Immortal

Ву

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FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN

Out of the inky gloom, windows emerge, framing the cool blue moonlight and we're inside --

INT. THURSTON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nothing else visible, just the windows, like two bright eyes on a black mask, and then --

BACK to BLACK:

SCREAMS, both male and female. ANIMALISTIC SNARLS. And then, SILENCE, AMPLIFIED SOUND of a HEARTBEAT -- slow and steady and then, increasing in intensity, synchronized in time with the steady THROBBING --

FLASHES:

- -- Bodies fall.
- -- Blood runs down the walls.
- -- Blood drips off furniture.
- -- Blood pools around bodies.
- -- An 8 year-old-boy, YOUNG IAN, peeks out from behind a lime green sofa.

Heavy breathing. Hyperventilating. Then --

Silence.

Young Ian stays perfectly still as --

A pair of RED STILETTO HEELS appear before him.

His eyes widen.

Someone, or something, grabs him from behind and drags him away.

He SCREAMS.

INT. GRAND LENNOX HOTEL - LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

IAN THURSTON (20s) leaps up from his nightmare. His unkempt hair and weeks worth of facial stubble show his lack of interest in his appearance.

His haunted eyes gaze wildly around the room.

A row of outdated, industrial-sized washing machines line one wall of the large room with dryers opposite them. The NOISE from all the machines operating at once is almost deafening.

Taking a deep breath, he loads some towels into a washing machine.

INT. GRAND LENNOX HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

Despite the name, the hotel is anything but grand.

The old, faded red and gold carpets appear to be original to the building. The once ornate floral wallpaper is torn and peeling in numerous locations. Crown molding is cracked and even missing in spots. Outdated chandeliers provide the only lighting, which is far from adequate.

Ian makes his way through the lobby which is bustling with activity.

The HOTEL GUESTS are mostly young men and women in their 20s and 30s, couples, no children. Everyone seems happy and in love, as if they are all on their honeymoon, except --

A pretty blonde, ASHLYN (20s), argues with a tall, broad-chested male with dark hair and features, TREY.

As their debate heats up, Trey takes Ashlyn by her arm and pulls her to him, speaking privately.

While the other hotel guests seem oblivious to the conflict, Ian can't take his eyes off them. Finally decides to step in.

ASHLYN

I said no.

She rips her arm away from Trey.

IAN

Is there a problem?

Trey looks him up and down before responding.

TREY

What are you, hotel security?

IAN

I work in the laundry room, actually.

Trey scoffs loudly, annoyed but amused at the same time.

IAN

But I'm thinking of applying for hotel security.

TREY

Well, if we need more towels, I'll let you know.

TAN

Here's what I propose. Why don't you go up to your room and if the lady feels like joining you, she will.

Trey laughs again. He looks like he might pounce on Ian at any second. Then he walks off.

Ashlyn should look relieved, but she doesn't.

ASHLYN

You shouldn't have done that. That guy could've --

Ian heads toward the exit. She hurries to catch up.

IAN

Killed me? I doubt it.

He exits through the wrought iron front doors.

EXT. GRAND LENNOX HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Ian starts down the street.

Ashlyn jogs out of the hotel a second later, still hot on his heels.

ASHLYN

Well... thank you.

Ian keeps going without so much as a backwards glance.

Ashlyn finally gives up the chase, watches him disappear into the night.

The CLICK-CLACK of heels echo on the sidewalk behind Ashlyn. A distant sound.

Red stiletto heels exit the hotel and advance toward her.

Ashlyn turns to find a woman right behind her --

CECILIA, early 30s, long, jet black hair, equally dark, piercing eyes and pale skin. Her red lips curl into a menacing smirk.

CECILIA

You failed.

Ashlyn looks undaunted by the sheer power the other woman exudes.

ASHLYN

Hardly.

INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

A handful of BUS PATRONS are sprinkled throughout the nearly empty bus, either asleep or worn out from a long days work.

Ian sits at the back, stares out the window.

WOMAN ON BUS (O.S.)

Revenge is a waste of time.

Voice belongs to an elderly woman seated across the aisle.

IAN

What?

WOMAN ON BUS

You got the time?

He eyeballs her a moment, then glances at his watch.

IAN

Nine thirty.

She nods her thanks, leans back against the headrest, closes her eyes.

Ian catches a glimpse of red stilettos under one of the bench seats in front of him. They stand out like a sore thumb among the boring, black, sensible shoes.

FLASHBACK TO:

THURSTON FAMILY LIVING ROOM

Red stiletto heels.

BACK TO SCENE

Ian leaps out of his seat, rushes to the spot where he saw the shoes. A woman sits there wearing a black leather coat with long, straight, black hair flowing down her back.

He taps her shoulder.

The woman turns, giving him a good look at her face. She is a young JAPANESE WOMAN with a confused expression.

JAPANESE WOMAN

(in Japanese)

Can I help you?

He glances down at her shoes. They are red, but definitely not stilettos as he initially thought.

IAN

Never mind.

The woman prattles on in Japanese to the JAPANESE MAN next to her.

Ian walks to the back of the bus. Pulls the stop cord, waits beside the rear exit door.

He zips up his black jacket and pulls the hood over his head. Takes an MP3 player out of his backpack, puts the earbuds into his ears.

ALTERNATIVE MUSIC blasts out, drowning out all other sounds.

EXT. SEEDY NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

The city bus comes to a noisy halt at a bus stop. It pulls away almost before Ian has a chance to step off.

Ian looks around to get his bearings, then starts down the street, head bowed, minding his own business.

He passes several bums who eye him suspiciously.

BUM #1 makes a half-hearted attempt to sit up, lifts his open palm.

BUM #1

Spare any change?

Ian doesn't hear him over his MUSIC, keeps going.

Bum #1 grumbles under his breath as he lays back down on his cardboard bed.

Ian turns a corner, heads down an equally dark and ominous street.

The dim street lights flicker, giving only a hint of what lies ahead.

Abandoned buildings and warehouses.

A stripped car dumped on the curb.

Overturned trash cans, rubbish blowing in the wind.

Ian spots a woman wearing a dark trench coat and red stiletto heels. She turns a corner and is gone.

He gives chase, jogging after her. Turns the same corner only seconds later but finds nothing more than a black cat that walks with a limp.

HANDS come out of nowhere and grab Ian, pulling him into the shadows.

Three thugs, dressed in dark clothing, push him up against a chain link fence. THUG #1 and #2 hold him in place while THUG #3 pulls a knife.

In the scuffle, Ian's earbuds get pulled out of his ears, ending the MUSIC.

THUG #3

Gimme your money.

IAN

(calm)

Don't have any.

Thug #3 presses the knife into his neck, almost breaking the skin. Ian doesn't react.

THUG #3

I ain't playin'.

IAN

Neither am I.

Thug #3 motions to his buddies. They rummage through Ian's pockets but come up empty. Not even a wallet.

Thug #2 rips off Ian's backpack, dumps it over. An energy bar, newspaper and 2 double A batteries fall out.

Pissed off, Thug #3 kicks the useless items across the alley.

THUG #3

I aughta drop your broke ass right here.

Thug #3 digs the knife in a little deeper. Opens up a hairline cut. A thin stream of blood runs down Ian's neck.

IAN

Do it.

Ian grabs hold of the knife. Increases the pressure on it until the cut turns into a deep gash.

Blood pours out, soaking Ian's jacket and Thug #3's hand.

Thug #3 releases the knife and it clinks to the ground. Thug #1 and #2 step away from Ian.

THUG #3

What the fuck? You got a death wish or somethin'?

IAN

Or something.

Ian collapses. The thugs disappear into the night.

THUG #3 (O.S.)

Fuckin' freak!

Ian covers his neck wound with one hand and collects his scattered belongings with the other. Shoves them into his backpack. Struggles to his feet, staggers out of the alley and onto the --

MAIN ROAD

-- where there are no signs of the thugs, or anyone else. He looks down both directions of the street, then heads down one of them.

EXT. DILAPIDATED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A ramshackle old building sits on a dimly lit corner, decaying like a dead body. All of the exterior windows are either missing or cracked. Doors hang off the hinges.

Ian emerges from the shadows. Looks around to ensure no one is watching. Enters the building.

INT. DILAPIDATED WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A long, dark, doorless hallway leads to an old freight elevator.

A flashlight hangs on a hook near the door.

Ian grabs the flashlight, turns it on, heads down the hallway.

DEAD GUY #1 (O.S.)

(faint)

Help me.

Ian continues toward the elevator, quickening his pace.

DEAD GUY #1 (O.S.)

(desperate)

Help me!

He steps into the open elevator. Tries to pull down the metal inner door but it's stuck.

IAN

C'mon!

He pulls frantically but the door won't budge.

A DRAGGING sound comes from the dark end of the hallway.

Ian trains the flashlight beam in that direction. DEAD GUY #1, belly to the ground, crawls toward him. He uses his arms and fingernails to claw his way closer.

He is missing his entire lower body from the waist down. He leaves a trail of blood behind him.

Ian pulls the door with renewed conviction.

The door SQUEALS down, BANGS into place.

Iam slams his fist against the rusty up arrow.

The elevator doesn't move.

He checks the hallway, finds that Dead Guy #1 has almost reached him. He pounds on the arrow again. Still nothing.

Dead Guy #1 grabs hold of the elevator door, pulls his torso the rest of the way.

He reaches his free hand into the elevator, narrowly missing Ian's leg as Ian leaps back, falling against the back of the elevator with a thud.

The elevator lurches into motion, slowly ascending.

Ian buries his head in his hands.

IAN

Get a fucking grip.

He lifts his head to find an empty hallway slowly being left behind. Breathes a sigh of relief until --

Dead Guy #1 grabs hold of his ankle. He is inside the elevator now.

IAN

Fuck!

He yells and kicks until Dead Guy #1 loses his grip on Ian's leg.

INT. DILAPIDATED WAREHOUSE - SECOND FLOOR - SAME

Another long hallway, this one with just one door, not counting the elevator. The rusted metal door lies on the opposite end, seemingly close yet a world away.

ELEVATOR

SHUTTERS to a stop, doors slowly part to reveal --

Ian hurries out, looks over his shoulder at the empty elevator behind him. Slicing through the darkness with the meager beam of light, he proceeds cautiously ahead.

A liquid drips onto his shoulder, leaves a tiny red spot.

He touches it to find it wet. His head slowly turns to the ceiling to find --

A large puddle of blood spreads the entire length of the hallway ceiling in a matter of seconds. Rich red blood rains down on Ian, forcing him to make a run for it.

Outside his apartment door, he kicks off his right shoe and reaches inside. Pulls out a key. Struggles to get it into the lock.

The hallway fills with blood at an alarming pace. It is already up to his ankles and progresses to his knees as he fumbles with --

THE KEY

It slips from Ian's blood-soaked hands, falls into the sea of blood. A dimple in the surface is the only hint to its whereabouts.

Ian sinks to his knees, now waist deep in blood. Frantically feels around for the key. Can't locate it.

