

#4

Witchblade

Written
by

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(Based on the Top Cow comic)

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1 THE SURFACE OF THE SUN 1

as immense flares shoot off it like tendrils.

2 EXTREMELY TIGHT 2

on the second hand of a regular old fashioned analogue alarm clock as the alarm goes off and the percussive music bed kicks in.

TIGHT

on weathered and baggy 501 Levi's as they're pulled on, buttoned up and belted.

A .38mm snub nose Smith & Wesson is stuck in an ankle holster.

A Glock with trinium sights is placed in a Yaqui slide.

A leather jacket is zipped up, and a full coverage Bell helmet grabbed off of a table -- a modern day knight off to do battle.

Dark combat boots stride to a door that opens and then slams shut. . A red flannel shirt hangs on the back of the door.

We hear a motorcycle growl to a start.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS - DAY 3

The Ducati 650 crotch rocket sweeps down the dirty boulevard.

SUBJECTIVE POV

as the rider starts to wind out the Italian cycle, a machine built only for those who are very serious about getting their speed on or their rocks off. He splits lanes, power shifts, apexes the turns and then heads along an abandoned expanse of Hudson riverside cement, curving smoothly around stripped down cars and overturned dumpsters, a no man's land that is obviously a short cut.

CUT TO:

4 THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE 4

As the rider flies across the bridge, so does the camera, in an aerial shot that then reveals the city of Manhattan - back lit and imposing - almost Gothic.

CUT TO:

5 EXT 33RD PRECINCT - DAY 5

The bike rider comes to a brisk halt and pulls off his helmet. . . HER helmet actually; meet Sara Pezzini, NYPD Homicide Detective. Tough, smart and yeah . . . very hot.

6 EXT/INT. UNMARKED CAR - SAME TIME 6

The window rolls down and seated behind the wheel is Michael Yee, third generation Asian American, a few years older than Sara.

YEE

Hey Pez.

She throws her helmet in the back of the car and gets in the beat up Crown Victoria without a word. The car pulls out into traffic. Pez is still silent. Yee looks at his partner for a beat.

YEE (cont'd)

You know what today is?

He holds up The New York Post.

YEE (cont'd).

It's November 11th, eleven, eleven.
Your horoscope says today is a special day.

PEZ

(blank)

Every day above ground is a special day.

YEE

You've got a point there. . . as far as I know.

Yee realizes that he isn't clearing her up.

PEZ

Sorry Yee.

YEE
 (giving in)
 I know how pissed off you are.

PEZ
 No you don't.

YEE
 We'll stay on Gallo and sweat him. Sooner
 or later something'll give.

PEZ
 Yeah - his heart as a hollow point hits
 it.

YEE
 We don't know that it was him.

PEZ
 You're right, we don't. I do. We just
 gotta prove it. Somehow.

Yee hands her his giant styrofoam cup of coffee. She takes a
 hit and passes it back.

PEZ (cont'd)
 How's the wife.

YEE
 That was a hyper segue.

PEZ
 I'm good at those.

YEE
 And getting better. Must be a Gemini
 thing. You know, mercurial and all.

They drive in silence for a beat.

ANGLE ON PEZ

through the window - the reflections of New York City
 streaming by in front of her face - as she thinks of her
 recently deceased friend Maria.

The reflections in the window become PROJECTIONS OF HER
 MEMORY.

Two little girls blowing out candles on a birthday cake.

PEZ (VO)
 Our birthdays were only a day apart.

Two little girls, two absolutely adorable little girls, a young Sara and a young Maria, making bubbles with little wands. (These images are a strong contrast to the hard ass Pez we've just met)

PEZ (VO)

We used to do everything together.

A 15 year old Pezzini grabs a Kool cigarette out of her friend Maria's mouth, takes a drag and starts coughing like crazy.

PEZ

I still don't understand how a 15 year old could like menthols?

YEE

Huh.

The reflections revert back to the grit of NYC.

PEZ

Nothing.

She looks over at him. Re-entering reality.

PEZ (cont'd)

You wearing your vest?

