Act 0: Chapter 7 - Darkness Unleashed

Date & Location(s):

Late May/Early June 2578 – Aboard the transport ship Hunter-Gratzner (en route to New Mecca) and the desert planet M6-117 (an isolated world with three suns).

Contextual Placement (Tethering):

In this prologue chapter, notorious convict Richard B. Riddick is being transported in cryosleep by mercenary William J. Johns to a prison facility, sharing passage with settlers and pilgrims bound for New Mecca. The events occur roughly five years before the Necromonger invasion of Helion Prime (long before Riddick’s rise in that conflict), marking Riddick’s first recorded survival ordeal. It sets the stage for his legend: a brutal incident on a remote world that forces him to cooperate with ordinary people against a deadly external threat.

Summary (Strict 1-2 lines of all three parts):

A rogue comet’s tail damages the Hunter-Gratzner, causing a crash on a sun-scorched planet where Riddick and a handful of survivors are stranded. They discover the planet’s perpetual daylight hides a subterranean swarm of light-sensitive predators; when a rare total eclipse blankets the world in darkness, the creatures emerge to hunt. Riddick’s enhanced night vision and ruthless cunning become the group’s best hope for survival as they trek across the darkened wasteland to an old dropship, fighting off the “bioraptor” aliens. In the end, Riddick overcomes his own selfish instincts to help Jack (a stowaway teen) and Imam (a holy man) escape the planet, though Carolyn Fry – the pilot who initially feared Riddick – sacrifices herself during the desperate evacuation.

Key Relationships & Shifts (6 max, changes per chapter):

Riddick & Carolyn Fry: Begins with mutual distrust – Fry sees Riddick as a dangerous prisoner, and Riddick regards her as a panicky pilot who nearly jettisoned the passenger cabin to save herself during the crash. Over the course of the ordeal, Fry moves from self-preservation to taking responsibility for the survivors, even trusting Riddick’s guidance in the dark. Riddick, in turn, grows to respect Fry’s resolve, noting her “strong survival instinct” and ultimately witnessing her sacrifice herself for the group (a stark reversal of her earlier attitude). Their relationship shifts from fear to mutual respect and sacrifice, highlighted by Fry’s dying act to save Riddick – a redemption for her past cowardice.

Riddick & Johns: Initially a captor-captive dynamic. Johns is presented as a lawman escorting Riddick, but Riddick soon exposes Johns as merely a mercenary chasing bounty (“Your Johns ain't a cop... he's just a merc... The creed is greed”). Tension escalates as Johns begrudgingly relies on Riddick’s skills while simultaneously fearing he’ll turn on them. When the creatures attack, Johns’s true nature shows – he proposes using one of the survivors as bait, betraying the group’s trust. Riddick refuses to go along, and their conflict turns lethal. The power balance flips when Riddick fights Johns, leading to Johns’s death at a creature’s claws. This relationship shifts from an official guard vs. prisoner arrangement to open enmity and moral opposition, ending with Riddick effectively usurping Johns’s role as the group’s protector once Johns’s treachery is revealed.

Riddick & Jack: Jack is a young stowaway who is fascinated by Riddick from the start – she even mimics his goggles and initially pretends to be a boy. Riddick keeps an emotional distance but shows a subtle protective streak toward Jack (e.g. warning her not to cry over the deceased Johns, and quietly looking out for her when creatures are near). When Jack’s blood inadvertently attracts the creatures (a consequence of her hidden gender, which Riddick and Johns both realize), Riddick becomes fiercely protective. Their bond strengthens through the crisis: Jack’s hero-worship of Riddick matures into genuine trust, and Riddick, moved by Jack’s bravery and innocence, ensures she survives. By the end, Riddick has taken on a reluctant guardian role for Jack – he saves her life and even instructs her to tell authorities “Riddick’s dead” to keep her (and himself) out of trouble. This surrogate big brother/little sister relationship is one of the few soft spots Riddick develops, marking a shift from aloof detachment to protective care.