IAN Son-of-a-bitch!

Blood is now up to his chest.

Ian drops the flashlight, searches with both hands.

Blood reaches his neck.

Then his chin.

Ian's right hand emerges with the key and he quickly lets himself in.

INT. DILAPIDATED WAREHOUSE - IAN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Before Ian can slam the door shut, a river of blood flows in ahead of and after him.

Ian stumbles around in the dark, feels his way like a blind man. Another small beam of light suddenly illuminates a tiny portion of the apartment. He has found a flashlight.

He aims the light at the bottom of the door. There are no traces of blood on the floor or his body. He stares at his now clean hands and clothing in disbelief.

BANGING ON THE DOOR shatters his reprieve, causes him to hurdle back into something. Turns to find --

A PUNCHING BAG

-- swaying back toward him. He gives it a hard punch, then staggers down a short hallway and into a door at the end.

INT. IAN'S APARTMENT - SAFE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ian slams the door after him as POUNDING begins on the other side. He rapidly engages a variety of locks -- standard, deadbolt, chain and slider.

The walls are completely covered with newspaper articles. Old, yellowing ones in the back and more crisp, recent ones in the forefront.

A bare concrete floor supports a twin-sized mattress, no sheets, pillows or blankets. A cardboard box next to it is the only other object in the room.

Ian sets down his backpack, fishes the newspaper out of it. Leafs through it in a frenzy.

RELENTLESS POUNDING outside the door increases in volume.

A bold headline catches his attention.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER HEADLINE

CONSTRUCTION SITE ACCIDENT LEAVES MAN SEVERED IN TWO

BACK TO SCENE

He rips it out and tacks it to the wall.

The POUNDING ceases instantly.

Ian flops down on the bed, spent. His hand goes up to his neck, comes away blood-stained.

He goes into the cardboard box, which contains a plethora of energy bars and energy drinks. A first aid kit rests underneath. He takes it out and opens it up.

Armed with a mirror and some butterfly bandages, he seals up the wound on his neck. His hands work quickly and accurately, probably with lots of practice.

Ian puts the MP3 player earbuds back in and leans against the wall. Eyes fixed on the door, as if standing guard.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Celia's red heels CLICK-CLACK down an otherwise quiet hospital corridor. She stops before a door marked: RESTRICTED ACCESS. Looks around, then pulls a card out of her coat pocket and slides it through a scanner.

The red light above the door knob changes to green and the door opens. She looks around once more, then enters.

INT. HOSPITAL - RESTRICTED ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A long, dimly lit hallway leads to another room requiring a card swipe. Once inside, Celia is greeted by --

Trey, wearing a white lab coat and an ominous expression, stands beside a microscope. A knife covered in dried blood rests beside the microscope.

He motions for her to take a look.

CECILIA

I take it it's not good news.

TREY

The antibodies in his blood are weakening more rapidly than we thought. He'll be of no use to us soon.

Celia peers into the microscope. Doesn't look happy with what she sees.

She straightens back up, composed, then lifts the entire lab table and throws it across the room.

Trey takes a step back, arms folded across his chest. Gives her a moment to calm down, then --

TREY

Still think it's a good idea to put our fate in the hands of an insubordinate half-breed?

CECILIA

She'll get the job done. She has too much at stake if she doesn't.

She turns to him, a smile returning to her red lips. She pats Trey on the cheek.

CECILIA

You worry too much.

On her way out --

CECILIA

Clean up this mess. And get rid of that body.

Trey watches her go, then regards the over-turned lab table. A few feet away, the body of Thug #1 lies sprawled on the linoleum floor, eyes wide open. Dead.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

The sidewalks are alive with people, hurriedly rushing to and fro.

Equally busy are the streets, packed bumper to bumper with early morning traffic. HORNS blare. Drivers SHOUT EXPLETIVES at each other in frustration.

Streets are lined with hotels, some modern and classy, others aged and run-down.

Ian moves against the flow of foot traffic, pushing and shoving his way to one of the oldest buildings on the block. It sticks out like a sore thumb among the surrounding buildings.

He enters --

INT. GRAND LENNOX HOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Ian bypasses the few hotel guests that are scattered around the lobby. It is a stark contrast to the crowded lobby last night.

We hear the MUSIC of Ian's MP3 player until --

A hand comes out of nowhere and strips the earbuds away, abruptly ends the music.

The owner of the hand is MARKUS, an African American in his late 40s, dressed neatly in a button down shirt and slacks.

MARKUS

You're late.

Ian glances at an over-sized clock on the wall above the reception desk. It's 8:02.

IAN

Two whole minutes.

MARKUS

Two minutes. Two seconds. Doesn't matter. Do it again and you're out of a job.

Ian doesn't reply. Waits patiently for Markus to walk away, then puts his MUSIC back in and continues on.

INT. GRAND LENNOX HOTEL - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

Ian empties an overflowing cart of sheets into an open washing machine. Barely able to hear his MUSIC over the HUMMING, THUMPING and SWISH-SWASHING.

He is stripped down to tattered old jeans. Sweat drips down his bare chest and back.

A towel-filled cart seems to come out of nowhere, slams into Ian's hip. The culprit is a MAID dressed in old-fashioned maid garb.

She addresses him, but all Ian sees is her lips moving. He takes his earbuds out.

TAN

What?

MAID

Why're you always wearing those stupid things?

IAN

I prefer music over people.

MAID

Obviously.

She heads back out.

IAN

Was there something you wanted?

MAID

Yeah, hurry up. We're almost out of towels.

And she's gone.

Ian puts his MUSIC back on. Tosses the last of the sheets in, adds some detergent, starts up the washer. Opens a neighboring machine, stuffs in the towels.

One of the towels, once lifted, reveals a red stain beneath. Blood.

Ian stares at it for a moment, freaked out. He frantically pulls towel after towel out, all soaked in blood. The last one is removed to reveal --

The dead body of Thug #1. Skin is a sickening shade of bluish-purple. His throat is completely ripped out leaving a gaping hole.

Ian stumbles back, trips over an empty laundry cart. Falls to the concrete floor.

EXT. GRAND LENNOX HOTEL - DAY

Two POLICE CRUISERS are parked on the curb in front of the hotel.

A MALE COP and FEMALE COP stand with Ian as he smokes a cigarette. His hand trembles as it brings the cigarette to his lips for a drag.

Two PARAMEDICS exit the hotel with a covered body strapped to a gurney.

A group of ONLOOKERS are gathered around, watching with looks of shock.

MALE COP

So what happened after he cut you?

TAN

They ran off. I grabbed my shit and hauled ass outta there.

Male and Female Cop wait for more information, but Ian takes another long drag from his cigarette.

FEMALE COP

Why didn't you report it?

IAN

For what? So you guys could interrogate me... kinda like you're doing now?

Male Cop is quickly losing his patience with Ian, but Female Cop manages to keep her compsure and professionalism.

FEMALE COP

A guy that mugged you winds up dead, in your laundry cart. We're just trying to figure out why. That's all.

IAN

You think I did it? Would I be stupid enough to stash the body where I work... and then call the cops on myself?

MALE COP

Basically, yeah.

Ian scoffs loudly. Takes another drag.

FEMALE COP

You're not a suspect.

IAN

Then tell your partner to stop treating me like one.

Ian lights a new cigarette with the old one. Drops and stomps out the butt.

MALE COP

Lemme ask you something, kid. What do you got against cops? What, was daddy a cop and he loved his job more than you? Were you arrested for smacking your girlfriend around and a cop roughed you up a little?

Ian suddenly blows his stack, getting right in the Male Cop's face.

IAN

My whole fucking family was massacred right in front of my eyes when I was a kid and the cops didn't do shit to find out who did it. So am I interested in helping you find out who killed this low-life, piece of shit scum... no.

Female cop now looks sympathetic while Male Cop's remains unchanged.

MALE COP

Watch your fucking mouth.

Markus, looking quite agitated, walks out of the hotel and up to them.

MARKUS

When can I expect you to have your men cleared out?

Male Cop turns his frustration to Markus.

MALE COP

We're investigating a homicide. It's gonna be a while.

MARKUS

I have a hotel to run here.

Ian throws his arms up, exasperated.

IAN

Nothing like a dead body to fuck up your occupancy rate.

Markus turns to Ian, equally frustrated.

MARKUS

I've been pretty lenient with you, Thurston, considering all the complaints I get on a daily basis. But if you persist with this outlandish behavior --

TAN

Fuck you. Fuck your job.

Ian drops the second cigarette next to the first. Smashes it into the sidewalk. Averts his anger toward the cops.

IAN

And fuck you, too.

He casually goes to the hotel stairs, picks up his backpack, slings it over his shoulder.

MALE COP

Kiss your mother with that mouth?

IAN

No, but I kissed yours a couple times. She didn't seem to mind.

Male Cop lunges at Ian but the Female Cop steps between them, hands on his chest.

FEMALE COP

Relax. He's just a kid.

Ian flips them the bird and walks off, melting into the crowd.

INT. BETTY'S CAFE - DAY

Normal lunch time traffic means all the tables in the little cafe are occupied.

Ian sits alone near the window, staring at a worn out photo in his hands.

INSERT - PICTURE

A studio shot of Young Ian with a beaming MOTHER and FATHER.

The edges are worn and the coloring on the picture is off, even for its age.

BACK TO SCENE

A half consumed cup of coffee sits in front of him which he mostly ignores.

A middle aged WAITRESS takes an order from a neighboring table, then works her way to Ian.

WAITRESS

Another cup o' coffee?

Ian shakes his head, his eyes never leaving the picture.

WAITRESS

What about something to eat?

He shakes his head again.

WAITRESS

Ice cream? It's pretty hot out here.

He finally looks at her, but only for a second.

IAN

I'm fine.

WAITRESS

No offense, sweetie, but you don't look fine. Not at all.

Waitress at the picture.

WAITRESS

That your family?

He nods, turning the picture over and setting it on the table.

WAITRESS

You homesick or something?

He manages a curt smile in her direction.

IAN

You could say that.

WAITRESS

They're not dead or anything, are they?

The look on his face immediately answers her question.

WAITRESS

Oh, shit. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have...

Ian takes off his left shoe, retrieves a few dollars.

WAITRESS

Now there's an interesting place to store your money. Ever heard of a wallet?

TAN

Don't really have a use for one. What do I owe you?

WAITRESS

You don't owe me nothing, sweetie pie. Just hope your day starts to improve.

Ian chuckles to himself, almost ironically. Puts his money away. Stands up.

IAN

Thank you.

WAITRESS

Don't mention it. 'Specially to my boss.

She winks at him as he walks off.

RUDE DINER (O.S.)

Yo, Terry, can we get some service over here?

WAITRESS

Hold your horses. I'm coming.

She watches Ian leave, then goes to the RUDE DINER and slaps him on the back of the head.

WAITRESS

Didn't your mama teach you any manners?

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE (CRIME SCENE) - DAY

Ian stands before the police tape, frozen in place. His bewildered brown eyes, survey the whole crime scene. Not much to see from his vantage point.