YEE

Of course.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. THE CLOISTERS - LATE AFTERNOON 7

A large wooded park on the upper tip of Manhattan. A gray day... a drizzle that's half-rain half-snow.

It's lonely tonight, not a lot of visitors to this museum that looks like a medieval monastery. We hear a distant P.A. Voice.

P.A. VOICE

Ladies and gentlemen...

8 INT. THE CLOISTERS - SAME TIME

8

P.A. VOICE

The Cloisters will be closing in fifteen minutes.

The handful of people in here look at their watches, check maps of the building to see if there are any final exhibits they want to see. Most head for the exit.

A ROOM

Filled with medieval art and artifacts... ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT pages in glass cases... Miniature handcarved CATHEDRALS in gold leaf... And in the middle of all this -

IAN NOTTINGHAM. Long dark hair. Brutally handsome. Nottingham stands extremely still, as if he too is one of the displays. He looks at a

A WALL OF PAINTINGS

Medieval Saints. George slays the dragon. Stephen is stoned by the crowd. Joan of Arc leads her army into battle.

It's Joan of Arc we're interested in. She raises her arm, brandishing a sword that radiates the fire of God, her army behind her.

A DISPLAY CASE

In front of the Joan of Arc painting. A small brass tag on the case: *From the private collection of Kenneth Irons.* In the case, sundry items that belonged to Joan: a rosary... a knife... an armored gauntlet -- old, gray, lifeless. A few stones dot the surface of the armored glove, one larger than the rest, but you wouldn't call them jewels.

Ian Nottingham stares at the gauntlet for a beat, looks at his watch, flips open a tiny cell phone and hits a speed dial number. He waits a moment, then speaks.

NOTTINGHAM

I'm ready.

We start to PULL BACK from Nottingham, MOVING THROUGH the walls to -

9 EXT. CLOISTERS - SAME TIME - HIGH ANGLE

9

Reveal that for all its rustic Medieval charm the cloisters sits on the edge of a hard-core New York City neighborhood.

CUT TO:

10 EXT 184TH AND BROADWAY

10

Washington Heights. Crack capital of the world. An old crumpled NEWSPAPER blows down the street. Yee and Pez sit in the car. Several more giant coffee cup grace the dash. Street lamps go on as daylight fades. Sara stares out of the window - a predator in wait.

YEE

So little Mike thinks that my job is driving a tractor. He wants to come to work with me. . . Hey Pez, I don't think I've seen you blink once in the past four hours. You should do that once in a while, you know it lubricates your eyes.

Across the street two men exit an apartment building. Both men are dressed gangster chic.

YEE (cont'd)

Well there he. . .

Pez is already out of the car. She strides up to Thomas Gallo and his associate.

GALLO

Pezzini. Bonjourno, Bella.

PEZ

(cold)
Hey killer.

Yee takes a hard look at Gallo's thug.

YEE (cont'd)

How ya doin?

The guy shrugs.

THUG

None of your business. You got a warrant?

YEE

A warrant? For what? This is a social call, a visit, an exchange of pleasantries between ourselves and the estimable Mr. Gallo.

GALLO

Some might say this borders on harassment, detectives

YEE

We've got three witnesses that put you next to Maria Buzanis only three hours before she was murdered.

GALLO

(looks to Sara)
Who wasn't.

Michael turns his attention back to Gallo's thug.

YEE

Hey . . .

Yee has a sudden realization about the thug that Sara sees and reads instantaneously. This guy is wanted for something serious and Yee has just mentally id'd him.

The thug slams Yee in the face with his brief case PULLS A GUN and starts to draw on Yee. Sara swings at the thug and his gun is knocked into the sewer.

He brutally body punches Sara and makes a run for it. Yee staggers to his feet and draws on Gallo who casually raises his hands.

GALLO

I'm not going anywhere.

Sara bolts after the perp. Down the steps on 185th street. Through an alleyway. Over a fence. Down the street into the cloisters. This woman is an athlete. A chaser. Combination pitbull and panther. And she's pissed.

