

LEVEL 2

by

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FADE IN:

INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: "1975"

The auditorium is in blackness, but for a flickering spotlight over the stage which reveals rock band 'The Cursed'.

Three male musicians, two female dancers, huddle in shocked silence, rehearsal forgotten. They study something on the ground beneath them.

Lead singer, KENT GALE(29) lies dead on the floor, hands clenched, body burnt and twisted. Wisps of smoke drift from his extremities. Still grasped in his hand is a slick black electric guitar.

A moody young guitarist, CONNOR, casually lights a cigarette, inhales and blows smoke over Kent's corpse.

MUSICIAN #1

Have have some respect Connor.

CONNOR

Why, he was a dick.

A tearful dancer tears her eyes away and looks distastefully around the hall.

DANCER #1

Why'd he choose this dump?

MUSICIAN #1

Low stage.

DANCER #1

He wanted to be nearer the crowd?

CONNOR

Nearer the floor love. He was scared of heights, not that he'd admit it.

Connor kneels down and wrestles the guitar from Kent's dead hands.

The group stare at him as he walks off with the instrument.

LEVEL 2 - NIGHT

Another plane of existence. At first just an otherworldly dark haze is visible, grey changing to black.

And then a spectacular light display bursts into life. Undulating blankets & ribbons of light, dance, change colour. Northern Lights but with a sense of purpose.

A circular platform, stonelike, comes into focus through the grey haze.

Kent wakes on the platform. His wounds are healed. Wispy tendrils of light snake from his body.

He stirs. A hand falls over the edge, followed by a foot. He takes hold of the edge, groggily pulls himself towards it and opens his eyes...

KENT'S P.O.V - LOOKING DOWN COLUMN

The column descends miles, perhaps hundreds of miles into the grey haze.

BACK TO SCENE

Kent looks ready to vomit. Consumed by fear he manages to scream a few words -

KENT GALE

Do you know who I am! I'm Kent
fucking Gale...

There's a tremulous RUMBLING and the column edges upwards a dozen more feet. Kent's breath shortens, his knuckles whiten and he blacks out.

INT. GARDEN FLAT/FRONTROOM - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "CURRENT DAY"

Untidy. Split between dining and living area. PC in the corner. A few origami models on shelves. A guitar rests against the couch. Patio doors are open to a small garden.

JAKE DOBEY, thirty two, laid back, sturdy, sits at the dining room table reading the paper. He pours juice from a carton, swallows pain killers.

A dark carrier bag occupies the centre of the table. It contains a box.

DARIUS WHITE, twenty nine, geeky, pony tail, lounges on the sofa watching Star Wars. A blanket has been thrown to one side. He pauses the DVD, goes to the table and pours some juice. He looks over Jake's shoulder.

DARIUS

Seriously Jake, obituaries?

JAKE
They cheer me up.

DARIUS
Right.

Jake pauses. A smile creeps over his face. He re-reads an entry and throws the paper down in disgust.

Darius looks at him questioningly.

JAKE
ABE's father died. I thought it was Abe.

DARIUS
Bummer.

Jake picks up the carrier.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
No one will fall for it.

JAKE
Got to break up the monotony somehow.

DARIUS
You need to sort your life out.

Jake looks at him with contempt.

JAKE
Darius, you work for tuppence an hour in a shit toy shop and live with your mum. In fact I only keep you around so I can feel smug about my own life, you're sort of a living obituary column.

DARIUS
Thanks.

INT./EXT. PORCH - DAY

Jackets, coats, and an old pair of binoculars hang from coat hooks. Worn shoes are piled on the floor. Keys hang from a hook above the coats. Jake retrieves his keys, leaves the flat.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

'Harris & Hammond' Debt Management Consultants. Arranged into a dozen screened work stations, a computer at each. The office buzz's with conversation and the tapping of keys.

JAKE'S WORK STATION

Jake sits at his desk talking half-heartedly to a customer though a headset. His patter is well rehearsed and devoid of emotion.

As he talks he folds paper, an insect of some kind. He fashions a folded section into a claw.

JAKE

I appreciate this is a difficult time Mr Mills. Perhaps we could agree a repayment schedule that will allow you some breathing space. Mr Mills? Hello?

Jake chucks down the phone.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Bastard.

He sighs with boredom, checks no one is watching and returns his attention to the Origami model. It's a scorpion, quite impressive.

He signs it and opens his desk draw to reveal six identical models. He carefully positions the new model.

INT. OFFICE/JAKE'S WORK STATION - LATER

Jake chucks his sandwich box under the desk, sits back, sighs at the prospect of resuming work.

REBECCA'S WORK STATION

REBECCA, late thirties, attractive, a little plump, returns to her desk, which is diagonally across from Jake's. She chucks her handbag down, makes herself comfortable and pretties herself in a small mirror.

A RUSTLE attracts her attention.

She swivels the chair towards a dark corner of the desk and peers under some papers just as...

A long thick hairy spider leg emerges.

She jerks upright, horrified. The creature crawls out from the paper revealing its terrifying proportions.

JAKE'S WORK STATION

Jake stands, angled towards Rebecca's desk. He smiles as he works a remote control.

Rebecca SCREAMS. She drops out of sight. There's a dull CRACK before she hits the floor.

Silence descends over the office. Colleagues gravitate towards her desk.

Jake throws the remote down and runs to her aid.

REBECCA'S WORK STATION

The spider is frozen mid-motion. A thread runs from it's abdomen to an origami scorpion which trails behind it. Jake's signature can just be made out across the model's body.

Rebecca lies motionless on the floor, one hand clenched, one arm bent awkwardly. Her face and hair are caked in blood.

There's a bloody smear on the edge of her desk.

Jake stares, eyes wide and terrified. A worried CROWD gathers and Jake snaps out of it. He kneels, tentatively puts a hand to her neck.

JAKE

Rebecca, can you hear me?

A solitary giggle is heard. Jake glares at the crowd. All are solemn faced.

JAKE

Has anybody phoned an ambulance?

He looks back at Rebecca. Still no movement.

JAKE

(louder)

I said has anyone phoned an ambulance?

Jake stands, grabs the phone from Rebecca's desk...

Rebecca miraculously picks herself up off the floor and guiltily opens a clammy fist to reveal a burst blister pack. The plastic still reveals hints of a blood like substance.

Jake stares at her.

REBECCA

Sorry.

A man near the front of the small crowd steps forward.

MAN

She wasn't alone.

He opens his hand to reveal a similar but full blister pack. One by one the rest of the crowd follow suit.

A portly man bounds to the front. A badge on his lapel reads 'Mr Groats, accounts manager.' He seems oblivious to the fact that the joke has fallen somewhat flat.

MR GROATS

Gotcha! In future don't order toys
at work, you never know who's
watching!

Jake's face reddens.

The manager looks at the spider.

MR GROATS (CONT'D)

Kind of childish Jake!

Jake's looks at the crowd. Speaks slowly.

JAKE

You sick fuckers. I thought she was
dead!

Mr Groats stops laughing, responds with utmost seriousness.

MR GROATS

If you value your job I'd be very
careful now Jake.

JAKE

Value... I harass people for a
living! Christ, what do you think
we do here all day, save the
fucking children!

MR GROATS

I hope we offer people a considered
repayment plan which will enable
them to escape their indebtedness
and get on with their lives.

JAKE

What the fuck is that, are you
reading from an autocue?

MR GROATS

I think -

JAKE

Doubtful.

Jake grabs his robot spider, and storms out.

INT. JAKE'S CAR - DAY - TRAVELLING

Jake's driving a sporty, if old, BMW. He looks a bit sorry for himself. He pulls up at traffic lights, glances out the window at a large imposing secondary school.

Jake's gaze is drawn to a field behind the school. He stares, oblivious to the changing lights.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. FIELD/REAR OF A SECONDARY SCHOOL - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "TWENTY YEARS AGO"

A first year lad, ABE (12), unusually big for his age, stomps across a field at the back of the school. The field backs on to woods. Three kids, TIM, Jake and DEREK stand near the boundary chatting.

A flash of pink in the grass catches Abe's eye. He stoops to investigate, pulls a pink bonnet from the soil. It's grimy but for some reason it pleases him.

With a mean smile he pushes forward towards the other kids.

A chubby lad, TIM, notices him first.

TIM

Shit, it's Abe.

ABE

(shouts)

Tim, got something for you!

JAKE, the stockiest of the three attempts to intervene.

JAKE

Lay off him Abe.

ABE

Stay out of it Jake.

(to Derek)

...and you nancy.

DEREK

It's Stancey.

DEREK is gangly, wears glasses, neatly dressed, spiked hair. Abe glares at him. He looks away.

Tim edges backwards.

Abe carries on towards Tim. He holds the bonnet out in front of him.

Tim belts for the woods.

Abe laughs, gives chase.

He closes the gap, all the time holding out the bonnet.

ABE

Don't forget your pretty bonnet!

ANGLE on a nasty exposed root, snapped a few inches from the ground, leaving vicious daggers of wood.

FIELD

Tim darts out from behind a tree.

Abe chases, approaches a deep gouge in the ground.

He hops over it, lands awkwardly.

Tim looks behind, Abe is closing and then... he's gone.

Abe slams to the floor. There's a terrible garbled scream as the exposed stump punctures his right cheek.

Tim skids to a stop, slowly turns to look at his tormentor.

Jake and Derek stare open mouthed at the scene. Abe's in pain. Blood gushes from the wound. He can't move without destroying his cheek. They edge toward him.

Derek smiles.

Tim walks over to Jake, grimaces.

JAKE

(to Tim)

He'll never leave you alone now.
There's only one thing for it.

TIM

Emigrate?

JAKE

Boxing lessons.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A car HONKS its horn, gives up, drives around Jake. The driver screams out of an open window.

DRIVER

Asshole!

INT. JAKE'S CAR

Jake snaps out of it, shifts into first and drives forward. He punches the radio on.

Moments later, he pulls up outside a shop. The sign reads 'The Games Cavern'.

INT. "THE GAMES CAVERN" - DAY

As Jake enters, a BAT SCREECH, in place of the standard shop bell, is heard.

The shop has been designed to resemble a cave - cave shaped mouldings are attached to walls, stacks of games fill spot lit crevices, CAVE SOUNDS - dripping water, bats, scurrying creatures etc - play quietly in the background. A skeleton rests in the corner.

The shop is near empty. A young girl, about thirteen looks through a rack of practical jokes at the back. A boy, twelve, mischievous looking, but otherwise normal, checks out the games.

Darius stands behind a counter. The boy approaches holding a board game. Jake busies himself elsewhere.

The child, RILEY, examines the game. He looks to Darius to pose a question.

RILEY

Why have you got a pony tail. Are you a girl?

Darius sighs.

DARIUS

No I'm a man. Why, do you find me attractive?

RILEY

No! You're weird.

DARIUS

Are you buying that? Only if you are I'll need to speak to a guardian, it has content only suitable for older children.

RILEY

I'm twelve!

The girl looks over at Riley and smiles in amusement.

DARIUS

Shouldn't you be bigger? Do you have any ID?

Riley face reddens. He throws the board game on the counter, and storms off.

He stops at the door, turns back to Darius.

RILEY

This store's rubbish. My dad owns a store in London. It's massive and the games are cool.

DARIUS

I'm happy for you. And indeed for your dad.

Riley glares at Darius.

RILEY

I'll be back.

DARIUS

I await your return with barely suppressed excitement. And don't forget your ID!

Riley storms out.

Jake approaches Darius.

JAKE

Masterful.

DARIUS

So to what do I owe this unexpected pleasure?

JAKE

I think I've lost my job.

DARIUS

Again?

JAKE

You sound like my dad. I'll fill you in later. Pub about eight?

DARIUS

You sure you want to spend your remaining funds on beer?

JAKE

Absolutely.

DARIUS

It's your funeral.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT/FRONT ROOM - DAY

Jake sits at his PC designing a 'For Sale' sign for his car. A roll up smoulders away in the ash tray. He swigs from a bottle of beer.

A small BEEPING sound is heard and a 'button' lights marked 'Incoming call: Parents'.

JAKE
Damn you Darius.

He hides the roll up, and clicks on the button.

Jake's mum, KAREN (52), attractive, appears on the monitor.

JAKE
Hi Mum, how's it going.

KAREN
Fine. Day off?

JAKE
Er yeah.

KAREN
You've lost your job haven't you.
What happened this time?

Jake chokes on his beer.

Jake's dad MICHAEL (53), rugged, grumpy looking, pulls over a chair and plonks himself down next to Karen.

MICHAEL
Another one? Jesus Jake. Thirty years I've been in my job. Despised every day of it, but that's what you do if you want to own your own house or raise a family.

JAKE
My generation rents. And no girlfriend, not any more anyway...

MICHAEL
Thank god Katie made something of herself.

Michael shakes his head, disappears off screen. Jake looks stressed, but leans back attempting to be cool.

KAREN
Call if you need anything, okay.

JAKE
Okay. Thanks.

Jake ends the connection, grabs his mobile.

ON MOBILE

He goes through a few names until he finds 'DEREK'. Dials the number.

INT. ESTATE AGENTS - DAY

Six desks, currently only two occupied. There's a curved reception at the front.

GREG, a bull of a man, sips scalding coffee whilst finishing a phone call.

DEREK (now grown up), still gangly, well dressed, short hair now swept forward, nervous disposition. He sits at his desk wetting contact lenses.

CHLOE (28) is at reception checking files off against a print out. Glasses, nice figure, plain office attire. She's gorgeous but plays it down.

Greg replaces the receiver, looks happy with himself.

GREG
God I'm good.

Chloe looks over.

GREG
(to Chloe)
Don't even think it, you couldn't afford me babes.

Chloe throws down her glasses, gives him a filthy look.

CHLOE
You disgust me.

Derek's mobile rings. He sticks the lenses back in to his eyes and answers. One lens seems uncomfortable, he prods, rotates, and blinks one eye throughout the conversation.

DEREK
Hi Jake... Beer? On a Tuesday! I've got work tomorrow, plus I'm not exactly flush at the moment... Couldn't it wait until -

Greg, now resting his feet on the desk, shouts across.

GREG
You are such a poof! Go out for fuck's sake, drink, flirt with some women!

Chloe looks angrily at Greg.

GREG (CONT'D)
(whispers to Chloe)
I wouldn't worry.

Derek glares at Greg. His eyes glass over.

BEGIN FANTASY:

INT. ESTATE AGENTS - DAY

Derek puts down the phone, calmly walks to a store cupboard and retrieves a hammer. He walks to Greg, the hammer clasped behind his back.

DEREK

(to Greg)

Sorry about this Greg. It's unpleasant but society will be better off without you.

GREG

What?

Derek pulls back the hammer, face expressionless, and smashes Greg in the head with it as hard as he can.

Blood splatters Greg's monitor, obscuring a desirable residence with a manageable south facing garden. Greg slumps forward, his head crashes into the monitor.

Derek's face is splattered with blood. He smiles, pleased by his handy work.

END FANTASY.

INT. ESTATE AGENTS - DAY

Derek snaps out of it and returns to his phone call. Greg is fine.

DEREK

Jake, can I get back to you... yeah will do. Bye.

Chloe checks through the files, selects a thick one and shouts across to Greg.

CHLOE

Greg, your file.

She chucks the file to Greg, it's a near impossible catch and Greg fumbles it, knocking hot coffee over his lap. He jumps up, screams in pain.

GREG

You cow. You did that on purpose!

CHLOE

It's not my fault you can't catch!

Greg strops off to the toilets to clean up.

Derek turns to Chloe, feeling emasculated.

DEREK
 (to Chloe)
 I can look after myself.

Chloe walks over, kisses him on the forehead in a motherly way and smiles.

CHLOE
 You don't need to.

EXT. COUNTRY / LOOKING TOWARDS A GRAVEYARD

A large man wearing jeans and an army style jacket sits on a powerful bike, back to us, looking down hill towards a funeral service.

In the distance solemn faced mourners watch as a coffin is lowered into the ground.

The man tugs on an expensive looking cigar. He seems relaxed. It appears that the cigar is in some way a celebration. A ring of smoke floats upwards.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

Jake and Darius emerge from the doors of a pub.