MALE COP #2 (O.S.)

Hey, kid, move it along.

Ian turns to find MALE COP #2 standing guard over the crime scene.

TAN

Yeah. Sorry.

Ian walks off. Stops behind a tree. Listens to the faint RADIO CHATTER over the cop's walkie talkie.

MALE COP #2

(into radio)

My relief isn't here yet.

Inaudible RADIO CHATTER.

MALE COP #2

Okay, I'll be right there.

Male Cop #2 gets into his patrol car and speeds off, lights and SIREN on.

Ian looks around to ensure he's not being watched, then lifts the police tape and walks under.

A short walk around the partially constructed building leads him to a blood splattered piece of concrete.

Images flash before his eyes.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- -- A scuffle between two large, unidentified figures.
- -- Pearly white fangs.
- -- Fangs tearing into flesh.
- -- Fangs dripping with blood.
- -- A body falling.

-- The top and bottom half of a naked body land several feet apart.

Ian stares down at the separated body at his feet, numb with shock. He kneels, turns the head to find fang marks.

SCREAMS OF PAIN fill his ears, followed by the sickening sound of FLESH TEARING.

The noises end abruptly. Eerie silence fills the air, broken by --

MALE COP #3 (O.S.)

You shouldn't be in here.

Ian turns toward the voice to find MALE COP #3 headed toward him. He bolts off, leaping over the police tape and dashing into the busy street.

Cars slam on their breaks to avoid a collision. HORNS blare.

He continues on without as much as a backwards glance.

INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

Ian sits on the back of the bus, nearly asleep. Same gory images from the crime scene flash through his head, followed by:

FLASHES (from opening sequence):

- -- Bodies fall
- -- Blood runs down the walls
- -- Blood drips off overturned furniture
- -- Blood pools around bodies

END FLASHES

CECILIA (O.S.)

Remember me?

Ian eyes burst open. Finds Cecilia beside him.

IAN

Should I?

CECILIA

Shane... Monroe?

He shakes his head.

IAN

Not even close.

CECILIA

I'm sorry. You look just like him.

She thrusts a hand out to him.

CECILIA

I'm Cecilia.

He does little more than stare at her outstretched hand.

CECILIA

Here's how it works. You tell me your name, shake my hand and then I say "nice to meet you".

He folds his arms across his chest defiantly.

She puts her hand down.

CECILIA

Or not.

IAN

Ian.

CECILIA

Nice to meet you, Ian.

He rests his head against the window, putting some distance between them.

CECILIA

So, do you work downtown, or...

IAN

Look, I don't wanna be rude, but I've had a real shitty day and I'm not really in the mood to chat.

CECILIA

I'm sorry to hear that. What happened?

He gives her a look.

CECILIA

Right. You don't want to talk about it. Okay. Well, why don't you ask me about my day. How's that?

Ian glances out the window.

A tractor trailer runs a red light, barrels straight for them.

Ian instinctively shields Cecilia with his body as the tractor trailer makes impact.

CRASH!

As the bus flips numerous times, its passengers tumble like laundry in a clothes dryer.

When it finally comes to rest, bleeding and batters bodies are strewn everywhere.

Ian lies at the top of the heap, bleeding profusely from a gash on his forehead.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Ashlyn, dressed in hospital scrubs, studies a chart at the nurse's station.

NURSE #1 and NURSE #2 converse in secret whispers a few feet away, occasionally glancing in her direction.

Ashlyn suddenly clenches her stomach, doubles over. Her face contorts in agony, sweat beads her forehead.

The sound of two distinctly different HEARTBEATS fade in.

She grips the countertop with white knuckles, glances over her shoulder at the two nurses.

Nurse #2 elbows Nurse #1 and nods toward Ashlyn.

NURSE #1

Ashlyn... are you okay? You don't look so good.

Ashlyn turns her back to them.

ASHLYN

I'm fine.

NURSE #2

Why don't you take a break or something and we'll cover for you.

ASHLYN

(shouting)

I said...

(more calm)

I said I'm fine.

She composes herself, walks down a hallway, stops at a water fountain. Pretends to take a sip while watching the two nurses out of the corner of her eye.

The nurses go back to their work.

Ashlyn quickly makes her way down the hall. Matches the room number on the chart with the one on the door. Looks around to ensure no one is watching before slipping inside.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A female patient lies in bed, hooked up to various machines. She appears to be in a deep sleep.

Ashlyn takes out a large syringe from her pocket. Injects it into the woman's arm. Slowly pulls back the plunger until the syringe is filled with blood. Caps it and starts with another.

She doubles over in pain again before sinking into a chair in the corner of the room. She uncaps the first syringe and is about to stick the needle into her arm --

VAUGHN (O.S.)

What are you doing?

Ashlyn startles, dropping both syringes. Kneels to retrieve them. Glances up at --

DR. VAUGHN

Tall, dark and intimidatingly handsome. A crooked smirk on his superior face.

Ashlyn pockets the syringes, straightens up.

ASHLYN

Dr. Vaughn. I was just on my way to the lab.

She tries to pass, but Dr. Vaughn blocks her path.

VAUGHN

This patient isn't scheduled for blood work. She's in a coma and will most likely stay that way until her family decides to pull the plug. But you already knew that because you were studying her chart at the nurse's station a minute ago.

ASHLYN

I... I was just...

He takes her by the arm none too gently, leads her out of the room and down a --

HALLWAY

ASHLYN

Dr. Vaughn, I can explain.

VAUGHN

I'm sure you can. And I would love to hear it... in my office.

She struggles to pull free but Vaughn increases his hold on her, so tightly that it causes her to glance up into his intense blue eyes.

ASHLYN

You're hurting me.

He stops at an office door labeled: DR. WILLIAM VAUGHN and drags Ashlyn inside.

INT. HOSPITAL - DR. VAUGHN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Cecilia sits in the office with her feet propped up on the desk, one tall leather boot crossed over the other. A huge grin spreads across her red lips.

Vaughn releases his grip on Ashlyn. Pushes her toward Cecilia.

VAUGHN

Would you care to explain this to me?

Cecilia remains calm and collected despite the fury that resonates from Vaughn.

CECILIA

What are you referring to?

VAUGHN

I just found this nurse on the verge of shooting up with a coma patient's blood.

Cecilia takes Ashlyn's chin in her hand to inspect her face. Ashlyn still looks to be in a great deal of pain.

CECILIA

A coma patient? Really, Ashlyn. Have I taught you nothing?

Vaughn grabs Cecilia and pulls her to him. The smile never fades from her face.

VAUGHN

Why have you crossed her over without my permission?

Cecilia pulls out of his grip, takes a step toward Ashlyn who stands like the frightened prey trapped between two ravenous animals.

CECILIA

I haven't crossed her. If I had, she wouldn't have this delicious look of agony on her face right now.

VAUGHN

Then what? Why the blood?

CECILIA

She's just a little experiment I've been working on. You know how bored I get and how fond I am of science. Really, it's nothing for you to worry yourself over.

Vaughn stares at her with a look that could kill. Cecilia holds her ground, glowers right back.

Vaughn's pager BEEPS.

He checks the message, then starts for the door.

VAUGHN

We'll discuss this later.

CECILIA

No need. I always clean up after myself.

Vaughn flashes her one last disapproving look, then exits the room.

Relief washes over Ashlyn's face as she collapses to the floor.

Cecilia kneels beside her.

CECILIA

You shouldn't let yourself get so drained.

She takes one of the syringes and jabs it into Ashlyn's arm, unloading the blood into her.

Ashlyn's head rolls back, eyes close. Slowly exhales. A junkie that's just got her fix.

Cecilia takes the second syringe, injects her with that blood as well.

Almost instantly, the color seems to return to Ashlyn's cheeks. She no longer appears to be in pain.

Cecilia returns to her feet, casually drops the empty syringes into a trash can. Towers over Ashlyn.

CECILIA

How are things going with our little project?

ASHLYN

I'm working on it.

CECILIA

Well, work faster. I'm on a deadline.

ASHLYN

What do you want with him anyway?

CECILIA

That's none of your business.

ASHLYN

What if I said I wouldn't help you unless you told me?

Cecilia grabs Ashlyn by the throat, lifts her to her feet. A purple gleam to her eyes and a flash of sharp fangs.

CECILIA

Need I remind you how easy it would be to arrange the disappearance of someone with no family or friends?

ASHLYN

(hoarse)

How do I know you won't kill me anyway?

Cecilia releases her grip on Ashlyn's neck.

CECILIA

You don't. Isn't the unknown thrilling?

She goes back to the desk and sits, feet once again propped up comfortably.

CECILIA

Why don't you go check on our special patient. He should be rejoining the land of the living room.

Ashlyn starts to leave the room.

CECILIA

And Ashlyn... if you cross me, what happened to your husband and child will seem merciful compared to what I'll do to you.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Sunlight suddenly floods the dreary, sterile hospital room as Ashlyn draws the blinds.

Ian lies motionless in a hospital bed, head wrapped in a white bandage with a spot of red on it.

She checks his monitors, then strokes the side of his face.

ASHLYN

(whispering)

Wake up.

Ian's eyes move behind their closed lids. One eye slowly opens, then the other. He blinks repeatedly, bringing Ashlyn and the rest of the room into focus.

She smiles down on him. The sunlight shines behind her head, giving her an angelic aura.

IAN

(hoarse)

Are you...

(clears throat)

Are you an angel?

She smiles, brightening her entire face. The kind of smile that could light up a room.

ASHLYN

Not even close.

IAN

Is this what you do when you're not playing the damsel in distress.

ASHLYN

You have a very good memory considering...

She puts out her hand.

ASHLYN

Ashlyn Marie Kennedy-Miller.

Ian hesitates before shaking it.

IAN

That's a mouthful.

ASHLYN

I answer to most things, as long as it's polite.

IAN

I'm --

ASHLYN

Lucky to be alive.

Ian attempts to sit up. Finds that his movement is restricted by the numerous tubes and wires connecting him to monitors and I.V.s.

He rips off the heart monitor. Makes a move for the I.V.

ASHLYN

Whoa, hold on. You still need that one.

She gently removes his hand from the I.V. tubes, returns it to his side.

ASHLYN

It's a miracle you can even move after what happened. Do you remember?

IAN

Bus accident.

She nods.

IAN

Did everyone make it?

Ashlyn's smile quickly fades, replaced with a look of worry. She edges toward the door.

ASHLYN

Your doctor will want to know that you're awake.

IAN

They're all dead, aren't they?

With her back to him...

ASHLYN

Yes.

She faces him.

ASHLYN

You should be, too. You were, actually. For seven minutes. No one thought you would make it. They were about to call it and then you just -- I have no business telling you this. I'm sorry.

She tries to leave, but Ian grabs her hand.

IAN

Tell me.

Ashlyn pulls up a stool, sits beside him. Leans in closer as if about to reveal a secret.

ASHLYN

It was an unsurvivable crash. Everyone... everyone else probably died on impact.

She pauses, expects to see some sort of reaction. Ian doesn't even blink.