11 THE CLOISTERS - 11

The Perp looks back, sees that Sara is right on his tail. He pulls another gun - a Desert Eagle - as he runs but he doesn't have the time to fire.

12 THE FRONT DOOR 12

where a GUARD is just about to close the door, but he never gets the chance, because the Perp slams the door into the guard, knocking him down. The guard cries out in protest, but the Perp has already vanished into the building. Seconds later, Sara comes flying through the door.

GUARD

Hey!

SARA

(flashing her badge)

Call 911, tell them an officer requires assistance.

She bolts into

13 THE CORRIDORS 13

And suddenly it's quiet. Empty. Eerie. Sara, gun drawn, stealths through corridors and around corners.

MOVEMENT at the end of a long hall. The Perp runs by, and Sara gives chase, only to lose him again as she finds herself in

14 THE ROOM OF THE SAINTS 14

with the glass case of Joan of Arc artifacts. Suddenly Sara stops, her attention inexorably drawn to

THE GLASS CASE

as subtle GLOW starts to emanate from within. PUSH IN on the case and the GAUNTLET.

The gauntlet shimmers slightly, the steel looks more supple than before. The gem on the back of the gauntlet almost seems to undulate and glow as if in response to Sara's presence.

She finds herself standing right over the case, staring down at it, mesmerized.

GAUNTLET POV - On Sara - Extreme Wide Angle (like Hal in 2001) Startling. Different. The entire room is visible beyond her and there is nobody else in sight.

NOTTINGHAM (O.S.)
Magnificent, isn't it?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Sara whips her gun around as she comes face to face with... Ian Nottingham. For a moment they stare at one another, Sara's GUN only an INCH from Nottingham's throat. But he makes no attempt to run, nor to push the gun away -- he just stares, unworried.

Sara realizes that Nottingham isn't the Perp, and she lowers her gun.

SARA
Sorry. .

NOTTINGHAM
(he means this)
Not at all.

SARA
You better get out of here quick.

NOTTINGHAM
Thank you officer.

MOVEMENT from the corridor outside draws Sara's attention: it's the Perp. Sara sprints after him, forgetting Ian Nottingham and the magnificent jeweled glove that moments ago had her rapt attention. Before we follow her we notice something

The gauntlet, the WITCHELDE as we will learn it is called, is already transforming back -- the glow fades, the jewels lose their light.

15 BACK ON SARA -

15

As she reaches the hall outside and a HAIL of bullets explodes around her, fired by the Perp from his HUGE hand cannon, BULLETS chewing up the walls, exploding into various CASES of artifacts, sending SHARDS of glass into air.

Sara returns the fire, SQUEEZING off a full mag of her own. As she goes to slam another one into the Glock it is shot out of her hands. She is now out of ammo and runs back into

16 THE ROOM OF THE SAINTS

16

From whence she only just came. Ian Nottingham seems to have vanished. Sara rolls in and then ducks while she grabs the .38 from her ankle holster. She fires from behind a Celtic shield.

THE CASE

The Witchblade has sprung to life, but Sara doesn't even notice it, doesn't have time to notice it, as -

The perp moves into the room, this time with two Desert Eagles. The shield she is hiding behind is shredded. Sara is completely outgunned. She drops the small gun and DIVES away from the incoming rounds and as she does, the Witchblade case is shattered and shot up.

The WITCHBLADE itself spins through the air in EXTREME slow motion as Sara is in mid jump.

TIGHT on Sara's hand, as it reaches through the air.

INTERCUT Sara's approaching hand and the spinning WITCHBLADE which seems to reach out towards Sara (the feeling is much like Michelangelo's Adam reaching out for the gift of life)

TIGHT on the WITCHBLADE as Sara's hand penetrates it - still in extreme SLO-MO.

Sara lands and rolls and instinctively raises her arm for protection. She and the Perp lock eyes. This is it. He smiles and unleashes another torrent of bullets.

The metal gauntlet on Sara's arm sparks as it is hit. The Witchblade is DEFLECTING the bullets which ricochet around the room like electrons in an atom, the Perp - astonished - stops firing for a second

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ian Nottingham stands in the shadows, behind an exhibit, watching all this, fascinated.

