

THE JESUS PROJECT

by
Richard F. Russell

Wordmstr007@gmail.com
910-285-3321
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FADE IN

EXT. IRAQI DESERT - DAY

SUPERLEGEND GULF WAR 1991

CORPORAL WES JONES, 20s, in desert fatigues, runs through deep sand to a HUMVEE. Opens the back and jerks out an anti-tank missile. Armed, he slogs a sand dune.

At the top, he crawls to where SGT. BLAKE, 30s, career soldier, lies flat, binoculars to his eyes.

Ahead, a camouflaged Iraqi tank squats in front of a cliff face.

Blake slaps Jones on the shoulder.

BLAKE

Lock and load, Jones, let's take out that bad boy.

JONES

Shouldn't we call in a Blackhawk?

BLAKE

And share the glory? Target of opportunity. Let's fry some ragheads.

Jones is not sold, but he primes the launcher and sights.

BLAKE

I'm going to write this up for a citation.

Jones FIRES.

The missile STREAKS away and misses by a mile. It slams into the cliff with a huge EXPLOSION.

Blake cuffs Jones on the helmet.

BLAKE

Numb-nuts.

The tank turret rotates, bearing on Jones and Blake.

BLAKE

Shit.

JONES

Shit.

The tank 50 CAL machine gun pocks the dune below Jones and Blake who duck fast.

JONES
What now, Sarge?

BLAKE
Bug out.

As they turn to run, a Blackhawk helicopter POPS over a dune and FIRES a missile.

The missile hits the tank. KABOOM!!! First EXPLOSION is followed by a SECOND.

Fried tank.

Jones and Blake stand and wave. The Blackhawk wags its nose and veers off. Blake slaps Jones on the shoulder.

BLAKE
Let's see if any camel jockeys survived.

EXT. IRAQI DESERT - CONTINUOUS

The HUMVEE stops. The tank burns, completely destroyed. Blake and Jones exit the HUMVEE and approach, weapons ready.

JONES
No survivors.

BLAKE
Chart it.

Blake looks up. The blast has exposed a cave in the cliff.

BLAKE
What the hell is that?

JONES
A cave.

BLAKE
Wrong, solider. That is an arms cache, weapons of mass destruction. The tank was guarding it, and we're gonna destroy it.

JONES
Shouldn't we call in a disposal unit?

BLAKE

With that attitude, you'll be in hell before you earn another stripe. Grab some ordnance and follow me.

Blake marches toward the cliff.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Looking at the bright, blue sky. Blake's helmet appears, silhouetted. His body blocks the light as he enters. Followed by Jones.

Twin flashlight beams split the darkness. Blake leads. Two steps inside, Jones SCREAMS. Blake spins, weapon and flashlight trained on a skeleton propped against the wall. So old, the arms have fallen off, legs are disconnected.

BLAKE

Shit, you scared of bones?

The skull wobbles and tumbles onto the sand floor.

BLAKE

I'm guessin' the poison gas is back a ways.

JONES

We oughta let the pros do it, Sarge.

Blake moves deeper into cave.

BLAKE

We do this right, and we might bag a medal. One of them French ones that nobody understands. Probably says rat dick but who the hell knows.

They round a corner and stop. Ahead, flashlights play over bones, lots of human bones, old and disintegrating.

JONES

Jesus.

Blake edges through the bones, kicking them out of the way.

BLAKE

I read where pirate captains killed the crew that buried their treasure.

JONES
How many pirates sailed this
desert?

They round a corner and reach the end of the cave. Hollows cut in the rock are filled with stone and clay jars, some broken to reveal wrappings inside.

BLAKE
What the fuck!

Jones examines a wrapping which falls apart to reveal a rolled scroll.

JONES
What the fuck is this place?

BLAKE
See any weapons of mass
destruction, soldier?

JONES
No, Sarge.

BLAKE
Then, lets seal the entrance and
move on.

JONES
This stuff is old, maybe important.

BLAKE
No one gets medals for finding old
stuff. Move out.

Blake heads back. Jones watches a moment before he opens a jar, grabs a scroll, and stashes it in his knapsack.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Jones pulls the pins on two grenades and tosses them into the cave. He jumps and slides down the cliff face to where Blake waits.

Above, EXPLOSIONS, one after another, collapse the entrance. Rock and dust rain down. No one can tell a cave was ever there. Blake strides past the smoking tank.

BLAKE
Double time, soldier. There are
Frog medals barkin' our names.

Jones hustles after Blake.

SUPERLEGEND NEW YORK 2000

INT. ATTIC - DAY

The flotsam and jetsam of life--lamps, luggage, boxes--the hot air filled with dust. Picking through the stuff are RAY, 20s, as common as dirt, and HEATHER, 20s, GF, plump, a cigarette in her mouth.

RAY

Did your uncle ever go through this shit?

HEATHER

(picking up a golf club)
He called this treasure, and you don't throw out treasure.

RAY

(opening a box)
And to think he willed all this treasure to you.

HEATHER

He didn't have anyone else.

She picks up a desert camouflage backpack.

HEATHER

That stupid war changed him.

She opens the backpack and takes out the ancient scroll.

RAY

What's that?

HEATHER

Something old, real old.

INT. SIM'S OFFICE - DAY

Baroque office of SIMS, foppish appraiser for an auction house. He sits on one side of Louis XIV desk. On the other side sits Heather. Between them, the scroll.

SIMS

The scroll appears genuine, but you understand we cannot offer it for bid until it's been authenticated.

HEATHER

How do I do that?

Sims taps his laptop and writes a note.

SIMS
This man has done work for us.

HEATHER
(taking note)
He can tell me what it's worth?

SIMS
I trust his judgement.

INT. SPEARMAN'S LAB - DAY

A big screen shows an Aramaic character.

MICHAEL SPEARMAN, 40, lean, sly, in lab coat, traces the figure. His finger quivers. He turns to Heather who sits on a stool. The room is filled with sealed jars and bottles of parchment, testing equipment.

HEATHER
Well?

SPEARMAN
It's genuine.

HEATHER
And that means?

SPEARMAN
It's not so old.

JONES
Not old?

SPEARMAN
Hundred, maybe two hundred years.

Heather is clearly disappointed.

HEATHER
You're telling me it's worthless?

SPEARMAN
On the contrary, I'd say at auction
you might expect as much as a
thousand dollars.

HEATHER
(perking up)
That's cool.

SPEARMAN
You don't have any other scrolls,
do you?

HEATHER
No..no, that's the only one.

SPEARMAN
To save you the commission, I'll
give you a thousand right now.

HEATHER
Cash?

SPEARMAN
Trying to cheat Uncle Sam?

HEATHER
I already owe that devil.

INT. SPEARMAN'S LAB - LATER

Spearman taps in a number on his phone. He touches the scroll as someone answers.

SPEARMAN
I know his eminence is busy.
Please tell him Spearman has
something that might pique his
interest.
(beat)
Yes, rare, unique, perhaps
important to the church.

EXT. NY CITY STREET - NIGHT

Spearman, carrying a metal briefcase, hurries along the sidewalk in a hard rain. Comes to a large, well-lit Brownstone.

INT. CARDINAL GOODMAN'S STUDY - NIGHT

Richly appointed study with all the comforts afforded a prince of the church. Pouring brandy into snifters, CARDINAL PETER GOODMAN, 50s, in robe and cap, a commanding figure and as polished as royalty.

SPEARMAN (O.S.)
Filthy weather. I hate New York.

He grabs the snifters and hands one to Spearman who sits at a small table and dries his hair with a small towel. On the table, photos of the scroll.

GOODMAN
I appreciate your expertise, but I
need independent verification.

SPEARMAN
Send your best.

GOODMAN
Are the contents of the scroll
significant?

SPEARMAN
Medieval Latin is my area of
expertise, but even I recognize the
Aramaic for Jesus of Nazareth.

GOODMAN
What year?

SPEARMAN
I want you to hear that from your
own man.

GOODMAN
(toasting)
To our interests.

They click snifters like conspirators.

INT. SPEARMAN'S LAB - DAY

A small bit of parchment in a petri dish.

In gloves and surgical mask, FATHER MATTHEW, 40, bald,
overweight and as dedicated as a drone, adds a drop of
chemical to the paper. Watching over Matthew's shoulder is
Spearman.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - NIGHT

Goodman hands a check to Spearman.

GOODMAN
As agreed.

Spearman stares at the check.

SPEARMAN
Ever had a dream come true, your
eminence?

GOODMAN
Not yet.

SPEARMAN
You just gave me a hot, dry
retirement.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

At the board, FATHER PATRICK THOMAS, 30, a man torn between science and faith. Handsome, in casual dress, you can't tell he's a priest. A time line on the blackboard from 5000 BC to 2000 AD. He slashes an X on the line.

THOMAS

Birth of Jesus of Nazareth. While the historical Jesus can be accepted as fact, the miraculous Jesus is open to debate.

REBECCA (O.S.)

Mr. Thomas?

He turns to REBECCA DAVID, 20, pretty despite ragged, student grunge, one of a dozen STUDENTS. She wears a prominent gold cross.

THOMAS

Father.

REBECCA

Father. Are you saying that the miracles never happened?

THOMAS

Zealots have always exaggerated in order to win converts. The old testament is full of miracles that defy credibility. Did Moses really part the Red Sea? New testament writers continued that tradition. If you believe water transformed into wine, then accepting hell and Satan is easier.

(glances at watch)

Quiz next time. Read chapter ten.

Students GROAN and gather books. Into the room hustles Father Matthew.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Using silver, Goodman pours coffee into two china cups. Carries the cups to a table where Thomas studies 8x10 photos.

GOODMAN

What do you think?

THOMAS

It's..incredible.

GOODMAN
Can you translate it?

THOMAS
Aramaic, first century. A peculiar
dialect, but it can be done. Is it
authentic?

GOODMAN
Father Matthew swears by ink and
parchment.

THOMAS
Are there any more?

GOODMAN
No. How quickly can you do a
translation?

THOMAS
These things take time.

GOODMAN
Three months, Patrick.

THOMAS
That is hardly--

GOODMAN
I feel God sent this for a purpose.
I need to hear the message.

INT. THOMAS' LAB - DAY

A small room with books, desk, windows, where Thomas stares
out. At a table, Rebecca pores over a text.

REBECCA
According to one author, the
passage could be interpreted to
mean Lazarus was in a hypnotic
trance.

THOMAS
The story of Lazarus may have been
contrived to add credence to the
resurrection of Jesus. Lazarus
demonstrates triumph over death.

REBECCA
You don't think the miracle
happened?

Door opens and Matthew rushes in.

MATTHEW
Patrick, he wants a report, and I
haven't finished.

THOMAS
Slow down.

Matthew nods at Rebecca.

MATTHEW
The translation demands precision.
He doesn't understand.

THOMAS
Don't worry. I'll handle it.
Give me what you have.

Thomas glances at Rebecca who raises her eyebrows.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Goodman paces, reading a report. To one side, Thomas.

GOODMAN
The temptation of Jesus?

THOMAS
In the desert.

GOODMAN
Jesus fasts in the wilderness.
Satan offers temptations.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Thomas, in cargo pants and safari shirt, consults a map.

GOODMAN (V.O.)
They were in a cave.

THOMAS (V.O.)
Between the sea and the more salty
sea.

EXT. ISRAELI DESERT - DAY

Thomas and Matthew in a Jeep bumping over a dirt road.

THOMAS (V.O.)
Near the tomb of Queen Majal. Some
think her tomb was located on the
shores of the dead sea.

GOODMAN (V.O.)
Find it, Patrick. Find the cave.

THOMAS (V.O.)
You don't really accept the scroll,
do you? I mean, the gospels were
written to win converts.

GOODMAN (V.O.)
If you find nothing, where's the
harm?

INT. TENT - NIGHT

A good-sized tent. On a camp stool, Thomas glances from photos to maps to the Bible to references. He shrugs and puts everything to the side.

Matthew enters and drops on his sleeping bag.

MATTHEW
The stars are beautiful.

THOMAS
Where were they 2000 years ago?

EXT. ISRAELI DESERT - DAWN

The rosy minutes before the sun peeks over the horizon. Thomas consults the text, a GPS, and a watch. Matthew surveys the mountainside with binoculars.

The first rays of sunlight wink over the hills.

Matthew follows the ray as it strikes the mountain.

THOMAS
Well?

MATTHEW
Nothing.

THOMAS
(marking map)
We'll walk it anyway.

EXT. ISRAELI DESERT MOUNTAIN - DAY

Sweat stained, Thomas and Matthew labor up the mountainside, searching for a cave that isn't there.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

A small fire. Thomas and Matthew, exhausted, spoon food from cans.

THOMAS
It's not here.

MATTHEW
His eminence will be disappointed.

THOMAS
I warned him.

MATTHEW
I wish we had camped closer to the sea. I would sleep better.

Thomas pauses.

THOMAS
The sea was higher 2,000 years ago, wasn't it?

MATTHEW
Our calculations.

Matthew drops the can and runs into the tent. Thomas returns to his food.