IAN

When can I get outta here?

He sits up in bed, swings his legs over the side.

Ashlyn tries to push him back into bed, but he resists.

IAN

I need to get out of here.

ASHLYN

Did you hear anything I just said? You almost died.

TAN

You owe me.

ASHLYN

You have a serious head injury.

Ashlyn makes a subtle move for the call button.

Ian seizes her by the wrist a fraction of a second before she can press it. Stronger and quicker than he should be.

A little gasp escapes Ashlyn's parted lips.

He notices a gold cross dangling from a chain around her neck. Picks it up for a closer look.

ASHLYN

You must've had a guardian angel sitting beside you on that bus.

He drops the cross as if it emitted an electric shock.

IAN

I don't believe in angels.

He rips the I.V. out of his arm.

IAN

I have to get out of here. Are you gonna help me or not?

ASHLYN

I can't do that.

IAN

Afraid of losing your job?

ASHLYN

Afraid of losing my life, actually.

Ian gives her a weird look, tries to make sense of it.

ASHLYN

Your life, I mean. I'm afraid if I help you leave --

Ian tears the bandage off his head, revealing that the gash is now nothing more than a tiny, nearly healed wound.

Ashlyn stands in shock, mouth agape.

ASHLYN

I just changed that bandage this morning...

She tries to touch the wound, but he stops her hand.

IAN

I need your help.

ASHLYN

Stay here. I'll be right back.

She scampers out of the room, still spooked.

Ian throws the sheets off, scrambles to his feet. Looks in drawers and cabinets for his clothes. Only finds a hospital robe. Slips it on. Peeks out into the --

HALLWAY

Ashlyn is no where to be found.

INT. HOSPITAL - NURSE'S STATION - DAY

A group of nurses gather around a computer monitor, pointing and gawking, hands covering their shocked mouths.

ON SCREEN

A crime scene surrounded by police tape and swarming with cops. On the upper left hand side of the screen is a picture of the Japanese Woman (from the bus).

BACK TO SCENE

A REDHEAD NURSE turns to the YOUNG NURSE beside her.

REDHEAD NURSE

That poor woman.

YOUNG NURSE

What kind of monster would do something like that?

INT. HOSPITAL - IAN'S ROOM - DAY

Ian tries to open the window but it only parts a few inches. He turns to find --

A ZOMBIE-LIKE WOMAN with black, eyeless sockets. The Japanese Woman.

Standing there naked, her skin is a ghastly shade of pale white. Her black hair hangs limply on either side of her head, making her pallor that much more apparent.

She reaches out to him, as if beckoning for his help. As she takes a step toward him, he takes a step back. She opens her mouth to speak, but blood flows out instead of words.

Ian dashes out of the room and down a --

CORRIDOR

He collides with Ashlyn, who pushes a wheelchair.

ASHLYN

Get in.

He looks behind him to find the zombie woman gone.

ASHLYN

Hurry up. They're coming.

Ian climbs into the wheelchair. Ashlyn pushes it down the hallway as quickly as possible without drawing suspicion.

ASHLYN

Keep your head down.

He bows his head as they head down another corridor.

A group of men in suits head their way, prompting Ashlyn to make a U-turn and head in the opposite direction.

She wheels him into an open --

ELEVATOR

Ashlyn hits the lobby button.

ASHLYN

I hope you have a plan. Because they're gonna be looking for you.

IAN

Story of my life.

ASHLYN

Maybe you could tell me about it sometime.

IAN

First things first.

ASHLYN

I'm working on it.

The elevator DINGS open.

Two SECURITY GUARDS in the lobby see them and quickly advance toward the elevator, one addressing them, the other speaking into his walkie-talkie.

SECURITY GUARD #1

That patient needs to be returned to his room.

Ian and Ashlyn reach for the door close button simultaneously.

The doors close just in time.

Ashlyn pushes the third floor button.

ASHLYN

Can you walk?

IAN

Yeah. Why?

ASHLYN

We're gonna have to take the stairs.

Doors open on the --

THIRD FLOOR

Ian bounds from the wheelchair. Ashlyn checks the hallway. Clear on both ends. She pulls him along.

ASHLYN

It's over here.

She leads the way to the stairwell entrance. Pulls the door open. They're almost inside when...

SECURITY GUARD #2 comes around a corner and spots them. Yells at someone over his shoulder.

SECURITY GUARD #2

They're over here.

(to Ashlyn and Ian)

Hey, you two. Stop right there!

ASHLYN

Come on!

She grabs Ian's hand, pulls him into the --

STAIRWELL

Ashlyn and Ian race down the stairs, zooming past a woman on her way up.

The woman looks up briefly, allowing Ashlyn a glance at her face. It's Cecilia.

Ian notices Ashlyn's hesitation. Looks back to see for himself. He stops in his tracks to stare at her in shock.

Ashlyn tries to pull him along.

ASHLYN

We have to go.

IAN

Cecilia?

She smiles broadly, almost deviously.

ASHLYN

We have to go!

He looks back at Ashlyn, as if just remembering her presence.

IAN

Do you see her?

Yes, of course. But we don't have time for a visit. Let's go!

Ian continues to stare at Cecilia, entranced. Her intense eyes never leave his.

Ashlyn pulls him by the arm, finally able to get him moving again.

Cecilia remains in place, watching them go.

A second later the third floor door flies open. SECURITY GUARD #1 and #2 rush down the stairs.

Cecilia gets in their way, increasing Ashlyn and Ian's lead.

CECILIA

Excuse me, but I can't seem to find my way to the lab. Could one of you show me the way?

Security Guard #1 is quite taken with her charm, but Security Guard #2 is focused and tries to push past her.

SECURITY GUARD #2

Excuse me, ma'am.

They do a little dance as Cecilia purposely moves in the same direction as him. He finally manages to get around her and bolts up the remaining stairs.

At the top, he bursts through the door to find the hospital corridor empty in both directions.

INT. ASHLYN'S CAR - DAY

Ashlyn drives while Ian sits in the passenger seat. He sweats profusely while messing with the air conditioner vents.

IAN

What's wrong with your a/c?

ASHLYN

Nothing. What's wrong with you?

IAN

I'm hot.

It's not that hot.

IAN

Do you see me sweating? It's hot.

ASHLYN

You're probably feverish. Another reason you should still be in your hospital bed.

She tries to press the back of her hand against his forehead but he foils her attempt.

TAN

I'm nobody's pin cushion.

ASHLYN

What are you afraid of?

He looks out his window to avoid answering her question. She waits patiently, alternating looks at him and the road.

IAN

You wouldn't understand.

ASHLYN

You'd be surprised.

IAN

Stop here.

Ashlyn looks around. No houses anywhere in sight.

ASHLYN

You live here?

IAN

Just stop.

Ashlyn checks her rear view mirror then pulls over on the side of the road. Watches as Ian takes some change out of a holder between the two seats and exits the car.

He gets back in a few seconds later with a newspaper.

ASHLYN

You're gonna read the newspaper? Right now?

IAN

Just drive.

Ashlyn pulls back onto the road.

ASHLYN

That woman in the stairwell... how do you know her?

He flips through the paper. Rips an article out, tosses the rest aside.

IAN

You don't wanna know.

ASHLYN

You're right. That's why I asked.

IAN

She was on the bus.

ASHLYN

But everyone on the bus...

IAN

Told you.

(pointing)

Turn here.

Ashlyn makes a right turn at the next intersection, heads into the same seedy neighborhood where Ian was previously mugged.

EXT. DILAPIDATED WAREHOUSE - DAY

A red compact car pulls up to the curb. Engine stops.

INT. ASHLYN'S CAR - DAY

Ian and Ashlyn unfasten their seat belts. Ian opens his door, moves to step out.

ASHLYN

Is my car safe out here?

IAN

Nothing's safe out here. Keep moving.

Do you have anyone in there to help you?

IAN

I've been taking care of myself since I was eight. I'm pretty good at it.

ASHLYN

Yeah, well, I helped you leave the hospital before you were ready, so it's on my conscience if something happens to you.

She pulls the keys out of the ignition, exits the car.

INT. DILAPIDATED WAREHOUSE - DAY

The door CREAKS open and Ashlyn peeks in apprehensively. Ian motions for her to go first.

TAN

After you.

ASHLYN

Is it safe?

IAN

Define safe.

She enters, followed closely by Ian. As the door shuts behind them, it is nearly pitch black inside.

Ian reaches for the flashlight and clicks it on.

ASHLYN

Forget to pay the electric bill?

IAN

Everyone thinks this building is abandoned. Lights would kind of ruin my cover.

He advances toward the elevator. Ashlyn trails behind.

ASHLYN

So would having a car parked out front.

He turns to flash her a "now you're getting it" look.

Okay, then, I won't stay long. I just wanted to make sure you were okay.

He pulls the elevator door open, steps inside, waits for her to get in.

ASHLYN

No lights but the elevator works?

IAN

You think this hallway is creepy, you should see the stairs.

ASHLYN

That's saying a lot.

She makes no move to enter the elevator.

IAN

Coming?

She hesitates a moment longer, then gets inside the --

ELEVATOR

Ian pulls down the inner metal doors, hits the up arrow. The elevator doesn't move. Ashlyn looks concerned.

IAN

It takes a minute.

ASHLYN

So... what happened when you were eight?

Ian pushes the up arrow again.

IAN

Why do you wanna know? Why did you help me?

ASHLYN

What is this, twenty questions?

IAN

You started it.

ASHLYN

It's called conversation. Maybe you've heard of it.

She pauses for a sign. Receives nothing.

No? Okay. Well, maybe we can help each other.

The elevator lurches into motion, catches both occupants off guard.

TAN

How could I possibly help you?

ASHLYN

I think we have more in common than you realize.

IAN

Lady, if you knew anything about me, you wouldn't want to have a single thing in common.

The elevator makes a very noisy stop on the second floor. Ian and Ashlyn pull the metal doors up, step out into the --

SECOND FLOOR

He shines his light down the hallway. All clear. They start down.

ASHLYN

How long have you lived here?

IAN

A while.

ASHLYN

Where'd you live before this?

IAN

Somewhere else.

They stop at his apartment door. He goes to pull off his shoe, then realizes he's not wearing any.

IAN

Shit. I don't have my keys.

Ashlyn digs in her over-sized purse.

ASHLYN

They rounded up all the belongings on the bus. Your bus. Everything else had been identified except a set of keys and an MP3 player, so (MORE)

ASHLYN (cont'd) the cops assumed they were yours. I know they're in here

somewhere.

Ian hears a noise, turns the flashlight to the end of the
hall to find --

THE ZOMBIE WOMAN

She begins a slow, casual walk toward them.

Ian taps Ashlyn's shoulder in anxious anticipation of the keys.

IAN

Hurry.

ASHLYN

(still searching)

In a minute.

IAN

Now would be good.

ASHLYN

I have a lot of crap in here. Hold on.

He jiggles the doorknob in vain, then puts his hand out again.

Despite her apparently slow speed, the Zombie Woman has almost reached them.

