

**AGENTS EXTRAORDINARY
8: THE HUNTING OF THE SNARK, PT. 1**

By Nathan Alderman

PAGE ONE

1.1

It's the middle of the night, pouring rain, at the side of a road through the middle of deep and dense woods. We're looking through a chain-link fence at a man, one CHESTER WILCOX, illuminated by the headlight beams of a parked car. CHESTER is filthy, one glove missing, his jacket spattered in mud and torn at the seam of one sleeve. Blood runs down his forehead from a cut, mixing with rainwater in his eyes. He clings to the fence as if trying to tear it down. There's a sign attached to the fence, on the opposite side from CHESTER, facing us. It reads PRIVATE ESTATE - NO TRESPASSING and in smaller letters, GUARDED BY KING'S MEN SECURITY.

CHESTER is all but screaming, terrified, desperate to get to the other side of the high fence. It's fair to say this is the worst night of his life. That's OK, though. It'll be over very soon.

CAPTION: Aylesbury Vale, rural Bucks County.

CHESTER: I'll confess! Lock me up, please!

CHESTER: **Just for God's sake, LET ME OUT!**

1.2

WENDELL GREASLEY, mid-40s and slightly overweight, works for King's Men Security. He's annoyed and befuddled at having to get out of his car, in the middle of a downpour, in the middle of the night, to investigate the strange man illuminated in his headlights, who, rather than trying to get **in** to the property WENDELL guards, is most emphatically trying to get **out**. He's talking to headquarters -- warm, dry headquarters, where they have tea and probably biscuits, and where he'd very much like to be right now -- on a walkie-talkie.

WENDELL: No, no, I said *he says he's a burglar*. Or something. He wants me to let him out.

WENDELL: Yes, **very** odd, exactly. Can we let people **out**?

1.3

CHESTER clings to the fence more urgently, looking back over his shoulder at something he thinks he hears in the darkened woods behind him.

CHESTER: You don't **understand!**

CHESTER: *There were **five** of us!*

1.4

WENDELL has turned away from the crazy, shouting man so that he can hear his walkie-talkie better.

WENDELL: Well how'm I supposed to know how he got in? Is that **my** job?

WENDELL: ... Now, you don't have to be so **snotty** about --

(cont'd)

1.5

WENDELL freezes in place, eyes wide, as a bloodcurdling scream from CHESTER cuts through the clamor of the rain.

CHESTER (o/p): AAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!

1.6

From the other side of the fence, we see the headlights through the chain link, illuminating two jagged grooves in the muddy ground, leading back into the forest, as if something roughly man-sized was dragged back into the darkness of the woods. WENDELL is silhouetted against the lights, walkie-talkie up to his ear.

WENDELL (small): Headquarters?

WENDELL (small): I... I'm going to get back in the car now.

PAGE TWO

2.1

PARRY LORD, a look of calm exasperation on his face, stands in the midst of an utterly demolished pub -- chairs and tables smashed, broken glass everywhere -- next to a grizzled old PUBMAN who's seen his share of brawls. The PUBMAN is reading a list off a grubby notepad. LORD's looking at someone else we can't see yet.

CAPTION: East London. 24 hours later.

PUBMAN: ... three light fixtures, five tables, eight chairs, a dartboard, two tellys, including the big-screen, and at last count, fifty-nine glasses.

PUBMAN: Them on the floor can settle up sep'rate when they come to, I guess.

LORD: I'll write you a check.

LORD: And to think, Doctor -- I was **going** to get you an iPod.

2.2

Large panel. DR. CELIA CHANCE slumps triumphantly -- and very, very drunkenly -- in a back booth at the pub. Half the pictures on the walls around her are crooked and/or smashed. There's a deeply impressive pile of empty beer mugs and shot glasses spilling off the table in front of her, and an equally impressive pile of burly, unconscious, occasionally bleeding men on the floor in front of her. CHANCE's knuckles are smeared with blood, most of which is her own. She's got a fat lip and a bruise welling on one cheek, but her glasses are intact, and she's grinning as only someone with a blood alcohol content exponentially above the legal limit can.

CHANCE (drunk): Hullo, Misser Lord.

CHANCE (drunk): **Happy birthday to me.**

TITLE AND CREDITS

PAGE THREE

3.1

A scrubby patch of forest in the Yorkshire countryside. A summer afternoon in the shade of the trees. A rabbit sits on the forest floor, nose twitching, nibbling on a bit of grass. The COLONEL's voice comes from off-panel.

CAPTION: Nineteen years ago.

COLONEL (o/p, quiet): That's it...

COLONEL (o/p, quiet): Now exhale, and squeeze the trigger.

3.2

COLONEL CYRIL CHANCE, British Special Air Services, is a stern and commanding man even when he's not on duty. He's not unkind or unfeeling, but by default, he views life in military terms, and conducts himself with a certain stiff discipline. He's got piercing eyes that stare out steadily from beneath the brim of his Panama hat, a hawkish nose, and a thick bristly mustache. He's out on a hunting party in the woods today, sporting a vest with various shells tucked in its pockets, and carrying a hunting rifle in the crook of one arm, in proper observance of safety protocols.