EXT. ISRAELI DESERT - DAWN

Rosy predawn. Thomas consults his GPS and yawns. Matthew picks up binoculars.

Rays streak over the horizon and hit the mountainside.

THOMAS
Well?

MATTHEW
A hole, not a cave.

THOMAS
Time to leave.

MATTHEW
We should examine it.

THOMAS
Worth some exercise, I suppose.

EXT. ISRAELI MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Thomas and Matthew trudge across rugged terrain until Thomas falls to knees beside a hole hardly large enough to crawl into. He shines flashlight into the hole.

MATTHEW
Animal burrow?

THOMAS
I can't tell.

He sheds gear and, armed with the flashlight, wiggles into the hole.

THOMAS
It's big, a cave.

MATTHEW
I'm claustrophobic, you know.

THOMAS
Come in.

Making a sign of the cross, Matthew wiggles into the hole.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Thomas's flashlight plays over the sand floor and stone walls of a large cave. Matthew stands, adding his light.

MATTHEW
Doesn't look like much.

Thomas walks to a wall and runs fingers over the rock.

THOMAS
Something scored the rock.
Shepherd's fire probably.

Matthew continues toward the rear.

MATTHEW
A very hot fire. Look.

Matthew holds an old leather whip, ready to disintegrate.

Thomas moves toward the back and stubs his foot, pitching him into the sand. YELLS!

MATTHEW
What the...?

Thomas shines his light on a snake that slithers into a fissure. He picks up a hunk of smooth glass.

THOMAS

Did the Jews make glass in Biblical times?

MATTHEW

Glass was well known throughout the Mediterranean.

Thomas pockets several hunks of glass.

MATTHEW

Here's something.

Matthew holds up a wooden staff, old but how old?

THOMAS

A shepherd's staff. Figures.

Thomas pulls out his phone and focuses.

FLASH.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Thomas and Matthew sit around the fire. Thomas handles a hunk of glass. Matthew studies photos of Aramaic text.

THOMAS

What do we have? A nonfunctional whip, a shepherd's staff, and some glass. Not exactly the spoils of King Tut.

MATTHEW

Listen. 'When the master could not be swayed, the great tempter joined battle. Blessed with the faith of Abraham and the strength of Moses, the Lamb of God smote..' I can't make out what comes next.

THOMAS

You know when we found the cave, I was hoping.

MATTHEW

Perhaps the key lies in what we haven't yet translated.

THOMAS
 (rising)
 A zealot's wine-fired imagination.
 You may as well believe in alien
 abduction.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Goodman handles a hunk of glass.

THOMAS (O.S.)
 We'll carbon date the whip and
 staff. The glass will be more
 difficult.

Goodman grabs a magnifying glass and examines the glass.

GOODMAN
 What's embedded inside?

THOMAS
 Impurities.

GOODMAN
 Looks like a piece of...something.

Goodman places the glass next to the whip and staff.

GOODMAN
 Not the cave of the temptation?

THOMAS
 That cave is a legend.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Goodman sits as a GIRL, 8, approaches with her MOTHER. The Girl stops and offers a glass paperweight. In the glass sits a gorgeous butterfly.

GOODMAN
 Thank you very much.

GIRL
 It's a butterfly.

GOODMAN
 So it is and so life-like.

MOTHER
 It's real. Take it out, and it
 might fly away.

Goodman blesses the Girl and her Mother.

GOODMAN
Go in peace.

As they turn away, he stares at the butterfly.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - LATER

Goodman places the paperweight on the desk and picks up a hunk of cave glass. He pulls out a magnifying glass and studies the hunk.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Goodman heads out the door, past a priest with a folder, FATHER EARNEST, 35, as conscientious as his name.

GOODMAN
What is it?

FATHER EARNEST
Our comments are due tomorrow.

INT. GOODMAN HOUSE - HALL - CONTINUOUS

Goodman strides, Father Earnest in tow.

GOODMAN
Topic?

FATHER EARNEST
Human cloning.

GOODMAN
Isn't that illegal?

FATHER EARNEST
The latest research...

Goodman is out the door.

FATHER EARNEST
(to empty air)
Says it's possible.

He turns away as Goodman returns and plucks the folder from his hand.

GOODMAN
I'll read it tonight.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Goodman handles a piece of glass. Father Earnest rocks before the desk.

FATHER EARNEST
The technology exists.

GOODMAN
It requires live DNA?

FATHER EARNEST
There is an experimental process
that can restore DNA.

GOODMAN
Who would perform this process?

FATHER EARNEST
Excuse me?

GOODMAN
Who restores DNA?

FATHER EARNEST
I...I'll find out.

GOODMAN
Do that.

INT. HORNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Glass, steel, chrome, as modern as a robot. Behind a slab
desk HORNER, bald, bespectacled, a tattoo on his cheek, thick
German accent, and no-nonsense.

Across the slab, Goodman, in a black suit.

HORNER
It is genetic material, you wish to
restore, ya?

GOODMAN
I want something I can use in
cloning.

HORNER
You must realize--

GOODMAN
That discretion is required.

Horner picks up the glass hunk.

HORNER
Forgive my curiosity, but why?

GOODMAN
Together, we will change history.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Thomas prowls in front of students, including Rebecca.

REBECCA

When does the church think Christ
will come again?

THOMAS

The early church believed Jesus
would return in a matter of months
or years. When that didn't happen,
church leaders settled in for the
long haul. We have changed the
length of our vigil but not its
essence.

INT. LAB - DAY

A bright, pristine lab. Everyone wears a HAZMAT suit. A
tiny drill angles through the glass, aiming for the impurity.

REBECCA (V.O.)

A triumphant return?

The drill reaches the pocket and is withdrawn. A very narrow,
metal filament is inserted.

THOMAS (V.O.)

No one knows how God will arrange
the second coming. Jesus was born
of humble means. Will the second
coming begin the same way?

The metal filament is withdrawn and a bit of impurity is
transferred to a test tube.

In the background, behind a glass partition, looms Goodman.

EXT. GOODMAN'S GARDEN - DAY

The manicured garden of Goodman's house. Walking a path,
Thomas and Goodman.

GOODMAN

What if you could clone the best of
us? Mother Theresa? Einstein?
Ghandi? Would that be a justified
use of the technology?

THOMAS

Your eminence, man must never
attempt to elevate himself to the
level of God.

GOODMAN
 At critical moments God provides
 the means to work His will. If one
 could use cloning for the glory of
 God, shouldn't one?

Thomas offers nothing.

GOODMAN
 I feel a calling to perform God's
 work.

THOMAS
 If God means for you to become
 Pope, I'm sure it will happen.

Goodman laughs.

GOODMAN
 No, Patrick, not Pope. I'm afraid
 that is not my destiny.

INT. FERTILITY CLINIC - DAY

MARY SING, 30, wholesome, anxious. Next to her, JOE SING,
 30, husband and more anxious. A handsome couple. Across the
 desk, an INTERVIEWER, 40, obese, fills out a form.

INTERVIEWER
 You understand that there is no
 guarantee of pregnancy or birth.

MARY
 We appreciate the opportunity.

JOE
 We've sacrificed a lot for this.
 We're ready.

Sitting in a corner--Goodman.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

A surgical TEAM in scrubs and masks surround a sedated Mary.
 Into the room steps a Technician carrying a stainless steel
 canister. A DOCTOR takes the canister.

Watching, in scrubs and mask, Goodman.

EXT. SING HOUSE - NIGHT

A big house in a nice suburb. Joe leads a very pregnant Mary
 out the front door to the car. Delivery time.

INT. GOODMAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Goodman's bedroom is plush. He kneels by his bed, praying.

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Panting, sweaty, Mary struggles to give birth. Joe holds Mary's hand. A DOCTOR sits at the bottom of bed. Mary pushes. The Doctor reaches for the child.

INT. THOMAS BEDROOM - NIGHT

A utilitarian room. Bed, books, chair, a desk. Thomas kneels at the side of his bed, trying to pray. Glances to heaven, unclasps his hands, and sighs. Rolls onto the floor and does pushups.

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Doctor places a squalling baby on Mary's chest. Joe reaches out to touch the newborn. A miracle.

INT. SING HOUSE - DAY

Joe opens the door for Goodman.

JOE
Your eminence. You..I wasn't
expecting--

GOODMAN
I came to see the child.

JOE
Christopher is sleeping, as is his
mother.

GOODMAN
I won't disturb them.

Joe clearly doesn't like this.

JOE
This way.

INT. NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

A mix of Sesame Street, Dr. Seuss, and above the crib, a crucifix. Goodman removes the baby from the crib and places it on a changing table. Slowly, deliberately, he unwraps the swaddling until the baby is naked.

Making a sign of the cross, he examines the baby's skin.

EXT. MEXICAN VILLAGE - DAY

An ancient HAG, of indeterminate age, shuffles along a deserted, dirt street. A stray dog trots from an alley, a rat in its jaws. It drops the rat at Hag's feet and trots off.

Hag pulls a knitting needle from her robe and skewers the rat. She lifts it up and studies it.

INT. CONFSSIONAL - DAY

An old PADRE, wraith thin, half asleep. Someone enters, and through the screen, Hag is barely visible. They speak in SPANISH with ENGLISH subtitles.

PADRE
(SPANISH)
Proceed, my child.

HAG
(SPANISH)
I am not your child.

PADRE
(SPANISH)
What do you want?

HAG
(SPANISH)
The one awaited has returned.

Padre hesitates, not sure.

PADRE
(SPANISH)
You are mad, old one.

HAG
(SPANISH)
We must prepare his way.

PADRE
(SPANISH)
I need proof.

HAG
(SPANISH)
Our time has come.

PADRE
(SPANISH)
I need proof!

No answer.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Padre pops out of confessional, rips open the door, and finds an empty slot. He looks at the crucifix behind the altar.

INT. MATTHEW'S LAB - DAY

Matthew flashes characters from the scroll onto a screen.

THOMAS (O.S.)
Still working?

Thomas enters with Rebecca in tow.

MATTHEW
This scroll is one of a set. I wish we had the others.

THOMAS
I want to introduce Dr. David. She just accepted a position.

Matthew eyes her.

MATTHEW
You know how his eminence feels about the scroll.

THOMAS
She's sworn to secrecy.

Matthew shakes hands with Rebecca.

REBECCA
I'm here to help Father Thomas with the Acts.

MATTHEW
I wish you could help with this translation.

THOMAS
(to Rebecca)
Don't let him kid you. He won't share with anyone.

MATTHEW
On pain of death...according to his eminence.

They laugh.

INT. SING HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

A single, lit candle on a small cake being carried by Joe. He places the cake on the table. Mary holds the baby. All around, happy FRIENDS and RELATIVES, including Mary's sister, HELEN, older and obese.

Goodman beams like a proud grandfather. 1st Birthday.

INT. SING HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Five candles on a cake. Christopher, eyes closed, making a wish. Eyes pop open. With a grin, he takes a deep breath and out go the candles.

INT. SING HOUSE - CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - DAY

Christopher plays with Legos, building a structure. The door opens, and Goodman enters.

GOODMAN
Hello, Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER
Hi, Uncle Peter.

GOODMAN
(sitting on bed)
That was quite a birthday party.
You're a lucky boy.

Christopher glances up and turns back to his structure.

GOODMAN
Your parents tell me you're very
smart.

Christopher shrugs.

GOODMAN
Do you feel you're different from
other children?

CHRISTOPHER
Different how?

GOODMAN
Oh, I don't know. You do things
they can't do?

CHRISTOPHER
I don't think so.

As Goodman watches, Christopher stretches out his hand. A piece from 5' away flies to his hand. He adds it to his structure.

GOODMAN
(smiling)
What are you making?

CHRISTOPHER
A church.

Goodman rises and rubs Christopher's head.

GOODMAN
A Cathedral.

Goodman leaves. Christopher picks up the structure and studies it a moment before he hurls it into the wall, breaking it apart.

INT. THOMAS'S STUDY - NIGHT

Rebecca studies a computer screen. The door opens behind her.

REBECCA
Where's the Lisbon codex.

MATTHEW (O.S.)
I was looking for Patrick.

She turns to Matthew.

REBECCA
I'm sorry. I though you were..

MATTHEW
Father Thomas. Where is he?

REBECCA
I expect him any minute.

Matthew paces, agitated.

MATTHEW
Has he ever mentioned the source of the scroll? No, of course not. He's discreet.

REBECCA
Is something wrong?

MATTHEW
Wrong? I can't say. It, the
scroll, it's...

He looks at her.

MATTHEW
Tell him I stopped by.

Matthew sweeps out, leaving Rebecca puzzled.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Matthew hurries along a sidewalk. He reaches a brownstone,
and hustles up the steps.

INT. SING HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

As Mary passes a bedroom, she hears a guttural VOICE.

INT. SING HOUSE - CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Door opens and Mary enters. Christopher plays with Legos on
the carpet. She looks around. Nothing.

MARY
Christopher, did you hear
something?

He smiles and shakes his head.

MARY
Bed time. Ten minutes.

