

HIGHLANDER IV

WORLD WITHOUT END

OVER BLACK, A VOICE:

VOICE

IN THE DAYS BEFORE MEMORY, THERE WERE THE IMMORTALS. WE WERE WITH YOU THEN, AND WE ARE WITH YOU NOW.

SWEEP LOW

through CLINGING HIGHLAND MISTS that shroud a land still

in its infancy. Cathedral spires of granite. Cradled lakes. A solitary vastness.

VOICE (cont'd)

WE HAVE BEEN WORSHIPPED AS GODS MISTAKEN FOR DEMONS AND REVILED AS WITCHES. WE ARE THE SEEDS OF A MILLION LEGENDS BUT OUR TRUE ORIGINS ARE UNKNOWN. WE SIMPLY ARE.

ANCIENT CASTLES dot the landscape, whisper of battles long forgotten.

VOICE (cont'd)

WE ARE DRIVEN BY THE CEASELESS FIGHT TO ENDURE. NO LIMIT, IT IS A BATTLE THAT KNOWS NO BOUNDARY OF TIME OR PLACE.

TWO FIGURES clash with broadswords atop the tallest promontory.

VOICE (cont'd)

TO THE WINNER COMES AN UNKNOWABLE PRIZE. YET AN IMMORTAL CAN FIND NO COMFORT IN VICTORY.

MATCH MOVE to the top of an ULTRA-MODERN SKYSCRAPER. Swordsmen continue to battle.

VOICE (cont'd)

BECAUSE IN THE END, THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE.

Loser falls to the other's sword as the HEAVENS CLEAVE in a TITANIC RUPTURE OF SIGHT AND SOUND.

Like the birth of a brand new universe.

BEGIN/END TITLES:

EXT - MANHATTAN, PRESENT-DAY ESTABLISHING - DAWN

Teeming millions. Yawning concrete spires. Blare of traffic.

EXT - ANTIQUE STORE - DAWN

Engraved into a brass plaque:

MACLEOD & ELLENSTEIN ANTIQUES (FORMERLY RUSSELL NASH LTD)

A FACE reflects in the window glass. It's RACHEL ELLENSTEIN, early 60's now, a graying, maternal beauty.

She moves to the front door, reaches out to unlock i.t.

It falls open at her touch. Even though the hanging placard is still flipped to "WE'RE CLOSED"

Rachel hesitates. Draws a shallow breath and steps

inside.

INT - ANTIQUE STORE

All those sublime European antiquities now drip with menace. Celtic harp. Scottish targe. Brooding statuary.

She moves deeper into the shadowed recesses, flicks on a lamp.

Her gaze settles on the one exception to the impeccable order of things. An open wooden case, empty.

Just the felt impression of a missing broadsword.

RACHEL

(icy dread)

Connor...?

She crosses to the foot of the staircase. Listens.

A MUSIC BOX

spools a faint, tinny madrigal.

She climbs the stairs, padding softly upward.

The music grinds EVER LOUDER in its maddening repetitions. Every so often, it's punctuated by a CHILD'S GIGGLE.

AT THE SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Rachel edges around the corner. Her breath catches in her throat. BEFORE HER stands a locked wooden cabinet. It's been cleaved nearly in half by the BROADSWORD that still juts hilt-first from the base of the splintered front panel. PHOTO ALBUMS and leather-bound DIARIES have been shredded and scattered across the floor--

--except for several selected PHOTOGRAPHS, skewered onto the sword tip like a Medieval message spike. Rachel struggles to breathe. Like she's taken that sword in her own gut.

INSIDE THE CABINET A TELEVISION flickers with videotape of GRAINY HOME MOVIES. A LITTLE GIRL (RACHEL) is entranced by a PORCELAIN MUSIC BOX held out by an AGELESS CONNOR MACLEOD.

YOUNG RACHEL

Let me see, Connor! Let me see!

Rachel stands frozen, watching her life with Connor flash by in RAGGED FILM CLIPS.

CONNOR teaching RACHEL to ride a horse.

CONNOR with RACHEL outside an English boarding school. In a train station. At her college graduation.

CONNOR and RACHEL in a laughing embrace that only hints at something deeper.

In each new clip, Rachel has aged further. Connor has not.

Rachel steps up to the broadsword, wraps both hands around the grip and jerks it clean of the cabinet.

THE SKEWERED PHOTOGRAPHS (flutterd to the floor like dead leaves)

THE VIDEOTAPE ENDS, CLICKS OFF...

and a NEW IMAGE burns itself onto the screen in perfect digital clarity. Rachel. Staring back at herself, terror-stricken.

She hadn't even noticed it before now. The tiny CAMCORDER on the shelf above the TV with the glowing red light.

MOVE IN ON THE TV as Rachel SLOWLY BACKS AWAY. Keep moving in on the TV until the PIXELS SWIM...

THE PHONE RINGS shattering the stillness. The old rotary phone on the little Louis XIV stand. It's not just beckoning her. It's taunting her.

Gathering up the photos and hugging them to her breast, Rachel slowly approaches the phone. Any second now, you'd expect it to stop ringing, nobody home. But whoever's on the other end knows better. It keeps right on RINGING. Insistant. Trembling fingers reach out for the receiver. Slowly lift it off the hook.

RACHEL

Hello?

EXTREME CLOSE ON PHONE:

A TINY ELECTRIC CLICK is the last thing Rachel hears before--

EXT - ANTIQUE STORE - WIDE

--a BLISTERING EXPLOSION blows out the entire second floor. Rachel Ellenstein is obliterated right along with her own treasured history. Linger on the FLAMES as we

TRANSITION TO:

EXT - SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS (1565) - DAY

A MOUND OF BURNING CORPSES

They crackle and twist in the fire that feeds off them. It takes a moment to realize they're LIVESTOCK-- oxen, pigs, goats, sheep-- piled like burning refuse.

A CRUDE, WOVEN-STRAW HUMAN EFFIGY stands astride the pile, engulfed in flame.

BEYOND THE FIRE Connor MacLeod and his young wife, HEATHER, watch from the steps of their simple, isolated home. Connor betrays no emotion. Heather looks on in horror.

HEATHER

My God, what are they?

CONNOR

Farm animals. Dead of the plague.

HEATHER

Why do they torment us with their dead cattle?

(no response)

Connor...?

CONNOR

They think I've brought this upon them. It's a warning.

A deeper fear now grips Heather.

HEATHER

A warning?! They drove you from your home! They cut you off from your own people! What else could they want?!

Connor turns away from the flaming heap.

CONNOR

Someone to blame.

CUT TO:

CONNOR swinging astride his horse.

HEATHER

(dread)

Don't go back there.

THUNDER RUMBLES in the distance.

CONNOR

I have no choice.

HEATHER

Please--

CONNOR

They can't hurt me. And they know it. But they can still hurt the ones I care about.

Heather looks off. Shivers.

HEATHER

I'm afraid.

Connor leans forward, takes her face in his hands.

CONNOR

I love you, Heather. More than anything in this world.

She grips his hands. Desperately.

CONNOR (cont'd)

Do you believe me?

HEATHER

Yes.

CONNOR

Then you needn't be afraid.

(kisses her)

Nothing can ever keep us apart.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS, VARIOUS - DAWN

Connor travels a primeval landscape of jagged peaks and fog-shrouded valleys.

CONNOR'S VOICE

Nothing...

CUT TO:

EXT - RIDGE ABOVE GLENFINNAN - TWILIGHT

He gazes down at the tiny hamlet of Glenfinnan, nestled between castle and shimmering loch. Breathes deep the forgotten smell of home.

INT - HUT - EVENING

CAIOLIN MACLEOD, ravaged by neglect and despair, strokes her son's face as if confirming his reality.

CAIOLIN

I thought you might be the water horse come to take me on his back and drown me in the loch.

CONNOR

(smiles)

Maybe I am, Mother.

CAIOLIN

(touches his hair)

Then come, let me grab hold of your golden mane and off we go.

Connor lifts her from the tattered bed, spins her around several giddy times and sits her upright in a chair.

CONNOR

Not before we put some meat on those bones.

He rummages through her shelves looking for food. Finds
painfully little.

CONNOR (cont'd)

No one comes to look after you?

CAIOLIN

They're all afraid of me. They think I bedevil their children because I've lost my own.

CONNOR

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry...

CAIOLIN

Tiny minds and sour dispositions. I don't need them, Connor. Any of them.

Connor crouches at her feet.

CONNOR

Then it's settled. You're coming with me. There's somebody I want you to meet. She's nearly as beautiful as you.

Caiolin blinks back her disbelief.

CAIOLIN

You're sure?

CONNOR (cont'd)

We leave tonight. Let's start packing.

CAIOLIN

(lifts up her shoes)

I'm already packed.

THE SLATTED WOODEN DOOR

swings OPEN. A YOUNG MAN stands in the doorway. He's strong and severe, dressed in clergyman's black. But

that's not what draws the eye.

Even though it's cold enough to fog his breath-- he's sweating.

Connor looks up, guarded.

CONNOR

Jacob--

KASE

You shouldna come back, Connor.

Connor feels the tension in Kase's voice.

CONNOR

Surely as a friend you can look the other way just this once... For old times' sake...

KASE

You knew. You knew what would happen if you came back. I am not to blame for this.

CONNOR

What?

(beat)

What have you done?

KASE

God help you.

FATHER ALASDAIR RAINEY, the local priest and inquisitor, steps inside, bent over a silver cane. He's gross, corpulent and perpetually short of breath. A nasty NOSE BOIL figures prominently in his overall appearance.

VILLAGERS of varying stripe crowd nervously behind them.

FATHER RAINEY

In the name of the Holy See and the rule of law, you are hereby charged, Connor MacLeod, with heresy and the practice of black magic.

(turns to the villagers)

Take him.

The townsmen jostle in place, each trying to squeeze backward behind the other.

FATHER RAINEY (cont'd)

(squints)

Heresy is not contagious.

Two of the bolder men move forward, gripping Connor by the elbows.

Once its clear they haven't sucked up any demons, the others SWARM HIM.

EXT - STONE HUT - NIGHT

Caiolin SCREAMS as Connor's dragged outside and driven to the ground by a relentless battery of sticks and clubs.

CUT TO:

INT - STONE CELL - NIGHT

Connor stirs awake in a centuries-old dungeon, a dark hole, crumbling and damp.

VOICES seem to drip through the porous mortar. Taunting, vengeful, expectant.

He crosses to the barred window that affords him a narrow, ground-level view of THE TOWN COMMONS where a well-attended EXECUTION is now underway.

Connor squints, craning to make out the identity of the condemned.

TOWNSPEOPLE mingle and mill in front of him, obstructing his line-of-sight.

Even as A FAMILIAR VOICE rises above the surrounding chatter.

JACOB KASE'S VOICE

The curse that afflicts one generation will invariably pass its mark onto the next. The ties of blood cannot be severed by word or deed, if in fact your blood is that of your son.

Several villagers STEP ASIDE to reveal:

CONNOR'S MOTHER bound to an UPRIGHT STAKE atop a mound of shorn timber. CONNOR siezes with the impossible horror of recognition.

CONNOR

No.. . NO! !

JACOB KASE Makes the sign of the cross as he reads from a writ of

execution. He stands atop a primeval CELTIC MONOLITH worn down to the form of a pedestal. Father Rainey wobbles behind him, sniffing ammonia to spell his chronic angina.

KASE

Through the infinite compassion of our Lord God, you are entitled one final opportunity to renounce all that is unholy, to declare Connor MacLeod not of your loins and help put an end to the darkness that has been cast upon this land. How say you, Caiolin MacLeod?

Caiolin lifts her head, pale and beatific.

CAIOLIN

If your god should persecute me into the next world, then I shall simply have to find myself another.

Shocked murmurs of outrage shudder through the crowd.

Kase steps up and RIPS AWAY Caiolin's cherished silver CRUCIFIX, with its distinctive wooden Christ figure.

KASE

(holding up Caiolin's crucifix)

You won't need this where you're going.

CONNOR grabs at the iron window-bars. Shakes them until the mortar chips from their moorings. THE RUDDY-FACED EXECUTIONER solemnly approaches Caiolin. Unseen by the bloodlusting crowd, he takes out a small leather sack and drapes it around her neck by the drawstring. He tucks it under her coarse woolen robe and pats it flush against her chest.

EXECUTIONER

(softly)

Black powder. It will make short work of your suffering.

Caiolin nods. He steps down off the pyre. Reaches for a BURNING TORCH. CONNOR strains against the bars like a madman. Mortar continues crumbling until one bar actually RIPS AWAY COMPLETELY. THE EXECUTIONER touches torch to kindling. It ALIGHTS. CONNOR tries to squeeze through the window gap. Too tight. So he winds back with the

iron bar and swings with mindless fury. Iron strikes unyielding stone, SPARKING and CHIPPING...

THE PYRE BENEATH CAIOLIN ENGULFS IN FLAME. Heat ripples her face, distorts her body. CONNOR hammers harder, quicker, louder. Bits of stone fly everywhere. But the bulk of it remains spitefully intact. Still, it's enough to convince ALL FOUR GUARDS to intervene. They throw open the heavy iron door and descend upon Connor with swords and axes. >Wielding the iron bar like a battle mace, Connor splits the first guard's head, catches his sword mid-air and slices into the next. Third guard's axe catches on a ceiling beam. Connor runs him through like an overstuffed feedsack.

The fourth guard drops his sword and BOLTS.

THE PYRE is now fully ABLAZE. Caiolin looks out through the rippling wall of flame...

. . . and smiles weakly.

CAIOLIN

My water horse...

AS CONNOR splits the crowd like a battering ram. He reaches the pyre, hurling flaming timbers aside with his bare hands. Initially stunned, the townsfolk shrink back, watching Connor desperately scatter the fire. Caiolin buries her face in her shoulder, biting back the agony as...

Sword in hand, Connor stretches upward, hacking away the ropes that bind her, oblivious to the fire now crawling in serpentine coils around his own arms and legs. Freed of the ropes, Caiolin begins to slump forward. Connor grabs for her arm as THE BLACK POWDER EXPLODES in a CONCUSSION of FIRE that renders any further hope of rescue futile.

Connor stands atop the burning pyre, wicked tongues of flame leaping off his back and shoulders like fiery wings. He throws back his head and HOWLS to the heavens. Fire dances across Connor's skin and clothing as he raises his broadsword and steps down into the crowd.