Fry & Johns: They start as uneasy co-leaders among the survivors – Fry is the ranking crew member, and Johns wields authority as an apparent law officer. In the beginning, Fry confides in Johns about her guilt (having nearly sacrificed the passengers during the crash), and Johns pragmatically excuses it, which forges a brief alliance between them. However, as Riddick unveils Johns’s mercenary identity and Johns’s addiction to a stimulant (he secretly injects morphine), Fry’s trust in him erodes. The rift deepens when Johns suggests using Jack as bait for the creatures – Fry is horrified by his willingness to abandon morality. She openly defies Johns and instead allies with Riddick to protect the others. Ultimately, Johns’s betrayal and death leave Fry as the clear moral leader until her own demise. Thus, Fry’s view of Johns shifts from a fellow survivor she might rely on to a threat from within the group, forcing her to oppose him.

Imam & Riddick: The devout Muslim preacher Abu al-Walid (Imam) treats Riddick with cautious courtesy but is troubled by Riddick’s lack of faith. Their interactions highlight an ideological clash: Imam often invokes God’s protection, while Riddick scoffs at divine aid. In a tense exchange, Imam tells Riddick, “Just because you do not believe in God... does not mean God does not believe in you,” to which Riddick replies, "I absolutely believe in God, and I absolutely hate the fucker". Despite this philosophical conflict, Imam maintains a respectful tone and even entrusts his young pilgrims’ safety in part to Riddick’s abilities. Over time, Riddick earns Imam’s gratitude by saving the last of Imam’s followers (and Imam himself). By the chapter’s end, the two men share a quiet respect – Imam prays for Riddick despite his sins, and Riddick, though cynical, goes back into danger to rescue Imam. This marks a shift from spiritual opposition to a kind of mutual understanding, laying groundwork for the loyalty Imam shows Riddick in later tales.

Group’s Perception of Riddick: At first, all the survivors view Riddick as a potential menace – a murderer in chains who might kill them next. He feeds that fear by slipping loose and lurking around them. However, as the real threat (the creatures) becomes evident, the group’s fear of Riddick slowly turns into reliance. One by one, they begrudgingly trust his survival instincts – from following his suggestions about exploring the cave to letting him lead through the eclipse darkness since he can see when they cannot. Key turning points include Riddick saving Paris from a creature (early on) and later guiding the group with his night-vision. By the time darkness falls, even Fry accepts that they need Riddick’s help. In the final moments, Jack and Imam implicitly trust Riddick with their lives. This relationship shift is essentially the outcast becoming the hero – Riddick goes from a feared outsider to the savior of the remaining survivors. The lingering irony is that Riddick still considers himself an outlaw; he has helped them out of necessity and curiosity, yet chooses to keep his identity “dead” to the outside world.

Emotional Themes (6 max):

Survival vs. Sacrifice: The chapter repeatedly tests whether characters will prioritize personal survival over others. Fry’s arc embodies this theme – she starts unwilling to die for anyone else, but ultimately sacrifices herself for Jack and Imam. Similarly, Johns’s selfish “survival at any cost” mentality is pitted against acts of selfless bravery by others.

Trust and Betrayal: Trust is a precious commodity among the crash survivors. The story explores fragile alliances – e.g. Fry tentatively trusting Johns (only to be betrayed by his mercenary agenda), and eventually trusting Riddick, whom she feared initially. Johns betrays the group’s trust with his lethal ulterior motives, whereas Riddick, the presumed traitor, proves more trustworthy when lives are on the line. The shifting trust dynamics drive the group’s cohesion and conflicts.

Fear of the Dark (Unknown): A primal fear underpins the chapter – fear of darkness and the unseen terrors it conceals. The survivors experience mounting dread as the eclipse approaches, knowing nightfall unleashes the creatures. Characters confront not only literal darkness but also fear of Riddick (“the devil you know”) versus fear of the alien horrors they don’t know. Overcoming this fear – by shining light or by trusting Riddick’s ability to see in the dark – is crucial for survival.