He nods. She leaves. He finishes the Legos. It's a car.

INT. BENJAMIN'S STUDY - NIGHT

RABBI BENJAMIN, small, bespectacled, a man as studious as he
appears, studies a 8x10 photograph.

RABBI BENJAMIN
Aramaic. First century from the
looks of it. This fragment refers
to a struggle. Authentic?

Sitting in a chair and sipping coffee, Matthew. In a room
full of ancient books, compendiums, wall charts, and awards.

MATTHEW
A splinter Christian sect. Here's
the interesting segment.

Matthew removes a second photo from his briefcase.

MATTHEW

I've not been able to translate the last. I believe it's a name.

Benjamin looks at the photo and frowns. He shuffles across the room and runs his fingers over several tomes before selecting one. He opens the book, pages, stops.

He returns the book and chooses another. Opens, pages. He compares the photo to some text and shudders.

MATTHEW

What?

RABBI BENJAMIN

Sartok. A demon borrowed from Babylon.

INT. SING HOUSE - CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lights out, Lego car on the carpet. Car rolls slowly through a moonbeam.

RABBI BENJAMIN (V.O.)

Sartok ruled the night.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Matthew, distracted, hustles along.

RABBI BENJAMIN (V.O.)

Sartok was a powerful demon.
Capable of great evil and demanding
of human sacrifice.

INTERCUT INT. SING HOUSE - CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM/EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Legos car runs in a circle on the carpet.

An automobile engine STARTS and REVS.

Matthew strides the sidewalk.

The Legos car goes faster.

The automobile pulls from the curb and slowly prowls the street.

The Legos car speeds in a circle through the moonbeam.

The automobile picks up speed.

The Legos car circles faster.

The automobile hurtles, a metal beast.

Matthew steps off the sidewalk.

The automobile SMACKS Matthew, hurtling him up and over to crash on the pavement. Matthew lies in a bloody heap.

The Legos car stops in the moonbeam.

EXT. GOODMAN'S GARDEN - DAY

Thomas joins Goodman who studies a rose.

THOMAS
Your Eminence.

GOODMAN
I believe one can find God in a
flower.

THOMAS
Sometimes, I can't find Him at all.

GOODMAN
Faith is a leap in the dark,
Patrick.

THOMAS
Then why were we given eyes?

GOODMAN
If reason were enough, there would
be no atheists.

THOMAS
I don't see the purpose. His death
was senseless.

GOODMAN
Matthew was a good priest and a
good man. He worked God's will.

Thomas might wish to argue, but he can't.

THOMAS
I put together a list of possible
replacements.

GOODMAN
I want his lab sealed.

THOMAS
Sealed? The translation isn't
complete.

GOODMAN

The world is not ready for the consequences of the scroll.

THOMAS

Your eminence--

GOODMAN

It's coming, Patrick. I've seen it, and it is coming. Prepare.

Goodman pats Thomas' shoulder.

GOODMAN

The kingdom is at hand.

INT. KING HOUSE - SHOWER - DAY

Mary in the shower. Not overly sexy but not bad. Suddenly, the hot water cuts out, leaving nothing but cold.

She YELPS, jumps out of the shower, and grabs a short towel.

INT. KING HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mary steps from the bathroom and stops, startled. On the carpet, playing with Legos--Christopher

MARY

What are you doing?

His smile is just lascivious enough to send a chill up her spine.

INT. SING HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Nine candles on the cake. 9-year-old Christopher with fewer RELATIVES and FRIENDS, Mary, Joseph. Helen to one side.

Christopher blows out the candles and grins. Mary and Joe exchange worried looks.

INT. SING GARAGE - NIGHT

Joe pulls a beer from the fridge and hands it to Goodman. Joe grabs one for himself and faces Goodman in a garage full of tools, stuff, Joe's car.

JOE

How's the beer?

GOODMAN

Cold, but you didn't ask me out here to sample beer.

JOE
I don't really know how to go about
this. We're considering moving.

GOODMAN
Oh?

JOE
It's the house. Lately, it seems
like, well, this sounds nuts.

GOODMAN
Go on.

JOE
It's haunted, the house is haunted.

Goodman raises his eyebrows.

JOE
I know, insane, but it's like those
movies. Drawers and doors open,
things fly, clocks reset. The
other night, every TV in the house
flicked on at the same time. One
wasn't even plugged in.

GOODMAN
Joe--

JOE
I know, I know, get a grip, right?

GOODMAN
Is Christopher in the house when
these events occur?

Joe thinks a moment.

JOE
Sure but it's not his fault.

GOODMAN
Let me talk to him.

Joe studies Goodman.

GOODMAN
Faith, Joseph, grow your faith.

INT. SING HOUSE - CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Christopher plays a video game. Goodman watches.

GOODMAN

We both know who resets the clocks
and opens the doors, don't we?

Christopher says nothing.

GOODMAN

Your parents don't know who you
are, but I do.

Christopher looks at Goodman, and despite the fact that he
isn't watching the screen, he plays flawlessly.

GOODMAN

I want you to stop. I know testing
yourself is part of growing up, but
from now on, practice when your
parents aren't around, OK?

A smile plays across Christopher's face.

GOODMAN

(tousling Christopher's
hair)

You have much to learn before
you're ready to announce yourself.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Three 12-year-old girls in plaid skirts and white blouses
stroll with backpacks on. A sudden gust of wind lifts their
skirts, exposing white panties. They struggle to push down
their skirts.

Leaning against the fence, watching--Christopher.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

A smallish room, seats half-filled. Among the crowd are
Rebecca and Rabbi Benjamin. On stage is Thomas.

THOMAS

Early Christian theology was
derived from available sources. I
refer to Paul's writings on Abraham
and Adam. Clearly, these themes
came from the old testament.

INT. HALL - LATER

Sipping coffee, Thomas and Rebecca are approached by Rabbi
Benjamin.

RABBI BENJAMIN
Father Thomas, I enjoyed your talk.

THOMAS
Thank you. It's not all my work.
Father Matthew helped.

RABBI BENJAMIN
His death saddened me. I've
wondered when we might expect an
announcement about the scroll.

THOMAS
Scroll?

Thomas and Rebecca exchange looks.

RABBI BENJAMIN
Matthew came to me the night of the
accident. I helped him with a
name. I assumed the translation
was nearly complete.

THOMAS
Cardinal Goodman will decide when
to make the scroll public.

RABBI BENJAMIN
Might I ask where the scroll
originated?

THOMAS
I'm sure all your questions will be
answered in due time.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Goodman paces. Thomas stands by the door.

GOODMAN
He knows the scroll?

THOMAS
Of its existence.

GOODMAN
Matthew should have come to me.

THOMAS
Perhaps the time has come to unveil
the scroll.

GOODMAN
 (slamming desk)
 No! He isn't ready!

Goodman grabs his chest as pain radiates through his body. As he collapses, Thomas rushes to catch him. Thomas lays out Goodman and grabs the phone.

EXT. SING HOUSE - YARD - DAY

Joe uses a weedeater to trim around the bushes. Mary, in T-shirt and shorts, pulls a sprinkler to the middle of the lawn. To one side, Christopher, 12, sits on his bike.

The spigot on the wall turns slowly.

As Mary positions the sprinkler, water shoots out, soaking her. She SCREAMS and jumps back, her shirt SOAKED, her breasts clearly visible.

Christopher ogles.

Joe looks from Mary to Christopher.

JOE
 OK, mister, up to your room.

Christopher doesn't move.

JOE
 Do you hear?

Christopher stares.

JOE
 Don't give me that look.

MARY
 Joe.

JOE
 I'll handle it.
 (to Christopher)
 Upstairs!

Christopher drops the bike and stomps into the house.

INT. SING HOUSE - CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - DAY

Christopher enters and kicks aside a Legos structure. Goes to the window and looks out. Mary is nowhere in sight. Joe trims around the bushes.

EXT. SING HOUSE - YARD - CONTINUOUS

Joe sets down the weedeater and reaches underneath a bush for a scrap of paper. The weedeater comes alive, nylon line like a scythe, whipping across Joe's arm. He BELLOWS and jerks back as the weedeater stops.

A wet Mary emerges from garage.

MARY
What happened?

Blood runs down Joe's arm and drips off his fingers.

JOE
Damn trimmer nipped me. Must have
a short.

She looks up.

Christopher stares down.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Monitors, lines, tubes, Goodman hooked up and alive. Next to the bed, Thomas.

Rebecca enters with sacks of deli food. Hands one to Thomas who takes out a sandwich and eats. Rebecca pulls up a chair and joins him.

REBECCA
He's going to make it.

THOMAS
He's the reason I'm still a priest.

Her eyebrows ask the question.

THOMAS
I struggled in a parish. Every day
my faith and vows were on trial.
He visited the school, and he must
have sensed my anguish. He asked
if I wanted to return to the
university. I told him I wasn't
worthy. He said some weren't
called to parish work.

REBECCA
He made a good choice.

THOMAS

He found a job for a man with
imperfect faith. Good corn beef.

REBECCA

No one has perfect faith.

INT. SING HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Twelve candles on a cake. Very few RELATIVES and FRIENDS.
Christopher, eyes closed, makes a wish? Eyes pop open.
Blows out candles. Turns and looks at Mary who stands with
Helen.

INT. SING HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mary brushes her hair. Joe, in pajamas, falls to his knees
by the bed.

JOE

He's getting worse.

MARY

It's a phase, isn't it?

JOE

Something's wrong. We have to face
that.

She looks at him.

MARY

What can we do?

JOE

Take him to Cardinal Goodman.

She kneels beside him.

MARY

You think he can help?

JOE

The worst part is I don't know how
he does it.

MARY

Our Father, who are in heaven..

INT. SING HOUSE - CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A Legos truck sits on the dresser. It shudders and rolls off
the dresser, taking flight. It crosses the room to crash
into a photograph of Joe and Mary, cracking the glass.

EXT. GOODMAN'S GARDEN - DAY

Goodman, pale and recovering, walks with Thomas.

GOODMAN

The episode has sobered me. I no longer believe I shall see the completion of the scroll project.

THOMAS

Project?

GOODMAN

I have kept a journal that explains everything. Should I die prematurely, I shall rely on your discretion.

THOMAS

The doctors are confident.

GOODMAN

I have set events in motion, but someone must ensure the outcome.

THOMAS

Your Eminence-

GOODMAN

Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land. You must be my Aaron.

EXT. MEXICAN VILLAGE - DAY

Bright, hot sunshine. Padre in black cassock, walks down the street. Raggedy CHILDREN race past, shouting and raising dust. A peasant WOMAN leans out a window.

WOMAN

(SPANISH)

Good day, Padre. The quinceara?

PADRE

(SPANISH)

Yes, tomorrow.

He walks a few more steps and knocks on a door which is opened by a peasant MOTHER.

INT. PEASANT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As poor as you might expect. Padre enters past Mother who shuts the door.

PADRE
 (SPANISH)
 Is she ready?

MOTHER
 (SPANISH)
 Yes.

He crosses the room to a second door.

PADRE
 (SPANISH)
 See that we are not disturbed.

INT. PEASANT HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Padre enters, closes door behind, and unbuttons his cassock. In front of him, naked, tied spread-eagled, gagged, a 15-year-old GIRL. Padre removes his cassock, and he's naked too. With a grin of pure evil he approaches the quaking girl.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Dressed, Padre exits the house. Turns, and there is the Hag, as ugly as expected. He gives a startled CRY.

HAG
 (SPANISH)
 It is time. They must all go.

PADRE
 (SPANISH)
 I cannot leave.

HAG
 (SPANISH)
 Refuse and you will be used worse than that girl.

She spits on his feet and shuffles away.

INT. SING'S CAR - DAY

Joe drives a highway. Mary rides in front. Christopher in back plays with a Legos truck.

The engine dies.

JOE
 What the...

MARY
 What?

JOE
Stupid car!

He flips on a signal and steers for the berm.

INT. SEMI - CONTINUOUS

A TRUCKER rolls the highway. Drops greasy burger wrapping into the sack between his legs. Wipes his mouth with his hand and pulls out a cigarette. Lights up.

INT. JOE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Parked on berm, Joe grinds starter. Nothing.

MARY
I though you had it fixed.

JOE
I did.

EXT. JOE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The back door pops open, and Christopher climbs out. He walks away. Mary rolls down her window.

MARY
Christopher, what are you doing?

JOE
Get back in the car!

MARY
CHRISTOPHER!

Christopher pulls a wheel off his Legos truck.

INT. SEMI - CONTINUOUS

Trucker takes a drag. The cigarette slips from his greasy fingers--right into the sack. The greasy wrapper catches fire.

TRUCKER
Holy shit!

He fights the fire in his crotch and continues to drive.

EXT. JOE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Christopher turns and looks at the car. Joe grinds the starter. Mary frowns.

MARY
 (to Christopher)
 What are you doing?

JOE
 If I have to come get you...

INT. SEMI - CONTINUOUS

Trucker YELPS as he plucks the burning sack from his crotch and tosses it out the window. Looks up.

Right in his path--Joe's car.