PANDEMONIUM breaks out. This isn't just a common witch. This is one of Hell's very own. Those few foolish enough to attack are cut down where they stand. The rest scatter in mindless PANIC. Father Rainey blocks Connor's path. Lifts his cross...

. . . as he's CUT DOWN by the blind SLASH of Connor's sword. Connor steps over Rainey's body and keeps coming, driving the mob fleeing into their dwellings. Kase crouches blustering over Rainey.

KASE

Father... Father, please--

(tries to staunch the bleeding)

Father--!

Rainey's eyes open slightly.

RAINEY

Who are you...?

KASE

Your son. It's your son-- Jacob.

Rainey stares back as if a veil has suddenly been lifted. And what he now sees terrifies him to death.

RAINEY

(eyes widen)

Who are YOU?

KASE

I'm your--

He stops. Rainey's eyes are frozen. Dead.

CONNOR returns to the flaming pyre, refueling his rage with the

sight of his mother's blackened corpse. >KASE

scoops up a discarded sword, leaps to his feet and CHARGES CONNOR, bellowing like a madman. >Connor whirls around with his sword, making Kase IMPALE HIMSELF on the blade. Kase stares wide-eyed and gagging at Connor's smoldering visage-- the depthless black pools of hate that shroud his eyes. It's the last thing Jacob Kase will ever see. Connor opens his fingers and lets him DROP, the sword hilt still jutting from Kase's chest. Gathering up several chunks of flaming timber, Connor HEAVES them onto the straw-covered rooftops, setting them instantly ABLAZE. In short order, the village is transformed into a giant swirling INFERNO. Silhouetted against the crimson sky, Connor lifts Caiolin's body and turns his back on Glenfinnan for the last time.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - ANCIENT STONE MONASTERY - NIGHT

Standing outside the massive door is a MONK clad in dark, hooded monastic garb. Nothing in the panorama would suggest we've just jumped four centuries into an uncertain future... Until--

A PACK OF MOTORCYCLISTS chew their way up the rubble slope. Fishtail to a stop. THE LEADER, a tall eclectically-dressed Jamaican, dismounts and approaches the hooded monk.

JAMAICAN

You people are extremely hard to find.

Monk unshoulders a PUMP-ACTION SHOTGUN.

HOODED MONK

We like it that way.

(pumps shotgun)

Now go.

The other six INTRUDERS surround the monk. His eyes flick from one to the next-- a buffet of different nationalities, all big.

JAMAICAN

Take your pick. Before you squeeze the trigger a second time, you'll be dead.

Easy choice. Monk levels his gun and BLOWS the Jamaican right off his feet. And sure enough, he GAGS before his next trigger-pull. A very nasty SERRATED BLADE retracts into a wooden hilt. Monk drops in a heap as his assailant, a WIRY ASIAN, turns for the door, joined by the others. IN THE VERY NEXT INSTANT the heavy oak-and-iron door SWINGS OPEN with a BARRAGE of AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE--

The intruders are CUT DOWN where they stand. THREE MORE HOODED MONKS appear in the doorway, wielding ASSAULT RIFLES. They grimly regard the bodies.

MONK #1

Take the heads. Just in case.

Saws and cleavers are pulled by the other two guards while Guard #1 keeps his gun trained on the corpses.

VOICE

Don't bother. Really.

A FIGURE stands in shadow, his face UNSEEN. We catch

only a brief glimpse of a PRIEST'S COLLAR. Guard #1 whips his rifle toward the Stranger. Stranger diverts it with the tip of his sword. Bullets go nowhere. One slash and the guard is gone. Two more slashes and his comrades fall. Stranger kicks the body of the dead Jamaican as he steps through the open doorway.

STRANGER

Don't be long.

INT - MONASTERY - NIGHT

FOLLOW THE STRANGER through a maze of chambers and DOWN into serpentine catacombs. He KICKS THROUGH a DOOR into AN INNER ROOM cavernous and dripping, where even the air seems septic. A few dim candles illuminate A DOZEN MEN bound to complicated, almost Giger-esque chairs. Arms, legs and faces have been immobilized by crossing flats of metal BOLTED into flesh and wood. From the wild overgrowth of hair and beard, and the impossibly long, curled fingernails, it's a good guess none of them have moved a muscle in years.

Except for a pale CUSTODIAN standing in a corner, trembling silently. Stranger stands at the threshold, his face obscured by flickering shadows. He scans the living corpses.

STRANGER

So it's true.

He moves slowly among them.

STRANGER (cont'd)

What sacrifices they made of you all. Warehoused, like rotting pieces of meat.

He pauses to lift up a downcast head. Gazes into the shackled face. The eyes are covered by strips of rusted

iron, the face by tangled beard.

STRANGER (cont'd)

Tell me-- is this the better way? I'm sure you've had some time to reflect on it.

One by one, THE RECENTLY-DEAD INTRUDERS filter into the room, led by the Jamaican. Blood stipples their clothes, streaks their faces. But they are, in every other sense, fully-restored.

Stranger straightens, swivels around to the terrified Custodian. Custodian backpeddles into the wall.

STRANGER

Which one is Connor MacLeod?

CUSTODIAN

I-- I don't know... They never told me names...

STRANGER

(low, seething)

Don't. Lie. To. Me.

CUSTODIAN

I swear. I don't know...

Stranger grabs him under the chin, lifts him to his toes.

STRANGER

You need to understand one thing, my gimpy friend. I don't care about the Game. I don't care about the rules. I don't even care about these other pathetic souls you lock away as a barrier to the Prize.

The Custodian stares back, uncomprehending.

STRANGER (cont'd)

(squeezes his throat)

I want Connor MacLeod. Give me MacLeod and I'll leave. And you can go right on pretending that what you do here actually matters.

The custodian lifts a shaking finger. RACK FOCUS TO:

THE PRISONER IN THE LAST CHAIR Even with an iron slat across his eyes, he is unmistakably Connor MacLeod. Stranger lets go of the custodian, turns...

STRANGER

Long time.

Connor strains to lift his head. His voice comes weak and drug-heavy.

CONNOR

Who are you...?

STRANGER

You'll know soon enough.

GLINT OF A SWUNG BLADE--

CUT TO:

EXT - MONASTERY - NIGHT

An unearthly LIGHT pulses through slitted windows and cracked mortar. TENDRILS of RAW ENERGY vein the ancient building, growing BRIGHTER until--

THE WINDOWS EXPLODE OUTWARD with a keening, animal-like HOWL. ABOVE the sky responds with SCREAMING WIND and TORRENTS of RAIN.

CUT TO:

EXT - PARIS - NIGHT

WIND HOWLS over the City of Lights, slicing up the Seine to. . .

DUNCAN MACLEOD'S BARGE

docked at the quay.

EXT - BARGE - NIGHT

PUSH IN on DUNCAN MACLEOD, cross-legged in meditation atop the deck. He JOLTS from a series of SUDDEN VIOLENT IMAGES. A FACE, bolted immobile, wrenched in agony. A SWORDBLADE slashing into flesh. FINGERNAILS clawing wood. BLOOD flecking tile. ESSENCE. PHONE. Ringing. Duncan snaps up the receiver, sweat drenched.

DUNCAN

Yeah?

Tiny electric CLICK...

. . . then the HISS of an overseas line.

WOMAN'S VOICE

(filtered)

He's dead.

DUNCAN

Who?

CUT TO:

A PAYPHONE, SOMEWHERE IN LOWER MANHATTAN

In a driving RAIN. A woman's hand holds the receiver to her face, obscuring her features.

WOMAN

Connor MacLeod. He was killed last night.

INT - DUNCAN'S BARGE

Duncan reels with a sudden flood of emotions.

DUNCAN

Who is this?!

WOMAN'S VOICE

A friend.

EXT - PAYPHONE

The unidentified woman slowly lowers the receiver and sets it back in the cradle.

CUT TO:

EXT - PARIS, ESTABLISHING, SUNRISE

Shadows crawl across the Parisian skyline as an ENGINE REVS TO 8000 RPM.

STREET LEVEL POV:

We PUNCH through the ARC DE TRIOMPHE and up the CHAMPS ELYSEE with a throaty FERARRI HOWL. On a WICKED DOWNSHIFT, we SQUEAL HARD RIGHT onto the PONT NEUF, stopping on a franc at

EXT - NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL - DAY

Duncan hops out of his Ferrari 355 Spyder, pauses before the massive Gothic edifice, then disappears inside.

CLOSE ON A CROUCHING STONE GARGOYLE

perched atop the highest balustrade. MOVE SIDEWAYS TO REVEAL A SECOND CROUCHING FIGURE, this one human. To many he'll be instantly familiar. He's METHOS, oldest of all Immortals, gazing down in quiet contemplation. Methos keeps staring at the ground below, sipping bordeaux from a paper cup, even as Duncan joins him at the edge.

DUNCAN

Methos.

METHOS

so-- What brings you up here to the aerie of the lesser gods?

DUNCAN

I need your help.

METHOS

I'm out of the help business. No future in it.

DUNCAN

I was told Connor MacLeod was killed last night.

Methos' darkens. Another one lost.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

I just want to know who did it.

METHOS

(sighs)

In our world, does it really matter?

DUNCAN

It does to me.

Methos looks down at the clotted life below.

METHOS

Did I ever tell you I once kept a vineyard on the very spot where they built this monstrosity? Glorious, the wine.

(looks up)

When did you see him last?

DUNCAN

Almost ten years ago.

METHOS

What did you talk about?

DUNCAN

Nothing much.

METHOS

Think back.

FLASH TO:

INT - PUB (FROM HIGHLANDER 1) - DAY

Connor and Duncan hunch over the bar, pounding scotch.

DUNCAN

We mostly just sat around, downing shots, staring at the beer lights above the bar. When he finally got up to go, he looked at me like it was the last time I'd ever see him again. No goodbye. No handshake. Just got up and left.

BACK TO SCENE:

Duncan blinks back the memory.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

Nobody's seen him since.

METHOS

Describe the look.

DUNCAN

What do you mean?

METHOS

Describe it.

DUNCAN

It was like...

FLASH: CONNOR'S FACE

DUNCAN (cont'd)

. . . Like every death he'd ever caused had come back to haunt him.

BACK TO SCENE:

Methos takes a thoughtful sip from his wine.

METHOS

For an Immortal who comes to abhor bloodshed, there's a solution-- a way to be removed from the Game forever. The price is unimaginably high, but you are, for all practical purposes, protected from the violence within yourself. It's called The Sanctuary.

DUNCAN

I don't understand.

METHOS

Think of those Buddhist monks who came to cherish life so much that to step on a single insect, to harm a blade of grass was a violation of their creed. They placed themselves into an extreme form of protective custody. A sanctuary of sorts.

(beat)

What I'm talking about is something similar. But one that doesn't allow for a change of heart.

He opens his fingers and watches his cup plummet to the plaza below. Wine SPLATTERS like blood on white marble.

METHOS (cont'd)

Apparently it was wiped out last night.

DUNCAN

By who?

METHOS

I don't know.

EXT - ABOVE THE ATLANTIC - DAY

A 747 cruises at 40,000 feet.

METHOS (O.S.)

He left no witnesses.

INT - 747 - DAY

Duncan stares out the passenger window as the FLIGHT ATTENDANT sets a DRINK down. He lifts the little plastic COCKTAIL SWORD from the glass. Yanks it out of the olive...

TRANSITION TO:

A BROADSWORD being jerked from a fallen warrior.

EXT - 17TH CENTURY BATTLEFIELD - DAWN

FOLLOW THE SWORD swinging above a PAIR OF HIDE-BOOTED FEET that tramp across uneven ground littered with CORPSES. FEET STOP at a BLOOD-CAKED BODY, swathed in the shredded colors of a defeated army. On a SWIFT KICK TO THE RIBCAGE--

DUNCAN MACLEOD JERKS UPRIGHT, flailing in spastic fits.

DUNCAN

GAHHHHHHH! !

He blinks thickly, as if routed from a deep, disorienting slumber.
Gapes up at--

A SILHOUETTE

that ECLIPSES the rising sun.

SILHOUETTE

You've better things to do than lie there collecting flies.

Duncan puts a hand to his chest, touches the worst of his several
lethal wounds. Utter confusion stitches his face.

SILHOUETTE (cont'd)

I suppose you're wondering how a knock-kneed swordsman with your
obvious lack of skill keeps living to fight another day.

The figure extends a hand to Duncan. Duncan hesitantly reaches up...

DUNCAN

(squints)

Are you an angel?

SILHOUETTE

I've been called that. And worse.

Duncan's hand RECOILS--

SILHOUETTE (cont'd)

Rest assured, I'm neither.

He hoists Duncan to his feet. Duncan gazes for the first time ever
upon the face of

CONNOR MACLEOD

who smiles back with the gift of untold secrets.

CONNOR

I'm Connor MacLeod of the Clan MacLeod. And like you, I have a hard time dying.

TRANSITION BACK TO:

INT - 747 - DAY

Duncan's now sitting upright in his seat as the FLIGHT ATTENDANT'S VOICE brings him back to the here and now.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (O.S.)

We'll be making our final descent into New York...

WHEELS

SMACK down onto the runway at JFK.

CUT TO:

A PHOTOGRAPH OF DUNCAN

PULL BACK and see it's his passport, held by a US CUSTOMS OFFICER. He lowers the passport and turns to the long metal case Duncan's brought with him from the plane.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Would you open the case, please?

Duncan hands the Officer documentation as he sets it on the counter and opens it. Inside is an old, meticulously

cared-for Japanese KATANA SWORD. Customs Officer studies Duncan's paperwork, smiles.

CUSTOMS OFFICER (cont'd)

Get much use for this?

DUNCAN

You'd be surprised.

Duncan shuts the case and continues on. Next MAN in line watches Duncan exit as he hands over his passport. Hang on the PHOTO. We'll remember those steel- gray eyes.

INT - CAB, DRIVING - DAY

Duncan watches the passing scenery. MUSIC and LANDMARKS

familiar from the first "Highlander" sweep past.

EXT - NEW YORK SIDE-STREET - DAY

Cab WIPES FRAME, leaving Duncan standing before the charred husk of Connor's antique store. Windows boarded, shreds of flapping police tape, the investigators have long since come and gone.