Behind him, his handsome, athletic son CECIL, 13, watches him keenly. CECIL sports a clear family resemblance, and though his posture mirrors his father's stiff formality, he's got an observant and sympathetic face.

COLONEL: ...

COLONEL: Well, go on. The **noise** won't hurt you.

COLONEL: Is something **wrong**, Celia?

3.3.

Eight-year-old CELIA CHANCE, slightly pudgy, looks up at her father from behind thick, squarish glasses. She's dressed for summer, complete with a floppy hat, and is holding a .22 rifle, which she's currently got aimed at the rabbit in question.

CELIA: It's just ... well, it's a **bunny**, sir.

CELIA: Why've I got to **shoot** it?

3.4

Patience is not one of the COLONEL's virtues. He's baffled, and quickly growing exasperated as he kneels down to respond. CELIA holds her ground, displaying the same stubbornness she'll show later in life.

COLONEL: That's... that's the **general idea** of **hunting**, dear.

COLONEL: We don't go to the woods to have **tea** with the thing.

CELIA: But that's **stupid**. It didn't **do** anything.

3.5

The COLONEL's losing even more of his patience as he stands up. He's beginning to gesture with his arms.

COLONEL: Celia, you **asked** to come **with us!**

CELIA: Not so I could **shoot** anything!

COLONEL: Then ... then ...

3.6

Close on CELIA's face. The COLONEL's going to realize he's said something stupid about two seconds after he says it, when he sees the hurt dawning on his daughter's face.

COLONEL (o/p): Then why did you bloody **bother?**

COLONEL (o/p): To just **stand around** being **useless?**

PAGE FOUR

4.1

Tears well in CELIA's eyes, but she won't give anyone the satisfaction of seeing her bawl - especially not her dad. Carefully, deliberately, she sets the rifle down, never breaking eye contact with the COLONEL.

NO DIALOGUE

4.2

CELIA runs off through the woods, the tears flowing now, leaving the COLONEL and a concerned CECIL behind.

CECIL: Celia, **wait--!**

4.3

The COLONEL's shoulders slump just slightly, in the manner of a man who knows he's made a mistake, but has resolved to push on nonetheless. He's holding out a hand to gently restrain his son as CECIL tries to go after his sister.

CECIL: I'll go get her, Colonel--

COLONEL: Let her **go**, son.

COLONEL: (small) *sigh.* Just like her **mother**.

4.4

Time passes. It's dusk now, and CECIL and the COLONEL are emerging from the woods, a few dead rabbits in hand, toward a small cottage. There's a Jeep parked in the dirt driveway, the scraggly remains of what once was a garden around the outside, and a few lights on in the windows.

NO DIALOGUE

4.5

CECIL and the COLONEL enter through the front door, the COLONEL with the guns and CEDRIC with the rabbits.

COLONEL: Get these prepped. Your **sister** can help.

COLONEL: I'll lock up the guns.

4.6

The COLONEL enters his study in the fading light. There are photos, military souvenirs and commendations all over the walls. He stops in midstep, looking in mild surprise at something on the floor.

NO DIALOGUE

PAGE FIVE

5.1

Large panel. The gun safe at the back of the room, behind the desk, swings wide open -- both combination-locked doors, the inner and outer -- and the perfectly disassembled components of eight rifles and shotguns of varying calibers are scattered about on the floor. In the middle of the room, sitting Indian-style, is a pissed-off and triumphant-looking young CHANCE, her hands smudged with grease and soot, staring back at the COLONEL defiantly.

NO DIALOGUE

5.2

For a moment, the COLONEL is taken aback.

COLONEL: Huh.

5.3

Then his face hardens back to normal.

COLONEL: No one likes a **showoff**, Celia.

5.4

He continues speaking as he moves out of sight, only partly visible behind the edge of the doorframe.

COLONEL: I want these all put back together. **Properly.**

COLONEL: No **supper** and no **sleep** until you do.

PAGE SIX

6.1

CHANCE is curled up in the passenger seat of LORD's red BMW Z9 convertible (yes, replacing the black one he wrecked in issue 4), sleeping it off. The wind is tousling her hair, and LORD is looking over at her from the drivers' seat with a modicum of concern, as they drive down the highway. It's early on a humid, overcast summer morning, and the top of the convertible is down under gray skies. They're out in the greenbelt now, hectares upon hectares of fields on either side of the road, with the occasional billboard for color. Both are in the clothes we last saw them in.

CHANCE (muttering): An' put 'em all back same as y' found 'em...

6.2

CHANCE stirs, waking, wincing at the colossal headache she's brought on herself. LORD's gloved hand is offering her a water bottle.

CHANCE: nnn...

CHANCE: Ow. God.