TAN

Ashlyn!

ASHLYN

Got it.

Ashlyn pulls out a set of keys from her cavernous purse and hands them to Ian. He inserts one into the lock and lets them into --

IAN'S APARTMENT

Ian slams and locks the door behind them. Ashlyn takes in her surroundings. He heads down the hall.

IAN

This way.

She follows him into the --

SAFE ROOM

Ian slams the door behind them. Locks the first of the four locks.

Loud FEMALE WEEPING filters in from outside the door.

He tacks the newspaper article to the wall. Ashlyn misses this as she looks around the room, not nearly as freaked out as she should be.

The weeping stops.

ASHLYN

Another one of your friends from the bus?

IAN

You saw her, too?

ASHLYN

The look on your face was enough.

IAN

You've just confirmed what I've known for a long time. I am crazy.

ASHLYN

You're not crazy.

Ian stares at her long and hard.

IAN

You sound like you know what you're talking about.

ASHLYN

I do.

IAN

You have no idea.

Ashlyn walks around the room, gazes at the innumerable newspaper articles on the walls. The color in her face slowly drains as she reads one gruesome headline after another.

She stops at one particular article with a picture of a handsome young man and a little girl, around five. Her fingers travel slowly across the picture. Eyes tear up.

I should get going.

She turns around just as Ian slips into a pair of jeans. She averts her eyes as he finishes getting dressed.

ASHLYN

If you start to feel dizzy or anything, just call... I don't suppose you have a phone?

IAN

Nope.

She starts on the first lock.

ASHLYN

You'll be fine.

She gets frustrated when she can't unlock the door. Tears form in the corners of her eyes.

Ian moves beside her, gently removes her hand from the lock. Unlocks all of the locks for her.

IAN

But will you?

Ashlyn looks him in the eye but doesn't respond.

IAN

Did I just get you fired?

Her tears spill over, roll down her cheeks. Ian wipes them away with a tender touch.

A RINGING from her purse severs the silence.

Ashlyn answers the call.

ASHLYN

Hello?

INTERCUT - SAFE ROOM / HOSPITAL RESTRICTED ROOM

Cecilia sits propped up on a lab table. A HANDSOME MAN stands between her parted legs, kisses her on the neck.

CECILIA

I left you a little present in your pocket. Did you find it?

Yes, I'm aware. I'll be back in a few minutes.

CECILIA

Don't let me down.

Cecilia ends the call, tosses the cell phone on the table beside her.

The handsome man comes up for air.

HANDSOME MAN

Everything alright?

CECILIA

Just some business. Nothing for you to worry about.

She grabs him by his hair, pulls his head to one side, exposes his neck. He only has time for a brief struggle before she tears into his flesh with her fangs.

BACK TO SCENE

Ashlyn tosses the cell back into her purse, looks up to meet Ian's gaze. Slips a hans into her pocket.

IAN

Work?

ASHLYN

Can you lay down for a second? I want to check your vitals before I go.

IAN

I'm --

ASHLYN

Fine? Yeah, I know. Just humor me.

He gives a little exasperated sigh, then gets on the bed.

Ashlyn's left hand remains in her pocket while she takes his pulse with her right. When she's done, she lifts her index finger in the air.

ASHLYN

Follow my finger.

Ian does as instructed. When she has his attention focused far to the right, she moves to jab him with a syringe.

He grabs her hand, needle millimeters from piercing his skin.

IAN

What're you doing?

ASHLYN

Trying to save both of our lives.

IAN

What's in there?

ASHLYN

Trust me.

He holds on to her arm a second longer, then releases.

Ashlyn inserts the needle into his arm, depresses the plunger, unloads the entire contents of the syringe.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GRAND LENNOX HOTEL - ROOM 412 - NIGHT

Ian slowly comes to. Everything is a blur. He blinks repeatedly until things start to come into focus.

Despite the outdated furniture and bedding, the room is in decent shape. A king sized bed is flanked by matching nightstands. An antique dresser across the room holds an old black and white TV.

Ian lies in the center of the bed, looking wildly around the room.

IAN

Ashlyn?

He gets out of bed, holding his head, still groggy. Walks into the --

BATHROOM

-- to find it in similar outdated fashion.

Ian finds a torn newspaper clipping on the floor. As he kneels to pick it up --

Cecilia stands in the doorwary, in VAMPIRE FORM. Fangs bared, eyes glowing purple. Skin pale with a subtle translucency.

Ian looks over the article. It is the same one that caught Ashlyn's attention earlier.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER CLIPPING

Headline reads: "HUSBAND AND CHILD FOUND BRUTALLY MURDERED,
WIFE SURVIVES ATTACK."

Further down, embedded in one of the paragraphs is the name "Ashlyn Kennedy-Miller".

On the back, it reads: "Front entrance 10:30" in permanent marker.

BACK TO SCENE

Ian checks his watch. It's 10:25.

Cecilia reaches out to him, her hand on his shoulder.

He turns to find --

Cecilia back in her HUMAN FORM. He jumps in shock.

TAN

Goddamnit, you shouldn't sneak up on people like that.

CECILIA

I didn't think I had to knock to enter my own room.

He takes a better look at her. Recognizes her.

IAN

Cecilia?

CECILIA

What's the matter? You look like you just saw a ghost?

She smiles coyly, walks into the --

BEDROOM

Ian follows.

IAN

What am I doing here?

CECILIA

You tell me.

He walks over to the nightstand, picks up a laminated room service menu. It reads: "Grand Lennox Hotel" on top.

IAN

How did I get here?

CECILIA

Don't you work here? I wonder how your boss would feel about you sleeping on the job.

IAN

You were on that bus. They said I was the only one that survived.

CECILIA

What does that mean? That I died? How is it that I'm standing here, then?

She walks over to him, uncomfortably close. Presses her body against his.

CECILIA

Are you saying I'm a ghost?

IAN

I have an uncanny tendency of running into the recently deceased.

Cecilia unbuttons her blouse, purposefully slow. Slides it off, lets it fall to the floor. Unzips her skirt, shimmies it off. She wears no undergarments.

Ian can do little more than stare, hypnotized.

CECILIA

Do I look dead to you?

She puts her hands flat against his chest, backs him against a wall. Corners him, like a lioness to her prey. Takes his hand, places it over one of her ample breasts.

CECILIA

Do I feel dead?

She crushes her lips against his, kisses him long and hard, then stops suddenly. Sits on the bed.

CECILIA

Could you clear out? I have a business meeting.

Ian snaps out of his trance, goes back into the --

BATHROOM

He runs the faucet, splashes some water on his face.

IAN

I hope you'll consider putting some clothes on first.

CECILIA (O.S.)

I'm waiting for the shower.

IAN

You just had your naked body pressed against me and your tongue down my throat. It's a little late for modesty, don't you think?

No reply. Ian glances over his shoulder into the bedroom. He has a clear shot of the bed but Cecilia is not on it.

IAN

Cecilia?

Still no reply.

He wanders back into the --

BEDROOM

-- to find Cecilia lifted off her feet while an unidentified vampire drinks from her neck. Her arms and legs dangle lifelessly.

IAN

What the fuck?!

The vampire drops Cecilia in a heap on the floor. It's Trey. He snarls at Ian, bloody fangs bared, eyes an intense purple.

IAN

Oh shit!

Ian makes a run for it with the angry vampire hot on his heels.

INT. GRAND LENNOX HOTEL - FOURTH FLOOR - NIGHT

Ian runs full speed down a long hallway. Finally gets up the courage to look behind him. The hallway is empty.

Lights flicker then go out.

Ian searches around him wide-eyed. Feels his way around in the dark until reaching the elevator. Pounds on the down arrow, to no avail.

IAN

Open up, you piece of shit!

He kicks the elevator repeatedly until it eventually DINGS and opens to reveal --

ELEVATOR

Two FEMALE VAMPIRES feasting out of both sides of a BUSINESSMAN's neck. The vampires turn in unison to snarl at Ian.

Ian stumbles back.

IAN

I'll get the next one.

The doors close as the vamps get back to their meal.

A noise at the other end of the hall gets Ian moving again. He feels his way to the stairwell, pulls open the door.

An eerily dim emergency light barely illuminates the stairs leading up and down.

Ian starts down, holding onto the railing for support. He makes it down several flights before he slips and falls.

The stairs and railings are covered in blood. So is Ian.

CECILIA (O.S.)

(weak)

Ian, help me!

The voice comes from above. Ian looks up but finds no one there.

TAN

Cecilia?

He starts up, then thinks better of it. Turns back around to find Cecilia standing there, still naked, bleeding profusely from a grizzly neck wound.

She falls forward. Ian makes a half-assed effort to catch her. Allows her to slide off of him and onto the stairs.

TAN

Jesus Christ!

He steps over her and trudges on, takes occasional peeks over his shoulder.

INT. GRAND LENNOX HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

The reception area bustles with activity. No less than ten couples wait in line to check in. Nothing out of the ordinary.

Ian bursts through the stairwell door, frantic. Runs right into a group of HOTEL GUESTS. Looks around suspiciously to find that the lights are all on. Checks himself. No blood.

HOTEL GUEST

You okay?

IAN

I'd find another hotel if I were you.

The guests stare at each other, confused, as Ian makes a run for the exit. He's almost home free when --

Markus grabs his arm.

MARKUS

Am I to assume the pipes are all fixed? Or is this your second letter of resignation?

IAN

What pipes?

MARKUS

I sent you upstairs to repair some plumbing hours ago.

Ian looks around at the hotel guests within ear shot. Makes no attempt to keep his voice down.

IAN

Look, I don't know what you're taking about. But there's a dead fucking body in the stairwell and a whole lotta something going on in the elevator. I think that's a (MORE)

IAN (cont'd)

helluva lot more urgent than leaky pipes.

With Markus and the guests staring, outraged, Ian runs out.

EXT. GRAND LENNOX HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Ian runs frantically out into the night, no idea where he's headed. Ends up in the middle of the street.

A car SCREECHES its tires to avoid him but it's too little too late. The car makes impact, tossing Ian back several feet.

The driver's side door opens and the person behind the wheel, Ashlyn, comes running out, distraught. Rushes to Ian's aid.

ASHLYN

I'm sorry. I didn't see you.

Ian struggles to get back on his feet. Ashlyn helps him.

ASHLYN

Are you okay?

IAN

I'm not gonna die, if that's what you're asking.

ASHLYN

C'mon, get in the car.

She puts his arm around her neck and helps him into the front passenger's seat. Closes his door, then quickly gets into the driver's seat.

INT. ASHLYN'S CAR - NIGHT

Ashlyn floors the gas. Weaves in and out of traffic. Eyes intensely focused on the road as if it takes every once of concentration.

Ian has a white-knuckled grip on the dashboard.

IAN

You late for something?

I need to tell you something and it would really help if you just took my word and didn't ask too many questions.

IAN

After tonight, you could pretty much tell me anything and I'd believe it.

ASHLYN

I hope you mean that because this is pretty big.