INT - ANTIQUE STORE

Door SPLINTERS OPEN. Duncan steps inside. In the aftermath of the firebombing, nothing has been

spared. Rachel and Connor's richly-cultivated collection has been reduced to a bitter moonscape. One can only shudder at the degree of overkill that went into this attack. Duncan climbs the back stairs to THE SECOND FLOOR LOFT which is even worse. Ash and cinder are virtually all that remain of Connor's home.

Pausing at the far wall, Duncan yanks down an old charred tapestry, revealing

AN INNER DOOR

deliberately hidden from view. He dips down, retrieves a key from under a loose floorboard and opens the heavily-reinforced door.

ENTERING he finds himself in a LARGE CIRCULAR ROOM surrounded by a staggering display of ARTIFACTS drawn from centuries of personal history. We're looking at the sum total of Connor MacLeod's existence, stacked floor to ceiling.

Duncan moves among the mementos, smiles as he lifts them; an old Scottish coin, pocket flask... a faded PHOTO of himself in a World War I uniform.

He pauses at a painting of Connor's wife HEATHER, radiant in simple peasant garb, smiling serenely across the ages.

Finally, a tarnished epee that he wields with instant familiarity.

TRANSITION TO:

INT - FENCING ACADEMY, RAVENNA ITALY (1627) - DAY

Duncan's LUNGE misses Connor by a mile. He stumbles upright in a grand hall streaked by SUNLIGHT from floor-to-ceiling windows. Duncan and Connor face off with duelling swords, sporting black waistcoats and

knee breeches in the manner of the times. Several other elegant FENCING PAIRS spar in this most genteel version of the ancient bloodsport, a far cry from the corpse-littered battlefield seen earlier. A little mustachioed PUFFER darts between the duellists with lint brush, pail and towel as Connor and Duncan re-engage in a rapid series of strikes and parries.

CONNOR

You've improved greatly.

DUNCAN

You really think so?

Connor executes a simple combination that sends Duncan's sword flying one way, his body the other.

CONNOR

No. I'm just being gracious.

Duncan recovers, sets his feet. Puffer skitters over, brushes the dust off Duncan's coat, dabs his sweat and puffs the back of his hair. Duncan swats him away. They take en-garde position. Connor points his blade.

CONNOR (cont'd)

Remember, you're only immortal as long as your head remains attached to those shoulders.

Duncan lunges again. Misses and hits the deck.

CONNOR (cont'd)

Which in your case might not be long at all.

He puts his blade to Duncan's neck. Humor evaporates.

CONNOR (cont'd)

What we give up to our adversary in defeat, Duncan... is everything.

Duncan stares up at him, uncomprehending.

CONNOR (cont'd)

We call it "The Quickening"-- our strength, our knowledge, our life essence-- it all flows into the victor, feeds him, makes him stronger, in ways you can't possibly comprehend. It's what drives other Immortals to kill us. And what forces us to be better-- smarter-- than the rest.

He takes Duncan by the arm, jerks him to his feet.

CONNOR (cont'd)

Survival. Learn it.

Duncan goes on the attack. What he lacks in technique, he makes up for in determination. Almost. Connor sidesteps Duncan's next lunge, swats his blade flat across Duncan's ass and sends him plowing face-first into the floor. Duncan re-engages Connor in fighting stance. Puffer races up behind Duncan again, meticulously dusts his backside. Reaches around and plucks an unsightly piece of lint off his crotch with thumb and forefinger.

DUNCAN

(whirls around)

You mind?!

Connor clucks his tongue.

CONNOR (cont'd)

Allow me.

He squares Duncan's shoulders and steps back. Considers.

CONNOR (cont'd)

Unh uh.

He steps up and swivels Duncan around until he's facing the opposite way.

CONNOR (cont'd)

If you should ever again find yourself backside to a blade... just keep this in mind.

He proceeds to take Duncan through a move that's dazzling in it's inherent simplicity-- a move that winds up with Duncan's blade whisking perilously close across Connor's throat.

CONNOR (cont'd)

It's a coup de fin.

He catches Duncan's sword-fist in his own, holds it immobile.

CONNOR (cont'd)

Properly executed, even you cannot prevent your blade from finding its mark.

DUNCAN

Properly executed, we'll never have this talk again.

Duncan and Connor's eyes lock. They break.

TRANSITION BACK TO:

INT - CIRCULAR ROOM

Duncan suddenly SIEZES UP with a strange disquiet and ringing in the ears known as THE BUZZ. It's the sense of another Immortal.

He swings around, reaches for his katana and steps back through the door, swinging it closed as

A YOUNG WOMAN

appears at the top of the stairs. She saunters toward him, glancing around.

She takes her time checking out the place before stepping up to Duncan.

The ragged crop of her hair and the slashing trowel application of makeup impart a kind of crazed anti- beauty. Like a post-nuclear Barbi doll.

Duncan regards her, intrigued and wary.

DUNCAN

Who are you?

YOUNG WOMAN

A friend.

Those two words instantly recall the mystery voice on the phone.

YOUNG WOMAN (cont'd)

Or lover. Or wife. Take your pick.

Memory jogs with a sudden lurch.

DUNCAN

Kate?

YOUNG WOMAN

Atta boy. 'cept I'm "Faith" now. Part of the makeover. Like it?

She runs a playful finger across his chest.

FAITH

Funny how 'the time slips by, huh? You wake up one day and ohmigod-- Airplanes!

DUNCAN

Why're you here?

FAITH

Remember our wedding day, Duncan? I do.

She takes him by the hands and leads him into an impromptu dance.

FAITH (cont'd)

We danced the "Highland Fling."

She spins under his arm, circles back into his embrace.

FAITH (cont'd)

I felt like we were flying.

Her sinuous body moves in perfect sync with his.

FAITH (cont'd)

And that we'd never come down.

She spins out of his arms again--

--and SPIN KICKS him across the FACE. BLOOD spatters from his nose and mouth.

FAITH (cont'd)

Of course, we did come down. Didn't we?

(kicks him again)

Crashing.

Duncan staggers backward into a concrete stanchion. Recovers.

They stand facing each other across a gulf centuries wide.

DUNCAN

(spitting blood)

Why are you here?

FAITH

Isn't it obvious? I wanted to see you again.

Duncan tenses at--

THE ROAR OF APPROACHING MOTORCYCLES.

His eyes track the SOUND. It's directly BELOW him.

EXT - STREET OUTSIDE ANTIQUE STORE

THREE MOTORCYCLES hop the curb, SLICE through the open door to the antique store...

INT - ANTIQUE STORE

. . . and SPIRAL up the BACK STAIRS.

INT - LOFT

Duncan's eyes flick upward to a NEW SOUND, directly above him as--

EXT - ROOF - DAY

A FOURTH BIKE

VAULTS the NARROW GAP between buildings and LANDS.

Knobby tires SLAM onto the rooftop, squirrelling wild across the tarred surface before shuddering to a stop.

A jackbooted heel digs in and grinds to a stop.

Biker suddenly BACKWHEELS around, BLASTS through the

ROOF ACCESS DOOR

and disappears inside.

TWO MORE BIKERS

follow suit, SLAMMING DOWN onto the roof like alien invaders.

INT - LOFT

Duncan reacts. But it's not just the full-throttle howl of approaching bikes.

It's the BUZZ of approaching IMMORTALS.

THE BIKERS

now crest the stairs and fan out into the loft-- Same group we saw outside the monastery.

Tricked out in everything from Keds to chainmail, they drag a variety of weapons in their trailing hands-- sword, baseball bat, mace, dao and chain-whip.

The tips make a scraping noise across the floor that's deliberately unsettling.

They surround Duncan, cutting off any avenue of escape. Nobody moves or speaks. Just the low staccato growl of idling two-stroke engines.

Duncan takes a step backward. Looks to Faith.

DUNCAN

Who're they?

FAITH

More friends.

PAN THE FACES. CARLOS from Bed-Stuy, BUG from Kyoto, WINSTON from Jamaica, SARGE from Shreveport and CRACKER BOB from nowhere in particular.

And then there's CALVIN.

A swaggering Immortal from the he's traded brute force in on a brand new weapon of choice. A DIGITAL VIDEO CAMERA.

CALVIN

Make it pretty now. It's the bottom of the ninth.

BIKERS DISMOUNT and CONVERGE on Duncan, swinging their weapons to limber up.

Duncan backs away. This is unheard of-- Immortals packing like jackals.

DUNCAN

What-- it's a team sport now?

CALVIN

(zooming in)

Whole new ballgame.

THREE IMMORTALS ATTACK. They're good. Duncan's better. About three times better.

CALVIN

jockeys his camcorder-- GOES IN TIGHT on Duncan.

CALVIN

Sup with the new blood, huh? Who's gonna lay him out? Take his secret sauce?

(swivels around)

YOU, Winston?

WINSTON,

the tall Jamaican, stands off to one side watching, the lone holdout.

CALVIN (cont'd)

Nope. Too proud. Old school.

INTERCUT - VIDEO VIEWFINDER

Image lurches and jostles as Calvin mixes it up with the combatants.

CALVIN (O.S.)

How 'bout you, Carlos? You good for it? Carlos--?

CARLOS HURTLES THROUGH FRAME. Lands hard.

CALVIN (O.S.)

I'll catch you later.

SWISH PAN TO:

SWORD

sparking off chainmail.

HANDS AND FEET

pounding flesh.

BODIES

slamming into walls.

BLOOD. MAYHEM. PAIN.

And Calvin, catching it all, up close and personal.

CALVIN (cont'd)

Sarge is down. Cracker Bob's down.

But Carlos got some kick. Still got some kick.

Carlos crawls to his feet, oozing blood and spite.

CALVIN (cont'd)

Like the man says, you gotta play with the small hurts.

Carlos LUNGES--

Duncan lays him out flat again, then swivels around to face--

BUG

who straightens up to his full five-foot frame.

CALVIN (cont'd)

Say hello to my man BUG and his ugly- stick.

Bug brandishes a simple metal ROD with a woven grip. Nothing much to speak of...

Until he squeezes the grip--

--and SIX BLADES EJECT SIMULTANEOUSLY.

The two on each end are SWORD BLADES, one for piercing, one for slashing.

Jutting perpendicular to the shaft, like an insane Swiss Army knife, are twin sets of DAGGERS-- two for stabbing and two sawtoothed SWORDBREAKERS.

And then there's the shaft itself, if you're in need of a good old-fashioned battering ram.

CALVIN (cont'd)

Like it? Came from a Tamaric swordsmith.

(grins)

Who smoked a lotta very wicked stuff.

Bug opens up a multi-pronged BARRAGE on Duncan.

Duncan adapts to the first assault-- only to find himself reacting to an entirely new set of insane moves.

CALVIN (cont'd)

Uhp--- Say welcome back to Carlos...

Carlos cuts in yet again, swinging for the stands. He fans several times before Duncan backfists him across the nose and dumps him back onto the floor.

Duncan spins back to Bug as the wiry Asian lifts his lethal metal rod again and grins.

But this time as he SQUEEZES the release mechanism--

--Duncan KICKS IT, shoving it flush against Bug's chest.

SNICK SNICK

two PIVOTING DAGGERS slice into the dumbstruck Immortal. He falls backward WAILING like a stuck pig.

A BOOMING VOICE freezes everyone in their tracks.

VOICE

That's enough.

All eyes converge on:

THE STRANGER

who stands at a distance, cloaked in murky halflight.

STRANGER

I'm sorry, Duncan. When it comes to discipline, the first hundred years are the hardest.

Duncan lowers his katana, turns to the Stranger as--

CARLOS

painfully hauls himself upright and suddenly BULLDOZES Duncan clear through one of the immense loft windows.

Duncan's launched AIRBORNE in a plume of shattered glass,

still clutching his katana.

Carlos hooks an arm around the empty window-frame and watches with unvarnished satisfaction as the body SPIKES onto an upright iron ROD jutting from the construction site below.

STRANGER

What was that?

CARLOS

(squinting)

Full gainer with a quarter twist. Degree of difficulty-- not very.

STRANGER

I thought I told you to stop.

CARLOS

Yeah, well. I stopped.

STRANGER (cont'd)

Are you challenging my authority?

Carlos does his best to ignore him.

STRANGER (cont'd)

Because the only way to challenge my authority is to kill me.

CARLOS

(turns away)

Hey hey, take it easy, man.

STRANGER (cont'd)

Is that clear?

In the split second it takes Carlos to turn back from the window, the Stranger is right there in his face.

CARLOS

Shit!

STRANGER

IS THAT CLEAR?

Stranger takes Carlos' sword and yanks it up to his own neck -.

STRANGER (cont'd)

Here's your chance.

Carlos stares wide-eyed. Pride won't let him back down.

Fear won't let him proceed.

STRANGER (cont'd)

Take it. You won't have another.

We can FEEL the SUDDEN HAMMERING of Carlos' HEART.

CARLOS

You're crazy, man!

STRANGER

Am I? Then go ahead...

(rubs his neck across the blade)

Stop the madness.

CARLOS

Hey--

STRANGER

Or walk away... in perpetual fear of your own shadow.

(beat)

Tell me, Carlos. Can you live with that? Can you live with the fear?
Can you live with the weakness?

THUMP-THUMP-THUMP-THUMP--

STRANGER (cont'd)

Weakness, Carlos. Isn't that why you're here with me? Isn't that why
you're ALL here with me?! Face it, you're nothing but. . .

(savoring)

. . . cattle.

Blood POUNDS in Carlos' eyes. He YANKS back the sword,
CRIES OUT and SLASHES for the Stranger's neck.

CLOSE ON STRANGER'S HAND

as it catches his wrist and diverts the blade around to Carlos' own
throat, wedging it up tight under his chin.

STRANGER (cont'd)

God loves you. I don't.

In one vicious UP-SLICE, Stranger cuts through bone and
sinew, stopping just short of a clean sever.

Carlos gags and gurgles in liquid protest.

STRANGER (cont'd)

(whispers)

They say the worst part, Carlos, is those last few seconds when you
find yourself staring at your own headless body.

SNICK--

He sends Carlos' head tumbling to the floor.

STRANGER (cont'd)

Of course it's pure speculation, since nobody ever lives to tell about
it.