LORD (o/p): Here. **Drink.**

6.3

CHANCE is taking the water with one hand, brushing her hair away from her face with the other. She's still waking up. LORD looks half-annoyed, half-concerned for her, with his eyes back on the road. We can now see that the back luggage compartment is packed with bags -- sleek black luggage for LORD, camo-green duffel bags for CHANCE, and a large, long package (I'll spill the beans: it's a tactical shotgun, in a black plastic case) wrapped up in brown paper and tied with string, with a little tag fluttering in the breeze. There's also a dossier stuck vertically in between the passenger's and driver's seats.

CHANCE: And -- ow -- good morning to you **too.**

LORD: I've some **aspirin** in the **glove box.**

6.4

CHANCE finally realizes where she is, looking around. A suspicious expression is creeping onto her face.

CHANCE (small): This isn't London.

CHANCE: Oh, wait. Wait, wait, wait.

CHANCE: Is this an **intervention?** Because I--

6.5

LORD cuts her off a bit sharply.

LORD: It's an **assignment**, Doctor.

LORD: Assuming you're **up** to it.

PAGE SEVEN

7.1

CHANCE fumbles with the childproof cap on the aspirin while she scowls at LORD.

CHANCE: What's **that** supposed to mean?

LORD: It's **one** thing to **witness** your **self-destruction**.

LORD: It's another to **pay** for it, **birthday** gift or not.

7.2

CHANCE downs the aspirin while looking sidelong at LORD. She's kind of trying to see if he's half-joking, like usual. He's not.

CHANCE: Oh, **come on**. I'm not showing up to work **drunk**.

LORD: No, just **hung over**. Even **Mal**'s noticed.

7.3

CHANCE leans back in her seat, eyes shut, and massages her temples. LORD's expression softens, barely.

CHANCE: It's ... it's just driving me **barmy**, all right?

CHANCE: **Months** now, and we **still** can't find a slimy old **git** in a **wheelchair** and a sodding **rabbit mask**.

7.4

CHANCE looks away, out at the countryside rolling by, as LORD makes a sincere offer.

LORD: You might try **talking** about it. **Before** your **liver** goes, I mean.

CHANCE: My liver and I will be **fine**. I'll **deal**.

CHANCE: This is, what, **Buckinghamshire**?

7.5

LORD hands a still-groggy CHANCE the dossier from between the seats.

LORD: Good guess. We've been invited for a **hunt**.

LORD: Here, it seems, there be **monsters**.

PAGE EIGHT

8.1

LORD and CHANCE pick their way through dense pine forest that is still soggy from recent rains. They're bickering in a somewhat more good-natured fashion. CHANCE carries the dossier, and has a different outfit on than when we saw her last: jacket, new T-shirt, baggy fatigue pants, and -- yes -- her combat boots. (They stopped at a petrol station en route, which gave CHANCE an opportunity to change and freshen up.)

CHANCE: ... just not **thrilled** with the notion of you **digging about** amongst my various **knickers**.

LORD: "**Thank** you, Mr. Lord, for driving to my flat and packing me a **change of clothes** while I was **passed out** in your car."

LORD (small): Besides, I **was** wearing gloves.

8.2

LORD is saying something to CHANCE, who is consulting the dossier.

LORD: I even picked up your **post**. Are your **birthday gifts** always so **heavy**?

CHANCE: The ones from my **father**? Usually.

CHANCE: So they found him about ... here, right?

8.3

LORD looks off in one direction, while CHANCE looks at a photo from the dossier, comparing it to what she's seeing on the ground. Her face is crinkling in disgust at what she's seeing in the photo.

LORD: Right. About half a kilometer from the **fence**.

LORD: You can see the **drag marks**.

CHANCE: **Bloody hell**. He looks like the **dog's breakfast**.

8.4

CHANCE has closed the dossier and is talking with LORD, still looking a little queasy.

CHANCE: If my **appetite** hadn't **already** gone...

LORD: The **examiner** found no fibers, DNA, punctures or unusual lacerations. Just **massive blunt trauma**.

LORD: The others -- if there **were** others -- couldn't be **found**.

8.5

LORD and CHANCE set off through the trees to a simple dirt path where LORD's car has been parked.

CHANCE: That's all well and **gross**, but why call **us** in?

LORD: Because of the current **tenant** of this estate. And his **pet project**.

8.6

A few minutes later. The car is parked on a gravel drive that cuts through the resplendent front lawn of a majestic old English manor house. CHANCE is turning to LORD to comment as they get out of the car; she's half-sarcastic, half-impressed.

CHANCE: Oooh. I want the military for **my** sugar daddy.

LORD: Careful what you **wish** for, Doctor.

PAGE NINE

9.1

From inside the dim entry hall of the mansion, we see LORD and CHANCE cautiously opening the front door, letting light spill inside. Something small and wheeled is rolling along the floor toward them.

LORD: Ah... hello?

SFX: Vrrrrrrrr

9.2

The thing on the floor is a Lego Mindstorms-like robot -- built out of simple toy blocks, with a few wires here and there, and a special webcam mounted on top, looking up at the agents. A voice is coming from a speaker set in the front of the GREETERBOT.

VOICE (electronic): Ah, you're the **government** people, aren't you?

VOICE (electronic): We're out back, in the **greenhouse**. Follow along, please.