Redemption: Several characters seek or attain redemption through the events. Fry seeks to atone for nearly abandoning the passengers by courageously leading the group and ultimately giving her life to save them – a profound personal redemption. Riddick, while not overtly seeking absolution, earns a measure of redemption in the eyes of Jack and Imam by helping rather than exploiting the group. Even an anti-hero can perform a redeeming act, complicating the moral landscape.

Faith vs. Cynicism: Imam’s unwavering faith in a higher plan clashes with Riddick’s hardened nihilism. Their exchanges highlight themes of belief (Imam believes events and survival have divine purpose) versus disbelief (Riddick attributes everything to raw chance and willpower). This theme resonates emotionally: Imam finds strength in prayer and hope, while Riddick’s scorn for “God” stems from a life of suffering. By chapter’s end, neither fully converts the other, but each gains insight – faith comforts some, while others, like Riddick, put faith only in themselves.

Light and Darkness (Hope and Despair): The ever-present sunlight initially symbolizes safety and hope, while the encroaching darkness brings chaos and despair. Emotionally, the chapter uses light as a metaphor for hope/glimmer of escape (the “daylight” of their situation when they still have time to prepare) and darkness as metaphor for desperation and hidden truths (e.g. Johns’s true nature comes to light only in the dark). The eclipse triggering total darkness tests the characters’ hope – as literal darkness falls, some succumb to panic (Paris), others find inner light (Fry’s resolve, Riddick’s guiding vision). The interplay of light and dark underscores every emotional high and low of the story.

Critical Events:

Catastrophic Crash: The Hunter-Gratzner spacecraft is struck by micrometeoroids while passing through a comet’s tail, fatally wounding the ship. Carolyn Fry, the docking pilot, nearly ejects the passenger section to save the cockpit during the uncontrolled descent (showing her desperation), but the ship crash-lands on the barren surface of planet M6-117. The Captain and navigator die in the incident, leaving a small group of survivors amid the wreckage. Riddick takes advantage of the chaos to slip his restraints and disappear, alarming the others.

Survivors’ Roll Call: In the aftermath, the survivors assess their situation in the glaring triple suns. Key survivors include Fry, Johns, Riddick (now at large), Imam and his three young students, Jack (a tomboyish stowaway), Shazza and Zeke (settler couple), and Paris P. Ogilvie (an antiques dealer with a stash of luxuries). They salvage water and supplies from the wreck and begin to explore the desert terrain, wary of Riddick possibly stalking them.

Zeke’s Death in the Cave: While burying the crash victims, Zeke investigates a strange cave or pit and is suddenly dragged underground and killed by unseen creatures. His gruesome death (with only blood and echoes emerging from the hole) is the first indication of a lurking danger. The group initially suspects Riddick of murdering Zeke, heightening tensions. Johns recaptures Riddick at knife-point shortly after. Riddick doesn’t deny Zeke was killed “out there,” sowing more unease.

Riddick’s Eyeshine & Creature Revelation: Fry confronts Riddick, and he cryptically hints at what might be in the darkness, revealing he has surgically enhanced night vision (“eye-shine” from a prison doctor). Doubting him, Fry herself descends into the bone-littered cave with glowsticks and discovers hostile alien creatures lurking in the shadows – eyeless, winged predators that shun light. She barely escapes as one snaps at her, proving Riddick was right about the threat. From this point, the survivors know they are not alone and that light is their only protection.

Abandoned Outpost & Eclipse Prediction: Trekking further, the group finds an abandoned geologist settlement that holds both a possible escape means – a grounded skiff (small dropship) – and ominous clues. They see old human remains and specimens, realizing the earlier inhabitants met a terrible end. Imam’s student Ali inadvertently awakens a nest of infant creatures inside a coring room and is killed in a flurry of teeth and claws. In the lab, Fry studies a model or orrery of the planetary system and makes a critical discovery: the planet’s three suns are about to align with neighboring giants, causing a total eclipse that occurs only once every 22 years. This means an extended night is imminent – and it dawns on the survivors that the creatures underground must have wiped out the colonists during the last eclipse. Now they are next.

