THE FEMPIROR CHRONICLES

Episode 1x08

“Empegen”

by

George Willson
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. FEMPİROR CITY - DAY

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

INT. FEMPİROR 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 Fempior 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 Fempioror 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. FEMPRIOR 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?

Kaplın 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.)

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.
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
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 transmutated 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