

SLIDERS

"New Gods for Old"

by

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REPRESENTED BY:

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. NIGHT. A EUROPEAN VILLAGE. HIGH ANGLE.

A totalitarian world. Huge posters on the walls show a stern-looking leader in a military uniform. Harsh lettering gives the cryptic warning: "BIR." Other posters proclaim "BEWARE!" and "VIGILANCE!" The village is lit with only a few lights; some are bright red, adding a sinister air. SFX: WARBLING GESTAPO-SIRES, BAYING HOUNDS, and ANGRY CROWD NOISES, rising in the distance. CAMERA LOWERS to street level, just as the SLIDERS come racing around a corner. REMBRANDT, MAGGIE, DIANA, and MALLORY. Someone is pursuing them. They have been running for awhile and all four are disheveled by their exertions, but Mallory is limping.

MAGGIE

Who are those guys?

REMBRANDT

We don't wanna know.

DIANA

Yes, I do --

MAGGIE

(to Mallory)

How much longer?

MALLORY

(checks timer)

90 seconds.

REMBRANDT

How's your leg?

MALLORY

I can make it!

SFX: RISING NOISES OF PURSUIT. FOOTSTEPS, SHOUTS.

DISTANT VOICE

They went down there!

REMBRANDT

(pushing Mallory
forward)

Come on!

CAMERA MOVES WITH as they run through the village. Rembrandt stays close to Mallory, as if to help him, but Mallory waves him off angrily. He glances back with genuine fear.

IN THE DISTANCE, THEIR PURSUERS ARE dark figures, hidden in the gloom of night. Brilliant red lights stud the darkness, like the glowing eyes of some demonic beast. SFX: WARBLING GESTAPO-SIREN.

Diana pauses to look back, frowning.

REMBRANDT
(continuing; passing
her)
Come on, Diana!

DIANA
Just a minute -- there's something
very strange about those --

Rembrandt's hand reaches back into frame and yanks her out.

THE PURSUERS: are still indistinct, following them moves with a deliberate pace. They don't have to hurry to catch them.

THE SLIDERS: Rembrandt is pushing Mallory and dragging Diana.

MALLORY
I don't need your help. My legs are
fine! See --

He nearly topples into a wall -- and shuts up as Rembrandt lets go of Diana to grab him.

REMBRANDT
It's no sin to lean on someone.

DIANA
-- those lights. Why red?
(to Maggie)
That's the most useless color for
night vision, you know --

MAGGIE (O.S.)
DIANA!

DIANA
I don't think they want to hurt us --

She is wrong! FX: A SIZZLING RED BEAM CRACKLES THROUGH THE AIR JUST ABOVE HER HEAD, missing her by inches!

DIANA
Hokay --

ANOTHER ANGLE ON THE FLEEING SLIDERS

As Diana passes them all and moves into the lead!

DIANA
Come on, Maggie!!

FX: TWO OR THREE MORE CRACKLING BEAMS FLASH OVER THEIR HEADS!

REVERSE. ON THE PURSUERS. CLOSER.

The first ones are TROOPS IN BLACK UNIFORMS. They are tall, thin, and gangly, as spooky as vampires. They wear knee-high boots, black helmets reminiscent of the German army and black cloaks that flap out behind them. Their faces are hidden by goggles with brilliant red line of light across the front instead of lenses -- and they carry ominous-looking beam weapons. They move with deliberate pace. This is not a "hot pursuit" as much as it is the methodical closing of a trap. One or two drop to their knees to fire at the fleeing sliders.

TWO VEHICLES COME INTO VIEW. Black, modified Jeeps -- the headlights have the same intense-red glare. ESTABLISH GENERAL KRISLOV in front of one Jeep. ANGLE TIGHTENS as the jeep passes --

KRISLOV
(into a walky-talky)
Unit three, we're coming up now.
Hold your position.

Krislov waves his troops on. A soldier stands in the back of each Jeep, operating a red spotlight on a swivel. Beside the Jeeps, other soldiers are aiming at the fleeing sliders -- THEY FIRE!

And finally, they are followed by a small crowd of grimly-dressed villagers, some carrying torches and pitchforks. Some of these folks will be recognizable to us later -- an old man, a teenager, a fat woman, etc. We can't see the faces of the helmeted and goggled troops, but the expressions on the crowd are bitter, angry, and pinched. This is a hate-mob.

ANGLE TIGHTENS ON A BITTER LOOKING YOUNG WOMAN (JILL).

JILL
(chasing and pointing)
Kill the believers! Kill them all!

AD-LIB AGREEMENT from the others. Two more troops step into shot and fire into the distance.

BACK TO THE SLIDERS

Looking VERY worried.

REMBRANDT
(genuine exhaustion)
I've had enough of this! I am ready
to go home!

MAGGIE
(ironic)
Where's your sense of adventure,
Remmie?

REMBRANDT
It's out adventuring --

MALLORY
(checking timer)
Just a few seconds more --
(points)
Over there!

They head toward a corner, turn around it into a dark narrow street. And stop suddenly! DOWN AT THE END OF THE STREET -- more red lights!

WIDE ANGLE. A wall of them of red lights stretched across the street.

MED ANGLE. MATCHING. Black troops. Vehicles.

CLOSER ANGLE. MATCHING. The troops raise their rifles.

ON THE SLIDERS.

MALLORY
Okay -- not there. Here!

He points the timer, opening an O.S. VORTEX. FX: Rising wind swirls leaves and paper. SFX: VORTEX SOUND begins. Diana looks back. SFX: WARBLING SIRENS LOUDER.

THE PURSUERS BEHIND THEM are moving steadily closer.

THE LINE OF TROOPS AHEAD OF THEM are starting to approach.

ON THE SLIDERS.

FX: BEAMS FLASH FROM TWO DIRECTIONS, CRISS-CROSSING IN THE AIR ABOVE THEM.

MAGGIE
This is going to be close --

FX: THE VORTEX FORMS in front of them.

REMBRANDT
(pushes Maggie)
Go !

She goes! She leaps and vanishes.

REMBRANDT
(continuing)
Diana! Go!

She jumps -- and vanishes. FX: MORE BEAMS! CLOSER!

REMBRANDT
(continuing)
Mallory! Let's go!

Mallory is rubbing his leg.

MALLORY
I don't know if I can jump --

REMBRANDT
We're not leaving without you!

Rembrandt pushes him. They leap together. Rembrandt is just a little bit ahead of Mallory. And as Mallory leaps -- A SIZZLING RED LIGHT BEAM HITS HIM RIGHT IN THE SMALL OF HIS BACK. FX: RED LIGHTNING CRACKLES ALL OVER HIS BODY as he disappears INTO THE VORTEX.

EXT. NIGHT. A VILLAGE. HIGH ANGLE.

Same village, SAME ANGLE AS BEFORE, but not the same world. The posters are gone. Instead, the town shows evidence of old battles. Some old rubble lies in the streets, there are scorch marks on the walls. Instead of posters, there is old graffiti: "Death to the BIR-man!" "BIR-men DIE!" Although the red lights are nowhere in evidence, the lighting of the town is still meager. There are no people on the streets.

CAMERA LOWERS to street level, as the SLIDERS COME TUMBLING OUT OF THE VORTEX. Maggie, then Diana, Rembrandt, and finally Mallory -- who collapses in a heap on the ground. RED LIGHTNING STILL SPARKLES ACROSS MALLORY'S BODY -- IT FINALLY FLICKERS OUT. The sliders react in alarm and rush to Mallory --

DIANA
Mallory!!

REMBRANDT
I should have just picked him up and carried him. I believed him when he said he could make it --

The timer has fallen from Mallory's hand. Rembrandt scoops it up and looks at it.

DIANA
(touching his face)
Mallory -- ?

Is Mallory dead? Or just unconscious?

FADE OUT.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. NIGHT. A SHELTERED ALCOVE.