The Perp, regaining his composure, levels his gun, sighting down on Sara for the kill shot and then... the JEWEL on the gauntlet starts to GLOW.

The Perp fires a single shot.

The bullet hits the Witchblade and ... bounces off one wall... another wall... headed for -

A GAS PIPE, an ancient looking thing and even as the bullet beelines for the gas pipe the glove on Sara's hand starts to glow with a hot light, as if it might explode on its own and then -

BOOM! A blinding FLASH of light, the entire room goes up in flames.

WITCHBLADE POV

As the ball of flame approaches.

SARA'S FACE lights up and then everything WHITES OUT.

CUT TO:

17 A VISION 17

Slowly, softly, an angelic vision of a woman appears, she is off in the distance, her hair blowing back as if in a gentle breeze. A Maxfield Parrish tableau. Peaceful.

SMASH CUT TO:

18 A FRENZIED MONTAGE 18

of images of a woman raging, screaming. We can never quite catch a glimpse of her face. EVERYTHING in frame is red.

CUT TO:

19 EXTREME CLOSE UP OF AN EYE 19

But rather than an iris and pupil inside, there is a solar eclipse.

CUT TO:

20 BLACK SCREEN. 20

A RED LIGHT starts to flash in a rhythmic pattern, taking us to

21 EXT. THE CLOISTERS - NIGHT 21

AN AMBULANCE provides this red light, and as we PULL BACK we see numerous other cop cars next to the ambulance, all of them with their FLASHERS on, providing a brilliant light show. A CROWD has gathered, kept at bay by numerous COPS.

Sara sits on the back ledge of an ambulance looking dazed, as if she has just come to. JOE SIRI, a detective lieutenant in his fifties stands by Sara as does Yee. Also present is JAKE MCCARTEY, a young cop in his mid to late twenties, with blond hair and surfer-boy good looks. He's new to the game but he's smart and laid back, at least on the surface.

JOE SIRI

You have any idea what happened?

SARA

(in a daze from the blast)

I chased the guy into the building. We exchanged a few rounds, but then he really started unloading with some big bore pistols and . . . Next thing I knew there was a giant explosion.

Joe turns and looks at Jake, who supplies an explanation.

JAKE

I talked to the caretaker. He said the gas pipes are ancient, thinks maybe a bullet hit one.

PEZ

I thought it was a grenade.

JOE SIRI

The blast was much bigger.

JAKE

Nobody can figure out how you weren't . . .
. . . um

PEZ

Pulped?

Pez looks from Jake to Yee and they lock eyes. No words necessary.

JOE SIRI

Do you realize who that was?

PEZ

(dazed)

I just know that he drew on Yee.

JOE SIRI

That was Lorenzo Vespuchi.

JAKE
 (almost respectfully)
 Best hitman in the biz. Gallo's protege.

PEZ
 Guess that explains all the firepower.

YEE
 We pulled a few of Vespuchi's teeth out
 of some marble. That's all we could find.

JAKE
 The security cameras that weren't blown
 up showed that there was another person
 in there.

YEE
 But the only thing on tape were his
 shadows - it was as if he knew the
 cameras were there.

PEZ
 (rubbing her head, trying to
 remember)
 I'm not sure . . .

Yee helps her up and they walk past Gallo who is sitting in
 the back of a patrol car.

GALLO
 (pissed)
 Get your man Pezzini?

PEZ
 Not yet.

GALLO
 You got one of mine. (smirks) Your father
 would be proud.

She stops as if punched in the solar plexus. Yee knows she's
 a cat's breath from putting a serious hurt on Gallo.

YEE
 (under his breath)
 Don't do it Pez.

TIGHT on Sara's wrist.

The WITCHBLADE is still on but now in bracelet form, a piece
 of exquisite form and beauty. The lights of the police
 cruiser kick off of the gem thus refracting light in weird
 ways across Gallo's face.

The flashing police lights also reflect off of the predatorial eyes of Ian Nottingham who stands on the edge of the crowd.