DARIUS
 ...and you really thought she had
 left this mortal coil?

Darius sniggers.

JAKE
 It's not funny.

DARIUS
 It is a bit.

Jake smiles.

JAKE
 I guess I could have handled it a
 little better. Bastards.

EXT. PIER - NIGHT

The wind is picking up. Jake and Darius walk the wooden boards of a Victorian pier. The air is moist with sea spray. Antique looking lamps light the way.

The building reverberates to the THUMP THUMP THUMP of heavy bass. Coloured light escapes from salt encrusted windows.

Darius grimaces.

DARIUS

You really want to go into that
hell hole?

Jake nods, takes tobacco out of his back pocket, turns his
back to the wind and spray.

JAKE

Can't believe you can't smoke in a
pub. It's like banning swimming in
a fucking swimming pool.

They wait as two drunk giggling girls stumble past with pints
of beer.

JAKE

Evening ladies.

GIRL #1

Fuck off!

The girls giggle some more and stumble on their way.

Jake and Darius go to the railings, stand underneath a lamp,
stare out at the sea. The waves are growing.

DARIUS

So, what you going to do now?

JAKE

No idea.

DARIUS

You know your problem?

JAKE

Too good looking?

DARIUS

You're aimless. Take me, I decided
to create a board game...

Jake instantly looks bored.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

The point is I didn't just sit down
with a bit of paper and a few
pencils. I changed my job, took a
desktop publishing course,
researched the market and so on.
And I could only do that by
deciding what my goal was.

JAKE

It's two thousand and twelve, board
games are dead, with the possible
exception of chess.

DARIUS

That's why I'm re-inventing the market. How many games do you know which include the option to blackmail and intimidate your opponents? Plus the board is hot.

JAKE

Jessica Alba is hot. A Ford Mustang is hot. A board game is not. And I do have goals, for example tonight, I would like to avoid ending up at home in my big double bed with two feet of empty space beside me. What do you suggest there smart ass?

DARIUS

Get a smaller bed.

Jake grins, sticks the roll-up in his mouth, leans over the railing. He watches the growing waves as he pats his pockets for a lighter.

He empties his jacket pocket, finds his lighter embedded in the folds.

Suddenly a large wave SMASHES the pier, drenching them.

Jake's wallet slips from his grasp.

JAKE

Shit!

He grabs for it, but he's too slow. They watch as the wallet tumbles through the air and splashes into the sea. It floats, tantalisingly, forty feet beneath them.

JAKE

Shit!

He looks at Darius, then back to the wallet.

JAKE

SHIT!

Jake removes his jacket and hands it to Darius.

Darius looks at him amazed.

Jake continues undressing.

DARIUS

Surely you're not...

JAKE

I need the money.

DARIUS
Christ Jake! It's just money.

JAKE
What do you know, you live with
your mum!

Darius moves out of Jake's way.

Jake strips to his boxers. Shrugs.

JAKE
It's just water.

He hops over the railings, plummets downwards.

DARIUS
Shit!

Jake smashes into the sea, vanishes underwater.

SEA

Jake emerges, spits out water and surveys the area. He spots the wallet.

He beams, enjoying his moment of victory.

A dark wall of water approaches. Jake is oblivious.

PIER

Darius watches with horror as the huge wave gains on Jake.

DARIUS
Jake! Jake!

Jake ignores him, he's nearly there...

SEA

The massive wave takes Jake, slams him head first into one of the pier's barnacle encrusted legs. The rough surface rips open his forehead.

The Wave passes, smashes onto the beach. Jake flops about in its wake. Blood pours from his head.

PIER

Darius runs to the nearest life belt, fumbles with the catch, finally rushes back to the railing with the float.

He tosses it over the edge.

Darius spins around, shouts -

DARIUS

Help!

Another wave approaches. Darius spots it, leans over the railings, screams at Jake.

DARIUS

Jake, get out of there!

No response. Again Jake's lifeless body is thrown towards the pier.

DARIUS

Someone help me!

The THUMP THUMP THUMP of music continues. No one comes.

Darius starts undressing.

Finally a GIRL, mid twenties, shy looking, lost in her own thoughts, wanders his way. She realises there's a problem, there's a moment's hesitation before she picks up pace.

Darius spots her, frantically waves to her.

The girl jogs over.

DARIUS

Thanks, er...

A moment's embarrassment as he realises he's half naked. He crosses his hands over his boxers.

DARIUS

My friends in trouble... could you phone an ambulance please.

The girl leans over the railings, finds Jake.

GIRL

Oh my god.

She pulls her mobile out.

Darius clambers over the railings, looks at the waves, hesitates, looks back at the girl...

GIRL

Perhaps we should wait?

DARIUS

Probably.

Darius closes his eyes and jumps.

The girl frantically dials 999.

SEA

Darius, emerges from the sea choking. He recovers, gets his bearings and swims towards the life belt. He's not a natural swimmer.

A wave approaches.

Darius turns his head, spots the wave, braces himself.

He disappears from view as the wave rolls him under the water.

The girl shouts from above, her words unintelligible.

Darius is gone.

Ten long seconds pass before finally he emerges coughing and spluttering. The life belt is next to him.

He grabs the belt, makes the few feet to Jake and wrestles to get the float over Jake's lifeless body.

Somehow he succeeds. Dragging Jake with all his strength, he clears a few metres from the pier, but his strength is failing.

Again the ocean pushes him back. The pier legs tower ominously in front of him. It seems impossible.

SPLASH! Another body hit's the ocean. Someone's swimming towards him at speed.

It's the young girl. She times it well and soon reaches Darius. She takes a second to catch her breath, spits out water.

GIRL

Need a hand?

Darius can't believe it but hardly has the strength to speak. He nods, more grateful than he's ever been in his entire life.

She takes hold of the float, and kicks out powerfully. Darius struggles to keep up. Together they battle the ocean, pulling Jake behind them.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER)

Jake lies spread out on the beach. He's not breathing. Darius straddles him, performs CPR. The girl kneels beside him.

GIRL
Thirty. I think you're supposed to
do thirty quick compressions. And
tip his head back.

DARIUS
Right.

Darius continues pumping Jake's chest.

GIRL
And then hold his nose and breathe
air into him... twice.

DARIUS
Right...

Jake suddenly jerks upright, simultaneously spewing water and
smashing heads with Darius.

JAKE
Don't tell my parents.

He falls back, unconscious.

Darius grabs his bruised head.

DARIUS
I think we did it!

He hugs the girl and then lets her go. He notices she's
wearing just her jeans and bra. She's pretty in a shy
unassuming way, with an athletic physique.

She self consciously crosses her hands over her chest.

Darius pulls back, averts his eyes.

DARIUS
I can't believe you did that...
thank you.

GIRL
I wasn't sure whether you could
swim.

DARIUS
Not my strongest point. But you,
you're like half fish or something.

GIRL
Thanks. I think.

DARIUS
Not that you look like a fish, no
gills or anything... everything in
the right place.

She smiles.

GIRL
You don't talk to many girls do
you.

A CRY is heard from the promenade. The girl looks up, sees a small group of girls approaching the steps.

GIRL
I better go. They'll be worrying
about me.

DARIUS
Of course. Thank you. Thank god you
were outside.

GIRL
Better than being inside that hell
hole.

DARIUS
Yeah...

GIRL
I hope he's okay.

She runs up the beach as best she can towards her friends.

In the distance a SIREN sounds, getting louder.

The beach is soon bathed in blue flashing light.

Darius looks back up the beach. She's gone.

INT. HOSPITAL/OPERATING THEATRE - NIGHT

Jake lies on the table surrounded by THEATRE STAFF. A skull clamp stabilises his head. Drips supply blood and fluids. An oxygen mask obscures his face. The ECG beeps weakly.

The surgeon watches a monitor. There's a small blip. He sighs behind the mask.

SURGEON.
Looks like we're going in. Nurse,
if you will.

The nurse knows what's expected of her. She shaves away a square of hair from Jake's skull revealing white skin, wipes his skin with a sterile solution.

The surgeon makes a small incision exposing Jake's skull and holds out his hand for a medical drill.

He places the bit against Jake's skull and squeezes the trigger. There's a high pitched WHINE, which is muffled as it bites into bone.

BEEEEEP

The heart monitor flat lines.

SURGEON.
Damn it. Pads!

He withdraws the drill.

EXT. LEVEL 2 - NIGHT

Another plane of existence. Jake wakes on a seemingly endless stone-like surface. Tendrils of light emanate from all over his body and snake off into the ether.

An impossibly high wall fills the horizon. Two gargantuan doors separate its endless span.

Above the doors, mountain sized letters spell out:

'LEVEL 2'.

There is no noise.

Jake struggles to his feet. A tendril of light passes in front of his face. He closes his eyes, looks again. The tendrils remain. He passes a hand effortlessly through one of them.

Jake surveys the horizon. He's confused, frightened...

He takes a few tentative steps forward.

JAKE
Hello, is there anybody here?

No answer. He turns slowly, sees the doors, does a double take.

JAKE
Wow.

His gaze is drawn upwards towards the colossal sign. For a moment he just stares.

He walks towards the doors.

JAKE
Can anyone hear me?

He pulls a mobile from his pocket. There's no bars.

JAKE
Shit.

Still walking, phone held upwards.

KENT GALE

You won't get a signal here.

Jake spins round, holding his heart. He's greeted by a MAN, about thirty, seventies clothes.

JAKE

Fuck! You frightened the life out of me! Who are you?

KENT GALE

Take it easy man! I'm Kent, Kent Gale. Number one with 'Twisted Desire' in 'seventy four?

Jake looks at him strangely.

Kent smiles. He seems alternately serenely calm and then slightly mad.

JAKE

Kent Gale died forty years ago, electrical fault I believe.

Kent twitches, shouts.

KENT GALE

Fault my ass!

Jake steps back.

Kent regains his composure.

KENT GALE (CONT'D)

That bastard Connor rigged my guitar, well he rigged a guitar. I thought it felt weird, you know your own instrument, right?

JAKE

If you say so. Any reason for this rather unsocial act?

KENT GALE

A woman, what else. His woman to be exact. It's not like I meant to do it, I was a victim of my own libido.

Jake's lost for words, he checks his surroundings again.

JAKE

This is one fucked up dream.

Kent smiles, twitches.

Jake slaps himself in the face.

KENT GALE
Won't help.

A new tendril sprouts from Jake's side and feels its way towards Kent.

It latches itself to Kent's abdomen.

JAKE
What are these?

KENT GALE
Information exchange, connections
to other souls.

Jake looks at him blankly.

KENT GALE (CONT'D)
Ever heard of the collective
unconscious or even conscious, the
distinction's a bit blurred here.

JAKE
Many minds acting as one.

KENT GALE
That's it. These feed it.

Jake looks at the tendril. He doesn't look impressed.

JAKE
What did you say this place was?

Kent completes a flamboyant spin and points to the giant sign. He returns to face Jake.

Jake looks none the wiser.

KENT GALE
The name sometimes changes, it
depends on the individual, 'Level
2' is sort of a default. Bland
isn't it?

Jake ignores the slur.

KENT GALE (CONT'D)
Whatever created this place, it's
powerful, able to manipulate
matter, create heaven or hell or
anything in between.

JAKE
Beyond the doors?

KENT GALE

No idea, it took me several decades just to get to ground level.

JAKE

What?

KENT GALE

Let's just say whoever or whatever is in charge has a really shit sense of humour. Anyway now I'm here, uninformed receptionist to the newly departed.

JAKE

I'm dead?

Kent runs his hand through the tendril of light which now joins him to Jake.

KENT GALE

Not quite.

(beat)

If you go back remember these connections. Your knowledge of their existence may grant you a brief period of unusual perceptiveness. Could be useful.

JAKE

(sarcastically)

Right, I'll remember that.

Kent shakes his head. His gaze is drawn towards one particular strand of light.

ON TENDRIL

One of the tendrils has a dark band running through it.

BACK TO SCENE

Kent moves closer, plunges his hand into the tendril. He looks concerned.

Jake then notices his leg is fading.

JAKE

What the fuck's happening to my leg?

Kent withdraws his hand, grabs Jake by the shoulders, and holds him with an intense look.

KENT GALE

You're going back. Now listen!
Someone close to you has done some
crazy ass thing which is going to
place them, possibly others in
serious shit, both there and here.
We're talking life, death, eternal
suffering, the lot, unless you do
something about it! This is your
chance Jake.

Jake continues fading.

JAKE

This isn't happening, you're not
real...

KENT GALE

Perhaps this will help convince
you.

Kent places both hands over the tendril of light linking them
both. A bullet of brilliant light shoots into the stream.

KENT GALE (CONT'D)

Don't forget Jake, or you'll regret
it!

Jake fades to nothing, only a ghostly image of the tendril
remains and then that too is gone.

INT. JAKE'S SUBCONSCIENCE

A succession of images bombard Jake... the beach, the sea,
the pier.

Disembodied words...

KENT GALE (V.O.)

...you'll regret it!

DARIUS (V.O.)

...you know your problem?

...and then strangely an image of a female toy clown alone in
a dark cavernous space. The doll has long lashes caked in
mascara, full lips, lipstick tapering into a long thin smile,
wild red hair.

INT. OPERATING THEATRE - NIGHT

The surgeon backs away, returns the paddles to the unit.

He looks down at Jake satisfied.

The ECG BEEPS slowly.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - DAY (MORNING).

Jake's in bed, his head and leg are bandaged, there's superficial abrasions to his face.

He opens his eyes, blearily scans the room, there's about twelve beds, a couple cordoned off, the usual cards, unwanted fruit, flowers, a few cuddly toys...

A cuddly toy bear catches his eye, he stares at it, becomes lost in its fur.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. HOSPITAL WARD (TWENTY YEARS AGO) - DAY

A small isolated room. A cuddly bear sits on a bedside table keeping watch over a child.

The child is Tim, whom we saw earlier running from Abe. He lies on a bed. His face, pale and motionless is obscured by a mask. A machine WHEEZILY fills his lungs.

Jake, now twelve, his father Michael, and a doctor stand at the base of the bed. Michael has his hand on Jake's shoulder.

MICHAEL

Will he be okay?

DOCTOR

We had to resuscitate him, but he's not out the woods yet.

Jake looks up at the doctor.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Don't worry son, he's a fighter.

Jake nervously approaches his friend Tim. He places his hands on the side of the bed, speaks quietly to him.

JAKE

I'm sorry...

Tim unexpectedly stirs, pulls at the mask and tries to speak.

Jake moves in closer. Tim whispers raspily.

TIM

We'll get him next time...

Tim's body shakes. The mask snaps back on to his face, as a monitor give off a long BEEEEEP.

Jake runs from the room in tears.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD (CURRENT DAY) - DAY

A consultant stands at Jake's bedside.

CONSULTANT
Jake, you with us?

Jake jumps.

JAKE
What?

The consultant gives a warm smile.

CONSULTANT
You're a lucky guy, the last lad
who jumped off the pier landed in
four feet of water. His femur
snapped in two, busted through his
femoral artery.

JAKE
Was he okay?

CONSULTANT
Bled to death, in some pain I might
add. So how you feeling?

He grabs the chart from the end of the bed.

JAKE
My head hurts.

CONSULTANT
You were technically dead for...

JAKE
Dead?

CONSULTANT
...for six minutes. So it could be
a lot worse. Luckily when we got
you back the swelling had
stabilised so there's just a small
hole in the old cranium. As long as
you don't go prodding things
through it, you'll heal just fine.

JAKE
I'll try not to. Thank you.

CONSULTANT
I'll leave you to your visitor.
Keep that hole covered!

The consultant replaces the chart and leaves. Jake shivers,
swigs water.

Darius approaches the bed, he's sporting a nasty bump on his forehead and a few minor cuts and bruises.

Jake spots the injuries, looks embarrassed.

DARIUS
You alright?

Jake nods.

JAKE
I heard what you did.

DARIUS
I had some help.

JAKE
Can't believe someone risked their
life to save my stupid ass. Sorry
Darius, I messed up.
(beat)
Did you catch his name?

DARIUS
Her name actually.

Darius is momentarily lost in thought.

JAKE
Her?