The Sliders have moved Mallory to temporary shelter. Mallory is just coming back to consciousness as Diana slaps his hands.

DIANA
Come on, Mallory! Wake up.

MAGGIE
I'll bet his first words are,
"Where am I?"

MALLORY
(blinking)
Who am I -- ?

Maggie shrugs. Close, but no tobacco cylinder.

REMBRANDT
Who do you think you are?

MALLORY
(shakes head, frowns)
Somebody named -- Mallory Quinn?
I'm not sure --

Maggie and Rembrandt exchange worried glances.

DIANA
You took a pretty bad hit.

MALLORY
(starting to sit up)
I'm fine, I --
(something is wrong)
-- can't move my legs. I can't
move my legs.

The others have to keep him from flailing.

MAGGIE
Don't panic. It might be a
temporary affect.

MALLORY
And what if it isn't?

REMBRANDT
Don't jump to any conclusions --

MALLORY

I'm not going back to a wheelchair!

DIANA

We'll find a doctor --
(remembers the timer)
Do we have time?

REMBRANDT

We've got twenty-two hours.
(hands timer to Mallory)
Maggie and I will go. You wait here
until we get back.

Mallory gives him the look. Excuse me?

REMBRANDT

(continuing)
Uh, sorry.

Maggie follows Rembrandt. As they leave:

MALLORY

(calling after)
That's all right. We'll wait for you
right here. We won't go anywhere.

His expression shows how angry and frustrated he is. He folds his arms across his chest and glowers.

ANOTHER ANGLE. CLOSE. DIANA AND MALLORY.

DIANA

(after a beat)
I hate it when you do that.

MALLORY

Do what?

DIANA

That thing you do.
(beat)
When you get the way you get.

MALLORY

And I hate it when you treat me like
a cripple. I can take care of myself.

DIANA

I know that.

MALLORY

Do you? Back there -- on the world of the BIR-men, I was handling the situation. I was trying to find out who they were so suspicious of -- and then you butted in. Asking questions. And arguing with the answers.

DIANA

Mallory! That place was a totalitarian nightmare. Secret police. Spies. Permits. Passes. You needed a passport just to go to the bathroom. They were suspicious of everybody.

MALLORY

See. You just did it again.

DIANA

No matter what we did there, we would have ended up in trouble, simply because we were outsiders.

MALLORY

You're still arguing with the answer.

DIANA

I'm lust trying to take care of you --

MALLORY

See! That's my point! I don't want anyone taking care of me anymore. I want to do it myself.

DIANA

Well, I'm sorry. Excuse me for caring!

ANOTHER ANGLE.

Remie and Maggie return, pushing a wheelchair. Diana and Mallory are pointedly not talking to each other.

MAGGIE

We found a doctor --

REMBRANDT

Dr. Krislov.

DOCTOR KRISLOV enters shot -- a double of GENERAL KRISLOV in the teaser, only this Krislov is badly scarred and needs a cane.

Mallory and Diana react, but say nothing. Krislov begins to examine Mallory.

KRISLOV

This'd better be good. I don't like being dragged from my bed for a common drunk.

EXT. NIGHT. VILLAGE.

Krislove Maggie lead. Rembrandt and Diana are following, Rembrandt pushing the wheelchair. CAMERA MOVES WITH.

MALLORY

This looks an awful lot like the BIR-world. Are we going to have to report to "The Bureau of Internal Reconstruction" here too?

REMBRANDT

No. We're moving through a cluster of similar worlds all branching off the same set of choice points. On the last one, the BIR-men were in power. Here, the BIR was overthrown. The people are still recovering from the war. Dr. Krislov barely escaped with his life --

MALLORY

So I have to depend on the guy who wanted to kill us on the last world ... to save my life in this one?

Rembrandt has no answer.

INT. DOCTOR KRISLOV'S HOME/OFFICE. NIGHT.

An odd mix of old and new. The office looks like something out of the 19th century. It's furnished with heavy old wooden furniture. Mallory, wearing only a cotton sheet up to his waist, lies on a wooden table with a single lamp shining down overhead. But Dr. Krislov is examining him with a device that is clearly hi-tech. He's a cranky old coot with serious scars of his own, a limp, and a cane he clearly depends upon. He grunts and clucks to himself, all the time ignoring the other Sliders. He waves them out of the way with annoyance as he circles the table.

KRISLOV

Mmmmmh mmmmm.... tsk

(finally)

Where did you say you came from?

DIANA

South.

MALLORY

East.

REMBRANDT

It was sort of... southeast....

KRISLOV

The reason I ask... I haven't seen a wound like this in a long while. These weapons were supposed to have been destroyed.

REMBRANDT

We were attacked by bandits on the road.

KRISLOV

Mm.

(changes the subject)

I'm afraid the news isn't good.

(to Mallory)

Your spinal cord has been scorched.

MALLORY

But it'll heal, right? How long until I walk again

Maggie and Rembrandt know better. They exchange a worried glance. Krislov looks uncomfortable.

KRISLOV

I'm sorry. I don't have the... the technology to help you. Maybe with physical therapy you might regain some movement, but --

MALLORY

You said you don't have the technology --

(beat)

If you don't, who does?

KRISLOV

(shakes head)

Young man. Don't do anything stupid.

DIANA

You don't understand, Doctor --

MALLORY

Diana!
(shut up!)

KRISLOV

(grumpy)
I understand all too well. Do you think I've never seen a wound like this before? The war left thousands maimed like this. Like me! Do you think if there were a real chance at recovery, I'd still be hobbling around on a stick?

MALLORY

But at least you can get around!
(adds)
This isn't your decision. It's mine. Who are you to play God?

Krislov whirls and points with his cane.

KRISLOV

You came to me for help. Not them. Now that you know I can't help you, you'll go out that door and up the road, straight to the believers.

(to the others)
And they'll promise your friend a blessing. They promise everyone. And he's so desperate, he'll take it.

MALLORY

Can they make me walk again?

KRISLOV

(reluctant)
Yes --

MALLORY

That's all I want to hear. Let's go.

KRISLOV

-- at a terrible cost!

MALLORY

What cost?

KRISLOV

Do you know who you are?

Michael reacts. This is the same question Maggie and Diana have been asking him.

MICHAEL

Yes --

KRISLOV

If you go up there, do you know you'll be?

MICHAEL

I'll be me.

KRISLOV

(beat)

No. You won't.

MALLORY

Well, that's all right too. Being me isn't that much fun anymore.

Mallory's remark draws sharp looks from both Maggie and Diana.

KRISLOV

(annoyed)

Do what you will then.

(to the others)

Get him out of here. I can't help a man who won't listen.

As an afterthought Krislov draws Rembrandt aside.

KRISLOV

(continuing)

Your friend is desperate.

Desperate people do stupid things.

REMBRANDT

He wants his legs back.

KRISLOV

And you're going to help him be stupid, aren't you?

(off their looks)

Well, I have no patience for stupidity. Take your friend and get out --

REMBRANDT

Uh -- thank you, Doctor.

As the others start to help Mallory off the table, Krislov limps away, shaking his head.

KRISLOV
(muttering)
Idiots....

MAGGIE
(whispering to Diana)
Thank you, Mr. Tact....

KRISLOV
I heard that --

REMBRANDT
(mouths the words)
Let's go.

EXT. MORNING. HIGH ANGLE. A ROAD LEADING TO A MEADOW.

On the road we see the Sliders. Rembrandt is pushing Mallory in a wooden wheelchair. CAMERA LOWERS as they approach. Their expressions show curiosity and wonder. CAMERA CIRCLES AROUND BEHIND THEM TO REVEAL what they are looking at --

DIANA
What is this place?

THE TENTS OF THE BELIEVERS look like a country fair, a festival, a gypsy camp, and a carnival of flower children. This is a commune without apparent leadership.

MAGGIE
It looks like the sixties --
(off Rembrandt's look)
-- My mother showed me pictures.