HOLD ON CARLOS' EYES

staring in pure, unknowable horror at his own body,
twitching several yards away.

A tiny ARC of electrical ESSENCE crackles from the neck...

THE OTHERS

bear mute witness to the GLOWING TENDRILS of ENERGY that stutter
across the walls and ceiling.

EXT - CONSTRUCTION SITE BELOW

Duncan lies IMPALED on a JUTTING SHAFT OF RE-BAR as an UNMARKED PANEL VAN screeches INTO FRAME.

His eyes stare sightless upward as

THE LOFT WINDOWS

EXPLODE with unearthly HOWLS of stretching metal and pulverizing concrete.

SHOCKWAVES strafe the walls, blowing out mortar and brick.

POWER LINES SNAP and LASH against the building, spitting

fiery plumes of SPARKS.

INT - LOFT

Seen from behind, the Stranger absorbs the QUICKENING in a series of wild electro-shock convulsions.

EXT - CONSTRUCTION SITE BELOW

Several darkly-clad MEN jump from the panel van and race up to Duncan. With pit crew efficiency, one takes a mondo set of BOLT CUTTERS to the metal stake while the others grab Duncan by the arms and ankles. A fourth throws open the cargo door.

Snap-lift... they TOSS Duncan in the back of the van.

INT - LOFT, SAME

Arms outstretched and rigid, head thrown back in silent rapture, the Stranger RISES slowly off the floor, suspended Christ-like in the air.

BLINDING HALOES of PURE RADIANT ESSENCE engulf him, a lifeforce beyond human understanding.

THE OTHERS

watch transfixed. They've seen it all before, but it never ceases to amaze and terrify them.

CUT TO:

DARKNESS

Which becomes a harsh blast of LIGHT.

DUNCAN'S EYES

flutter open, squint at the glare. He's strapped to the same Giger-like chair, immobilized. Standing around him are hooded members of that same monk-like order in what is, essentially, a dungeon.

One of them, MATTHEW, steps forward. His steel-gray eyes are familiar. He's the one who followed Duncan through customs.

As he reaches to cinch closed one of the iron cuffs with a thick metal dowel, he reveals a distinctive TATTOO across his inner forearm. One that Duncan instantly recognizes. _

DUNCAN

Watchers?

Matthew simply nods.

DUNCAN

Watchers observe. They don't interfere.

MATTHEW

True. And we were more than happy to perform our traditional function. Believe me, it's a whole lot easier charting the history of Immortals than it is running a day care center for them. Unfortunately our role has changed somewhat.

DUNCAN

Why?

MATTHEW

Because the rules have been broken.

DUNCAN

Not by me.

MATTHEW

You're not the one we're worried about.

Matthew moves to the other side of the chair. Pegs the arm cuff and ratchets down a redundant set of bindings.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

One of your kind has gone renegade. In doing so he's gained himself a sizeable advantage. One that will be impossible to overcome.

DUNCAN

Nobody's unbeatable.

MATTHEW

He's surrounded himself with Immortals loyal only to him. He uses holy ground as a safe haven. And every head taken in battle is reserved for him alone, each Quickening-- hundreds upon hundreds-- taken by just one man. Yes, Duncan. He is unbeatable.

Matthew pours a Scotch. Glenmorangie. Holds it to

Duncan's lips like the final offering to a condemned man.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

Worse still, far worse, is that he's become a perversion to the Game. And if he prevails, that perversion will resonate through everything we know. For eternity. In ways we can't possibly comprehend.

Duncan tugs at his bonds. Knows what's in store for him.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

There must always be two of your kind. As long as there are two, and they're kept from fighting, the Prize is safe. The Sanctuary must continue.

DUNCAN

Get yourself another volunteer.

MATTHEW

We had a number of "volunteers." Sadly, that's no longer the case.

Another WATCHER steps up and forces an IRON FACE SHACKLE down over Duncan's head.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

You'll be warehoused. Hidden away. So the Prize can remain safe.

Duncan struggles frantically against his bonds.

DUNCAN

You're insane!

MATTHEW

For the world, Duncan. We do this for the world...

The Watcher takes two large BOLTS and begins to screw the mask directly into Duncan's skull.

DUNCAN'S POV:

BLACKNESS, accompanied by BRIGHT SEARING FLASHES of

AGONY.

MATTHEW'S VOICE (cont'd)

Don't worry. The drugs should kick in momentarily.

All external SOUND is slowly DROWNED OUT by the POUNDING IN HIS OWN BRAIN.

A POUNDING interspersed with jarring, synaptic flashes of

BATTLE. Killing. Dying. Killing again. Dying again.

The recycling nightmare finally RECEDES back into

NOTHINGNESS.

Then, a NEW SOUND. Distant. Grind of metal on bone. Bolts being unscrewed.

Iron plate lifts from his eyes, flood of LIGHT.

Once again, Duncan SQUINTS up at a FACE. This time, the blurred, swimming features of a familiar Irish-American mug.

DUNCAN

(WOOZY)

Dawson...

JOE DAWSON, familiar to many as Duncan's one friend inside the Watchers, smiles back.

DAWSON

You look like shit.

DUNCAN

How... long...?

DAWSON

Week, maybe longer. We can't talk here.

(unstraps Duncan)

We gotta go.

Dawson reacts to the sound of APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS.

DAWSON (cont'd)

(urgently)

Now. Can you walk?

DUNCAN

Think so.

He takes one step and pitches forward onto his face.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

Potent whiskey.

He clambers to his feet and follows Dawson out of the chamber.

EXT - ARMORY - NIGHT

Dawson and Duncan emerge from a nondescript cinderblock armory, an overgrown Cold War relic recently co-opted by the Watchers.

They duck some scurrying guards, plow through thick underbrush to

A HIDDEN CAR

and climb inside.

INT - CAR, TRAVELLING - NIGHT

DUNCAN

You knew about The Sanctuary.

DAWSON

Just because I'm a Watcher, doesn't mean I'm always in the loop.

DUNCAN

I don't buy that.

Dawson averts his gaze. Stares ahead.

DAWSON

I really struggled with it, y'know, the idea of keeping guys on ice like that. But I couldn't argue with the logic. Least not 'til they went after you.

(squeals hard onto the main drag)

Guess that put it a little too close to home.

DUNCAN

I owe you.

Dawson slides Duncan's katana out from under the seat. Hands it over.

DAWSON

Do me a favor, buddy. Live to pay me back.

DUNCAN

What happened to the bodies?

Dawson winces slightly. Keeps driving.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

C'mon, Joe.

DAWSON

Listen-- I got you outta one jam. Don't push your luck.

DUNCAN

I need to see them.

DAWSON

They're dead. Trust me.

DUNCAN

Was one of them Connor MacLeod?

DAWSON

Yes.

DUNCAN

Let me see the bodies.

DAWSON

The heads are gone. You really don't wanna go there.

DUNCAN

I have to, Joe. I have to know.

Dawson jerks the car to a sudden shuddering stop.

DAWSON

Alright... Alright-- If I tell you, that's it, I'm outta here! You're on your own! I can't be a part of this, OK?!

DUNCAN

OK.

DAWSON

OK.

Dawson stares at Duncan. A beat, then:

DAWSON

Fuck. I'm a part of it.

He throws the car back into gear and fishtails back onto the road.

CUT TO:

A VIEW THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

of a forlorn and forgotten CEMETERY. Nothing marks its perimeter but a toppled gate and some trampled barbed wire.

DAWSON

It was a Christian burial. Decent. They said all the right words.

DUNCAN

I can't begin to tell you how reassuring that is. Pull over.

WIDE

Dawson pulls over. He and Duncan get out of the car.

DAWSON

Needless to say, with a dozen unexplainable corpses, they had to go a bit off the beaten track.

EXT - CEMETERY - SUNSET

From here it looks like just a barren hillside littered with broken and crumbling marble.

CLOSER

Duncan and Dawson tramp up the shallow incline.

DAWSON (cont'd)

What do you think you're gonna find when you get up there?

DUNCAN

I don't know.

DAWSON

I'm not digging. Get that through your skull right now. Not these hands...

CRESTING THE RIDGE

Twelve freshly-mounded graves come into view, gouged into the rubbled downslope like wounds, each set off by a simple wooden cross.

Duncan stops when he reaches the first grave. Stiffens.

DAWSON

What?

Duncan remains frozen, staring, seemingly at nothing.

DAWSON (cont'd)

My dog used to do that with locked closets. I hate that.

DUNCAN

Shh.

Dawson listens. Nothing but the soft moan of WIND.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

He's here.

DAWSON

Tell me I'm not here for a seance.

Duncan squints. Feels the BUZZ. Slight, but unmistakable.

WHAT HE SEES:

A row of stunted oaks, thick and gnarled against the setting sun.

CLOSER. . .

Standing against the trunk, silhouette on silhouette, is the ghostly form of a MAN. Barely discernible, his features are hidden in shadow.

Duncan slowly approaches the figure. Dawson hangs back,

nervous and slightly twitchy.

CLOSER STILL...

The figure steps up to greet Duncan. Sunlight brightens the face of

CONNOR MACLEOD

who smiles as he embraces Duncan in the traditional bear-crush of Scottish clansmen.

DUNCAN

Sorry I missed your funeral.

CONNOR

All told, it was a bit underwhelming.

DUNCAN

So it would seem.

They break. The brief joy suddenly drains from Connor's face-- his eyes speak of diffuse, faraway suffering.

CONNOR

Why are you here?

DUNCAN

Ten years ago you skipped out on a bartab.

Connor's expression hardens.

CONNOR

You need to know something...

He steps up to Duncan, locks eyes.

CONNOR (cont'd)

Every life I touch ends. Brutally. And for no reason. It's a curse that's followed me for centuries. I can't outrun it and I can't outlive it.

(beat)

You're my last friend in this world, Duncan. I left for your own good.
It was better that you didn't know where.

DUNCAN

The Sanctuary.

CONNOR

Yes. The Sanctuary.

DUNCAN

But you escaped.

CONNOR

No, I didn't escape...

FLASH BACK TO THE SANCTUARY as the STRANGER moves toward a shackled
Connor MacLeod.

CONNOR (V.O.)

...I was freed.

As before, the immobilized Connor stirs in a drug-addled haze.

CONNOR

Who are you?

STRANGER

You'll know soon enough.

CONNOR'S POV - THROUGH THE BOTTOM EDGE OF HIS FACEPLATE

All Connor can see is the Stranger's HAND as it reaches down and PULLS
THE PIN from one of Connor's arm shackles. The cuff FALLS OPEN.

Stranger turns away. A beat later come the unmistakable SOUNDS of
SLAUGHTER that fill the room to a DEAFENING CRESCENDO.

CONNOR (V.O.)

I couldn't see the slaughter. I only heard it.

BACK TO CEMETERY:

We can still see the agony playing out in Connor's eyes. He turns away, sees

JOE DAWSON

still standing on the ridge, swatting at the occasional deerfly.

CONNOR

Who's he?

DUNCAN

The reason I didn't become your replacement.

Dawson casually removes one of his legs and vigorously shakes it upside down.

CONNOR

What's he doing now?

DUNCAN

Sand in the shoe would be my guess.

Connor suddenly gazes beyond Dawson to

THE NEXT HILLSIDE

and the FAINT SOUND OF APPROACHING MOTORCYCLES. He stiffens.

CONNOR

You were followed.

One by one, a HALF-DOZEN MOTORCYCLISTS crest the surrounding hills and come to a menacing stop.

DUNCAN

Yeah. I was meaning to tell you about those guys.

Dawson fumbles to put his leg back on. Hops a full 360 as he watches the intruders surround them.

TWO MORE

approach on foot, following the same path Duncan and Dawson took.

One is Faith. The other, The Stranger.

Except he's no stranger to Connor MacLeod. Far from it.

Connor goes rigid. Breathing stops.

His nightmare's finally taken human form.

MOVE IN for our first clear look at

JACOB KASE

striding forward, bigger than death.

His is a face hewn by God's sharpest blade, every angle cold, remorseless, Puritannical.

As before, he's clad in basic black, accented by the stark white of a priest's collar.

CONNOR

(ice)

Jacob Kase...

Connor edges back his coat. Hand seeks out the grip of his sword.

Duncan grabs his arm.

DUNCAN

Not here.

CONNOR

Walk away, Duncan.

Kase and Faith continue toward them. Connor's rage seems to ratchet up with every step.

DUNCAN

You're on holy ground. Remember the rules...

Pure, radiating hate seethes in Connor's eyes.

CONNOR

The rules be damned.

Kase stops, inches from Connor's face. Cooly regards the sword.

KASE

Look at you. You'd think after half a millenium, you'd learn to keep that you'd learn to keep that temper of yours in check.

Gone is any trace of brogue. He's a fully-assimilated New Yorker now.

Connor's fingers tighten around the swordgrip...

CONNOR

Just tell me where, Kase.

KASE

If all I wanted was to kill you, you'd have been dead a very long time ago, Connor.

Something roils under Kase's controlled exterior. A rage every bit as consuming as Connor's.

KASE (cont'd)

But your death alone could never appease the innocent souls you slaughtered.

FLASH TO SEVERAL OF GLENFINNAN'S VILLAGERS being MOWED DOWN by Connor's mindless fury.

KASE (cont'd)

It couldn't even begin to appease mine.

FLASH TO KASE as he drops to his knees, gagging blood, RUN THROUGH by Connor's blade.

KASE (cont'd)

Worst of all, you murdered a man of God. Who raised me as his son.

FLASH TO A FATHER RAINEY as Connor brings his sword CLEAVING DOWN on him.

KASE (cont'd)

...and no punishment conceived by man can ever atone for that.

AFTERMATH OF MASSACRE

Scattered wisps of smoke gambol across the demolished commons, leading up to the CORPSE of JACOB KASE.

KASE (cont'd)

What you never could have expected was that you'd leave behind this one humble servant...

Kase's body lies there as cold as the Highland dawn.

KASE (cont'd)

...who would trade eternity itself to make you pay.

HIS EYES

snap open.

And we're once again TRANSPORTED BACK TO:

EXT - CEMETERY - DAY

Kase steps closer, revelling in this moment.

KASE

Look back over the endless travesties of your life and you'll see me. Always there, waiting in the shadows.

(beat)

When friends and lovers are wiped from your sight, I'm there.