DARIUS
(sarcastically)
Yes apparently in two thousand and
twelve, women are capable of heroic
acts too. And no, I didn't.

Darius hands Jake a wallet, slightly sodden, and a card.

Jake's momentarily speechless. He takes the wallet, opens it up to find several notes inside, crumpled, but useable.

He looks at the wallet, shakes his head, annoyed with himself.

JAKE
Thanks.

Jake opens the envelope. The front of the card is filled with thick black unspaced letters. They read 'Jakeyouareatwat'.

Inside: 'Get well soon'

JAKE
Desk top publishing?

Darius nods.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Jake and Darius sit at the dining room table eating sandwiches. Jake's tired and bruised but holding up. A large piece of paper is laid out. Jake has skilfully drawn his recollection of Level 2. Darius is immensely sceptical.

DARIUS

And a murdered seventies musician predicted that someone you know faced death and damnation?

Jake nods.

DARIUS

I read that trauma can cause a build up of carbon dioxide in the blood, which affects the brains ability to manage electrical impulses, hence the visions.

JAKE

It bloody felt real, I mean I spoke to this bloke, had a whole conversation.

DARIUS

What happened next?

Jake folds the drawing up.

JAKE

Just felt like I was being pulled back to my body, got all these snatches of images, bits from the evening... apart from the last bit, that was weird. I saw a toy clown, a female toy clown in a dark room or attic or something.

DARIUS

Do they even make girl clowns?

Jake yawns.

FRONTROOM - VERY EARLY NEXT MORNING

Darius is sleeping on the sofa. It's dark.

A sudden SCREAM of pain from Jake's room. Darius, jerks upright, looks around scared. He remembers where he is...

JAKE (O.S.)

Darius, get the fuck out of here!

Darius stumbles off the sofa, trips on the blanket, picks himself up. He pauses for a second, considers the patio doors, then stumbles through the dark to Jake's bedroom.

BEDROOM

Darius bursts in.

Jake, still wearing the same clothes, is sitting up in bed holding his stomach. A pen juts out from his abdomen between the folds of his shirt. Blood seeps from the wound.

JAKE

I told you to run!

(beat)

Did you see anyone?

Darius takes a moment, he's confused, scared...

DARIUS

No. What happened?

JAKE

Christ knows, I came in here, and just zonked out. Next thing I know I've been stabbed.

Jake eases himself off the bed, grunts in pain. He grits his teeth and pulls the pen out, stemming the blood flow with his hand.

Jake staggers towards the door, edges into the hallway, holding his stomach.

HALLWAY

His hand moves to the light switch.

Darius shakes his head.

Jake ignores him, light bathes the empty corridor.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT/FRONTROOM - NIGHT (A LITTLE LATER)

Both are tense, shaken by events. Jake feels his wound through the bloody shirt.

DARIUS

Are you sure someone stabbed you, you didn't fall on it or something?

JAKE

How can you fall on a pen? You'd have to wedge it upright and throw yourself on the damn thing!

Darius walks towards the patio doors, checks again that they're really locked and turns back.

He looks at Jake suspiciously.

DARIUS
You should clean the wound. Got any
medical supplies?

BATHROOM

Jake opens a cabinet, finds antiseptic and plasters. He starts unbuttoning his shirt.

Darius's mouth drops. He steps back, shocked.

DARIUS
What the hell is that!

Jake turns to a large mirror over the sink, opens the remaining buttons...

He recoils from the mirror, noticeably shocked.

Drawn on his skin in jagged penmanship is an open grave. The gravestone states 'RIP?' followed by three scratched lines, one of which is crossed through. The hole in Jake's stomach forms the base of the question mark.

The picture is initialled KG.

DARIUS
That's it, I've had it.

Jake looks at Darius, sees the anger in his face.

JAKE
You think I did this?

DARIUS
I don't see anyone else here.

JAKE
(looking at mirror)
Give me some credit. I think the
marks could be a countdown.

DARIUS
It sounds like you've got it all
figured out. I'll be off now.

Darius storms from the bathroom.

FRONTROOM

Darius gathers his belongings, heads for the front door. Jake shouts after him.

JAKE
Damn it Darius, I didn't do this!

The front door SLAMS shut.

JAKE
(shouts)
What's going on!

The exertion brings on sudden agonising pain. Jake grabs his head, crumples onto the couch and passes out.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT - DAY (MORNING)

Jake's on the couch where he passed out hours before. Sunlight's trying to force its way through the curtains.

A sudden CLANGING sound. Just the letter box.

Jake wakes, for a while just stares at the ceiling. An Alarm clock suddenly BUZZES from the direction of his bedroom.

JAKE
I haven't got a job!

He remains still until the noise becomes too punishing

He forces himself to move, sits up, winces.

BATHROOM

Jake stands in front of the bathroom mirror, once more he examines the drawing. There's a puzzled look on his face.

JAKE
Shit.

He takes a picture with his mobile, then pours some antiseptic onto a flannel and dabs painfully at the hole in his stomach.

INT, JAKE'S FLAT/FRONTROOM - DAY

Jake's sitting at the table, a piece of paper laid out in front of him.

Across the top of the page he has scrawled 'Who's in trouble?'

A list of names follows down the page - 'Derek, Chloe, Darius, Katie, Mum, Dad.' He stares at the page, poised to add additional names. Nothing comes. He puts down the pen.

HALLWAY

Jake emerges from the bedroom, tugs a thin woollen hat over his bandaged head, takes a big breath and leaves.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jake pulls up on the driveway of a modest semi. The area is a picture of respectability, perfect lawns, freshly painted facades. He exits the car and rings the bell.

No answer. He makes his way through a side gate, follows the path round to a conservatory.

INT. CONSERVATORY - DAY

Jake enters. The conservatory is modern, stone floor, wicker armchairs, glass coffee table, tropical plants. Karen sits at one of the arm chairs. She works on a laptop which is supported on her legs by a cushioned tray. A glass of red wine rests on the table in front of her. She wears a fifties style hat. It looks good on her.

She looks up, smiles at her son, pleased to see him.

KAREN

Hello Jacob, what's with the hat?

JAKE

Bad hair day, you?

Jake sinks into an arm chair.

KAREN

It brings me closer to my main character.

Jake looks confused. Karen sighs.

KAREN (CONT'D)

The children's book I'm writing, a schoolboy obsessed with Film Noir, sets up his own detective agency?

Jake smirks.

JAKE

Why would a child be interested in Film Noir!

Karen shuffles irritably.

KAREN

What can I do for you Jake?

Jake takes a deep breath.

JAKE

I need to ask you a question, and I need you to promise me that you'll answer it honestly.

KAREN

I'd prefer to know what the question is.

JAKE

Please. It's important.

Karen looks at her son. She relents uneasily.

KAREN

Okay. I promise.

JAKE

Thanks. Have you done anything that you regret, I mean something bad, that could have repercussions? And I'm not talking parking tickets.

KAREN

Murder, arson, theft, adultery, that sort of thing?

Jake nods.

KAREN (CONT'D)

No murders I recall, or fires, or priceless paintings hidden under my bed.

JAKE

(joking)

And the last one?

She laughs awkwardly, almost shakes her head.

KAREN

You haven't forgotten it's Katie's birthday on Friday have you?

JAKE

No, well yes, but are you changing the subject?

KAREN

No, I'm not having an affair.

Karen refills her glass. Looks away. She looks a little flushed.

Jake watches her, he notes tell tale spots of perspiration on her neck.

Karen puts down the glass between them.

JAKE
Shit, mum!

Karen remains silent.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Does dad know?

KAREN
No.

Jake gets up to leave.

KAREN
I wanted to tell him...

JAKE
Yeah someone said that to me once.

KAREN
Would it have helped if she had?

JAKE
At least I would have had a choice.

KAREN
We should talk about this.

JAKE
No we shouldn't.

Jake walks away.

Karen calls after him to no avail. She watches him leave, closes her eyes and slumps back into the chair.

EXT.STREET - OUTSIDE "THE GAMES CAVERN" - DAY

Jake parks in the first available spot. For a moment he just sits there, unsure what to do. He punches the steering wheel, sits back. He notes a young lad near the shop, it's the kid who had an argument with Darius. He looks cagey, he's up to something. Jake exits the car and creeps up behind him.

The boy checks his pockets, removes a small tube of glue.

JAKE
Hey kid.

The kid jumps, quickly pockets the glue and turns round.

JAKE (CONT'D)
What's your name?

The kid looks at him suspiciously.

RILEY
Riley.

JAKE
Let me guess Riley, you're going to attempt to glue the games together, perhaps even the till?

The kids says nothing.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Darius embarrassed you and you want to have a little fun back. Who can blame you, but seriously glue? Where's the skill, where's the panache!

RILEY
What then?

JAKE
I don't know, think big. Get creative. Come up with a plan so diabolically clever that your mates will be queuing up to hear about it!

RILEY
You must really hate him.

Riley walks off.

Jake shrugs it off, and enters The Games Cavern.

INT. "THE GAMES CAVERN" - DAY

A 'bat' SCREECHES as Jake enters. He approaches the desk.

Darius spots Jake, busies himself with a box of CD's from behind the counter. The CD's are labelled, 'Cave Sounds 1', 'Cave Sounds 2', 'Cave Sounds 3', and 'Best of Bowie'.

Darius selects Cave sounds 3, sticks it in the CD tray behind the desk. The atmospheric NOISE of SCURRYING CREATURES running down a storm drenched tunnel fills the shop.

JAKE
(sarcastically)
Cave Sounds three, my favourite.

DARIUS
I guess they saved the best for
last. What do you want Jake?

There's a further bat SCREECH as an elderly woman enters the store. She brushes madly at her hair in an attempt to dislodge the non existent beast.

She walks nervously to the far side of the shop, checking for bats as she goes.

Jake sniggers.

DARIUS
Shush.

The woman looks round. Darius smiles at her. Jake bites his fist.

DARIUS
(to Jake)
What do you want?

JAKE
Have you done anything I should
worry about?

DARIUS
By anything I assume you mean some
event so terrible it could result
in my death and eternal damnation?

JAKE
Yes.

DARIUS
Then no.

JAKE
Good.

Jake's about to leave.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Oh, I should probably warn you-

DARIUS
I'm a little bored with your
stories Jake.

JAKE
Fine. It wasn't important.

Darius watches him go, he sighs, switches off the CD.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

A car travels along a winding road at speed. There's a hill to one side, grass verge leading to woods the other. Plant life shakes in its wake. Motes of dust stir and drift to the ground.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Moving into the woods, we discover a motorbike on its side half buried in foliage. Other than a cracked headlight and a few scratches, it looks roadworthy. It's the same bike seen at the funeral.

Deeper still is the body of a LARGE MAN stretched out on his back. The bike's owner wears boots, jeans, a dark t-shirt and army jacket. His head and clothing are covered in blood.

ON EYE

His eye flickers but dried blood prevents it from opening.

BACK TO SCENE

Consciousness returns, the man shudders, slowly sits up. His rugged weather worn features are obscured by blood, bruising, soil and plant matter. He wipes at his face with a grubby hand loosening some of the blood and dirt.

A nasty star shaped scar is revealed on his right cheek.

It's Abe, older, uglier, and more dangerous than ever.

He looks around, his eyes cold, angry.

EXT. VERGE - DAY

Abe emerges from the woods with his bike. He ignores his injuries, completely focused on what he's doing. He pushes the bike to the edge of the road and kicks out the stand.

He surveys the area and returns to the mouth of the woods.

He squats, attempts to upright the trampled grass and presses a ten pound note in amongst the blades. He sticks a twig into the ground near by.

He returns to the road, mounts the bike, and after a few attempts, succeeds in starting the engine. He roars off.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT/FRONTROOM - DAY

Jake sits at the dining room table looking at the list. He crosses through both Karen and Darius's names.

A moment later he screws up the paper and throws it at the wall.

KITCHEN

Jake stands facing the fridge, lets his forehead drop onto its surface.

After a moment he takes out a can of beer, cracks it open and takes a long gulp.

FRONTROOM

He collapses on the sofa, finishes the can.

Puffs up the cushion, lays down, closes his eyes.

He drifts off to sleep.

For a brief moment a tendril of light is visible emanating from Jake's body. It's gone almost instantaneously.

BEGIN DREAM:

JAKE'S SUBCONSCIENCE - LEVEL 2

Kent Gale is on top of the spectacularly high column. With monumental effort he shakily gets to his feet.

There's a brief flicker of colour in the ashen sky.

He looks up, screams.

KENT GALE

Is this what you want!

(beat)

Now get me the fuck down or I will ensure that when you're put away you're violated in every fucking way possible...

The column RUMBLES upwards another foot.

Kent panics, almost falls.

KENT GALE

Okay, I'm sorry! Please...

The column grinds to a halt, reverses, drops a few inches.

END DREAM.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT/FRONTROOM

Jake jerks awake. His face is drenched in sweat.

KITCHEN

Jake spoons huge amounts of coffee into a cafetiere. Fills it with hot water.

He takes out his mobile, phones a number.

INT. KATIE'S FLAT/MAIN RECEPTION - DAY (SAME TIME)

Up-market. Original features, high ceilings, solid oak floor, superior fittings.

The reception is sparsely furnished. There's an ugly red sofa, cheep coffee table and an old TV in the corner of the room. The contents seem at odds with the decor.

Katie sits on the sofa. She's attractive but skinny. Dark rings surround her eyes. She looks stressed.

Her mobile rings. She picks it up, looks at the caller's ID and switches the phone off.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT/KITCHEN - DAY

Jake looks at his phone. He dials again. The number's unavailable.

He chucks down the phone, presses the plunger on the filter coffee maker, and pours out a mug of black coffee.

He gulps it back, grimaces, spits it out in the sink.

JAKE
Bloody hell!

EXT. ROAD (OUTSIDE JAKE'S FLAT) - DAY

Jake climbs into his car. A 'FOR SALE' sign in the rear passenger window includes his landline number.

EXT. UP MARKET STREET - DAY

Jake walks with purpose down the path. The area screams money.

He reaches Katie's place.

Two burly men are just leaving.

JAKE
(nervously)
Is there a problem?

The larger of the two turns, squares up to Jake.

LARGER MAN
Who are you?

Jake's intimidated but hides it.

JAKE
Jake, Katie's brother, who are you?

The man is about to respond but the smaller of the two puts a hand on the larger man's shoulder.

MAN
Perhaps you could ask your sister
to call us. For her own good. She's
got the number.

The larger man snarls at Jake as they leave.

Jake composes himself and rings the bell. He shouts through the letter box.

JAKE
Katie, its me, Jake.

No response.

JAKE
Katie, open the door please. I'm
worried about you.

INT. KATIE'S FLAT/FRONTROOM

Katie shakily gets off the sofa, approaches the door.

PORCH

Katie squats by the letter box, back against the wall. Her eyes are red.

INTERCUT between Katie's porch and Jake outside

KATIE
What do you want Jake?

There's a posh twang to her voice, an affectation picked up at University. It does not disguise her distress.

JAKE
Why don't you open the door.

Katie looks around at the bareness of her flat.

KATIE
You can't come in.

JAKE
Why?

She slowly picks up the card lying on the floor.

KATIE
It's not convenient.

JAKE
I need to talk to you. I'm worried
about you.

Katie laughs, it's too little too late.

KATIE
Go away.

JAKE
Please.

Katie wearily gets up, reaches for the door.

Jake notices the curtain twitching next door. He bangs on the door.

JAKE
Katie, I'm going through some weird
shit at the moment, please just
answer the door!

Katie jumps. Slowly her hands drops.

KATIE
I knew this would be about you.

JAKE
It's not... if you answer the door
I'll explain.

Katie's already walking up the hallway. One arm hangs limply. She drops the card which flutters to the floor.

EXT. OUTSIDE KATIE'S FLAT - CONTINUOUS

A neighbour peers out of the window. Jake smiles at the observer.

He bangs again.

JAKE
Katie please, you could be in
trouble.

He hears a TAPPING at next door's window. He turns.

The neighbour, an elderly gentlemen wearing a silk robe pulls the curtain further back, silently mouths something unpleasant at Jake.

Jake smiles at him, returns to the letter box.

JAKE

I really need to talk to you Katie,
phone me. Please.