9.3

LORD and CHANCE emerge from the back of the house into a humid greenhouse, the bot ruggedly bumping across the dirt and wood chips on the slightly soggy ground. The greenhouse adjoins the back wall of the house, and set into the wall, there's a large metal breaker box with a thick electrical cable running down through the roof of the greenhouse into it. A table is set for tea in one of the aisles between the raised, wooden-boxed planters of tomatoes and peppers. In the center of the table, a **robot arm** -- small, simple, the kind you can build from a kit -- is pouring tea from a teapot into cups.

VOICE (o/p): **There** you are.

9.4

DR. OLIVER PROSPER is slim, handsome, in his late forties, with the beginnings of a scraggly beard. He looks more or less kind, but there's a distance in his eyes that suggests his mind is elsewhere. He sits at the table with his daughter ARI, a pretty but sullen-looking young girl of about 11 or 12, who is resignedly eating a sandwich. She seems entirely unimpressed with the very cool robot arm on the table in front of her -- or the laptop computer with live feed coming from the greeter-bot, for that matter.

PROSPER's son CAL, maybe six or seven years old, sits on the ground in front of the table, cobbling together another bot like the one that greeted LORD and CHANCE. He doesn't even look up at LORD and CHANCE, entirely focused on his work. That's because CAL is autistic.

PROSPER: Won't you join us for **tea**?

PAGE TEN

10.1

LORD takes a seat at the table. PROSPER is friendly, pushing a plate of tea sandwiches toward him, but ARI regards him warily. CHANCE is kneeling down to talk to CAL.

LORD: **Dr. Oliver Prosper**, I presume?

LORD: I didn't know you took your work **home** with you.

CHANCE: Hello. What's **your** name?

10.2

CHANCE is reaching out to put a friendly hand on the oblivious CAL's shoulder, but a word from ARI stops her.

ARI: **Don't**.

ARI: **Cal** doesn't like to be **touched**.

10.3

PROSPER sips his tea and looks warningly at his daughter.

PROSPER: **Ari**, don't be **rude**.

PROSPER: Do forgive her. I'm afraid my son's **autistic**. He can be rather **particular**, Miss...?

10.4

CHANCE stands up and pulls another seat out beside LORD, who is apparently savoring a neat triangular cucumber sandwich. LORD is looking at her sidelong, and we can't tell if he's smiling about the sandwich or what she's saying.

CHANCE: **Doctor**. Dr. **Darcy**. And my associate, **Mr. Bennett**.

LORD (small): Oh, **quite** good.

10.5

CHANCE scrutinizes the robot arm, intrigued, as LORD talks with PROSPER.

LORD: We were told you might have a **security issue**.

PROSPER: I think my **military** friends are overreacting a bit.

PROSPER: They **told** me of the break-in, but as far as I know, **no one** came near the house.

10.6

ARI sulks a bit as PROSPER continues speaking. She's glowering suspiciously at LORD and CHANCE.

PROSPER: We've had a few **animals** come sniffing around nights, but nothing more.

PROSPER: I'm afraid you've come out here for mere **jitters**, Mr. Bennett.

ARI (small): That's **not** his name.

(cont'd)

10.7

CHANCE, interested and a little impressed by the girl's perceptiveness, leans forward as PROSPER scolds his daughter.

PROSPER: Ari, what are you **saying?**

ARI: It's **not!** They're names out of a **book!**

ARI: Why are you **lying** to us?

10.8

PROSPER is getting stern now, and ARI is willfully getting up from the table, banished but unbowed.

PROSPER: Young lady, if you can't be **polite** to our guests, you can **leave the table.**

ARI: ... **fine.**

10.9

ARI walks off across the terrace, turning back to glare over her shoulder at her father. It's a lot like young CHANCE's glare in the flashback sequence.. She walks right past CAL, who's still building his robot, and doesn't look up as she passes.

NO DIALOGUE

PAGE ELEVEN

11.1

PROSPER gets up from the table, collecting the plates. He looks a bit rueful about that last exchange with ARI.

PROSPER: It's... hard for her, I think. She misses her friends.

PROSPER: I only get them summers. They're usually with their mum in London.

11.2

As LORD and CHANCE watch, PROSPER kneels down to talk to CAL, who's looking at him in a vague, distracted sort of way. PROSPER has the plates in one hand and the robotic arm, still gripping the teapot, in the other.

PROSPER: Come on, my little genius.

PROSPER: Let's go back inside, eh? It's looking like rain.

11.3

CAL wanders off toward the house, carrying the bot he was building, still seemingly in his own little world. LORD and CHANCE follow PROSPER back into the house. CHANCE is asking PROSPER a question, and PROSPER answers with a mixture of pride and sadness.

CHANCE: He's quite the **engineer**.

PROSPER: At age 3, he saw the **Eiffel Tower** on the telly. Next day, he's made a model of it from his Legos.

PROSPER: But just you **try** to teach him to **tie his shoes**.