KASE (cont'd)

When those you cherish die abruptly and for no reason, I'm there.

(kicks a clod of dirt onto a grave)

And when a handful of misguided and pathetic idiots just happen to share your own private hell...

(shrugs)

Guess who?

He walks a full circle around Connor.

All the while Kase addresses Connor, Faith never takes her eyes off Duncan.

KASE (cont'd)

But if you think it ends here, my ancient friend, you're wrong. Very... Very... Wrong.

Kase turns back to Faith. Pulls his sword and without warning SLICES it across her throat.

Faith reflexively GASPS, stumbles backward, leaving--

A WOOD AND SILVER CRUCIFIX

dangling on Kase's swordtip.

FOLLOW THE CRUCIFIX

as he swings it around and offers it up to Connor.

KASE

Thought you might be wanting this. I kept it for you...

FLASH TO CONNOR'S MOTHER, bound to the stake as Kase rips the crucifix from her neck.

BACK TO SCENE:

Connor stares down at the crucifix now in his open palm.

KASE (cont'd)

For old times' sake.

Kase puts an arm around Faith.

KASE (cont'd)

Want to find me again, Connor? Just put your hands together...

KASE (cont'd)

(winks)

And pray.

He gives Faith a little shove and they both start downhill.

THE SURROUNDING BIKERS

gun their engines and ride off on billowing plumes of dust.

Connor makes no move to follow. Strangely silent and impassive, he's like a warrior gutted by an invisible sword.

Duncan puts a hand on his shoulder.

DUNCAN

Whatever it is...

Connor swipes away Duncan's hand, starts walking.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

I can help you, Connor.

Connor stops, swivels back. Eyes dead.

CONNOR

Nobody can help me.

He walks off alone, a ghost against a sea of gravestones,

DUNCAN

CONNOR--

Duncan watches his friend depart, helpless. Turning back, he sees

FAITH AND KASE

stopped halfway down the hill. They seem to be arguing. Kase turns abruptly and strides off.

CLOSE ON FAITH

She stands there a moment, sullenly rubbing her throat. Duncan's VOICE spins her back around.

DUNCAN (O.S.)

Problem?

FAITH

I get a bit fussy whenever somebody points a sword at me.

(dry)

Goes a long way back.

Their eyes fix on one another. Air thickens. Buzzes with electricity.

DUNCAN

Just one question. After all these years. . .

(re: Kase)

Why him?

Faith glances down at Kase, who stands waiting at the base of the hill. Considers.

FAITH

Because I've never known anyone who had such an amazing capacity for hate.

(beat)

Except me.

On that, she brushes past Duncan and rejoins Kase.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT - IRISH COUNTRYSIDE, 17TH CENTURY - DAY

Duncan and Connor ride side by side on horseback. They reach a

RIVERBANK

where a YOUNG WOMAN and her elderly CONSORT are detained at a crude wooden TOLL GATE.

Eight or nine disreputable-looking HIGHWAYMEN surround their carriage.

Connor rides up to what would appear to be the LEADER. He has the most teeth.

CONNOR

What's going on?

HIGHWAYMAN

The lady here refuses to pay her toll.

CONNOR

Toll for what?

HIGHWAYMAN

Passage over the bridge.

Connor cranes his eyes, upriver and down.

CONNOR

I see no bridge.

HIGHWAYMAN

What do you think pays for the bridge?

Connor considers, then turns back to the lady with a shrug.

CONNOR

The man has a point.

Despite her sweeping auburn hair and natural beauty, we now recognize the young woman as FAITH from an earlier era.

Her original name is CATHERINE MARY DEVANEY.

CATHERINE

These men are liars and scoundrels. They've preyed upon us three years running.

CONNOR

This true?

HIGHWAYMAN

A good sturdy bridge is not an overnight accomplishment, Sir.

CONNOR

Exactly what, may I ask, have you accomplished so far?

HIGHWAYMAN

(proudly)

The tollgate.

Duncan trots around the tollgate and up alongside Connor. He leans over to the highwayman.

DUNCAN

Excuse me, but by whose authority do you act?

HIGHWAYMAN

(holds up scroll)

By deed of the King.

DUNCAN

Might I see that?

Highwayman slowly unravels the parchment scroll. The nearly-illegible scrawl suggests random words copied by an illiterate.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

Does the King always sign his name with an "X"?

Highwayman's cronies reach for their swords.

HIGHWAYMAN

He was in a hurry.

All eyes hover on Duncan's reaction. Two of the highwaymen edge around behind Catherine and her elderly consort, ready to gut them both at a moment's notice.

Duncan tracks them with his eyes.

DUNCAN

(nods)

Busy man, the King.

(to Catherine)

I suggest you pay the gentlemen and be on your way.

CATHERINE

His deed is a fake!

DUNCAN

That's a matter of opinion.

CATHERINE

You, Sir, are no better than they!

DUNCAN

That's also a matter of opinion.

(to Connor)

Shall we?

Connor sizes up his young protege'. Gives a dubious nod.

CONNOR

Lead on.

CATHERINE

You can't just leave!

DUNCAN

You're right...

He tosses a handful of gold coins to the Highwayman.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

Good luck with the bridge.

He kicks his horse into a brisk trot. Connor reluctantly follows suit.

They cross the river through ankle-deep water.

CONNOR

I can't believe you gave those bastards your money.

DUNCAN

It wasn't my money.

Duncan pulls a cinched canvas BAG overstuffed with coins from his overcoat.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

It was theirs.

RACK FOCUS TO the duped HIGHWAYMEN scrambling onto their horses and riding hard in frantic pursuit.

They hit the river at a gallop, kicking up giant shimmering fantails of water.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

By the time they reach us, the young lady and her escort should be safely out of harm's way.

The pursuers close the gap in seconds.

Connor grins approvingly. Draws his sword and glances over at Duncan.

CONNOR

Shall we?

Duncan FLICKS his own sword, lets the hilt auto-rotate around his open palm and snaps it vertical. He nods back at Connor.

DUNCAN

Let's.

Together, they whirl around to face the onrushing horde.

THEY BATTLE

in the middle of the shallow river. Nine maniacal thieves against two sporting Immortals.

The spray of water, the slashing of swords and the pounding of hooves all build to an operatic crescendo.

Duncan's improved since Ravenna. He easily scatters three of his adversaries before engaging the blood-crazed LEADER.

This time it's Connor who finds himself in trouble. He tumbles from his horse and goes down, losing his sword in the river.

DUNCAN

suddenly winds back and FLINGS his sword at his opponent like a throwing dagger.

BLADE

whistles past the dumbstruck highwayman's head. Which was not the intended target...

. . .as we discover when we follow it's end-over-end

flight. . .

. . . straight into CONNOR'S OUTSTRETCHED HAND.

Connor parries his attackers, drives them backward onto their asses, then swivels around and TOSSES the sword back to

DUNCAN,

who catches it, ducks the highwayman's next swing and swiftly sends him packing.

CONNOR

recovers his own sword, which is enough to send the last of their attackers into a full-on, stumbling retreat.

They both stand watching as

THE CARRIAGE

jostles safely across the river.

CLOSE ON CATHERINE

as she looks back at Duncan. She gives Duncan a knowing smile that's as innocent as it is seductive.

CONNOR

(watching Duncan)

You know that stirring in your gut? It's not just simple lust, my friend.

DUNCAN

I know...

CONNOR

Ah, but do you really?

MATCH CUT TO:

FAITH

as she and Kase drive away from the cemetery in a late model convertible.

EXT - CEMETERY - SUNSET

Joe Dawson walks up to Duncan.

DAWSON

I feel like I stepped in on the wrong party.

Duncan keeps watching the convertible until it disappears over the next rise.

DUNCAN

(quietly)

Let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT - BAR - NIGHT

We recognize this place. It's where Connor and Duncan shared a last drink together.

Duncan and Joe Dawson now hunch over that same bar, staring into their drinks.

DAWSON

I swear, the man's a walking ghost.

EXT - SIDEWALK - NIGHT

FEET pound pavement.

DAWSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Whatever it is he's carrying around inside him, it's like he's dead already.

Glare of streetlights rake across Connor's face, his eyes fixed forward as if driven by a sense more powerful than sight.

Connor bumps shoulders with a passing PEDESTRIAN.

PEDESTRIAN

Eyy man-- watch it.

He continues on, oblivious.

INT - BAR - NIGHT

Duncan turns to Dawson.

DUNCAN

There are things you do in this life that damn you for eternity. They can't be changed. And they can't be undone. You carry these things to the grave, Joe, in the hopes that maybe, just maybe, you'll find some peace there. Some relief, even if it's oblivion.

(hollow smile)

But Immortals don't die. We just go on reliving our sins. Over and over again.

EXT - ANOTHER STREET - LATER

Connor stops. Lifts his eyes to the light.

A SOLITARY STONE CHURCH

stands before him in a bed of crawling mist. It seems eerily out of place amid the urban blight around it.

INT - BAR - NIGHT

Duncan downs the last of his drink, shoves off from the bar.

Dawson glances warily up at him.

DAWSON

Where now?

DUNCAN

There were two places I figured Connor was likely to go. One of 'em was here.

DAWSON

And the other?

DUNCAN

You're the "Watcher." You tell me.

EXT - STONE CHURCH - NIGHT

Connor climbs the steps, presses through the heavy wooden doors...

INT - CHURCH

. . . and prowls slowly through the dimly-lit interior. Icon SHADOWS loom large and menacing.

JUMP CUT:

He moves along the stations of the cross.

JUMP CUT:

He's stalking through the nave.

JUMP CUT:

Barging into the sacristy.

EXT - DAWSON'S CAR, DRIVING - NIGHT

Dawson's car screams past with a doppler howl.

DAWSON (O.S.)

It's an old abandoned church just off Canal...

INT - DAWSON'S CAR - SAME

Dawson's behind the wheel, gunning through narrow back streets.

DAWSON

. . . Perfect safe haven for a so-called priest, huh? "Our Lady of Sorrows."

(dry)

Kinda has a nice ring to it.

He fishtails around the next corner. Recovers.

DAWSON (cont'd)

I'll tell ya this-- if he's going after Kase, he's in for a rude awakening. The man's untouchable.

DUNCAN

So they tell me.

INT - CHURCH SANCTUARY - NIGHT

Connor stops before the darkened altar, senses BUZZING.

THE SHADOWED CRUCIFIX

stirs. Arms lift in the darkness.

Jacob Kase steps down off the cross, lingers in shadow.

KASE

I would grant you absolution. If I were a better man.

He turns and disappears out the back.

Connor follows.

Right past

KASE'S POSSE OF IMMORTALS

scattered throughout the pews, who simply track him with their eyes but make no move to follow.

WINSTON,

the tall Jamaican, leans over to Faith.

WINSTON

You know we're next, don't you?

Faith lowers the book she's reading-- the Holy Bible. Looks up.

FAITH

What?

WINSTON

Our days are numbered. You can see it in Kase's eyes.

FAITH

Do you believe in a hereafter, Winston?

WINSTON

All I know is I won't be hereafter Jacob Kase gets through with me. And that's all I care about right now.

Faith leans back against the hardback pew, closes her eyes.

FAITH

Yeah...

CUT TO:

EXT - REAR OF CHURCH - NIGHT

Kase strides just beyond the perimeter of the church grounds, then turns back to Connor.

Connor draws his sword, moves on Kase.

KASE

The ancient samurai vowed never to draw blood in anger. It defiled their sense of purpose.

(draws his own sword)

Of course they're also somewhat extinct.

He steps fearlessly up to Connor, places his neck against Connor's swordblade...

. . . just like he did with a certain late Immortal named Carlos.

CLOSE ON KASE'S SWORD

He opens his fingers and lets the sword DROP. It clatters useless to the ground.

KASE

Would you slaughter an unarmed man of God again, Connor? Would that finally put your soul to rest?

(low, taunting)

Then go ahead. Send me home.

BLOOD POUNDS with the rage pulsing through Connor's veins.

KASE (cont'd)

What's stopping you? Guilt? The nagging sense that maybe you, more than I, deserve to die?

Dawson's car pulls up in the background. Duncan jumps out.

KASE (cont'd)

Or somewhere along the way did you just lose your nerve?

Connor's sword digs into Kase's neck. Breaks skin.

DUNCAN

(approaching)

Don't do it, Connor.

CONNOR

(gritted)

Keep back.

KASE

(to Duncan)

You heard him. No Immortal can interfere with another's duel.

DUNCAN

He's playing you! Step back onto holy ground before it's too late--

Kase faces back to Connor.

KASE

Go ahead-- what better chance than now? Take your shot.

DUNCAN

Don't listen to him!

KASE

Do it. For your sweet mother...

FLASH

Caiolin burns at the stake. Suddenly startled,

KASE (cont'd)

Your Huguenot bitch in Navarre...

FLASH

rears back, THROWS Suddenly startled, the HORSE bearing a FRENCH DUCHESS her to the ground, breaking her neck.

KASE (cont'd)

Brenda Wyatt...

FLASH

BRENDA WYATT ("Highlander 1") is seen walking in CENTRAL PARK. A HIT-AND-RUN DRIVER MOWS HER DOWN from behind.

KASE (cont'd)

Rachel Ellenstein...

FLASH

RACHEL is BLOWN APART in the antique store she shared with Connor.

KASE (cont'd)

Tell me-- do they even begin to equal the devastation of an entire village?

BLADE TREMBLES in Connor's hands. Kase presses his neck even harder against Connor's blade. BLOOD trickles down his neck.

KASE (cont'd)

So close. Soooo close...

Duncan stands by, helpless to intervene.

KASE (cont'd)

Look at you. Even now, you're afraid you'll lose. That's your true fear isn't it?

(whispers low, seductive)

Oh, it's not the dying, my friend. I know that. That would be a blessing. It's the thought of giving up your essence to me. Making me even stronger by it.

One look in Connor's eyes and you know he's right.

KASE (cont'd)

What's wrong?

(almost a purr)

Don't you want to be inside me?

Connor slowly LOWERS his sword...

and FLICKS Kase's discarded sword back up into his hands.

Kase simply smiles and takes position.

Duncan can only look on helplessly as Kase takes the first offensive, driving Connor backward with dazzling -- almost casual-- swordplay.

KASE

I've taken more heads than you can possibly imagine.