He sticks his fingers up at the old man and leaves.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The biker pulls up on the crest of a hill. It offers a view of the woods where he woke earlier. He lugs a heavy bag into a patch of ground between the trees.

He pulls a roll of green canvas from the bag, followed by poles. He's setting up camp.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT - FRONTROOM - NIGHT

Jake rescues the screwed up list, flattens it out on the dining room table. He places a large question mark by Katie's name. Three names remain: Dad, Derek and Chloe.

He hovers his pen over the names, none seem likely.

He throws down the pen, goes to the landline, picks up the phone and punches the button marked 'parents'. There's no dialling tone.

INT. KAREN AND MICHAEL'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Candles burn either side of the bed.

A shadowy figure stands hidden behind the wardrobe brandishing some sort of club.

PORCH

Jake's dad Michael creeps through the front door. He notices a piece of paper at the bottom of the stairs. A large black arrow points upwards.

Looking around he spots the phone at the bottom of the stairs is unplugged.

He plugs it back in, hesitantly climbs the stairs.

LANDING

Michael glances through the open bedroom door, spots the candles. He ventures in, stops at the bottom of the bed, back to the wardrobe.

An object runs up his inner thigh. He spins around.

Karen emerges from the shadows, she's wearing a police woman's uniform, without the skirt....

KAREN

You're under arrest for not satisfying your wife.

She shimmers up to him, moves the truncheon higher.

MICHAEL

Karen..

KAREN

Take off your clothes.

Michael squirms uncomfortably.

Karen takes off her jacket and blouse, presses herself against him.

MICHAEL

It's a bit early isn't it?

Karen laughs it off, throws her hat on the bed, tosses her hair.

MICHAEL

Karen, I'm not in the mood...

Karen purrs.

KAREN

Well get in the mood.

Michael reluctantly starts to take off his shirt.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry, I just can't do this right now, perhaps later?

Karen helps undo a few buttons...

Michael pulls away, ripping the shirt.

Karen stops, stares at the rip. She looks him in the eyes searching for something...

KAREN

I... I had an affair, a long time ago but... I should have told you.

A long pause.

MICHAEL

Took you long enough.

It takes a moment for Karen to take this in.

KAREN

You know?

Michael nods, buttons up his shirt.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Did Jake tell you?

Michael stops what he's doing.

MICHAEL

Jake knows?

KAREN

He came round this morning asking questions. I assumed -

MICHAEL

I've always known.

Karen is completely flabbergasted.

KAREN

All this time and you never said... why?

MICHAEL

I could ask you the same question.

KAREN

I wanted to tell you. I just couldn't. I mean you loved me once...

There's an uncomfortable silence.

Karen takes a pair of jeans and a t-shirt off a chair in the corner of the room, starts dressing.

Michael opens the wardrobe, looks for another shirt.

KAREN

What happened to you Michael, how could you not say anything? How's it even possible...

MICHAEL

Life happened, and it aint like the movies.

KAREN

If you're not happy, act. Get things of your chest, scream, shout. If you hate your job, leave it. If raising a family with me was making you miserable, tell me.

Michael remains silent.

Karen's eyes well up. She storms out of the bedroom...

Michael follows.

LANDING

Michael stands at the top of the stairs looking down.

MICHAEL

I hope it was worth it.

Karen wipes her eyes, looks back at him.

KAREN

No, it wasn't. I'm sorry.

She grabs her coat, handbag and leaves.

The front door clicks shut. Michael stares at the closed door confused, angry and upset.

INT. DEREK AND CHLOE'S HOUSE/FRONTROOM - NIGHT

The front room is tastefully decorated and tidy. There's a small dining table at one end of the room. Derek and Chloe sit with plates of food. The news plays on the TV in the background. A cat rubs itself against Chloe's legs. The atmosphere is tense.

Chloe plays with her food.

CHLOE

What is it with men and chilli?

DEREK

You need to eat something.

CHLOE

I don't feel like eating.

The phone RINGS. Derek get's up, answers it.

DEREK

Jake... no sorry mate not tonight
we're staying in... what, well to
be honest... Hello?

CHLOE

What?

DEREK

Jake's coming up.

Chloe throws down her cutlery.

CHLOE

What do you mean he's coming up?

DEREK

Imminently.

CHLOE

(getting louder)
Couldn't you have made some
excuse?!

DEREK

(stressed)
I didn't get a chance.

CHLOE

Great, that's just what I need!
Sometimes you really are hopeless.

DEREK

I thought you liked that in a man.

Chloe eyes him angrily but doesn't comment.

DEREK (CONT'D)

I'll get rid of him, just try to be
calm.

CHLOE

Calm, after what you made me do!

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. DEREK AND CHLOE'S CAR - TRAVELLING

SUPERIMPOSE: "TWO NIGHT AGO"

It's dark, Derek and Chloe drive down a winding country lane,
they pass a pub on the left. A large bike (the same as seen
previously) is parked down one side.

They carry on going for about half a mile, pass the
occasional house. Suddenly -

BANG! A rear tyre blows, the car veers to one side...

Derek breaks, yanks the wheel in the opposite direction, rolls to the side of the road.

Derek looks a bit shaken. Chloe's calm.

CHLOE
Fan-fucking-tastic.

DEREK
I'll call the AA.

Chloe reacts with contempt.

CHLOE
Just change it. Or do you want me
to do it?

DEREK
No, no, I think I can manage.

Chloe looks doubtful.

Derek presses the boot release, gets out of the car and goes to the rear of the vehicle.

EXT. ROADSIDE

Derek rummages around the boot, returns to the passenger window.

DEREK
Have you seen the torch?

Chloe grimaces.

CHLOE
Shit, I was trying to find the cat
in the garden...

DEREK
You used the emergency torch?

CHLOE
It was an emergency!

Derek knows not to press the point. He returns to the boot, retrieves the tyre iron and jack. Chloe jumps out, goes for the spare tyre.

DEREK
Babes, careful!

Chloe wrestles the tyre to the front of the car.

CHLOE
Just concentrate on getting the car
in the air.

Derek sighs, chucks the jack on the floor, tries to locate it
under the car.

DEREK
Can't see a bloody thing...

Chloe looks at her mobile - no signal.

CHLOE
Perhaps one of the houses up the
road would lend you a torch?

Derek stands, looks up the road into the dark.

CHLOE
Go on then.

Derek stomps up the road, still carrying the tyre iron.

CHLOE
Love you. Make it quick!

DEREK
Love you too.

He jogs into the dark.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Chloe's leans against the car, bored. A large bike RUMBLES
towards her, slows down.

The bike pulls in. Its headlight blinds Chloe. She shields
her eyes.

It's Abe. He kicks out the stand, turns off the engine.

Chloe looks hopefully up the road.

Abe removes a second world war crash helmet, puts it on his
lap. He examines Chloe with cold calculating eyes and smiles.
The smile does not put her at ease.

ABE
Looks like you could do with a
hand.

Abe dismounts. The powerful bike bounces as it's relieved of
his weight. He moves in.

Chloe can't help turning away as the waft of alcohol assaults
her.

CHLOE
I'm fine. My boyfriend's just gone
for a torch, but thanks.

Abe looks around.

ABE
I'll wait. Make sure he makes it
back.

He smiles menacingly.

CHLOE
He can take care of himself.

He moves back to his bike, pats the headlamp.

ABE (CONT'D)
Could light Wembley stadium with
this beauty.

He looks her up and down, likes what he sees.

Chloe squirms.

CHLOE
I'm fine. Thank you.

ABE
Is it the scar?

She looks at the starfish shaped scar, finds herself repelled
by the man's features.

CHLOE
No.

ABE
I think it's exactly that. I think
you took one look at me and thought
he's a big ugly fucker.

He steps closer.

Chloe edges backwards.

FOOTSTEPS.

From out of the darkness Derek emerges, switches on a torch.
His voice is shaky.

DEREK
Sir, thanks for stopping but we're
fine, just needed a torch.

He waves the torch around.

Abe shields his eyes, momentarily blinded.

DEREK

Sorry.

Derek examines Abe for one moment, there's a hint of recognition in his eyes. He lowers the torch. In the darkness only his torso upwards is properly visible.

Abe squints, looks at Derek and laughs. There's no sign that he recognizes Derek.

ABE

This the boyfriend?

Chloe nods, a little embarrassed. Derek notices.

Derek pulls a ten pound note from his pocket and offers it to Abe.

DEREK

For your trouble.

ABE

What the fuck is that?

DEREK

Just a good will gesture.

ABE

Like fuck is it.

Abe slaps Derek's hand away and slips his arm around Chloe's waist. She whimpers.

ABE

A kiss, that's a good will gesture...

Chloe wriggles.

Derek mumbles.

DEREK

Just leave us alone and no more will be said about it.

Abe leans towards Derek, raises a large hand to Derek's face and flicks him in the forehead.

The flick leaves a bright red mark. Derek stumbles backwards, shocked.

Abe laughs. He leans in to Chloe, sniffs her hair.

Chloe looks at Derek desperately. She tries to pull away.

Abe kisses her neck. Her skin flushes with anger.

CHLOE
Get the fuck off of me!

She hits hard to the man's groin.

He doubles up and she pulls away from his grasp.

Abe recovers quickly. He lifts his head slowly, grins menacingly.

ABE
You shouldn't have -

From out of the darkness Derek swings the tyre iron hard at Abe's head. It's a vicious blow. Abe drops to the ground.

Chloe approaches the crumpled figure.

CHLOE
You fucking creep!

She kicks him in the ribs hard, again and again.

Derek grabs her, pulls her off the man.

Derek stoops to the ground, shakily puts a hand to the man's neck.

DEREK
He's dead.

For a moment there's a hint of a smile as Derek gets to his feet, and then realisation what he's done.

Chloe's speechless.

DEREK
Did you hear me Chloe?

Chloe holds herself tight.

CHLOE
Phone the police.

DEREK
Just give me a minute...

CHLOE
Phone the fucking police!

Derek looks up the road, nervously brushes his hair forward.

DEREK (CONT'D)
(manically)
I'm not going to prison for him...
not him.

Chloe looks at Derek like she doesn't know him.

Derek rubs his forehead, makes a decision. He retrieves several carriers from the boot of his car, puts one over each hand. He hangs the torch around his neck, hands two carriers to Chloe.

DEREK
You going to give me a hand?

CHLOE
No.

DEREK
I hear it can be quite unpleasant
for an attractive straight girl.

CHLOE
What?

DEREK
Prison.

Chloe hesitates, then snatches the bags. She slips her hands in.

Derek looks at his shoes, slips carrier bags over them as well. He hands Chloe another two carriers. She takes them without comment.

They cover up and take one end each. Despite the heavy load, fear of being caught provides unusual reserves of strength and they're soon across the road.

EXT. VERGE - NIGHT

They step onto the grass verge, check for observers and drag the body to the edge of the woods.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The entrance to the woods is a foreboding black hole. Chloe looks at Derek, clearly not savouring the prospect.

Derek looks more nervous than her. He switches on the torch and aims the beam into the black passage. After a moment he wedges the lamp under an arm and they pick up the body.

They fight to drag the body through the awkward confined passageway. Branches and weeds scratch at them as they plunge silently deeper.

Six meters or so in Derek stops at a tree. He tries to stand the body up, but struggles.

DEREK
Chloe, would you mind?

Chloe begrudgingly helps.

Derek looks back towards the road, gages a likely trajectory and pushes the man's bloody head against the tree. They drag the body a couple more metres, drop it in a thicket.

DEREK
 Now the bike.
 (beat)
 Er... have you ever ridden a bike?

Chloe nods.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. DRIVEWAY (CURRENT DAY) - NIGHT

The area is remote, just a handful of small detached houses in a new development. Jake squeezes onto the driveway behind Derek's car. A security lamp illuminates the driveway.

He exits the car, rings the bell. Whilst waiting he looks at Derek's car which is gleaming and sports four new tyres.

The front door opens.

DEREK
 Jake. Everything okay?

JAKE
 I thought you were skint.

DEREK
 (nervously)
 Sorry?

JAKE
 New tyres, looks like its been professional cleaned...

Derek's momentarily lost for words.

DEREK
 Half decent tyres aren't cheap.

Jake follows Derek inside.

INT. FRONTROOM - NIGHT

Chloe's still at the dinner table, her meal barely touched. Derek joins her.

Jake follows.

JAKE
 Chilli, excellent choice.

CHLOE
Yeah, can never get enough chilli.
You alright?

JAKE
I've been better.
(to Derek)
So where were you Tuesday night?

DEREK
Oh, er Chloe wasn't feeling well,
feverish, dodgy stomach. Didn't you
get my text?

Jake shakes his head, looks at Chloe.

She moves her dinner around a bit.

JAKE
Not got your appetite back?

CHLOE
I guess not.

She looks angrily at Derek.

DEREK
So, what can we do for you?

Chloe notices Jake's hat. Jake's aware of her appraisal.

JAKE
I took a bit of a knock swimming.
Luckily my head took the brunt of
it.

Chloe smiles, doesn't laugh.

JAKE
God, you two are cheerful. I'll
just get to the point...
(beat)
I need to know if either of you
could be in trouble. Have you done
anything that could-

DEREK
Why?

JAKE
Fair question. Okay, this will
sound a little odd but it's the
truth. After I had my little
accident I was told that someone
close to me had done something,
something bad which will have
severe repercussions, maybe death.

Chloe looks scared.

CHLOE
And we were mentioned?

JAKE
Not specifically.

DEREK
Who told you this?

JAKE
I don't know. I woke in hospital
with nothing but a vague memory.

It takes Derek a moment to respond...

DEREK
Shouldn't you have grown out of all
this?

JAKE
All what?

DEREK
This, whatever this is. This joke,
trick, game, prank, ruse... call it
what you want.

JAKE
I swear I'm hear to help. I know we
don't hang out much these days but
I thought I was still a mate.
Humour me.

DEREK
No.

Jake looks at Chloe.

She doesn't respond.

JAKE
I'm sorry to have wasted your time.

Jake turns to leave.

CHLOE
Wait... I'll think about it and let
you know and I apologize for Derek.

Jake looks at Derek and shakes his head.

JAKE
How did he hook up with you again?

CHLOE
I'm attracted to hopeless men.

JAKE

Did I mention I'd lost my job?

EXT. TERRACED STREET/DARIUS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jake pulls up outside a large Victorian building, leaves the car and nervously rings the doorbell.

A frail woman answers the door, she walks with the aid of a walking stick.

WOMAN

Hello Jake.

JAKE

Hello Mrs White, how are you?

MRS WHITE

I'm alive, every day's a bonus at my age.

JAKE

Rubbish, you'll outlive me.

MRS WHITE

From what I hear that's probably true. It's not just your life you endangered, remember that.

JAKE

I will. I'm sorry. For what it's worth, your son was very brave.

She ushers Jake in.

INT. DARIUS'S HOUSE/HALLWAY

MRS WHITE

He's upstairs.

Jake nods, climbs the stairs. Darius's bedroom door is ajar but he knocks anyway before edging in.

BEDROOM

The bedroom is large, practically a studio flat. A lamp lights a long table, which holds a PC, mass of paper and card and what at first appears to be a simplified model village. Closer inspection reveals it's a board game. A grand auction room occupies the centre of the board.

Darius is fiddling with some wiring under the base of the model. Satisfied, he turns off the lamp, flicks a switch illuminating rows of model lamp posts. A model factory gives off a green glow from each of the three chimneys.

Tiny up-lighters cast light on the auction room. Besides the board is a lump of round wood, attached by a chain to a small hammer.

Jake edges in.

JAKE
Holy shit, is that 'I own the town'?

He walks up to the board, picks up a small model street lamp and examines it.

DARIUS
I thought I heard your voice.

JAKE
It is hot! I love it.

Despite himself Darius can't help but smile.

DARIUS
Possibly a little elaborate at the moment...

He remembers his anger, turns on the lamp, swivels his chair fully to Jake.

DARIUS
What do you want Jake?

JAKE
Your mum seems well.

DARIUS
She's sixty five and already crippled by arthritis.

JAKE
I need your help. I feel like I'm going insane.

DARIUS
Going?

JAKE
Do you really think I smashed my skull in on purpose and then for an encore, stabbed myself?