Trucker jerks the wheel hard.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The semi screams past Joe's car, missing the bumper by inches and shooting across the road.

INT. SEMI - CONTINUOUS

Trucker BELLOWS with joy. Breaks into laughter for a second. Until he spots a cement mixer coming right at him.

TRUCKER
 Shit!

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The semi screams past the mixer that veers to avoid the crash. The semi races into the ditch and flips over. The mixer zeroes in on Joe's car.

EXT. JOE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Christopher watches impassively as the mixer ROLLS OVER and through Joe's car. At 70 mph, Mary and Joe are smushed.

Joe's car BURSTS into flames. The mixer flips on its side and slides before the cab shoots up in flames.

Car burning.

Mixer burning.

Semi flipped over, cab crushed.

Christopher smiles.

INT. THOMAS CAR - NIGHT

Thomas drives. Riding with him, Christopher.

THOMAS

His Eminence would have come, but he's recovering from a heart attack.

Christopher plays with Legos.

THOMAS

I'm sorry about your parents. Want some ice cream?

Christopher pulls off pieces to rebuild.

THOMAS

How is it you were out of the car?

CHRISTOPHER

They stopped so I could...

Thomas glances over.

CHRISTOPHER

I like rocky road.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Goodman sits behind his desk. Christopher sits across. Goodman opens a small pill bottle, shakes a pill into his palm, and places it under his tongue.

GOODMAN

As you know, I am your legal guardian. I have decided to send you to St. Michael's.

Christopher picks up a hunk of cave glass. He slowly rotates the glob, staring.

GOODMAN

It's a monastery in the northern part of the state.

EXT. ST. MICHAEL'S MONASTERY - DAY

Set amidst the mountains of upper New York, the monastery consists of large buildings, a chapel, and grounds.

GOODMAN (V.O.)

You will complete your basic education and begin your theological studies.

Walking to the front entrance, battered suitcase in hand, Padre.

GOODMAN (V.O.)
 You will live as a novitiate. Hard
 work and diligent study will help
 you overcome the death of your
 parents.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Goodman watches Christopher study the glass.

GOODMAN
 I will visit on a regular basis.
 With God's grace, you will achieve
 your destiny.

For an instant, a mask of pain twists Christopher's face.

GOODMAN
 Are you all right, Christopher?

Christopher manages a forced smile.

CHRISTOPHER
 Remembering is painful.

GOODMAN
 Pray, Christopher. God will
 provide the strength you require.

Christopher holds up the glass piece.

GOODMAN
 You may take it. Keep it safe.
 It's precious. But I think you
 know that.

INT. SING HOUSE - CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rebecca takes folded clothes from a dresser and packs a bag.
 Thomas removes a Legos fire engine from a line of figures.

THOMAS
 Think he's too old for these?

REBECCA
 I still have my first troll doll.
 (off his look)
 The toys of youth contain a certain
 magic.

THOMAS
 (placing figure in a box)
 I doubt he'll have time to play.

Into the room comes Helen, Mary's older, heavier sister. She carries a steno notebook.

HELEN

Excuse me. My sister left this.
It's addressed to Cardinal Goodman.

Thomas takes the notebook.

HELEN

It's a diary. I scanned a few
pages.
(shudders)
I think his eminence should read
it.

THOMAS

I'll see that he gets it.

Helen looks at Thomas as if she wants to say more.

THOMAS

St. Michael's is a fine school.
You don't have to worry about
Christopher.

HELEN

I'm not worried about him.

Helen leaves. Rebecca and Thomas exchange looks.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Notebook closes. Frowning, Goodman slides the notebook onto the desk.

INT. MATTHEW'S LAB - DAY

Dust, dirt, cobwebs, a room that's been sealed for years. Through the dust shuffles Goodman, past poster blowups of Aramaic text, past a blackboard of chalk notes.

He stops at a table and runs fingers over curled photos. He moves to a glass case containing the staff and whip.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Flying side by side, Thomas, Father Earnest, and Rebecca.

FATHER EARNEST

I want you to know I'm not good
with confined spaces. I hate
elevators.

THOMAS

You won't have to go inside, just keep a lookout.

FATHER EARNEST

Absolutely. As long as...I'm not good with confined spaces.

REBECCA

What's so important about this cave?

THOMAS

His eminence thinks we missed something.

Thomas sips coffee and looks out the window. Below, the desert of Israel.

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT - DAY

A modern stucco house alone amidst the cacti. Shuffling up the drive, the Hag.

On a veranda overlooking the desert, talking on a cell phone, an older Spearman.

SPEARMAN

Yes, your eminence, yes, but it's been years.

(beat)

I bought the scroll from Heather Jones. Last known address was New York.

(beat)

I suppose she might be findable. You're welcome.

He kills the connection, sips coffee, and turns. Hag stands behind him.

SPEARMAN

Who are you, and what the hell are you doing in my house?

Hag CHANTS in an unrecognizable tongue and pulls a seven pointed star from beneath her robe.

SPEARMAN

(advancing)

Get the hell out!

Hag backs away, flashing the star to no effect.

SPEARMAN
Come back, and I'll call the
sheriff!

INT. SPEARMAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Spearman enters with a cup of coffee. Takes two steps and hears a RATTLE.

Freezes.

Looks down. Coiled, within striking distance, a huge rattlesnake. Spearman ever so slowly lifts a foot to back away.

Too late. The snake strikes, sinking fangs into Spearman's leg.

Coffee flies.

Spearman jumps before the snake can strike again. He runs into the bathroom as the snake slithers under the bed.

INT. SPEARMAN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Spearman opens a cabinet, rummages, and pulls out a snake bite kit.

Opens the box and finds it empty.

SPEARMAN
Shit!

INT. SPEARMAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wary, Spearman scampers past the bed.

INT. SPEARMAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Spearman limps into the kitchen, venom already having an effect.

INT. SPEARMAN'S HOUSE - GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Limping, he jerks open the door of a SUV, fumbles through the glove box, and pulls out a second kit. He opens the box.

Empty.

He tosses the box and slowly raises his pants leg. The wound is a monster blood blister, black and ugly. As he watches, the blister POPS, spraying blood in his face. He SCREAMS and lowers his pants, face flecked with brackish blood.

INT. SPEARMAN'S HOUSE - GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

As the garage door rises, Spearman slides into the SUV. He SCREAMS as another blister pops, staining his pants, higher this time.

EXT. SPEARMAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The SUV tears out of the garage and rips down the drive.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Pain and panic fuel Spearman as he hurtles onto a desert road. Another blister pops beneath his pants. He HOWLS.

He rounds a curve. Directly ahead, shuffling in the middle of the road--Hag.

He jerks the wheel and sends the SUV, bouncing through the desert, trampling cacti and brush until it bangs to a stop. Shaking, he restarts the engine, puts vehicle in gear, and tries to go.

A flat rear tire spins uselessly.

He shifts into 4-wheel drive. Slowly, the SUV lugs toward road. He regains the road and limps along. Sweat streams down his face. A blister pops on his thigh. He BELLOWS. Pants are soaked with blood.

He speeds up, the SUV sliding back and forth.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Too fast, the SUV misses a curve and plunges into the desert, hits a rut, and flips, landing on the roof and grinding to a stop.

A battered Spearman crawls from the SUV. He struggles to his feet and tries to walk. As soon as he puts weight on his leg, he collapses with a CRY. Desperate, pants blood-soaked to crotch, he crawls.

Spearman drags himself along the road. Gasping. A blister pops, staining his shirt. He's past screaming. He's toast. He rolls over and blinks at the desert sun.

Blotting out the sun...Hag.

EXT. ISRAELI DESERT - NIGHT

Thomas, Rebecca, and Father Earnest climb a slope under a bright moon.

FATHER EARNEST
Are we allowed to do this?

THOMAS
We're almost there.

They stop by the small hole leading to the cave. Thomas and Rebecca strip off backpacks.

THOMAS
Keep your eyes open.

Thomas wiggles into the cave. Rebecca follows. Father Earnest, nervous, squats and stares into the night.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Thomas flicks on a flashlight. The bright beam illuminates a cave that hasn't changed. Same scars, same sand, same globs of glass. Rebecca adds her beam. They press deeper into cave.

REBECCA
What happened in here?

THOMAS
No one knows.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S MONASTERY - CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - DAY

Spartan, tiny cell of a seminarian. Christopher has added a computer and Legos but otherwise bare except for a crucifix. Christopher holds the glob of glass. Drops it, directly on a mound of Legos.

EXT. ISRAELI DESERT - NIGHT

Two ARABS anchor a tripod and mount a rocket launcher. As Arab-1 grabs a rocket from a box, Arab-2 adjusts the elevation. Arab-1 activates the fuse and drops the rocket into the launcher.

A leg slips. The launcher lurches to one side as the rocket fires. Arab-1 glances at the launcher and cuffs Arab-2 on the head.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Father Earnest paces, nervous. SOUND of an incoming rocket. Unaccustomed, he does nothing, wondering, until the rocket EXPLODES in a fireball at the cave entrance. Father Earnest isn't dead, he's annihilated.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

The explosion RIPS into cave, sending Rebecca flying, blasting Thomas into a wall. Unconscious, he slides to the sand beside Rebecca who bleeds from a head wound.

INT. CAVE - LATER

Thomas wakes, moaning, fuzzy, flashlight on. A few feet away, in the light cone from her flashlight, a coiled snake eyes Rebecca. Suddenly alert, he grasps flashlight.

The snake STRIKES.

Thomas bats the snake with the flashlight. He pounces on the snake, POUNDING it, over and over. He scuttles back, panting, and shines the light on the snake.

Dead.

He turns the flashlight to the entrance. No entrance. Hole is filled with rubble. He flashes the light around. No other exit.

Rebecca moans and wakes. He scrambles to her.

THOMAS
Lie still.

REBECCA
My head. What happened?

THOMAS
Explosion. The entrance is sealed.

REBECCA
(rising)
Sealed?

THOMAS
(holding her in place)
Looks worse than it is. Relax.

She sits up and blinks.

REBECCA
Ooooh, the cave's not spinning, is it?

He helps her lie flat.

THOMAS
I'll dig.

He crawls to the entrance.

THOMAS
Father Earnest!

No answer.

THOMAS
FATHER EARNEST!

No answer.

Thomas clears rubble with bare hands.

EXT. CAVE - NIGHT

Darkness reigns. A bloody hand pokes through the rubble and drinks the night air.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

Thomas supports Rebecca as they struggle down the mountain.

EXT. ST. MICHAEL'S MONASTERY - EVENING

A seminarian, KURT, 20, strides across the grounds. In the distance, tossing rocks into a lake, Christopher. Three more steps and Padre pops out from behind a tree.

KURT
Father. You surprised me.

PADRE
I was meditating.

KURT
Yes, excuse me, it's time for evening prayers.

PADRE
I'll get him.

They look at each other a moment until Kurt turns away.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S MONASTERY - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Chairs on tables. Padre mops the floor. Into the room comes the ABBOTT, older, plump, more administrator than priest.

ABBOTT
Good evening, Father, where's Christopher?

PADRE
He needed to study, so I sent him
to his room.

ABBOTT
You know the rules. He must
perform his chores.

PADRE
I don't mind.

ABBOTT
(leaving)
Whether you mind or not doesn't
matter. Character is built through
work.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S MONASTERY - CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Christopher's online at his computer.

A KNOCK

The door opens, and Abbott enters. Christopher turns.

ABBOTT
Good evening, Christopher. I just
came from the dining room. Wasn't
mopping the floor your assignment?

CHRISTOPHER
He offered.

ABBOTT
You know the rules. As punishment,
you will not participate in rock
climbing this weekend. Is that
clear?

Christopher stares.

ABBOTT
Is that clear?

CHRISTOPHER
Yes.

ABBOTT
Yes, what?

CHRISTOPHER
Yes, Father.

Abbott whirls and leaves, shutting the door. Christopher stares a moment before he returns to the computer.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Thomas adds a hunk of glass to the ones on the desk.

THOMAS
I'm sorry about Father Earnest.

Goodman sits at the desk.

GOODMAN
He was a good priest and a good friend.
(beat)
I've unsealed Matthew's lab. I want you to complete the translation.

THOMAS
I have my own work.

GOODMAN
First, I want you to find out if there are additional scrolls.

THOMAS
Your Eminence--

GOODMAN
The scroll was sold to Michael Spearman by Heather Jones. I have her address.

Goodman holds out a folded slip of paper. Thomas hesitates before he accepts.

THOMAS
What good can come from chasing fairy tales?

GOODMAN
You must trust me.

Thomas clearly doesn't want to pursue this task.

GOODMAN
I should have done this years ago. I pray I am not too late.

INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

A WOMAN, 20s, pretty, half drunk, sits on a chair in the middle of the dance floor. A SPOT hits a PRIEST as he crosses the floor to the Woman. He blesses her with his right hand.

The LIGHTS pop on. The floor pulsates with MUSIC and LIGHT. The woman gasps as the Priest strips off his cassock. Underneath is all bodybuilder stripper.