His sword whistles across Connor's face, opens a THREE

INCH GASH over his eye.

KASE (cont'd)

Do you really want a taste of all those accumulated quickenings?

Connor stumbles backward again, blinded by his own dripping blood. Knows beyond a shadow of a doubt he's doomed.

Duncan knows it too. And it's killing him to watch.

Still Connor won't go down easy.

He manages a brief offensive, walking Kase backward on his toes.

Kase puts one hand behind his back, fencing-style, and goes to work on Connor's torso, crosshatching him in blood.

Connor lunges wildly. Kase parries effortlessly.

Kase now opens up a BLINDING BARRAGE on Connor. It's like duelling against lightning, so quick and unpredictable are Kase's strikes.

Constantly off balance, Connor still manages to NICK Kase in the cheek.

KASE (cont'd)

(touches scratch)

I'd almost forgotten what that felt like. Thank you.

He now turns it on full. Drives Connor up against a wall and pins him with his swordtip.

His eyes go impossibly cold.

KASE

I want you to think back to this moment in the endless nights ahead. And know that every time you close your eyes, from now to eternity, I'll be there.

(beat)

Ripping apart the ones you care about most.

He removes his sword and steps back.

KASE (cont'd)

It's not over, Connor MacLeod. It will never, never be over.

He turns and walks back toward the church.

Duncan does not step aside to let him pass-- their shoulders bump.

KASE (cont'd)

You, on the other hand, are on borrowed time.

He continues on, past the other Immortals who have gathered to watch the unfolding spectacle.

One-by-one, they turn and file back into the church behind Kase.

Connor stares into Duncan's eyes as if wanting to say something. Can't.

Instead, he turns and starts limping out across the empty lot.

Feeling the presence of another Immortal, Duncan slowly looks over at

FAITH

who stands at a distance. Watching him.

As their eyes meet, she, too, turns and melts back into the surrounding blackness.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT - DUBLIN ROWHOUSE (17TH CENTURY) - DAY

A BEARDED BRAWLER

CRASHES DOWN onto a wooden table. He takes the table cloth with him as he TUMBLES head over heels onto the floor in a cascade of soda bread and cabbage.

Miraculously (unless you're an Irishman) he spills not one drop of precious Guinness, which he hoists in a cheery salute to:

THE BRIDE AND GROOM

who sit laughing in the eye of an Irish hurricane. DUNCAN MACLEOD and CATHERINE MARY (KATE) DEVANEY-- aka "Faith"-- are a stunning couple that inspire joyful madness.

Things have progressed nicely since their chance encounter at the toll crossing.

BRAWLER

Let's have at it!

They kiss to a CHORUS of BOOS. So this time they REALLY KISS. Crowd goes wild.

AROUND THEM

REVELERS DANCE and FIGHT with equal abandon, making it almost impossible to tell the difference. But they stop like clockwork for every new toast and testimonial.

THE BEARDED BRAWLER

spears his mug into the air like a royal scepter.

BRAWLER

Happy is the bride that sees the sun! Sorry the corpse that sees the rain!

CLOSE ON BEER MUG

framed in a perfect BEAM of SUNLIGHT streaming through an open window.

FOLLOW THE SUNBEAM TO:

KATE who smiles back with her own inner radiance. Bedecked in flowers, her brown hair sweets low over white lace shoulders and cream skin.

She leans over RAUCOUS CHEERS and kisses Duncan, provoking a new RIOT of and UPRAISED GLASSES.

THE PIPERS

resplendent in their Celtic kilts, launch into the "Highland Fling.

Kate is instantly YANKED up onto her feet and into a ROUSING JIG.

Before Duncan can protest, he's HOISTED from his seat and FLUNG onto the dance floor.

Duncan and Kate link arms, goaded on by a circle of shouting, stumbling CLAPPERS.

With each new upshift in tempo, they spin faster and faster until they're hanging on for dear life.

SIGHT AND SOUND

gradually blur into a queasy sense of vertigo. But for Duncan, it's not just the headstrong mix of drink and passion.

It's the BUZZ of another Immortal.

He spins to a stop as his eyes come to rest on

CONNOR MACLEOD

who enters the room on a wave of silence.

Duncan breaks away from Kate, crosses over to Connor and wraps him in a bear hug.

DUNCAN

About time. I was beginning to wonder.

CONNOR

I was on a junk in the South China Sea when I got your notice. 12 hours ago.

DUNCAN

How...?

CONNOR

Don't ask.

Kate spins by on the arm of a new partner.

KATE

You're next, Connor MacLeod.

CONNOR

That better be no idle threat.

Duncan watches Kate with a rapturous smile.

DUNCAN

Well, I finally did it!

CONNOR

So it would appear.

DUNCAN

What do you think of her?

CONNOR

You know that's not an easy answer.

The edge in his voice is not lost on Duncan.

CONNOR (cont'd)

Outside.

EXT - PORCH - NIGHT

Connor stands with Duncan at the railing, staring out into the encroaching night.

CONNOR

You know she's like us.

DUNCAN

Yes. I sensed it the day we met her.

CONNOR

So you know that, like us, her immortality can only be triggered by the shock of a violent death.

Duncan looks off, as if purging the thought from his head.

CONNOR (cont'd)

It's what makes warriors of us all, Duncan. Good or bad, there seems a purpose to it.

DUNCAN

Yes. And without such a death, she'll simply grow old and die like any other. Is that what you dragged me out here to tell me?

Connor removes a uniquely-braided GOLDEN ROPE from his vest pocket.

It catches the candlelight with the glint of a thousand silken threads as he runs it lightly over his fingertips.

CONNOR

Many years after I was married, I came home to find Heather sitting on a stool in the kitchen, with a knife in one hand... and her hair in the other.

FLASH TO:

HEATHER, early-forties, her hair shorn to the scalp. She looks up at Connor with red-rimmed eyes and a bitter smile.

CONNOR (cont'd)

At first I was scared. Scared that she'd gone mad. And then angry, as if she'd somehow meant to hurt me by it.

BACK TO CONNOR AND DUNCAN:

CONNOR (cont'd)

When I asked her why she'd done such a thing to herself, her answer cut me to the quick. She said it was the one part of her that would not age. It would forever remain the same as when I first fell in love with her.

FLASH TO:

CONNOR burying Heather in a simple grave overlooking their home. Tears streak his face. He sinks to his knees in unspeakable anguish.

CONNOR (cont'd)

And that's how she wanted me to remember her.

BACK TO CONNOR AND DUNCAN:

Connor closes his fingers around the braid. Squeezes.

CONNOR (cont'd)

It's all I have now.

DUNCAN

I love Kate. I'll hold on to her as long as I can. That's all I can do.

Kate can be seen through the window behind them, exchanging dance partners with dizzying abandon.

CONNOR

If that's your intent, so be it.

Duncan swings over the rail and hops off the porch. Takes to the ground in long angry strides.

EXT - COBBLED STREET - NIGHT

Conner walks double time to catch up with him.

DUNCAN

Why are you telling me this?

CONNOR

Because I once loved a woman more than life itself. And I watched her die. Unlike you, I had no other choice.

DUNCAN

And I have a choice?! What would you have me tell her?!

CONNOR

I'd tell her nothing. She wouldn't believe you. They never do when it involves themselves.

DUNCAN

Then I can do nothing.

CONNOR

She's in the flower of her youth. Enjoy the moment and let it pass. If you think you can.

Duncan suddenly grabs Connor's shoulder, spins him around.

DUNCAN

You'd have me kill her?! Is that it?! Is that what you came all this way to tell me on my WEDDING NIGHT?!

CONNOR

I'd have you do what your heart-- and our conscience-- demand.

Duncan settles. Searches his eyes.

DUNCAN

And if it were you in my place?

Connor ponders. Then shakes his head.

CONNOR

I thank God I never had the choice.

He listens to the faint strains of music and laughter carried on the rising WIND.

CONNOR (cont'd)

Tell Catherine I'm sorry I couldn't stay longer.

He clasps Duncan by the forearm. Then turns and continues n down the cobbled lane leading from the wedding party.

TRANSITION BACK TO:

INT - SOHO HOTEL - NIGHT

Duncan lies sleepless in a nouveau-stark hotel room, somewhere in the bowels of Manhattan.

A half-empty bottle of Glenmorangie is there for company.

The door CREAKS OPEN, casting a single ribbon of light across the room.

It WIDENS to REVEAL THE SILHOUETTE OF A WOMAN.

Duncan closes his eyes. Feigns sleep.

She pads silently inside. Pulls the door closed.

Duncan remains still, breathing heavily.

The woman steals slowly up to the bedside. Pauses, as if quietly studying Duncan--

--then swings her leg up and straddles him.

Even in the murky halflight, he can still make out the familiar painted eyes framed by a tangle of bleached hair.

She says nothing, her expression lost under a veil of darkness. Only her rapid breathing betrays her tension.

Instead, she suddenly leans forward and KISSES HIM.

Passionately.

Duncan responds in kind. AS if powerless to do anything else...

LIGHTNING stitches the sky outside as--

They embrace.

Bodies entwine with an urgency that builds with the STORM raging outside.

ON THE NEXT THUNDERCRACK

TRANSITION TO:

EXT - EMPTY FIELD (DUBLIN) - NIGHT

ANGRY SHEETS OF RAIN rake the countryside as Duncan slogs imlessly through calf-deep mud. Still in his wedding arb, he's thoroughly drenched, as if he's been wandering this way for hours.

INT - ROWHOUSE - NIGHT

The last of the guests have gone or passed out beneath toppled kegs of ale.

Only Kate remains upright, her face etched with sober dread as

DUNCAN

appears in the doorway, rivulets of water pouring off his shoulders and brow.

For a while they just stare at one another, each lost to his own sense of foreboding.

Kate is the first to speak. Despite her stoic veneer, her voice comes out small and terrified.

KATE

If this is wrong, Duncan, tell me now.

Saying nothing, Duncan slowly crosses the floor and takes her hands in his own.

INT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CANDLES flicker in the storm-fed drafts that whistle through closed windows.

Kate lays Duncan's rainsoaked clothing across a nightstand then turns, regarding him naked for the very first time.

Duncan reaches out to touch her. She trembles.

Gently, as if unwrapping an object of unimaginable fragility, Duncan removes her clothing down to a simple floating chemise.

Then guides her down onto a canopied bed encircled by a hundred fresh-cut wildflowers.

HANDS

clasp, fingers dig into skin.

Whatever refinements Kate displayed in public are now happily abandoned.

She arches up under Duncan, puts her lips to his ear.

KATE

I'll love you forever.

On an OMINOUS THUNDERCLAP--

TRANSITION BACK TO:

INT - SOHO HOTEL - NIGHT

We're back in the present. Little has changed but the sheets.

And the fury of their lovemaking.

Each new THUNDERCRACK highlights a different aspect of their hunger-- their wet, glistening bodies STROBING FASTER AND FASTER until the act itself becomes abstracted from any sense of time or place.

FLASH FRAMES

stutter inside the lightning:

SILKEN HAIR

coursing over cream-colored breasts and a simple pewter cross.

EYES

similar in shape and color, that shift from painted to plain...

FINGERNAILS

that toggle between neo-goth BLACK and natural pink...

FAITH

throws back her head, biting back the shudders of release...

. . . and sinks down into the bed with a drawn sigh.

INT - DUBLIN BEDROOM - NIGHT

A SHADOW darkens Kate as she sleeps. It lingers there, deadly still.

DUNCAN

stands over her, gripped by indecision.

The fateful choice tears at him, even as he holds a DAGGER over her gently-rising chest.

His hand TREMBLES.

DUNCAN

(softly)

Forgive me.

KATE'S EYES

SNAP OPEN as the DAGGER PLUNGES INTO HER HEART.

For an instant their eyes meet. And in that single shattering moment, Duncan knows he chose wrong.

It's not just terror that passes through Kate's eyes. It's the incomprehensible pain of betrayal.

Kate gasps once, jerks and settles. Lies there dead, blood pooling across her nightgown.

Duncan stares down at her body, numb.

DUNCAN

I'm sorry...

On that look we TRANSITION BACK TO:

INT - HOTEL - NIGHT

The pain imprints on Duncan as if he's still clutching the knife.

DUNCAN

I'm sorry.

Whatever passion stirred Faith moments before is gone without a trace. Her eyes are as cold and empty as the dead Kate.

FAITH

You had no right.

DUNCAN

I was doing it for you. For us.

FLASH TO:

INT - DUBLIN BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kate CONVULSES BACK TO LIFE, eyes wild, insane.

Duncan reaches out to her, which only sends her reeling further into panic delirium. She swats at him, punching flailing...

DUNCAN

Now you're an immortal. Like me. It was the only way...

Words fall on deaf ears.

She wrenches out of his grip. Stumbles for the door, drenched in her own blood.

Leaves Duncan standing mindblown in her wake.

EXT - DUBLIN STREETS - NIGHT

Kate flees through wet empty streets-- barefoot, nightgown ripped and bloody, face contorted like a madwoman. Breath comes in ragged, whimpering gasps.

She trips, falls. Comes up running.

BACK TO PRESENT:

Faith climbs off the bed, throws on Duncan's shirt, whirls back, tears streaking her face like warpaint.

FAITH

You wanted this! I never asked for eternity! You forced it on me!

(screams)

IT WAS MY DECISION, NOT YOURS!!

DUNCAN

Would you have really understood?

FAITH

Understood? Which part?! The part about never having children? Or the endless, numbing sameness of it all?

(bitter laugh)

Or maybe you mean the part where you wake up one day and realize you're nothing but a whore racking up faceless affairs because whole lifetimes tick by so fast they don't even count anymore!

She wraps her arms around herself as if to stem the escaping demons.

Duncan remains silent, taking it all in.

FAITH (cont'd)

Here's the kicker, Duncan. I came here for one reason and one reason only. To see if I could feel again. Anything.

She walks out, leaving the door hanging wide in her wake.

INT - HALLWAY

Faith reaches for the stairwell door as--

--DUNCAN'S ARM LANCES OUT, holding it shut.

DUNCAN

(leaning in)

I'm watching my best friend driven insane by something that happened four centuries ago. And there's nothing I can do to stop it. Because those people are dead and nobody can bring them back.

Faith struggles to open the door. Duncan holds firm.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

But I'm lucky. You know why?

FAITH

Let go!