DARIUS
I know you can draw. I assume the stabbing was realised through the clever application of make up. You're good.

JAKE
Do you want to stick your finger in the hole?

Darius grimaces.

JAKE (CONT'D)

However I think you're right.
During the NDE he did something to
me, planted an instruction...

Darius mouth slowly curls into a smile. He laughs out loud before spinning the chair towards the model. He fiddles with one of the buildings.

DARIUS

So you stabbed and drew on yourself
in accordance with some
subconscious instruction planted by
a dead musician in another plane of
existence! Is that about right?

There's no answer.

Darius swings back.

Jake is gone, the bedroom door swings slightly as it comes to rest.

Darius stares at the empty space where Jake was. Swivels back to the model, deep in thought.

He sighs, grabs a Coke from a small fridge, settles himself in front of the computer and taps a key. The screen flickers into life displaying a search engine.

He cracks open the can, takes a swig, types in 'Near Death Experiences and Delusions.'

INT. JAKE'S FLAT/BATHROOM - NIGHT

The bathroom is steamed up. Jake stands in front of the mirror, a towel wrapped around his waist. He wipes the mirror with his hand.

The picture on his torso is now almost gone, just a faded outline. He stares at it, then brings his face close to the mirror. He stares into his eyes questioning his own sanity.

JAKE

Two more, then you're done.

FRONTROOM

Jake sits at the dining room table with the crumpled list. Two names remain: KATIE and DAD.

He looks tired. Out of the corner of his eye he catches the flashing light of the answer machine. He gets up, plays the message.

ANSWER MACHINE (V.O.)
Eight Seventeen PM, Friday.

Its Jake's dad. He sounds inebriated and upset.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
It's your dad. What happened Jake,
why today?

The message ends abruptly.

Jake picks up the house phone, goes for the preprogrammed button labelled 'Parents'. His finger hovers over it... He decides against it, replaces the receiver. Paces.

INT. KAREN AND MICHAEL'S HOUSE/FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Michael's slouched in an armchair nursing a glass of whisky, the bottle, half full, sits on a coffee table within easy reach. There's a manuscript next to the bottle. Seventies rock blares out from the hi-fi.

He notices the manuscript, with little interest leans over and picks it up. The cover sheet reads 'Ed Blake, Schoolboy Detective by Karen Dobey.'

Michael turns the first page.

INT. KAREN AND MICHAEL'S HOUSE/FRONT ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Michael's thirty pages or so into the script. The music has been silenced. He's upright and alert, glued to the pages. The whisky bottle remains half full. He tears himself away, sits back. He's impressed.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

It's late. A taxi pulls up outside Jake's flat.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT - FRONT ROOM

Jake's sitting in the front room, strumming badly at a guitar and drinking beer.

The door bell RINGS.

Jake's startled. Drops the guitar, puts his hat on and goes to the door.

FRONT ROOM

Michael takes a seat at the dining room table.

Jake looks at the list, regrets not moving it.

JAKE
You okay dad?

A fleeting look of sadness crosses Michael's face.

MICHAEL
She's gone. Left me.

JAKE
What... What happened?

MICHAEL
I was kind of hoping you could tell me.

Jake squirms.

JAKE
Shouldn't you be talking to mum?

MICHAEL
I know about the affair, always have-

JAKE
Really?

MICHAEL
Let's not go there. What I don't understand, is why today?

Jake deliberates. He takes slow steps to a shelf and retrieves his drawing.

Michael misunderstands the silence and gets up.

MICHAEL
Perhaps I should go.

JAKE
No it's fine dad, sit, please. I'll tell you what I can. I should warn you, it's going to sound a little strange, but I swear it's true.

Jake lays the drawing out on the table.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Tuesday night I was out with Darius. We were on the pier and I lost my wallet through the railings...

INT. FRONTROOM - NIGHT (A LITTLE LATER)

Half drunk mugs of tea sit on the table. Michael holds Jake's drawing of Level 2. Jake is no longer wearing the hat.

Michael puts the drawing down, sits back.

MICHAEL

Wow, that's some story. We should have been there, at the hospital.

JAKE

I was embarrassed. I'm kind of a fuck up, excuse the language.

Michael looks at Jake sadly.

MICHAEL

Perhaps I'm the fuck up.

JAKE

At least you can keep a job.

Michael half laughs, sadness rather than mirth.

MICHAEL

I doubt anyone will be reading my memoirs. Anyway, this NDE, it's a recognised phenomena but nothing more than that. Just the brain playing games with you.

JAKE

What if something does happen, even if it's just a horrible coincidence?

Michael leans back.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about mum, I never intended to cause any trouble.

MICHAEL

Don't be too hard on her.

JAKE

Why?

MICHAEL

She deserved more.

(beat)

Did you know she's writing a book.

JAKE

(laughing)

Yeah.

MICHAEL

You sound like me, poor woman. Anyway it's good, bloody good. Take my advice and pay more attention to people you care about.

Michael rises, squeezes his son's shoulder.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Feel free to cross me off your list.

(points at guitar)

And if you ever decide you want to learn how to play that thing properly, let me know.

JAKE

Do you remember how?

MICHAEL

Like riding a bike. I hope.

INT. DARIUS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM- NIGHT

Darius is in front of his PC, he's looking at a web page regarding near death experiences.

ANGLE ON MONITOR

Underneath a photo of an operating theatre, a column of text reads: 'In a unique experiment, an enterprising surgeon with a keen interest in the near death or out of body experience, secretly placed a set of symbols above the theatre in the hope that a resuscitated patient may one day describe seeing them. At the time of writing Dr Habash has not revealed whether there has been any success, however it is clear that there is growing interest in the brain's endless ability to...'

A picture of several symbols is provided with the text.

BACK TO SCENE

Darius sits back, deep in thought.

FRONTROOM

Mrs white sits back on a recliner watching television. Darius enters the room.

DARIUS

Mum, could I ask you a question.

Mrs White points the remote at the screen, pausing her programme.

MRS WHITE

What is it?

DARIUS

Jake was supposedly dead for six minutes. He swears that during that time he was given a message. What do you think?

Mrs White shrugs, stretches her legs painfully.

MRS WHITE

I watch too much tv. watched this programme about quantum physics the other day, over my head, but one thing was clear.

DARIUS

What's that?

MRS WHITE

We don't know it all. Not yet anyway.

DARIUS

I guess not. Have you heard of a musician called Kent Gale?

MRS WHITE

Yeah, thought a little too much of himself that boy. Perhaps that's why the other one killed him.

Darius stops breathing for a second.

DARIUS

I thought he was electrocuted?

MRS WHITE

Don't you watch telly? His band mate, whats-his-name, confessed to doing something with Kent's guitar.

Darius's mouth hangs open...

DARIUS

When?

MRS WHITE

When did he confess?

DARIUS

Yeah.

MRS WHITE

I don't know, it was on the news yesterday.

DARIUS

Yesterday?

MRS WHITE

Yeah, why?

DARIUS

That can't be right... I mean why now, it's just too much of a coincidence.

MRS WHITE

He's getting on, perhaps it was just time.

DARIUS

No you don't understand...

MRS WHITE

Don't understand what?

DARIUS

I don't know, I don't understand either... I need to make a call, thanks mum.

Darius rushes off. Mrs White watches her son run off, shakes her head and switches her programme back on.

EXT. COUNTRY SIDE - DAWN

Morning breaks, a beautiful pink and red sky.

EXT. HILL/TENT - DAY

The injured biker stirs. He crawls towards the tent's opening with his binoculars and aims them towards the woods.

ABE'S P.O.V. - THROUGH BINOCULARS AIMED ON GRASS

He finds the ten pound note and checks the surroundings. The area seems unchanged.

BACK TO SCENE

He puts down the binoculars, pours a mug of coffee from a metal thermos flask and waits.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT/FRONTROOM - MORNING

Jake sips coffee. He looks at his watch, just gone nine, puts down the cup and dials a number on the landline.

JAKE

Hi, ext 6628, Katie Dobeys please.

Jake drinks more coffee.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Sick? How long?... Yeah I
understand, thanks anyway.

INT. "THE GAME'S CAVERN" - DAY

Darius is standing behind the counter. David Bowie plays in
the background.

There's a BAT SCREECH as the door opens. Darius instinctively
turns off the CD. The school boy, Riley enters. Darius stands
up straight.

DARIUS
Ah, my nemesis returns!

RILEY
What?

Darius rolls his eyes.

DARIUS
What can I do for you today?

RILEY
Resign.

Riley puts his hand in his pocket and presses something.
There's an audible CLICK.

The sound isn't lost on Darius. His head jerks chicken like
towards the source.

DARIUS
What was that?

Riley looks around.

RILEY
Nothing.

DARIUS
Empty your pocket.

RILEY
No.

DARIUS
Empty your pocket or I'll call
security.

RILEY
So, done nothin' wrong.

DARIUS
'Nothing!' Just empty your
pocket... The other one!

Riley begrudgingly takes the recording device out of his pocket, places it on the counter.

Darius picks it up, presses the stop key.

DARIUS
You despicable child, you were going to try and coax me into making some inflammatory remark weren't you!

RILEY
What?

DARIUS
Were you not taught English! Why are you here anyway, it's Friday.

RILEY
Training day.

DARIUS
Of course. You kids are all the same, don't appreciate the value of a good education.

RILEY
You clearly didn't.

DARIUS
And what leads you to that conclusion may I ask?

RILEY
Look around, what you on, £6.00 per hour?

Darius looks around, the kid has a point.

DARIUS
Appearances can be deceptive.

RILEY
Under cover are you?

Darius smiles, amused by the kid despite himself.

DARIUS
Fair point, this store doesn't have a lot to offer. Certainly not a career choice, which you'd do well to remember unless you want to be standing where I am. If you must know I'm working on a board game.

Riley looks at him blankly.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

My employment allows me to conduct a certain amount of market research, perhaps make a few contacts, check out the games, and get paid for it.

RILEY

You quiz the customers?

DARIUS

They don't mind. Mostly.

RILEY

So you're like working on your game while being paid?

DARIUS

You make a relatively innocent sideline sound like I'm performing illegal abortions in the back room.

Darius hands the kid back his recording device.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

How about a truce.

RILEY

I'll think about it.

DARIUS

What do you think of 3D boards?

The kid's already out of the door.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

RILEY walks around the corner, to a couple of lads of similar age who are sitting on a low wall.

LAD#1

You get anything?

Riley smiles.

RILEY

I think.

He undoes the buttons of his shirt, and removes the mobile which is taped to his chest. He looks at the screen.

RILEY

Yeah still recording!

(guiltily)

Although I'm not sure about this...

The kids smile. They don't share his concern.

EXT. OUTSIDE KATIE'S FLAT - DAY

Jake stands at Katie's door. Rings the bell. He waits a moment, hears movement...

The door opens.

Katie stands in the doorway, she looks better than last time, arty / bohemian attire, more relaxed.

Jake's relieved.

FRONTROOM

Katie takes a seat on the ugly red sofa. Jake looks around.

JAKE

Have you been burgled?

Katie looks around sadly.

KATIE

I wish.

JAKE

Are you okay? Your work said you were sick.

It takes her a moment to answer.

KATIE

I'm not sick, well not physically anyway.

JAKE

Then what? I thought everything was great - got your degree, decent job, beautiful flat...

KATIE

My degree came with a rather hefty debt. My job's not as financially rewarding as I'd hoped, and the flat - yes it's beautiful, all twelve hundred pounds per month of it.

JAKE

Ouch.

KATIE

Which before I bought all the beautiful furniture and artwork....

She gestures at the empty walls. Her voice becomes louder.

KATIE (CONT'D)

..and before that silly cow
Rochelle left over some stupid
argument about some guy, I could
afford. Just.

Katie looks up, eyes moist.

JAKE

You're in debt.

Katie's can't talk any more, just nods.

Jake gives a huge sigh of relief.

JAKE

Thank god!

Katie's stunned.

KATIE

Thank god! Do you have any idea how
shit my life is right now!

She stands, screams at Jake.

KATIE

Get out, get out of my flat!

Jake holds up his hands.

JAKE

Wait, you don't understand!

There's noise coming from the bedroom, someone making their
way to the front room...

Karen walks in wearing a dressing gown. Her eyes are a little
red but she seems composed.

KAREN

What's going on?

JAKE

Mum! Hi, I er... I'm sorry about
before. Are you okay?

KATIE

Jake's leaving.

Jake turns to Katie.

JAKE

Please, let me explain.

Karen encourages her daughter to sit, takes a seat beside
her.

KAREN

Perhaps you should explain. What's going on Jake? The truth!

JAKE

Actually, I can't explain.

KAREN

Try.

Jake pauses before he removes his hat.

JAKE

Tuesday night I was involved in an accident...

INT. KATIE'S FLAT/FRONT ROOM - DAY(A LITTLE LATER)

Katie looks at Jake incredulously. Karen too seems lost for words. She looks at Jake's head, jumps up and hugs him

JAKE

I'm okay mum, honest.

KAREN

If you're ever hurt again you call, got it!

JAKE

I will. I promise.

She takes a seat, wipes her eyes.

KATIE

But the rest is a joke right?

Jake shifts uncomfortably.

JAKE

No. Afraid not.

Karen studies her son, notices the nervous movements.

KAREN

You don't believe in the supernatural. What are you not telling us?

Jake ponders this a moment too long.

JAKE

Okay. The gentleman who gave me the message had the initials KG. The following night I woke with a pen sticking out of my stomach and this...

Jake shows them the photo of his torso on his phone.

Katie and Karen study the photo.

Katie looks at Jake.

JAKE

I'm not making it up, I swear!

Jake pulls open his shirt revealing the hole in his stomach.

Karen flinches.

Katie studies Jake, looks from the wound on his head to the hole in his stomach, decides he's telling the truth, or at least thinks he is.

KATIE

First of all, you could stand to lose a few pounds. Secondly, you've been had. What you experienced wasn't real, which means someone did this to you!

KAREN

Were you alone?

JAKE

Darius was keeping an eye on me.

Katie scoffs.

KATIE

Darius! Oh my god. Jake, wake up! Darius did this to you.

JAKE

He was more freaked than I was.

KAREN

Which is more likely, a dead musician drew a graveyard on your torso or Darius saw an opportunity to get back at you for past jokes?

Katie barely manages to suppress her amusement.

KATIE

Well played Darius!

JAKE

There's no way...

KATIE

So who's going to hell then Jake? I may be in a mess but I doubt it warrants a one way ticket to Hades!

Karen's expression says she agrees.

Jake looks completely defeated, their words have hit home.

JAKE
I should go.

KAREN
Thank you Jake, you meant well.

KATIE
(amused)
Yeah, thanks for trying to save us.

JAKE
It's not funny.

Katie controls herself.

KAREN
Is your dad okay?

JAKE
He misses you.

Jake turns to leave, stops, turns back.

JAKE
I'm sorry if I was a little
dismissive of your story, I hear
it's good.

KAREN
You have?

JAKE
So dad says.

Karen's surprised. She smiles.

Katie punches her playfully on the arm.

KATIE
So, you coming tonight?

JAKE
It's still going ahead?

KATIE
Mum insists.

JAKE
Then I guess I'll see you there.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Darius waits at a rear exit. He looks a little cagey as if he shouldn't be there. He pretends to use his mobile.

Moments later a male nurse appears through the door.

He hands Darius a dark plastic bag.

Darius peers in, his mouth drops open, his colour drains.

DARIUS'S P.O.V - LOOKING INTO BAG

Inside the bag a face stares back. The face belongs to a toy clown, female, long lashes caked in mascara, full lips, lipstick tapering into a long thin smile, wild red hair.

BACK TO SCENE

Slightly shakily he pulls an envelope from his rear pocket, opens it revealing five ten-pound notes.

The nurse nods, checks no one is watching, takes the money and leaves.

INT. "THE GAMES CAVERN" - DAY

The bat screeches as Jake enters the store. An unknown person stands at the counter. The man is a little on the round side, hair parted at one side, woolly jumper. He's eager to please, all smiles and efficiency.

SHOP ASSISTANT

Good afternoon sir, if I can help you in any way don't hesitate to ask.

JAKE

Is Darius around?