11.4

The kitchen of the country house, extensively renovated with modern appliances. PROSPER drops the dishes off in the sink; the robot arm rests on the counter. LORD stands in a corner; CHANCE slouches casually against the island in the center of the room.

LORD: If it's no **objection**, Dr. Prosper, we'd still like to look around a bit.

CHANCE: **Something** all but **jellied** a man in your woods last night.

CHANCE: I'd show you **pictures**, but you've just **eaten**.

11.5

PROSPER smiles faintly. He's been working by himself for a while now, and the chance to show off his work clearly appeals to him.

PROSPER: Well... my **staff's** got the weekend off, so we've certainly got the **room**.

PROSPER: And you've obviously got the proper **clearances**, so..

11.6

LORD and CHANCE look at one another, intrigued, as PROSPER makes them an offer.

PROSPER (o/p): Would you like to **see** what you're here to **protect**?

PAGE TWELVE

12.1

LORD and CHANCE carry their bags up the sweeping main staircase of the country house, bantering as usual. CHANCE is lugging not only her duffel, but the long blocky package from her father, last seen in the back seat of LORD's car.

LORD: ... **What?**

LORD: Miss Doctor Scientist **doesn't** want to see the **top-secret robotics?**

CHANCE: Miss Doctor **Mathematician**, thank you, would rather look for **clues**.

12.2

LORD and CHANCE have reached the top of the stairs and are heading down a hallway. A pair of dueling sabres, which apparently came with the house, are mounted on one wall.

LORD: Dr. Prosper's **tour** may well be **enlightening**.

CHANCE: Think there's a link between his **work** and our **mystery beast?**

LORD: Can't hurt to check.

12.3

LORD pauses next to one of the guest room doors, his hand on the doorknob, talking to CHANCE.

CHANCE: I saw an old **barn** off near the **woods** -- maybe something's taken up **residence**.

LORD: Just be **careful**, Doctor. Should I lose **two** partners, there'll be **no end** to Mrs. King's **dirty looks**.

12.4

LORD has opened the door and is looking into his room. Over his shoulder, seen through the doorframe, CHANCE is smirking.

LORD: **Well**. Looks like we'll be **just across the hall**.

CHANCE: Do try to keep the **noise** down.

12.5

LORD and CHANCE look at each other from opposite sides of the hall, each halfway into their respective rooms. CHANCE has a kind of disturbingly wistful look on her face.

LORD: I could say the **same** to you.

CHANCE: Mm. Depends on how **thoroughly** you packed my **bags**.

LORD (small): "No good deed goes **unpunished**..."

PAGE THIRTEEN

13.1

Close on DR. PROSPER's face. He's cleaning his glasses with a handkerchief, but he's looking off-panel at LORD.

PROSPER: So, Mr. Bennett: Say you're sending a **commando squad** into **Tora Bora**.
PROSPER: You want a way to **survey** the area without getting bits of your men **shot off**.
PROSPER: It's got to be **rugged**, obviously. **Autonomous**, if possible. **Modular**, for easy transport. And, in the best case, **cheap**.

13.2

Close on LORD as he gingerly examines some kind of cord-and-piston robotic limb he's lifted from a nearby tabletop.

LORD: Given your **speciality**, I'm guessing the answer has **robots** in it.

LORD: But robots are difficult to design. Robots are **dumb**.

LORD: Most of them can't even **walk** with guidance, much less **independently**.

13.3

PROSPER gestures around one of his lab rooms, which we're finally getting a better look at. It's full of blown-up photo sequences of animal motion -- dogs, big cats, and insects moving frame-by-frame, like the old Muybridge photo studies. There are glass tanks full of insects, spiders, and other critters. And, scattered here and there, robotic works-in-progress, bits and limbs that sort of look vaguely like limbs from an animal.

A sign on the wall, clearly printed off somebody's desktop computer, reads: PROJECT S.N.A.R.C.: SIMULATED NEURONET AUTONOMOUS RECONAISSANCE CREATURES.

PROSPER: Ah, but the **hard bits** have been done **for** us already. By **Mother Nature**.

PROSPER: It's called **biomimetics**, Mr. Bennett.

PROSPER: Think of it as **copying** off evolution's **schoolwork**.

PAGE FOURTEEN

14.1

Close-up on three round, triangularly-spaced impressions in the mud of a flower bed.

CHANCE (o/p): A-**ha**.

14.2

CHANCE is kneeling next to the flower bed planted around one side of the house. Behind her, off near the treeline at the edge of the lawn, we see the handsome and well-kept old two-level barn.

CHANCE: That's **some** kind of animal.

CHANCE: ... I **think** it's some kind of animal.

CHANCE (small): Should've actually **listened** on Daddy's nature walks.

14.3

CHANCE is silhouetted as she throws open the doors of the barn and looks inside.

CHANCE: Anyone home?

14.4

The barn seems harmless enough. There's a handsome chestnut mare paddocked in one of a row of stalls along one wall; various tools and junk, and something the size of a small vehicle under a tarp, against the opposite wall; and a ladder leading up to a second-level hayloft. CHANCE is standing opposite the calm, disinterested horse, regarding it with a certain degree of wariness.

