

The Monster Squad

by
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(Based on the 1987 original film)
Working Draft

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FADE IN

EXT. SEATONVILLE HARBOR - NIGHT

The brackish waters of a modest commercial marina, with rows of contract fishing and cargo trawlers hugging the concrete strip of the waterfront and warehouse blocks. Fog hangs low over the water. All's quiet on the night watch, save for the dinging of buoys and slow churn of the tides.

INT. HARBORMASTER'S OFFICE

The cluttered office of the Harbormaster, manned by a single operator: a night watchman in his late fifties. Hokey nautical memorabilia hugs the walls, a coffee pot brews, and the watchman reads from a dog-eared paperback while seated before several security monitors.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

(singsong)

My father's a poor missionary... he
saves pretty women from sin...

The silhouette of a man moves across the monitors, unnoticed by the sentry; pacing from one screen to the next, along the perimeter fence.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

(still singing)

... he'll save you a blonde for five
dollars... Lord, how the money rolls
in.

The sentry flips a page, not noticing as the intruder nonchalantly LEAPS over the twelve-foot high fence without missing a step, vanishing from the security cameras' view.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEATONVILLE HARBOR

Leather dress shoes touch down on the corrugated steel roof of a warehouse, as the intruder is revealed: CHARLES RUEGER, somewhere in his forties, bespectacled, his expression haunted. Dressed in a threadbare overcoat and the dirty, ripped trappings of what was once a three-piece suit underneath. He stoops into a crouch and checks his watch: it's 11:58.

INT. HARBORMASTER'S OFFICE

Click. An old digital clock atop the sentry's desk ticks over to 11:59. The night watchman stirs his coffee, setting the mug down and returning to his reading. He flips another page, glancing upward at a faint rattling sound; his expression registers confusion as he realizes that it's the SPOON, vibrating against the ceramic coffee cup.

EXT. SEATONVILLE HARBOR

Rueger stands, peering out into the foggy waters. From somewhere in the distance, a low, throbbing HUM can be heard; growing louder, coming closer.

INT. HARBORMASTER'S OFFICE

The sentry fishes around beneath piles of paperwork and through the drawers of his desk, looking for the source of the sound. Beyond the office's windows and over the quiet sprawl of the marina, a hazy GLOW has appeared on the horizon, buried in the fog and centered by two large red lights. The sentry glances up, squinting outward.

EXT. SEATONVILLE HARBOR

Rueger stands at the harbor's edge, his body rigid with tension. The ephemeral glow and steady thrumming sound slice through the night air as the source emerges from the fog...

INT. HARBORMASTER'S OFFICE

... the sentry sees it as Rueger does, his expression contorting in horror. It's a MASSIVE MERCHANT FREIGHTER with Cyrillic lettering on the bow. Flames flicker behind the portholes and on the deck, its engines bellowing as it steams ahead on a crash course with the docks. The sentry makes a clumsy lunge for the phone, but it's too late.

EXT. SEATONVILLE HARBOR

A moment of deathly silence, and then: impact. Timbers explode, smaller ships are scattered and capsized by the wake churned out by the huge ship. It shanks into the concrete waterfront, ripping through steel, bending the massive frame of a loading crane as though it were made of matchsticks. The echoes of the violent arrival taper off, as does the sounds of breaking glass and falling metal. Once again, all is quiet.

Rueger looks on in disbelief from his rooftop perch. He moves; a series of cautious steps and superhuman agility, as he leaps onto the broken neck of the crane and scales it to the deck of the hulking ship.

EXT. SHIP'S DECK

The freighter's main deck has been shattered, unlashed cargo and open flames everywhere. Rueger picks his way through the debris, cautiously approaching the sprawled shape of a BODY. He turns it over with his foot: the sailor's neck has been torn open, the man's face contorted into an expression of raw, frozen TERROR. As Rueger recoils slightly, a frantic pair of hands abruptly SEIZES him. A survivor. The sailor babbles in Russian, as Rueger struggles against him.

RUEGER

Where is he?! For God's sake...

The man breaks away with a rough shove, knocking Rueger to the ground and running for one of the open hatches to the hold.

The sailor staggers down the steps and into the murky darkness. Rueger fights to his feet as the sound of panicked screaming emerges from the stairwell; it peaks, and is cut off sharply by a horrible gurgling sound.

Rueger's breathing quickens. Footsteps. From the smoke and flames emerges a tall, elegant form: swarthy and lean, dressed in an archaic ensemble of hooded cloak and a sleek, military-style tunic and slacks. KAZIGLU BEY. His long black hair pulled into an ornamental topknot, bloodied hands adorned in exotic silver rings. His black eyes find Rueger cowering amidst the devastation, and the gap between the men is sheared in a single, predatory leap.

Bey's fingers close around Rueger's throat. Holding him in place as his free hand tears Rueger's shirt open, revealing a ragged mark carved into the skin there: a crude rendition of a dragon wrapped around a crusader's cross. Bey releases his grip, as Rueger shrinks back in fear.

KAZIGLU

The Ruegermarka. You heed its call.

RUEGER

As commanded... I'm Ch... Charles
Rueger.

KAZIGLU

You know my face, Charles?

RUEGER

I do.

KAZIGLU

And you've prepared for my arrival.

RUEGER

Yes, I h... have him. Somewhere safe.

The sound of approaching SIRENS can be heard in the distance. Kaziglu moves to the lip of the ship's deck, taking in the view of the city before him: sleepy lights, tucked into the crescent of a Pacific Northwest mountain range. He smiles.

RUEGER

They're coming, Master... we should go.

KAZIGLU

Yes. For now.

The fog has begun to thin, revealing the devastated waterfront. The full moon burns overhead.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEATONVILLE HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

Morning has risen over the laconic city's highschool: an efficient, box-like brick and mortar structure, its lawn carpeted in shed autumn leaves. In the distance, a plume of thick smoke rips across the blue of the sky, the aftermath of the waterfront carnage.

INT. SEATONVILLE HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

Two pairs of feet march quickly down an empty corridor: modest blue pumps worn by a redheaded woman in her thirties, MRS. GILMAN, and a pair of ratty black Converse sneakers worn by LIAM CROSS, a sullen-faced boy of fourteen. Upon reaching the principal's office, Mrs. Gilman indicates an empty SEAT with a sharp gesture. Liam seats himself slouching.

Mrs. Gilman disappears into the office's main door. A beat. When she emerges, it's with a worn-looking man with an unkempt beard, a pie-bald-and-ponytail hairstyle, and a flannel shirt... the school's resident guidance counselor, MR. COMBS. He takes one look at Liam, and sighs.

CUT TO:

INT. THE FEELINGS ROOM

A small classroom, done up in muted blues and browns. Construction-paper letters spell out hokey words of inspiration, scattered between motivational posters from the late 1980's. One reads "WRAP YOUR ARMS AROUND THE WORLD." Another reads "SHAME AND FEELINGS ARE NOT THE SAME THING." Mr. Combs sits atop a stool at the front of the room, speaking.

MR. COMBS

... all you hear from your peers, your parents... particularly your fathers, right? They say that it's not cool to express how you feel, that emotions aren't something to be proud of. They say, "curl it up, man. Don't resent me."

Liam slumps over at a desk, glassy-eyed.

MR. COMBS

Liam, you try to express yourself artistically... and what do you get told? That it's not "normal" behavior. And it makes you want to lash out. And I say... that's valid.

Two seats to Liam's left is D'JUAN HOUSTON, age FIFTEEN, a sharp-looking African-American kid. He taps his pencil, also bored stiff.

MR. COMBS

D'Juan, you might have some resentment towards your brother for making the professional choices that he has...

but even if ~~the COMBS~~ back on his hometown to go live it up and play ball for Eastern, and made life here twice as hard for you as a result, then... we just take a deep breath, and say... let it be.

D'JUAN

Borcoul started up with that "Benedict Houston" bullshit again, Mr. Combs. With all due respect to you doing your job... someone comes at me with that, ten times outta ten, someone's getting rawed in the face.

MR. COMBS

Then at least we've got something to work with, right? And David... Chud...

To D'Juan's left is a third boy: moon-faced and stocky, hunched over his desk. David "Chud" Carruthers, age fourteen.

MR. COMBS

... you've got a lot of issues to deal with. Which could be a good thing.

Mr. Combs rises from his stool, pacing about the front of the room as he speaks.

MR. COMBS

Just to say it... I do cherish the time that we spend in here together. That's me being honest. But the world's a big concept. Bigger than me, or you, or this room... and sometimes it's easy to lose sight of that fact.

But if you ~~keep COMBS' cords down~~ on
the negative, the dark and heavy
things... boys, you're going to
miss out on a lot of beauty.

Dramatically, Combs DRAGS on the cord for the blinds, jerking them upward. The view through the windows is as follows: half-bare trees, the toxic smoke-column from the bay, and an OLD WOMAN scolding her dog as it squats over the school's front lawn. Combs lets the blinds drop, just as sharply.

MR. COMBS

Anyways... okay. Life is what
happens when you're making plans
for-

The classroom's door BANGS INWARD, suddenly. In walks COACH STEELE, a severe-looking ex-jock in his early fifties, a shit-licking grin on his face. His fist is cinched around the collar of the army jacket worn by DEACON MEANS, sixteen, with stringy black hair and a charmingly burned-out demeanor.

MR. COMBS

Coach Steele.

COACH STEELE

Mr. Combs. Dropping off your trash.
Found this one hiding behind the
cafeteria, snaking a smoke...

Steele shoves Deacon forward. The teenager seats himself as far away from the others as possible, dropping into a slouch and tugging up the hood of his sweatshirt.

DEACON

Oh, I wasn't hiding.

COACH STEELE

Shut up, Means.

MR. COMBS

Okay. Thank you, Coach... though
I'm not really sure that words like
"trash" are-

COACH STEELE

Mr. Combs. That's the only PG-rated
word that comes to mind when
discussing your regulars.

Steele chuckles to himself, backing up to the door.

COACH STEELE

Oh, and Means? Next time I catch
you on the slide, you better hope
Combs is close enough to hear you
hollering. Dig?

DEACON

(sarcastically)

Dig it, badger.

Steele slams the door behind him, sending papers scattering
from Combs' desk. Combs wearily goes about picking them up.

MR. COMBS

Now, see? That could be an
excellent example of what happens
to feelings when they go
unexpressed, and get pent up.

DEACON

Or when an employer doesn't do
background checks.

MR. COMBS

Deacon. Please. As we were
discussing... expressing ourselves.
I have a little video here...

Audible GROANS, as Mr. Combs produces a battered old VHS
sleeve and tape.

MR. COMBS

Yes, yes, it's a little 'cheesy' and a little 'eighties,' but the message... I think... is pretty timeless. It's called "An Inquiry of the Spirit," and it's about twenty minutes long.

Combs fiddles with an A/V TOWER at the front of the room, inserting the tape and flipping on the television.

MR. COMBS

I think you can handle it. I'll be back in a bit.

Wobbly synth music chirps up as the movie starts: a blurry, aged graphic with the film's title. As the boys settle into their slumps and sour expressions, the HOST appears: bad hair, bad moustache, bad lycra workout suit, seated cross-legged in a cheap set that's styled to look like a Japanese garden. The text beneath him reads "DAVE YOUNG - EMOTIONAL CARTOGRAPHER."

DAVE YOUNG

Emotions... the unspoken language of the universe. Whether it's plants, animals, or the invisible chakras of life on this planet...

D'Juan turns in his seat, facing Deacon, who has been grinning at the back of his head the whole time.

D'JUAN

You need help with something?

DEACON

I'm just curious. Jocks usually have a bye on winding up in here.

CHUD

Ex-jock.

The boys shift their attention to Chud, as he also turns towards Deacon.

CHUD

He got suspended from the basketball team last week.

DEACON

(amused)

Oh, my. By Coach Steele? Tsk.

D'JUAN

Yeah. I missed the part where you explain why you give a shit?

DEACON

Well... I don't, see. But it's that kind of reckless show of free will that moves a guy from one rung of the social ladder to the next one down... one day, you're doing pick and rolls and coppering feels off cheerleaders, and the next thing you know...

Deacon gestures at the screen, where David Young is engaging in a series of exaggerated BREATHING EXERCISES; panting and stretching from the lotus position.

DEACON

You're one of Combs kids.

D'JUAN

Difference being that I'm in here for standing up for myself, not because the principal thinks I'm gonna burn the school down.

DEACON

It starts slow.

D'JUAN

Wisdoms from a guy who got held back two years and lives in a junkyard? You should make your own video, Means.

DEACON

(mock-gasp)

He knows my name!

Chud has been fishing around in his backpack during the exchange. He pulls out a DVD case and holds it up.

CHUD

I got something we can watch instead.

D'JUAN

Dumbass, that's a DVD. You see a DVD player up there?

CHUD

I'm not TALKING to you.

DEACON

What is it?

CHUD

"Twins of Evil." It's a horror flick from the seventies...

D'JUAN

Man, nobody wants to watch your stupid monster movies. Shut up, and settle.

DEACON

I do. Any tits in it?

CHUD

Oh my God, there's this one scene...

D'JUAN

Oh my God, who gives a shit? What
are you bringing that to school
for, anyway?

CHUD

My mom, uh...

D'JUAN

I don't care.

DEACON

Then stop interrupting. How many
tits, kid?

CHUD

A shit-ton. There's also this girl-
on-girl thing, where...

LIAM

That's a different movie.

A pause. All eyes go to Liam, who hasn't moved; he doesn't return the glances.

CHUD

What?

LIAM

You're thinking of "The Vampire Lovers." Same studio, same trilogy, different movie.

DEACON

And then there were two.

CHUD

Woah. I didn't know you were into the genre.

LIAM

Yeah.

D'JUAN

Oh, okay. I didn't know you all had
a little club going on in here...

CHUD

It's not a CLUB. (to Liam) You ever
see the original "Legend of Hell
House," from...

D'JUAN

Yo. Hey. Listen to me... nobody
cares about horror movies, yeah?
Nobody.

CHUD

Like you know anything about it!

D'JUAN

I know that nobody cares. Only some
sorry-ass kids who got scared when
they were little, and who can't let
the shit go. It's psychological.

LIAM

It's escapism. Same as any movies,
any books.

CHUD

Thank you! Thank you. He knows what
he's talking about.

D'JUAN

He doesn't, and you don't, either.
Which is why you're bringing some
stupid DVDs to SCHOOL with you.
That's not healthy.

DEACON

What's wrong with a little
initiative?

D'JUAN
You still talking, Means?

DEACON
I'm an advocate for freedom, jock.
Which means that... if a man wants
to bring the things that make him
happy to this squalid shithole,
then...

Deacon continues to orate, as he digs into his own bookbag, coming up with ANOTHER DVD box. His, however, is quite clearly PORN, as illustrated by the glossy raunch on the cover.

DEACON
.. he should have the right to do
so. It's America.

D'Juan and Chud are transfixed on the DVD. Liam couldn't look more indifferent.

CHUD
I'll trade you.

D'JUAN
I'll buy that off you, right here.

CHUD
Oh, what happened to all the shit
you were talking two minutes ago?

D'JUAN
That was PERSONAL, kid. This is
business. How much you want for it?

DEACON
This one's got sentimental value...
so it's not for sale. The hundred
or so other ones that my old man
has, however, are.

CHUD

I need it more than HE does. I
can't even bring up WIKIPEDIA on my
computer at home...

D'JUAN

Oh, you got it rough. You're from
the STREETS.

DEACON

Gents, gents. I assure you, there's
enough smut to go around.. if you'd
like to confer after school, then
I'd be happy to deliver.

D'JUAN

What, at my HOUSE? My pop would
throw you from the porch to the
curb without asking if you were
homeless. No.

CHUD

Same. Not... a good idea.

DEACON

No harm, no foul. (to Liam) What
about you, Cross?

LIAM

I don't want to buy any of your
porn.

DEACON

No, no. Your place. Five minutes,
we're in and out.

LIAM

That's not happening.

DEACON

Five dollars.

LIAM

No.

D'JUAN

I got five on it, too. Come on.

LIAM

I said NO.

D'JUAN

Liam. Consider this...

Chud leans over, taking the DVD from Deacon; he holds it up, illustratively.

D'JUAN

... part of our education.

Liam shoves the DVD away, as the classroom door opens. It's Mr. Combs: in his hands is a coffee mug, along with a small CADDY containing four cups of watery orange juice.

MR. COMBS

Alright, I know I shouldn't be doing this, but I brought juice...

He looks up, catching the boys in mid-gawk. The porno. Chud's DVD. Awkward silence, as Liam resumes his slouching.

MR. COMBS

Alright. Is everybody's parental contact information up to date?

CUT TO:

INT. SEATONVILLE HIGHSCHOOL CAFETERIA

A gooey splat of macaroni is ladled onto a lunch tray, as Liam stands in line with the lunchtime rush. He pays for his meal and starts towards a table; CHUD intercepts him in mid-stride.

CHUD

Can you believe those guys?

Liam tries to alter course. It's no use. Chud follows, toting his own tray.

CHUD

I don't know about you, but if Combs does call our parents... I'm blaming everything on that Means kid. He's a mess in a mop bucket. Scotty Tyer says he saw him shooting at cars from an overpass last spring.

Liam takes a seat, silent. Chud squeezes in next to him.

CHUD

You want to see something?

LIAM

No.

Undeterred, Chud unfolds a piece of paper from his pocket and smoothes it out on the table. It's a crude, gruesome picture of a mer-monster decapitating a victim; its red hair and shoes are clearly those of MRS. GILMAN.

CHUD

I got an entire book of these. And that isn't counting the ones that got confiscated.

Liam gives Chud a dead-eyed glare, as a figure dressed in a grey SMOCK moves behind them.

ANGELINE (OSV)

Not bad. But arterial spray comes out in dots and dashes, not like a goddamned fire hose.

Liam and Chud look up to the third party: it's a CAFETERIA ATTENDANT, a hard-looking woman in her early fifties. Her nametag reads: ANGELINE.

CHUD

Not to sound rude, but what the hell do you know about arterial spray? You're the lunch lady.

Angeline nods, considering this.

ANGELINE

True. Which means that I have the choice of shitting or spitting in your food the next time you're in here, doesn't it?

Angeline continues on her way, leaving Chud's and his stupefied expression.

CHUD

Everybody's an asshole.

LIAM

She's always like that. Lives halfway down the block from my house.

CHUD

Oh, yeah! Speaking of which... we never figured out a time to get together, later... I'm thinking seven, seven-thirty...

LIAM

What part of "no" isn't registering...

CHUD

I mean, I have to be home for dinner. That's non-negotiable...

Chud's limited attention span has lapsed; he's watching D'JUAN as the older boy crosses to a nearby table.

CHUD

And you're still NOT INVITED,
dickhead. Don't act like you can't
hear me.

D'Juan almost lets the comment slide... but doesn't. He stops, turns, and runs directly into a pair of tall, sneering teenagers: JEREMY AND GRANT FLANCH, both sixteen, and identical twins. The Flanches are flanked by three other boys, one of which is nursing a sour-looking BRUISE under his eye.

JEREMY

A moment, D'Juan?

GRANT

Ryan tells us that you two had yourselves a little altercation between classes this morning.

D'Juan remains unimpressed, squaring up on the other boys and folding his arms.

D'JUAN

I'd say it was more like... he spoke ill, and I punched him in the head.

JEREMY

That's an admission, Grant.

GRANT

It certainly is, Jeremy. (to D'Juan) I don't think he realizes that he's on notice.

JEREMY

Your brother's a fucking disgrace to this town.

The only person who doesn't seem to realize that you're not wanted in this school is you... which means we've got a problem, Houston.

Chud's abrupt snort-laugh cuts Jeremy off in mid-threat. The Flanches and their cronies shift their glances to he and Liam.

GRANT

The hell you laughing at, bitchcakes?

Chud drops his eyes to his food. Liam doesn't blink.

LIAM

Leave him alone, Grant.

JEREMY

Or what, Cross?