MALLORY
And these people are supposed to
fix my legs?

DIANA
Or your attitude.

As the Sliders approach, they are greeted by several of the believers. These include the recognizable individuals we saw in the hate-mob in the last world: the old man, the teenager, the fat woman, and the bitter young woman, Jill. Only in this world, they are angelic. They speak with genuine warmth and sincerity. But they are vaguely unkempt and their clothes are old, mismatched, and tattered. As if there is no need for them to take care of personal appearances.

DIANA
(continuing)
Hello -- ? Is this the --

TEENAGER

Welcome.

FAT WOMAN

To our Colony.

The Sliders exchange a glance. Although each speaks as a friendly individual, the effect is that they are speaking as one person.

OLD MAN

You've been injured.

The fat woman bends to look at Mallory's legs.

JILL

But your legs are fine.

The fat woman leans Mallory forward and places her hand along his spine at various points.

MALLORY

(to the fat woman)

It's my spinal cord.

TEENAGER

It's been scorched.

JILL

And you're here to ask for the blessing.

The Sliders exchange another glance.

REMBRANDT

We should think about this....

MALLORY

We -- ?!

(angry)

Are you in a wheelchair too?

(the speech)

You don't know what it's like to be frustrated all the time because everything requires ten times as much effort as it should. Just going to the bathroom --

He wheels himself forward to the believers.

MALLORY

(continuing)

Can you help me walk again?

OLD MAN

Not only will you walk again --

JILL
We'll teach you to fly.

TEENAGER
If you want.

The teenager invites them into the big tent with a gesture.

MAGGIE
They seem friendly enough

INT. THE BIG TENT.

The tent is decorated with plants, beads, macrame, "dream catchers", and other seemingly New Age stuff. But there's a high-tech flavor here too. Some glittering lights and glowing beads, nothing obtrusive, but enough to show that these folks are living this way by design. As Rembrandt enters, the "transformed people" are showing Mallory a pallet of cushions in the center of the tent. Other believers have begun entering the tent. They begin to seat themselves in a circle around the cushions.

MALLORY
This won't hurt, will it?

FAT WOMAN
(patting his shoulder)
Does it hurt the caterpillar to become a butterfly?

OLD MAN
Yes, transformation always hurts --

FAT WOMAN
-- but you'll be laughing too hard to notice.

TEENAGER
(to the Sliders)
Please -- ?

He politely guides the Sliders to one side, where they will not be in the way. The last of the believers seat themselves. With eyes closed, they begin humming a low-pitched "ooooommmmmmmmm," as if tuning themselves into alignment. The "ooooommmmmmm" continues throughout:

ON THE SLIDERS. THEIR REACTIONS.

Interested, skeptical, curious. Jill comes up to them, carrying a bowl of something. She offers the bowl. WHATEVER IS IN THE BOWL, GLOWS AND SPARKLES.

JILL
You're welcome to join us.

REMBRANDT
No thanks. Not this time.

JILL
The invitation is always open.

Meanwhile, Diana scoops some of the water into a test tube, or pours it into a canteen --

MAGGIE
Diana!

DIANA
I just want to find out what it is.
Analysis. You know.

JILL
It's all right. We don't mind.
We have no secrets here.
Transformation is free.

She smiles and takes the bowl to the circle. CAMERA MOVES WITH HER.

JILL
(continuing; to
Mallory)
I offer you water. May you never
thirst.

She the bowl out to him. He looks at it with curiosity and some concern.

JILL
(continuing)
Drink.

Mallory reaches for the bowl and -- Rembrandt stops him.

REMBRANDT
Wait

MALLORY
Why?

REMBRANDT
Mallory. Doesn't all this -- seem
a little weird to you?

MALLORY
Everything seems weird to me since I
started sliding.

REMBRANDT

Let's take the sample to Krislov
and analyze it. See if it's safe.

MALLORY

I'm not going

DIANA

Mallory -- !

MALLORY

Do these people look dangerous -- ?

REMBRANDT

Promise you won't do anything
until we get back? Maggie --
don't let him do anything stupid.

MALLORY

-- because the cripple can't take
care of himself.

(beat)

And once again, I'm waiting for other
people to make decisions about my
life --

(off Rembrandt's look)

All right, I'll wait

Rembrandt and Diana look at him skeptically. Very skeptically.

MALLORY

(continuing; angrily)

I'll wait for you!!

INT. KRISLOV'S LAB.

CLOSE ON A GLASS OF GLITTERING LIQUID. ANGLE WIDENS to reveal
Krislov, Rennie, and Diana. Krislov takes the glass and puts a
drop on a slide. He shoves it under a futuristic-looking scanner,
and turns on a TV screen. The image shows glittering biological
nano-engines. Like body cells imprinted with circuits.

KRISLOV

You didn't drink any of this, did
you? Here, see this? Billions of
biological nanotech engines. They
reproduce themselves like blood
cells. And yes, they can rebuild
his spinal cord, cell by cell.

DIANA

So ... what's so bad about that?

KRISLOV

How do you think these things get their instructions? They link up and combine processing power.

DIANA

Like a network -- ?

KRISLOV

Right. The network programs the individual machines. They communicate by tiny pulses of light. That's why they glow.

DIANA

Billions of them? That's a lot of processing power.

(gets it)

Oh.

REMBRANDT

What ?

DIANA

The network -- it's not limited to a single person, is it?. It broadcasts through the skin from one person to another. Right?

KRISLOV

Uh-huh -- and above a certain threshold it becomes self-aware.

REMBRANDT

Self-aware ... ?

KRISLOV

The glow is one big mind. It lives in all of them at once. It uses their bodies -- and eventually their brains.

DIANA

And that's why they all talk like one person --

REMBRANDT

-- finishing each other's sentences.

KRISLOV

(nodding)

They don't exist as individuals doesn't exist any more. Just cells in the larger community.

REMBRANDT

So if Malloy drinks this stuff, he'll
turn into --

DIANA

-- one of them.

REMBRANDT

Is there any way to cure this ...
infection?

KRISLOV

Not legally.

DIANA

But there is a way, isn't there?

KRISLOV

It was supposed to be a medical
breakthrough. An end to human
suffering.

(beat)

Yes, of course there's an off-
switch. There's a shutdown code
that you beam into the network
:uiitn a modulated light operating
at certain key frequencies. It's
called "dead man's light." And
you're not allowed to use it --

DIANA

Do you know anyone -- ?

KRISLOV

(touches his scars)

Look at me! If I did know
someone, I'd have healed myself
a long time ago.

REMBRANDT

The lights of the BIR-men, they
worked that way, didn't they?

KRISLOV

They were all destroyed. Forget it.

(beat)

Tell me something. Did you see a girl
named Jill? Was she all right?

REMBRANDT

She looked fine.

KRISLOV

If I knew how to make the light, I
could have my daughter back.

(adds)

Don't let your friend do this.

EXT. DAY. THE MEADOW.

As Rennie and Diana approach, Maggie comes running to them!

MAGGIE

I'm sorry! I couldn't stop him. He
started yelling at me about how he
had to do this by himself --

Rennie and Diana look up the hill:

MALLORY comes walking (a little unsteadily) down to meet them.
There are other joyful believers accompanying him.

MALLORY

(waving)

I have my legs back!

JILL

It's just like flying.

OLD MAN

It's everything they said it would
be!

REMBRANDT AND DIANA REACT IN HORROR as Mallory grabs them in a
grand affectionate hug. All the believers surround them with
affectionate hugs and pats.

DIANA

His enthusiasm has infected them
all.

MALLORY

Yes! Isn't it wonderful! I'm in
love with the whole world --

FADE OUT.

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

AS BEFORE. EXT. DAY. MEADOW.

Mallory grins and hold up his hands as if to show them, "Look, no crutches." All bitterness is gone from his demeanor. He is as angelic and beatific as any of the other believers.