CHANCE: Haven't seen any **long-leggedy beasties**, have you?

CHANCE (small): ... why the **long face**?

14.5

CHANCE pokes her head and hand out of the barn just as thunder rumbles, and the first fat drops of rain begin to fall into her palm. She doesn't look pleased.

SFX/THUNDER: Rmmmmmblllll

CHANCE: Oh, **bollocks**.

14.6

CHANCE sprints across the increasingly muddied lawn with her jacket over her head, back toward the front door of the house, as the rain really starts to come down. If possible, don't forget to show LORD's convertible (top up) parked on the drive in front of the house.

CHANCE: Why am I not the one with the **broolly**?

PAGE FIFTEEN

15.1

LORD and PROSPER stand on opposite sides of a lab table, LORD with his umbrella in the crook of his arm, PROSPER holding up what looks like a robotic dog's leg. Rain drums in sheets against the windows. You can tell PROSPER's quietly digging the chance to show off his work.

PROSPER: I was watching **Cal** build one of his **toy brick** robotics kits -- like the one you saw earlier --

PROSPER: And I thought, why **shouldn't** it be that easy?

15.2

LORD ponders a section of segmented joints, like a snake's body, or a tail, holding it gingerly with his gloved hands.

LORD: I **see**. Standardized connectors for each of the bits.

LORD: And is that some kind of **artificial muscle**?

15.3

PROSPER is snapping the metal leg into one socket of a torso unit lying on its side on the table.

PROSPER: Next-generation **memory plastic**. Any soldier worth his **boots** could assemble one of these.

PROSPER: There's even different **parts** depending on the **functions**. Infrared imaging... remote video cameras...

15.4

PROSPER's deep into his spiel now as he fishes various bits and pieces off the mass on the table, so he doesn't quite notice the suspicious look LORD's fixing on him.

LORD: **Weaponry?**

PROSPER: No, no, **none** of that. I've **seen** those Terminator movies.

PROSPER: They **asked**, and I made up a lot of words about how I **couldn't**.

15.5

LORD raps gently with the handle of his umbrella on the torso unit, as if testing its durability.

LORD: I'm... sure they'll be **pleased** nonetheless.

LORD: When do you expect to have **working prototypes**?

15.6

PROSPER looks like this is the funniest thing he's heard in weeks. On the wall behind him, there are blueprints for various different configurations of robots, built from the same set of standard components, each vaguely resembling a different animal.

PROSPER: I'm **sorry**. Are you **serious**?

PROSPER: What makes you think we **haven't** got them **already**?

PAGE SIXTEEN

16.1

From here on out, until stated otherwise, it will be raining heavily outside. Interiors should reflect that accordingly.

The floor lamps are on in the study where ARI is working on her own iBook laptop, and CAL is, once again, working on his toy robot. A soggy CHANCE, still dripping, is walking into the room through an open doorway as she shucks off her sodden jacket. ARI's glancing at CHANCE out of the corner of her eye, not kindly. There's a bit of tape stuck to the lid of ARI's laptop, with "NANERL" written on it.

CHANCE: Whoo. Pfaah.

CHANCE: **Towels.** I require **towels.**

16.2

CHANCE sits down somewhat awkwardly in the chair opposite from ARI. ARI doesn't look at her.

CHANCE: You wouldn't happen to know where I ...

CHANCE: Uh ... right.

CHANCE: So ... **Nanerl.** That's a funny name.

16.3

Same as 16.2. ARI's still tapping away, not looking at CHANCE. CHANCE is just sitting there, looking uncomfortable. CAL is building his robot in the background.

ARI: It was my **nana's** name.

CHANCE: ... oh.

ARI: So why are you a **liar?**

16.4

CHANCE leans back in the chair, looking tired. The hangover's catching up with her.

CHANCE: I'm **not.** Mr. **Bennett** and I, we have to work in **secret.**

CHANCE: We have to **know** things, and **do** things, so that everyone else in the **dark** can **sleep** the better for it.

CHANCE: But I **promise,** we're the **good guys.**

16.5

ARI finally, finally, lifts her gaze just above the laptop screen to make eye contact with CHANCE.

ARI: ... so I guess you like **Jane Austen?**

CHANCE: Used to, when I was your age.

16.6

CHANCE smiles, with a hint of mischief in her eyes.

CHANCE: I was positively **mad** for **Mr. Darcy.**

CHANCE: He could be as **rude** as he wanted, and it didn't **matter.**

CHANCE: 'Cause in the **end,** he was **right.**

PAGE SEVENTEEN

17.1

Scales are weighing in ARI's mind, and they seem to have finally tipped in CHANCE's favor.

ARI: ... My **nana's** name was **Edna**.

ARI: **Nanerl** was a **nickname** I read about. **Mozart's sister**.

17.2

CHANCE isn't sure where this conversation is going, but she's rolling with it.

CHANCE: I didn't know he **had a sister**.

ARI (o/p): She was **just as good** as him. Her **dad** used to take them **both** around, playing music and stuff.

