good in
your learning, but you need more
practice. I think you can do okay
if we get into a scrap, but try
and stay behind me.

Alex nods, visibly frightened.

The doors ping and open. Beyond the open doors is nothing but a monorail track.

DAVID

Oh, no.

INT. MONORAIL JUNCTION - NIGHT

David and Alex step out of the elevator onto an empty platform with a recall button.

ALEX

What's wrong?

DAVID

He told us this is where he gets his stuff, but it's only a station. Who knows where it really comes from?

ALEX

I don't understand.

DAVID

Tom is only one of many dealers of Empegen. It comes from somewhere and is apparently distributed to its various dealers through their monorail system.

David presses the call button.

ALEX

Are we going to find it?

David holds up a finger. A monorail car zips out of the tunnel along the track to where David and Alex wait. The driver looks at them.

DRIVER

Who are you?

David grabs the driver and lifts him out of the car.

DAVID

Tell me something. Where is the Empegen central hub?

The driver laughs.

DRIVER

I have no idea. I just follow the calls.

DAVID
So you've never been here before?

DRIVER
Never said that.

DAVID
What do you carry?

DRIVER
I don't know. No one tells me
anything.

David rolls his eyes. He knocks the driver out and puts him back in the monorail car. He picks up his communicator.

DAVID
Beth.

BETH (V.O.)
Go ahead, David.

DAVID
I'm leaving my tracker in a
Tepish monorail car. I want to
know where it ends up. Maybe we
can put together a map of some
sort while we're at it.

BETH (V.O.)
Understood.

David puts his tracker under one of the car's seats. He presses the "go" button in the car. Its track lifts up, turns around, sets back down, and the car jets off into the tunnel.

Alex looks to David.

ALEX
We're not going with it?

DAVID
Too dangerous. The Tepish have been
growing their numbers, so there's
no telling how many are down there.

ALEX

What about Empegen?

DAVID

Beth will let us know where the car ends up. We'll follow it until it gets to the Empegen source. Bound to happen eventually.

ALEX

Wait a minute. We're just leaving? I've seen you do some wild stuff, and you're not taking this one? What about the element of surprise? They won't be expecting us.

DAVID

But for the moment, it is safer to let Beth track the car and let us know where it stops. We can follow it in the Levi-Cart, and check out where it goes. The Tepish use their system to get to their destinations, which are still above ground. Let's go.

David and Alex run back to the elevator.

INT. FEMPIROR CITY - CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Beth watches the screen where the progress of David's tracker is displayed. It zooms along making rapid turns as it goes.

EXT. WEST SIDE STREET - NIGHT

David and Alex exit the store and run to the Levi-Cart. They get in with David driving.

INT. LEVI-CART - NIGHT

David turns to the backseat where Tom is tied and gagged.

DAVID

How're you doing back there?

Tom "mmphs" a response.

DAVID

Yeah, don't try to get out of the bonds. They're Fempiror resistant.

Tom struggles again.

BETH (V.O.)

All right, David. Stop number one. You ready?

DAVID

Let's go.

EXT. WEST SIDE STREET - NIGHT

The Levi-Cart lifts off and flies off into the night.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - NIGHT

A pristine college campus glowing in the night.

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - NIGHT

A classic design house set in white boasting Greek letters.

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - NIGHT

A fair but not overwhelming number of young adults mill about in the house. Among them, Carey Junger makes his way to a couch and plops down next to a young Spanish girl of 17, ISABEL FUENTES.

CAREY

Hey Isabel. Having fun?

Isabel looks somewhat drunk and relaxed.

ISABEL

Oh sí. It's muy bien.

CAREY

I'm glad you were able to come.

ISABEL

It's better than crying at home.

CAREY

This is over that Alex guy,
right?

Isabel nods. Carey scoots closer to her.

CAREY

What have you had?

ISABEL

A few beers. I don't remember
nada right now. What are we
talking about?

CAREY

You were trying to find an
escape.

ISABEL

Yeah. You're great, Carey, but
I still remember my Alex.

CAREY

Well, here. Maybe this will
help.

Carey leans over and kisses her.

ISABEL

Oh, I don't think I sh-

She grabs his neck and pulls his face into hers. Carey blindly reaches onto an end table beside the couch and takes a syringe of clear fluid. He breaks the embrace and shows it to her.

ISABEL

What's that?

CAREY

It's a trip, girl. I promise.
It'll help you to forget.

Isabel looks at it, apparently trying to focus her eyes on it.

ISABEL

I don't like needles.

CAREY

Here, let me help.

Carey removes the cap from the needle. He taps her arm. He injects her and kisses her at the same time. He presses the plunger and pumps the fluid into her.

He leans back and looks at her. Isabel's eyes roll back into her head, and she smiles.

ISABEL

Oh, that is good.

END OF EPISODE