As he grinds in front of her, the rest of the BRIDESMAIDS emerge from the shadows. Drunk, cheering, they gather around the Woman. Laughing and cheering is Heather.

EXT. ALLEY - LATER

Heather, cigarette in hand, steps out of the club and lights up. Ahead, a robed, hooded FIGURE. She frowns as the Figure limps toward her.

HEATHER
Can I help you?

The Figure pulls down the hood, and it's THE HAG! With a cackle, she tosses a cup of liquid on Heather.

HEATHER
(jumping back)
What the fuck--

She crashes into a dumpster. A rat LEAPS from the trash, runs across her shoulder, and sinks teeth into her neck. With a SCREAM, Heather snatches off the rat and hurls it away. Grabbing her neck, she staggers away.

She rounds the dumpster, and a cat leaps and sinks claws into her chest. As she fights the cat, a second cat LANDS on her neck. Another ATTACKS her thigh.

She tosses one away as two more cats attack, clawing her face. Blood BLOSSOMS as the cats bite and claw.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Thomas leaves the dance club. He looks around. Half a dozen cats sprint from the alley.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Ahead, cats swarm over a body. Thomas moves forward.

THOMAS
HEY!!

The cats scatter, darting off in all directions. Thomas kneels by a bloody Heather ripped and clawed and suffocated and dead.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Thomas carries a cup of coffee across the room to Goodman who sits at the table.

THOMAS

If I hadn't seen it, I wouldn't have believed it. In any case, she can't tell us how she obtained the scroll.

GOODMAN

I have reports from St. Michael's. Christopher is not progressing as hoped.

THOMAS

Perhaps a different school.

GOODMAN

Not yet. I trust he will take to the discipline. The translation?

THOMAS

Slow. Sometimes, I think God is mischievous. Matthew had left Rabbi Benjamin the night he died.

GOODMAN

Rabbi Benjamin knows?

INT. MATTHEW'S LAB - DAY

Rebecca stares at a screen displaying a slide of Aramaic. Nothing registers.

REBECCA

I can't translate the name.

Across the room, Thomas stares at the glass case containing the whip and staff.

THOMAS

Did they use whips two thousand years ago?

REBECCA

Egyptians used whips at the time of Moses.

THOMAS

Any reference to Jesus having a whip?

REBECCA

He was a carpenter.

THOMAS

How about the devil? He ever use a whip?

REBECCA

Jesus won. We know that. What happened to the tempter?

Thomas turns away from the case and studies the screen.

THOMAS

How do myths end?

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

A granite cliff face stretching toward the sky. At the bottom, a group of Seminarians and priests in climbing gear. Among them, Kurt who checks his harness and starts to climb.

Belaying Kurt is Padre.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Abbott pedals a mountain bike along a country road. Plump, slow. Sun shines, but in the distance a line of dark clouds mars the horizon.

EXT. TRACK - DAY

Christopher walks a jogging track that circles an athletic field. A black Doberman emerges from the trees and falls in by his side.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

A third of the way, tough going, winded, Kurt pauses to gather strength. Below, Padre holds the rope, watching.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Abbott pedals up a hill, a cliff to one side. Dark clouds stream toward him.

INTERCUT TRACK/CLIFF/ROAD

Christopher jogs, Doberman sticking to his side.

On the cliff, Kurt reaches for a handhold, misses, and slips a few feet before he catches himself. Padre plays out a length of line.

Abbott reaches the top of the hill, pauses a moment, and glides down the other side.

Christopher runs faster, Doberman keeping pace.

Kurt climbs higher.

Padre relaxes his grip.

Abbott accelerates as gravity tugs him along.

Christopher runs faster, pouring it on. Doberman still there.

Kurt stretches for a hold, toes on the tiniest of edges, fingertips searching for a grip.

Padre's fingers open.

Abbott flies, grinning at the rush.

Christopher in a mouth-wide-open sprint. Doberman breaks off and rushes into trees.

Kurt's grip fails. He falls.

The line sings through Padre's open hands as Kurt plummets. The crowd doesn't have time to scream.

Christopher runs flat out, as hard as he can.

Abbott rounds a curve. Ahead, a rock slide. He squeezes brakes, but too late. The bike hits the rocks, flips, and sends him flying into a steep ravine.

Padre's hands CLAMP on the line.

Kurt jerks to a stop, dangling.

Abbott hits the rocky ravine and tumbles out of control. Bones snap as he crashes into rocks and scrub, tumbling until he splashes into a shallow creek.

Christopher collapses in the grass, chest heaving. Overhead, dark clouds spit rain.

Bruised, battered, broken, bloody, Abbott moans and tries to move. No way. He's stuck, water to waist.

Rain pelts Padre as he lowers Kurt down the cliff face.

Christopher lies in the grass, rain cooling him.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

Water rises up Abbott's chest as runoff fills the creek. He scoots higher but can't move far. He glances to one side where a wet raccoon stares back.

A low GROWL.

Above him on the bank, the Doberman which bares sharp teeth. Terrified, Abbott tries to scoot. Nope.

ABBOTT

Good dog. Good, good dog.

The Doberman crouches and SPRINGS--at the raccoon.

The raccoon dodges. The Doberman slips, slamming into Abbott, shoving him deeper into the water. As the Doberman chases the raccoon, Abbott struggles, water at his neck.

He stretches, fingers pawing for a grip. Water rises, creeping over his chin

And lips

And nose

Until he's submerged.

His eyes widen as breath BUBBLES out his lips.

EXT. TRACK - DAY

Dripping, Christopher rises from the grass and trudges toward the main building.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

Funeral mass for the Abbott. The casket is flanked by candles. A CHOIR intones Gregorian chant. In ornate vestments, Goodman presides, assisted by Thomas.

INT. SACRISTY - LATER

Thomas helps Goodman out of his vestments.

GOODMAN

God chooses odd ways to take us,
doesn't he?

THOMAS

Perhaps being helpless in the face
of death is just one more test.

GOODMAN

A last opportunity for Satan to
turn us from God.

THOMAS

Do you think he really exists?

GOODMAN

Of course God exists.

THOMAS

Satan. Evil has become human and
explainable. A childhood trauma to
account for every depravity.

GOODMAN

I'm afraid God does not consult a
psychiatric manual.

THOMAS

It would be easier if Satan did
exist.

Goodman, disrobed, sits wearily.

GOODMAN

If Satan did exist, would you fight
him?

THOMAS

Would I have a choice?

Goodman shakes his head.

INT. MATTHEW'S LAB - DAY

Rebecca uses a magnifying glass to study a photo of Aramaic.

REBECCA

The only reference involves a
chariot.

Thomas, busy stapling photos to corkboard, shoots her a look.

REBECCA

Can we publish partial results?

THOMAS

No, the translation must be
complete.

REBECCA
I'll be senile by then.

THOMAS
I want it finished before Cardinal
Goodman dies. It is his triumph.
He deserves the credit.

She shrugs and focuses on the photo.

REBECCA
He could provide a few more worker
bees.

INT. DELI - DAY

Goodman, in black suit and collar, sits across a small table
from Rabbi Benjamin. The remains of lunch between them.

GOODMAN
Why does chicken soup always taste
better in a deli?

RABBI BENJAMIN
For the same reason whiskey tastes
better in an Irish pub.

They chuckle.

RABBI BENJAMIN
You didn't ask me to lunch to talk
chicken soup.

GOODMAN
You know that Father Matthew was
translating an Aramaic scroll. You
helped him how?

RABBI BENJAMIN
I thought someone might ask. It
was a name.
(leans closer)
Sartok is a prince of darkness,
more powerful than I first thought.
To meet him, well, if I believed in
such things, I would be afraid.

GOODMAN
What if I told you Sartok was the
demon that tempted Jesus?

RABBI BENJAMIN
Is that what the scroll says?

Goodman nods.

RABBI BENJAMIN
To meet such evil and survive
requires incredible...faith.

GOODMAN
Is there a way to recognize the
demon? Is there a test?

INT. GOODMAN'S CAR - DAY

Goodman drives through northern New York mountains.

RABBI BENJAMIN (V.O.)
The Magi, the wise men brought
three gifts.

GOODMAN (V.O.)
Gold, Frankincense, and myrrh.

RABBI BENJAMIN (V.O.)
Myrrh was used to anoint babies
because demons could not abide it.

GOODMAN (V.O.)
Myrrh?

RABBI BENJAMIN (V.O.)
The balm reportedly has healing
powers, but then the scriptures are
full of unproven tales.

EXT. ST. MICHAEL'S MONASTERY - GARDEN - DAY

Christopher hoes between rows of plants. A rabbit darts from beneath a bush. He reacts instantly, swinging the hoe and batting rabbit into the next row. Calmly, he steps over and swings. The bloody blade rises for another blow.

GOODMAN (O.S.)
Christopher!

Christopher turns and eyes Goodman who stands at the edge.

CHRISTOPHER
Rabbits eat the lettuce.

GOODMAN
Come with me. I wish to speak with
you.

Slinging the bloody hoe over his shoulder, Christopher steps away.

INT. GOODMAN'S CAR - DAY

Goodman drives. Christopher rides.

GOODMAN
Do you miss your parents?

CHRISTOPHER
I wish I didn't have to live at the
seminary.

GOODMAN
What's wrong with St. Michael's?

CHRISTOPHER
They make me work.

GOODMAN
(chuckles)
Work builds character. If you're
lucky, you will work the rest of
your life.

Christopher clearly doesn't echo that sentiment.

INT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - DAY

Goodman and Christopher carry trays to a table and sit.
Christopher tears open a ketchup packet and adds it to his
burger.

Goodman takes out a vial and pours oil onto his palm.

GOODMAN
You don't get food like this at the
seminary, do you?

CHRISTOPHER
They act like meat is a sin.

GOODMAN
Tell you what. Every time I visit,
we'll eat out, OK?

CHRISTOPHER
Sure.

Goodman holds out his hand. Grinning, Christopher shakes.

Christopher SCREAMS, jerks back his hand, and jumps to his
feet.

CHRISTOPHER
 What the fuck?!
 (rubbing hand)
 You sonofabitch!

He grabs the burger and hurls it at Goodman. Ketchup sprays Goodman's face and shirt.

CHRISTOPHER
 How about that, asshole?

Goodman rises and grabs Christopher who struggles.

CHRISTOPHER
 Let go of me! Help! Help me!

Though weakened, Goodman is a match for Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER
 Let go of me, you old queer!

A local, GRIZZLED MAN, steps forward.

GRIZZLED MAN
 Something wrong here?

CHRISTOPHER
 This queer priest is trying to
 force me into his car.

GOODMAN
 I'm the boy's guardian. Everything
 is under control.

Grizzled Man doesn't know who to believe.

GOODMAN
 (to Christopher)
 Cause trouble and things will go
 badly.

Christopher stops struggling.

GOODMAN
 (to Grizzled Man)
 He's a bit of a challenge, but
 he'll be all right.

The Grizzled Man watches Goodman and Christopher leave.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Goodman pushes Christopher into the car on the driver's side, sliding in without releasing his grip.

INT. GOODMAN'S CAR - 10 MINUTES LATER

Goodman drives, no longer holding Christopher.

GOODMAN
Who are you?

Christopher doesn't answer.

GOODMAN
Rabbi Benjamin said myrrh would
cause pain. Why?

CHRISTOPHER
He's messing in things he knows
nothing about.

GOODMAN
Who are you?

CHRISTOPHER
Ever been fucked in the ass,
Eminence?

Stunned, Goodman can't answer.

CHRISTOPHER
When I finish with you, you'll know
how it feels.

Goodman makes the sign of the cross.

GOODMAN
I will drive Satan from your body.

CHRISTOPHER
(laughing)
I don't 'inhabit' this body.

Goodman's look says he understands. Exorcism won't work.

CHRISTOPHER
You thought you were bringing him
back to life. Fool. He won,
remember?

EXT. ST. MICHAEL'S MONASTERY - CHAPEL - DAY

Goodman wrestles a struggling Christopher into the Chapel.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S MONASTERY - CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

Puffing, in pain, Goodman drags Christopher toward the altar.
Ahead, a priest in cassock kneels in a pew.

GOODMAN
 Father, help me.

The priest and stands and turns...Padre.

PADRE
 Of course, your Eminence.

Padre leaves the pew, and Christopher stops struggling. Goodman spasms as pain rips through his chest. He releases Christopher who steps away. Padre strides ahead.

Goodman, in terrific pain, struggles to remove his pill bottle from his pocket. He manages, but shaking hands can't remove the cap.

PADRE
 Allow me.

Padre takes the bottle and snaps off the lid. Goodman stretches out his palm. Padre smiles and pours pills on the floor.

Goodman gapes a moment before he sinks to his knees and reaches for a pill. As his fingers grasp a pill, Christopher's shoe SMASHES his hand.

Goodman SCREAMS.

Padre grabs Goodman, hauls him to his feet, and propels him into a pew where Goodman doubles over the back.

Pain exploding in his chest, Goodman cannot move or protest as his pants are jerked down. Goodman gasps and dies as Padre unzips.