SHOP ASSISTANT

My predecessor?

JAKE

Predecessor? What happened?

SHOP ASSISTANT

I'm not at liberty to divulge anything pertaining to his circumstances sir. Confidentiality and all that, besides this could be a test, what with it being my first day and all.

JAKE

It's not.

SHOP ASSISTANT

So you say.

The shop assistant smiles. Jake leaves.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT/SPARE BEDROOM

A single bed is hidden under a layer of junk - books, old electrical stuff, paper etc. Jake loads the items into a large plastic box at the edge of the bed. Some go straight into a bin liner. Others he lingers over -

He picks up an old games console and looks at it fondly before carefully placing it with the other items in the box.

He picks up a soft toy - a striped tiger, lays it at the head of the bed. Books follow, mostly art. He puts a choice few in the corner of the room.

Finally he drags the box towards his own bedroom.

JAKE'S BEDROOM

A row of plastic boxes lines one wall.

Jake wrestles the current one on top and surveys the mass of stuff.

HALLWAY/OUTSIDE SPARE ROOM

Jake pulls a plaque from his back pocket and removes the film from the back. He presses the plaque into the middle of the door. We do not see what it says.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT - DAY (LATER)

Jake's on the sofa strumming chords in some sort of pseudo country style.

DARIUS

(singing badly)

"My best friend, gone and stabbed
me, with a pen I got from..."

The DOORBELL RINGS.

Darius shouts through the letter box.

DARIUS (O.S.)

Jake, answer the door, I need to
speak to you. Jake!

Again the doorbell RINGS.

Jake drops the guitar. Dials a number on his mobile. He speaks with calm aggression.

JAKE
(on phone)
Go away.

He ends the call.

BING BONG BING BONG

DARIUS (O.S.)
Answer the door you moron!

Jake continues to ignore it. The ringing stops.

Moments later a SCRAPING SOUND, someone clambering over the garden fence...

Jake curses, gets up and pulls the blinds shut. He returns to the sofa.

Darius HAMMERS on the glass patio doors.

Jake continues to ignore it.

Silence.

And then a loud CRASH as a brick smashes through the patio doors, partially ripping off the blind.

Jake jumps up, rips open the blinds, stares at Darius through the shattered door.

Darius stands there, breathless and excited.

JAKE
What the fuck's the matter with you!

DARIUS
The brick, look at the brick!

JAKE
Are you out of your fucking mind!

DARIUS
Look at it!

Jake turns, finds the brick. A toy clown is secured by a length of string. He picks it up. Instantly recognises the clown's striking features.

DARIUS
Is that what you saw? Is it?

Jake's incredulous.

JAKE

How...

DARIUS

I read about this surgeon. He hid symbols above an operating theatre-

JAKE

You found this at the hospital?

DARIUS

Above a ceiling panel in the operating theatre. There's no way you could have seen it, not from below anyway.

Silence.

Jake stares at the toy.

JAKE

It is. It's the same.

DARIUS

Freaked me out to be honest.

JAKE

Why... how...

DARIUS

You were right. Kent Gale was murdered. His band mate, Connor, confessed.

Jake gives a wry smile.

DARIUS

What?

JAKE

I e-mailed his record company everything I knew. I knew they wouldn't take it seriously but I guess Connor did.

DARIUS

Wow, remind me not to piss you off!

JAKE

So you didn't stab me?

DARIUS

No, of course not.

Jake slumps down on the sofa, massages his head.

JAKE
I went to the shop today. Have you
resigned or something?

DARIUS
No, that kid got me sacked.

Jake looks away guiltily.

JAKE
I'm sorry.

DARIUS
Thanks. Right, who's going to hell?

Jake shrugs, stares vacantly.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
What do your instincts tell you?

JAKE
Derek and Chloe were acting a bit
odd.

DARIUS
In what way?

JAKE
I got the impression they didn't
want to see me.

DARIUS
Okay, that's normal. Any other
possible candidates?

JAKE
No one close.

Darius scratches his head.

DARIUS
What about Tim?

JAKE
I haven't seen him for twenty
years.

DARIUS
But you think about him, or at
least about what happened don't
you?

Jake mulls this over...

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. PLAYGROUND (1990) - DAY

Jake, Derek and Tim are at the back of the playground playing kick ups.

Abe walks towards the group, his face is heavily scarred from his fall.

Jake spots him first.

Then Derek. He misses the ball, which rolls away.

JAKE
Shit. What's he want.

DEREK
I thought you two were near pro boxers.

TIM
We may have exaggerated. We've had two lessons... against a punch bag.

JAKE
(to Tim)
Coach said you could punch. You'd have him.

TIM
Why don't you 'have' him?

Abe reaches the group, stands with his arms crossed, a sneering expression.

ABE
Hello girls. Playing catch?

JAKE
Leave us alone Abe.

ABE
Make me.

Tim clenches his fists. Abe backs up.

ABE
(joking)
Easy Tim, you're scaring me.

Abe gives Tim a shove. He goes down, but doesn't complain. He gets back up. There's a determined look in his eyes.

ABE
Come on then fat boy. I owe you a beating.

Jake looks at Tim, willing him on. Tim seems to be considering it.

Abe raises an arm threateningly.

ABE (CONT'D)
What's the matter, scared...

Tim's fist slams into Abe's jaw.

Abe reels backward, almost falls. A trickle of blood seeps from the side of his mouth.

Abe's stunned. A smile creeps across Tim's face.

Abe notices the smile and something changes in him. He wipes at his mouth, looks at his blood smeared hand, and back at Tim.

Like a man possessed he lunges forward, punches at Tim's face, no style, just violence.

Tim stumbles back under the blows but doesn't go down.

Abe doesn't let up, he punches again and again.

Tim falls heavily but Abe cannot stop. He kicks at Tim's ribs, his head, anywhere.

Derek stands open mouthed, shocked by the violence.

Jake finally acts, rushes in, pushes Abe out of the way.

There's a loud WHISTLE. A TEACHER charges towards them, screaming unheard words.

Abe regains his footing, looks at his handy work and smiles.

Derek looks at Abe with pure hatred.

Jake kneels at Tim's side.

JAKE
Tim, can you hear me?

There's no answer. He shakes him gently.

JAKE
Tim...

Tim's unconscious, and in a bad way.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Jake recovers from the memory.

JAKE

I should of acted sooner...

DARIUS

You were twelve. Write down his details, anything that might help, I'll see what I can dredge up on the net.

JAKE

I think I've done enough damage. Don't even know if he's, well you know, all there.

DARIUS

You want to leave it to chance?

Jake wrestles with the consequences.

JAKE

Okay, do it. I guess that leaves me another crack at Derek and Chloe. Doubt they'll tell me anything different though.

DARIUS

Get creative.

EXT. "THE PUB ON THE HILL" - DAY

A large country pub perched on the edge of a hill. The rear of the pub features a modern extension - a large decked area on wooden stilts. Wooden steps descend from the decking to the hill.

INT. "THE PUB ON THE HILL" - DAY

The pub has been decorated for a birthday party, balloons adorn columns, 'Happy Birthday' banners hang from walls.

Ladders are positioned either side of the bar, a pair of female legs visible on each. Moving up their legs we find Karen taping one end of a banner to the bar. A slim pretty girl stands the other side. The banner reads 'Happy 30th Katie!'

The girl climbs down.

Karen shouts to her.

KAREN

Rochelle, could you grab me a couple of balloons.

Rochelle runs for the balloons, rushes them to Karen.

She looks up earnestly.

ROCHELLE
Are you sure she'll want to see me?

Karen takes the balloons, tapes them to the corner of the banner.

KAREN
She misses you.

They both climb down.

At that moment a delivery driver walks in carrying an extravagant bunch of red roses.

Karen waves the delivery guy over.

KAREN
Seems my daughter has an admirer.

She glances over at Rochelle.

The guy looks at his sheet.

DELVIERY GUY
Your daughter called Karen?

KAREN
You mean Katie?

DELVIERY GUY
Says Karen.

KAREN
I'm Karen.

DELVIERY GUY
Then I guess they're for you.

Karen accepts the flowers, admires them. The guy leaves and she looks at the card.

The card which has been typed, simply reads 'Karen XXX'

ROCHELLE
They're beautiful, strange there's only eleven though. Do you think it's Michael?

KAREN
It's probably a mistake. Come on, I want everything to be perfect.

Karen drops the flowers on chair and heads for a pile of decorations.

INT. CAR/COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

Jake drives fast along a country road. He passes the scene of the attack.

EXT. HILL - NIGHT

A camouflaged tent is nestled amongst the trees. Abe sits in the opening. He follows a car (Jake's) up the road through binoculars.

He drops the binoculars, pours a coffee from a thermos, adds a splash of whisky, gets comfortable.

INT. CAR/HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

Jake drives through a modern development, carries on going a hundred metres past his destination and parks up.

EXT. DEREK AND CHLOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jake doubles back on foot. Tiptoes up to the front of the house. The TV can be heard in the front room.

Jake remembers the motion detector, stays away from the drive and positions himself under the front room window. Squatting under the sill, he takes his mobile and sends a text. We don't see what it says.

INT. DEREK AND CHLOE'S HOUSE - FRONTROOM - NIGHT

Derek's on the floor doing sit ups. The TV is on. Chloe watches the local news.

CHLOE

Do you have to do that in here?

DEREK

Good abs save lives.

She tuts, returns her attention to the news.

Derek's mobile beeps, followed by Chloe's.

Both pick up their phones and read:

INSERT - MOBILE TEXT

Which reads 'Why did you do it?'

BACK TO SCENE

Chloe looks at Derek wide eyed.

CHLOE
It's from Jake!

Derek stares at the message.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
(angrily)
Don't ignore me!

DEREK
It's nothing, just Jake playing
games.

CHLOE
He knows.

Derek gets to his feet, starts pacing.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
We have to phone the police. I
can't live like this!

DEREK
Let me talk to him, please.

EXT. DEREK AND CHLOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jake's heard enough. He gets up from the floor, and goes to the front door. Security light flicks on. He hammers on the door.

INT. DEREK AND CHLOE'S HOUSE/FRONTROOM - NIGHT

Derek jumps.

CHLOE
Why did I listen to you!

Derek tries to peer round the curtains without showing himself.

The bell RINGS. Followed by a shout.

JAKE (O.C.)
It's Jake, I'm here to help.

They both breathe a little easier.

Chloe gets up. Derek grabs her.

CHLOE
He's your friend Derek.

DEREK
Exactly. It's not fair to burden
him with this.

CHLOE
That's not how it works.

Chloe's made her mind up. She goes to the door.

EXT. DEREK AND CHLOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The front door opens.

CHLOE
Come in Jake.

FRONTROOM

Chloe's on the sofa. Derek's at the dinner table. Jake stands.

JAKE
I'm sorry about the text, had to be sure.

DEREK
Sure about what?

JAKE
Just tell me how it happened.

DEREK
(hesitantly)
I don't know what you're talking about.

JAKE
Then why the panic? I was outside by the window, I heard you.

DEREK
You were spying on us!

Jake sighs, turns to Chloe.

JAKE
Chloe, perhaps you could tell me how it happened?

Derek looks at Chloe, shakes his head the tiniest amount. He turns to Jake, studies him.

DEREK
What's this about Jake, what is it that you think we've done?

Jake turns away in frustration, turns back.

JAKE

God you're stubborn. You're right. I don't know what you've done, no idea. Truth is Tuesday night I hit my head very hard and I died. For six minutes. During that time I was told that someone I know had done something which will most likely result in their death.

Jake removes his hat.

JAKE (CONT'D)

See that hole in my head, it's from a surgeon's drill. If I could bring you a fucking death certificate I would. Seems you have to stay dead for that.

DEREK

You've lost it.

CHLOE

We killed a man.

Jake's dumbfounded.

Derek fakes a laugh.

DEREK

She's joking.

Jake stares at Derek intently, daring him to lie.

Derek looks down.

DEREK (CONT'D)

I killed a man.

JAKE

Sorry?

Derek gets up.

DEREK

We were defending ourselves, this thug had his hands all over Chloe, I... shit...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Jake's walks down the road. He carries a torch, but keen to avoid detection, does not turn it on yet. Nervously he scours the area. He spots the black opening. His face drops.

JAKE

Shit.

He pulls on a pair of gloves and leaves the road...

EXT. VERGE - NIGHT

Jake checks no one is watching and flicks on the torch. As he nears the black passage, his beam picks something up. He kneels, retrieves a ten pound note from the grass.

He tuts, pockets the money, and disappears into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Jake pushes his way through the foliage, moving the beam around as he walks. A fat spider is illuminated. He jumps, swears and ducks under the web.

He continues deeper until he reaches a patch of flattened grass. The path ends, the foliage beyond creating an impenetrable barrier.

Jake scans the area. Whoever was here is not here any more. He heaves a sigh of relief, and then looks even more pissed off.

JAKE
(mumbles)
Not funny.

EXT. HILL - NIGHT

Abe emerges from some bushes, does up his belt.

He returns to the tent, surveys the area. Through the patchwork of trees he notes a parked car a way up the road. He picks up a pair of night vision binoculars.

ABE'S P.O.V. - THROUGH BINOCULARS

Abe finds the car. Spots a for sale sign in the rear window. He jots down the telephone number.

He moves the binoculars across the road towards the woods. He searches for the ten pound note.

It's not there.

EXT. VERGE - NIGHT

Jake emerges from the woods. Checks the area. A flash of light catches his attention. He looks up the hill. Strains to make out who's there.

EXT. HILL - NIGHT

Abe realises his binoculars have given him away. He stuffs the telephone number in his pocket, goes to a holdall and pulls out a claw hammer.

EXT. VERGE - NIGHT

Jake peers up the hill, there's movement... someone is coming towards him fast.

Instinct kicks in, he runs to the car.

EXT. HILL - NIGHT

Abe scrambles down the hill, brandishing the hammer in his right hand.

EXT. VERGE - NIGHT

Jake makes it to his car, fumbles with his keys, drops them to the ground.

EXT. HILL - NIGHT

Abe trips, rolls the remaining part of the hill. He staggers back to his feet at the road side. His battered features all the more terrifying in the moonlight. He raises the hammer, with cold determination strides towards Jake.

EXT. VERGE - NIGHT

Jake picks up the keys, struggles with the lock.

Finally the key's in. The door opens. He jumps in.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Jake bangs the door locks down. Starts the engine.

Something hits the back of the car. He glances at the rear mirror.

ON REAR VIEW MIRROR

A face fills it, bruised, menacing... a starfish shaped scar on the right cheek.

Jake's eyes widen. Sudden realisation.

JAKE

Abe!

Abe looks in the mirror at Jake's reflection, smiles.

JAKE'S CAR

Jake floors the accelerator, the engine whirs terribly - the car's in neutral! He grabs at the gear stick...

A hammer SMASHES the rear window. Glass EXPLODES over Jake.

Jake ducks whilst pushing the stick into first. Again floors the accelerator.

Abe swings at him through the open space. Misses.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The car screeches away. Abe's thrown from the vehicle as Jake accelerates up the hill.

Jake, breathes heavily. He looks in the rear mirror.

JAKE

Holy shit!

Abe picks himself up, calmly dusts himself down and removes a mobile from his pocket. He dials a number.

ABE

Luce, it's Abe, I need a favour.
Get a pen... Write this number down
- two zero three six one seven.
Came from a 'for sale' sign in a
Blue BMW. The owner's called Jake.
He's out, but see if there's anyone
else home. I need his address...
nothing to worry about, just some
prick from the past harbouring a
grudge... Yeah cheers.

Abe ends the call. Races up the hill.

EXT. DEREK AND CHLOE'S DRIVE - NIGHT

Jake skids to a stop behind Derek's car. Jumps out.

INT. DEREK AND CHLOE'S HOUSE/FRONTROOM - NIGHT

Derek jumps up from the couch as Jake storms into the room.

DEREK

You found him?

Jake approaches somewhat menacingly.

JAKE
You could say that. Your victim,
remind you of anyone?

DEREK
(hesitant)
Well it was dark, I was scared....
I err...

JAKE
Come on you can do it.

DEREK
Fine. It may have been Abe.

CHLOE
Who's Abe?