REMBRANDT

How are you feeling?

JILL

The process isn't painful.

GIRL

Mostly, you have dreams.

MAN

Nice dreams.

MALLORY

I feel fine. My coordination is still a little shaky --

MAN

But in a little while, the recovery should be complete.

MALLORY

This is such a blessing. I feel --
(at a loss for words)

GIRL

-- transformed. In the most spiritual sense of the word.

Mallory takes Diana's and Maggie's hands in his.

MALLORY

(absolute sincerity)

It's unbelievable. It's like being able to see for a thousand years in all directions.

(sincere)

I've been such a jerk -- so angry at everyone and everything. And you two have been so wonderful to me. Can you forgive me?

DIANA

You don't have to apologize. That was just ... the way you get, when you get the way you get.

MALLORY

But it hurt you. I was wrong.

Rembrandt has been watching all this skeptically. Now:

REMBRANDT

Mallory, what are you feeling right now?

JILL

Transformation is a feeling of incredible joy and ecstasy.

REMBRANDT

I asked Mallory.
(turns Mallory to him)
What are you feeling, Mallory.

MALLORY

Joy. And ecstasy --

REMBRANDT

(shakes him)
Mallory!

MALLORY

(blinking)
I feel ... blurry. Like I'm bigger than before. Like I'm living in a lot of places at once ... and this body is only a ... a momentary focus.

(smiling again)
You should feel this, Remie.
It's so -- spiritual. Drink the water of life with me?

MAN

Oh, yes. Drink with us. All of you.

Mallory turns from Remie to Maggie to Diana, taking their hands in both of his, as if blessing them like an angel.

MALLORY

If you've ever trusted me about anything -- trust me on this. This is like nothing you've ever encountered.

MAN

It's a whole other way to be.

JILL

Oh, do join us. Please join us.

Three other relievers approach, carrying glowing bowls.

MALLORY

I offer you life.

Rembrandt disengages himself first. He pulls Maggie away and she pulls Diana back .

REMBRANDT

Mallory. We need to talk.

Mallory nods and starts to go with his friends.

REMBRANDT

(continuing)

No. WE need to talk.

(without you)

Mallory nods. And as he turns away, so do all of the other believers. They smile and depart.

MALLORY

I'll wait for you in the tent.

And he leaves too.

ANOTHER ANGLE. REMBRANDT, MAGGIE, DIANA.

Hooboy! What was all that about?

REMBRANDT

He's turning into one of them.

MAGGIE

He's a little creepy, isn't he?

DIANA

But a nice kind of creepy.

(explains)

I mean -- he says what he's really feeling.

MAGGIE

He did that before. Just not as ... politely.

DIANA

Mallory has always been trying to prove he's just as good as anyone else. Now he's at peace with himself. What's wrong with that?

MAGGIE

What if it's not Mallory. Maybe it's Quinn trying to come back --

DIANA

Quinn is gone! He's off somewhere else -- sliding! You need to let go.

MAGGIE

I don't let go of my friends that easily --

Before this can go any further --

REMBRANDT

Wait a minute. Both of you. Maybe it isn't either of them.

DIANA

No. That's Mallory. The real Mallory. We've just never seen him this happy. Admit it.

MAGGIE

If I didn't know better, yes, I could almost envy him. Health. Happiness.

REMBRANDT

(compassionate)

And a true spiritual connection to others.

DIANA

A real sense of community.

MAGGIE

Peace. Real peace.

DIANA

You know ... it is tempting. I mean, aren't you curious? Don't you want to know ... ?

MAGGIE

But it isn't real.

REMBRANDT

We have to get out of here.

DIANA

Huh -- ? Why?

REMBRANDT

Because -- this is a slow happy death. You want comfort? A grave is comfortable. Nobody ever climbs out of one. Life -- real life -- is about being uncomfortable.

(intense)

Life is about making a difference. If it doesn't make a difference, why bother?

(resolved)

We've got to get him and get out of here. Now.

INT. TENT.

Mallory is sitting cross-legged on the floor in apparent communion with several other believers. They are all linked through the mass-mind of the glow. FX: THEY SIT IN A POOL OF BRIGHTNESS. Mallory opens his eyes as his friends enter. He watches them impassively.

REMBRANDT

Can we talk to you alone?

THE BRIGHTNESS FADES OUT. The other believers get up and leave. It's a spooky phenomenon. Mallory remains impassive.

DIANA

What were you doing?

MALLORY

Communing with God. Rembrandt, what's a soul?

REMBRANDT

(taken aback, but--)

Our souls are the core of our being.

MALLORY

Our souls are tiny pieces of God, aren't they?

REMBRANDT

Some people believe that. Others think that the soul is a mirror in which we catch the reflection of God --

MALLORY

Either way, God's presence is manifest in each of us, right?

REMERANDT

Not everyone finds God easily.

MALLORY

Because most people don't know where to look.

REMBRANDT

Do you?

MALLORY

The connection is eternal and unbreakable.

(taps his heart)

I felt the hand of God -- here. You don't know what that feels like.

REMBRANDT

Yes. I do.

MALLORY

Not like this --

MAGGIE

You're arguing with the super-mind, Remie. You can't win!

Remie waves her off.

MALLORY

I know something you don't. The soul is the antenna by which each one of us receives the radiance of heaven.

REMBRANDT

Is that what you're feeling?

MALLORY

Wouldn't you like to realize the power and the grace of such a blessing for yourself?

REMBRANDT

I know the blessings of God. Without the glow.

MALLORY

Remie -- here, in this place, we've linked a myriad of separate souls together -- into one greater being -- so that we may serve as a much more powerful antenna, and thereby obtain a far greater and clearer communication with God than any individual among us can achieve alone.

REMBRANDT

That's what you feel -- so that's what you believe.

MALLORY

(speaking as himself)

I know it. And once experienced, the ecstasy of such profound knowledge changes one forever. And you know that. Or you don't know God.

REMBRANDT

Um....

(after a pause)

That almost makes sense.

MALLORY

(very quietly)

You have to experience it.

MAGGIE

Remie. He's trying to get you to drink --

MALLORY

Yes, of course, I am.

REMBRANDT

He is ... tempting me.

DIANA

Mallory, we have to go. It's time to slide.

MALLORY

If I slide, it'll break the linkage. I'll lose my connection with God. I don't want to do that.

(to Diana)

Stay. Join me. Let me show you the ... joy.

(MORE)

MALLORY (cont'd)

(to Maggie)

I know you seek the shadow of Quinn inside of me -- if we were linked, even if only for a moment, you'd feel how deeply Quinn's soul is impressed in mine. And you could put your heart at ease.

(to Rembrandt)

I know you want to go home. But it's not enough to take the body home. You have to send the spirit home as well.

REMBRANDT

Mallory. We can't.

DIANA

Please, come with us.

MAGGIE

Quinn -- ? If I ever meant anything to you --

Mallory hands the timer to Rembrandt.

MALLORY

You go on without me.

Rembrandt, Maggie, and Diana exchange a look.

REMBRANDT

(hands the timer back)

Set the controls for us -- ?

Mallory nods.

EXT. DAY. THE MEADOW.

A small crowd of believers -- including the ones we have seen before and are most likely to recognize -- come to watch as the Vortex opens. Mallory hands the timer to Rembrandt.

MALLORY

You'll be going to a world where you can rest and take your ease, one not too far from here in this cluster of connected worlds. You should be safe.

(adds)

But I'd rather you stay. Won't you reconsider?

Rembrandt and the other sliders look around. The believers -- as friendly-looking as they are -- seem uncomfortably close to him. Perhaps dangerously so. They seem to be echoing Mallory's emotions.

REMBRANDT
We can't stay. You know that.

MALLORY
It's your choice.

Mallory goes to each one of them, hugging them in turn.

MALLORY
(continuing)
I wish you could know what you're giving up. And I wish you could know much I love you all --

DIANA
(close to tears)
I love you, Mallory --

She kisses him, then abruptly, she turns and jumps through the Vortex.