Christopher watches as Padre prepares to mount.

CHRISTOPHER
 Don't bother. He's dead.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Thomas stands by Goodman's freshly mounded grave. Rabbi Benjamin ambles alongside.

RABBI BENJAMIN
 He was a good man.

THOMAS
 Come to pay respects?

RABBI BENJAMIN
 I missed the funeral.

Rabbi Benjamin bends over and lays a stone on the marker.

THOMAS

He lived his whole life for the church. Think it was worth the sacrifice?

RABBI BENJAMIN

Do I detect doubt, Father Thomas?

THOMAS

Sometimes, all you need is a sign.

RABBI BENJAMIN

I believe the signs are all around us. Did the myrrh work?

THOMAS

Myrrh?

RABBI BENJAMIN

He didn't tell you? He asked about the demon, Sartok. I said myrrh burns demon flesh.

THOMAS

There are no demons.

RABBI BENJAMIN

I pray you're right.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Thomas opens a cabinet, exposing a safe. Using a key, he opens the safe and removes Goodman's binder and Mary's notebook. He sits at the desk. He pauses a moment before he opens the binder and reads.

GOODMAN (V.O.)

Hello, Thomas. If you're reading this, then I am dead. That feels odd to write, but it is true, as is this journal. I ask but one thing. Keep an open mind. What I did, I did with the belief that I followed God's will.

Thomas picks up his coffee and sips.

GOODMAN (V.O.)

The scroll provided my inspiration.

INT. WINE AGING ROOM - DAY

In black cassock, Christopher walks between old, wooden vats once used to age wine. Cobwebs, dust, rough, rock walls, this room hasn't been used in a while.

Pulls hem above his knees as if it's a skirt and begins to dance, an ancient dance.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Rebecca, backpack on, strides a sidewalk, past a bowed, hooded figure who turns slowly.

Hag watches Rebecca recede.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

A dog, a mongrel trots out of the alley and down the sidewalk.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Rebecca passes a hot dog vendor and sniffs but doesn't stop.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

A larger dog has joined the mongrel. They lope along.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A MAN flies a Frisbee. His dog, JO-JO, breaks for the Frisbee, stops, looks, and takes off in another direction.

MAN
Jo-Jo, Hey!

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Mongrels and dogs of different shapes and sizes are joined by Jo-Jo. They form a pack.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Rebecca passes a storefront and pauses to admire an antique painting of the Madonna and Christ-child.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

A pack of 20 dogs surges down the sidewalk, picking up speed. They bank into an alley.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Rebecca pays a WOMAN for an apple from a storefront display. Chomping, she moves on.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

The silent pack races out of the alley and into the street. Cars slam on brakes and SCREECH. One car HITS two dogs, sending them FLYING, dead.

A van PLOWS into the back of a car.

More cars SKID and swerve as the pack races onto the far sidewalk, unmindful of the carcasses left behind.

Rebecca turns at the sound of BRAKES and ACCIDENTS.

Even as PEOPLE climb out of the vehicles, the pack races toward her.

A moment of incredulity before she tosses the apple and whirls. She SPRINTS away.

The pack STREAMS past the apple stand.

Rebecca races along the sidewalk, dodging people.

A WOMAN starts to step off her stoop, spots the pack, and jumps back as they pass.

Rebecca glances over her shoulder. Dogs, mouths open, panting, frothing.

She RUNS as fast as she can from the pack from hell.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Pack closing, Rebecca reaches a campus building. Panting, she fumbles with her swipe card.

Behind, Jo-Jo SURGES ahead in a final sprint.

Panicked, Rebecca drops the card. She hears the dogs as she scrambles for the card. Swipes it and looks over her shoulder.

Jo-Jo nears.

Swiped wrong way. Lock BEEPS.

Panting, she flips card and swipes. Red light turns GREEN.

Jo-Jo LUNGES, flying through the air.

She's pushing through door as Jo-Jo LOCKS onto her backpack, JERKING back Rebecca.

She CLINGS to the door.

Jo-Jo pulls loose.

Before Jo-Jo can recover, she pushes into building, slamming the door.

The door barely locks before the dogs BANG into it. Fangs bared, growling, they repeatedly CRASH into the unbreakable glass.

She backs away from the froth-covered door as frenzied dogs ATTACK.

She's terrified.

The dogs stop, turn, and run off.

She hesitates a moment before she races deeper into the building.

INT. WINE AGING ROOM - DAY

Christopher drops hem, rips off the cassock, and hurls it at a vat. He turns and runs out.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Hands quivering, Thomas closes the binder. What hath Goodman wrought?

INT. MATTHEW'S LAB - DAY

Rebecca's hands shake as she dips a tea bag in a mug of hot water. She walks to the door and makes sure it's locked.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Thomas pours a tumbler of whiskey, drains it, and refills it before he returns to the desk and opens Mary's notebook.

EXT. LAWN - DAY

Christopher pushes a mower across the lawn, grass shooting out the side. Reaches a point, turns, and sets off at a new angle.

EXT. PARK - DAY

On a bench, Rabbi Benjamin reads. A cloud obscures the sun. He shivers. He closes the book and looks up. Face pales.

In a semicircle a few feet away sit the dogs, silent and watching.

Unnerved, he pockets the book and looks around. No one in sight. He slowly stands. Dogs wait. He takes one step.

A dog GROWLS.

RABBI BENJAMIN

Good dog, good dog.

He edges around the bench. Dogs watch. He backs toward the trees.

Jo-Jo attacks, LEAPING onto the bench and over, KNOCKING Rabbi Benjamin to the grass. Other dogs are right behind. He is toast.

EXT. LAWN - DAY

Christopher runs as he mows, grass flying. He connects with a mown section and stops, chest heaving, mower putting.

From above, the mown lines form a perfect star of David.

INT. GOODMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Thomas closes the notebook and sets it beside the empty tumbler.

INT. MATTHEW'S LAB - DAY

Rebecca glances up from a photo and stretches. Looks around and stops.

REBECCA

Who are you?

Across the room in the doorway, Hag.

REBECCA

How did you get in here?

Hag stares, more terrifying than any witch.

REBECCA

This room is off limits. You'll have to leave.

Hag steps forward, raises one hand, and CHANTS. Spooked, Rebecca looks around for help.

REBECCA

GO!

Hag pulls a short length of rope from beneath her robe. But it's not rope, it's a SNAKE that she drops. The snake slithers away as Rebecca SCREAMS.

A second rope, a second snake. Rebecca backs away as Hag CHANTS and snakes circle. A third snake. Rebecca looks around wildly.

One is coiled a few feet away.

She YELPS and jumps as the snake STRIKES and misses. Hag CHANTS louder and launches a fourth snake. Snakes streak across floor, circling.

Rebecca runs and stops short, a coiled snake in her path. She jumps to the side as it LAUNCHES, fangs bared. This deadly game can't last long.

The snakes move in.

Rebecca dodges and fakes. She grabs books and photos and paper, HURLING everything. When she hits a snake, she only succeeds in rousing it. HISSING, they back her into a corner.

Chest heaving, CHANT echoing in her ears, Rebecca faces a phalanx of coiled vipers. She's history. SCREAMING, she takes one step and launches herself into the air as the vipers STRIKE.

The snakes miss as she flies overhead, sliding across the case containing the staff and whip, cracking the glass. She lands on the other side even as the snakes CHARGE.

She scrambles atop the glass case. The snakes gather on all sides, coiling and striking, but the case is too tall. She peeks over edge as a snake STRIKES, stopping an inch short of her face. She SCREAMS and recoils.

Hag BELLOWS.

Rebecca faces the advancing Hag who holds a coiled snake. Rebecca climbs to her knees. Snakes circle on all sides. She searches for something, anything.

Hag moves in, brandishing the hissing viper.

Beneath Rebecca's knees, the glass spider webs. Too much weight.

Hag slides forward, an inhuman smile on her lips.

Rebecca's knees CRASH through the glass, a sharp edge slicing jeans and skin.

She YELPS as the glass breaks into shards. Blood stains her jeans. She grabs a shard. Hag stops and stares at Rebecca who kneels on glass, whip, and staff.

REBECCA

Come on, come on. You want me,
come and get me!

Hag hisses and retreats.

The snakes dart for the door, exiting before Hag tucks the last viper under her robe and disappears.

Rebecca shakes, dropping the shard and grabbing her leg. She climbs down, wincing with every move. She falls into a chair as Thomas enters, carrying binder and notebook.

THOMAS

Rebecca, you'll never--

He stops and surveys the mayhem, Rebecca clutching her bleeding thigh.

THOMAS

What the hell happened?

REBECCA

I'll explain on the way to the
hospital.

He drops the notebook and binder on the table, picks up Rebecca, and carries her out.

EXT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Thomas and a limping Rebecca walk to his car.

REBECCA

Stitches and a scar. If I ever see
that thing again...

THOMAS

Snakes?

REBECCA

I'd like to know how she did it.

THOMAS

Believe in demons?

She shoots him a look.

INT. THOMAS' CAR - NIGHT

Thomas drives. Rebecca rides.

THOMAS
We found the cave of the
temptation. It's incredible, but
we did.

REBECCA
Cardinal Goodman thought he was
cloning Jesus?

THOMAS
I have to talk to the boy.

REBECCA
I'll go with you.

He glances over.

THOMAS
The artifacts.

REBECCA
Artifacts?

THOMAS
The whip, did Jesus use a whip?

REBECCA
When I was 8 years old, my older
brother made me watch a vampire
movie. My mother told me there
weren't any vampires, but I was so
afraid I didn't sleep for two days.
I was crying when my father told me
about vampire spiders. The spiders
built these big, strong webs. When
a vampire flew into it, the spider
ate it.

THOMAS
No wooden stake?

REBECCA
I was 8. I thought spiders could
kill anything. Anyway, my dad and
I used magic thread--

THOMAS
Magic thread?

REBECCA

To create these really elaborate webs. We connected them to a little bell so that when a vampire crashed into the trap, the bell would tinkle. We'd kill it.

THOMAS

How many did you catch?

REBECCA

After that, I slept really good.

INT. MATTHEW'S LAB - NIGHT

Thomas and Rebecca enter. He goes to the broken case. She limps to the notebook and binder.

REBECCA

If it is a demon, how do we defeat him?

THOMAS

(holding up whip)
Same way Jesus did. Strength of Moses and...

REBECCA

Faith of Abraham.

He starts away, stops, returns, and grabs the staff.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Christopher rises from his bed and moves to the window. He looks at the moonlit landscape.

INT. WOODS - NIGHT

A deer rises from its bed and stiffly walks through the trees.

INT. THOMAS' CAR - NIGHT

Thomas drives through upstate New York. Rebecca uses a penlight to read the binder.

REBECCA

(closes binder)
Stop. Turn around.

THOMAS

What?

REBECCA

This is insane. He's a boy, not a demon.

THOMAS

You read Goodman's journal?

REBECCA

Which proves nothing. Coincidence and supposition.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Christopher uses his forefinger to trace lines on his window.

THOMAS (V.O.)

And Mary's notebook?

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The deer breaks into a trot.

REBECCA (V.O.)

A neurotic woman's diary that can't be substantiated.

INT. THOMAS' CAR - CONTINUOUS

REBECCA

Have any idea how crazy this is? We're chasing a demon cloned from 2,000 year old DNA? We're mad. They stole Goodman's money and used some schmuck's sperm.

THOMAS

There's a test.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Christopher draws faster.

REBECCA (V.O.)

Test?

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The deer breaks into a run.

THOMAS (V.O.)

Rabbi Benjamin said myrrh would cause.

REBECCA (V.O.)
You've got to be kidding.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The deer bounds from the woods onto the highway and stops.
In the distance, approaching headlights.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

His finger slides across the glass.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Incredibly, the deer runs at the approaching headlights.

INT. THOMAS' CAR - CONTINUOUS

THOMAS
I know it sounds impossible.

REBECCA
This is the 21st century. We don't
burn witches. We don't offer human
sacrifices to some cloven-hoofed
idol. And we don't believe you
toss salt over your shoulder to
ward off the devil!

Ahead, the sprinting deer appears in headlights.

THOMAS
Jesus!

Thomas hits brakes and tries to swerve.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The deer LEAPS, clearing the grill and SLAMMING into the
windshield.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The windshield EXPLODES in a shower of glass as the deer
bursts through, slipping between Rebecca and Thomas and
landing in the back seat.

Alive, the deer begins to kick, sharp hooves SLASHING.
Thomas catches a hoof across his cheek, splitting the skin in
an ugly cut.

THOMAS
Jump!

He fights to get car off the road while dodging hooves. As the car slows, Rebecca BAILS, barely escaping a hoof. A second blow rips open a gash along Thomas' hairline, and he BAILS.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Thomas hits the asphalt and rolls, scraping his body. The car plunges off the road and into a shallow ravine. Thomas stands and stares. Rebecca limps up.

REBECCA
Are you all right?

THOMAS
The artifacts.