IAN

Bigger than a vampire sucking the life out of a woman that supposedly died in a bus crash, the same bus crash that should have killed me, yet didn't? Bigger than that? Because that's pretty big.

ASHLYN

So you know then.

IAN

What I haven't figure out yet is you. What the hell did you inject me with... and why?

Ashlyn pulls the car into a turn lane. Waits for oncoming traffic to clear.

IAN

No, no, no. Keep going straight on this road until you hit the --

ASHLYN

I can't take you home. They know where you live.

Ashlyn instinctively looks in her rear view mirror.

IAN

How would they know that?

He turns to her accusingly. She looks away from the road to flash him a sheepish grin.

IAN

Son-of-a-bitch! You said you wanted to help me, not lead them to my fucking door!

That wasn't my intention. And I am going to help you. Why do you think I'm here?

IAN

I don't know. Why don't you tell me.

Ashlyn navigates the car down a deserted side street. Pulls into a dark corner. Shuts off the engine.

IAN

What're we -- ?

ASHLYN

Shhhh!

She looks out her window, then Ian's and finally the back window. Suspicious. Nervous.

IAN

Expecting someone?

ASHLYN

(whispering)

We're being followed. Get in the back seat.

IAN

What? Why?

ASHLYN

No questions.

Ian climbs into the back seat.

IAN

What are you gonna do?

ASHLYN

Just stay here.

She opens her door, starts to get out.

IAN

Don't go out there!

Ashlyn goes anyway.

He watches through the front window as she slinks around, looking in every direction possible before disappearing into the shadows.

Ian inches closer to the window, peers out. His breath fogs up the glass.

A RABID DOG smashes into the glass, barking and growling.

Ian lurches back, hits his head against the opposite window.

The dog continues to snarl, scratching the window with impossibly sharp claws. A spider web crack forms on the glass.

IAN

Oh shit!

He pulls on the handle, but the door won't budge.

The crack in the window spreads.

Ian tries to lift the lock, but there is only a hole where it should be. He bangs on his window, to no avail.

The glass shatters. The dog leaps into the car, lands on Ian's chest. Nips at him with saliva foaming from its snout.

Ian is barely able to hold off the dog.

The dog morphs into --

Handsome Man (Celia's lover) in VAMPIRE FORM.

IAN

You looked better as a dog.

Ian kicks the vampire off, giving himself a temporary reprieve. He uses it to dive into the front seat and pull the driver's door open.

The vampire pursues him, but he kicks him in the face and lunges out the door.

EXT. SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ian lands in front of a pair of black stiletto boots. Follows them up sexy legs to a mini skirt, halter top and finally Cecilia's face, in VAMPIRE FORM.

IAN

I liked you better dead.

HANDS emerge from the car, grab Ian and pull him back in.

INT. HOSPITAL - DR. VAUGHN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dr. Vaughn and NURSE #1 have sex on his desk. The nurse throws her head back in ecstasy, eyes up in her head.

The phone RINGS.

Dr. Vaughn ignores it for a few seconds, then pries his lips off the woman's neck, leaving a bloody gaping hole.

He releases her, allowing her head to thump against the desk. Wipes his mouth on his sleeve, picks up the phone.

VAUGHN

This better be important.

INTERCUT - VAUGHN'S OFFICE / DARK ALLEY

Cecilia stands, partially concealed by shadows. Holds a cell phone to her ear.

CECILIA

We lost one of ours.

VAUGHN

How?

CECILIA

Lets just say he bit into something he shouldn't have.

VAUGHN

Bring him to me.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Cecilia snaps her phone closed with a devilish grin on her face. The Handsome Man, in HUMAN FORM, lies dead at her feet.

CECILIA

What is it humans say? Everything that tastes good is bad for you.

Trey suddenly falls from the sky. Lands behind Cecilia.

CECILIA

Mission accomplished. Get him back to the lab.

INT. ASHLYN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ian leaps out of bed, fending off imaginary foe. A hand goes up to his neck, feels a nearly healed bite mark.

He gazes around the room but everything is a blur.

The bedroom is furnished with a full-sized bed draped in white bedding and shrouded in a gauzy canopy. And nothing else.

He stumbles toward the door with the room spinning around him. Feels around for the knob, turns it, surprised to find it open.

Staggers out onto a landing. Grabs a metal railing for stability.

ASHLYN (O.S.)

You're not a morning person, are you?

Ian looks in the direction of the voice. Struggles to focus. Blinks his eyes repeatedly. Sweats profusely. Still blurry.

IAN

Ashlyn?

ASHLYN (O.S.)

Take it easy on those stairs.

Things slowly come into focus. Ian looks down on what appears to be a --

MEDICAL LABORATORY

Various medical apparatuses are set up on expansive lab tables.

One such table is devoted to numerous vials and beakers of varying shapes and sizes, all filled with what appears to be blood.

Ashlyn sits on a stool, stares into a microscope.

IAN

You live here?

ASHLYN

People who live in abandoned warehouses shouldn't cast stones.

Ian carefully maneuvers down the stairs, holding onto the railing for support.

IAN

What happened?

His hand feels for the bite wound. Still there.

ASHLYN

Sit down. I'll get you something to eat and you'll be right as rain.

TAN

By "something to eat", you don't mean...?

ASHLYN

(chuckling)

Blood? No.

IAN

But my neck...

ASHLYN

If it was as simple as a bite, the world would be overrun and they'd have nothing to eat. They have to get --

IAN

I don't wanna know.

He carefully negotiates the last step, walks through the lab toward Ashlyn. Passes the lab table with all the blood samples.

IAN

Whose is it?

She finally looks up from her microscope.

ASHLYN

Yours.

Ian gives her a "come again" look. Grabs hold of the lab table as his knees go weak.

IAN

When can I have it back?

ASHLYN

I wasn't planning on giving it back.

IAN

Do I wanna know what you're gonna do with it?

ASHLYN

I'm testing it.

IAN

For?

ASHLYN

Cecilia wants your blood... bad. So it got me curious.

IAN

What can twenty vials tell you that one can't? That's half my blood supply over there!

ASHLYN

Actually it was more like three quarters.

IAN

And?

ASHLYN

I thought you didn't want to know.

He gives her an exasperated look.

ASHLYN

Do you know what immortal means?

IAN

Undying.

ASHLYN

Vampires are not immortal, not in the true sense of the word. They <u>can</u> die under the right circumstances. You proved that last night.

IAN

I killed a vampire?

ASHLYN

Your blood did, anyway.

She pushes herself away from the microscope.

Have a look.

Ian stares skeptically at her for a second before moving into position.

MICROSCOPE POV

Little dark circles on a light gray background.

BACK TO SCENE

IAN

I have no idea what I'm looking at.

ASHLYN

Normal red blood cells.

He shifts his eyes to her.

IAN

Fascinating.

ASHLYN

Not nearly as fascinating as this.

Ashlyn takes a drop of blood out of a different vial, drips it onto the current slide.

MICROSCOPE POV

New blood cells appear beside the previous ones. The old blood quickly begins to "attack" the new until there are no new blood cells left.

BACK TO SCENE

ASHLYN

What do you see?

IAN

My blood is kicking that other blood's ass.

ASHLYN

Astute observation.

IAN

Whose blood is it?

ASHLYN

(dramatic pause)

Mine.

Ian straightens up, alarmed. Repulsed.

IAN

You're one of them?

ASHLYN

I'm nothing like them.

He backs away as she advances toward him.

IAN

You're one of those fucking monsters?

ASHLYN

We're not all monsters. Some of us are just like you. Trying to survive.

Ian scans the room, looking for an exit. Hurries to a set of double steel doors. Tries to get out, but they're locked. Bangs on the doors in vain.

TAN

How do I get out of here?

ASHLYN

If you walk out that door, you'll be on your own... right back where you started. No answers and no idea how to undo what's been done to you.

He turns to her, fuming.

IAN

I was better off on my own. My life has taken a real shitty turn since meeting you.

ASHLYN

Is that so?

IAN

Things went from "holy shit" to "totally fucked up" the minute I got into your car. You set me up. You practically fed me to your fanged friends last night.

Ashlyn joins him at the door. He continues banging.

I was created because of you. It was my job to lure you in. To deliver you to Cecilia.

IAN

See, and I would have kept that to myself if I was trying to get back on your good side.

ASHLYN

Would you shut up and stop that banging and listen to me.

He stops pounding. Seems to be listening.

IAN

Well?

ASHLYN

They haven't told me much but I've heard things. They've been looking for you for a long time... ever since you got away.

The look on Ian's face tells her he knows exactly what she's referring to.

ASHLYN

But I didn't know why. I wanted to see what they would do with you once they had you. So I ran an experiment. That's what last night was.

He scoffs loudly, beyond angry.

IAN

Do I look like a fucking lab rat?

He pounds on the door with renewed conviction.

IAN

Can anybody hear me? I need help!

ASHLYN

I risked my life for you.

IAN

What life? You're already dead!

She didn't change me... not completely. I'm not a real vampire, or a full vampire, or whatever you want to call it. I think I can be human again. With your help.

His pounding ends suddenly. He chuckles spitefully.

IAN

Me? Help you? Why would I do that?

He rushes away. Heads straight for a set of windows at the back of the lab.

IAN

There's gotta be another way out. Fire code and all that.

He pulls on the window and, to his surprise, they open. On the other side are sturdy black bars, three inches apart.

TAN

You really don't want anyone in here, do you?

ASHLYN

I've got a good reason.

IAN

How can I believe anything you've said? What if you're still playing the game?

ASHLYN

I'm not!

IAN

How do I know I can trust you?

Ashlyn slides back a small panel on the door, reveals a hidden key hole. Takes a key out of her pocket, unlocks the door. Pulls it open. Sunlight streams in.

Ian doesn't know what to make of it.

INT. HOSPITAL - RESTRICTED ROOM - DAY

Handsome Man's naked corpse lies on an exam table. Trey stands beside him in a lab coat, performs an autopsy. Cecilia stands beside him, arms folded across her chest, impatient.

Trey uses a rib cutters to get through the ribcage. Tosses the bloody instrument aside, reaches into the gaping hole. Pulls out a blackened, shriveled heart.

Cecilia couldn't look more pleased.

CECILIA

Beautiful.

INT. ASHLYN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

A very minimal, industrial kitchen.

Ian sits at a stool next to the counter, wolfs down a plate of food.

Ashlyn fills a glass with milk, sets it down next to him.

He drinks half of it in one gulp. Shovels in more food.

ASHLYN

When's the last time you ate?

IAN

(mouth full)

Besides energy bars? 2003.

ASHLYN

How do you live like that?

He gives her a look.

ASHLYN

Oh, right.

IAN

I'm listening. Talk.

Ashlyn sits across the counter from him.

ASHLYN

It wasn't all romantic like in the movies. I didn't fall in love with a sexy vampire and beg him to make me like him. I didn't have a choice.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ashlyn walks into a darkened bedroom, kicks off her shoes, pulls back the comforter on the bed.

ASHLYN (V.O.)