MAGGIE
I love you, Quinn! Wherever you are!

And she kisses him even more ferociously than Diana. And then she leaps after Diana. Mallory turns to Rembrandt.

MALLORY
Remie -- ?

REMBRANDT
Mallory ... I told you this before.
But it bears repeating.
(grabbing him)
We're not going without you!

And as he says the last, he scoops up Mallory in a fireman's carry and runs with him toward the Vortex.

MALLORY
(panicky)
Put me down!!

ALL THE BELIEVERS
(AD-LIB, Not in unison!)
REMBRANDT! STOP IT! PUT ME DOWN!
PUT ME DOWN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!!

They close in on Rembrandt, chasing him. On Rembrandt's shoulder, Mallory starts to FLICKER WITH HINTS OF GOLD LIGHTNING. THE BELIEVERS COME PURSUING -- and they start showing SIMILAR FLICKERS. Rembrandt -- carrying Mallory -- LEAPS THROUGH THE VORTEX. A last flicker of GOLD LIGHTNING washes up and down Mallory's body. The believers come charging after -- THE VORTEX SHUTS DOWN -- and ALL THE GOLD FLICKERS DISAPPEAR. The believers suddenly mill about in confusion. Mallory's panic is no longer infecting them. They look at each other, smile, pat each other's shoulders, and return back toward the meadow...

FADE OUT.

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. MORNING. A VILLAGE. HIGH ANGLE.

Same village, SAME ANGLE AS BEFORE, but not the same world. The posters are gone. The graffiti is gone. There was no war here, the BIR-men never fought the believers. This town is undamaged. There are trees and flowers in evidence, as well as banners and flags for a festival.

CAMERA LOWERS to street level, only this time it turns to a nearby Inn -- A REDRESS OF DR. KRISLOV'S HOME. ESTABLISH A BLINKING RED NEON SIGN: KRISLOV'S EXCELLENT FARE.

There is a patio or terrace opening onto the Sliders' room. A low wall separates it from the plaza. Krislov, the Innkeeper, and his daughter Jill are laying out breakfast for the Sliders. This Krislov is unscarred and has full use of all his limbs. He is a very happy and jovial man. But this time, Jill has a limp and walks hunched over.

CLOSER ANGLE. MATCHING.

As Krislov puts out plates of food, including a pitcher of water, Maggie, Rembrandt, and Diana come out and take their places around the table.

MAGGIE

Everything is so pretty here. And everything smells so good.

REMBRANDT

A very restful place.

KRISLOV

Thank you. We like to keep things pleasant.

MAGGIE

Pleasant? This place is paradise.

DIANA

What about the BIR-men?

Maggie and Rembrandt give her a sharp look . Don't bring that up.

JILL

Those silly people? And their miracle cures that didn't work --

KRISLOV

Hush, Jill. That was a long time ago. And they had some good ideas, but nobody listened. So... nothing happened.

JILL

Is your friend going to be all right?

DIANA

He's had a rough time. He just needs to sleep for a bit.

KRISLOV

(finishes)

Well, there you go. If you need anything else, just jingle the bell.

(jingles a little silver bell)

Krislov and Jill exit. The three Sliders exchange a glance and start laughing together.

MAGGIE

He is nothing like his duplicates.

DIANA

I think I liked him better with the scar --

REMBRANDT

This one didn't have to live through a war. On this world, the glow was never invented. So the BIR never happened either.

MAGGIE

Poor Jill. She wasn't so lucky here.

DIANA

But her spirit is good.

REMBRANDT

Who we are is very often determined by what we get challenged by ...

(adds)

But sometimes, it's nice to not be challenged....

MAGGIE

Are you Getting philosophical again?

REMBRANDT

Mallory gave me a lot to think about.

(admits)

He was awfully convincing.

Mallory cones out then, blinking, looking bleary and disheveled -- like someone who has been asleep for several centuries and has the worst case pillow hair since Phyllis Diller. He is wearing slippers and a robe.

MALLORY

I smell coffee --

He seats himself at the table and starts pouring coffee, buttering toast, etc. He pays no attention to the curious stares of the others. Finally, because she can't stand it any more....

DIANA

How are you feeling, Mallory?

Mallory stops buttering his toast. He looks at her. He looks at Diana. He looks at Rembrandt. He resumes buttering his toast. He is clearly not feeling kindly toward the other sliders. Finally, after a moment more of silence, he looks up again. He speaks very quietly, very calmly.

MALLORY

Do you really want to know?

(off their looks)

I feel like I've been amputated.

(beat)

I suppose you want me to feel grateful.

(beat)

Well, I don't.

Rembrandt holds up a hand to keep Diana and Maggie from arguing the point.

REMBRANDT

Go ahead. Say it.

Mallory puts down the toast. Very politely, he explains to his friends:

MALLORY

You have no idea. Words can't contain it.

(MORE)

MALLORY (cont'd)

(intensely)

What's possible in the universe is so profound. So extraordinary. And most people never even get a chance to know this.

REMBRANDT

Don't think I wasn't tempted to join you. I was.

MALLORY

You should have.

(beat)

I was learning how to look out through the eyes of everyone in the group -- even the birds and the animals who were blessed. Everything. I was going to achieve congruence between the little self and the big Self.

REMBRANDT

(beat)

But it was time to go.

Mallory deliberately ignores Remie's justification.

MALLORY

Y'know, we're all just a bunch of whirling fragments pretending to be a whole person. I was getting unified. There were pieces of Quinn and Mallory and parts of me still unnamed all starting to come together -- blushing into one whole person. I was about to find out who I really am --

(to Rembrandt)

And then you grabbed me and yanked me through the Vortex. And broke the linkage.

(calm)

And I lost everything.

(direct to Rembrandt)

So how am I supposed to feel now? How do you want me to feel?

REMBRANDT

I had to do it

MALLORY

(still calm)

No, you didn't.

(beat)

And I feel betrayed.

He picks up his toast and takes a bite. His words might be angry, but his demeanor is straightforward and simple. The other three Sliders exchange a glance. Finally:

REMBRANDT

I'm not going to apologize.

(beat)

Somebody had to think about us.

You weren't.

MALLORY

Remmie, you didn't understand what you were doing. If the situation had been reversed, I probably would have done the same.

(he takes another bite)

But maybe we shouldn't slide together anymore

MAGGIE

You can't mean that!

DIANA

Mallory! No!

REMBRANDT

If that's what you want --

(beat)

I'm ready to go home. Any time.

He meets Mallory's glance head on.

REMBRANDT

(continuing)

We have to trust each other. If we can't do that ... well, then we shouldn't be together.

(beat)

Don't you agree?

Mallory doesn't answer.

REMBRANDT

(continuing)

It's your call, Mallory.

Mallory reaches for his water glass, it slips out of his fingers, and he douses his own lap.

MALLORY

Damn! I gotta dry off --

He exits quickly.

ON THE OTHER SLIDERS.

Diana and Maggie are aghast.

DIANA
What are you saying?

MAGGIE
You can't mean it, Remie!

REMBRANDT
Yes, I do mean it!

Remie gets up and follows Mallory. The women follow him.

INT. HOTEL ROOM.

As they enter, CAMERA FOLLOWS their peripatetic conversation back and forth:

REMBRANDT
Either he gets over it, or --

DIANA
Or what?

MAGGIE
We can't just quit --

In. B.G., through an open door, we see Mallory filling a fresh water pitcher. Does he add something to it...?

REMBRANDT
Why not?

REMBRANDT
(continuing)
We're falling apart here. You tell me, how do we put it back together?

MAGGIE
I don't know --

DIANA
(flustered)
You shouldn't have let him drink --

MAGGIE
Do you think you could have stopped him? He wanted his legs back.

DIANA

Well then maybe we should have left him there. I don't know.

