

The Morning Briefing
by
Kevin Pinkerton

INT. PENTAGON BASEMENT CORRIDOR - DAY

A damp narrow corridor, lit overhead by a row of dim bulbs.

THE PRESIDENT walks beside a SPECIAL FORCES SERGEANT strapped with an assault rifle, the men appearing and disappearing in pools of light.

The sergeant stares ahead, expressionless, while the President pulls a red, white and blue handkerchief out of his pocket and wipes his forehead, eyes on the floor ahead.

They come to an UNMARKED DOOR.

The President carefully folds the handkerchief into a neat triangle, and places it in his pocket.

THE PRESIDENT
Let's get this over with.

The soldier thumbs the safety off the rifle, steps between the President and the door, and slides the bolt back.

INT. CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

As the heavy CLACK and CREAK of the door opening echoes across the large dark chamber, the two men step inside.

In the center of the room is a low circular DAIS in a spotlight, and on it stands THE CREATURE.

Hunched but still nine feet tall, the Creature looks as if it is made of rotted raw meat, in an over-muscled humanoid form.

It stirs at the sound, recoiling, but its wrists are SHACKLED to the dais by massive ANCHOR CHAINS.

Oddest of all, the Creature has no real head/neck, its shoulders terminating instead in a thick, tapering protuberance with a razor-toothed maw, slit nostrils, but NO EYES.

It SNIFFS the air in the President's direction -- then turns and sniffs in the direction of the small bank of BLEACHERS to one side of the chamber.

On the bleachers, reflected in the murky light bounced from the dais, are a DOZEN CHILDREN, ages five to seven, wide-eyed and weeping in horror at the *thing* before them, as they sit gagged and chained to their seats.

The President SNAPS his fingers at the Creature.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It SNORTS and turns back to face him.

The sergeant tenses, ready, but the President motions for him to step back, all the while never turning his eyes from the Creature's twitching mouth.

THE PRESIDENT

Begin.

The Creature raises its "head", acknowledging the word and processing it in its alien brain.

When it lowers its head, ridges begin to PULSE along its forelobes, VEINS stand out in relief along them, and ELECTRICITY begins to CRACKLE in the air before it.

The President shields his eyes from the glare, and the chains on the children begin to RATTLE.

The Creature strains upwards against its shackles, and then --

The electricity vanishes in a puff of BLACK SMOKE, and the Creature sags back on its heels.

In a VOICE like an idling chainsaw, the Creature speaks.

THE CREATURE

Deploy the ships to the Bosphorus.
Acquiescence is certain.

THE PRESIDENT

Press reaction?

THE CREATURE

Acceptable. On the crux of the
Senate standoff, the weak vote is --

The Creature "looks" to one side with its eyeless gaze.

THE CREATURE (CONT'D)

Ohio. Tomorrow's NASDAQ, up 29.
Thunderstorms in the D.C. Metro
area. Hail.

THE PRESIDENT

But I've scheduled the speech --

THE CREATURE

I have seen the storm. It is
already cut on the lathe of time.
What more? Enough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THE PRESIDENT
Are you telling me --

THE CREATURE
Tired.

THE PRESIDENT
I just want to be clear, the
carriers, the Russians won't be --

THE CREATURE
HUNGRY.

The Creature balls its hands into mighty fists, as silence blankets the chamber, save for the children WHIMPERING.

They plead to the President with their eyes.

The President frowns, then shrugs.

THE PRESIDENT
Sergeant.

The two men exit the chamber, deaf to the children's rising, muffled SHRIEKS. The room is cast into darkness.

INT. PENTAGON BASEMENT CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Once outside, the soldier slides back the bolt. He opens a panel beside the door, and the President inserts a key.

He turns it, and a METAL SCRAPING noise inside the chamber is followed by the sound of CHAINS HITTING THE FLOOR.

The President pockets his keys, and pulls back out his handkerchief.

The two men walk back down the hall, as the muted sounds of THUDS, SCREAMS and CRACKING BONE fade behind them, in the distance.