He sees the Witchblade on Sara's wrist and flips open his cell phone.

CUT TO:

22 EXT CITYSCAPE/INT PENTHOUSE OFFICE - NIGHT 22

Camera pulls slowly back and reveals KENNETH IRONS standing at the floor to ceiling window, the city of New York glittering beyond the vague reflection of his face.

NOTTINGHAM (OS)

She's got it.

IRONS

Good.

The camera continues it's slow move back - letting Irons fall into silhouette without us ever having gotten a good look at him.

A fire roils in an immense 360 degree fire place. What looks like a duplicate of Rodin's Thinker is off to the side. Two Irish Wolfhounds lie on the floor. Irons ponders as the fire burns.

A DESK BEHIND IRONS

Covered with TEXTS, some of them hundreds of years old, some much older than that, but none of them recent. Many of the texts are open, and in one of them we see

A SINGLE PAGE

A strange rune-like marking at the top of the page... below the rune: a list of dates. The last date is 11/11/2000.

CUT TO:

23 INT. SARA'S APARTMENT - DAWN 23

We were here during the opening sequence, but now we get a better look at her small, Spartan apartment. There's a case of books, a boombox and some CD's, a few dumbbells and that's about it. Except for one important touch

ON TOP OF AN END TABLE

Several PHOTOS. Sara's MOM and DAD on their wedding day. Another picture of a young Sara on her Dad's shoulders (he's wearing a beat up red flannel shirt) in front of a pick up truck.

A very young Joe Siri and Sara's dad together in uniform.

There is also what looks like a second grade picture of Maria.

(We will later learn that this is an altar of sorts - Sara's homage to deceased loved ones)

A piece of paper with coffee stains lies at the end of the table; a certificate showing that Sara was the interservice pistol combat champion.

The SOUND of KEYS opening several locks, and then a moment later Sara enters. Jake McCartey stands in the hall behind her.

JAKE

Are you sure you don't need...

SARA

(cutting him off)

I'm sure. I can take it from here. Thanks Jake.

Sara smiles and shuts the door.

JAKE (O.S.)

(muffled through the door)

I could make you some calzones or something... (he mispronounces calzones)

Sara laughs -- but her laugh is gentle, good-natured.

SARA

(correcting him)

Calzones. Go home, Jake.

JAKE (OS)

Some pasta puttanesca?

SARA

See ya.

JAKE (OS)

(as he walks away)

Rock on dot com.

Sara turns to her apartment and is immediately confronted by the BLINKING red light on her answering machine. She sighs, as if remembering something, then pushes "play".

MACHINE VOICE

You have one new message.

She checks it.

YEE (VO)

Hey, Pez. Yee here. Spot check. You cool?
Gimme a ring if you need anything.

Sara saves the message.

24 THE BATHROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

24

One of those bath tubs with clawed feet and a plastic shower curtain. Pez turns on the ancient shower and lets the hot water radiate through every pore of her dirty, exhausted and aching body.

She starts to lather up when she notices the thing on her wrist. Her looks says, "what the hell?"

INT BEDROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Pez, now in a pair of flannel boxers and a tee shirt flops onto her futon. She picks the bracelet up off of the bedside table and studies it. She then puts it back on the table, and continues to stare at the gem.

SLOWLY

push in on the Witchblade. Sara is reflected in the gem. Push in on Sara's reflection until we are tight on Sara's reflected eye. Within her eye we again see the the SOLAR ECLIPSE instead of a pupil. As if in a hall of mirrors HER POV AND THE WITCHBLADE'S ARE ONE IN THE SAME.

We see Pez lie down and instantly fall asleep, too tired to even get under the blankets. Her image undulates slightly as she gets smaller and smaller in frame (or as the Witchblade pulls back further and further into itself.)

The sounds of chanting and wind merge in a weird, Doppler effected sonic vortex. Voices in all languages meshing as the volume grows.

DISSOLVE TO:

25 THE SURFACE OF THE SUN 25

A flaming tendril, a sun flare, hurls a meteor into the inky blackness of space.