REMBRANDT

But we didn't leave him.

MAGGIE

Because you were so sure he wasn't talking to God. What if he was?

REMBRANDT

I don't know.

(beat)

So there it is. None of us knows.

(adds)

But either we find a way to put ourselves back together or we can't go on.

(realizing how true this is)

Maybe we should just go home.

Mallory, dressed now, comes out of the bathroom with a full pitcher of water. He fills a glass and takes a drink. Casually, he notices the others and fills water glasses for them on a table in the F.G.

MALLORY

(ironic)

Here, I offer you water. May you never thirst

The other sliders remain silent. They pay no attention to the glasses of water on the table.

MALLORY

(continuing)

You're right, Rennie.

(off his look)

We have to trust each other.

(adds)

I shouldn't be angry with you. I should be grateful for your friendship. And... we have to find a way to keep on, don't we?

Rembrandt nods slowly, thoughtfully. It sounds good, but -- he looks away, troubled.

ANGLE FAVORING DIANA.

As she picks up a glass of water -- THE SUN SPARKLES THROUGH IT. Just enough to GLITTER. The glitter catches Rembrandt's eye. Before Diana can drink, he dashes the tumbler from her hands.

ANGLE -- AS THE TUMBLER BREAKS ON THE FLOOR.

FX: THE WATER SPLASHES AND SPARKLES

ON ALL FOUR SLIDERS.

Diana and Maggie stand to stare at the glittering puddle.

Rembrandt stands up, holding the pitcher to the light. IT SPARKLES!

ANGLE TIGHTENS ON REMBRANDT AND MALLORY as Rembrandt holds the sparkling pitcher up to Mallory's face. Explain this!

MALLORY

(continuing;
nonplussed)

You were right, Remie. We have
to be together.

(serious and honest)

I wanted to share he gift.

REMBRANDT

You're still infected.

MALLORY

Not infected. Blessed. It's a
gift. Don't you understand? This
is immortality! For everyone.
It's world peace! It's the answer.

In reply, Remie dashes the pitcher to the ground, shattering it
and the sparkling water in all directions.

REMBRANDT

If it's not a free choice, it's not a
blessing -- it's a curse.

MALLORY

Did you give me a choice?

REMBRANDT

That was for your own good!

MALLORY

So is this!

(beat)

Somebody has to think about us.
You're not.

REMBRANDT

Damn you, Mallory!

MALLORY

No. You're the one who's damned!

And with that, Mallory goes out the door to the patio -- Maggie starts to follow him.

DIANA

No! I'll go after him. You were
no help last time.

Diana follows Michael -- Maggie fumes.

INT. BATHROOM.

Remmis and Maggie enter, find the evidence of Michael's handiwork. A razor, still glittering with Michael's blood. Some open packs of sugar. A glass of water.

REMBRANDT

Here's how he did it.

Remie holds the razor up to the light. The edge of it GLITTERS.

MAGGIE

Blood, water, nutrients. Very
simple.

Remmy fills a glass with water. He adds sugar to it, then stirs the water with the razor.

REMBRANDT

He cuts a vein, drips some blood
into the water, adds sugar for
food. The nano-bugs start
multiplying. Meanwhile, his cut
heals like magic. Very convenient.

Remie holds the glass up to the light. THE GLITTER SPREADS
THROUGHOUT THE WATER.

MAGGIE

(as she realizes)
He doesn't need us anymore,
Remmie. If he can infect us, he
can infect anyone!

REMBRANDT

Oh god. What have we turned loose on
this world?

MAGGIE

Immortality and peace.

REMBRANDT

And God.

MAGGIE

It would be so easy to join him,
wouldn't it?

REMBRANDT

Don't go there, Maggie. It's a
mistake.

MAGGIE

(sad)

I know. We have to stop him.

REMBRANDT

Fine -- all we need is deadman's
light. The shut-off code. The BIR-men
knew. Krislov told us about it -- the
scarred one.

MAGGIE

Do you think this Krislov would know
anything?

Still carrying the glittering glass, Rennie heads for the door.

REMBRANDT

Let's find out.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY.

CAMERA FOLLOWS DIANA, who is following Mallory. She comes around a
corner -- and he is gone. She fumes, frustrated, unable to find
him. Finally she picks a direction and heads off. CAMERA DOES NOT
FOLLOW.

After a beat, Mallory steps out from behind a newsstand and heads
the other way. CAMERA MOVES WITH MALLORY. He encounters Jill. She
is coming back from the local store with a basket of shopping
goods.

JILL

Hello! I'm glad to see you're
feeling better. Where are your
friends?

MALLORY

They're back at the hotel. I'm
taking a walk by myself. I might
stay here.

JILL

(interested)

Really?

MALLORY

There's a lot of nice people.
(smiles)
And I have a gift I can share.

He takes a flask from his pocket and offers it to her.

JILL

What is it?

MALLORY

Would you believe me if I told you
it was a little miracle?

JILL

(laughs)
Miracles don't come in bottles.

MALLORY

Can you afford the arrogance of not
knowing?

JILL

If I drink this, what will happen?

MALLORY

You'll laugh.

JILL

I'm already laughing.

MALLORY

But now you'll know why it's all so
funny.

(serious)

Would you like to walk upright like
everyone else?

JILL

You can't do that. No one can.

MALLORY

I dare you to trust me.

He takes a drink and then offers the flask to her.

JILL

You're silly. It won't work --
and I'll show you --

Jill takes the flask and drinks! Jill starts to giggle as the glow
takes over her. Diana returns, sees them and --

DIANA

Mallory!!

MALLORY

So home, Diana. You and Rennie and Maggie. You're sliding out tonight. I'm staying here.

DIANA

Do you remember what it was like on the BIR-world? Do you remember the tanks and the secret police? Do you want that to happen here.

MALLORY

Go away, Diana. I don't need you to tell me how to live anymore. If you won't share this blessing, then go to hell and leave the rest of us alone.

(turns to Jill)

How are you feeling?

JILL

(stretching)

This isn't going to work you know... but I do feel... better.

Diana is horrified. She backs away from Mallory and Jill.

INT. KRISLOV'S LAB. REDRESS. KRISLOV, REMMIE, MAGGIE.

Krislov removes the dust covers from old equipment to show Rennie and Maggie.

KRISLOV

-- well, yes, for a long while, I did believe in the BIR. We worked so hard -- It would have been the greatest medical advance ever. All I wanted to do was fix my daughter's twisted spine. But we couldn't get the nanotech working. And after awhile...

(shrugs)

...people gave up. So what is it you've got?

Rennie puts the glass of GLITTERING WATER on the lab bench. Krislov blinks, holds it up to the light.

KRISLOV

(continuing)

What is this?

MAGGIE

Put it under your scope.

Krislov prepares a slide. The screen lights up with a familiar image.

KRISLOV
(amazed)
Is this for real? Does it work?

REMBRANDT
Too well.

Krislov looks at the glass, dips a finger in it -- looks at the GLITTERING DOT on his fingertip.

REMBRANDT AND MAGGIE.
Don't. Don't drink it.

KRISLOV
Why not?

REMBRANDT
Don't push the on button if you
don't know where the off-switch is.

Krislov puts the glass down.

MAGGIE
Our friend is... infected. He
knows how to infect others. We need
to know how to turn it off.

KRISLOV
You don't have the shut-off code?

REMBRANDT
Do you?

KRISLOV
We talked about it. About how to
implement it. But we never got it
working, so we never had to worry
about shutting it down --

MAGGIE
But if you had gotten it
working -- ?

Krislov is already searching for his old lab books.

KRISLOV

Well, we had the command language -- let me find my notebook -- you couldn't just use a simple binary code, because something else might accidentally trigger it, so we decided on a specific command sequence that had to be repeated three times -- with a specific modulation of light in two key frequencies -- never mind, that's all organic cyber-topology...