Jeremy pushes past his brother, leaning down over the table.

JEREMY

C'mon, daddy's boy. Stand up for the retard. Say something.

Liam doesn't break the eye contact, but remains silent. Jeremy picks up the apple that's on his lunch tray, and brings it to his mouth for a bite; he's STOPPED in mid-motion by the sudden clamping of another hand. It's Deacon's. Deacon grins, crookedly.

DEACON

Drop it.

Jeremy does. The apple hits the tabletop. Rolls. The other boys step forward as Jeremy wrenches his arm loose from Deacon's grip.

DEACON

Now, the way I see it... we can do one of two things, here.

We can act DEACON responsible young
men and step away, pride intact.
(Pause) Or I can tell you two that
the next time I drill your mom, I'm
gonna tap so deep that she'll pop
out triplets... and see where we go
from there.

Jeremy and Grant exchange a brief look. Grant shakes his head.

GRANT

Maybe that cut it in sixth grade,
Means. But there's nothing scary
about a sorry-ass piece of shit
like you in the daylight.

A moment of tense silence; Deacon's face is expressionless. Without warning, he suddenly lunges in and BARKS LIKE A RABID DOG at the Flanches, causing them both to jerk back.

DEACON

Better check under your bed
tonight.

Grant shakes his head, tugging on Jeremy's arm.

GRANT

Leave the mongoloids to their
misery. C'mon.

Grant, Jeremy and the boys take off; D'Juan is left looking at Deacon.

D'JUAN

I didn't ask for it, I didn't want
it.

He leaves. Liam's next. He hefts his bookbag and stomps to the nearest exit, pushing through and slamming it behind him.

DEACON
(to Chud)
Meeting adjourned?

CUT TO:

EXT. STORAGE LOT - DAY

The sudden racket of a corrugated steel door being dragged upward, bathing a small storage space in daylight. Rueger stands in the doorway, looking as ragged as ever: before him is a single, coffin-shaped crate draped in a tarp. He glances around before stepping inward and kneeling next to the crate, peeling back one of the canvas flaps: the stencils on the wood read "CASTAIC NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM."

Rueger slips his hand to his mouth, feeling at his gums. It withdraws with a single TOOTH pinched between his thumb and forefinger. He examines it, numbly.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEATONVILLE HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

The tolling of the school day's final bell, as students scatter across the front lawn. Liam is among them, his steps dull. He doesn't realize that he's passed CHUD, sitting atop the stairs. As Liam passes, Chud hops up, falling into step behind him... much to Liam's obvious chagrin.

CHUD

Hey... sorry about that shit with
Jeremy and Grant... I don't like to
say that I hate anybody, but I
really, really hate those guys...

Liam keeps walking. Chud dogs along.

CHUD

... but anyway, I was thinking, it's Friday... maybe we could go the P-I-P... gorge ourselves on some comics, get some pizza, head back to your pl-

Liam stops. Chud bumps into him.

LIAM

Stop. Okay? Just stop. "We"... there is no "we," Chud. What happens in there... (gesturing to the school)... doesn't mean ANYTHING out here, alright? We have nothing in common. We're not friends, we're not in this together.

Liam starts walking again. Chud doesn't follow.

LIAM

Go home.

CHUD

You think you're the only one who feels like they live to be crapped on, Liam?

Chud starts to follow him again, upset.

CHUD

We have something in common. We're both social skidmarks. And I just thought that maybe... JUST maybe... I could watch forget about that fact and watch some stupid-ass old movies with someone who isn't a complete and total asshole.

Chud pushes past him, on the sidewalk.

CHUD

But that's too much to ask, right?

Chud steps off the curb. Liam's face contorts in sudden shock; he lunges out and grabs him by the backpack strap, wrenching him back onto the sidewalk as a BATTERED OLD VAN roars past, nearly mowing Chud down. A beat of stunned silence as the boys stare at each other. Then:

CHUD

I hate this goddamned town. I hate this school, I hate the college, I wish I had a suitcase nuke so I could blow it all up, eat the ashes, and then shit them out into the waters of the bay.

Liam can't help but to crack a grin.

CHUD

It's not funny.

LIAM

I'm sorry, it's... you're right. You want to come over, come over. 233 Sunny Sign Place.

Chud's face brightens at the invitation.

CHUD

Screw it, let's go. My mom's not going to lose it if I miss one dinner...

LIAM

You sure?

The boys start walking, again.

CHUD

No. I'd better call. I can stop and
use the phone out in front of the
Chug-N'-Lug...

The boys' voices fade as the camera drifts upward, gradually moving over the sleepy details of the town to reveal the hit-and-run driver in his RAMSHACKLE VAN, still speeding along. It's Rueger, white knuckles wrapped around the steering wheel.

The van chugs past a sign reading "NORTHWESTERN CAMPUS DRIVE," "OLD TOWN SEATONVILLE" and "CHERRYMOUNT TERRACE," driving on.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNNY SIGN PLACE

A quaint neighborhood, lined by stripped elm trees and fallen autumn leaves. Chud and Liam walk down the center of the street, talking.

INT. THE CROSS HOME - DUSK

A modest, cozy place: second-hand furniture, hardwood floors. A young girl sits cross-legged on the couch, reading a copy of "FANGORIA" with a broad grin as the television prattles on: a news report, taking place alongside a stretch of forested highway.

REPORTER (VO)

... police say that it was here that
the alleged accident occurred,
involving a truck on its way to
Castaic County... missing is the
cargo. Mummified remains from the
recently-closed Seatonville
Heritage Center, bound for their
new home...

Chud and Liam's voices grow louder, along with the sound of feet on the front porch. The front door opens, as they amble in.

CHUD

So I say the only way a ship can show up from halfway around the world without ANYBODY knowing is... and excuse me if I'm being honest here... terrorists. Mr. Auciello says I'm disrupting the class, and so...

LIAM

Mom?

The young girl doesn't look up from her magazine. This is LIZEY CROSS, ten years old, Liam's sister.

LIAM

Chud, Lizey. Lizey, Chud.

LIZEY

Your name sounds like a dog taking a crap.

CHUD

Your face looks like a dog already did.

Liam gives Chud a strange look; the kind that suggests a 9th-grade shouldn't be insulting kids. Chud shrugs.

LIAM

Lizey's cool. Except for the fact that she's a horror movie fiend too, which means...

Liam steps to the couch, lunges down, and SNATCHES the copy of Fangoria from where Lizey hid it.

LIAM

... she's always snaking my stuff.
How many times have I told you?! If
you're gonna read them, READ THEM
IN MY ROOM.

LIZEY

There's spiders out there!

Liam rolls the magazine up, and starts out of the room.

LIAM

When mom catches you, she blames
me.

LIZEY

Because I'm sweet.

LIAM

Because you're a little viper. Keep
it up, we're both gonna wind up
without ANY.

OSV

Any what?

Liam quickly hides the magazine behind his back as his MOTHER enters the living room.

LIZE + LIAM

Hi mom.

MRS. CROSS

Uh-hunh.

LIZEY

This is Chud!

MRS. CROSS

(pleasantly)

Hi, Chud. (to Liam) You
hanging out tonight?

LIAM

For a bit. We'll be out back.

MRS. CROSS

I'll make extra rigatoni... Lizey,
can you show "Chud" where Liam's
room is? I need to borrow your
brother for a second.

Lizey springs up, bounding down the hallway. Chud follows.

MRS. CROSS

Okay. We'll pretend that you don't
have that magazine behind your
back, and move straight to the part
where I ask you about Mrs. Gilman.

LIAM

She got pissed off about my
drawings... again.

MRS. CROSS

Liam....

LIAM

She says to draw what you want,
then you do, and...

MRS. CROSS

Liam, I know. I'm not saying you
need to change who you are, or do
what's going to make HER happy,
but...

LIAM

Censor myself.

MRS. CROSS

Just... a tiny, teeny, itty-bitty
bit. In school. Outside of that,
draw whatever you want.

As long as MRS. CROSS (don't) me
getting my head eaten off. Please?

LIAM

I'll try.

MRS. CROSS

Good enough. Len's coming home in
about twenty, go have fun with your
friend. "Chud?"

LIAM

His name's Davey.

MRS. CROSS

I can see why he prefers Chud. I'll
have Lizey bring some food out.

Liam nods, his smile thin. He heads towards the back of the house, as Mrs. Cross watches him go.

MRS. CROSS

"Davey?" "Davey."

CUT TO:

EXT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - DUSK

On the fringes of Seatonville: the silhouette of a derelict sanitarium, surrounded by a good square mile of dilapidated weeds and overgrowth.

INT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM

Rueger struggles to push the crate along on a small mover's dolly, the sterile corridor filled with trash, and the walls stained by fetid water. He pushes it upright, wipes the sweat from his forehead, and continues down the hallway, his way lit by work lights.

Rueger continues down another hallway, its length lined with sealed CELL doors.

Pausing before one, he raises his light and peers through the cracked glass of the observation window: inside is the wide, empty stare of KAZIGLU's face, his bloodstained mouth agape. Rueger glances down to his watch, and returns to his work.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CROSS HOUSE - DUSK

Liam walks across a neglected lawn, the yard offering a magnificent view of the steel-grey waters of the bay. He takes it in briefly before continuing on, to the low, ivy-draped shape of an old BOMB SHELTER: his converted room, affectionately known as "THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE."

INT. THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE

The door pushes inward to the sounds of an argument. Lizey and Chud, standing inside what's clearly a shrine to the last seventy years in horror cinema: posters plastered thick against the walls, action figures meticulously arranged on shelves, an entire book case of VHS and DVDs. A computer desk and a bed round out the decor, the latter of which Chud SITS on as he looks to Liam.

CHUD

Your sister is a psycho.

LIZEY

I am not! HE was trying to play
with your Dr. Phibes action figure!

CHUD

She's a liar... AND it's the
Phantom of the Opera, stupid.

LIAM

I don't-

LIZEY

If I can't play with them, HE can't
play with them, Liam!

LIAM

Lizey-

CHUD

Action figures are not for PLAYING
WITH. They're for APPRECIATING.

LIZEY

You're stupid.

LIAM

Keep it DOWN. The neighbors bitch.

CHUD

Dude, how are they going to hear
anything? It's a bomb shelter.
(Pause) I think.

Liam kicks his shoes off, shaking his head.

LIAM

It's a... whoever owned the property
during World War Two apparently
thought the Japanese were going to
invade, so they built this... thing.
Bunker, pillbox, whatever.

LIZEY

I get it when Liam goes to college!
Or gets sent to military school.

CHUD

Aren't you supposed to be going
inside now? The adults are trying
to talk.

LIZEY

You're like four years older than
me, dickhead!

A sudden series of knocks rattle the Slaughterhouse's door.

LIAM

Shit. Len.

Lizey ducks down at the foot of the bed, covering herself with the hanging comforter. Chud looks to her, slowly. Then to Liam. Obviously confused.

CHUD

Who?

Liam twists the door handle: standing outside is DEACON, his hood up, an old canvas-style army bag slung over his hip.

DEACON

Colder than Frosty's cock out here.

LIAM

No. How did you... why?

DEACON

Internet Yellow Pages. Your mom said you'd be out here, so... ka-boom.

LIAM

You talked to my MOM?

Lizey emerges from her hiding place, pulling up alongside Liam. He tries to push her back with his hip.

LIZEY

Hi. I'm Lizey.

DEACON

Cool. I'm Deacon. Pound.

LIAM

No, no, NO...

Deacon pushes past Liam, offering his fist. Lizey gives it a solid wallop with her own hand.

DEACON

How thick are the walls in this
thing?

CHUD

Man, who invited you?

DEACON

I'm just honoring our gentleman's
agreement from earlier today,
Pudski...

CHUD

CHUD.

DEACON

... CHUD. But if I'm unwelcome, then
I can most certainly adjourn...
aaaand take my wares with me.

LIAM

"Wares?" Are you serious?

DEACON

Like a case of black pox. Brought a
big ol' sack of por...

Deacon pats his canvas bag appreciatively, trailing off as
his glances down to Lizey's grinning face.

DEACON

... Por. P-O-R. Pay on Return, for
the... stuff.

LIAM

You need to GO. Okay, Lizey...

Another series of knocks at the door. Sharp and quick. Liam groans. Lizey scurries past Deacon and Chud, resuming her hiding place. Liam gestures sharply for quiet, and opens the door, revealing... D'JUAN.

D'JUAN

'Sup? Deacon texted me, said he was gonna be over here.

CHUD

Oh, this is getting better all the time.

Deacon looks over his shoulder from where he's standing: in front of Liam's action figures, with a small toy of some 50's b-horror creature in his hand.

DEACON

Hey-hey, there he is. Just in time, auction's about to begin.

Liam notices Deacon, with the toy. He walks over, snatching at it. Deacon jerks it away from his grasp.

LIAM

Give it. I'm not screwing around.

DEACON

Easy. No need to draw down, gangster. I was just messing with the kung-fu grip.

Liam grabs the figure, replacing it carefully on his shelf.

LIAM

It doesn't HAVE a goddamned kung-fu grip. D'Juan, Deacon was just getting the hell out of here...

Lizey's head pops out from under the blanket.

LIZEY

(to D'Juan)

Hi! I'm Lizey.

CHUD
(to Deacon)
They're for appreciating.

D'JUAN
(to Lizey)
'sup, Lizey?

LIAM
Chud.

D'JUAN
(to Deacon)
We doing this thing, or what?

LIAM
D'Juan.

DEACON
(to Chud)
I appreciate the shit out of them,
thank you. I'm not an expert, I'm
not culty about it, but I've seen
the Maniac Cop series enough times
to be considered for club
membership.

LIAM
(to Deacon)
There's no CLUB.

CHUD
(to Liam)
There's a club?

LIAM
(to Chud)
There's NO club!

DEACON

Fine. All I'm saying is, I
appreciate. I appreciate like a son
of a bitch.

CHUD

You don't appreciate on the same
level as WE do.

D'JUAN

You're saying that like it's a BAD
thing? Like he should be doing what
you do after school, trying to come
up with a scientific explanation
why the Wolfman's pants never get
tore up, even though the rest of
his clothes are like... off?

CHUD

That's not SCIENCE, you dumb shit.
It's tradition. So you don't see
his nards.

D'Juan's face is blank. A pause. Then... laughter.

DEACON

"Nards?"

D'JUAN

Yeah, he said "nards."

CHUD

What's wrong with nards!

DEACON

What isn't wrong with it?

LIAM

Okay, fuck it. Out. LEAVE.
Everybody...

Liam seizes the bag under Deacon's arm and gives it a sharp jerk. It promptly RIPS OPEN, resulting in a shower of ultra-glossy smut rags flying all over the room. Nobody moves, as Deacon stares at the torn bag in his hand, all other eyes on the floor.

LIZE

(Giggling) GROSS!

A flurry of movement commences, as both Chud and D'Juan hit the floor on their hands and knees and Deacon and Liam both attempt to start collecting the scattered porno.

CHUD

Oh my God, look at this.
"Spanker"...

LIAM

Put it in the...

D'JUAN

...let me see that shit...

DEACON

... you TORE the bag, man...

CHUD

...get your fucking hands off my
porn!

There's a brief knock at the door, and it swings inward. Standing over the chaotic pitch of the scene is LEN, Mrs. Cross' boyfriend; built sturdy and grey-haired, he seems to be in his late forties, with dark eyes and a solid line of a mouth. He's dressed in the dark navy and crisp white of a paramedic. He's also got two plates of food in his hands.

LEN

Liam, your mom got a plate for your
friend, and...

Silence. Len stops dead in his shoes, and looks to the magazines. Liam looks to Len. Lize hides herself behind the couch, about ten seconds too late.

LIAM

Len. Uh, these are my...

CHUD

Hi, Len. I'm Chud.

Chud stands and offers his hand jauntily, but Len looks right past him. The silence continues, until the older man takes a long breath and sets the plates down.

LEN

Okay, I don't want to know... or care... whose this is, but get it off the floor and get it out of here.

DEACON

Sir, it's mine. These guys didn't even want to look at it, but I...

LEN

I said I don't want to hear it. Up. Off. Out. Everybody. Lize, get out from behind there and go inside.

D'Juan and Deacon both grab armloads of magazines, as does Chud. Lize silently and petulantly heads for the Slaughterhouse's door.

LIZE

It wasn't Liam's fault.

LEN

Go help your mom.

CHUD

Dude, do you want me to...

LIAM

No. Go home. We'll do it another time.

D'Juan tips a stoic nod to Liam, and is out the door. Deacon follows.

DEACON

Sorry, Liam.

Chud is the last one out, dragging his backpack behind him.

CHUD

Nice meeting you, sir.

Len ignores him entirely, and closes the door tensely behind him.

LEN

We need to talk.

LIAM

I don't have anything to say.

LEN

Fine. Then I'll talk. It's nice to see you having friends over here, but... not when it's compounding certain things.

LIAM

Such as?

LEN

Same things we're always going around about, Liam. Problems at school, staying locked down in here with your horror movies, avoiding reality.

LIAM

(Laughing)

Avoiding reality? Why don't you strap my shoes on for a day, Len? See how it feels to have everyone hating you, just so they can feel better about their stupid-ass selves?

LEN

Liam, it's high school. It's four years of ducking your head and trying to find reasons to get up in the morning. Everybody has to get through it, you just do your best and say "screw it" to whatever anybody else thinks. That's life.

LIAM

Thanks for the tip, but I got my dose of "look outside to the beautiful world beyond your door" today. I don't need another spoonful.

LEN

Then we'll get right to the point. Your mom respects your right to figure yourself out, and I respect her. So what you do in here? That's your business. The problem is the effect it has on Lize.

LIAM

What 'effect'?

LEN

Things like threatening to stuff another kid in a sleeping bag and slam it against a tree until it... and this was a direct quote... "stops twitching".

Lize's eighteen, Liam.
You've got her keyed up on this
horror movie crap and acting like
she's eighteen. It's costing her
with her friends, her schoolwork,
and everything else.

LIAM

And you propose... what, then? I stay
away from my own sister?

LEN

I propose that you stop blaming the
world and everybody else for your
problems, suck it up and try to
give a damn about someone other
than yourself, Liam. She looks up
to you, and you're rewarding it by
being a piss-poor influence.

LIAM

Let me ask you something, Len. Just
one question. Why do you even give
a shit what we do? It's not like
you're our dad, coming in here...

LEN

That's right. I'm not your dad. He
didn't care enough about your
family to keep him from taking a
coward's way out of his own
problems. I do.

Liam is DUMFOUNDED. He swipes his hand angrily at the plates, sending food splattering all over the place.

LIAM

Fuck YOU.

Liam grabs his jacket and shoves past Len, to the door.

LEN

Real level of you, Liam. Way to
show maturity. Where you going?

LIAM

Walk.

LEN

Fine. Get some air. Be back home by
eleven. (Beat) You hear me?

No response. Liam storms out as Len leans against the door frame of the bunker, releasing a frustrated breath.

EXT. SUNNY SIGN COURT - NIGHT

Liam plods angrily down the dark street, moving past the glow of windows. As he passes the row of homes across the street, we can see Angeline-the Cafeteria Lady-sitting on her front porch with a cigar clenched between her teeth. She watches as Liam storms past, eyes sharp.

Liam continues around the corner. He takes a few more steps, and stops. There's nothing in either direction but empty street and darkness. He heaves a few breaths, trying to make up his mind, as a BUS wobbles up the road. Liam runs across the street and waves it down at the opposing stop. Brakes hiss, the door opens, and he climbs on.

INT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM

Darkness. There's a sound of rusted hinges, and a long shaft of flickering lantern-light spreads with the opening of a door. Caught within its glow is the crumpled form of Charles Rueger, who has fallen asleep against the wall. He awakens slowly and snaps to attention, struggling to his feet and wiping drool from his mouth with a sleeve.

RUEGER

I've brought him. He's in the
eastern wing.

With a whisper of cloaks and a regal movement, Kaziglu Bey steps into the light, lantern in hand.