17.3

ARI is looking back at the computer screen, darkly. Unhappy.

ARI: Then she turned **sixteen** and her dad stopped **caring** about her.

ARI: She got **married** and **died** and didn't do **anything** inbetween.

17.4

CHANCE looks over at CAL playing on the floor, all in his own world.

CHANCE: ... I had a brother, too. Mine was always **nice** to me.

CHANCE: I think he felt bad for being Daddy's **favorite**.

17.5

CHANCE looks back at ARI, leaning forward in her chair to emphasize her point.

CHANCE: I **worried** about that for a long time. Until I **stopped**.

CHANCE: I just did all the stuff I was **good** at, the **best** I could.

17.6

ARI's thinking about this. CHANCE has clearly begun to win her over.

CHANCE (o/p): And I figured, if **he** was really **lucky**, one day he'd **appreciate** that.

17.7

ARI looks up shyly at CHANCE, turning the screen toward her. She's smiling like she's holding something in. CHANCE has clearly won her over.

CHANCE: What's so **funny**, then?

ARI: You're good with **secrets**, right?

ARI: D'you want to hear one of **mine**?

PAGE EIGHTEEN

18.1

Back in the lab, PROSPER is showing a skeptical LORD something on a computer screen.

LORD: ... fine, the **mechanics** are sound, but I can't see how you'd fit a workable **brain** in those **bodies**.

PROSPER: We **didn't**.

18.2

PROSPER points to rows of numbers scrolling in a window on the screen.

PROSPER: The **brain's** in an old **gamekeeper's shed** a ways off in the **woods**.

PROSPER: We're **streaming** everything over amped-up **Wi-Fi**.

PROSPER: And we **cheated** a bit on the **A.I.**, too.

18.3

LORD, increasingly grave, takes a closer look at the screen. PROSPER, just happy to have someone he can geek out about this to, keeps talking.

PROSPER: This is **Avida**. Open-source program from some chaps in California..

PROSPER: It uses **self-propagating** digital organisms to mimic **evolution**.

PROSPER: Does all the **heavy lifting** for us, really.

18.4

PROSPER points to a photographic motion study of a dog posted up on one of the walls of the lab.

PROSPER: Got the idea from an **effects house** in **Oxford**, making **digital stuntmen**.

PROSPER: **Model** the bots digitally, let them try to learn to **walk**, pick the **best** ones, repeat.

PROSPER: We had them **walking** about in **three hours**.

18.5

LORD looks uneasily at the headless 'bot torso lying on the lab table.

LORD: Surely you've got **safeguards**, though?

PROSPER: We do **cull** them a bit to keep them **on task**, yes.

18.6

Cut to an increasingly concerned CHANCE in the parlor, looking over ARI's shoulder at the laptop screen.

ARI: ... and see here? Dad was **killing** all the best **processes**.

ARI: So I went on the **server** and took out the **restrictions**, just for a bit. Now they **hide** when Dad tries to **sift** 'em out.

ARI: It's **so** cool.

(cont'd)

18.7

CHANCE looks at ARI, worried, and ARI looks back as if she's completely missing the

point.

CHANCE: Your dad **knows** about this, right? That you've been **modifying** his code?

ARI: 'Course not. He's always on about how **Cal's** his little **genius**. Imagine what he'll think when I **surprise** him with this.

ARI: Clever, right?

PAGE NINETEEN

19.1

It's getting dark outside, and the overcast skies and drumming rain make it nearly dark as night already. In the lab, LORD's trying to make a point, politely but firmly, but PROSPER is dismissing him.

PROSPER: ... I'd see how you could **think** that, but I'm telling you, I **built** these things.

PROSPER: I've seen **every** line of code. They're made for **reconnaissance**.

LORD: So what **killed** that man in the **woods**?

19.2

In the parlor, ARI is getting angry, clutching her closed-up laptop to her chest. CHANCE is reaching out toward her, trying to explain.

ARI: What do you **mean**? You can't tell my **dad**! I **said** it was a **secret**!

CHANCE: Ari -- Ari, **listen**!

CHANCE: Did your dad even **tell** you **why** we're **here**?

19.3

The lab. PROSPER turns to the computer as a big flash of lightning strikes outside.

PROSPER: **Fine**, if it'll **ease** your mind, I'll send out a **shutdown** sign--

SFX/THUNDER: KRAKABOOM!

19.4

The lights go out. LORD and PROSPER are barely visible in the dimness.

LORD: ... well, **that** was **convenient**.

PROSPER: They **said** they'd got the **wiring** up to spec, but it **always** goes out like this.

PROSPER: Come on -- breaker's in the **greenhouse**.

19.5

The parlor; CHANCE and ARI are lit eerily by the screen of the reopened laptop. ARI's freaking out a bit. CHANCE is trying to keep her calm.

ARI: Oh my **God**. Oh my God.

CHANCE: Look, I'm **sure** it had **nothing** to do with your dad's work.

CHANCE: I'm just saying, let's go **tell** him, and then we can --

19.6

Wider shot. Pull out to reveal CHANCE and ARI both noticing that the patch of carpet on which CAL was building his robot is now empty.