He runs after the car. He SLIDES into the ravine and reaches the car. He pauses and sniffs. Yep, leaking gas.

THOMAS
Heavenly Father--

The deer THRASHES in back window. Thomas jerks open the driver's door, reaches inside, and pops the trunk as a hoof barely misses his neck.

Jumping back, he hustles to the trunk as the back window SHATTERS, spraying glass. Even as deer struggles to climb out, Thomas pushes up the trunk lid. He grabs the whip and staff.

Whirling, he runs from the car to the sound of HOOVES on METAL. A few steps later, the car EXPLODES in a fireball.

Standing on the highway, Rebecca watches flames SHOOT into the night.

REBECCA
Father?!
(beat)
PATRICK?!

Up the side of the ravine climbs Thomas. Bleeding, singed, he's been through hell--or so he thinks. He clutches the whip and staff.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Christopher backs away from the window and leaves.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Thomas sits on a rock while Rebecca examines his wounds.

REBECCA
I can't tell much in this light.

THOMAS
You're leg's bleeding.

REBECCA
Stitches popped.

THOMAS
Can you walk?

REBECCA
How far?

THOMAS
Five miles.

REBECCA
Guess I'll have to.

Thomas hands her the staff.

THOMAS
Use this. Journal and diary?

REBECCA
In the car. Sorry.

He stands, grabbing the whip. They start off.

INT. PADRE'S ROOM NIGHT

Padre sleeps. His eyes pop open. Christopher stands beside the bed.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Thomas and Rebecca trudge. With a cry, she buckles and falls. He kneels beside her.

THOMAS
What?

REBECCA
My leg.

He feels her jeans.

THOMAS
Your jeans are soaked.

REBECCA
Give me a minute.

Headlights round a curve and head toward them. Thomas moves into the road, waving his arms. For a moment, the headlights accelerate. Red and blue bubble lights pop on. A Sheriff cruiser stops, and a young, clean-cut DEPUTY climbs out.

DEPUTY
That your burn-out back there?

THOMAS
We had a run-in with a deer.

DEPUTY
Thought it smelled a bit gamy.

THOMAS
My friend is bleeding.

Deputy walks over to Rebecca and squats, touching her leg.

THOMAS
Take us to St. Michael's.

DEPUTY
County General.

THOMAS
The seminary will take care of us.

Deputy helps Rebecca to her feet and toward the cruiser.

DEPUTY
SOP. Something happens to you, I
get canned.

Thomas grabs the artifacts and follows.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Rebecca lies on a gurney while a FAT-RESIDENT cuts off her jeans.

FAT-RESIDENT
Car accident?

REBECCA
Ever have a deer come through your
windshield?

Fat-Resident stops and regards her.

FAT-RESIDENT
A deer? Inside and alive?

REBECCA

I never knew their hooves were so sharp.

FAT-RESIDENT

(continuing to cut)

I thought that was an urban legend.

In another cubicle, a THIN-RESIDENT works on Thomas' cheek and forehead. The Deputy stands to one side.

DEPUTY

I thought that was an urban legend.

THIN-RESIDENT

A raccoon got into my uncle's cabin once. Tore the hell out of the place.

THOMAS

(winces)

This the uncle that taught you how to sew?

Deputy laughs.

Padre walks through automatic doors of the Emergency Room Entrance.

In a cubicle, a NURSE uses a scalpel to lance a boil on a MAN'S back. The boil shoots puss.

NURSE

Crap!

She lays the scalpel on the table and grabs gauze.

MAN

What?

NURSE

One down, one to go.

She reaches behind for the scalpel. Feels nothing. Looks. No scalpel.

In his cubicle, the Thin-Resident works on Thomas.

DEPUTY

I can't take you to St. Michael's, but I'll call someone.

THOMAS

Thanks.

The Deputy leaves.

In her cubicle, Rebecca lies, eyes closed, while Fat-Resident stitches her leg. He reaches for scissors, hand patting table and not finding anything. Looks up.

Padre smiles, scissors in hand.

FAT-RESIDENT
Hey, dude, I need those.

Rebecca's eyes pop open. Padre hands over the scissors.

PADRE
Father Thomas?

FAT-RESIDENT
Two down.

Padre leaves.

FAT-RESIDENT
(working)
That guy ought to wear a cow bell.

Rebecca stares, suddenly alert.

In the room, Padre meets the Deputy.

DEPUTY
Looking for Father Thomas?

Padre nods.

DEPUTY
Next cube.

Padre moves on.

DEPUTY
Hey, how did you know?

Padre doesn't answer but parts the curtain and enters. Deputy stares and moves on.

The Thin-Resident finishes with Thomas as Padre enters behind.

THIN-RESIDENT
Hey, you're just in time.

THOMAS
(glancing)
From St. Michael's?

Padre nods.

THOMAS
That was quick.

Padre smiles.

EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Thomas carries whip and staff, Rebecca by his side. Padre leads.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Padre drives. Next to him, Thomas. Rebecca in the back with artifacts. The scalpel slides out of Padre's sleeve and into his hand.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Sheriff cruiser, bubbles on, occupies a lane. Ahead, a wrecker sits crossways, cable stretching into the ravine. Deputy stands by the wrecker.

In the ravine, the WRECKER DRIVER attaches a cable to the burnt-out car.

INT. PADRE'S CAR - NIGHT

THOMAS
Have there been any accidents?

PADRE
We watch over the young one.

Thomas eyes Padre.

THOMAS
You spoke to the Deputy?

PADRE
Yes.

THOMAS
Then you know we hit a tree.

PADRE
Yes.

THOMAS
Stop the car.

Without warning, Padre LASHES out. The scalpel slices Thomas' shoulder as he jerks away.

Padre SLASHES again, and Thomas grabs his arm. As they wrestle, Padre slams down the accelerator. The car shoots ahead.

In back, Rebecca hangs on.

REBECCA
Stop! What are you doing?! STOP!

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Wrecker Driver and Deputy stand next to the wrecker as it slowly winches the wreck from the ravine.

INT. PADRE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Padre drives wildly as he battles Thomas. Rebecca grabs the staff and BATS Padre on the back of the head. At the touch of the staff, Padre HOWLS.

The car rounds a curve. Dead ahead, the flashing bubbles of the sheriff cruiser.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Deputy spots the headlights and steps away from the wrecker.

INT. PADRE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca bats Padre again. He SCREAMS hideously. He releases the wheel, PUNCHES Thomas, and scrambles over the seat to get at Rebecca. The car slides out of control. Thomas grabs the wheel.

In back, Padre tries to slice Rebecca who manages to keep staff between them, fending off the scalpel.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Deputy waves at the car and realizes it's coming like a bat out of hell. He darts out of the way.

INT. PADRE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

As the cruiser looms, Thomas slides behind wheel, slams on the brakes, and spins the wheel, putting the car into a long drifting slide. In back, Rebecca and Padre hang on.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Padre's car CRASHES sideways into the back of the cruiser, bounces off, and CAROMS across the road, to slam ass end into a tree. Horn BLARING.

Deputy and Wrecker Driver hustle over. Deputy arrives first, opens the rear door, and pulls out Rebecca who holds the staff.

Wrecker Driver rounds the other side, opens the driver's door, and pulls out an unconscious Thomas. He drags Thomas around to where the Deputy has Rebecca on the asphalt.

DEPUTY
(to Rebecca)
What the hell is going on?

REBECCA
The priest.

DEPUTY
(pointing at Thomas)
Him?

REBECCA
No.
(pointing)
Him!

Around the front staggers Padre, bleeding, scalpel in hand.

REBECCA
He tried to kill us.

Deputy stands and unholsters his pistol. He faces Padre.

DEPUTY
Drop the knife and get on your
knees.

Padre hesitates.

DEPUTY
Drop the knife!

Padre's face twists into a snarl. He LUNGES. The Deputy shoots two quick rounds that BLOW large holes in Padre's chest. Padre collapses.

The Deputy edges forward, and puts one knee on Padre's forearm. As he reaches for the scalpel, Padre flicks his wrist.

The scalpel SAILS through the air to be caught by Padre's other hand. As Padre slashes the Deputy's thigh, the Deputy FIRES two more times.

BELLOWING, thigh spurting blood, the Deputy slides away on his butt as Padre dies.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - NIGHT

In bed, Christopher's eyes pop open.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

In the ravine, the burned out car snags on an outcropping. The winch tugs, straining.

Wrecker Driver gapes as the Deputy struggles to staunch the bleeding. Rebecca crawls over. She removes her belt and wraps it around the Deputy's thigh. He shakes with shock as she tightens the tourniquet.

The winch motor WHINES and SMOKES. Wrecker Driver glances at the winch.

WRECKER-DRIVER

Oh, shit!

He races for the wrecker. The cable begins to snap, strand by strand, TWANGING as the strands break. Wrecker Driver reaches the winch lever and shuts it off. He grins. Made it.

Last cable strands SNAP.

The taut cable WHIPS back like an overstretched rubber band, SLICING Wrecker Driver in two. For a moment, he stares, unaware of what happened. Then, his top half slides off the bottom.

Rebecca hears the cable SINGING through the air. She sees it hit the asphalt like a snake, slithering toward her, stopping a foot short. It writhes a moment before it dies.

Thomas moans and wakes. Blinking, he looks from Padre to where Rebecca holds the shivering Deputy. What the hell happened?

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Empty foam cups say these people have been at this for a while. Rebecca and Thomas on one side. SHERIFF PILOT, a florid, little man, on the other.

SHERIFF

No, it ain't good enough. I got a priest with five slugs in his chest, a wrecker driver chopped in two, and a deputy near bled to death! Sayin' he went wacko ain't good enough!

THOMAS
That's all there is. I'm sorry.
He just snapped.

SHERIFF
(to Rebecca)
I can see you're hurt, but you
gotta understand. I can't
whitewash this. I gotta make
sense.

REBECCA
I know, Sheriff, it seems...unreal.

Sheriff stands.

SHERIFF
First the deer and then the priest.
You two ain't so lucky, are ya?

THOMAS
Think you can get us a ride to St.
Michael's?

SHERIFF
I'll take you. Someone's gotta
tell them about the shooting.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Early morning. Front pews filled with SEMINARIANS and
PRIESTS and set apart, Christopher. Everyone CHANTS except
Christopher who uses a fingernail to carve a figure into the
wood.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A robed and hooded figure shuffles along the road. Hag.

INT. CRUISER - DAY

Dawn sun finds the Sheriff driving. A mesh screen separates
him from Rebecca and Thomas in the back seat. Thomas has the
staff, Rebecca the whip. They look as if they've been in a
battle.

SHERIFF
You know, I heard about a deer
coming through a windshield, but I
figured it was just a story.
Must've scared the crap out of you.

THOMAS
I wouldn't have believed it if I
hadn't been there.

Sheriff spots the Hag on edge of the road and slows.

THOMAS
What is it?

SHERIFF
Old woman.

Rebecca leans forward.

REBECCA
Don't stop.

SHERIFF
What?

REBECCA
Don't stop! Keep going! Keep
going!

SHERIFF
It's an old woman for chrissakes.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sheriff pulls past Hag and stops. Climbs out and walks
toward Hag.

SHERIFF
Good morning. You need a ride or
something?

INT. CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Thomas and Rebecca watch out the window.

REBECCA
That's her, the woman with the
snakes.

THOMAS
Are you sure? How could she get up
here?

REBECCA
She's going to kill him.
(yelling)
GET AWAY! STAY AWAY FROM HER! GET
AWAY!

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Sheriff reaches Hag. Hears commotion and looks behind. Rebecca YELLS and gestures wildly.

SHERIFF

Who shoved a bee in her knickers?

(turns to Hag)

I'm Sheriff Pilot, and I'll be happy to give you whatever assistance you need.

That hideous Hag smile. She beckons him closer. He leans in, turning his head so his ear is close to her lips. From beneath her robe, she produces a knitting needle sharpened to a fine point.

Her shaking hand moves to the Sheriff's head. With incredible speed and strength, she SHOVES the needle through his ear and into his brain.

Blood spurts a moment before his eyes roll back. He sways and collapses to the asphalt.

INT. CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Thomas and Rebecca witness the attack.

REBECCA

Oh my god, oh my god!

She grabs for the door handle, but it's not there. Thomas tries his door. Nope. Doors can't be opened from inside.

REBECCA

It's locked, it's locked. Oh my god! It's locked!

Thomas KICKS the mesh screen. Rebecca looks back.

Hag pulls the pistol from the Sheriff's holster and starts toward them.

REBECCA

She's coming! She's coming!

THOMAS

Help me!

Rebecca lends her good leg, and they manage to break loose a corner. If they had an hour, they might loosen the screen, but they don't have an hour.

Rebecca looks back.

Hag's hideous grin a few feet away.

Rebecca SCREAMS.

Hag shuffles to the driver's door.

Thomas grabs the staff and shoves it under loose corner of the screen. As Hag opens the door, staff hits her in the chest. She HOWLS with pain and falls.

Holding onto the door, the Hag FIRES. The bullet SHATTERS the back window, spraying glass. FIRES a second time and shatters rear door window.