KAZIGLU

Show me. We've catching up to do.

INT. THE BUS - NIGHT

The bus continues to steam along, completely empty save for Liam. Seated in the back, he stares out the window with glassy eyes. His thoughts are distant and his mouth tight, unaware as the bus comes shuddering to a stop.

DRIVER

Alright, there. Cherrymount Court.
End of the line.

Liam snaps out of his bitter reverie and moves to the front of the bus.

LIAM

I think I'm going to just go back.

DRIVER

Not on this bus, kid. I'm heading for the yard.

Liam looks out the window, finding only a deserted street and darkness. The bus stop is illuminated by a single, stuttering lamp.

LIAM

So I've got to wait? Out THERE?

DRIVER

Or you could start walking? Nah, nah. I'm just messing with you. There'll be another 74 by in about fifteen minutes.

The door hisses open, apparently signaling the end of the conversation. Liam gives the driver a poison look and moves down the steps.

DRIVER

Hold up, kid. (Beat) Don't forget your transfer.

The driver grins and hands Liam a slip of paper. The boy takes it, glaring at the older man, and steps out onto the sidewalk.

DRIVER

You have yourself a great night.

EXT. THE STREET

The door hisses shut and the bus chugs into motion, fading out into the distance. Everything is still and dark, as Liam nervously breathes into his hands. As he glances to the looming shape of the asylum, a single light CLICKS ON, standing out against the darkness. Liam squints at the sight curiously, but finds himself GRABBED by the sudden curl of an arm. Howling in surprise, he struggles against the headlock

LIAM

GET OFF ME!

It's the Flanch twins. They laugh as Liam fights to get loose.

GRANT

The hell are you doing up here,
Cross? Looking for daddy's grave?

JEREMY

I don't think he's getting the idea, Grant. We keep having to go through this, again and again... I think maybe Liam's a little masochist. (He squeezes Liam's head) That right, Cross?

The two brothers shove Liam up against the fence.

GRANT

You get hard off of being such a
fucking loser?

LIAM

You both came to every one of my
birthday parties from the time I
was five until I was twelve. We
grew up together, spent summer
vacations in each other's yards,
had a million sleepovers. So if
anybody knows what makes me tick...

Liam SPITS in Grant's face.

LIAM

... it would be you assholes.

Grant PUNCHES Liam in the chest, knocking the air out of him.

JEREMY

I like it better when he doesn't
talk.

GRANT

Yeah. He's got the wrong idea.
Today's lesson isn't about local
history, it's about humility.

The Flanches grab Liam and begin to drag him along the length
of the asylum's fence. Cross gasps for air and tries to fight
against their grip.

LIAM

(Heaving)

... get... get off me...

JEREMY

No, nonono. We're going to help you. Big, tough emo-goth faggot like you? You'll love this.

GRANT

Got him?

The twins get a clumsy hold on Liam's arms and THROW him forward. He's pitched over a sagging part of the fence and rolls down a slimy, leaf-covered hill into a rain ditch. The laughter of the Flanches can be heard from above, as Liam fights to get his footing in the muck. The sluice is too steep and wet to scale, leaving him trapped at its foot.

LIAM

Fucking assholes!

The twins peer down from the crest of the slanted terrain. Jeremy shakes his head in disgust.

JEREMY

You brought this shit on yourself, Cross! I didn't want it to be like this, Grant didn't want it to be like this, but you just can't fucking grow up and get over yourself. You're a loser because that's all you know how to be.

GRANT

But look at it this way: at least if you see any fish-people or zombies in there, you'll know how to handle yourself.

LIAM Jeremy!

JEREMY

Later, Liam.

The Flanch twins vanish from Liam's view, and everything's quiet again. Liam brushes mud and filth from his sleeves and looks up to the asylum, where that single light is still burning.

LIAM

Goddammit.

INT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM

A piece of canvas is sharply torn away by someone's hand, revealing the varnished flesh of a PETRIFIED CORPSE. The figure-once a man-is dressed in flaking and aged leather, most likely circa the mid-1800's. His moustache and strands of white hair have been perfectly preserved by time. Half-closed eye sockets stare into space, yellowed teeth bared by a lack of lips.

Rueger steps back from the rusted examination room table. The walls of the operation room are stained by water damage, light provided by a halogen work lamp.

RUEGER

There.

Kaziglu's eyes glitter, as he hunches over the mummy and draws in a deep breath through his nostrils.

KAZIGLU

It's Colton Darrow. I remember his scent.

RUEGER

You knew him?

KAZIGLU

Once upon a long time ago, yes.
Darrow was quite a cunning adversary. I believe that only time and his own mortality truly stayed his hand, had he been more like you and I...

Rueger's disgust at the implication is obvious. It causes Kaziglu to smile.

KAZIGLU

Why, Charles. Do I detect an
indignant breath?

RUEGER

I didn't have a choice in "being"
this way. Neither did my father, or
grandfather, or anybody else in my
family. Our obligation and bond to
you doesn't mean jack shit to me... I
just want it to be done with. No
more killing, no more sickness.

KAZIGLU

(Laughing)

Life is sickness, Rueger. Your
ancestors knew it, and so shall
you.

EXT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - MAIN GATE

The heavy iron slats of the main gate roll back, illuminated
by the slanted shaft of headlights. A figure trots back to a
nearby car; it's a white and red cruiser with the words "HOME
FIRES SECURITY" written over a brass crest on its doors. An
older, wearier looking sentry is behind the wheel.

YOUNGER GUARD

You call it in?

OLDER GUARD

No.

The younger man reaches for the console's mic, but his
partner blocks his hand.

OLDER GUARD

I like to roll up slow and keep the lights off, then catch 'em in the act. As time grinds on, you'll start to appreciate the little things on this beat... like catching a cheerleader giving her boyfriend a blowjob in the bushes.

YOUNGER GUARD

Fine. But we're calling it in after the fact.

OLDER GUARD

(Sarcastically)

Oh, yes sir.

The car idles forward, crawling up the long driveway to the asylum. As it crawls past, we see LIAM struggling up the nearby hillside; he waves his arms frantically at the cruiser, but it's too far away to notice.

LIAM

HEY! WAIT!

The tail lights shrink, as Cross limps and fights through the underbrush. Reaching the shoulder of the road, he glances down the winding driveway, and then up in the direction of the asylum itself.

LIAM

Shit.

Decision made, he doubles his pace and jogs through the cruiser's dust trail, continuing up the long driveway.

INT. THE CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM

Kaziglu digs his fingers into the mummy's jaws, papery skin flaking away as he pries its mouth open.

RUEGER

I already went over the corpse with
a fine-toothed comb. Pockets,
teeth, boots. Whatever it is that
you're looking for, he didn't die
with it on him.

KAZIGLU

I wouldn't have thought so. Colton
was a particularly cautious fellow,
survived by his instincts.

RUEGER

So why bother with the body at all?

KAZIGLU

Because there's a few questions I
need to ask him.

Kaziglu begins to roll up a sleeve, but stops and glances
towards the empty door of the examination room.

KAZIGLU

Greet our guests, Charles.

Rueger's eyes zigzag from the vampire to the direction of his
dark gaze. A pair of flashlight beams trace the walls,
jerking about until the two rent-a-cops appear. Pistols in
one hand, mag-lights in the other.

OLDER GUARD

Aw, dammit. Alright, ladies. This
is private property, and... what the
hell is that?

RUEGER

You shouldn't be here.

YOUNGER GUARD

I think it's that... petrified thing
that got snaked from the heritage
museum.

OLDER GUARD

Great. Alright, then. You two mummy-fuckers step on back, give the dead guy some room. We're going to take this slow.

RUEGER

Listen to me. You need to leave.
You shouldn't be here.

EXT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM GROUNDS

Outside, Liam sprints past the parked cruiser, its radio crackling along inside. He continues around the building's perimeter, a collapsed wall and various detritus creating enough of a slope to climb up to the lit window.

INT. THE OPERATING ROOM

Rueger advances on the guards as Kaziglu looks on amusedly. The rent-a-cops raise their guns, tensing into firing positions.

OLDER GUARD

Buddy, this is not a soft option.
Get on the floor.

RUEGER

I'm telling you...

OLDER GUARD

And I'm telling you. Floor. NOW.

RUEGER

... turn around, get in your car...

YOUNG GUARD

Sir. Stop. Get on the floor.

Liam's face has appeared at the window, sectioned by the steel grating over it. He raises a hand to bang on the metal, but stops at the scene inside.

OLDER GUARD
Let me handle this!

RUEGER
... forget you were here...

YOUNG GUARD Last warning, sir.

OLDER GUARD
I said, let me...

RUEGER
GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE!

BANG. Rueger's sudden movements spook the younger cop, who squeezes off a single round. The shot is a point-blank one; the body hits the ground and lays flat, limbs akimbo.

Liam's mouth is as wide as his eyes. His breath stops.

OLDER GUARD
H... h... holy shit, Larson.

YOUNGER GUARD
I told... I... I told...

Wearily, Kaziglu begins to move around the end of the examination table. The guards, still jolted, raise their guns again.

OLDER GUARD
Okay. Okay, let's just all calm down. Stand right there. Please.

KAZIGLU
You know, the endlessly self-destructive nature of mankind once troubled me. I was fouled by its lack of logic, its cannibalistic contradiction.

I couldn't KAZIGLU myself to grasp
the nuances of a species who are
both cattle and wolf.

OLDER GUARD

Okay pal, we're all a little
shaken, but...

KAZIGLU

But over time, I came to realize
that it was a blessing. It makes
things much easier.

Kaziglu's eyes close, and then open, now FULLY BLACK. The sentries don't know what the hell to make of it. As the vampire speaks, his voice has taken on a bandsaw edge, raspy and ethereal.

KAZIGLU

If you're so determined to be
destroyers...

Jerking about a bit, the cops' guns begin to change direction. Easing away from their dead aim on Kaziglu, veering towards one another.

YOUNGER GUARD

Ken...

OLDER GUARD

I can't...

The pair are now squared up, pistols pointed at each other's faces.

KAZIGLU

So destroy.

YOUNGER GUARD

KEN!

The older guard, Ken, screams in frustration as both men pull their triggers.

Outside the window, Liam has taken to biting into the edge of his hand to stifle any sounds; a single drop of blood stirs down his wrist. He's bitten through his own skin.

The bodies of the two sentries collapse; Larson landing face-down, Ken slumping against the wall and skidding downward. Kaziglu pauses and sniffs the air, hound-like. His eyes slide towards the window, and with a with a knife-edged HISS, he lunges forward. Bey's mouth widens to bare two rows of JAGGED CANINE FANGS, and his outstretched hands SLAM against the grating. It doesn't budge. Liam howls and wrenches himself backwards, stumbling clumsily down the slope and into a frantic run.

Inside, the vampire moves smoothly back to the examination table. He kicks at Rueger's body in passing; jolted, it promptly comes to life, dragging in an ungodly groan of a breath. Charles rolls over, crumpled on all fours. When he lifts his head, we can see that there's NO EVIDENCE of the bullet wound; his face is intact, save for his shattered glasses.

KAZIGLU

Enough games, Rueger. We have another intruder.

Rueger struggles to his feet.

RUEGER

I'll... I'll go get...

KAZIGLU

No. Humanity's benefited from your brand of compassion enough for one night. Clean this mess up.

Rueger staggers from the room, as Kaziglu returns his attentions to Colton Darrow. Fluidly, the vampire prince slices open his bared forearm with one of his clawlike fingernails. The resulting blood is thick and black, oozing like tar from his brown flesh into the mummy's parted lips.

KAZIGLU

Alright, old friend. I've one last
dance for you. Just a little more
of what you once excelled at.

Kaziglu flicks his wrist, anointing the corpse with a spatter
of blood.

KAZIGLU

Get up.

The petrified corpse sits up abruptly, letting out a dusty
shriek.

EXT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM GROUNDS

Liam stumbles blindly through the underbrush, losing his
footing and falling to his knees. He fights back the urge to
throw up, shoulders shaken with dry heaves. Collecting his
bearings, he looks up, only to find that he's looking
straight at a TOMBSTONE. It's the old inmate's graveyard, the
marker just one of dozens amidst the weeds. Liam rises, and
the rustle of something moving catches his attention.

He looks to the nearby ridge, where a spindly figure is
standing. Darrow's mummy. The thing moves with a spidery kind
of agility, all angles and odd, double-jointed grace. Liam
sucks in a sharp breath and doesn't hesitate to RUN.

He staggers along, dodging tombstones and rocks, as the
petrified creature continues to gallop down the hill in his
wake. The ground gives way under the boy's sneakers, and he
pitches forward, tumbling down a steep embankment; the bottom
peters out into a murky stream, which Liam splashes into. He
emerges from the muddy water and begins crawling, but the
mummy's closed the gap and LANDS ON HIS BACK. Colton's
fingers dig into the boy's neck, trying to drown him in the
frigid stream.

Liam's hands thrash about, fingers finding a rock and
swinging it at the creature's head. It nearly knocks Darrow's
skull off of its shoulders.

Adrenaline surging, Liam notices a storm drain just a few feet away. He lunges for it, but Darrow's got him by the ankle. Cross SCREAMS as the thing's sharp fingers dig into the flesh of his leg, but rips himself loose, crawling into the pipe and dragging down a grating behind him.

BANG. The mummy slams its weight against the metal mindlessly. BANG, BANG. Liam's dirty fingers fiddle with the hinge's locking mechanism, engaging it and crawling backwards on his hands and knees. The sounds of violent impact continue, as the boy continues crawling.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY

The outflow empties into a ditch along the side of a quiet, two-lane highway. Liam claws his way free from the pipe and across the gravel of the shoulder; we can still hear the sounds of Colton's IMPACT clanging steadily from the other end.

BANG. BANG. CRASH.

The sound of something metal being busted through rings out, echoing through the pipe. Liam limps across the asphalt, turning frantic looks over his shoulder; the sound of clattering is growing louder and more pronounced, coming from within the drainage tube.

Liam falls to the ground as Darrow's corpse scuttles out of the pipe's mouth. Stretching back to its full height, the mummy wobbles across the road as Liam-out of breath, hysterical, bloodied and muddied-scrabbles to the opposite shoulder. The creature closes in. Step by step.

BEEEEEEEEP-

The sound of a horn precedes the deafening screech of brakes, as an SUV PLOWS RIGHT OVER Darrow's corpse, skidding across the highway and fishtailing some thirty yards down the road. The vehicle lurches to a stop, and out stumbles a COLLEGE GUY with a baseball cap and a polo shirt on. R and B music pumps from the SUV's speakers as he yells at Liam.

COLLEGE GUY

Hey! Did I just run over a fucking
homeless guy? Hey kid! Want a ride?

Liam's already running like hell was on his heels in the opposite direction. The college guy scoffs and heads around to the front of his truck, checking the grill. The bumper's been dented, but there's no signs of blood or Colton. Confused, he straightens back up. Darrow's mummy is perched atop the vehicle's hood. It makes a papery hiss and lunges at the driver, his horrified howl cutting off SHARPLY as a splash of blood splatters across the SUV's headlights.

INT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - FURNACE ROOM

Flames paint the walls as Rueger shields his mouth against the heat and vapors, forcing the tarp-wrapped corpse of one of the security guards through the grating.

Kaziglu looks on in the background, wrapped stoically in his cloak, his hood drawn over his head. The scuttle of uneven steps descends the stairs, and Colton's mummy moves from the shadows. Wordlessly, Bey takes one of the petrified creature's fingers and suckles it thoughtfully.

KAZIGLU

Blood. (Beat) But not enough.

RUEGER

You mean whoever that was got away?! We have to get out of here before...

KAZIGLU

No. It was only a child. Even if he does convince others, they've no time to stop us.

INT. THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE - DAY

An alarm clock's digital display clicks over to 9:00, and a squeaky Top 40 pop song chirps to life.

A heap of blankets on Liam's bed begins to move, and a filthy, mud-streaked hands reaches out to pound on the clock until it quiets.

Liam sits up quickly. He hasn't changed out of his clothes, and his face is still a dirty mess. Tentatively, he reaches down to tug up the covers over his leg; as they recede, we can see that the ANGRY PURPLE WOUND from Colton's hand is still there. He touches at it lightly before sinking back down against his pillow.

INT. THE CROSS HOME

Inside, the breakfast routine is in full swing. The television yammers on with its white noise, bacon sizzles, Len and Mrs. Cross move about the kitchen, conversing. Liam creeps across the hallway, looking particularly filthy and worn against the white of the walls.

MRS. CROSS

Len, it's a college town. We're always at the mercy of its moods.

LEN

Yeah, but when you have disappearances being reported off-campus, it's bigger than just the usual stupid Greek pranks...

Lize steps out of her bedroom and into the hallway. She yawns, rubs her eyes, and looks at Liam. She doesn't even register his face; she just SHRIEKS.

LIAM

Lize!

There's a brief commotion, and Len and Mrs. Cross come spilling into the hallway. They stare at Liam in disbelief.

MRS. CROSS

LIAM? Oh my god, is that... what did you do to your PANTS?!

INT. THE CROSS HOUSE'S BATHROOM

Liam-now cleaned up-sits in an oversized bathrobe amidst bottles of shampoo and unused towels. His mother dabs at a few scratches on his face with a cotton swab.

LIAM

Mom.

MRS. CROSS

You can "mom" at me until your tonsils fall out, but you're not moving from this spot until I clean these up. Thank god Len's around to make sure they aren't infected.

Liam scowls.

MRS. CROSS

I heard about it. And I'm not going to pick on who said what, but I don't think you're giving him enough credit, Liam. He's trying. He's doing the best he can.

No response.

MRS. CROSS

And it isn't easy raising a young man when you've never had kids. That's all I'm going to say as far as motherly wisdom goes. (Beat) So who'd you get in a fight with, exactly?

LIAM

Nobody.

MRS. CROSS

Mmhm. So you cartwheeled down a hill and got beaten up by a five-fingered branch?

LIAM It wasn't a branch. It was a...

He trails off. It's no use trying to explain. Mrs. Cross smiles.

MRS. CROSS

Well, whoever it was had some long fingernails. I hope you gave her as good as you got.

LIAM

Mom!

EXT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM GROUNDS - DAY

Bare and squalid in the daylight, the overgrown asylum grounds are nearly silent. The sound of a shovel scraping the soil resonates across the stillness of the yard; amidst the scrub weed and tombstones, RUEGER is digging a hole. A heap of clothes lies nearby; as Charles begins to fish through the pile, we can make out the sentry's JACKETS and GUN BELTS. He throws them into the small pit, and looks down at his fingertips. They gleam with blood. A growl of frustration wells up in the man's throat, and builds to a scream. He swings his shovel wildly and smacks it against a tombstone; it splinters, the blade flying off into the underbrush. Rueger's left hand holding a jagged shaft of wood with a handle. He holds it up, studying the sharp point.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SEATONVILLE - DAY

Obliviously, the citizens of Seatonville go about their business in the quaint downtown area. The main square-Old Town Seatonville-is a modest park with several statues, surrounded by a diamond of streets and storefronts. One of these is brimming with comic book and movie posters; the name of the shop reads "PURGATORY IN PRINT - COMICS N' CARDS".

INT. PURGATORY IN PRINT

The interior of the shop consists of more of the same. Racks of comics, posters on the walls, a glass case brimming with cards and action figures. Seated behind the counter is an appropriately ghoulish guy in his late thirties; this is THOMPSON, the owner. His thinning hair is pulled into a ponytail, a goatee hiding his weak chin. He flips through a copy of Wizard magazine.

THOMPSON

I look back on my childhood, and we just... had the Roman Empire of pop culture. Seriously. Movies were better. Action figures were better. We actually had cartoons on Saturday mornings. Compare that to the shit that you're growing up with, right? Your generation just BORROWED everything we came up with. You turned He-Man into a manga fag and ruined Star Wars. You proud of that, Chud?