Rushed Evacuation Plan: With time running out before nightfall, the survivors hastily devise a plan: they must retrieve power cells from the crashed ship to start the dropship at the outpost, their only way off-world. They assemble makeshift torches and lamps, knowing any darkness will invite attacks. The group (now consisting of Fry, Johns, Riddick, Imam and his remaining two boys, Jack, Shazza, and Paris) treks back toward the crash site towing a sled for the power cells. Tension and old conflicts simmer – Johns secretly indulges in drugs to steel his nerves; Riddick quietly observes everyone’s weaknesses.

Eclipse & Creature Swarm: The celestial event arrives sooner than expected: a colossal double eclipse gradually blots out the suns. Day turns to eerie dusk, then pitch black night. As the last sliver of light vanishes, the bioraptor creatures erupt from their lairs in countless numbers, filling the sky and canyons with shrieks. The survivors ignite their lighting gear, but the darkness is now total. In the initial chaos, Shazza panics at the sight of a swarm and breaks from the group; she is brutally run down and torn apart by a flock of the flying predators in moments. One of Imam’s boys, Hassan, is also snatched into the sky by creatures. The survivors realize the creatures hunt in packs and are repelled by even small light sources – but their supplies (hand lights, torches) must last for what could be a long night.

Journey Through the Dark: Riddick now takes point, since his eyeshine allows him to see in darkness where others are blind. He leads the diminished group (Fry, Johns, Imam, Jack, plus Imam’s last boy Suleiman and Paris) back toward the colony ship with the power cells. They move in a tight formation of light. During the trek, Paris loses his nerve – the cowardly dealer slips away from the light to retrieve dropped liquor bottles, and a lurking bioraptor seizes the opportunity to eviscerate him in the dark. Paris’s dying screams and the sudden extinguishing of his lamp send waves of panic through the others. Despite losses, the rest press on, dragging the heavy cells while creatures dog their steps.

Johns’s Betrayal & Death: As their light sources dim and the creatures’ attacks intensify, Johns proposes a grim solution: sacrifice Jack as bait, theorizing the creatures’ attraction to her blood (she’s begun menstruating) could draw them off so the rest might survive. Riddick immediately confronts Johns over this monstrous plan. The two men circle each other in the dark with weapons, culminating in a brutal fight. Riddick, faster and stronger, gains the upper hand, but before he can decide Johns’s fate, a bioraptor ambushes Johns. Johns is dragged away and killed horribly – fittingly hoisted by the very monsters he wanted to appease with someone else’s life. Riddick watches coldly rather than intervening. With Johns gone, any semblance of civil authority vanishes, and Riddick fully assumes leadership for survival.

“Would You Die for Them?” – The Ultimate Choice: Now only Riddick, Fry, Imam, and the last boy Suleiman and Jack remain. Riddick guides them into a small cave to shelter from the swarms. There, under relative safety, Riddick quietly decides to abandon the others and make a solo run to the dropship with the power cells – ensuring at least he escapes. He slips away, expecting Fry to do the same. However, Fry surprises him by following. She catches Riddick at the dropship just as he powers it up, confronting him in the darkness and refusing to leave Imam and Jack behind. Riddick is impressed by her courage (“A strong survival instinct... I admire that in a woman” he remarks). He challenges her resolve bluntly: “Would you die for them?” After a moment, Fry answers yes – she would. Her honest devotion causes Riddick to pause and reconsider. In this pivotal moment, Fry’s selflessness rekindles Riddick’s buried conscience. He agrees to return with her for the others, implicitly accepting that he will risk his life alongside her.