JAKE
(to Chloe)
School psycho, put a friend of mine
into a coma. The heavy scarring on
his cheek... he did that at school.
Kind of stands out doesn't it!

Derek backs away from Jake.

DEREK
What difference does it make!

JAKE
You hate Abe!

Chloe gasps.

CHLOE
(to Derek)
You knew him?

DEREK
That thug had his hands all over
you, what was I supposed to do!
Let's face it, I've done the world
a favour!

Chloe just stares at Derek.

DEREK (CONT'D)
I had no choice!

Jake stares at him.

Derek turns to Chloe for reassurance.

DEREK
Chloe?

CHLOE
Why didn't you tell me?

Jake drops into the armchair, puts his head in his hands.
Looks up.

JAKE
He's not dead. He was waiting for
someone to return...

Derek sits back down.

DEREK
What? He had no pulse.

JAKE
Clearly you made a mistake.

DEREK
Well then everything's okay, right?

JAKE
Depends. Crazy fucker just tried to
cave my skull in with a hammer. I
don't think he knows who did it.

DEREK
Shit, I'm sorry, this is why I
didn't want to involve you...

CHLOE
Don't start that again.

JAKE
I can't believe he didn't recognise
you.

DEREK
Its been twenty years. And he was
drunk.

Jake's mobile rings. He answers.

EXT. JAKE'S FLAT/FRONTROOM - NIGHT

Darius sits at the table with the house phone. A note with
the name 'Lucy' is scrawled in front of him.

INTERCUT with Jake at Derek and Chloe's house.

DARIUS
Good news!

JAKE
I could do with some.

DARIUS
You may have a buyer for the car.

JAKE
(not interested)
Yeah?

DARIUS
Some girl, said her name was Lucy.
She saw the car parked in town
earlier.

JAKE
I wasn't in town earlier. Did you
give her my address?

DARIUS
Yeah. Problem?

JAKE
Maybe. Remember I told you about
Abe?

DARIUS
I recall the name.

JAKE
He just tried to put a hammer
through my skull.

The phone goes silent.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Darius?

A motorbike rumbles towards Jake's flat. Pulls up round
front.

DARIUS
Has he got a bike?

JAKE
So I'm told.

DARIUS
I think he's here.

JAKE
Get out of there now! Call me when
you're clear.

BACK TO SCENE.

JAKE
Abe's at my place. I've got to go.

Jake heads for the front door.

DEREK
 It's suicide, he's after you...
 Jake!

Derek runs after Jake.

The front door clicks shut.

Chloe sighs.

CHLOE
 Great.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Darius is at the door, he bends to look through the spy hole.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

Darius jumps, flattens himself against the wall, puts a hand to his beating heart.

Moments pass.

There's movement at the letter box. A finger pushes through the thick fibres, tries to widen the gap, gives up.

Darius risks another peek, just as -

CRACK

A metal spike is hammered through the spy hole, missing Darius's eye by about a millimetre. Darius recoils but somehow doesn't cry out. A circle of glass pops out and falls to the floor.

The spike is withdrawn and an eye appears at the hole.

Darius holds his breath, stays out of view.

FOOTSTEPS move down the path. Abe's travelling to the rear of the house.

Darius turns, looks at the smashed patio door.

DARIUS
 Shit.

Keeping his distance he looks through the hole in the door, and then very slowly turns the handle.

The coast is clear. He spots binoculars hanging from a coat hook, grabs them and leaves.

EXT. JAKE'S FLAT/GARDEN - NIGHT

Abe approaches the smashed patio doors, he's wearing gloves. Before going any further he pulls a hammer from his back pocket.

He pauses briefly at the smashed door, checks the area. Satisfied no one is watching, he puts a hand through the opening and opens the door.

He steps into the frontroom.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT/FRONTROOM - NIGHT

Abe's quick and methodical. He heads straight for the phone and finds what he's looking for - an address book. He pockets the book, continues into the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Abe looks around, notices a calendar pinned to the door. One date in particular interests him. Scrawled across today's date is written 'Katie's 30th!'

Abe moves on to the bathroom, pokes his head through the door.

BATHROOM

Nothing of interest.

He crosses the hallway to the spare bedroom.

SPARE BEDROOM

Abe pokes his head through the door, does not bother to go in. The plaque on the door is not visible. He goes to Jake's bedroom.

JAKE'S BEDROOM

Abe scans the room, he checks a chest of draws next to the bed - socks in one draw, boxers the other, odds and ends in the third. He removes a small stack of photos, starts leafing through them. They show friends and family in various poses.

He stops at one in particular...

A photo of Derek and Chloe.

A puzzled look on Abe's face.

A SUDDEN IMAGE: Derek raising the tyre iron.

Abe remembers. He places his thumb over Derek's head as if erasing a smudge and then pockets the photo. He flicks through the rest. A photo of Jake and Darius also goes in his back pocket.

FRONTROOM

Abe looks through the address book, finds Katie's entry.

Picks up the landline, dials Katie's house phone.

No answer.

He returns the phone to the cradle. Thinks.

EXT. SMALL PARK (OPPOSITE JAKE'S FLAT) - NIGHT

Darius hides behind a tree, his binoculars are trained on the flat.

He takes out his mobile, shakily dials Jake's number.

DARIUS

I'm safe, but Abe's in the house...
I'll let you know.

INT. JAKE'S FLAT/FRONTROOM - NIGHT

Abe sits at the PC. He seems calm.

ANGLE ON MONITOR

The web site is titled 'Find a Pub.Com' Underneath the postcode Abe has typed is a list of pubs within a five mile radius. Each entry gives a brief rundown of the pubs size/facilities.

BACK TO SCENE

Abe prints the screen, returns to the keyboard.

He checks the address book again, repeats the search using Katie's postcode.

Again he prints the screen.

Abe grabs the prints, leaves the frontroom.

EXT. SMALL PARK - NIGHT

DARIUS'S P.O.V. - THROUGH BINOCULARS

Darius Watches as Abe exits via the front door.

He notices something in his hand, attempts to zoom in as Abe goes to his bike.

It's an address book.

Suddenly Abe stops and turns. Darius moves the binoculars upwards to find...

Abe's staring straight at him!

Darius drops the binoculars

PARK

Darius backs away.

A SIREN is heard approaching.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Abe mounts his bike, roars up the street, takes the first available turning.

Moments later a police car pulls up.

INT. JAKE'S CAR - ROAD - NIGHT

Jake's parked up. He slides his mobile shut.

DEREK

Is he alright?

JAKE

A bit shaken. Chloe must have called the police, they're at mine now but Abe's gone, and he's got my address book.

DEREK

Perhaps we should talk to the police?

JAKE

You left a man for dead, sure you want to go down that line?

Derek shrugs.

JAKE

Your call, but I need to warn people.

Jake dials a number.

No answer.

JAKE
Where the fuck are they...

He notices a red envelope on the dash, the printed name reads 'Katie.' He hits his forehead with the palm of his hand.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Of course. It's Katie's thirtieth.
They're at the "Pub on the Hill".

DARIUS
Any chance Abe could know?

JAKE
Don't see how. Your address is in that book though, probably best to get Chloe out of there. Looks like we're going to a party!

Derek pulls out his mobile, frantically dials her number.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Abe's sits on his bike at the roadside, list in hand. He's talking on the mobile.

ABE
Yeah hi, I'm running late for Katie's party, just wondered if you could pass on a message...

No party there. Abe terminates the call, moves to the next pub on the list.

INT. JAKE'S CAR - NIGHT

Derek's on the phone.

DEREK
(to Jake)
She asks what she should wear?

Jake shakes his head in disbelief.

JAKE
It's fancy dress, anything goes.
She's got ten minutes.

DEREK
You know a disguise might not be a bad idea at the moment...

JAKE
You serious?

DEREK
Just a thought.

JAKE
Whatever. Could you call Darius,
let him know where we're going.

INT. "THE PUB ON THE HILL" - NIGHT

The pub is heaving, a live band belts out covers. Revellers
in all manner of costume chat, dance, drink.

Karen's at the bar, dressed as a femme fatale, black dress,
seamed stockings, high heels, fedora hat.

She waves to the barman, who finishes with his customer and
wanders over.

Karen smiles, pushes forward her glass.

A gentlemen dressed as Sam Spade, eases in behind her. He
speaks with an accent borrowed from forties film noir.

SAM SPADE
A lady such as yourself shouldn't
be reaching in her purse, that's
where I come in.

She turns.

Sam Spade smiles, hands over a beautiful red rose.

KAREN
Michael!

She looks at the rose, smiles.

MICHAEL
What'll it be beautiful?

She looks at him, glad to see him but confused...

Michael returns to his normal voice.

MICHAEL
How you doing Karen?

KAREN
I'm okay...

MICHAEL
(sadly)
I'm sorry it's come to this, I
really am.

Karen looks disappointed.

MICHAEL

Karen. Would you be my date this evening?

She smiles.

KAREN

You asking me out?

MICHAEL

If you'll have me. And by the way, you look fantastic.

Karen blushes, kisses him on the lips, quick but affectionate.

KAREN

Michael, about what happened...

He puts a finger to her lips.

MICHAEL

New start.

KAREN

I like the hat.

KATIE AND ROCHELLE

Katie watches her parents. She wears a sexy green dress, tiara, and jewel encrusted mask over her eyes. She's slightly tearful, a little drunk, but happy. She turns to Rochelle, who's dressed as a nun.

KATIE

Look at them, isn't it beautiful.

Rochelle smiles, a little awkwardly.

ROCHELLE

Katie, you do believe me about that boy don't you, I swear nothing happened, it's just when you accused me I got so angry and...

Katie puts a hand to Rochelle's lips, removes it, kisses her on the lips.

KATIE

Buy me a drink bitch.

Rochelle smiles.

ROCHELLE

Whatever you want babes.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PUB ON THE HILL - NIGHT

Jake pulls up. Car doors open.

Three Zombies - torn shirts, outlandish wigs, rapidly applied make up, clamber out.

JAKE
I look ridiculous.

Chloe laughs.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Come on, lets get on with it.

INT. "PUB ON THE HILL" - NIGHT

Jake, Derek and Chloe enter the pub.

They survey the scene. Jake shouts above the noise of the band, not yet acclimatized.

JAKE
Everyone seems in good spirits.

DEREK
Isn't that your parents over at the bar?

Jake looks over. Spots them.

JAKE
They look happy.

DEREK
Alcohol does that to people.

Chloe gives Derek a mean look.

JAKE
We better get a drink, blend in.

Chloe brightens up.

JAKE
Take it easy though yeah.

CHLOE
Spoil sport.

Derek heads off with Chloe. Jake follows, heads for the other end of the bar.

Michael spots him and waves him over.

Jake reaches his parents.

MICHAEL

Did know one tell you it was fancy dress?

JAKE

Ha ha dad. Like the suit.

Karen grabs Jake, kisses him on the cheek.

JAKE

Nice to see you too happy. Dad, I was kind of hoping I might have a quiet word with you.

KAREN

Oh no you don't, he's mine tonight. You can have him later.

Karen grabs Michael by the arm.

MICHAEL

You heard the lady.

Karen drags Michael away. They both giggle like teenagers.

Jake stares after them but can't bring himself to spoil the moment. He sighs, looks for Derek and Chloe.

Someone taps Jake on the shoulder. Nervously he turns.

KATIE

Jake!

Jake looks at his sister, she's happy, glowing.

JAKE

Wow!

Katie does a little turn.

KATIE

Wow yourself, Zombie eh!

JAKE

Best I could do at short notice, it's been an eventful evening. I should probably tell you about it...

KATIE

I'm so glad you came.

JAKE

Wouldn't miss it. Any chance we could....

Katie swirls around.

KATIE

Dance? Zombie and the debutante!

JAKE

No, I...

KATIE

Come and meet my girlfriend! She's the nun over there.

JAKE

Let me get a beer, I'll catch up with you in a bit. You're looking good!

KATIE

Thanks. We'll be waiting!

Katie skips off happily.

Derek, glass of wine in hand, and Chloe with her beer join Jake.

The band spot Jake, Chloe and Derek in their zombie gear and give a short blast of Michael Jackson's 'Thriller'.

All faces turn their way.

JAKE

Great.

CHLOE

Perhaps we should just enjoy ourselves while we can.

JAKE

I doubt Abe's resting.

CHLOE

It's not like he knows we're here!

DEREK

He found Jake's place quick enough. Jake's right, we need to have our wits about us.

Derek drinks his wine.

Jake looks at the drink in disgust.

JAKE

Shall we go out back, can't hear myself think in here. I'll just get that beer.

CORNER OF PUB

A large figure wearing a DARTH VADER outfit sits alone in a dark corner. He lifts the mask to take a sip of his whisky, revealing a starfish shaped scar on his right cheek.

EXT. PUB/DECKED AREA - NIGHT

Jake, Chloe, and Derek stand on the raised decking at the rear of the pub. A rope barrier blocks the stairs which lead down to the hill. A full moon bathes them in soft light.

Most are outside to enjoy the pleasures of nicotine. A hazy smoke permeates the group. Derek coughs.

DEREK
(sarcastically)
This is pleasant.

Jake looks over the edge of the wooden railings at the hill, sips his beer.

JAKE
We could go down, plan our next
move.

DEREK
Just let me nip to the gents.

CHLOE
Be careful.

A couple of people snigger.

Derek heads inside, head down.

Jake shouts after him.

JAKE
Keep your eyes open!

More titters.

INT. PUB/MEN'S TOILETS

The toilets are spacious, well maintained, pristine white floor tiles.

Jake stands at the urinals, relieving himself.

The door opens, Darth Vader walks in.

Derek glances over, nods.

Darth Vader nods back, takes a small wedge shaped object from a bag under his cape, and slips it under the toilet door.

He waits.

Derek senses something isn't right. He finishes, turns nervously. Looks at the masked man.

Darth Vader removes the mask revealing himself.

ABE

Didn't recognise you before, but then you were never very memorable.

Derek's shaken, he looks to the door.

Abe shakes his head.

Derek's terrified but puts on a brave face.

DEREK

Can I wash my hands?

Abe finds this amusing but nods.

Derek rushes to a row of sinks, washes his hands. He looks in a long mirror, and is temporarily shocked by his own zombie reflection before his gaze shifts to Abe. His voice is shaky.

DEREK

Why'd you come back?

Abe glares at him, annoyed by the question.

ABE

My father died.

DEREK

I'm sorry.

ABE

I'm not, he was an embarrassment, all that religious shit he preached. Come closer.

Derek shakes his hands dry, wipes them on his torn jeans and ambles towards Abe.

Abe moves in, punches Derek hard in the stomach. Derek goes down, writhes in pain.

Abe takes out his phone, kneels down close to Derek. He shows him a photo.

INSERT - MOBILE

which displays a photo of Darius, he appears unconscious. He's tied to a tree in a wooded area, his head is slumped to one side.

BACK TO SCENE

ABE

Spotted him outside. Figured he'd be useful, and his dumb costume.

Abe stands.

Derek looks up from the photo.

DEREK

What's he done to you.

Abe slaps him hard in the face, sending him backwards.

Derek lifts his head. A drop of blood falls from his mouth, splashes onto the white floor.

ABE

Keep your mouth shut. Get up and do what I say, unless you want your friend's death on your conscience.

Derek stands slowly, his lower lip quivers.

ABE (CONT'D)

You should be happy, I was hoping to grab that pretty girl of yours. How the fuck you pulled her I'll never know.

A rush of courage...

DEREK

You touch her I'll... I'll kill you!

ABE

Do as I say and you'll get your chance. Out the front door, ignore everyone, follow the pub round to the right and down the hill. If anything stops me I'll be back for the girl.

Abe replaces the mask. Draws a knife out from his back pocket and places it against the small of Derek's back.

ABE

Just in case.

EXT. HILL - NIGHT

Abe, now wearing his full costume marches Abe down the hill towards the edge of the forest.

EXT. PUB/REAR DECKED AREA - NIGHT

Jake's looking at his watch nervously.

Chloe peers over the railings, down the hill.

CHLOE
I wonder what they're up to!

JAKE
Who?

CHLOE
It's dark, but I could swear Darth Vader just walked into the woods with someone.

JAKE
Darth Vader?