The shot widens, and we can see that Thompson is addressing Chud, who is reading an issue of The Hulk and seems to be ignoring the owner.

CHUD

And it was so great, half of you are still living in your parent's basement trying to re-live it. Grown men in shirts with like... the Legend of Zelda on them, talking about the good old days like you fought a fucking war. You proud of that, Thompson?

THOMPSON

If you aren't going to buy anything, I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

OSV
Bitch!

THOMPSON
And YOU. Watch your mouth. This is
a family establishment.

Nearby, D'Juan is playing a standup arcade game,
enthusiastically jamming on the joystick. Chud flashes a
quarter at Thompson and walks over to join the other boy.

D'JUAN
Thompson, you ever going to get
some real games in here? This
shit's older than you are.

THOMPSON
You don't like it, you can always
go home and hump your little
Playstation or whatever.

Liam is outside, peering through the window. He rushes
through the door, with a jaunty little jingle.

CHUD
Don't jostle me, asshole.

LIAM
Chud. We need to ta... (to D'Juan)
I didn't know you hung out here.

D'JUAN
Where else you gonna hang out when
you're under 21 in this town?

CHUD
Shit! You're cheap, man. Same three
moves, over and over.

LIAM
Chud, listen.

D'JUAN

Same three moves I used on your mom
last night.

CHUD

Man, piss in your mouth!

Angrily, Liam reaches around behind the game and yanks the cord out of the wall.

D'JUAN Man!

THOMPSON

No refunds!

LIAM

LISTEN. Chud. Meet me at Sunny Sign Park tonight. Seven. We need to talk.

D'JUAN

Am I invited?

LIAM

You... actually want to come?

D'JUAN

Well, yeah. Deacon's going to be there, right? I still owe him five bucks from the other night.

Liam rolls his eyes in exasperation, and heads for the door.

LIAM

Seven!

The door slams. The boys return to playing their game.

EXT. OLD TOWN SEATONVILLE

Liam moves along the sidewalk with a clipped pace, his leg still giving him trouble.

The shop windows are filled with Halloween decorations and advertisements for the upcoming football season opener; the University's mascot, "THE FIGHTIN' VIKING", features prominently. As Liam walks, he's pushed through by a group of older girls. They giggle and banter, paying him no mind.

GIRL ONE

Alright, tell him to call me!

GIRL TWO

Tell him yourself! But call me
later and tell me about it!

Girl Two, a bright-faced brunette, hops off the curb and crosses the street. She's unaware that she's being watched through the filmy windshield of a nearby van; behind the wheel, grim-faced, is RUEGER.

EXT. MEANS SALVAGE YARD

BLAM. A stark yellow road sign with a black arrow eats a bullet and spins about atop its pole. This is the Means Salvage Yard, a few good acres of mud and junk. Deacon's home. The older boy grins broadly, lowering the barrel of the sleek black hunting rifle he's got lashed around his elbow, military-style. Squinting at the target, he raises it for another shot.

DEACON

I'm Carlos Hathcock, bitch...

OSV

Deacon!

Deacon lowers the gun as Liam pedals up on his mountain bike, breathlessly.

LIAM

I need you to meet me at... you just
shoot that thing out here?

DEACON

Yeah. But only because telling me
not to would involve actual
parenting. The hell happened to
your face?

LIAM

I'll tell you about it later. What
time do you eat dinner? Can you
come over to Sunny Sign park
tonight, around seven?

DEACON

Dinner comes out of a can that I
open myself. Houston going to be
there?

LIAM

Yes, and he'll have your fucking
five dollars. This is important.
Don't tell anybody.

DEACON

(Sarcastically)

I'll try. No guarantees.

Liam pedals away as Deacon raises his rifle and fires again.
BANG.

EXT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - DUSK

The sun is riding low in the winter sky, with a ceiling of
grey clouds. The asylum is dark and silent.

INT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM

Rueger drags his feet through the derelict hallways of the
building, fiddling with a ring adorned with what must be a
few dozen keys. He nears the end of the corridor, where a
flickering firelight casts its glow through a half-open door.
He stops, and readies himself, taking a deep breath.

Half-concealed beneath his shabby coat is the broken shovel; he checks it and moves on.

INT. DR. MACBETH'S OFFICE

The walls of the run-down office are wood paneled, a few portraits and book shelves still intact; a desk and a few chairs have been left behind, as has the mildewed rug. The centerpiece of the room is a huge hearth, within which a fire is burning. Kaziglu stands before Colton's corpse, studying it raptly.

KAZIGLU

Is it done?

RUEGER

Yes. They're downstairs. Have you gotten your answers yet?

KAZIGLU

Unfortunately, our friend's shell doesn't retain much of the man he was, and won't serve our purposes directly. But it's of no concern. Your duty tonight will be to track down the visitor from the previous evening, who will serve as...

Kaziglu turns towards Rueger, who brandishes the shovel. He SLAMS its jagged point into the vampire's chest with both hands, the tip puncturing fabric and flesh and driving in deep. Rueger gives it a twist, teeth clenched.

RUEGER

I'm not like you. I never could be.

Kaziglu gasps and writhes, and brief triumph flickers over Charles' face. It abruptly fades, however, as the vampire relaxes, rolling his neck and shoulders and squinting curiously at Rueger.

KAZIGLU

You truly believe that?

With a sweep of his arm, Kaziglu launches Rueger off of his feet. He flails and staggers into a bookcase, falling to the floor. The vampire draws the shovel-handle from his chest and tosses it like a dart, the point impaling the wall next to Rueger's head.

KAZIGLU

That you'd simply be done with
this, and return to your life?
Charles, Charles. This is a
contract, and its terms are most
binding.

Kaziglu moves to where Rueger is slumped. He kicks him in the face, casually.

KAZIGLU

Non-negotiable.

Kick. Rueger spits up blood.

KAZIGLU

And resolved only at a time of my
choosing.

Kick. Rueger curls up, trying to guard himself against the blows. Kaziglu grips the scruff of his coat and easily drags his struggling carcass across the floor, towards the window.

KAZIGLU

Your kind once roared. They didn't wear masks and fight against their nature, they defied the night sky and bathed in the blood of their enemies. So, Charles...

Kaziglu hauls Rueger up to the window, where the twilight sky has given way to the night. The moon blazes from above; it's full. Charles recoils, trying to cover his face. Kaziglu slaps his hands away and smears the still-fresh blood of his forearm wound against the man's mouth, its black and acrid shine causing Rueger to gag violently.

KAZIGLU

Roar for me.

Rueger screams, convulsing and landing on the carpet. The transformation is a hideous process, rather than a gradual becoming; bones snap and reform, the man's clothing and skin is ripped through by the form bulging beneath it, his face is split asunder by the emergence of a fanged maw. Kaziglu looks on with his arms folded. When the process is complete, Charles Rueger has given way to a WEREWOLF, nearly seven feet of shredded clothing, bristled fur and red eyes. The werewolf slavers and stalks the vampire, then lunges forward as if to attack.

KAZIGLU

Wait.

The prince raises a hand, and the werewolf jars to a halt, licking at its lips in a doglike manner.

KAZIGLU

I'll send another to hunt the boy.
Your task is to simply go forth and
breed terror. Shed the blood, take
what you need, but bring the bodies
to me. We need numbers.

The beast huffs and puffs, and sprints from the room. Glass shatters and explodes outward from a hallway window as the werewolf drops some twenty feet to the ground. Its call echoes through the stillness of the night. Kaziglu watches from the window, and turns to pick up Rueger's discarded keychain.

INT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM PATIENT'S WING

Kaziglu's strides through the corridors of the asylum. Darrow's corpse is positioned alongside a door, standing guard. Bey steps past him, selects a long key from the chain, and twists it into the lock. The door opens, casting moonlight on the faces three of terrified teenage girls. One of them is the brunette that Rueger was stalking earlier.

KAZIGLU

Ladies.

The sounds of whimpering grows louder, as the vampire swoops forward.

INT. THE CROSS FAMILY HOUSE DINING ROOM

Seated at the dinner table with Len, Lize and Mrs. Cross, Liam glances sharply to a nearby wall clock. It's 7:12. He shovels in a few more mouthfuls of mashed potatoes while the conversation goes on around him.

LIZE

Well, she wasn't being nice to ME.

MRS. CROSS

Still. You can't threaten to fill people with embalming fluid, Lize.
Isn't the right, Liam?

LIAM

(Distractedly)

Only if you're Dr. Phibes. Can I be excused?

MRS. CROSS

Okay, I give up. Yes. Go ahead. Any more of this dinner conversation, and I'm going to wind up feeding you two like a mother bird.

Mrs. Cross jams a finger into her mouth, pantomiming gagging. Lize makes a face as Liam grabs his plate, deposits it in the sink, and bolts for the front door. He's dragging his shoes on when Len appears in the hallway, clearing his throat. He eases over to Liam, and leans down.

LEN

Look, I know things got a little
steamed up last night, but I just...
I wanted to apologize for... you
know. That was a cheap shot. I was
out of line.

LIAM

(Surprised)

Thanks.

LEN

Yeah. Also, if you're hanging out
with your friends, be careful.
There's some weird things going on
around out there.

LIAM Weird how?

LEN

Don't worry about it. Just enjoy
being a kid while it lasts.

Len grins, rises, and heads back to the dining room. Liam
watches him go, then snaps back to attention and grabs his
jacket.

EXT. OLD TOWN SEATONVILLE - NIGHT

The main drag is practically deserted, save for a few
straggling bodies and the occasional car. Trash stirs slowly
in the gutters and University banners flap on their lamp
posts in the autumn breeze. The majority of the shop windows
are dark, but the PURGATORY IN PRINT is still up and running.

EXT. ALLEYWAY

The shop's back door clunks open, and Thompson stumbles out,
dragging a life-size cardboard cutout of sci-fi film icon
Julie Strain. He pushes open the dumpster lid and prepares to
fold the standee up, but pauses. He takes a look around, and
grins.

THOMPSON

I know you want it. But it'd never work.

He LICKS the standee's face, and begins to feed it into the dumpster. A growl emits from somewhere in the shadows; Thompson stops, looks around, and lets loose with a low whistle.

THOMPSON

Woof, woof?

SNARL. Rueger steps out of the darkness with long steps, talons flexing and jaw slavering.

THOMPSON

WOW-

The beast is on him in a single movement. The shadows cast on the brick wall are a frenzy of movement, as the shop owner's howls of terror abruptly stop.

EXT. SUNNY SIGN PARK - NIGHT

Click. A flashlight is turned on, illuminating the roundness of Chud's face. He speaks in a Dracula-like voice.

CHUD

But D'Juan! You cannot suck my testicles, for the flow of blood there is quite weaaaak!

D'JUAN

It wasn't funny the first three times, it isn't funny now.

Sunny Sign Park. It's really nothing more than a small patch of playground and grass tacked onto the cul-de-sac that the namesake street ends into. Chud is sitting on a PONGO PONY (A plastic see-saw horse with a spring under it), and D'Juan is parked on the foot of the nearby slide.

He checks his watch in agitation, as Liam emerges from the darkness, glancing nervously about.

D'JUAN

Alright, man. It's fifteen after seven. What's so important that we've got to be out here, freezing our asses off?

CHUD

Yeah, you wanted a push on the swing, or what?

LIAM

I thought you were just here for the porn.

D'JUAN

Yeah. I am. But since Deacon isn't here and I've got time to kill, knock it out.

Liam takes a deep breath, trying to collect his thoughts.

LIAM

Okay. This is going to sound... beyond full-loco fucknuts crazy. But just hear me out until I'm done, alright? After Len showed up last night, we got in a fight and I had to take off to blow off some steam. I wound up on a bus with this total dick behind the wheel, and the guy made me get off at the Cherrymount Stop. I see this light on up in the window. So I'm wondering what the fuck, and then the Flanch twins come out of nowhere, and...

D'JUAN

Hold up, what the hell would Grant and Jeremy be doing up there?

CHUD

What does anybody do there? Smoke out and get sucked off. They were probably doing both.

LIAM

I don't know, I didn't ASK them. But we got into it, and the assholes go pushing me over the fence down this hill, and I wind up...

CHUD

Oh, SHIT. You actually went on the grounds? Did you see the inmate's cemetery?

LIAM

Yeah. It was... anyways, the light was still on and I'm stuck. So I go up to the building.

OSV

You guys seriously haven't heard this one?

The boys abruptly look towards the voice, and find Deacon standing off to the side with a grin. His face is lit by a brief sputter of a lighter, as he fires up a cigarette.

D'JUAN

You ever show up like a normal person, Deacon? Fucking popping up out of nowhere.

DEACON

It's called dramatic timing, dick.
(Beat) Anyways, let me guess.

You went up ~~DEACON~~ ^{DEACON} to get a look at what was going on, and lo and behold, there's one of the freshmen getting it on with a couple of seniors, Rueben-style. Tit sandwich. That one's been a Seatonville standard since I was in sixth grade.

CHUD

Wait, did that actually happen?

LIAM

Deacon, shut up. It wasn't like that. There were these guys in one of the rooms, and they had that Callow guy's body on a table... the mummy. You know?

DEACON

Okay, this is way better than my version. Were they fucking it?

LIAM

NO. The mummy... (Beat) ... these cops showed up, shot one guy in his face, then the other guy made them shoot each other. Then he sees me watching, makes a jump for the window, and he's got these like... four-inch fangs. Huge.

There's a long moment of silence. Then everyone starts to laugh.

CHUD

And people say I sound like I'm on drugs.

DEACON

That's good, Liam. Keep writing the script. Houston, you got my money?

LIAM

I am NOT BULLSHITTING.

D'JUAN

Yeah, I got it. Five bucks? (To Liam) Seriously, man. It's cool if you want to live and breathe this shit, but trying to pass it off on us and trying to scare your little sister with it are two totally different things.

OSV

I don't get scared off of what Liam tells me!

The boys' laughter tapers off as Chud wheels his flashlight about, finding Lize petulantly standing at the edge of the playground. Her little fists are balled up in anger.

LIAM Lize, what the HELL?

CHUD

Isn't it past your bedtime, midget?

LIZE

Shut up, Chud! Why didn't you tell me you were coming out here to tell monster stories?

LIAM

We're NOT.

D'JUAN

It's been real, but I gotta get back. Deacon, Liam.

LIAM

D'Juan! This is the dead-bang fucking truth, man. There's something evil up there, and...

DEACON

That would be good for the poster.
I'm out, too.

Liam makes a frustrated grab for D'Juan's jacket, dragging on it.

LIAM

I am NOT dicking around, here! You been watching the news? Where the hell do you think these people are disappearing off to?

D'JUAN

They're college students. Who the fuck CARES. Get off my jacket.

DEACON

Seriously, Liam. Let's humor this shit for a few seconds. Say there is a gang of murderous undead assholes running around... they wouldn't have somewhere better to be than THIS fucking crater of a town? Or did they show up to eat people and hit up the Peach Pit for cobbler Tuesdays?

LIAM

I don't know. I don't know why they're here.

DEACON

Exactly. This town's already filled with retiree zombies and not much else. It's deader than Frenchman Flats, deader than Nixon, and deader than this conversation.

Liam's attention is no longer on Deacon, nor is Chud's or Lize's. The three kids are staring past the older boy;

something white has descended from the sky, and is moving across the lawn on bare feet. D'Juan follows their staring and stiffens, himself, but Deacon continues talking.

DEACON

So. With that, I'm going to lay out my final wisdoms and get the fuck on. You ready? Don't drink more than the prescribed amount of NyQuil before bed.

The figure draws in closer. We can now see that it's a WOMAN; she's dressed in the loose, stark white flow of a medical gown, it's sleeves adorned with straitjacket straps. It's one of the women who Kaziglu had as prisoner. She smiles, baring a quartet of petite fangs.

CHUD

H... holy... balls.

Deacon turns to go, and nearly walks right into the woman.

DEACON

(Bemusedly)

Becky-be-sure-and-keep-her-out-late-Praite. Hey, is your sister still married, or...

The VAMPIRE BRIDE hisses and flattens Deacon with a sudden lunge, going for his throat. He howls and struggles, as Chud and D'Juan try to pry the creature loose from him.

DEACON

SHE'S TWEAKED OFF HER ASS! GET HER OFF ME! AGH!

D'Juan's muscles strain as he puts the bride in a chokehold, but she doesn't budge. The vampire throws an elbow, sending Chud sprawling. Her fingernails dig into Deacon's forearm, puncturing his jacket sleeve. He screams.

CRACK. Liam darts in and delivers a swift shot with a piece of rock.

The vampire rolls aside, spitting and writhing and gripping her skull. The kids fall back in a cluster, dragging Deacon to his feet, freaked out.

LIAM

NOW do you fucking believe me?!

The bride snaps about like a snake, whipping from her back to all fours. She seethes, blood drooling down her temple.

DEACON

Let's talk it up later. RUN.

Deacon SHOVES the other kids, who turn tail and sprint for the street. D'Juan easily takes the lead, as Chud puffs along and Deacon moves to run through people's yards. Liam drags Lize along by her wrist.

INT. SUNNY SIGN HOME

An old couple sits around their television, watching a game show. They don't even notice the flight of the kids outside of their portrait window, or Chud's wild hollering. or the fluid figure of the bride as she glides past, hot on their heels.

EXT. SUNNY SIGN COURT

Lize's legs are no match for Liam's gait, and she begins to stumble. Liam pauses and hefts her up, his stride still favoring his uninjured leg. Chud is panting and seems to be about six steps from passing out; Deacon looks over his shoulder in mid-run, and yells back at the others.

DEACON

SPLIT!

Liam breaks left, and Chud goes right. Their divergence narrowly avoids the dive-bomb SWOOPING of the vampire bride, who screeches as she spirals past. Liam and Lize leap over the curb and through the shadowy stretch of a neighbor's front yard, continuing over the autumn leaves strewn on the lawn and through to the backyard.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S BACKYARD

The Cross siblings pick their steps through the gloomy darkness of the backyard. It's been thoroughly neglected, with seasonal debris and branches laying thick on the ground, a sagging woodshed and a huge pile of unused firewood. Liam runs to the shed and tests the door; it's padlocked shut. He tugs Lize over to the woodpile, but she balks and tugs on his arm.

LIZE

Liam, there's spiders...

LIAM

Yeah, and they've got LITTLE fangs,
Lize. I'll go first, okay?

Liam crouches and begins to duck into the hole within the sagging pile of timbers, but is stopped by the sudden MOVEMENT of a shadowy form. It pushes him back, clutching his jacket's collar.

DEACON

Of all the fucking places on the street to hide, you pick THIS one!

Deacon's wedged in tight, hood pulled over his head. Liam lets out a sharp breath and pushes him BACK.

LIAM

Can we debate this later? MOVE.

Deacon edges back on his knees and elbows, several logs shifting in the process. Liam lets his arm slip off of Lize's shoulders, going low and leading the way into the makeshift hiding place.

LIAM

Alright, once I get in, you take my hand and...

Crunch. Crunch. The sound of feet on gravel averts Liam's attention. Lize turns around slowly, only to find the backyard empty and quiet; or, it is for the scant few seconds before the VAMPIRE BRIDE touches down from the home's rooftop, landing in a sleek crouch and scuttling forward. Red eyes wide, fangs bared, moving too fast to avoid. The little girl SCREAMS.

BOOM. A single round thunders through the night, hitting the creature square in the hip. The bride twists around, as do the huge eyes of the kids; standing there beneath the glow of the porch light is none other than the CAFETERIA LADY. She's dressed to impress nobody in a baggy sweatshirt and jeans, feet bare, a four-barreled SHOTGUN smoking from its cradle in her arms.

The vampire lurches forward, changing direction. The woman doesn't flinch, but instead raises the gun again, and begins firing.

CLICK. BOOM. CLICK. BOOM. CLICK. BOOM.

The vampire powers through the impact of the blasts, staggering forward. The cafeteria lady pulls the trigger once more; it makes a hollow click. No more rounds. The bride licks at her lips, mere steps away.