I came home from work one night to find my husband and daughter... murdered... in their beds.

A male body lies beneath the sheets, blood everywhere.

Ashlyn SCREAMS.

BACK TO PRESENT

Ashlyn has a haunted look in her eyes but manages to hold back tears.

Ian stops eating, pushes his plate away.

ASHLYN

I tried to move on with my life. I kept working at the hospital at night, kept up with med school during the day. But I was miserable and lonely. Then one day...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Ashlyn, dressed in scrubs, assists on a trauma. The PATIENT, a man in his 30s, lies on a gurney, writhing in pain.

He has a large gash in his neck that gushes blood like a fountain.

Suddenly he turns on Ashlyn, teeth latching onto her arm. She yanks away, cradles her arm against her chest. Falls to the floor.

ASHLYN (V.O.)

I was bit by a vampire... before he had made the full transformation.

BACK TO PRESENT

Ian sits in stunned silence, stares at Ashlyn with a combination of sympathy and extreme caution.

ASHLYN

Of course I didn't know it at the time. I was afraid of HIV or Hepatitis. I had no idea what he had actually given me was a whole different nightmare.

IAN

So what do you become when a "not-quite-a-vampire-yet" bites you?

ASHLYN

I'm getting to that part. That's when I met Cecilia.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Ashlyn sits alone in an ER cubicle, staring down at her bandaged wrist.

CECILIA (O.S.)

How does it feel?

Ashlyn jerks her head toward the unexpected sound. Finds Cecilia standing there dressed in leather and heels.

ASHLYN

What?

CECILIA

Your arm. How does it feel?

ASHLYN

Are you a doctor?

Cecilia smiles with her vicious red lips.

CECILIA

No, but I do have much to teach you. Come with me.

Cecilia puts her hand out. Ashlyn automatically reaches for it.

BACK TO PRESENT

Ian sits in stunned silence for a second.

IAN

How did it feel?

ASHYLN

Strange. Painful, but to a different extent. It was like being on nitrous oxide. I could still feel all the pain, but I didn't care.

IAN

Where did she take you?

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - MORGUE - NIGHT

Ashlyn and Cecilia enter quietly. Ashlyn stays a few steps behind Cecilia.

ASHLYN

What're we -- ?

Cecilia places a finger across Ashlyn's lips, silences her.

CECILIA

(whispers)

Just watch...

Cecilia moves to a refrigerated drawer, pulls it open. The body of the ER VICTIM lays on top, seemingly dead.

Cecilia motions Ashlyn closer, but she hangs back.

ASHLYN

The guy that bit me. He... died?

Cecilia traces a finger across her right wrist. The delicate motion opens up a deep wound that immediately bleeds.

Ashlyn watches in horror as --

Cecilia positions her arm so that her blood drips into ER Victim's mouth. Ashlyn backs away.

ASHLYN

What're you doing?

ER Victim's eyes suddenly burst open, an intense purple color. He sits up and grabs Cecilia's wrist, brings it to his mouth hungrily.

Ashlyn runs out of the room.

BACK TO PRESENT

Ian leans forward, fully engaged in the story.

IAN

She let you go?

ASHLYN

She knew she could find me whenever she wanted. And she did. She told me that I wasn't like her. That there was a cure for what I had and she would give it to me if I did everything she asked of me. And so far, I have.

IAN

So far?

ASHLYN

She wants you. Up until today I had no idea why. I've spent the last three years of my life trying to find a cure for this... affliction and --

IAN

You kill people and drink their blood. You're a vampire. Let's not sugar coat.

ASHLYN

I told you, I'm not like them.

IAN

Lemme see your fangs.

ASHLYN

What?

IAN

Your fangs. And your creepy purple eyes. And then tell me you're not a vampire.

ASHLYN

You couldn't possibly believe I'm dangerous or you wouldn't still be here.

IAN

I don't really have anywhere else to go, do I?

ASHLYN

So what're you gonna do, hide out for the rest of your life? Did you hear anything I told you in the lab? They can't hurt you.

Ian stands up suddenly. His stool flies backwards, crashes into a wall.

IAN

I heard the important part.

ASHLYN

I got bitten, but I didn't turn. Not completely. No fangs. No creepy eye color changes. No aversions to garlic or sunlight or crosses.

She motions to the cross on a chain around her neck.

IAN

Then how do you know you're one of them?

ASHLYN

As best as I can figure, half of my blood is vampire and the other half is human. When it's in balance, I'm fine. But when the scale tips...

Ian sighs loudly, walks away from her.

IAN

Patients turn up missing at the hospital?

ASHLYN

I give myself a blood transfusion. And then I'm okay... for a while.

IAN

And where do I factor in all this?

ASHLYN

That cure I was telling you about. The one I've been searching for. I think you might be it.

INT. IAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

The door flies off the hinges and Cecilia storms in, followed by an entourage of men dressed all in black.

She gives a signal and her people scatter, searching the apartment. Trey leads a group down the hallway. Doors are kicked open. They enter the rooms.

TREY (O.S.)

Cecilia.

Cecilia makes his way down the hall and into the --

SAFE ROOM

She studies the newspaper clippings that cover the walls.

TREY

He's not here.

Cecilia violently rips down a section of newspaper, growls.

Turns on Trey, full CREATURE FORM. Not only does she have the fangs and purple eyes, but her entire face is distorted beyond recognition.

CECILIA

(seething)

Find me that nurse... or I'll have all your heads.

INT. ASHLYN'S APARTMENT - LABORATORY - DAY

Ian sits on a chair, having his blood drawn by an impossibly large needle and syringe.

IAN

How do you know this is gonna work?

ASHLYN

I don't.

She removes the needle from his arm, pulls off the rubber tourniquet from his bicep.

IAN

How do you know it won't kill you?

ASHLYN

I don't know that either.

IAN

Then I'm gonna have to strenuously object.

ASHLYN

I didn't know you cared.

They make eye contact, hold each others' gaze.

IAN

There has to be a safer way.

ASHLYN

Stop me if you think of one.

She attempts to jab the needle into her arm. Ian grabs it from her.

IAN

Would you just wait a minute?

She waits, but he's got nothing.

IAN

Let me do it.

He carefully injects her with a small amount of the blood.

ASHLYN

All of it.

IAN

Just see how you react to this before --

Ashlyn pushes the plunger in the rest of the way, unloads the entire syringe of blood into her vein.

Ian stares at her. Waits for any sign of a reaction.

IAN

Anything?

ASHLYN

Maybe it would work better if you stopped staring at me.

EXT. ASHLYN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ian takes a final drag off his cigarette. Tosses the butt. About to walk back into the building when he sees a --

BLACK CAT

It limps by. Stops in front of Ian, gets on its hind legs to scratch the door.

Ian tries to shoo it away, but the cat won't budge. He nudges it with his foot.

IAN

Go on. Get!

The cat persists.

Ian shoves it aside with his foot, opens the apartment door. Before he can get inside, the cat runs in ahead of him.

INT. ASHLYN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ian chases the cat through a short hallway and foyer.

IAN

Hey! Get outta here!

Cat speeds ahead, into the --

LABORATORY

-- and disappears under one of the lab tables.

Ian gives chase, ducks down to look in the last location he saw it.

IAN

Where are you?

Ashlyn staggers past him.

ASHLYN

What are you doing?

From his crouched position on the floor, Ian looks up at her.

IAN

I let a cat in.

He quickly straightens up, looks her over.

Ashlyn's face is several shades paler than the last time we saw her. She looks weak and frail. Holds her stomach, hunched over.

IAN

You okay? You look like hell.

ASHLYN

I'm gonna go upstairs and lie down.

IAN

I'm taking you to the ER.

ASHLYN

And tell them what, that I injected myself with someone else's blood because I thought it was the cure for vampirism?

IAN

It sounded better in my head. So what's the plan then?

ASHLYN

I just need to rest for a while.

She grabs hold of the staircase railing, pulls herself up the first step.

Ian picks her up, carries her the rest of the way. In the
--

BEDROOM

-- he sets her down in the middle of the bed, steps back to observe.

Ashlyn's skin is paler still. Tiny bruises dot her arms. She clutches her stomach, doubles over. Rolls in pain.

IAN

What is it?

ASHLYN

Anemia. Rapid red blood cell destruction.

IAN

It's not working?

ASHLYN

No, it is. I just didn't expect it to be this... fast. Or... painful.

IAN

What can I do?

Ashlyn seizes, her petite frame wracks violently.

Ian gets on the bed, tries to hold her down.

ASHLYN

There's a box... under the floor boards. If something happens to me...

IAN

Something is happening to you!

ASHLYN

You need to... find it.

Ashlyn's seizure intensifies. Even with Ian's body pressed against hers, he is barely able to keep her in the bed.

IAN

What do I do? Tell me what to do!

ASHLYN

I... need... blood.

IAN

What am I supposed to do? I can't give you mine. It's killing you.

ASHLYN

I'd rather die than live like this.

Ian looks around the room. Sees Ashlyn's purse. Dumps it over. Searches through the spilled contents, locates a pocket knife.

He cuts the palm of his hand, squeezes his fist above her mouth.

Blood drips onto her face as she trembles violently.

Ian holds her face still, allows his blood to pool into her mouth. Drains a dangerous amount of his blood into her before her seizure subsides.

He falls away, lands hard on the floor, spent. Watches Ashlyn from a distance.

Her body goes rigid against the bed. The veins in her arms and neck throb, almost burst through her skin. Head snaps back, eyes roll back into her head.

A piercing scream escapes her lips.

And then her body goes limp. She appears to be dead.

IAN

No, no, no, no!

Ian crawls back onto the bed, feels for a pulse. Breathes a sigh of relief when he finds one. Rolls over onto his back, wipes the sweat from his face, sighs loudly.

LATER

Ian tries in vain to pry the floorboards up with his fingernails. Eventually finds a loose one. Pulls it up to reveal a box underneath.

He pulls the box up, tears into it. Inside is a stack of newspaper articles and below that, photos.

He thumbs through the articles.

INSERT - ARTICLE HEADLINE

FAMILY OF FOUR SLAIN, EIGHT YEAR OLD MISSING

BACK TO SCENE

He tosses it aside, turns to the next one.

INSERT - ARTICLE HEADLINE

TEEN SURVIVES SIXTH STORY FALL

BACK TO SCENE

Turns to the next one.

INSERT - ARTICLE HEADLINE

DEADLY SHOOTING LEAVES 12 DEAD AND 1 CRITICALLY INJURED

BACK TO SCENE

Ian rapidly leafs through the remaining articles, throws them aside. Looks back into the box to find a series of grizzly crime scene photos.

INSERT - CRIME SCENE PHOTO

An older woman (from the diner picture) lies sprawled on the floor in a pool of blood. Her throat is ripped out, leaving a gaping hole.

BACK TO SCENE

Ian squeezes his eyes shut. Deep shaky breath. Keeps going.

INSERT - CRIME SCENE PHOTO

An older male (also from the diner picture) in a pool of blood. There is a gruesome hole where his left eye should be.