Hag tries to drag herself inside as Thomas HITS her with the staff. Hag SCREAMS with rage and pain and drops the pistol.

As Thomas battles the Hag, Rebecca knocks out the glass in the door window. She LUNGES through the window as the Hag recovers the pistol.

Hag FIRES wildly as Thomas harries her. Outside, Rebecca circles the cruiser. BELLOWING, Hag grabs the staff with one hand and aims at Thomas. Rebecca CRASHES into the Hag, sending the pistol flying.

As the women BATTLE, Thomas climbs out the window, hauling he staff with him.

Hag proves deceptively strong. When she kicks Rebecca's wound, Rebecca crumbles. Hag pounces, grabbing Rebecca's hair and slamming her head on the asphalt--until the staff HAMMERS Hag's back. She SCREAMS and scuttles away.

Thomas faces Hag who bares her teeth and CHARGES.

Thomas grabs the Hag's hood and SLAMS her into the cruiser. She collapses, out.

Thomas takes one look at Hag before he retrieves the pistol. He kneels by Rebecca as she moans. Her eyes widen with fear.

Thomas spins and FIRES automatically, hitting Hag and dropping her. He rises and stands over Hag.

THOMAS

Tell me.

She HISSES at him.

He FIRES.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Christopher stands and leaves as others CHANT.

EXT. ST. MICHAEL'S - DAY

The damaged cruiser stops in front of the main building. Rebecca and Thomas, battered, dirty, and bloody, climb out. She carries the staff, he has the whip. They limp inside.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - DAY

The door bursts open. Thomas leads Rebecca. Room's vacant.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Several long tables occupied by PRIESTS and SEMINARIANS.

Thomas leads Rebecca. Thomas confers with a PRIEST who shakes his head. As they leave, Thomas grabs a salt shaker.

EXT. SPORTS TRACK - DAY

Christopher walks on the track, the Doberman by his side. Onto the far end of track limp Thomas and Rebecca. Christopher drops to one knee and whispers to dog. The Doberman takes off at a dead run.

Thomas and Rebecca watch dog coming.

REBECCA

Oh god.

THOMAS

Get behind me.

She moves as the Doberman, fangs bared, approaches. Thomas readies. The Doberman slides to an abrupt stop, rolls on its back, begging to be rubbed. Thomas moves forward and rubs the dog's belly, as surprised as anyone.

REBECCA

What the...

Thomas looks down track. Christopher is gone.

THOMAS

Where did he go?

Doberman pops up, runs a few steps, and pauses, waiting for Thomas and Rebecca.

Thomas looks at Rebecca.

THOMAS
You think?

REBECCA
What choice do we have?

EXT. MAIN BUILDING - DAY

The Doberman arrives at a thick wooden door. Thomas and Rebecca are a few steps behind.

REBECCA
What is it?

THOMAS
They used to make wine.

He opens the door, and the Doberman bounds inside.

THOMAS
You don't have to.

REBECCA
You're kidding, right?

THOMAS
I wanted to make sure.

REBECCA
You lead.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Dusty stone steps spiral along rough, stone walls. Thomas and Rebecca limp down.

INT. WINE AGING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Giant wooden vats line both walls. A few bulbs cast a feeble light. Rebecca and Thomas limp around a corner.

At the other end stands Christopher, in cassock, and the Doberman.

CHRISTOPHER
You shouldn't have come.

THOMAS
I know about the cloning, what you are.

CHRISTOPHER
If you had any idea, you'd run.

THOMAS

I don't know what his eminence told you, but I don't believe you have any special power.

Christopher offers nothing.

THOMAS

Goodman's fantasy infected you.

Thomas walks forward. Rebecca follows, a step behind.

THOMAS

Some bad things happened, accidents. I don't believe that's your fault.

(producing salt shaker)

This is salt. You like salt, right?

Christopher waves. The shaker flies from Thomas' hand and shatters against the wall.

CHRISTOPHER

When you were in the cave, did you notice the walls?

Thomas stops.

CHRISTOPHER

I thought he hadn't come into his power. I thought he would be weak from fasting. It should have been easy. Have any idea how much it HURT?! Sand fused into glass. Banished and dead for millennia! You have no FUCKING CLUE!

Christopher reaches out his hand. The whip jumps out of Thomas' grasp and flies to Christopher. As he touches it, the whip becomes new and whole, shimmering with a red aura. He flicks, and it CRACKS cruelly.

CHRISTOPHER

I had forgotten how good this feels.

Christopher laughs in a voice too deep for his body and taps the Doberman which charges, fangs bared, vicious.

The Doberman LEAPS at Thomas who catches it, falls, and wrestles.

Christopher flicks the whip, and it BITES Rebecca's arm, causing her to drop the staff. He moves forward, swirling the whip.

CHRISTOPHER
 Isn't technology marvelous?
 Without it, I would be dead, sliced
 to ribbons inside a lost cave.

He flicks. The whip CUTS a nasty slash on Rebecca's cheek. She SHRIEKS.

CHRISTOPHER
 You know what? I think I'll like
 it better this time around.

Flicks. A CUT on her other cheek. Her hands cover her cheeks.

On the floor, Thomas holds off the snapping Doberman.

CHRISTOPHER
 People don't believe in demons.

Flick. Two buttons POP off her shirt.

CHRISTOPHER
 They have no faith.

Flick Remaining buttons POP off, exposing her lacy bra.

CHRISTOPHER
 It will be so easy.

Flick. Her bra SPLITS. Lovely breasts spill out. She tries to pull her shirt together.

Flick. A LASH across her throat. Her hand goes to her throat.

Flick. Her other hand shows a LASH mark, and she releases her shirt, exposing those breasts.

Flick. A red line MARS her cleavage. She SCREAMS.

CHRISTOPHER
 Such a lovely way to exact pain.

Rebecca turns to run. The whip catches an ankle, and drops her to the floor.

Thomas struggles to keep SNAPPING jaws from his throat. With a draining heave, he manages to toss the dog aside. As it scrambles, he grabs the staff.

The Doberman ATTACKS. Thomas HITS it with the staff. The dog HOWLS pitifully and backs away.

The Doberman circles as Thomas rises to his feet. Every time the dog ATTACKS, Thomas HITS it. Each time the dog HOWLS and backs away.

Rebecca crawls. Christopher flicks the whip which WRAPS around her neck, choking her. He sinks to one knee beside her.

CHRISTOPHER

After I flay off your nipples, I'm going to let the dog have you.

With a final HIT, Thomas sends the dog racing up the steps. He turns to where Christopher chokes Rebecca. Thomas BELLOWS and CHARGES, swinging the staff. He manages to hit Christopher, sending the boy FLYING into a vat.

Thomas unwinds the whip from Rebecca's neck, tosses it, and helps her to her feet.

Christopher rubs his shoulder and reaches out. The whip flies to his hand. He SNAPS the whip.

Thomas whirls, placing himself between Rebecca and Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER

That hurt, Fucker.

Christopher circles, SNAPPING the whip. Thomas turns, shielding Rebecca.

CHRISTOPHER

You can't defeat me. You're half dead already.

Flicks whip and CUTS Thomas' cheek. He winces with searing pain.

CHRISTOPHER

In the cave, I hit him whenever I wanted. Target practice. I should have WON. I was so much BETTER.

Thomas' arm SLICES open. He SWINGS wildly, missing.

CHRISTOPHER

If this body were older, I'd...but I'm old enough, eh, Thomas?

Flick. Another CUT on Thomas' arm.

Christopher laughs, in complete control. He does an Ali shuffle and flicks, CUTTING open Thomas' neck.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm a baaaad boy! Flit like a butterfly, sting like a motherfucking cattle prod!

Blood oozes from slashes and scrapes. Thomas looks like he's been sucked through a grater. He swings the staff, but Christopher is far too quick.

REBECCA

Oh god, do something!

THOMAS

I..I don't know what to do.

CHRISTOPHER

I promise to keep you alive long enough to watch the dog do her.

Flick. Thomas manages to get the staff in the way, and the whip WINDS around, causing SPARKS and FLASHES, as when sulfur touches water.

Whip quickly unwinds, and sparks die.

CHRISTOPHER

Can't believe that can you? Like a fucking video game.

Flick. A CUT on Thomas' arm.

CHRISTOPHER

In the cave, you should have seen the fireworks.

At this pace, Thomas can't last much longer.

REBECCA

Do something!

THOMAS

What?

REBECCA

The scroll. Strength of Moses, faith of Abraham.

THOMAS

What is the strength of Moses?

CHRISTOPHER
No fair talking.

Flick. Whip SLASHES Thomas' leg.

REBECCA
The staff, Moses used a staff with
Pharaoh.

Thomas looks at the staff doubtfully. What can wood do?

REBECCA
Faith of Abraham.

Thomas stares at Christopher. Thomas' lips move in silent prayer.

CHRISTOPHER
This cat and mouse bores me.

Whip flicks.

Thomas parries, catching the whip with sparks FLASHING, before Christopher pulls back. Thomas gains a bit of confidence.

CHRISTOPHER
Starting to get the hang of that
thing? Too late, Padre.

Christopher launches an onslaught, whip SINGING as he SLASHES back and forth.

Thomas retreats, blocking with FLASHES of light and sparks. The THRUST and PARRY are almost too fast to see. SPARKS chronicle where whip and staff meet. A laser light show.

The action pauses.

Christopher pants.

Thomas pants. Behind, Rebecca's face shows hope.

CHRISTOPHER
Don't you feel foolish? You know
there are no miracles. You know
the gospels were written by a bunch
of sci-fi freaks who made up
stories to keep the audience tuned
in.

REBECCA
Don't listen to him.

CHRISTOPHER

This is one of your wet dreams,
brought on by brushing your hips
against hers. This doesn't feel
real, does it?

Doubt shows in Thomas' face. What the hell is going on?

Christopher STRIKES, WRAPPING the whip around Thomas' throat,
choking him.

Christopher JERKS the whip.

Thomas falls to his knees, dropping the staff, struggling to
loosen the whip.

Christopher laughs as Thomas chokes.

Rebecca LUNGES, grabs the staff, and takes one of Thomas'
hands. Placing his hand between hers, she points the staff
at Christopher.

REBECCA

Believe, Patrick, believe!

The staff shoots a BEAM of light that SEARS Christopher's
arm, continues on, and EXPLODES the vat behind in a shower of
wood. It scores the rock wall.

Christopher SHRIEKS and jumps to the side.

Thomas' face turns blue.

Rebecca tracks Christopher with the staff which shoots again,
brighter and faster. The BEAM cuts across Christopher's
side, shearing off flesh and EXPLODING another vat.

Christopher's hideous SCREAM echoes through the room as the
beam, out of control RAKES vats, EXPLODING several before it
dies.

Christopher drops the whip and stares at the hunk of red
flesh on the floor. Thomas manages to loosen the whip which
falls away. Gasping, he stares as Christopher carefully
picks up his own flesh.

CHRISTOPHER

It was going to be different this
time.

With a SCREAM, Christopher drops the flesh and reaches out.
The whip JUMPS into his fist.

Before he can strike, the staff SHOOTs again. The beam HITS Christopher in the chest.

Instead of passing through, the beam FILLS him, lighting him up like a neon tube.

He SCREAMS, and for an instant the light dims.

THOMAS
(yelling)
MOSES!

Beam intensifies.

THOMAS AND REBECCA
MOSES!!

Christopher transforms into an incandescent star.

The beam stops.

Christopher lingers a moment before he winks out. Gone.

The whip drops to the floor, and it's old again, fragile.

Rebecca and Thomas stare at the whip. They unravel. She sinks to her knees as Thomas edges forward. He looks at the whip and hunk of flesh.

REBECCA
Kill it.

Thomas aims the staff, but the power is gone. Nothing happens.

THOMAS
It's dead.

He kicks the flesh beneath a vat where it smacks the wall.

He hobbles to Rebecca, helps her up, and together, they struggle for the stairs.

THOMAS
No one will believe us.

REBECCA
Doesn't matter.

INT. MATTHEW'S LAB - DAY

Thomas, wounds healed, types on a computer. Rebecca, also healed, enters.

REBECCA
You wanted to see me?

Thomas holds up one hand, finishes typing, hits a key, and starts the printer.

THOMAS
(standing)
I've decided to seal the lab.

REBECCA
The scroll?

THOMAS
Better left undiscovered.

She comes close and looks at his cheek, the scars.

REBECCA
Are they still looking for
Christopher?

THOMAS
One body they'll never find.

He grabs several sheets from the printer, adds them to a stack, and carries the stack to a cabinet. Rebecca moves to the glass case, glass still broken, and touches the staff.

REBECCA
Faith of Abraham.

Thomas places the artifacts in the cabinet, closes the door, and locks it with a padlock.

THOMAS
When do you leave for the coast?

REBECCA
Tomorrow.

THOMAS
South American artifacts?

REBECCA
I've switched focus.

She joins him and they move toward the door.

REBECCA
You believe it happened, don't you?

THOMAS
The scars are real.

FADE OUT

THE END