BRIDE

All out of bullets, bitch?

CAFETERIA LADY

Looks like.

The bride CHARGES, snarling. There's a sharp flurry of movement; with one fell swing, the cafeteria lady pulls a short wooden stake from the shotgun's butt, and POUNDS it into the creature's sternum. The vampire contorts violently and falls backwards, limbs curling in like a dead bug and steam rising from its gurgling mouth.

The kids can do little more than GAWK at their rescuer. Chud and D'Juan come piling around the side of the house, slicked with sweat and completely out of breath. They take in the scene with a blank state of disbelief, as the woman cracks the shotgun open and lets the shells spill out.

CHUD

How did she... get here... with that?

CAFETERIA LADY

(Sarcastically)

I'm the fucking cafeteria lady.

INT. DOCTOR MACBETH'S OFFICE

We cut abruptly to the meditative face of Kaziglu Bey, seated in doctor Macbeth's office. His dark eyes snap open suddenly, the firelight from the hearth reflected in them.

INT. THE SHROUD HOUSE

CLUNK. The shotgun thuds dully atop a coffee table, as the cafeteria matron has a seat in an overstuffed armchair. The inside of her home is cozy, filled with antiquated drapes and old furniture, and oil paintings on the walls. She strikes a match and lights a fat cigar, kicking her bare feet up. The five kids sit on an old couch across from her, stark-still. Crammed in shoulder-to-shoulder, they simply stare at her in a state of shock, barely breathing.

CAFETERIA LADY

So. You got questions. Start asking.

The kids exchange looks.

D'JUAN

Was... what just happened out there real?

CAFETERIA LADY

(Pained)

No, it was done with computers. For Christ's sake. Anybody got a real question?

CHUD

You're the cafeteria lady.

CAFETERIA LADY

That's not a question, and I've got a goddamned name. Angeline Shroud.

D'JUAN

I'm D'Jua-

MRS. SHROUD

Yeah, I know who you are. All of you. I punch you little shits' meal cards every day, remember?

She glances to Lize.

MRS. SHROUD

Except you, sweetie. What's your name?

LIZE

Lize. I'm his sister. Um, was that lady another vampire?

MRS. SHROUD

"Another"?

All eyes go to Liam. He glares back, and sullenly speaks.

LIAM

When that thing showed up, I was telling a story about... this guy who seemed to be a vampire. I saw him at Cherrymount asylum last night.

He was the ~~LIAM~~ and another guy and they saw me, then the next thing I know this fucking mummy thing they've got comes to life and tries to kill me.

CHUD

You kinda left that part out.

LIAM

Yeah, because you assholes were totally hanging on every word?!

MRS. SHROUD

Alright, cork it before you leave a piss-stain on my couch. The mummy. Was it the same one that was stolen from the maritime museum?

LIAM

Probably. I think so.

MRS. SHROUD

No. Was it the EXACT same mummy?
Yes or no?

DEACON

Lady, how many fucking mummies are there in Seatonville proper?

MRS. SHROUD

Hopefully, there's more than one, because if the bastard you saw IS Colton Darrow's corpse, then we're all in a handbasket full of bullshit.

Shroud rises and moves across her living room, fingers tracing along the spines of books packed tightly in an old cabinet.

MRS. SHROUD

Now, I'm going to talk. Whether or not you believe me isn't any of my concern, but seeing as you little shits have gone and stuck your heads on the chopping block...

She drags a book out and returns to her seat.

MRS. SHROUD

... you deserve to know what you're up against. Short story made long, mankind's been waging a guerilla war against the powers of darkness for the last two thousand years.

The Dark Ages marked the last time that humans had their balls in a sling by the creatures of the night, and they didn't take too neatly to being bumped off the top of the food chain.

She flips open a page. It shows a yellowed old woodcarving showing a battlefield; on one side are an army of what look like KNIGHTS TEMPLAR, while the other consists of all kinds of fanged and winged monsters. The text reads "TURNING POINT".

MRS. SHROUD

And for nearly as long, these bastards... (Pointing to the Templars) the Order of the Dragon... have been tasked with ensuring that evil doesn't get its hands back around the neck of humanity.

They've held the SHROUD since the
 collapse of the Roman Empire,
 beating back the enemy's advance
 while the world's gotten smaller
 and smaller, and while normal
 people have forgotten all about the
 realities of things that shed blood
 and go bump in the night.

Shroud flips another page. It's a map of the world, circa 1850. There's all kinds of hand-written notes, and what appears to be a route scrawled into the yellowed paper in black ink.

MRS. SHROUD

But they're out there. Watching.
 Waiting. Just because nobody
 believes in monsters anymore
 doesn't mean they've had the good
 grace to die the fuck off.

Shroud flips a page. There's a woodcut of KAZIGU BEY; crude in comparison to the real deal, with devilish eyes and sharp, slanted features, but easily identifiable. Liam swallows.

MRS. SHROUD

This piece of shit look familiar to
 you?

LIAM

That's him.

MRS. SHROUD

Christ.

She slams the book shut and rises from her chair, puffing on her cigar and pacing about the room.

DEACON

This the Q and A portion of the
 program, then? Like... where we ask
 who the fuck that guy is and why
 the fuck we should care?

MRS. SHROUD

Alright kid, look at it like this.
On a scale of general malevolence,
there's some nasty things. You run
the gambit from your underling
ghouls all the way up the the worst
of the worst... lupine warriors,
force-three poltergeists, real
black magic. Then you twist the
dial up another full rotation, and
you'll find him. Kaziglu Bey.
Butcher of Wallachia, and a bunch
of other cute nicknames I can't be
fucked to remember.

D'JUAN

You're saying that's a real
vampire.

MRS. SHROUD

I'm saying that's THE vampire.
Ancient, dyed-in-the-wool, bleed-a-
thousand-peasants-for-a-pound-of-
lost-gold, bonafide and double
fucked evil. Bey's been a blight
since before Christ was born, and
out of all the sons of bitches who
have tried to topple mankind, he's
come the closest.

DEACON

And he decides that fucking
Seatonville's the place to try
again. Yeah, right.

Shroud throws the book she's got in her hand at his chest.
Deacon fumbles it, flipping its front cover open in the
process. An inscription is written there; its signature reads
COLTON DARROW.

CHUD

Colton Darrow. This was the mummy guy's?

MRS. SHROUD

Darrow wasn't just some cornpone cowboy, despite what the Chamber of Commerce makes him out to be. Way before he ever came to Seatonville, he was one of the finest vampire killers on the face of the planet. He fought Kaziglu Bey for his whole life, even after Bey had murdered his wife, killed his sister and did things to his children that are so horrible that there's no actual account of them. Darrow kept coming after him, until he managed to steal something from the bastard that was so valuable that it practically ended Bey's reign of terror in one fell swoop.

CHUD

What? Like... his heart or something?

MRS. SHROUD

Better than that. There's only a few vampires who have ever achieved Kaziglu's standing, but they all had one thing in common: knowledge of a ritual that divides one's... animus, or humanity, or soul, or whatever the hell you want to call it... from the self. The bloodsucker sacrifices their potency for security, since they can't be offed in this state by conventional means. Half-undead, half-alive.

LIAM

But he got Darrow, eventually.

MRS. SHROUD

No. Darrow fled Europe and came to the States, running from Bey's agents. He came all the way across the country, and eventually just ran out of new world... so he struck out to go north, hoping to vanish into the wilds of Canada. On his way, he got popped by robbers in the desert and died there. Hell of a denouement for a guy probably saved mankind about ten times.

Shroud drops back into her seat, slouching comfortably and gnawing on her cigar.

MRS. SHROUD

Which was fine, until some dickhead with a pick and a shovel dug up his remains. Shipped him here, slapped him up in a glass case, and charged admission. The minute they ran a DNA test and figured out who the hell the guy was, the deal was sealed, and Bey was bound to show up looking for him.

D'JUAN

And you know all this shit how, exactly?

LIZE

She's a vampire hunter.

MRS. SHROUD

Not quite, honey. My husband... Peter. He was a vampire hunter. I was just born into a proud tradition, and followed in his footsteps, learning what I could.

CHUD

Did he get... you know.

Chud gestures at his neck with two fingers, pantomiming fangs.

MRS. SHROUD

No. That would have been much more poetic. Pancreatic cancer. Five years of fighting tooth and nail, and then... it was just me. And the final directive.

LIAM

Final directive?

MRS. SHROUD

Come on, kid. You seem to be the stoic one, the brains of the operation. You haven't put it together?

LIAM

You and your husband. You were here because you know where Darrow hid what he stole.

MRS. SHROUD

Close. Peter took the final resting place of the Essential to his grave, with my blessing. We gave up enough of our lives in the name of that shit. I was happy to wash my hands of it.

Shroud leans forward, and tamps out her cigar in an ashtray.

MRS. SHROUD

So, consider yourselves brought up to speed on current events.

LIAM

"Brought up to speed"? That's it?
You outline the end of the world
for us, and now... what? We go home,
go to sleep?

MRS. SHROUD

I don't really care what you do,
honestly. But yeah. That's it.

LIAM

That's bullshit, lady.

DEACON

It's ONE vampire and a guy who
looks like a varnished dog turd.
Why don't you just roll up there
like you did out back, put the
barrel in his mouth...

MRS. SHROUD

You fight a lot of vampires, kid?

DEACON

No, but I can fucking count. One of
him. One of you. Call some friends
and make a tailgate party out of
it.

MRS. SHROUD

(Chuckling)

Anything or anyone that gets done
by those of a vampire's blood
become converts TO that blood. So
even if there was "just" one leech
up there-and it wasn't fucking
Kaziglu Bey-you can get good odds
on the fact that there'll be
hundreds of his followers trucking
around here by the week's end.

CHUD

So what are we going to do!?

MRS. SHROUD

Convince your parents it's a good
time to visit Canada, or something.
I don't know.

She pushes herself up and out of her seat, and begins to pad towards the door.

MRS. SHROUD

I'm tired, and I'm retired. It's at
the point now where I'm thinking a
little conflagration might be good
for people. Your generation's got
its head up its ass, and the world
isn't getting any less ugly.

Shroud reaches down for her doorknob, but Liam's up and advancing fast. The door starts to open, but Cross SLAMS it shut.

LIAM

No. I said this is bullshit.

MRS. SHROUD

I wasn't asking, kid. Step lively,
or I'll kick your ass off my porch
myself.

LIAM

If you're too much of an old
chickenshit to stand up and fight,
then at LEAST teach us what you
know. It's the least you can do.

Shroud has opened the door a bit, but now SLAMS it herself. The other boys and Lize are up, and flank Liam.

MRS. SHROUD

Let me make this crystal clear for you. This is not Nintendo fucking happy hour, where you grab a magic mushroom and get another chance. This is real warfare, with real blood, and a very real chance that you or someone you love will die.

LIAM

We can be ready.

MRS. SHROUD

Ready? You can be "ready"? You think you can be ready for the possibility of having your fingernails pulled out, and being used to peel your skin off, one inch at a time? Or maybe having to pull the trigger on a loved one, before they tear your throat out? Your own mother, maybe?

CHUD

I could probably do that.

MRS. SHROUD

Think. Think about it long and hard, kid. You want to be "ready", you'd better harden up and realize that you might die before you've even really lived. Now, take your sister home and make sure she gets to bed.

Liam doesn't budge.

LIAM

Please.

MRS. SHROUD

All due points for your grit, kid,
but...

Someone KNOCKS heavily on the door, startling the group. Shroud reaches into the umbrella caddy in the foyer and draws out a large revolver, cocking the hammer and slowly turning the knob.

It's a cop. Late twenties, blue eyes, black hair, solid jaw. He offers a papery smile to the older woman, and we can now see that there's two police cruisers out on the street, along with quite a few startled neighbors. The red lights cast the scene in a dull crimson glow.

OFFICER RUTLAND

Sorry to bother you ma'am, but we had reports of shots fired in the neighborhood, and... (He notices Deacon) ... hello, Means.

DEACON

Officer Rutland, sir. Lovely night.

MRS. SHROUD

Oh, I'm afraid not. We've just been sitting around, discussing... the upcoming football season. I don't believe we heard any commotion.

Rutland gives her a strange, unconvinced look before nodding.

OFFICER RUTLAND

So, you know these kids.

MRS. SHROUD

I'm their cafeteria lady.

OFFICER RUTLAND

Oh-kay. If it's alright, I'll go ahead and walk them back across the street. (To Deacon) And I want a few words with you.

DEACON

Joy.

The kids begin to file out of Shroud's house, leaving Liam last.

LIAM

Please.

Shroud rolls her eyes in exasperation, and leans down towards the kid.

MRS. SHROUD

Sleep on it. You still ready to martyr yourself up tomorrow morning, come see me. I'm not guaranteeing a damn thing, but I'll show you little shits a thing or two.

Liam nods silently, and scurries to catch up with the others.

EXT. SUNNY SIGN COURT

Out on the street, a handful of officers try to maintain some semblance of order while a small group of neighbors fire off questions and comments noisily. Among them are Mrs. Cross and Len, who notice Liam and the others being led across Shroud's front yard.

MRS. CROSS

Oh my GOD! Someone heard gunshots out here, and you kids are running around doing... what did you do to your pants NOW?

LEN

Come on, come on. They're alright.
No harm, no foul. Let's get inside,
it's freezing out here.

LIAM

I'll be along. Just one second.

He turns to look at the other boys, expectantly. Deacon passes the trio, being talked at by Officer Rutland. He grins slyly and slides a middle finger up at them.

LIAM

I'm going back there first thing tomorrow. You coming along?

CHUD

To do what? Watching this shit on cable's one thing, Liam. Actually living it is something else.

D'JUAN

Count me out.

LIAM

D'Juan.

D'JUAN

I didn't ask to get thrown into the blender with you guys, and as far as I'm concerned... good luck with it, man. Peaces.

D'Juan turns and heads off, leaving Liam and Chud behind.

LIAM

You bitching out, too?

CHUD

No. I'll be here.

Liam nods silently, and swats the other boy on the shoulder before picking up the pace and heading for his house. He jogs across the lawn and up the stairs, only to find that Lize's seated on the porch swing, waiting for him. Wordlessly, she hops up and scuttles over, throwing her arms around her brother's waist before he can protest.

LIZE

Whatever happens, I'm with you.

Liam doesn't know what to say. He returns the embrace, as the moon continues to shimmer placidly overhead.

INT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Thump. With a gross, wet splat, the lifeless body of a CONVENIENCE STORE CLERK is dumped on the concrete floor. Its limbs splay out in dead weight, the fabric of its polo shirt and the nametag on it—"JOE"—torn, revealing the mauled flesh underneath. A vampire bride wipes the back of her hand across her bloodied mouth, having been carrying the corpse.

It's one of many. Maybe a half-dozen dead bodies—mostly dead University students, from the looks of things—are strewn about the floor of the asylum's basement, the firelight from the boiler flickering over the ghastly scene. Kaziglu watches it all with a managerial air, as Rueger humps down the stairs and dumps another lifeless figure with the others.

KAZIGLU

Fate turned a key tonight, Rueger.
I saw her. The Order's steward.

There's a faint sound of movement on the floor; as Kaziglu and Rueger look on, one of the dead bodies begins to twitch.

KAZIGLU

Tomorrow, we move swiftly. No more second chances. Your task will be to bait the hook, and once she comes along to indulge the usual heroics... we'll bleed her dry.

INT. THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE - MORNING

All it takes is a brief once-over to see that Liam hasn't slept a wink from the night before. His eyes are pinkish and slightly sunken, narrowed in focus on something held in his hand. He's stretched atop his blankets on his bed, fully dressed.

We close in tight on the piece of paper he's holding. It's a photograph. In it, a younger version of Liam, Lize, Mrs. Cross and a man who we'll assume is the late Mr. Cross are all grinning and waving, standing against a clear blue sea. Liam's thumb strokes the photo thoughtfully.

He sits up, his expression a determined scowl. He slams the picture face-down on his nightstand, grabs his shoes, and opens the Slaughterhouse door. It's morning; the sunlight pours in, painfully bright and clean.

INT. THE CROSS FAMILY HOME - MORNING

Len and Mrs. Cross are eating their breakfast on the living room couch, faces concerned as they watch the television. The back door bangs shut, and Liam pads down the hallway.

TELEVISION

... the rash of campus disappearances are only the latest happening to stretch the resources of local law enforcement, who already have a number of similar investigations open. University student body president Joshua Unger has stated that plans for the annual football rally remain in effect, despite the...

Liam grabs his jacket and wordlessly opens the front door.

MRS. CROSS

Liam?

The door slams.

EXT. SUNNY SIGN COURT - MORNING

It's a stark Sunday morning, lit with cold sunlight. The street's deserted, save for a single figure seated at the end of the Cross house's walk. It's DEACON. He touches his lighter to his shoelaces as Liam steps alongside him. The boys say nothing. Deacon stands, and they continue across the street.

EXT. MRS. SHROUD'S HOUSE - MORNING

As Liam and Deacon approach, they find Chud pacing nervously around on the sidewalk. Again, nothing is said; looks are exchanged, with the round-faced boy eyeing Deacon somewhat suspiciously, and Means giving one of his shit-eating grins in response. Liam continues up Shroud's walk, and the others follow.

EXT. MRS. SHROUD'S PORCH

Liam bangs on the door, and it swings inward. Mrs. Shroud stands there with a cup of coffee and a sour morning expression, hair tucked up.

MRS. SHROUD

What, you were expecting a
goddamned wakeup call?

She gives the boys a once-over, and steps aside, revealing the fact that D'JUAN is already sitting on her couch, slouched comfortably, feet on the coffee table.

MRS. SHROUD

He's been here for an hour.

D'Juan just shrugs.

D'JUAN

What else is there to do in this
town on a Sunday?

MRS. SHROUD

Alright, we're wasting my time
already. Let's get started.

INT. THE SHROUD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

D'Juan's sneakers are pushed off of the table, replaced by the THUMP of a fat, dusty old book. Upbeat music cues in, setting the pace for the montage that's to come.

MRS. SHROUD

First off, forget all the shit
you've been rotting your brain with
on television. This is warfare, and
warfare's got no rules. Your
ability to improvise is what keeps
your skin on your ass.

Shroud flips open to a page and turns it around. It's written in Cyrillic.

CHUD

What is that? An incantation?

MRS. SHROUD

Shopping list.

INT. THE MALL - DAY

The bustle and noise of a Sunday afternoon at the Seatonville mall. Shoppers push and shove around the food court, as D'Juan turns the charm up on a couple of blonde girls manning a jewelry cart. Deacon takes advantage of the distraction, pouring a tray of rings marked "REAL SILVER" into the deep pocket of his jacket.

INT. STRIP MALL CHURCH - DAY

A group of young children chant along to some nursery-school rhyme as Chud slinks by the door.

He glances around to make sure the coast is clear, and proceeds to fill up a water bottle in the small, plastic fountain marked "SANCTIFIED WATER - DO NOT DRINK".

INT. THE SHROUD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Shroud flips through another book, holding up a woodcut illustration of a corpselike monster terrorizing some villagers.

MRS. SHROUD

And this one?

CHUD

Zombie.

D'JUAN

Vampire. It's got fangs.

CHUD

Dickhead. Zombies can have fangs.

INT. SEATONVILLE LIBRARY - DAY

By himself, Liam studies several rolls of blueprints. He spreads out a poster-sized piece of paper; it's a map of the SCHOOL.

EXT. MEANS SCRAPYARD - WORKSHED - DAY

The door to an old corrugated steel workshed is dragged open, pouring light into the musty confines. Deacon and D'Juan take in the guts of the shanty, backlit by daylight. Deacon steps in and starts digging through the junk; tossing aside a cricket paddle, an old stroller, and then picking up a pushbroom and examining it.

INT. THE SHROUD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

D'Juan and Chud continue to argue.

CHUD

It's not DRESSED like a vampire.

D'JUAN

And you know... what, exactly, about fashion? Your MOM dresses you.