Final Gauntlet and Fry’s Sacrifice: Riddick and Fry head back and retrieve Imam and Jack (Suleiman, unfortunately, is snatched by creatures just before rescue). Now the three survivors dash through the darkness toward the waiting dropship, with Riddick defending them. In the final stretch, Riddick is tackled by a large bioraptor and injured, and it seems he might be overwhelmed. Fry, who once vowed not to risk herself for others, turns back for Riddick. She drags the wounded Riddick toward the ship, even as creatures close in. In doing so, Fry fulfills her promise to “die for them” – she puts herself between Riddick and an attacking creature. Fry is impaled and carried off by the monster in front of Riddick’s eyes. Her last words to Riddick are, “I said I would die for them, not you,” emphasizing she did not intend to die saving him – yet, in effect, she did exactly that. Riddick’s stoic façade cracks as he screams in fury and sorrow, “Not for me!,” at the darkness. Fry’s sacrifice is the emotional climax of the chapter, completing her redemption and profoundly affecting Riddick.

Escape from M6-117: Grieving but spurred to finish the mission, Riddick gets Jack and Imam into the dropship and launches. As they lift off, he uses the skiff’s thrusters to scorch as many creatures as possible – a vengeful parting blow (“We can’t leave… without saying goodnight,” he growls, igniting the engines on the swarming aliens). The craft breaks through the darkness into the upper atmosphere. Exhausted and bloodied, the survivors have one final exchange: Jack, aware that Riddick will still be a wanted man, asks what they should tell people about him. Riddick, shaken by Fry’s death and perhaps unwilling to return to society, raspingly replies, “Tell ’em Riddick’s dead. He died somewhere on that planet”. As the dropship flies off, Riddick assumes the persona of a dead man, giving Jack and Imam a story that protects them from reprisal and allowing Riddick to disappear into the shadows once more. The chapter concludes with the three suns of M6-117 beginning to emerge again, shining light over a planet now truly empty of human life.

Pivotal Quotes (Max 10):

Carolyn Fry, “I’m not gonna die for them!” – Uttered during the crash as she nearly dumps the passenger section, this line lays bare Fry’s initial mindset of self-preservation over duty. It starkly contrasts with her later heroic sacrifice, framing her character arc.

Richard B. Riddick, “Your Johns ain’t a cop… he’s just a merc. … The creed is greed.” – Riddick reveals to Fry that Johns is not a genuine law officer but a bounty hunter motivated purely by money. This pivotal expose shatters the survivors’ trust in Johns and flips the group’s loyalties, illustrating Riddick’s perceptiveness and honesty about harsh truths.

Abu “Imam” al-Walid, “Just because you do not believe in God, Mr. Riddick, does not mean God does not believe in you–” – Imam’s gentle rebuke to Riddick during a philosophical exchange, highlighting the theme of faith vs. cynicism. It’s pivotal as a voice of hope and morality, appealing to the good he senses in Riddick (and foreshadowing that higher forces may have a purpose for Riddick).

Richard B. Riddick, “You got it all wrong, holy man. I absolutely believe in God, and I absolutely hate the fucker.” – Riddick’s grim response to Imam, revealing the depth of his bitterness. This quote is pivotal for understanding Riddick’s psyche: he acknowledges the existence of higher power but blames it for the cruelty in his life, setting him apart as a damned anti-hero in his own eyes.

William J. Johns, “Doctors decide who lives and dies on the battlefield. It’s called Triage. ” – Johns coldly rationalizes sacrificing a survivor (Jack) as a necessary wartime-like decision. His willingness to pick who dies exposes the extent of his selfishness and moral decay, marking the point where he crosses fully into villainy in the eyes of the group.

Richard B. Riddick, “Kept calling it murder when I did it.” – Riddick’s ice-cold retort to Johns’s triage justification. This quote is pivotal as a sharp condemnation of Johns’s hypocrisy – Johns once condemned Riddick as a murderer, yet now Johns proposes a similarly heinous act. It underscores the blurred line between “hero” and “monster” and signals Riddick’s moral superiority over Johns in this moment.

Richard B. Riddick, “Strong survival instinct… I admire that in a woman.” – Said to Fry after she tracks him down rather than fleeing, this line acknowledges Fry’s courage. It’s a turning point in their relationship, as Riddick moves from mocking her to respecting her resolve. The grudging praise also humanizes Riddick, showing he can admire selflessness and loyalty – traits he’s not used to seeing.