(finds one)

Ahh, let's see what I have here....Hmmm. I think -- let me see...yes...

(stops abruptly)

But why do you want to shut it off? It can't possibly hurt anyone...

(off their looks)

Can it?

MAGGIE

Does the phrase "deadman's light" mean anything to you?

KRISLOV

(nods)

I can build one.

(stops again)

Are you really sure? I mean, we worked so long and so hard because we 'wanted to heal people -- and now here it is -- and you're saying -- we shouldn't use it?

Diana enters, out of breath --

DIANA

I'm sorry, he got away from me.

(to Maggie)

I guess it was my turn to screw up

(to Rennie)

He shared water with Jill.

(to Krislov)

I'm sorry.

KRISLOV

Will it heal her?

REMBRANDT

Yes.

KRISLOV

Then what's the problem?

REMBRANDT

Have you ever heard of the law of unintended consequences? This thing is an infection. It's going to spread out of control.

Krislov gets it. He starts grabbing odds and ends of equipment and machinery from his workbench.

KRISLOV

It's in the modulation! We planned to use harmonic frequencies as the carrier wave, and encrypt the signal into the light -- the off switch is a specific combination of colors --

REMBRANDT

Can you duplicate it?

He gives Rennie a look. Is a bear Catholic?

KRISLOV

I'll need a --

He continues grabbing tools and supplies off shelves --

KRISLOV

(continuing)

-- and one of these --

He opens drawers and pulls things out. Batteries, chips, wires....

DIANA

-- and this and this --

He stops to think. Looks around.

KRISLOV

(points)

And that....

REMBRANDT AND MAGGIE exchange a glance.

KRISLOV

(continuing)

Give me an hour, maybe two, and I'll give you deadman's light.

This should please the other two. But Rembrandt looks even more worried than before.

DIANA

What?!

MAGGIE

Remie...?

REMBRANDT

We just reinvented the BIR-men.

And on that terrifying realization, we:

FADE OUT.

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. NIGHT. THE VILLAGE.

This time we start at street level. And this time, CAMERA IS PULLING BACK with Remie, Maggie, Diana, and Krislov. Remie is carrying/wearing a jerry-rigged spotlight, with wires and circuits and batteries taped onto it with duct-tape. It does not look hi-tech as much as it looks hasty. The spotlight has a bright red lens on it. It looks very much like the lights on the Jeeps.

REMBRANDT
This had better work.

KRISLOV
(calmly)
It will.

REMBRANDT
Because if it doesn't -- we're going to end up wearing happy smiley faces.
(beat)
Forever.

KRISLOV
Oh, stop fussing! It killed the stuff in the glass.

MAGGIE
But is this light strong enough?

KRISLOV
Doesn't matter. The shut-down signal is contagious through the entire system. Even a partial exposure will cure.

REMBRANDT
I never had to "cure" someone of God before....

EXT. NIGHT. TOWN PLAZA.

The Sliders have been searching for a while. They stop abruptly in the middle of the plaza.

MAGGIE
(frustrated)
This is crazy. We'll never find him this way.

REMBRANDT

He needs to enroll new people.
He's here.
(beat)
Somewhere.

KRISLOV

It's a small town. There aren't
many places he could have gone.

MAGGIE

We've been up and down every
street --

DIANA

You can't just expect him to walk
up and say --

JILL

(stepping into shot)
Hello. Would you like to take a
free personality test?

She is completely cured of her limp. She looks as beautiful as
we've ever seen her. The sliders exchange a glance.

KRISLOV

Jill -- ?
(amazed)
Jill!
(to the others)
It works! It works!

JILL SEEMS TO SPARKLE.... (LIGHTING, NOT FX.) The Sliders look at
each other again.

JILL

Daddy! I'm sorry I ever made fun
of your old research. Look at me!

She twirls and dances like a ballerina!

KRISLOV

It's a miracle!

DIANA

(to Rennie)
Go ahead and cure her --

REMBRANDT

(reluctant)
I don't want to take away their
happiness so soon.

Jill leads the Sliders over to a small table in an alcove by a door. Another believer is there, sitting and smiling.

MAGGIE

What are you testing for?

MAN

It's about how open you are to accepting spirituality in your daily life. Wouldn't you like to transform the quality of your being?

(almost as an
afterthought)

Would you like some water?

He picks up a pitcher and pours a SPARKLING glassful. Maggie takes the glass, not to drink, but to stare at it curiously -- and Rembrandt brings up the spotlight and AIMS THE RED LIGHT INTO IT. SFX: DISTINCTIVE ELECTRONIC WHINE.

THE SPARKLE DISAPPEARS. Maggie drinks.

MAGGIE

Thank you.

MAN

(puzzled)

What was that?

REMBRANDT

You mean this -- ?

He points the RED LIGHT at the man. SFX: ELECTRIC WHINE. The man staggers, as if dizzy. His body posture changes, as if some internal joy is being sucked out of him. It looks painful. He collapses across the table.

JILL

What did you just do?!

KRISLOV

(upset)

It works.

JILL

(angry)

What works?

MAGGIE

(to Rennie)

Now, do Jill --

KRISLOV

No -- she's so happy -- please?

Remmie is already turning to point the light at her. He FLASHES HER the same way. The physical response is alarming. Almost like a seizure. Did they kill her? Abruptly she wilts, sighs, and crumples into her father's arms.

JILL

Daddy, no --

KRISLOV

You bastard.

Other believers come out of the building. Again, these can be people we have seen before. They are seriously concerned -- and just a little twitchy.

BELIEVER ONE

What are you doing?

BELIEVER TWO

I can't feel Jill anymore!

BELIEVER THREE

She's fallen out of the glow!

BELIEVER ONE

Who are you people?

REMBRANDT TURNS THE LIGHT ON THEM --

REMBRANDT

We're our worst nightmare. We're BIR-men.

And the believers stagger. The sudden loss of their linkages to each other is a terrible shock. One of them collapses. Another one has to steady himself against a wall.

KRISLOV

I should never have built this terrible light --

Jill, recovering, thrusts herself away from her father.

JILL

You did this?! Daddy, how could you? You've taken away the blessing! I hate you --

BELIEVER ONE

(recovering)

We have to tell Mallory.

JILL

(darkly)

He knows.

Three more believers come out of the building.

BELIEVER FOUR
What's happening out here -- ?

ANGLE ON REMBRANDT.

As he toasts the glow right out of them. CAMERA PULLS BACK to show more believers approaching, surrounding our Sliders. Too many. Rennie turns around quickly, pointing the RED LIGHT this way and that. The RED WHINE grows louder. But there are too many of them, and as the CAMERA RISES TO A HIGH ANGLE, they close in on the Sliders --

FROM ABOVE we see that the RED BEAM CUTS INTO THE WARM GLOW (LIGHTING?) OF THE CROWD, but not enough.... And soon, the RED BEAM GOES OUT.

INT. A HALL, REMINISCENT OF A CHURCH.

Mallory stands in the center of a circle of people, filling a goblet from a large urn. The goblet GLOWS. ANGLE TIGHTENS AS Mallory offers the goblet to a person in the circle.

MALLORY
I offer you water.
(beat)
May you never thirst.

As the person drinks, A NOISE in the back of the hall. Mallory looks up.

REVERSE.

As the crowd of believers, some angry, some smiling, bring in their prizes -- Maggie, Diana, Rembrandt, and Krislov. Jill, walking apart from the rest, carries THE SPOTLIGHT. CAMERA FOLLOWS JILL as she brings the spotlight to Mallory. He takes the device and turns it over and over in his hands.

Mallory looks up as his three friends are brought before him. They are released and their captors back off to wait with the rest of the crowd at a polite distance. Mallory shows no hint of anger or animosity. He is absolutely sincere, so much so that perhaps it is he who is right and the other three who are wrong.

MALLORY
(continuing; holding up
the light)
This is very clever, Rennie. Very
good.
(regret)
But are you really helping anyone
this way?