DUNCAN

I'm lucky because my crime can still be forgiven.

FAITH

LET GO!!

DUNCAN

As long as you're still alive, there's at least the chance. It could take years. Centuries even. It may never happen...

Faith is now PUSHING FURIOUSLY on the door.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

But at least I can still carry the hope inside me. That's one blessing of immortality. There's always tomorrow.

He lets go of the door and steps back.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

Even for you.

Faith shoves her way past him and disappears into the stairwell.

CUT TO:

EXT - MANHATTAN SKYLINE - NIGHT

CONNOR MACLEOD stands on a ROOFTOP, sword in hand, face upturned to the bitter heavens. Stinging WIND and RAIN slash at his face.

He doesn't even blink.

CUT TO:

EXT - NEAR CHURCH - NIGHT

Seen through a CAMCORDER VIEWFINDER, our roving POV wends its way past a couple fixing junkies up to a

GARAGE

where WINSTON hunkers over his bike making repairs. Kase's church looms in the background like a veiled threat.

CALVIN (O.S.)

Win-ston.

WINSTON

Shut that thing off.

CALVIN (O.S.)

Hey, c'mon.

WINSTON

SHUT IT OFF!

SCREEN BLACKS OUT as Winston slams his hand over the lens, ENDING
CAMCORDER POV.

Calvin sets it down.

CALVIN

Awright...

WINSTON

I'm out. I'm leaving.

CALVIN

You're out. You're out... You don't g&z out.

WINSTON

Watch me.

CALVIN

You saw what he did to Carlos. He's Genghis the fucking Hun, man. You
live his way or you die your way. Be grateful you got the choice.

Winston looks off.

WINSTON

We could take him.

CALVIN

Huh? Say how much you value your life?

WINSTON

Forty-three guineas. Saw the bill of sale myself. Kingston Jamaica, August 14th, 1813.

CALVIN

Sorry there, Cinque', but I got a bigger price goin on this unit.

WINSTON

I watched Connor MacLeod stand up to Kase tonight. Got me thinking.

CALVIN

What about.

WINSTON

That maybe my soul wasn't part of the deal after all.

Calvin considers his point.

CALVIN

You really think we can take him?

WINSTON

The man can't stop a bullet. I know that much. But I need your help.

CALVIN

Yeah and who takes his head, huh? Gets that bucket fulla lucky charms. You, Mr Cool?

(beat)

Who's gonna be master then?

INSERT - CALVIN'S CAMERA

and that little glowing RECORD LIGHT...

EXT - RUBBLED CEMETERY - DAWN

FOLLOW CONNOR MACLEOD

CUT TO:

as he reaches the crest of the cemetery ridge.

He sags against a solitary windswept oak, slides down until he's sitting cross-legged at the base of the tree. Eyes wide, unblinking.

BEFORE HIM

stand those TWELVE DEAD IMMORTALS from The Sanctuary, directly over their burial plots.

Their heads are missing.

CONNOR

looks on impassively. Even as--

THOUSANDS MORE

now stipple the barren landscape. All headless, in period dress spanning untold centuries. The forgotten casualties of an endless, impossible war.

Connor nods solemnly.

CONNOR

Soon.

He blinks.

The specters are gone.

TIME LAPSE ON CONNOR:

DAY becomes NIGHT becomes DAY.

And still he sits there, unmoved, as if ready to embrace the rest of eternity from this one desolate spot.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT - CEMETERY RIDGE - DAY

Connor remains sitting against the tree as

A SHADOW

slices over him. He slowly tilts his gaze upward. Squints.

DUNCAN (O.S.)

There's supposed to be an end to all this, right? A final answer...

Duncan slides down next to him. Gazes out at the trackless ocean.

DUNCAN

Isn't that the "prize" we're all butchering each other to win?

CONNOR

I already know the answer. The "prize"-- the real prize-- is just to close your eyes and see nothing.

DUNCAN

I don't believe that.

CONNOR

You think the Game is still about good against evil? A better world? Look around. Who among us really deserves to win?

DUNCAN

Not Jacob Kase.

CONNOR

And who's going to stop him? You? Me?

DUNCAN

There has to be a way.

Connor looks off. Nods.

CONNOR

Oh, there's a way, kinsman. There's a way. But I don't believe you have the guts to take it.

DUNCAN

Try me.

Connor stands up. Offers a hand to Duncan. Hauls him upright.

CONNOR

Alright then.

HE SUDDENLY LASHES OUT WITH HIS SWORD.

Duncan barely catches Connor's blade with his own.

DUNCAN

What're you doing?!

CONNOR

Don't you know? The better of us will take the other's gift. Pray it'll be enough.

Duncan lowers his blade.

DUNCAN

I won't do it.

CONNOR

Then you'll die.

Again, Connor STRIKES. Again, Duncan barely escapes with his head.

And settles into a fighting stance.

DUNCAN

It can't end like this!

CONNOR

It already has. Goodbye, brother.

He SWINGS FOR DUNCAN'S NECK.

Steel RINGS against steel.

Clansman against clansman.

CUT TO:

INT - CHURCH SANCTUARY - DAY

Faith sits in a center pew, head bowed, deep in thought. Or prayer. Hard to tell with somebody like Faith.

Kase sits down beside her.

KASE

You were with him.

He curls his nose, as if he can still smell the sin.

KASE (cont'd)

Woman is a temple built upon a sewer.

FAITH

Glad I can help you feel a bit better about yourself there, Jacob.

KASE

Remember what you were when I first found you? A whore. Now look. A liberated woman.

FAITH

Fuck you.

Kase runs a delicate finger across her neck.

KASE

Be grateful I don't this minute remove your pretty little heafod.

FAITH

(looks up, cold)

Holy ground, lover. It's a bitch, ain't it?

CUT TO:

EXT - CEMETERY RIDGE - DAY

Two figures dot the faraway ridge as the savage music of their swordplay PEALS out across the barren countryside.

MOVING CLOSER,

we watch these timeless warriors exchange strikes that would drive lesser men into the ground. Each gifted in his own way, neither gaining full advantage over the other...

. . . they both gradually succumb to EXHAUSTION.

CLOSER:

Connor and Duncan finally lower their swords, panting and spent.

DUNCAN

(hollow rasp)

Enough?

CONNOR

(barely audible)

Enough...

And that's as much as either can say as they suck back great gulping lungfulls of air.

A little color finally returns to Duncan's cheeks. He mops his face with his sleeve.

DUNCAN

Next time I won't hold back.

CONNOR

Nor I.

Dragging his sword like a half-ton barbell, Duncan turns and makes his way back toward the "resting tree.

CONNOR

closes his eyes and HOISTS HIS SWORD...

CONNOR

(whispered)

Remember well, old friend.

DUNCAN

feels, more than sees, the ONCOMING BLADE.

He turns into the ARC of CONNOR'S SWING--

SLOW MOTION

He reacts on pure instinct, SWORD LIFTING, BODY PIVOTING with the DRIVING FORCE of CONNOR'S THRUST...

FLASH TO:

CONNOR TEACHING THAT SAME MOVE TO DUNCAN BACK IN 1627.

FLASH BACK TO:

CONNOR'S SWORD

as it GRAZES Duncan's side.

DUNCAN'S KATANA

SWINGS UP with the same vicious thrust, CATCHES CONNOR UNDER THE CHIN...

Connor doesn't flinch.

TIME SUSPENDS the instant before blade meets flesh...

CONNOR'S VOICE

The game is not about survival, Duncan. It's about living. In the end, it's all that matters.

REAL TIME--

THE BLADE CUTS CLEAN THROUGH CONNOR'S NECK WITH UNSTOPPABLE MOMENTUM.

Duncan CRIES OUT as he follows through, BLOOD staining his blade with the crushing reality of what he has just committed.

He sinks to his knees...

. . . and SCREAMS TO THE HEAVENS.

The heavens answer back with THUNDER, LIGHTNING and GALE FORCE WINDS that seem to come from everywhere at once.

PURE ESSENCE--

--HOWLS out of CONNOR'S BODY.

DUNCAN

CON-NORRRRRRR!!

It SURGES UPWARD into endless SHEETS of LIGHTNING.

Duncan CONVULSES at the epicenter of a GROWING CLASH between EARTH and SKY.

SHOCKWAVES POUND through his skull, triggering

A LAST FLEETING VISION OF CONNOR MACLEOD:

Walking with Heather across an open field. He turns and looks back at Duncan.

CONNOR'S EYES

shine with a look of ultimate peace and transcendence.

He seems to be gazing straight into Duncan's soul. And smiling at what he sees as--

A FINAL BLAST OF ESSENCE

RIPS through Duncan's BRAIN.

EXT - HIGHRISE - NIGHT

DISSOLVE TO:

Duncan stands alone on the rooftop, stripped to the waist, moving slowly through an elaborate kata.

The precision of his movement belies the chaos inside him.

He windmills the katana over his head, faster and faster, until he suddenly RELEASES IT--

THE SWORD

PINWHEELS through the night sky, arcing out across the open space between buildings...

Duncan watches its long, lofting trajectory...

. . .then takes off RUNNING. He reaches the edge of the rooftop and LEAPS.

WIDE

Legs cycling through empty air, he traces a matching arc directly under the far-flung sword.

Like a long-jumper stretching for that last inch of sand, Duncan HYPER-EXTENDS for the next rooftop.

EXT - NEXT ROOFTOP

HIS LEADING FOOT

hits the edge-- digs in, pivots and sets.

HIS HAND

THRUSTS UPWARD as the sword grip SLAPS INTO HIS OPEN PALM. Fingers wrap around the ivory hilt, slowly lowering it down to eye-level.

GO IN CLOSE ON THOSE EYES

and see a new Duncan MacLeod. Stronger. Deadlier. A man coolly aware of his own destiny.

CUT TO:

EXT - ARMORY - DAY

Dawson's car pulls up to the generic cinderblock building that now stands unguarded and abandoned.

INT - ARMORY - DAY

Dawson enters, squints into the darkness.

The interior looks as if it's stood fallow for the last three decades. No giger-chair, no gothic restraints. No evidence the Watchers ever took up temporary residence here.

Except for MATTHEW, who emerges from the stale halflight to confront Dawson.

MATTHEW

I'm a bit surprised to see you again. All things considered.

Dawson just stands there, hands plunged inside his coat pockets.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

As you can see, we had to move on. Find a new Sanctuary.

DAWSON

It's wrong. What you're doing. It's inhuman.

MATTHEW

Ah, but they're not human, really. Are they?

DAWSON

Gimme a reason, Matthew.

MATTHEW

It's for the good of us all. You know that.

DAWSON

Gimme a reason.

Matthew cocks his head like the RCA dog.

MATTHEW

Because we must. It's that simple. And if you get in our way again, there will be very serious consequences.

DAWSON

Gimme a good reason.

Matthew pulls a gun. Aims it at Dawson's heart.

MATTHEW

I'm sorry to have to do this, Joe.

He pulls the trigger...

as TWO SLUGS pound into his chest. Matthew topples backward, dead.

Dawson palms the gun still concealed in his coat pocket. Nods.

DAWSON

Reason enough.

CUT TO:

EXT - NEW YORK STREET - DAY

Kase is roaring through narrow streets in a low-slung convertible, Faith at his side. With utter disregard for speed or care, he guns it madly in shrieking turns.

INT - CONVERTIBLE, DRIVING

Faith grips the dashboard two-handed.

FAITH

Slow down.

KASE

Adrenalin's good for the sex drive.

FAITH

I'm not amused, Jacob.

She reaches over and slaps on her shoulder harness.

KASE

Thought maybe you needed a little more excitement. You know, spice up our relationship a bit.

WIDE

He OVERSTEERS, caroms off several parked cars, recovers...

KASE (cont'd)

I mean, isn't that why you went back to Duncan MacLeod? The risk?

FAITH

I don't know what you're trying to prove.

Kase puts an arm around her shoulder...

KASE

Why do I have to prove anything to you?

.... as his foot flattens the accelerator. ENGINE WHINES.

KASE (cont'd)

I can have anything I want already.

FAITH

Except me. And that bugs the shit out of you, doesn't it?

KASE

Not really.

AT THE NEXT TURN

it's clear he'll never make it, he's going too fast. Kase only smiles.

Releasing the wheel, he stands in his seat, lifts his arms above his head and SHOUTS in exultation as--

--the car EXPLODES into the wall.

It's all over in a breath. Accordioned metal, drooling radiator, and Faith, slumped over the dash.

Kase lies sprawled and battered on the pavement, thrown some distance from the wreckage. He's clearly taken the worst of the impact.

FAITH

stirs and slowly wrenches herself free of the smoking mangle of steel and plastic.

She reaches back and pulls Kase's sword free of the wreckage.

With single-minded determination, she limps over to Kase's body, face-up in his own pooling blood.

A disbelieving PEDESTRIAN pauses in shock.

Faith gives her a twisted smile.

FAITH

Don't mind us.

Pedestrian SCURRIES OFF as Faith lifts the sword over her head and brings it WHISTLING DOWN across Kase's neck.

With inhuman reflexes, Kase awakens and catches her wrist in the same heartbeat.

Eyes narrow.

KASE

Does this mean it's over?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - KASE'S CHURCH - DAY

Kase steps up to the back entrance, alone.

THE DOOR hangs slightly ajar, which clearly disturbs him.

INT - CHURCH SANCTUARY - DAY

Kase enters the main room to find Calvin and Sarge asleep on their pews. He kicks the first pew, awakens both with a start.

KASE

Who left the back door open?

CALVIN

Huh?

Kase looks to Sarge.

SARGE

I dunno.

KASE

Where's Cracker Bob? He was supposed to be watching the back.

Calvin and Sarge both shrug.

KASE (cont'd)

(sotto)

Infants.

He whirls, stalks out.

INT - SACRISTY

Kase enters his dark, cluttered office, SLAMMING the door behind him.

FLICKS ON THE LIGHT

and stops cold.

A SWORD

JUTS from a small wooden table...

. . . right through CRACKER BOB, who lies skewered to the tabletop.

WRAPPED AROUND THE SWORDHILT

is Caiolin MacLeod's unique silver-and-wood CRUCIFIX.

The message is not lost on Kase.

BOB'S EYES

suddenly flutter open. First thing he sees is that sword hilt sticking rudely out of his own chest.