CHUD

And YOUR mom undresses me.

EXT. MEANS SCRAPYARD - DAY

CRACK. Deacon's foot comes down on a rake, snapping its handle. He repeats the action down a line of propped-up tools. The broken wood makes perfectly improvised stakes, as D'Juan steps in and collects the fragments.

INT. THE CROSS FAMILY HOUSE - KITCHEN

Lize intently goes to work on a piece of construction paper, drawing something with markers.

INT. THE SHROUD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Deacon shouts his friends down.

DEACON

HEY. Shut up. Lady, what the hell is it? Vampire, or zombie?

MRS. SHROUD

It's a trick question. The proper answer is: "I'm thirteen years old, and if I see anything like this, I need to run my little ass off".

CHUD

(Sullenly)

I'm fourteen.

MONTAGE SHOTS:

HANDS

D'Juan drags out a roll of electrical tape.

CLOSE UP

Deacon smokes and melts down the rings in his dad's workshop.

CLOSE UP

Lize draws.

CLOSE UP

A metal mold is tapped against the table, and several silver bullets are knocked loose.

CLOSE UP

Liam pores over his blueprints.

CLOSE UP

D'Juan wraps the tape around the butt of the stakes.

CLOSE UP

Chud sits, reading one of Deacon's smuttrags. Someone rips it out of his hands.

INT. THE SHROUD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Shroud slaps the book shut and tosses it alongside several others on her coffee table. Deacon looks less than impressed.

DEACON

And then what?

MRS. SHROUD

We wait for something terrible to happen.

DEACON

And that's it. No magic spells, no napalm, no Frankenstein monster?

Shroud looks annoyed, but curls a fist around a pendant she's got dangling from her neck.

She jerks it, snapping the leather thong, and throws it to Deacon. Chud reaches out and snags it.

MRS. SHROUD

There. That thing's like a metal detector for all kinds of manky, evil shit. Once it starts glowing, you can bet that bad shit's inbound.

CHUD

(Shaking it in his hand)
It's busted. It's already glowing.

Deacon PUNCHES him in the arm stiffly.

INT. THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE - EVENING

Liam's room is filled with activity and noise, as the boys sit amidst the fruits of their labors. Most of the clothes and other junk has been shoveled aside to make way for the items scattered on the floor: makeshift stakes, jugs of holy water, cheap plastic triptychs. Chud and D'Juan are seated, leaning against Liam's bed.

CHUD

Do you think, like... if you drank enough holy water, you could sanctify your piss?

D'JUAN

Chud, you ask me one more stupid question about holy water, and I'm seriously going to beat you.

CHUD

You can beat me... (pause) ... off.

D'JUAN

Liam, what the hell are you doing?

Liam has put the finishing touches on his blueprint with a Sharpee. He turns around and slaps it down on the rug, spreading the paper out.

LIAM

I spent the whole afternoon at the library, going through blueprints of buildings put up before 1950. Places that are sturdy, places where people can lock themselves down if it comes to it.

CHUD

Way to rip off Dawn of the Dead.

LIAM

So what? It was a good fucking idea in the movie, it's a good fucking idea here. The plan is that we come up with a signal, or something to...

D'JUAN

Man, this is a blueprint of the school.

CHUD

The SCHOOL?

LIAM

Yeah. The SCHOOL. Okay? It's made of bricks, it's got areas that can be blocked off, the cafeteria's got food for at least a week...

D'JUAN

It's still the fucking SCHOOL, man!

CHUD

Yeah, I hate to agree with D'Juan, but if I've got to pick anywhere to die...

LIAM

Nobody's dying. Now. The plan is to
come up with a signal...

The door to the bomb shelter bangs open, and Lize enters.
She's carrying a piece of paper by the corners, its paint and
glue still wet.

CHUD

Close the door, you're letting all
the cool out!

LIZE

Stick your head in it first! I made
you guys something.

LIAM

Show it to us later. Right here, I
drew...

LIZE

It'll only take a second!

Lize drops to the floor and slaps her picture down on top of
the blueprint. It's a fairly crude drawing done in markers,
some glitter, poster paint and paper pieces; it shows the
boys fighting a group of vampires with the words "MONSTER
SQUAD" written boldly across the top.

CHUD

That's officially the gayest thing
I've ever seen. D'Juan isn't TALLER
than me.

LIZE

I was going to make you fatter, but
I ran out of glue.

D'JUAN

Nah, he looks fat enough.

LIAM

Lize, we're busy. Take this inside
and...

The door bangs open again, and Deacon walks in, an army bag thrown over his shoulder and a cigarette in his mouth.

D'JUAN

Again with the cool guy shit. Why
don't you dig a hole through the
ceiling next time?

Deacon ignores him and looks over Lize's picture.

DEACON

Is that me with the sword?

LIZE

(Shyly)

If anybody would kill a zombie with
a katana, it'd be you.

Chud GAGS. Lize socks him in the leg.

LIAM

We've been going over the retreat
plan.

DEACON Nice. Let me show you what Santa brought real quick.

Liam starts to protest, but it's too late: Deacon pulls a small plastic RACK out of his bag; it's half-filled with bullets of varying calibers. Their tips are SILVER.

CHUD

Fuck buttons. No way. You actually
managed to make silver bullets?

DEACON

Party poppers. Got some nine mills,
thirty-oughts... these'll make some
noise.

LIAM

Can you put them with the rest of
the stuff? We've got to go over...

Deacon fishes in the bag again, and pulls out a pair of PVC pipes. They're wrapped in duct tape, and have short fuses jutting out of their ends.

D'JUAN

Motherfucker made PIPE BOMBS.

CHUD

Oh my GOD. Can we light one up? On
the Tileson's front lawn, or...

LIAM

Deacon, what the hell? Bombs?

DEACON

Unhitch your panties, they're safe.
Insides are packed with metal
shavings and screws, so when they
do go off, you'd better hope you're
a zombie going in. (He digs back
into the bag) And the belle of the
ball...

Deacon withdraws a large black SHOTGUN. Smooth, sleek, its dull shine the color of motor oil, with a foldable stock and brackets for shells on top.

DEACON

Straight from the old man's private
stash.

CHUD

Let me hold it!

LIAM

Deacon, what are you...

D'JUAN

Bitch, like you've fired a gun before. Let me see that.

DEACON

Hell no, it's locked, loaded and live. I'm keeping point with this baby.

LIAM

GODDAMIT!

Furiously, Liam hurls his marker against the wall. The other boys fall silent.

LIAM

You know something? Shroud was fucking right last night. We're in a world of shit, and you guys are treating it like a fucking Nintendo game! Like it's a big fucking joke, coming in here with this crap...

Liam grabs Lize's painting and crumples it up. She gasps, crestfallen.

LIAM

... carrying on like fucking GI Joe!
All I'm trying to do is get serious about this thing, and you're all just rui... (He trails off)

After a long moment, Deacon's the one to speak.

DEACON

Wait, we're what?

LIAM

Nothing.

DEACON

No. I want to hear this. We're WHAT, Liam? We're fucking RUINING this for you? How can you sit there and run us down for not taking this thing seriously, and all the while you're humping some fantasy shit about how you're going to save the world with your little escape plan?

LIAM

At least I'M TRYING.

DEACON

Yeah. We ALL are, man. You're just too bent with your wet dream about coming to the town's rescue and somehow CHANGING everything to give us any credit. Like you're some kind of leader, Liam? Guess what. Fuck that. You're as big a loser as the rest of us, and not a goddamn thing... monsters, secret plans, any of this crazy bullshit... is going to CHANGE that fact. So just shut the FUCK up and stop pretending.

The silence is thick enough to cut with a knife. Lize is sniffling. Everyone else has gone mute. The door handle twists, and Len storms into the room.

LEN

Guys, I'm only coming out here once...

He stops and takes in the scene. The shotgun. The bullets. The stakes. The kids. The floor plan for the school. When he speaks again, it's quiet. Dangerous.

LEN

What is this?

LIAM

It's not what you...

LEN

Give me the gun.

DEACON

Sir, it's j-

LEN

GIVE ME THE GODDAMNED GUN.

Deacon unstraps the shotgun and hands it over to Len, who snatches it out of his hand.

LEN

Lize, go up to your room and stay there. The rest of you, go home.

Deacon seems primed to let loose, but just shakes his head and moves for the door. The others follow, wordlessly. Len SLAMS the door behind them.

LEN

Liam, for Christ's sake... no matter how bad things are at school. This isn't an answer.

LIAM

Len, it's not what you...

LEN

Then WHAT? You collecting fucking GUNS for charity?

EXT. THE CROSS FAMILY'S BACKYARD

The angry voices of Liam and Len can be heard out on the lawn, as the boys part ways. Lize stops in the middle of the lawn, prompting Deacon to move over to her and muss her hair.

DEACON

It was a good poster.

POV - RUEGER'S EYES

Heavy breathing and slavering, as we switch to the classic horror-movie POV. Something large and unpleasant is watching the scene in the backyard, as Lize trudges up the steps and Deacon lights a cigarette.

INT. THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE

Len sets the gun down. Liam's eyes haven't risen from the floor.

LEN

Like I told you, I KNOW things are bad, Liam. But you have to believe that it DOES get better...,

LIAM

This isn't ABOUT that! We... the guys and I... we found out that... (beat) ... there's REAL monsters, Len. They're out there right now, all of the disappearances and crazy shit that's been going in is because of them.

LEN

Monsters.

LIAM

You can ask Lize, you can ask any one of those guys, they've seen them and...

Without warning, Len grabs a fistful of Liam's horror magazines and HURLS them against the wall.

LEN

I told your mom that you were
frying your mind with this shit.

LIAM

I'm not a liar, Len.

LEN

It's fine, Liam. I'm through
trying. If you don't want to talk
to me, then maybe you'll open up to
the cops.

Liam glances to where the magazines have fallen. Shroud's amulet is glowing a VIOLENT WHITE color. Len reaches for the door handle, as recognition snaps on the boy's face.

LIAM

LEN! DON'T-

It's too late. Len drags the door open as time slows down; filling the entirety of the frame is RUEGER. The beast's shoulders heave, while Len's expression changes to profound confusion.

SLASH. Time SNAPS back into the present as Rueger's claws rake across Len's chest, sending him sprawling. He screams in pain as the monster advances on Liam; the boy backs into the wall and flattens against it, jaw agape. The werewolf raises its arm for another blow, but is stayed by an OSV SCREAM.

Standing in the doorway is LIZE. She gapes at the monster. Rueger's jaws widen into a hideous SNARL as Liam's senses return, as he grabs a nearby stake. As Rueger turns, he JAMS it into the monster's ribs, prompting a scream of inhuman pain.

EXT. SUNNY SIGN COURT - NIGHT

Deacon shuffles along. As he stops to re-light his cigarette, the ear-splitting ROAR echoes through the night.

He straightens sharply, glances over his shoulder, and runs back in the direction of the Cross house.

EXT. THE CROSS FAMILY BACKYARD

Liam drags Lize out of the bomb shelter and through the backyard.

LIZE

LEN!

Rueger thrashes about, trying to pry the stake loose from his flesh. Liam and Lize run through the back door and into the kitchen.

INT. CROSS FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN

Liam slaps the deadbolt into place and leans down to his sister.

LIZE

Len! Len's... Len...

LIAM

Lize. Listen to me. Go down to the basement, HIDE. No matter what you hear, until someone comes and gets you, don't MOVE.

Lize sniffles as he wipes her tears, and nudges her along.

LIAM

Go. Go, go.

Lize stumbles off down the hallway, as Liam's eyes scan the kitchen for a weapon. He pulls a steak knife out from the chopping block and begins to back away from the rear of the house cautiously; he can HEAR Rueger's breathing outside. Slow and methodical. A growl.

EXT. THE CROSS FAMILY HOME - FRONT YARD

Deacon, D'Juan and Chud all arrive at the front of the walk at the exact same moment. They share confused looks.

D'JUAN

You heard that shit, too?

CHUD

The fuck are you doing, Deacon?

The older boy has begun to pick his way up the steps. He takes another as a POLICE CAR drags up to the curb, and out steps Officer Rutland, nightstick in hand.

OFFICER RUTLAND

You know, Means, I'm getting sick of seeing your face.

DEACON

You need to call for backup RIGHT fucking now, Rutland...

OFFICER RUTLAND

And you need to park that potty-mouth, bitch. Hands where I can see them.

SMASH. A huge portion of the Cross home's front EXPLODES outwards. Rueger simply goes through the wall, showering busted timbers and broken glass onto the group outside; as they spill to the lawn, the werewolf bounds past, leaps onto the hood of Rutland's cruiser, and ROARS. We can now see that he's dragging Liam's limp form under a massive arm. The beast bounds down the street and into the night, leaving Rutland in a state of shock and the boys slowly getting to their feet.

DEACON

Lize. (To Chud) Go get Shroud!

Chud runs off as Deacon and D'Juan head up the steps, leaving Rutland mumbling to himself.

INT. THE CROSS HOME

The living room is ravaged. Upturned furniture, clawmarks on the hallway wall. Deacon and D'Juan step through the debris, taking in the damage.

DEACON LIZE?

A soft, distressed sound comes from downstairs.

DEACON

Fuck, downstairs. Go see if she's alright, man!

D'Juan nods and takes off down the hallway. Deacon continues to the back of the house, stepping over broken glass and arriving in the kitchen. A huge hole has been TORN into the wall where the window used to be, as the teenager takes it in with huge eyes.

DEACON

Fuck me sideways.

EXT. THE CROSS HOME - BACKYARD

Deacon hops through the hole in the back of the house, only to find the wounded LEN crawling weakly across the lawn. Deacon drops into a crouch at his side.

DEACON

Len. You hear me? The cops are coming, the ambulance is coming. Your friends are on their way.

LEN

Gotta... Liam...

D'Juan and Lize arrive, picking their way through the door. Lize squeaks, running to Len's side with tears in her eyes.

DEACON

Are you hurt?

LIZE

No! Liam told me to hide, and he
tried to protect me and that thing...
it took...

She breaks down, with Deacon's arm slung around her shoulder.
Chud stumbles through the door, huffing and puffing.

CHUD

She isn't there, man!

DEACON

Fuck. (Beat) Lize, listen to me.
We're gonna go help your brother,
but I need you to...

CHUD Woah, WHAT?

DEACON

... I need you to stay here with Len
until help comes. He needs you. Can
you do that for me?

Lize sniffles, weakly.

DEACON

Hey. Monster Squad. Hooah.

He musses her hair and gets to his feet, collecting whatever weapons have been scattered about. Stakes, holy water, the shotgun, stuffed into his army bag. Chud and D'Juan look on in disbelief.

D'JUAN

Man, what the hell do you think
you're gonna do?

DEACON

Something stupid.

EXT. THE CROSS HOME - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

The neighbors are out again, clustering around Officer Rutland, who's trying to set up a perimeter with some YELLOW POLICE tape. He gestures for calm as the boys appear from the sideway, purposefully crossing the lawn.

OFFICER RUTLAND

Hey! Hey, you aren't going
anywhere! HEY!

The boys ignore him, and the mob of concerned citizens keep the cop from following. Deacon reaches the curb and does a quick survey of the street, then heads for Rutland's cruiser. He pops the front door, throws his bag in, and looks to the other two boys.

DEACON

I'm not leaving a friend to die.
I'm going to Cherrymount. You're
welcome to join me.

Chud and D'Juan exchange looks, then get into the car. D'Juan in shotgun, Chud in the back. The engine fires up, the siren sputters to life, and the cruiser peels out down the street, leaving Rutland coughing on its dust and screaming. Chud glances through the back window of the cruiser.

CHUD

How many monsters you think we have
to kill to justify a GTA?

EXT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM

Establishing shot of the rotting old structure. A single light burns in the window, framed by bare trees.

INT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - DR. MACBETH'S OFFICE.

With a thump, Liam is thrown onto the office floor. He's groggy; it takes effort to get to his knees, as he looks around the ramshackle office.

The ever-present fire flickers in the hearth, as Kaziglu's shrouded frame leans on the mantelpiece. Rueger lurches forward and moves to take his place at the vampire's side, along with the already-stationed MUMMY. A moment passes, and Kaziglu whirls about and swoops in at Liam, moving silently. He stops a mere inch from the boy's face and inhales deeply. Once, twice. He smiles.

KAZIGLU

You've a knack for finding yourself
in ill places at ill times, boy.

He rises, and moves to a nearby armchair, dropping into it with a throne-like importance.

LIAM

I'm not afraid of you.

KAZIGLU

And why would you be? You've done
me no wrong. Yet.

LIAM

What do you want?

KAZIGLU

Only what's mine. I believe you're
familiar with the one who knows its
whereabouts.

LIAM

It doesn't matter, she doesn't know
where your shitty little trinket
is.

KAZIGLU

And she's told you as much? You two
must have quite a rapport. (Beat)
Tell me, do you think she, or
anybody else cares enough about you
to attempt a rescue?

LIAM

No.

EXT. THE CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM GROUNDS

SNAP. A pair of bolt cutters slice through the steel slats of the fence, forming a hole large enough to duck through. Deacon slides the tool into his bag and eases through the gap, with Chud and D'Juan following. In the lead, Deacon grimly taps D'Juan's shoulder, pointing wordlessly to the single lit window within the asylum's façade. D'Juan nods.

INT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - DR. MACBETH'S OFFICE

KAZIGLU

You've an odd air about you, child.
You reek of the selfishness of
someone who knows suffering and
persecution intimately, yet you're
so ready to sacrifice yourself for
something you can't even
comprehend.

LIAM

There's nothing to comprehend about
fucking up your plans to take over
the world.

KAZIGLU

(Laughing)

The WORLD? Is that what you've been
told? This twaddling ball of mud
and misery that mankind's created
for itself? Please. You may think
me a monster, but not a sadist.

LIAM

Then what? What the hell do you
want?

KAZIGLU
(Seething)

My SELF. That which has left me wandering this godforsaken world in a half-state, removed of my power and my ability to feel anything... you can't imagine it, boy. What it is to be neither alive nor dead, skulking through the shadows like an insect when you were once a king.

LIAM
That's IT? You've done all this because you want your humanity back?

KAZIGLU
Please. Even with your young arrogance, you must realize that the two are not synonymous. Humanity is frail, limited... look at Colton. An inextinguishable force when alive, now nothing more than a toy dangling on my strings. No, boy. My self makes no provisions for the weaknesses of your kind. It's grown to be so much more through the tempering of time.

EXT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM GROUNDS

Deacon stops, crouching low behind some underbrush. He signals for D'Juan and Chud to stop and drop with a fist. He's intent on something ahead, half-shrouded in the mist; as the other boys lean inward, we can see that it's an UNDEAD MINION. A familiar one.

D'JUAN
(Whispering)
Hold up, is that...

CHUD
(Whispering)
... THOMPSON?

It is. The recently-deceased owner of the comic book shop wobbles a bit on his heels, colorless eyes staring off into space. He's been pretty well-mangled, neck torn out and a piece of his cheek missing.

CHUD
Gimme the gun, I want to shoot him.

DEACON
That's fucked. You knew that guy?

CHUD
Yeah, but he was an asswipe and now he's a zombie. Let me blast him.

D'JUAN
Well, hold up. Is he a zombie? Or a vampire?

CHUD
Look at how slow he's moving! Of course he's a fucking zombie!

D'JUAN
Bitch, you ever see Thompson do ANYTHING fast?

Deacon hisses sharply for quiet, and unslings his shotgun.

DEACON
(Whispering)
It'll take too long to go around.

He lines up a shot, as Chud cups his hands around his mouth and SHOUTS.

CHUD
NO REFUNDS, FUCKFACE!

Deacon and D'Juan are speechless. The Thompson-creature tilts its head at the noise, and then goes into full-on ATTACK MODE. It clears the distance between it and the boys in a few gallops, and Chud and D'Juan pitch back in panic. Deacon stands his ground and pops off a single shot at point-blank range. It pretty much explodes what's left of the shopkeeper in a nasty splatter of gooey viscera, showering the boys.