Richard B. Riddick, “Would you die for them?” – A direct challenge Riddick poses to Fry in the climactic confrontation at the dropship. The question forces Fry (and implicitly Riddick himself) to confront the price of altruism. It’s a pivotal line that serves as the ultimate test of Fry’s character, to which she responds with total commitment.

Carolyn Fry, “Yes… I would die for them.” – Fry’s resolute answer to Riddick’s question, delivered without hesitation. This is the defining moment of Fry’s redemption, showing that she has overcome her fear and selfishness. Her willing self-sacrifice here not only convinces Riddick to help but also stands as the moral high point of the story – a simple statement that changes the course of events (and indeed, she fulfills it moments later).

Richard B. Riddick, “Tell ’em Riddick’s dead. He died somewhere on that planet.” – Riddick’s final instruction to Jack and Imam as they escape. This quote is pivotal as it encapsulates Riddick’s acceptance of his outlaw nature and the closing of this chapter of his life. Rather than seek credit or companionship, he chooses to stay a ghost. It underlines the mythic tone of the ending – Riddick “dies” in the official record, even as he is reborn to the survivors as a savior figure. The line also foreshadows Riddick’s continued life in the shadows, setting up his anonymity in future chronicles.

Symbolic or Foreshadowing Elements (Optional):

Triple Suns & the Eclipse Model: The perpetual daylight of M6-117’s three suns symbolizes a fragile sanctuary – as long as light prevails, humanity is safe. The planetarium orrery found in the abandoned outpost (showing an upcoming alignment of planets) serves as foreshadowing for the coming eclipse. It visually warns that an era of darkness is imminent. The sudden total eclipse itself is symbolic of dread and doom (“light being extinguished”), abruptly turning the bright, open desert into a claustrophobic nightmare and heralding the rise of the creatures that represent the planet’s dark past.

Fry’s Broken Lever: Fry’s attempt to dump the passenger section during the crash – aborted when the lever jammed or her co-pilot intervened – is a symbolic moral crossroads. This near-act of treachery haunts her through the story. It foreshadows the later moment when she faces a similar choice in reverse: whether to go back into danger for her survivors. The broken lever incident is visually and narratively echoed when Riddick asks if she’d die for them – Fry gets a second chance to make the selfless choice, redeeming the earlier failure.

Riddick’s Goggles & “Eyeshine”: Riddick’s reflective goggles and his shiny surgical eyes symbolize the idea of seeing truth in darkness. He often removes the goggles at critical moments (during the eclipse, when he takes leadership), signifying him stepping out of the metaphorical shadows to guide others. The eyeshine itself is a literal adaptation to darkness, but symbolically it suggests Riddick’s ability to perceive what others cannot – whether it’s creatures hiding in the dark or the hidden motives of a man like Johns. It foreshadows Riddick’s role as a survivor in the most hopeless situations (he thrives in the dark that blinds others).

Abandoned Settlement & Skeletons: The desolate research camp, littered with bleached bones of indigenous creatures and the belongings of vanished colonists, serves as ominous foreshadowing. It’s a grim mirror for the current survivors: if they fail to find light in the coming darkness, they will share the fate of those who disappeared 22 years ago. Every skeleton and empty harness implies a story of someone who died when the lights last went out – a fate that nearly befalls our heroes. This environmental storytelling heightens the tension even before the eclipse strikes, symbolizing the thin line between life and death on this planet.

Jack’s Imitation of Riddick: Jack wearing goggles and emulating Riddick’s tough demeanor is a small character detail that foreshadows her own transformation. It symbolizes the allure of Riddick’s survival prowess to someone who feels vulnerable. In-universe, it subtly hints at Jack’s true identity (her goggles hide not just her eyes but her feminine aspect) and growth – by surviving the events under Riddick’s wing, she is “reborn” with a harder outlook. (This foreshadows her later persona “Kyra” in the sequel, having adopted Riddick’s brutal approach to life.) For this chapter, it also serves as a humanizing influence on Riddick; Jack’s adoration and need for protection draw out his latent sense of responsibility, hinting that he is more than just a monster – a fact that becomes crucial to the group’s survival.