CHLOE
Yeah.

JAKE
That's got to be Darius, how many people have a Darth Vader costume!
(beat)
What's he going into the woods for, and where the hell is Derek!

CHLOE
Perhaps they're together?

JAKE
I don't like it. I'm going to take a look.

Jake un-hooks a rope barrier, passes through and descends the first couple of steps. A few revellers watch with mild curiosity.

CHLOE
What about Derek?

Chloe follows.

Jake turns to Chloe.

JAKE
I don't want to lose them. You should stay, it could be dangerous.

Another step.

CHLOE
So!

Jake turns back, still descending.

JAKE

Do you always argue... Shit!

Suddenly Jake loses his footing, he slips on the edge of the tread, his foot bends over sickeningly.

Chloe grabs the back of his jacket.

Jake manages to grab the rail. Lowers himself on to the stair.

CHLOE

You okay?

Curious faces peer over the railings, but soon return to their fags and drinks.

Jake takes a moment to recover before he attempts to stand. As he puts weight on his ankle he grunts in pain.

JAKE

Shit.

CHLOE

Can you walk?

JAKE

I'll manage.

Jake painfully descends the last few steps.

At the bottom he massages the injury. Chloe looks at him, concerned.

CHLOE

Perhaps I should go.

JAKE

Lend me your shoulder.

EXT. HILL - NIGHT

Chloe and Jake make their way down the hill, Jake limps, he uses Chloe's shoulder to support himself.

EXT. WOOD/CLEARING - NIGHT

A natural clearing illuminated by the full moon.

The area looks as if it has been used by kids, empty bottles and wrappers litter the area. Several branches have been hacked off trees and used to create makeshift teepees.

The remains of one is situated a little further back, tattered bin liner remnants cling to the fragile frame. The mutilated trees lend an eerie feeling to the space.

Darius is tied to one of the butchered trees. A severed limb has been used to help prop him up. It extends from under his armpit.

Abe stands in the centre of the clearing opposite Derek. A holdall is at his feet. He reaches into the bag.

ABE
Recognise this?

He removes a tyre iron, chucks it to Derek.

Derek fumbles the catch, picks it up, confused.

Abe takes another tyre iron from the bag. He tests the weight in his hand. Smiles.

Derek looks at the tyre iron, pleads with Abe.

DEREK
I was just protecting my
girlfriend.

ABE
You left me for dead.

DEREK
Then tell the police!

Abe laughs.

DEREK (CONT'D)
This is insane, one of us could die
for real this time.

ABE
So. Life is pointless, a few years
scrabbling around for petty rewards
whilst our bodies decay, followed
by death and absolute nothingness.
It's meaningless.

DEREK
It matters to me.

Abe smacks the palm of his hand with the tyre iron.

ABE
You better put up a good fight
then.

Derek screams, runs at Abe, tyre iron in the air.

Abe side steps. His injuries slow him down, but Derek's no match. He swings the tyre iron, hitting Derek in the stomach as he careers past.

Derek hits the ground, groans in pain.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Jake and Chloe creep into the woods. They're a hundred meters or so in when suddenly they stop. Chloe grabs Jake's arm.

CHLOE

Sorry.

A well built man stands pressed against a tree, his back to them. He turns, smiles reassuringly. He puts a finger to his lips, waves them over.

Jake strains to make out the face.

JAKE

It can't be.

The man creeps towards them. He's muscular, good looking.

They speak in whispers.

JAKE

Tim?

TIM

Jake. Been a while. I hope that's a costume.

JAKE

It's my sister's thirtieth, but yeah hah. You look... good. I thought maybe you'd be...

Chloe smiles provocatively.

CHLOE

Hi, I'm Chloe.

Tim smiles back.

TIM

A pleasure Chloe.
(to Jake)
Your mate Darius contacted me.

JAKE

I'm sorry, I shouldn't have involved you.

TIM
You didn't. I've been waiting for
this day.

JAKE
You have?

TIM
I told you we'd get him next time.

JAKE
Okay... Tim, I just want to say I'm
sorry, all those years ago, I
should have stepped in sooner, I
guess I froze...

TIM
You did enough. I'm alive.

He looks towards the woods.

TIM (CONT'D)
Come on. I was a way off but I
think he's got Derek.

Chloe's drags Jake.

Tim notices Jake is limping.

TIM
You sure you're up to this?

JAKE
I'll manage.

TIM
What about you Chloe? It could be
dangerous.

CHLOE
Don't worry, I'll look after you.

TIM
I like your friend.

They press forward.

EXT. WOODS - CLEARING

Abe studies Darius.

ABE
He'll be awake soon. Shame.

He turns, casually steps towards Derek.

Derek's just about on his feet. He stumbles towards Abe.

Abe raises the iron, ready to strike at his head.

Derek's faking the severity of his injury -

Suddenly he moves right as Abe brings down the weapon. Abe's off balance, Derek spins, hits him hard across the back.

Abe collapses to the floor, incapacitated. He groans in pain, tries to move but can't.

Derek approaches Abe, raises the weapon, he pauses, can't bring himself to do it...

Abe kicks hard at Derek's shins, manages to knock his legs out from under him.

Derek goes down, drops the tyre iron.

Abe grabs it.

Derek rolls away.

Abe flails wildly at him. He now has both weapons, but still can't get up.

Derek's only thought is to get away, he runs to Darius.

Derek works at the knots.

He can't untie them.

He turns looking for something to use. A look of horror creeps across his face...

Abe stands in front of him.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Jake, Tim and Chloe near the clearing.

Through the thinning trees Jake spots Darius. He tries to run.

Tim shoots out a muscular forearm, stopping Jake in his tracks. He sprints into the clearing himself.

EXT. WOODS - CLEARING

Abe raises the iron for the final lethal blow.

Derek cowers.

Tim hurtles into the clearing, dives into Abe.

Abe's propelled backwards. Hits the ground hard.

Both get up, Tim's first.

Tim throws an almighty punch, sending Abe staggering backwards onto his back.

Chloe runs to Derek, checks him over.

CHLOE
You okay?

DEREK
Yeah I think so, I almost had him
you know.

Chloe brushes dirt off of Derek's side.

DEREK
Did you hear me?

CHLOE
(dismissive)
As long as you're not hurt, that's
the main thing.

They exchange a look. Derek doesn't want to be looked after any more and Chloe realises it.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
I'll check on Darius.

Jake limps over, pats Derek on the back. They turn their attention to Darius who's still unconscious, tied to the tree.

Tim walks up to Abe.

Abe looks at him, a hint of recognition.

TIM
Remember me?

The voice does it, Abe smiles, his teeth bloody and loose.

ABE
Should have finished you off when I
had the chance.

Abe slowly sits up.

Tim sees red, punches him in the forehead.

Abe's slumps back, his eyes close.

Tim massages his hand, then picks up the tyre iron, raises it above his head.

A hand grips the end.

Tim turns.

DEREK
He's not worth it.

Tim looks at Derek. It takes a moment but he nods in agreement. He lowers his weapon and grabs the other tyre iron for safe keeping.

JAKE (O.S.)
Can't get the damn knot undone!

Tim scans the area, spots something.

TIM
Keep an eye on him will you Chloe.
If he moves, brain him.

Tim passes her the tyre iron.

He jogs to the other side of the clearing and picks up a soda can. Walking towards Darius he rips the can apart, creating a sharp cutting edge.

Derek joins him at the tree. Tim starts sawing at the rope.

Chloe watches Abe nervously.

After a few moments she shouts over.

CHLOE
How's it going!

TIM
Almost done- AHH!

Chloe runs to Tim's aid.

Tim stumbles back from the tree clasping his left hand. Blood pumps from a nasty cut near his thumb.

Jake lowers Darius to the ground, the rope's now severed.

CHLOE
Shit, what happened?

TIM
Had my damn hand under the cutting
edge when the rope snapped.

Jake's rips a section of his already tattered shirt and gives it to Tim.

Tim nods, wraps his hand.

Abe's eyes slowly open. He creeps to his feet.

He looks at the group, realises the severed limb positioned behind the crowd holds possibilities...

Abe prepares himself, then with an almighty burst of energy, launches himself towards the group, intent on impaling one of them.

For a fraction of a second -

A TENDRIL OF LIGHT IS VISIBLE between Abe and Jake! It's not seen but somehow Jake knows. Without even turning, Jake shoves the group to the side as he falls the other way.

Abe powers through the gap, too much momentum to stop. He tries to scream, but it's cut short. Two foot of branch impales him, extends between his shoulder blades. He shudders, vomits blood.

The group gape at him, a mixture of shock and relief.

With his remaining strength Abe manages one last weedy cry.

ABE

Derek...

Derek forces himself to go to Abe.

ON ABE'S BLOODY FACE:

ABE

Remember, none of this matters.

He manages a deranged smile.

DEREK

For your sake, I hope you're right.

A brief moment of doubt in Abe's eyes and then a bloody chuckle. He manages a half salute before his head slumps on to his chest. He's dead.

BACK TO SCENE

Derek backs away.

CHLOE

What did he mean?

DEREK

As far as I can gather he's of the opinion that how you act during your short life is of no consequence, it ends with nothingness either way.

TIM

Not true, I assure you.

CHLOE
What makes you so sure?

TIM
I've glimpsed more.

CHLOE
Really?

Darius is sitting against a tree, he stirs and looks blearily at the group.

JAKE
You okay mate?

DARIUS
Yeah...

He notices Abe's staked body.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
Holy fuck!

JAKE
(doubtfully)
He'll be fine.

INT. "THE PUB ON THE HILL" - NIGHT

The band plays a slow number. Couples dance.

Jake limps up to Katie. Rochelle is slumped on a long bench beside her, still wearing her nuns outfit.

JAKE
Bloody hell, what's she been drinking!

KATIE
She's not used to it. Nuns eh!
(beat)
What happened to your foot?

JAKE
Sprained it.

KATIE
You need to take better care of your self.

Katie smiles playfully.

KATIE (CONT'D)
But at least no one died eh!

JAKE
No one you know anyway.

Katie laughs, punches Jake in the arm.

Jake hands her the red envelope.

Katie rips open the envelope and pulls out a birthday card.

There's a couple of photo's inside the card and a key.

INSERT - ON PHOTO'S

One shows a photo of the spare room Jake was tidying. The room is attractive, the bed dressed and inviting.

The other photo shows a plaque attached to the bedroom door. It reads 'Katie'

BACK TO SCENE

Katie rips the key off the card, looks at it, then at Jake.

JAKE

It's yours if you want it, rent free until you sort your financial problems out.

Katie's eyes are moist.

KATIE

That's the nicest thing you've ever done for me.

JAKE

I know, I've been a crap brother.

KATIE

No you haven't, well perhaps a little but thank you. You're now my favourite brother.

JAKE

I'm your only brother.

KATIE

Then I guess we're stuck with each other.

She smiles, hugs Jake.

The band stops and couples depart the floor.

Rochelle stirs, sits up, grabs Katie and kisses her on the lips.

ROCHELLE

She's staying with me.

Rochelle slumps back down.

Jake looks at Katie confused.

Katie looks embarrassed. She smiles.

At that moment, a cool guitar solo kicks off on stage.

A few drunken revellers clap.

Jake looks over towards the stage

ON JAKE'S FACE:

Amazement as he realises it's his dad playing.

BACK TO SCENE

Michael's lost in the music, enjoying himself immensely.

Karen slinks towards the mike....

A flashing blue light outside grabs Jake's attention.

He kisses his sister on the cheek.

JAKE

I've got to go, nice to see you
happy sis.

KATIE

Where you going?

As Jake walks towards the flashing lights, Karen starts singing.

Jake winks at his mum, does a thumbs up, and walks outside towards the waiting police car.

Katie notices the flashing lights, edges towards the door to take a look.

EXT. LEVEL 2

An almost black haze but for an endless expanse of what looks like concrete.

Abe wakes, groggily gets to his feet. A number of tendrils, somewhat darker in colour this time, snake off into the sky.

He feels his chest. There's nothing there. The wound is healed.

He looks around, spots the tendrils, examines them fearfully.

The blackness is interrupted, curtains of colour, shift, angrily dance around, the occasional explosion of red. It's as if a conversation is taking place in colour.

Abe looks up, terror in his eyes.
He scans the horizon, hoping to find something.
Suddenly a small flame jumps up between his feet.
He stamps on it just as another pops up.
Abe jumps for that one. Two more flames pop up in its place.

ABE
No fucking way...

More flames spring from the ground, each bigger than the last.

There's a heavy rumbling.
It grows in severity...

ABE
It's not supposed to be like
this...

Suddenly the ground below Abe's feet, drops thousands of feet.

He screams as he plummets into a burning, undulating chasm, his own personal vision of hell.

EXT. LEVEL 2

Kent Gale stands beside the huge chasm, looks up to the sky.

KENT GALE
That wasn't very nice.

Flashes of colour.

KENT GALE
You're right, not my place...
Can I go through the doors now?

A wave of purple undulates across the sky.

KENT GALE
Oh come on, I even got a blood
pumper to stab himself! I did well!

Flashes of colour which soon calm.

KENT GALE
It better be soon. I'm a rock star
you know!

Sudden flash of colour.

KENT GALE

Joking!

Kent walks away.

He's eventually but a speck on the bland featureless landscape.

INT. DARIUS'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

SUPERIMPOSE: "TWO MONTHS LATER"

Jake and Darius clink beer glasses.

In front of them is a box. The label reads 'I OWN THE TOWN'. The artwork depicts black outlined buildings vanishing into the distance, each bares the words 'MINE' in large red letters down or across the structure.

The logo is positioned in one corner of the box. It's an origami scorpion positioned diagonally between the words 'Stinging Games'

Darius grins, puts down the beer glass, and plays with one of the pieces.

JAKE

I think I know what I want to do.

DARIUS

Yeah?

JAKE

I want to work with my hands...
make things.

DARIUS

Cool. Like what?

JAKE

I dunno, give me a chance. What
about you?

Darius smiles.

JAKE (CONT'D)

What?

DARIUS

You know that kid you encouraged to
get me sacked?

Jake's face drops.

JAKE

You know about that?

DARIUS

Yeah. Anyway, turns out he felt bad, told his estranged dad everything and Daddy really does own a massive game store. He's got a few contacts, said he'd take a look. This could be good for us.

JAKE

Us?

DARIUS

Of course.

JAKE

Thanks.

DARIUS

We're seeing him Friday.

JAKE

Better got on with it.

DARIUS

Not me... I've got a date.

JAKE

You're joking, you tracked her down!

DARIUS

Finally. Never swam so much in my life, turns out she prefers the pool out of town.

JAKE

Awkward cow.

DARIUS

Oy!

JAKE

I'm pleased for you. Where are you taking her?

DARIUS

Pub. A nice pub. None of them dives you frequent.

JAKE

Darius.

DARIUS

Yeah?

JAKE

Stop bloody smiling.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: 'EIGHT MONTHS LATER'

Derek sits on a neatly made prison bed with a parcel. There's a poster on the wall by the bed - an idyllic landscape.

Derek looks different, more self assured, content even.

He removes the packaging to reveal a commercially produced board game titled 'I OWN THE TOWN'

The artwork is as previously seen.

Scrawled on the back of the box is 'See you in a few months mate!

Jake and Darius have signed their names.

Derek smiles, pulls off the lid. One of the 'blackmail cards' sits on top of the contents. A small ribbon is tied around it. He undoes the ribbon.

The card displays 'BLACKMAIL CARD, LEVERAGE PLUS 9!'. Underneath is a picture of damaged motorbike and rider half buried in undergrowth. A bloody tyre iron is prominent in the foreground of the picture.

The small print reads 'Crazed estate agent fakes accident to escape murder charge.'

He takes the card and smiles. He attaches a small piece of tape to the back and pulls back the poster on the wall.

The space behind reveals a mass of comic book style drawings. They all share one theme, the bad guy getting his comeuppance at the hands of a lone vigilante.

He attaches the card to the wall alongside a drawing of a whimpering bad guy on a powerful motorbike. A muscular version of himself wields an iron bar.

He surveys the wall, enjoying the view.

Replaces the poster, lies back on the bed, closes his eyes and smiles.

FADE OUT