He approaches the Sliders.

MALLORY

(continuing)

You saw what happened to these people when you turned this light on them. They were separated from their linkage to God. They died -- spiritually. That's why this is called dead man's light. It kills people.

(shrug)

No matter. We'll renew them. The blessing is infinite.

DIANA

And what about us?

MAGGIE

Are you going to force us to drink? The real Quinn would never do that.

MALLORY

I'm not Quinn.

(beat)

But no, I won't force you to drink. Blessings are freely given.

REMBRANDT

Like morning -- ?

MALLORY

I was wrong to trick you. I'm sorry. I wasn't ... all myself yet. I was still hurting from the amputation.

REMBRANDT

It doesn't matter. You're still taking away free will.

MALLORY

No. I'm enhancing it. When you are linked with others, your freedom is expanded. But you can't know that, can you?

(he takes out the timer)

Join me, Rennie -- or go on without me.

DIANA

There's a third option --

MALLORY

An unacceptable one.

Mallory approaches his three friends as he did earlier, as if he is going to tell them how much he loves them. But this time:

MALLORY

(continuing; to
Remie)

This is a chance to meet God face
to face.

REMBRANDT

(quiet)

No, it isn't.

MALLORY

Remie, you're arguing against
your own transformation.

REMBRANDT

No, I'm arguing for my own
transformation.

(points toward goblet)

I'm arguing against that.

(adds)

Transformation comes from the heart.
Not from a bottle.

MALLORY

I don't blame you for being
scared. I was --

REMBRANDT

No, Mallory. This isn't an
answer. This is a crutch.

Mallory looks up sharply, curiously.

REMBRANDT

(continuing)

You wanted your legs back, didn't
you? You said you'd do anything
to walk again. You said you'd
even take this risk.

MALLORY

And I was right to do so.

REMBRANDT

Yes, you were! I'd have done the same
thing.

(MORE)

REMBRANDT (cont'd)

(adds)

But you forgot the other thing you said --

(off Mallory's look)

You said you wanted to walk without help!

And amazingly -- Mallory gets it.

REMBRANDT

(continuing)

Who's really walking here, Mallory? You? Or the glow? Who's really talking?

MALLORY

You... don't understand.

REMBRANDT

The glow? No. I don't.

(beat)

But I understand you. And if you're really still in there, then you know that I'm telling the truth.

Mallory is undecided. He turns and goes back up to the dais looks at the spotlight on the table.

REMBRANDT

(continuing)

Yes. Turn off the glow, Mallory. And then see how you feel about it.

(beat)

And then... if you still feel that I'm wrong -- if you still feel that the glow is a better place to be, then you can drink the water again....

(beat)

And I'll drink with you.

MALLORY

Is that what it will take to convince you?

REMBRANDT

Yes.

Mallory nods. Accepts. He turns and picks up the spotlight. THE BELIEVERS REACT in alarm!

ALL THE BELIEVERS

(ad-lib)

Don't do it, Mallory! No, please!
Mallory don't leave us!!

MALLORY

(to his congregation)

Please be calm --

(as they quiet)

I will leave you only for a little
while. I make this sacrifice
willingly. To prove that there is
nothing to fear. Transformation is
always available to all of us.

Mallory turns on the RED LIGHT. SFX: DISTINCTIVE WHINE. He points it at himself. As with all the others, the transformation is immediate. He looks as if something joyous inside him is dying. There is a profound physical impact -- as if his energy source is fragmenting. He writhes, staggers, twists -- THE BELIEVERS SHUDDER WITH SYMPATHETIC RIPPLES OF HIS PAIN.

FX: FLICKERS OF THE OLD QUINN.

Maggie and Diana both rush to keep Mallory from falling to the ground. Around them, THE BELIEVERS react with shock and anguish. Wailing. They feel Mallory's pain and stagger in sympathetic misery. Others weep and wail and cry.

MAGGIE

It's mass-hysteria.

DIANA

What one feels, they all feel.

REMBRANDT

Mallory's loss is driving them
mad --

For a moment, the whole hall is mad with pain and anger. The believers advance on our people, with ferocious mutterings. We are one step away from a lynch mob. And then --

ON MALLORY

MALLORY shudders and shakes himself awake. He blinks in momentary confusion. He sinks to his knees and buries his face in his hands. Is he crying? And then he looks up. He is the old Mallory again. The crowd falls silent. Some weep at their loss --

REMBRANDT

(continuing)

How do you feel?

MALLORY

Empty.

The others hunker down around him. They are kneeling together now.

MALLORY

(continuing; shakes
head sadly)

You don't know what I just gave
up.

REMBRANDT

I can imagine.

MALLORY

No, you can't.

DIANA

Are you going to drink the water
again?

Mallory turns and looks back at the table -- AT THE GOBLET.

MALLORY

I don't know.

(to his friends)

While I was -- transformed -- I was
everybody. I was Mallory, and I was
Quinn, and I was everybody else.

(beat)

Now... I can't feel anybody. Not
Mallory, not Quinn, not anybody.
And... I don't know who I am
anymore.

(beat)

I had a --- a strength inside me.

REMBRANDT

And that's gone too -- ?

MALLORY

(touching himself)

No. I can still feel it. Just not as
clear.

REMBRANDT

Mallory, that's normal for
everybody.

(off his look)

Nobody ever knows who they really
are -- except by who they're
connected to. Who you care about
is who you are.

MAGGIE

Who do you care about, Mallory?

Mallory looks from one to the other. He looks past them to the whimpering crowd of believers at the back of the hall.

MALLORY

You're telling me I have to choose --

DIANA

That's life too, Mallory. Life is always about choices. Possibilities.

REMBRANDT

-- and the choices are never easy. Otherwise, we wouldn't know how powerful we are.

With the help of his friends, Mallory stands up. CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM TO THE TABLE. He picks up the pitcher and refills the goblet. Is he going to drink? He holds it out to the believers.

MALLORY

This is a choice.

He holds up the spotlight.

MALLORY

(continuing)

And so is this.

(holding up the goblet)

The water of life gives us knowledge of our blessings.

(holding up the light)

The light gives us responsibility.

(beat)

Once you've been given the knowledge of the blessing -- and the blessing of the knowledge, it can't be taken away from you.

(adds)

The real question is this. What do you do with it?

Taking the light and the goblet, he steps down off the dais and approaches the crowd of believers. He hands the goblet to one and the light to another.

MALLORY

(continuing; directly
to the believers)

How are you going to use it?

(beat)

I'm not going to tell you which
choice to make. That's what other
people do when they don't trust
your ability to be responsible for
yourselves.

ALL THE BELIEVERS

(ad-lib)

Don't leave us, Mallory! We need you.
Give us back the blessing!

MALLORY

I'm not your saviour. I'm just an
ordinary guy -- who just learned
that blessings aren't found in
what you're given, they're found
in what you create for the people
around you.

(points to the goblet
and the light)

What's important is making a
difference. The real
transformation ... comes from
choosing it.

He exits the hall, followed by the other sliders. The believers --
some blessed, some not -- look at each other in confusion.

KRISLOV

What do we do now?

JILL

(looking between
Mallory and the
goblet)

We choose.

(beat)

As individuals.

EXT. TOWN PLAZA.

Our Sliders come out of the hall. They stop for a quick exchange
of hugs.

MALLORY

(to Maggie)

Quinn is gone --

MAGGIE

I know.

(adds)

I'm learning to like Mallory.

MALLORY

I'm sorry for what I said to you before.

DIANA

I didn't want to lose you --

MALLORY

(to Rembrandt)

Thank you.

REMBRANDT

Welcome back.

(grins)

So who are you now?

MALLORY

I'm still finding out. But isn't that true for all of us?

He points the slide control O.S. WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THE VORTEX FORMING. THE WIND WHIRLS PAPER AND LEAVES AROUND THEM AND --

FADE OUT.