DEACON

(Tightly)

Chud, I'm going to shoot you in the face.

CHUD

Okay.

The moment is interrupted by the shuffling of nearby movement; the boys look into the distance, where something-or a number of somethings-are rapidly making an approach.

INT. THE CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM

Rueger's monstrous visage peers through the window, aware of the gunfire. Kaziglu slides a glance over in the same direction.

KAZIGLU

Well, well. It sounds as though your life's worth than you thought.

He rises, moving to the window. Liam woosily gets to his feet, craning his neck to see what's happening outside, as a loud BOOM and a flash of light burst through the darkness outside.

EXT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM GROUNDS

Deacon is running for his life, lighter in hand; he touches the flame to the fuse of another PIPE BOMB, twisting and throwing it at the dozen or so ZOMBIES who are now giving the boys chase.

They're the same corpses from the Cherrymount's basement, now animated; several college kids, the convenience store guy, a gas station attendant, undead and pissed-off.

DEACON
FIRE IN THE-

BOOM. The bomb goes off, launching a few undead creatures into the air. Chud and D'Juan continue to bound through the underbrush, hell on their heels.

INT. THE CHERRymOUNT ASYLUM - DR. MACBETH'S OFFICE

Kaziglu's face is framed in the window. He catches a glimpse of the boys running through a clearing, and laughs.

KAZIGLU
Ah, how noble. After enlisting your aid, the old woman doesn't even follow your friends into the breach.

He adjusts his cloaks moves from the window, nodding to Darrow.

KAZIGLU
We've no more use for this one.
Take him to the basement and make sure he's comfortable. (beat) Burn him alive in the furnace.

Liam tries to get to his feet and begin running, but Colton's on him. The mummy twists its withered arms around his chest, dragging him from the room. Once out of the room, he opens his mouth and screams at the top of his lungs.

LIAM
GUYS! IT'S A TRAP! IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, IT'S-

The mummy stuffs its fingers into Liam's mouth, gagging him. Kaziglu watches them leave, then turns to Rueger.

KAZIGLU

You know what to do.

INT. THE CHERRYMOUNT ASYLM - MAIN FOYER

The three boys come lunging through the asylum's front doors; the old wood is busted, but still on its hinges. They screech against the linoleum as Chud and D'Juan force them shut.

D'JUAN

Fuck, it won't close!

DEACON

Fridge!

Amongst the debris and derelict items that have been dumped in the asylum's lobby-a broken table, tires, a couch-is a huge old fridge. Deacon hurls his weight against it and tips it over, and the boys shove it up against the door just as the first of the zombies slam their weight against it. It shifts a bit, but holds.

CHUD

It smells like about a million bums have pissed in this thing.

DEACON

C'mon.

INT. THE CHERRYMOUNT ASYLM - BASEMENT

Still struggling, Liam is dragged down the basement steps. The mummy's hands are twisted tight around his arms, hauling his weight with its awkward, shuffling gait. The boy tries to dig his heels in, writhing.

LIAM

Colton... your name is Colton Darrow...
you were alive once, you were a
vampire hunter... your name's Colton
Darrow! Remember your name!

The mummy shows no recognition.

EXT. THE CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - HALLWAY

Armed with nickel-plated flashlights, Deacon and the others run up to a junction of staircases. Two lead down, two lead up, with a large landing in the center.

DEACON

Shit! Did that scream come from upstairs, or downstairs?

D'JUAN

Upstairs.

CHUD

You deaf? It was downstairs!

DEACON

How the fuck could it come from upstairs AND down...

He trails off, as something pads down the stairs with heavy footsteps. The flashlight plays along the water-damaged walls, eventually landing on RUEGER. The werewolf stalks along the landing slowly, as Deacon's beam of light starts to shudder.

DEACON

I'm going downstairs. You guys can have the upstairs.

D'JUAN

W... what?

DEACON

RUN, SHITHEAD!

Deacon SHOVES the other two boys and leaps onto the railing of the downstairs flight. Chud and D'Juan make a breakneck rush for safety as Rueger clears the steps with a single lunge, his snapping jaws barely missing Deacon's head.

The beast lingers for a moment before lurching off after the other two boys.

INT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM BASEMENT - STAIRS

Deacon hurtles down the banister and skids off, landing hard on the concrete floor. In the distance, he can hear Liam's voice; setting his jaw, he retrieves his flashlight and presses on.

INT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM BASEMENT

Clank. The door to the boiler room is thrown open, as Colton hauls Liam's thrashing form through it. The kid catches a foot on the door, struggling.

LIAM

Colton... Colton Darrow... your name is
Colton Darrow! Fuck! You were
human... you fought evil... you had a
wife! You had a sister! You had
kids!

No avail. Darrow drags the furnace hatch open with a heavy clunk of metal and hefts Liam up. The fires roar, nearly white-hot.

LIAM

He killed them! Kaziglu Bey killed
the people you loved, Colton!

The mummy begins the backswing to hurl Liam into the fires, but abruptly stops. It freezes for a long moment. And then, without warning, it drops the boy. Liam slumps on the floor, eyes fearful.

LIAM

Kaziglu Bey. You fought him your
whole life. You gave up everything,
because you believed in that.

The petrified creature cants its head, almost human-like. It reaches down and lifts Liam to his feet.

LIAM
(Breathlessly)
You can still fight him, Colton.

INT. CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - CORRIDORS

Chud and D'Juan are still in full retreat mode, with Rueger galloping after them. It snarls, as D'Juan looks over his shoulder; sensing the incoming leap, he SHOVES Chud to the left and breaks right. The creature awkwardly pounces down the middle, sweeping wide but missing its victims.

Chud nearly falls on his face, but keeps his balance. He continues to sprint for all of ten feet, at which point he realizes that he's been led right into a dead-end. He howls in frustration, grabbing the doors of cells on either side, frantically testing them. They're locked. Rueger's huge, hunched shadow spreads up the wall as the werewolf advances. Chud backs against the wall, out of room and out of time.

CRACK. Rueger grunts and snarls as he's hit by something; a MOP HANDLE. D'Juan brandishes it, baseball-bat style. The wolfman turns towards him.

D'JUAN
Chud, kick him in the nards!

CHUD
Again with the nards shit?!

D'JUAN
DO IT!

D'Juan swings again, but Rueger catches the handle in his claw and snaps it like a toothpick. He bellows, as Chud takes two steps and KICKS him square between the legs. The werewolf yelps, doglike, and doubles over, as the two wide-eyed boys resume their retreat.

CHUD
(Flatly)
Wolfman's got nards.

INT. THE CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM BASEMENT - CORRIDORS

Deacon stealthily moves along the deserted hallways, the yells of his friends causing him to stop and glance upward. His flashlight slides along the walls and floor, revealing blood smears and rust. Suddenly, the faint sound of someone crying can be heard.

DEACON

Shit. Liam?

No response. He continues along, avoiding broken glass, leaning around the edge of the darkened room ahead. Stepping inward, he immediately covers his mouth with his sleeve to keep from vomiting. The room is FILLED with human remains; half-eaten carcasses, bloodied clothing and shoes, a compost pile of victims. Deacon's flashlight sputters as he steps from the room, ducking his head and fighting a dry heave.

When the light comes back on, we can see the spiderlike form of a VAMPIRE BRIDE clinging to the wall. She hisses and lunges for Deacon, knocking him to the hallway floor and sending both his weapon and flashlight skidding away. They struggle; Deacon's got a knee planted in the vampire's belly, giving him a few inches of breathing room. She seizes his injured forearm, and the boy screams in pain. He recoils, and the bride bares her fangs for the kill.

THUNK. She freezes, looking down. Deacon does the same. Driven between her breasts is the bloodied end of something sharp; we pull back to reveal that it's an old wooden CHAIR LEG, jammed between her shoulderblades and out through her sternum by Liam. He grips it with both hands, as the creature rolls off of Deacon and hits the floor, contorting violently. Liam offers his friend a hand, dragging him to his feet.

DEACON

What kept you?

LIAM
(Matter-of-factly)
It's called dramatic timing,
dickhead. Where's Chud and D'Juan?

A HOWL emits from upstairs. Liam and Deacon look at each other.

INT. THE CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - MAIN FLOOR

Chud and D'Juan are backing down a long hallway, stalked by Rueger. The beast is closing in with measured paces; the boys grab anything they can get their hands on, flinging various debris at the werewolf.

D'JUAN
I think you pissed him off...

CHUD
Me?! YOU were the one who told me
to...

Rueger winds his paw back for a killing blow, but is STOPPED dead in his swing by the jarring interruption: Colton's mummy. The other creature lunges between the boys and the wolfman, hissing between yellowed teeth. Rueger ROARS in defiance. And with a sudden flurry of motion, the FIGHT begins, pitting Rueger's inhuman strength and ferocity against the living corpse. Darrow dodges the swiping of the werewolf's huge claws, retaliating with its own needle-sharp talons. The monster brawl spills down the corridor, putting distance between the two boys and danger. Chud and D'Juan continue to gawk on in disbelief, as Liam and Deacon come running around the distant corner, flashlight in hand.

DEACON Stop jerking off and get that window open!

Chud and D'Juan are jarred back into the moment, joining Liam as he moves to the busted-out hallway windows. The entirety of the corridor's view is secured with a steel grating; D'Juan kicks at it violently, but it refuses to budge.

Liam begins scanning the ground for something to jar it with, but instead sees KAZIGLU descending the stairs at the opposite end of the corridor.

DEACON

Vampire?

LIAM

Vampire.

DEACON

Fuck buttons.

Deacon steps up, shotgun brandished. He begins to fire at Bey: BLAM. BLAM. BLAM. The buckshot barely has any effect on the vampire's stride. The boys continue to throw themselves against the grating as something dawns on Liam.

LIAM

Dude, shoot the window!

DEACON

What?

Liam grabs the shotgun's barrel and re-directs it at the grating. Chud and D'Juan bolt out of the way as the older boy pulls the trigger, BLASTING the frame out. The quartet spill through the window and down to the ground; Chud, D'Juan, Deacon, and Liam, who is halfway out when his ankle is SEIZED by Kaziglu.

DEACON

Take a hit off this!

Deacon shoves the shotgun into Bey's face and pulls the trigger. Click. It's out of shells. The vampire snarls and begins to drag Liam back through the window, easily overpowering D'Juan and Chud's as they try to grab Liam's arms. Kaziglu bares his fangs, and prepares to bite into Liam's knee, but COLTON leaps onto him. The vampire hits the wall, and the boys sprawl onto the turf, Liam in tow.

D'JUAN

That's one pissed-off motherfucking
mummy.

The boys stumble to their feet and begin running for their lives.

INT. THE CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - CORRIDOR

Colton's rage is a FORCE MAJEUR. He rends Kaziglu's face with a slash of his claws. The sheer ferocity of the mummy's attack has the vampire prince on his heels.

EXT. THE CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - GROUNDS

Liam and the others haul ass down the winding road. An undead ghoul-a woman with her neck torn asunder-catches sight of them and lets out a hideous SHRIEK, sounding the alarm.

INT. THE CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - CORRIDOR

Kaziglu falls to one knee as Darrow's withered hands wrap around his throat.

EXT. THE CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - GROUNDS

Out of breath, running on sheer adrenaline, the boys have reached the end of the driveway. Something has dawned on Liam:

LIAM

The gate! The gate's still...

FLASH. The foursome are blinded by a huge bank of halogen lights. They're attached to the roof rack of a robust-looking SUV, equipped for clodbusting and sitting between the open gates on raised knobby tires. Shroud hangs out of the driver's side, cigar in mouth and an AR-15 assault rifle in her hands. Lize is in the passenger seat.

MRS. SHROUD

Grab your ankles, you little shits!

POP. POP, POP. With military precision, the old woman begins dropping pursuing zombies. Blood splatters, carcasses fly, the boys limp up and pile into the SUV's back seat. Shroud ducks in, slides the gun to Lize, and throws the truck in gear. It peels out, spewing gravel.

INT. THE CHERRYMOUNT ASYLUM - CORRIDOR

Kaziglu's face contorts in pain as Colton's talons puncture his throat, strangling him. Darrow's triumph is almost complete, but Rueger's has returned-maw foaming and bleeding, one eye gouged-with a vengeance. The werewolf seizes the petrified creature, flexes, and TEARS it asunder. Darrow is literally ripped in half, limbs flailing on the floor. Kaziglu rises, gripping his throat, and lunges to the window. Below, we can see Shroud's SUV tearing off down an access road. Rueger bellows angrily and begins to crawl through the window, but Kaziglu stops him.

KAZIGLU

No. Let them go. We have the scent,
and the old woman's only got one
place to go.

Kaziglu's attention is drawn to something; he looks down at his leg, where Colton's mummy is weakly clawing at him.

KAZIGLU

Goodbye, old friend.

Kaziglu STOMPS on the mummy's skull, crushing it under his boot.

INT. SHROUD'S SUV

The boys are crammed into the back seat, shoulder to shoulder to shoulder. They look reasonably haggard: vacant eyes, foreheads slicked with sweat, sagging forward. Lize excitedly chatters on over the back of the seat.

LIZE

... so I waited until the ambulance showed up and then they wanted me to go to the hospital but I remembered that we needed to get Mrs. Shroud so I pretended to cry and when nobody was looking, I...

LIAM

Lize.

LIZE

... I got away, and went to her house, and...

LIAM

Lize. You did a good job. You saved our asses.

Lize strikes up a big, bright smile. Liam is quiet for a moment, then looks to his friends.

LIAM

(To each) Thanks. Thanks. Thanks.

DEACON

Don't mention it. Friends are friends, even when it means having to fuck up a few zombies.

LIAM

Mrs. Shroud, thank you for...

MRS. SHROUD

(Amusedly)

Save it, kid. Wait to see if we're still alive in two hours before we start that shit. (Beat) You little bastards really went and twisted this thing.

CHUD

Yeah, thanks so much for YOUR help,
by the way.

D'JUAN

Seriously. If we'd sat around
waiting for your ass to come home,
Liam would be a juicebox by now.

MRS. SHROUD

That was the POINT, for Christ's
sake. It was a bait and switch. You
think Kaziglu took him so they
could sit down and have a heart to
heart? The point was to smoke me
out.

DEACON

Joke's on his ass, then. You don't
know where his doohickey is.
(Pause) Right?

LIAM

She does.

The boys look to the front of the car, clearly annoyed at
having been denied that bit of information. Shroud glares
back in the rear-view mirror.

MRS. SHROUD

Yeah, because telling a bunch of
fourteen-year-olds where the most
powerful relic on the face of the
planet is is a SWELL fucking idea.
How silly of me.

D'JUAN

Wait, how's this a bad thing? We
just go and grab the damn thing,
throw it off a pier, and...

LIAM

But Bey would still be alive. And
he wouldn't stop.

A long pause.

DEACON

So, I'm guessing we aren't making
for the Mexican border, then.

MRS. SHROUD

I'm going to get the essential,
give the prick what he wants and
the moment he's vulnerable, I'm
going to send him back to hell.
(beat) I can drop you off on the
way.

The kids swap glances.

LIAM

To the end?

Chud, Lize and Deacon nod solemnly.

D' JUAN

Greaaaaat.

The SUV speeds off into the night.

EXT. OLD TOWN SEATONVILLE - NIGHT

FWOOSH. A plume of white-hot fireworks are launched into the night sky. The quaint square at the center of Old Town Seatonville is THRIVING with college students in the hundreds, dressed in their festive Viking football merchandise. Banners dangle from lampposts, booze is flowing freely, and a podium has been set up on the steps of the old church, upon which a group of cheerleaders are prancing about to late 90's "jock rock" music.

Shroud's SUV is unable to drive any further through the crowd, and the doors pop open, the reunited Monster Squad pouring out and taking in the scene with weary agitation.

CHUD

Well, this is just fucking grand royal. What are we going to do?

MRS. SHROUD

We're going to move fast. You two (Pointing to Lize and Liam) are coming along with me. You three, stick around and keep an eye out. Anything happens, the rifle's in the front seat and there's ammunition in the trunk.

D'JUAN Hold up, what about all these people? I mean, if shit's rolling down the hill...

CHUD

They're college students. Fuck 'em.

D'JUAN

I agree, but it still isn't right.

A drunken student stumbles by, pointing at Shroud with a drooling grin.

STUDENT

Hey, cafeteria lady! New special of the day! DEEZ NUTS!

MRS. SHROUD

They're all yours, kid. Good luck.
(Beat) Try not to die.

Shroud pulls her overcoat tight around her and heads off. Liam and Lize hesitate, tip a nod to their friends, and follow her.

DEACON

If we pull this off, I'm gonna
shit.

Continuing through the crowd, Shroud begins to head across the street towards a series of nearby storefronts. Liam glances to the church, and then to her.

LIAM

We're not going to the church?

MRS. SHROUD

Old Trinity church was built after the old Old Trinity church was burned to the ground by the locals at the turn of the century. They moved it from its original location, which was...

She pulls up to the door of a video shop, nestled between two coffee shops. It's a "GALA VIDEO", brightly-lit, with posters and signs smattering the windows.

MRS. SHROUD

Here.

INT. GALA VIDEO - NIGHT

Shroud and the Cross kids heads in through the door, where they're cheerfully greeted by a girl wearing a 1930's usher uniform. It's a new low in customer service wardrobe.

GIRL

Welcome to Gala Video!

Shroud ignores her, and continues through the store towards the back. Lize lingers near the horror section; Liam jerks her arm as they continue on.

EXT. OLD TOWN SEATONVILLE

The girls onstage are leading the crowd in a raucous cheer; one half drunkenly shouts "SCREW!" while the other follows up with "EASTERN!". Deacon and the other boys take in the beer-soaked chaos with an air of helplessness. They scan the crowd, noticing a couple of COPS leaning casually against a nearby cruiser; Deacon leads the way in that direction, only to see that one of the officers is RUTLAND. He looks pissed-off, violently gesturing as he tells a story.

DEACON

Okay, that was my plan. What now?

CHUD

I know. Get the gun, start shooting in the air. That'll clear this place out.

DEACON

(Incredulously)

So, almost getting me killed by a zombie tonight isn't enough for you? Fuck that noise.

D'Juan's eyes move to the stage, where a steely-eyed older man in a parka and baseball cap is moving towards the mic. One of the cheerleaders-perky to epic proportions-bounces around as she introduces him.

CHEERLEADER

Ladies and gentlemen and Viking Hordesters... COACH CARCER!

D'Juan sets his mouth in an unpleasant line and heads for the podium.

CHUD

Where are you toddling off to?

D'JUAN

I've got an idea.

INT. GALA VIDEO - BREAK ROOM

Two bored, disillusioned twenty-somethings in usher uniforms are seated on a heap of old boxes. They gnaw mindlessly on hamburgers, staring at the floor.

CLERK ONE

I heard that someone took a shit on
the wall of the men's bathroom.

CLERK TWO

I heard that, too. I don't even
know how you could shit on a wall.
Seems impossible.

The door BANGS open, and Shroud and the kids enter, looking around.

CLERK TWO

Uh, it says employees only on the
door.

CLERK ONE

Didn't you used to be the cafeteria
lady at Seatonville High?

Shroud wearily digs into her coat and pulls out a chrome-plated 357. MAGNUM HANDGUN. She waves it illustratively at the two wage-jockeys.

MRS. SHROUD

Yeah, and slinging creamed corn for
you little fuckers has pushed me
over the edge. It's a hostage
crisis. Clear the store, get the
cops, tell them to call for backup.

Mouths stuffed, eyes wide, the two employees rise and stumble through the door. Shroud counts off several paces from the nearest wall.

LIAM

Uh, no offense? This seems kind of wackshit looney. If the old church did burn down, then they would have cleared out the...

Shroud has taken one of her rings off. She tosses it on the floor; it rolls a few feet and stops, as a thin line of eerie green light emits from it and forms a SQUARE on the linoleum tile. When the light recedes, a grimy old trap door has been left behind, sunken into the ground.