CRACKER BOB

Ah-- Ahhh-- AHHHHHHH!!

KASE

Shut up.

He reaches forward and JERKS the sword out of Bob, and with it

A SINGLE SCRAP OF PAPER

impaled on the blade.

It bears just one word, scrawled in Bob's plentiful blood.

GLENFINNAN

Bob sits up on the table, wild-eyed, as Kase calmly opens his fingers and lets the paper slide from his fingers.

CUT TO:

EXT - LITTLE ITALY, ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

Glitter lights and milling tourists. Row upon row of gimmicky Italian restaurants.

INT - ITALIAN RESTAURANT, PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

Jacob Kase and his acolytes dine at a long table set against a gaudy backdrop of faux Roman ruins, babbling fountains and plastic holly.

It all imparts a whiff of "Last Supper" pomp to the proceeding.

Which is not lost on the other Immortals, who glance around warily while eating, as suspicious of each other as they are of Kase.

Nor does anyone miss the fact that there are no windows in this particular room.

CLOSE ON WINSTON

He stares into his pasta, beading sweat.

BENEATH THE TABLE

his fingers curl around the cold steel of a .38 SPECIAL wedged between his knees. He inches the gun upward toward the table rim as...

Kase suddenly stands up in the center.

KASE

A toast...

All heads turn.

Gun freezes in Winston's lap, just hidden from view.

KASE (cont'd)

I see tonight as a celebration of the spirit.

(raises his glass)

Here's to all of you who continue to
stand by me...

(smiles at Winston)

. . . even those who might waver at times.

Winston stiffens, fears that Kase is on to him.

And when Calvin averts his gaze, he knows.

Still, he raises his glass. As do the others.

KASE (cont'd)

You are my flock. You nourish my soul.

It's now or never for Winston. His moment of truth.

Kase's eyes slowly drift over to meet his.

SLOW MOTION,

Kase tips back his glass and drinks, eyes locked on Winston.

Winston responds in kind, gulping down his wine as he slips the gun
back into his pocket.

He shoves off from the table.

WINSTON

Excuse me.

KASE

Where you going?

WINSTON

Toilet.

KASE

Sit sit. I'm not through with my toast yet.

WINSTON

Can't wait.

He angles for the door.

KASE

I'm almost finished. Sit.

Winston reaches for the doorknob. Locked.

He swivels back. Sees death in Jacob Kase's eyes. His death.

KASE (cont'd)

It'll all be over in a few more seconds.

A cold spike of fear shoots through every single one of them...

. . . as Kase continues.

KASE (cont'd)

You've all been a part of a great quest. A four hundred year quest for justice.

He lifts up an exquisitely-crafted sword.

KASE (cont'd)

And here, my friends, is the instrument of that justice. It's called the "Colichmarde." Finest sword known to man.

The blade WHISTLES upright.

KASE (cont'd)

Blessed by Popes and baptized in blood. I only break it out for special occasions.

He kisses the perfect cross formed by the juncture of blade and quillons.

KASE (cont'd)

It sings like an angel. Just listen.

Winston jerks for his gun.

In a SUDDEN BLUR of STEEL and BLOOD, Kase beheads Winston and dispatches the next two of his stunned acolytes with blinding efficiency.

TONGUES OF LIQUID ENERGY coil up and around Kase's body. But he keeps right on coming.

The others scatter like roaches.

ESSENCE PULSES off walls and ceiling, SHATTERING STATUARY, HURLING FURNITURE...

. . .before MERGING with the WALKING INFERNO that is now Jacob Kase.

His sword BLAZES through the remaining victims, trailing STREAKS OF BLUE FIRE.

One after another, they drop headless to the concrete,

triggering

A FULL-ON MULTIPLE-QUICKENING.

THE NEXT WAVE OF ESSENCE

SLAMS into Kase front on. His knees BUCKLE.

ANOTHER

Hits him BROADSIDE, buffeting him one way as

YET ANOTHER

POUNDS him from the opposite- side, rocking him back center and IMMOBILIZING HIM inside an omni-directional CRUSH of LIGHT AND SOUND that WHITES OUT THE FRAME.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS - DAY

A THICK CLINGING FOG, enshrouds the rocky highlands. Somewhere along the invisible coastline below, a foghorn MOANS.

The skeletal remains of an ancient Gaelic CASTLE loom spectral gray above

JACOB KASE

who stands before an ANCIENT CELTIC MONOLITH (familiar from Glenfinnan's town square) revelling in the changeless land of his birth.

KASE

(calling out)

Where else could stir the blood of a Scotsman too long of this earth and too far from home?

Kase picks his way across the uneven ground, unable to see beyond the reach of his own arm.

KASE (cont'd)

(filling his lungs)

I can nae get enough of it.

He draws his sword, extends it outward until the tip disappears from sight.

A LOW SCRAPING OF METAL ON STONE taunts him from somewhere out there in the slow-drifting whiteness

Kase's sword TWITCHES toward the SOUND.

Just the FAINTEST OUTLINE of a FIGURE COALESCES BRIEFLY inside the fog.

KASE

Ah, what's this? Hamlet's ghost?

The FIGURE melts back into silent nothingness.

KASE (cont'd)

I'm afraid even the cloak of fog won't help you overcome a sizeable disadvantage.

A DIFFERENT SCRAPING SOUND

spins him around to see

ANOTHER GHOSTLY FIGURE

looming over him from a narrow stone outcropping.

Kase masks a slight tinge of concern.

KASE (cont'd)

It's always good to see two fellow clansmen banded together in a common cause. But I hope you haven't sunk to the level of a simultaneous ambush.

Once again, the figure steps backward into the enveloping

fog. Disappears.

Slightly unnerved, Kase jerks around. No sign of anyone. Just that infernal mist.

A SOFT SCRAPING of SWORD against ROCK swivels him back around to his original position.

CLOSE ON KASE

His nerves are starting to shred.

He turns several full rotations, craning for a glimpse of his tormentors.

And then he sees it...

AN APPARITION WIELDING A SWORD.

Kase LUNGES for it. And this time, it doesn't retreat.

Swords CLANG in thunderous overture as

TWO SPECTRES IN THE FOG

battle for position on tenuous footing.

KASE drives his adversary backward into a BLUNTED STONE WALL, leaving him no avenue of escape.

Their swords LOCK UP and Kase suddenly finds himself FACE TO FACE WITH--

DUNCAN MACLEOD.

You can sense Kase's bitter disappointment.

KASE

Not at all who I'd hoped for.

CLOSE ON DUNCAN'S EYES

as they flick to a point iust behind Kase's head.

CLOSE ON KASE'S EYES

as he realizes he's been had.

He SWINGS FULLY AROUND TO FACE CONNOR--

--and sees that NOBODY'S THERE!

Too late-- he SWINGS BACK TO DUNCAN-- and IMPALES HIMSELF ON DUNCAN'S SWORD.

DUNCAN

(through clenched teeth)

I'm afraid Connor couldn't be here. But don't worry, he's with us in spirit.

Still gripping his sword two-fisted, Duncan seems to surge with newfound strength.

DUNCAN

He gave himself for this moment. And I shan't let him down.

Duncan SHOVES OFF from Kase and goes to work on him with a VENGEANCE.

WHAT KASE SEES:

A frightening, hallucinatory vision of a DUAL ADVERSARY-- one that CHANGES back and forth in the flux of swirling mist.

As Duncan's blade BLURS PAST, Kase sees CONNOR. With the very next SWING, he sees Duncan again.

Then Connor. Then Duncan. Connor. Duncan...

Kase rubs his eyes with the back of his hand. Shakes it off. Can't be.

Duncan buffets Kase backward with several dazzling combinations, then goes inside, tough and ugly.

Kase seems suddenly overwhelmed, physically and mentally, as he's driven onto his back by sheer relentless overdrive.

Duncan SLASHES DOWN for the killing blow, which Kase BARELY DEFLECTS.

He SLASHES AGAIN. And AGAIN. Each time Kase barely escapes with his head intact.

Duncan keeps up this relentless barrage, hacking down in every conceivable direction, looking for an opening, finding none.

With each increasingly-leaden DOWNSTROKE, Duncan is losing strength...

. . . and Kase is regaining his.

Kase BATTLES BACK TO HIS FEET, deftly siezes the advantage.

KASE

(savage smile)

This is not a game won on points, I'm afraid.

He drives Duncan back with an answering exchange that leaves no doubt of his superior ability.

In a single massive THRUST, Kase STRIPS Duncan's sword and sends him flying.

Duncan lands on his back, weaponless.

Kase steps up to the katana, scoops his toe under it and FLICKS IT BACK TO DUNCAN.

Then waves him back to his feet. A cat playing with his prey.

Both combatants square off... and RESUME.

KASE

That's the beauty of eternity. The fun never stops.

He THRUSTS-- spiking Duncan clear through the shoulder.

Duncan hangs up on the blade, unable to move. Grimaces in pain.

Setting boot to chest, Kase KICKS Duncan off his sword and sends him spiralling backward.

Duncan reaches out to break his fall--

--but there's no ground beneath him.

He PLUMMETS OFF a SLANTED CLIFF. Bounces at fifty feet, then tumbles clear to the bottom.

Kase steps up to the edge, scowls.

A FRESHLY-CUT QUARRY

has been hewn from the hilltop by the massive sword of modern technology.

EARTH MOVING EQUIPMENT several stories tall lines the inner basin.

KASE

What have they done to my mountain?!

He gazes down at DUNCAN'S BODY sprawled at the base of the cliff. Then starts down after him.

EXT - BOTTOM OF QUARRY - DAY

Duncan crawls over to his sword...

. . . as Kase picks his way down the steep incline.

Duncan spikes his sword into the ground and uses it to climb upright.

One look at his battered body and you know this fight is over. He just stands there, hunched over his sword, grimly waiting for Kase to reach him and deliver the killing blow.

It doesn't take long. Kase stops, regards him with contempt.

KASE

Don't make it easy. I hate that.

DUNCAN

You're breaking my heart.

KASE

Pick up!

Duncan shakes his blood-streaked head.

KASE

PICK UP!

DUNCAN

It's always been too easy for you, Kase. No reason this time should be any different.

He plucks his sword out of the ground...

. . . and TURNS HIS BACK TO KASE.

DUNCAN (cont'd)

Take your best shot.

He hobbles off, sword hanging limp at his side.

Kase starts TREMBLING WITH RAGE.

KASE

MACLEOD!

Duncan ignores him, keeps walking.

About now, we should have a pretty good idea what Duncan has in mind.

But Kase doesn't have a clue.

DUNCAN'S POV:

For a fleeting moment, Connor stands before Duncan, more mist than flesh.

He opens his arms wide.

CONNOR'S APPARITION

Remember weil, old friend.

He DISSOLVES AWAY as Kase hoists sword over shoulder...

KASE (cont'd)

MAC-LEOD!!

. ..and CHARGES...

Which is exactly what Duncan expected.

USING THE SAME MOVE CONNOR TAUGHT HIM--

--Duncan PIVOTS WITH the THRUST, catching Kase completely off guard and off balance.

This time, no force of man or nature can keep Duncan's sword from hitting home.

He SLICES UPWARD with a ROAR OF DEFIANCE...

. ..and FOLLOWS THROUGH.

ON KASE:

He stands there, head miraculously still intact, a look of bewildered relief.

Duncan simply POPS his sword butt into Kase's face.

The head comes easily away from the neck and falls.

KASE'S POV spins END OVER END through the air, bounces twice and comes to a rest SIDEWAYS.

And that's how we first see his HEADLESS BODY, sprawled across the ground.

KASE'S SEVERED HEAD

blinks with sudden recognition. And now he knows. This is the worst part of losing your head-- those last few seconds of cold lucidity.

DUNCAN

opens his arms to

HEAVES UNDERFOOT.

WIDE - THE QUARRY

the ULTIMATE QUICKENING as THE EARTH

WALLS

EXPLODE like a circle of VOLCANOES venting into the center.

Duncan CLAWS UPWARD on a GROUNDSWELL OF RAW ENERGY as DIRT, ROCK, ASH and SMOKE OBLITERATE THE BASIN.

The SEISMIC CONVULSIONS GRADUALLY SUBSIDE.

The dust settles.

And the blighted landscape falls into an unearthly SILENCE, blind to its own buried secrets.

HOLD on the trailing wisps of smoke as

THE GROUND SHUDDERS

and DUNCAN'S KATANA BREAKS THE SURFACE.

It PLUNGES UPWARD ONE, TWO, THREE MORE TIMES, pulverizing dirt and stone.

HANDS FOLLOW, clawing their way up through the loosely- mounded earth until DUNCAN'S HEAD AND SHOULDERS APPEAR.

As if the earth itself is giving birth to a new generation of Immortal.

He rolls out onto the ground, gasping, triumphant. Reborn.

One inch at a time, he slowly rises to his feet.

As we KEEP ON RISING up into a FIERY HIGHLAND SUNSET.

TILT BACK DOWN TO:

EXT - HIGHLANDS ABOVE GLENFINNAN

Duncan stands over a freshly-dug grave. Onto the simple stone, he's chisled:

HEATHER MACLEOD

BELOVED WIFE OF CONNOR

And beneath it:

CONNOR MACLEOD

BELOVED HUSBAND OF HEATHER

Duncan's eyes glisten with an unspeakable loss. And a comfort in knowing that his friend has finally found the peace of eternity.

DUNCAN

yours is the greater prize my friend. Welcome home.

LINGER ON DUNCAN as we DISSOLVE SLOWLY TO...

EXT - MANHATTAN SKYLINE - DAWN

FAITH stands sentinel-like atop a bluff overlooking the Hudson River and the insignificant island of Manhattan beyond.

Her trademark slashes of facepaint and hair dye have been shed like molted skin. What remains is a serene beauty that defies fashion or vanity.

Her faraway eyes BLINK with a sudden, frightening clarity.

THE BUZZ sets her reflexes snapping as she SPINS AROUND--

--and CATCHES the COLICHMARDE, handle first.

DUNCAN

follows, strolling toward her with hands loose at his side.

Faith runs her finger down the shimmering blade.

FAITH

(considers)

So... what am I supposed to do next -- kiss you or take your head?

Duncan steps up to her, smiling enigmatically.

DUNCAN

The choice is yours.

FADE OUT:

THE END