26 THE METEORITE 26

slams into a mountain.

27 EXT PRIMITIVE CAMPSITE - NIGHT 27

Flames shoot high against a full moon. Drums thunder. A small group of primitive people are in a frenzy of ecstatic dancing. A clenched fist suddenly comes into the foreground, silhouetted against the flames. The hand opens up revealing a beautiful gem - the WITCHBLADE GEM.

MATCH CUT TO:

28 A MOLD OF A HAND 28

as molten steel is poured into it.

MATCH CUT TO:

29 A STEEL GAUNTLET 29

with the Witchblade gem now embedded in the back.

Pull back to reveal that the gauntlet is on the hand of an EGYPTIAN PRINCESS. She is standing in front of an immense SPHINX. Her hands rest on her shoulders and she wears the Witchblade on her right hand. Wind blows her long dark hair across her face and a funnel of sand swirls around behind her. She sweeps her hand through the air and we see thousands of subjects (CGI and stock) bowing before her.

INTERCUT WITH THIS WE SEE SARA SLEEPING AS LIGHT RAKES ACROSS HER (AND INTERCUT WITH THIS ARE BRIEF-ALMOST SUBLIMINAL FLASHES OF AN ANIMATED SARA AS THE WITCHBLADE - MORE ORGANIC THAN IN REALITY - WRAPS AROUND HER)

30 14TH CENTURY BATTLEFIELD - 30

Joan of Arc leads her troops into battle, brandishing a SWORD OF FIRE that seems to grow out of the Witchblade on her arm. The chanting increases in volume.

31 A COURTYARD - 31

Where Joan has been tied to a stake. We see the CROWD but we don't get a good look at Joan as a TORCH is set to a pile of wood and FLAMES start to dance.

32 A BALCONY -

32

Overlooking the courtyard where Joan burns. A BISHOP holds the Witchblade: the look on his face tells us he fears it.

With a shudder of disgust the Bishop locks the Witchblade in a wooden CHEST. Before he closes the chest we glimpse a number of other items: a crucifix, armor, a long-bladed knife. All things we saw at the Cloisters. The Bishop turns to a waiting Soldier.

BISHOP
Bury this in the Catacombs.

SLAM CUT TO:

33 SARA'S BEDROOM - END OF THE DREAM - NIGHT

33

Sara sits bolt upright. The chanting is dramatically cut off. She looks at the Witchblade on her bedside table. It seems to glow slightly.

CUT TO:

34 INT DARK BAR - NIGHT

34

Tommy Gallo sits across from a sleek Asian man.

GALLO
Normally I would handle the problem internally but in this situation I can't do that. I'm under too much scrutiny. I need your very best cleaner.

ASIAN MAN
What you are requesting is very expensive Mr. Gallo.

GALLO
I don't want to negotiate, I just want this situation handled. Soon. I know you'll probably have to import the talent.

ASIAN MAN
Who is the situation . . .

GALLO
 Detective Sara Pezzini. She works . . .

CUT TO:

35 EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY . . . 35

GALLO (VO)
 . . . out of the 33rd Precinct.

Sara Pezzini looking a bit less beat up than last time we saw her, walks up to the front door, helmet in hand. She's about to enter the precinct when she stops... reacts as if she's being watched... turns and sees -

A man who might be Ian Nottingham stands across the street a moment until... a BUS cruises by... BLOCKS the view... and then the bus is gone, and so is the guy who might've been Nottingham. Now -

Sara frowns, turns, and enters -

36 INT. PRECINCT HOUSE - SAME TIME . . . 36

"Sara is greeted by most of the cops with shouts of "It's Pez!" and "Hey, Pezzini!" Sara never really stops MOVING, but slows down when a uniform cop, SMITTY, joins her.

SMITTY
 Hey Pez. Lorenzo Vespuchi huh. The
 butcherman. Gallo can't be too happy
 about that.

SARA
 How you doin Smitty.

SMITTY
 Jealous.

SARA
 Don't be.

SMITTY
 You took out Vespuchi. That's . . .

SARA
 Blind luck.