LIAM

... okay, never mind.

EXT. OLD TOWN SEATONVILLE

Onstage, COACH CARCER is sounding off into the mic. The boys reach the edge of the stage.

COACH CARCER

But this is not merely a moment for myself, or the Vikings players, or you... this is an allegory for our lives, and destinies...

D'Juan sets his jaw, and ducks right past the student security, climbing up on stage. His appearance causes a murmur through the crowd, as Carcer trails off and looks to the boy, questioningly. D'Juan whispers something to him. Carcer gives him an odd regard, and returns to the mic.

COACH CARCER

Uh, this is... Dean Houston, the brother of Clarence Houston...
The crowd ERUPTS into a bunch of ill noise.

COACH CARCER

Hey, now! Hey! Dean wants to say a few words on his brother's behalf.

Maybe an OFFICIAL CARGER boy's day we
settle on down and hear him out.

The crowd's umbrage dies down, as D'Juan steps up to the mic and clears his throat.

INT. GALA VIDEO - BACK ROOM

Shroud has unwound a chain around her neck with a key on it. She slides it into an old wrought-iron lock, hesitates, and turns it. The tumblers click.

EXT. OLD TOWN SEATONVILLE

D'Juan is still silent. The crowd mumbles its disapproval.

D'JUAN

I know... a lot of your are wondering why my brother decided to transfer to Eastern... and the answer to that is... (pause) ...that you gotta raise the fuck on up out of here. There's a gang of fucking monsters headed this way, and if you DON'T get the lead out your asses and start running, there's going to be some serious shit going down.

The crowd's is silent for a long moment, and then the responses start. Angry white noise, yells of "GET THE FUCK OFF THE STAGE!" and "BENEDICT HOUSTON!". D'Juan's expression sours as he grabs the mic in his fist.

D'JUAN

On second thought? Fuck y'all! Fuck Northwestern, fuck this redneck town, fuck...

The mic squeals as Carcer grabs D'Juan. The boy continues to sputter over the speaker in broken profanity as he's dragged from the stage.

EXT. OLD TOWN SEATONVILLE - THE EDGE OF THE CROWD

At the back of the crowd, the FLANCH TWINS and their crew look on as D'Juan is dragged from the stage, catcalling. They laugh and toast their beers as a song fires up over the loudspeakers, and two VIKING MASCOTS in full berzerker regalia begin breakdancing on the podium.

JEREMY

Remind me to beat Houston's ass
during the third period lull
tomorrow.

There's a rustle of movement from behind them. The frats turn around, to find KAZIGLU BEY and a phalanx of his undead minions standing there. The students take in the sight with watery eyes, and promptly break out in laughter.

GRANT

Holy shit, Cross called out his
cosplay pals for the event!

JEREMY

Hey, check out the face. You get
barebacked into the headboard,
or...

EXT. OLD TOWN SEATONVILLE - THE STAGE

D'Juan is being dragged in two directions, as Coach Carcer and Officer Rutland each haul on an arm. They're surrounded by pissed-off security and students.

COACH CARCER

All I want to do is take him up on
stage and punch him a few times!

OFFICER RUTLAND

Sir, RELEASE the suspect and stand
back... this is your second warning...

A SCREAM splits through the night from somewhere at the edge of the crowd; everyone glances over, just in time to see one of the Flanches get HURLED through the air by Kaziglu. It's an effortless toss, the bully smashing through the window of the darkened COMIC BOOK SHOP.

OFFICER RUTLAND

What the... YOU! ON THE GROUND, ARMS SPREAD!

The cop shoves D'Juan aside, leaving him to rejoin the others as he and several officers advance on the vampire.

DEACON

Nice plan, man. I think the fuck has officially clustered.

CHUD

I think I want to get the gun out of the truck.

D'JUAN

I think I'm with you.

The trio start towards the truck, but stop dead in their tracks as RUEGER leaps down from a moonlit rooftop. The werewolf lets out an ear-splitting roar, furthering the crowd's already-pitched panic.

INT. GALA VIDEO - BREAK ROOM

The werewolf's howling can be heard, even inside the shop. Shroud glances to the door, and drags the hatch in the floor open; it hisses and emits a green steam as it peels back, revealing a stark white light from within. The Essential. It's little more than a pure, shimmering glow within an old perfume bottle, but Shroud tests it with a fingertip before picking it up and getting to her feet.

EXT. OLD TOWN SEATONVILLE

The cops drop into firing stances, leveling their handguns at Kaziglu and his minions. The vampire licks his fingers.

OFFICER RUTLAND
GET ON THE GROUND! ARMS SPREAD!

Two of the ghouls lurch forward, only to be cut down by gunfire. The police began dropping shells at anything that moves; zombies, Kaziglu, store windows. Weakened from his fight with Colton, the shots actually staggers the vampire a bit; out of nowhere, RUEGER touches down and forms a living, slavering wall between the officers and their target. The bullets impact harmlessly on the monster, as it bears forward on the cops. They draw their batons, backing away in fear.

INT. GALA VIDEO

Shroud and the kids emerge from the back of the store, only to find that the employees are running back inside in terror. The old woman checks the cylinder on her revolver.

MRS. SHROUD
Stick close.

She advances, as a few of Kaziglu's ghouls smash through the front window. Despite the chaos and the rapid movement of bodies, Shroud's aim is flawless; she picks off two of the creeps with a smooth head-shot series, then turns about and effortlessly dispatches a third. She glances to Liam and Lize just as a FOURTH ghoul rises from the "EROTIC THRILLERS" section, snarling.

LIAM
LEFT!

Shroud turns the pistol about, not even having to look as she puts a slug right in the creature's face. She cracks a smirking smile at Liam, and continues to the door.

EXT. OLD TOWN SEATONVILLE

The cops make their move on Rueger, with the expected results. Baton-blows thump harmlessly off of the huge beast's form, officers being thrown left and right like ragdolls. Deacon, D'Juan and Chud come running down the middle of the emptied street, now armed with Shroud's AR-15 rifle and the army bag. Deacon drops to one knee, licks the gunsight with his tongue, and lines up a shot. POP. A zombie goes down. POP. Another one.

Rueger hurls another cop out of his way, noticing the boys. He snarls.

DEACON

Bullet! Thirty-ought!

Chud is digging through the bag, and comes up with the silver bullets. He fumbles with them.

CHUD

Which one's the thirty-eight?

Rueger begins to plod towards the three boys, as a motorcycle cop speeds towards the scene. As he drives past the werewolf, he's ripped from the saddle of his bike and thrown aside; all with one arm.

DEACON

THIRTY-OUGHT. The BIG ones,
dumbass!

Chud drops the small rack of bullets, and then scatter all over the pavement. Deacon wrings his hands in frustration and hits the asphalt, trying to find the right caliber.

D'JUAN

INCOMING!

D'Juan HURLS himself onto the other two boys, as the bike cop's motorcycle comes flying through the air.

It smashes on the street, scattering glass and plastic, missing them by scant feet. Chud falls on his back, head hitting the curb. He's out flat.

DEACON

Chud! Fuck!

EXT. GALA VIDEO - STREET

Shroud, Liam and Lize have emerged into the frenzied scene.

MRS. SHROUD

High noon time. You watch me; the minute fang-fuck's down, bring the Essential. We give him what he wants, then we put him down.

She HANDS the Essential to Liam, his face bathed in the white glow. He shakes off its hypnotic effect.

LIAM

And what if he doesn't go down?

MRS. SHROUD

(Grinning)

Start praying.

She turns, just as one of the Viking mascots runs past. With a single fluid movement, Shroud TAKES his sword, and snaps the blade out, testing its strength. It seems pretty sharp and tensile. The old woman advances across the square, as Liam sees his friends; Deacon and D'Juan, backing away and popping shots off at the advancing Rueger.

LIAM

I've gotta help them!

LIZE

We're supposed to watch Shroud!

Liam looks over to the former cafeteria lady, as she SLASHES a clean, decapitating blow across the neck of the third and last vampire bride. All without missing a step.

LIAM

She can handle it. C'mon!

EXT. THE STREET - D'JUAN AND DEACON

POP. POP. Deacon puts two more bullets into Rueger's face.
The werewolf barely flinches.

EXT. THE SQUARE - SHROUD AND KAZIGLU

The vampire turns to the old woman as she feints inward,
dodging the two thrusts she throws at him.

KAZIGLU

Ah, I was beginning to wonder if
you'd crawl out of your rat-hole.

Shroud swings again.

MRS. SHROUD

You sound pretty chipper for a guy
who just got fucked in the ass by a
bunch of ten-year-olds.

EXT. THE STREET - D'JUAN AND DEACON

POP. Deacon fires the last round in the clip. The trigger
clicks; he looks over his shoulder to D'Juan, before
shrugging stoically and swinging the barrel around into a
gloved hand. He brandishes it, club-style.

D'JUAN

The fuck you doing?

DEACON

We're in the goddamned club, aren't
we?

Deacon SWINGS the rifle at Rueger, as we cut to:

EXT. THE STREET - SHROUD AND KAZIGLU

Shroud's sword landing in the palm of Kaziglu's hand with a sickening, wet sound. He grips the blade, blood beginning to stream down his wrist.

KAZIGLU

This is pointless.

EXT. THE STREET - D'JUAN AND DEACON

The werewolf bellows and whips the rifle aside, the still-shouldered strap wrenching Deacon off of his feet and to the ground, hard. D'Juan's next: he actually throws a PUNCH at the beast, which has no effect other than pissing Rueger off. The monster SLASHES him with its claws across the chest, pitching him flat on his back in the middle of the street.

Rueger lunges in for the kill. A single shot rings out. Everyone freezes-Kaziglu, Shroud, Liam and Lize on the curb, the wounded Deacon and D'Juan. Standing nearby, clutching a discarded policeman's handgun, is CHUD. The barrel smokes.

Rueger looks down at his ribs, where a large WOUND is currently pumping blood. The werewolf licks its chops. It staggers back, hitting the wall and sinking to its knees, the entirety of its monstrous form beginning to shudder and shrink. As the boys look on, the beast returns to the form of CHARLES RUEGER, the man. He looks to his side and the shock gives way to a kind of relief.

RUEGER

Thank you. (Beat) I'm sorry.

Rueger falls to the sidewalk, dead.

EXT. THE STREET - SHROUD AND KAZIGLU

As his hench-monster dies, Kaziglu's face falls. Shroud takes her chance; with two quick moves, she's unsheathed the sword from his grip and DRIVEN it straight through his chest.

The wounded vampire gasps and collapses to his knees, gripping the handle.

MRS. SHROUD

Consider that two-hundred years' worth of compound interest, you son of a bitch.

EXT. THE STREET - THE BOYS

Liam and Lize run to their fallen friend's side. Chud slaps D'Juan, trying to revive him.

CHUD

D'Juan! Hey, D'Juan!

The other boy SLAPS him back.

D'JUAN

Stop hitting me, motherfucker!

Gingerly, Chud helps him to his feet, as Liam does the same for Deacon. The older boy is favoring his shoulder.

LIAM

What the hell happened!?

DEACON

Chud found a bullet that fit.

A sharp whistle breaks out over the scene. Shroud throws her hands up in an annoyed posture.

MRS. SHROUD

Way to follow orders, you little bastards. If it's not too much trouble, can I...?

LIAM

Lize?

Liam hands her the Essential.

LIAM

You're braver than I am, maybe you
should do it.

Lize is positively beaming. She runs over to Shroud's side of the square, as the boys continue to drag their injured comrades over to the nearby FIREWORKS STATION, a makeshift structure of sandbags and deserted tables.

EXT. THE STREET - SHROUD AND KAZIGLU

Shroud takes a nearby "VIKINGS" flagpole in hand and SNAPS it in half, creating a makeshift stake. Lize runs to her side, the Essential in her little hands.

LIZE

I watched Liam AND you.

MRS. SHROUD

You're a good soldier, baby. Now,
go to your brother. I don't want
you to see this.

Lize turns and makes for the boys, as Shroud plants a boot on Kaziglu's side and kicks him over onto his back. The vampire's mortally wounded; panting and gasping, eyes closed. Shroud grips the stake with both hands and prepares to drive it into him, but the monster's eyes open; pure-black, staring into the old woman's.

EXT. THE STREET - THE BOYS

D'Juan is propped up against the sandbags by his friends.

CHUD

I'll go call 911.

DEACON

I think they're PROBABLY on their way, unless Godzilla's coming up the fucking river.

CHUD

Not funny.

Liam looks over the sandbags, finding that Shroud has FROZEN in place. Lize sees the fear on her brother's face and turns, just as Kaziglu struggles to his feet.

EXT. THE STREET - KAZIGLU AND SHROUD

Shroud's face has a dreamlike quality, mesmerized.

MRS. SHROUD

Peter?

KAZIGLU

That's right, darling. I'm here.

He slips his hands around hers as they grip the stake, and drive it into her belly. Her face tightens; no scream, no cry of pain. She sways on her feet, fingers relaxing, the Essential falling into the vampire's waiting palm.

Lize SCREAMS.

LIAM + CHUD + DEACON

HOLY SHIT!

Time grinds into slow motion as Kaziglu uncorks the bottle, Shroud falls onto her back, and the boys look on in horror. The vampire tosses back the contents into his waiting mouth, as the moment SNAPS back into real-time with a deafening explosion of pure, white light and FORCE. Lize is thrown back onto the pavement. The boys are knocked flat.

Liam sprawls, but rights himself. He grabs a stake from the bag and vaults the sandbags, running to his sister's side, bucking his friend's attempt to hold him back. Guarding his eyes against the light, he can only watch on helplessly as Kaziglu EMERGES from the shimmering glow, revived. Liam brandishes his weapon and prepares to fight, but a simple gesture lifts both he AND Lize off of their feet, held fast in the air.

KAZIGLU

In gratitude for all you two have
done for me, I've a very special
reward in mind.

Kaziglu SLICES Liam's face with a single fingernail, on the cheek. The other boys can't do anything but watch, as Deacon's eyes desperately roam the ground for anything that can be used as a weapon. They come to rest on the FIREWORKS LAUNCHER.

KAZIGLU

I'm going to bleed you slowly. Like
a spider. Your suffering will see
out the dawn of a new world, of my
crafting.

Thump. The fireworks launcher lands atop the sandbags. Deacon has a roll of duct-tape, and he rips out a strip, quickly taping a STAKE to a skyrocket.

KAZIGLU

And the best part? You'll be able
to watch each other's suffering.
The unimaginable suffering.

Chud braces the launcher as Deacon tries to line up a shot; it's a perfect frame between the two Cross Kids.

DEACON

Fuck it.

He PUNCHES the launcher's button as Kaziglu's dark eyes finally notice the other three boys. With a fantastic rush of sparks and noise, the makeshift rocket blasts forward; spiraling and whistling and hitting the vampire DEAD in the chest. He stumbles back on his heels as Lize and Liam are dropped to the ground; Liam throws himself over his sister protectively. There's a moment of silence, and the fireworks EXPLODE in a shower of beautiful purple and blue lights, sending Bey's body to the pavement. It hits hard and lays flat, unmoving.

The other boys emerge from their hiding place, limping and shuffling and surrounding the vampire's smouldering body. Chud nervously pokes at it with a stick.

OSV

Liam.

The boys look over, to where Deacon is kneeling alongside Shroud. Hesitantly and sadly, the group moves to the dying woman's side.

SHROUD

Oh, Jesus Christ. Can the waterworks... this is exactly how this was meant to play out. I've been waiting for this for so... long. No tears. (She gestures to the kids, coaxing them inward) Just remember... the world isn't all ugly. You just gotta look... harder.

LIAM

We'll look for it. Peter's waiting for you.

Shroud smiles before her head falls back, her body going limp. The kids linger in tears as the shot pulls out.

EXT. OLD TOWN SEATONVILLE - MORNING

The aftermath. The square looks like it's become a full-blown military operation, with the National Guard in full effect. Tanks roll along, EMTs try to make sense of the undead corpses as a few confused cops try to interview witnesses. We continue along, eventually coming to LIAM. Draped in a blanket, he leans against the trunk of a police cruiser, a cup of something warm and steaming in his hands. He looks like he's been through a war; stitches for his face, dirt smudges, hollow eyes. A cop stands next to him, smoking.

COP

I don't envy you, kid. I just gotta ask the questions about what in the hell happened here... you gotta answer 'em.

Liam doesn't respond. He's still staring off into space, as Chud plods up, taking dejected steps.

LIAM

You okay?

CHUD

My mom's gonna take me home. I'm grounded for two months. That's what gratitude looks like in this town.

LIAM

When you're freed up... we'll watch some Cannibal Holocaust, or something.

CHUD

Yeah?

LIAM

Yeah.

Chud's mother-a ripe-faced, dour looking woman in her forties-starts yelling "DAVID!" from her place nearby, flanked by police and EMTs.

CHUD

Shiiiiit.

He turns to leave, but stops and glances over his shoulder at Liam.

CHUD

D'Juan told me to tell you... thanks, back. You know. For everything.

LIAM

I'm not the one who tried to box
with a werewolf. I'll tell him
thanks when I see him.

CHUD

He should be out in about...

CHUD'S MOTHER (OSV)

DAVID! WE ARE LEAVING!

CHUD

... six weeks. Christ! I'm coming!

Chud is grabbed by the arm and led off by his mother, who has apparently taken issue with his language. She screeches on as they pass MRS. CROSS, who looks like she's been through hell herself; she dashes away from the police who have pointed Liam out, running up to him and promptly breaking down.

LIAM

(Annoyed)

Mom!

MRS. CROSS

Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god...
your face! What happened here?! Why
didn't you tell me you were... never
mind. Never mind, never mind. Are
you alright? Do we need to get you
to the hospital?

LIAM

No. It just... looks a lot worse than
it is. (Beat) Len?

MRS. CROSS

He's going to drag himself through.
Lize's already at the hospital,
she's there and here's there and
your friend Dean is there...

LIAM

D' Juan.

MRS. CROSS

He's probably there, too.
Everybody's there. We should go.
I've got the car right over...

LIAM

I was actually going to cop a ride
from... the cops. If that's alright
with you. I kinda missed out on the
chance to ride in a cruiser last
night, so I wanted to catch up.

The comment makes no sense to Mrs. Cross, and she shows it. A smile forms on her face.

MRS. CROSS

Alright, cowboy. I'll save you the
embarrassment of being seen with
your mother.

She begins to leave.

LIAM

Mom.

MRS. CROSS

Mm?

LIAM

I love you.

MRS. CROSS

Hey, you managed to say it without
puking up blood. There's hope for
us, yet.

Liam laughs as his mother heads off.

INT. POLICE CRUISER

Alone with his thoughts, Liam sits in the back of a parked cop cruiser. With a heavy thump, DEACON slides into the back seat. The older boy's arm is in a sling, and he's got an unlit cigarette parked between his lips. Liam is jolted by the interruption, sizing up his friend quizzically.

LIAM

I thought you went to the hospital.

DEACON

I did. Then I came back. Now I guess we're going again. You got a light?

LIAM

No. I'm all out of pipe bombs and fireworks.

Deacon laughs. The two boys sit silently for a long moment, gazing off into space.

LIAM

We didn't do too bad.

DEACON

Nah, we didn't. But you did prove me wrong about one thing.

LIAM

Yeah? What's that?

The front door opens, and an OFFICER slides into the seat. He pushes his keys into the ignition, glancing at the haggard faces in his rear-view mirror.

COP

Sorry about the hangup. We ready?

LIAM

Yeah.

COP

You can't smoke that in here.

The car starts to move, as Deacon scowls and slides his cigarette behind his ear.

DEACON

Okay, I was only halfway wrong.
Nothing really has changed. But.
You did go and save the whole
world.

Liam shakes his head slowly, a thin smile on his face.

LIAM

Nah, man. Just our little corner of
it.

The camera draws out as the police cruiser drives away,
leaving the square in its wake.

FADE OUT.

END.