CHANCE: **Hold up**.

CHANCE: Where's your **brother**?

PAGE TWENTY

20.1

PROSPER and LORD stand in the doorway leading out to the greenhouse, both carrying flashlights. (LORD's got his umbrella tucked in the crook of his other arm.) PROSPER is shining his toward the glass roof, while LORD, taken by surprise, is shining his beam dead ahead down the aisle.

PROSPER: **Damn.** Looks like a **branch** hit the roof. Might be a bit **soggy** underfoot.

LORD: Doctor... what is **that**?

20.2

LORD's flashlight beam illuminates a vaguely doggish LITTLE BOT, along the lines of the designs we saw in PROSPER's lab, lying in a puddle in the middle of the wet ground of the greenhouse. Rain drips in through a cracked pane in the roof, and the floor is thoroughly soaked and pooling with water. The LITTLE BOT has glowing green eyes, and is tilting its head in a pathetic, almost pleading manner.

NO DIALOGUE

20.3

PROSPER advances into the greenhouse fearlessly. LORD, more cautious, hangs back.

PROSPER: Well, **you're** a bit **far from home**, eh?

LORD: Doctor --

PROSPER: No, no, it's **OK**. This is **Champ** -- our very **first**.

20.4

PROSPER squats down in the middle of a puddle on the sodden floor to pat CHAMP fondly on the head. We can see that one of CHAMP's hind legs looks oddly twisted and mangled. In the background, we can see LORD taking a few cautious steps into the greenhouse.

PROSPER: Ah, got into a bit of **mischief**, have you?

PROSPER: Wonder how **that** happened.

20.5

LORD stands inside the greenhouse, shining his light over to the back wall that the greenhouse shares with the main house, where the breaker box is mounted. The main line that should lead to the breaker box has been severed roughly -- we can see the frayed ends where it should have led into the box, and the twisted, half-broken thin metal bonds that held the main line to the wall.

LORD: ... Something's not **right** here, Doctor.

20.6

Low angle, so that we're looking up past LORD's face to the steel rafters of the greenhouse, where a shape with glowing green eyes -- much larger than CHAMP -- crouches. LORD doesn't see it yet -- he's looking ahead, at PROSPER.

LORD: Doctor, we should get inside.

LORD: I don't think it's --

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

21.1

As seen from LORD's POV: PROSPER's back as he kneels, illuminated by the flashlight, attending to CHAMP. PROSPER's head is bent, as if looking at CHAMP. But CHAMP's head, just visible over PROSPER's shoulder, is looking *up* -- not at LORD, but at something above him.

NO DIALOGUE

21.2

Large panel. LORD looks up, slowly, his flashlight beam illuminating a much larger BOT directly above him, with a slightly longer neck and flexible tail than CHAMP. "BRUTE" has been stenciled on the side of its casing. It's crouched on the steel rafters, looking down at LORD with its green eyes. And its prehensile tail is curled around the severed feed line to the main breaker box, its live wires dangling above the wet floor.

LORD (small): Bloody hell.

21.3

In BG, PROSPER is looking over his shoulder, startled. In midground, LORD is moving forward toward PROSPER, instinctively trying to put distance between himself and BRUTE. In FG, BRUTE's tail is uncoiling, letting the live wire drop toward a particularly large puddle on the floor...

NO DIALOGUE

PAGE TWENTY-TWO

22.1

CHANCE and ARI, still hugging her laptop, make their way cautiously through the hallways of the house. They're on the far side from the greenhouse, by the way, closer to the front door -- and it's a big house. From somewhere nearby comes the whirring motor of CAL's robot GREETERBOT.

SFX (distant): VRRRRRRRRRRRRR

CHANCE: **Cal?**

ARI: I can hear his little **robot** going...

SFX: VRRRRRRRR-- KRUNCH!

22.2

From an open doorway down the hall, something small and broken comes skittering out, as if kicked. CHANCE and ARI watch, not sure what to expect.

SFX: Clattaclattaclatta

ARI (whisper): ... Cal?

22.3

Closer on the object. It's the broken remains of the GREETERBOT, looking like something very large has stepped on it, hard. Its plastic boards are snapped in half, and the webcam on top is mostly crushed.

NO DIALOGUE

22.4

CHANCE and ARI peer cautiously around the doorjamb into the room from which the broken GREETERBOT was expelled. They're obviously stunned and shocked by what they see, and they exchange whispers without looking at each other.

CHANCE (whisper): Is... is your dad OK with **swearing?**

ARI (whisper): He says it's **vulgar**.

CHANCE (whisper): That **limits** my **vocabulary** here.

22.5

Large panel. CAL sits in the middle of the room, fiddling with some broken bits of the GREETERBOTS. He doesn't seem to care much about the three large, sleek 'BOTS -- ACE, LAD, and MINX -- slowly surrounding him, much like hyenas surround a wounded antelope. The whole scene is eerily lit by the green from their glowing eyes, as the BOTS begin to close in on CAL...

NO DIALOGUE