BACK TO SCENE

Ian takes the remainder of the photos and flings them across the room with a yell. Composes himself slightly. Finds one last article in the box. Slowly picks it up.

INSERT - ARTICLE HEADLINE

TODDLER GIVEN SECOND CHANCE

BACK TO SCENE

Ian reads aloud from the article.

IAN

Chicago toddler, Ian Thurston, was pronounced dead at the scene, then resuscitated by paramedics a full three minutes after his heart reportedly stopped. His parents, Jordan and Beverly Thurston, say it was a miracle and they feel truly blessed.

Destroyed, Ian lets the paper drift out of his hand and back into the box. He sinks to the floor, head in hands.

A pair of hands come to rest on his shoulders. He looks up to find Ashlyn standing beside him, looking back to her healthy, beautiful self.

ASHLYN

I wanted to tell you... I should have.

IAN

It all started with me. I'm the reason they all died.

She takes his face between her hands, forces him to make eye contact with her.

ASHLYN

You can't take that on. It wasn't your fault.

His eyes tear up. He tries to push her away but she holds on tight.

ASHLYN

You can't change the past. But you can avenge it.

IAN

How? By tricking vampires into biting me?

ASHLYN

It won't take them long to figure it out, if they haven't already. We'll just have to find another way to get your blood into their system.

IAN

What if we just ask really nicely?

Ian sees the hurt in her eyes. Eases up a bit.

IAN

Do you think it worked?

ASHLYN

I feel... normal. You did it.

IAN

Me? No. I would've pushed the panic button when you almost swallowed your own tongue. That was all your doing.

Ian breaks their contact, moves to the bed.

Ashlyn follows, sits beside him.

ASHLYN

This also means we can help other people... like me.

IAN

And what about me? Who's gonna help me? Where am I gonna be in...
(MORE)

IAN (cont'd)
20 years? 50 years? When you're gone?

Realization seems to slowly wash over Ashlyn's face. Tears form in the corner of her eyes. Remorseful. Sullen.

Their faces inch closer together. Lips almost touching. Ashlyn initiates a kiss.

Ian doesn't reciprocate at first, then pulls her to him, kissing her passionately.

Their hands explore each other's bodies as he eases her back onto the bed. Undresses her.

INT. ASHLYN'S APARTMENT - LABORATORY - NIGHT

The black cat limps across the lab floor, slowly MORPHS into Cecilia. She saunters over to the "blood table", picks up a vial of Ian's blood. Holds it up to the light, smiles sinisterly.

Her cell phone RINGS.

She removes it from a pocket of her leather jacket. Checks the caller I.D. Answers.

CECILIA

Talk to me... yeah, I'm in... tell Vaughn he needs to learn some fucking patience... well, phrase it however you'd like. Don't call me again.

INT. ASHLYN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ian sits up in bed alertly after what must have been a nightmare. Immediately looks for Ashlyn but finds the bed beside him empty. A gold cross and chain rests on a pillow.

The sound of glass SHATTERING in the b.g is followed by a fire alarm WAIL.

Smoke seeps in underneath the door.

Ian hurriedly throws on some clothes, rushes out of the room. At the top of the --

STAIRS

The laboratory down below goes up in flames. The smoke is so thick Ian can barely see.

IAN

(coughing)

Ashlyn!? Where are you?

Flames encroach the staircase as Ian makes his way down.

LABORATORY

Ian shields his face from the immense heat as he searches.

IAN

Ashlyn!

The flames lick at him, forcing him back toward the exit.

IAN

(desperate)

Ashlyn!

He finds a business card for The Grand Lennox Hotel stuck to the door by Ashlyn's pocket knife.

INT. GRANDE LENNOX HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

Ian walks through the lobby with a fire in his eye. Looks bound and determined to get where he's going and God help anyone that gets in his way.

Markus intercepts him.

MARKUS

Your job is no longer --

Ian punches him in the face with such force that Markus is knocked to the floor. He continues to the elevator and gets inside.

ELEVATOR

He contemplates the floor buttons before selecting the fourth floor.

The elevator trembles violently, then begins a downward decent.

Ian grabs the wall to steady himself. Looks perplexed. What's below the lobby?

The elevator comes to an abrupt stop, jostles Ian around. The doors part to reveal an --

UNDERGROUND CAVERN

-- crawling with vampires, both in VAMPIRE and CREATURE FORM.

The sea of creatures part, uncovering a set of steep stone stairs that lead to a ledge. Vaughn and Cecilia (human form) are perched on top, as if King and Queen.

The flicker of numerous torches cast an eerie glow on the two leaders, making them seem that much more evil.

VAUGHN

Come in, come in. We won't bite.

Vaughn laughs thunderously while Cecilia just smiles venomously beside him.

IAN

I'm not staying long. I just came for Ashlyn.

VAUGHN

Ashlyn? Which one is she again?

CECILIA

Cute blonde nurse.

VAUGHN

Of course. Isn't she one of ours?

IAN

Was. She was one of yours.

Vaughn smiles, impressed. Starts down the stairs while Cecilia stays behind. Stops a short distance from the open elevator. Signals someone.

Trey steps out of the shadows in CREATURE FORM, morphs back into HUMAN FORM as he does so.

He grabs Ian by his shirt, drags him out of the elevator. Delivers him to Vaughn.

Ian brushes Trey's hands away.

IAN

Get off of me!

Vaughn nods and Trey files in behind him. Arms folded in front of him. Alert. Ready.

Vaughn looks over Ian, skeptical.

VAUGHN

So this is The Immortal. I thought you'd be more... formidable.

IAN

And you're the blood-sucking son-of-a-bitch that killed my family. I thought you'd be uglier.

Vaughn changes into his CREATURE FORM for a split second, growls ferociously.

Ian isn't phased.

TAN

There we go.

Vaugh rapidly transforms back to HUMAN FORM.

IAN

Where's Ashlyn?

Vaughn motions to Cecilia. She produces a sickly-looking Ashlyn who is barely able to stand on her own two feet.

VAUGHN

I'm afraid your "cure" has started to wear off a bit. It appears you're not the savior that you seem to think you are.

IAN

So what you're telling me is that my blood isn't lethal to vampires.

VAUGHN

It appears so.

IAN

Prove it.

Vaughn looks at a loss for words.

IAN

That's what I thought.

Ian pushes past Vaughn and Trey, heads up the stairs.

Trey gives Vaughn a look, to which Vaughn shakes his head.

As Ian nears, Cecilia pulls Ashlyn back protectively. Snarls.

Ian notices a fresh set of fang marks on Ashlyn's neck.

IAN

What'd they do to you?

Vaughn is suddenly behind Ian.

VAUGHN

She would be dead right now if we hadn't saved her.

ASHLYN

I'd rather be dead.

VAUGHN

That can still be arranged. Celia.

Cecilia sweeps the hair off Ashlyn's neck. Exposes the bite mark even more. MORPHS into her VAMPIRE FORM, sinks her fangs into Ashlyn's neck.

IAN

No. Stop!

Cecilia retracts her fangs. Tosses Ashlyn's limp body aside like a rag doll.

Ian makes a move for her, but Vaughn blocks his path.

VAUGHN

Not so fast.

Cecilia hovers over Ashlyn like a buzzard.

IAN

Get away from her. Don't you touch her!

VAUGHN

How's about an even trade? Her life for yours.

IAN

I've got a better idea.

Ian pulls out the pocket knife, presses it against Vaughn's cheek.

IAN

How's about Ashlyn and I walk out of here and I won't cut that fucking grin off your face?

Vaughn slams Ian against the wall. The knife falls to the ground with a clank.

VAUGHN

It doesn't have to be this way. We could work together. You have what everyone in this room desires. True immortality. Do you really want to waste that freedom spending eternity fighting a losing battle?

IAN

I have no intention of fighting that battle. The only person I want to see dead is you.

Vaughn takes Ian by his throat, lifts him off his feet.

VAUGHN

Do you think you'd grow a new head if I ripped this one off?

IAN

(hoarse)

Only one way to find out.

Vaughn tightens his grip on Ian's neck, jaw clenched, eyes change to purple, fangs bared.

He MORPHS into a horrible, bulging-eyed, pointy-eared, fanged beast. An enormous pair of black wings tears through his flesh and clothing.

He drops Ian suddenly, lets out a primal growl.

Ian stares up in dismay as --

Vaughn turns to reveal a large syringe sticking out of his back, the plunger pushed all the way in.

Vaughn faces his attacker, Cecilia.

VAUGHN

What did you do?

He reaches behind him, tries to pull the needle out. Lunges at Cecilia when he fails.

Cecilia steps back, allows Vaughn to collapse at her feet. She squats down next to him, a safe distance away but close enough to look him in the eye.

CECILIA

Does it hurt?

He sweeps at her with a large, clawed hand but comes up short.

Cecilia straightens up. Steps back to watch the show, a sadistic smile on her face.

Vaughn slowly MORPHS back into his VAMPIRE FORM and then his HUMAN FORM.

Everyone watches in shock as his skin melts off until all that's left is a skeleton.

Then his bones turn to ash.

Ian crawls over to Ashlyn, sweep her into his arms. She's barely hanging on.

CECILIA

Well, now that the unpleasant business is out of the way...

Cecilia turns to face the sea of vampires.

A hint of fear is registered on their distorted faces. Not a single one among them attempts to challenge her authority.

Pleased, she turns to focus on Ian and Ashlyn.

CECILIA

Take her and go.

IAN

What?

CECILIA

Take her and

leave. Quickly. Before I change my mind.

Ian scurries to his feet, pulls Ashlyn up to hers. Tries to help her walk but she's too weak. He scoops her into his arms, walks down the stairs.

The sea of vampires reluctantly part. It's ovbious they don't agree with Cecilia's decision.

CECILIA (O.S.)

You might be untouchable, but she isn't. You come after me and I'll kill her.

Ian enters the elevator.

Trey approaches Cecilia bravely.

TREY

You're letting him go? He can destroy us all.

In a split second, Cecilia has Trey flat on his back, the heel of her boot against his throat.

Ian looks back, sees Cecilia's hold on Trey.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. THURSTON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A middle aged male, JORDAN, lies on the floor. A black boot crushes his throat. He's still alive. Barely.

JORDAN

(suffocating)

Don't hurt my family.

The boot comes off his throat, gives him a temporary reprieve.

Then it comes down on his face.

The heel pierces his left eye.

YOUNG IAN (O.S.)

Dad!

The boot's owner, Cecilia, whips around to find --

Young Ian peeks out from behind an overturned sofa.

BACK TO PRESENT

Ian has a knowing look on his face as the elevator doors close. He reaches for the button, but the elevator lurches upward.

Ian turns his attention to Ashlyn. Looks down at her still form in his arm.

Her eyes slowly open to reveal that they are an intense shade of purple.

Before Ian can react, she sinks her fangs into his neck.

He struggles. Falls to the floor with her.

The elevator comes to an abrupt, SCREECHING halt.

The light overhead flickers, then goes out.

Everything goes BLACK.

FADE OUT.