SMITTY

That's not the way I heard it - but if you want to do that Sara Pezzini modest thing that's cool with me.

Pez can't help cracking a small smile and shake her head as she walks away.

Joe Siri approaches her in the hall.

SIRI

Lookin good detective.

PEZ

Thanks.

SIRI

C'mon on in.

He leads her into his office. Siri takes a seat at his desk, she remains standing, not at attention but almost.

SIRI (cont'd)

So what's the deal Sara?

PEZ

What do you mean sir.

SIRI

Don't give me that officious bullshit. You know what I mean.

Pez remains stoic.

SIRI (cont'd)

(shakes his head)

Your old man hated Gallo too.

PEZ

With all due fucking respect Joe, Gallo killed one of my best friends.

SIRI

You can't prove that.

PEZ

Yes I can. And I will.

SIRI

Good. I think a few people are pretty angry about Vespuchi. Be careful.

A beat. Sara looks at a picture on Joe's desk (the same one she has at home). A young Joe Siri and his partner, an equally young James Pezzini standing together in uniform.

PEZ

Yes sir.

SIRI

He would be proud of you.

Pez nods, gives Joe the peace sign and leaves.

37 INT PEZ AND YEE'S OFFICE

37

Sparse and ancient looking.

YEE

Hey Pez.

He holds up his giant styrofoam cup as she walks by. She takes it without even looking. He watches her closely.

PEZ

What?

YEE

What do you mean what?

PEZ

What are you looking at?

YEE

My perpetually scowling partner.

PEZ

And you know here I thought I was coming across as uh . . . ebullient.

YEE

Pez I actually don't think I'm caffeinated enough for the word thing this morning.

She passes the styrofoam cup back to him.

PEZ

(mock chinese)

So sarrhe. But you started it.

YEE

Hey listen you wench, I just wanted to say thanks for saving my life.

(MORE)

YEE (cont'd)

PEZ

Oh yeah that. No big deal. I think we're even now.

YEE

No we're not, I still owe you one.

PEZ

OK. I'll think of something.

YEE

Something like help taking down Gallo?

PEZ

Yup.

YEE

Hey, not a problem. Legendary hitman, never been caught and one of the smartest, hardest bad guys in the city. Pez can I ask you a serious question?

PEZ

I'm bracing myself.

YEE

Seriously.

PEZ

(knowing he's serious)
Hit me.

Yee takes a breath.

YEE

Maria was a party girl, a high end hooker alcoholic, sex addict, pill head, and coked up adrenaline junkie hedonist.

PEZ

Your point being?

YEE

She was constantly putting herself in dangerous situations. She *liked* dangerous situations.

PEZ

Right. So she deserved to get double tapped by a skumbag who thrives off the human detritus he creates.

YEE

I didn't exactly say that.

PEZ

I know. I'm just mad at myself. Really mad. I hadn't even seen Maria for almost a year. She called me six days ago, then bang, a day later, before I get a chance to call her back, she gets her brain splattered onto. . .

YEE

(interrupting)

What. . . You think you could have saved her?

For the first time we see Pez drop her guard and let someone in a little.

PEZ

I just don't know Mikie. . . I just dunno.

Pez looks at the bulletin board that is covered with crime scene photos from the Maria Buzanis murder.

As she looks at the photos she puts her hands in the pockets of her leather jacket. In one photo the chalk outline on the floor indicates where Maria's body was found.

A beat later Pez feels the Witchblade in her pocket. She takes it out and looks at it. Perplexed. She puts it on her wrist.

PEZ

I almost forgot, the other night this weird bracelet somehow . . . (as she is speaking she glances at the crime photo)

SMASH CUT TO:

38 WITCHBLADE SECOND SIGHT

38

as it kicks in for the first time.

Pez winces as the chalk outline becomes a real body.

The pov - Sara's AND the WITCHBLADE'S - actually enters the picture - going backwards in time. Maria gets up - like film being played in reverse. She moves - IN REVERSE - over to a glass table and then fills half a glass with some red wine from her mouth as a heel flies through the air and lands back on her foot.

PEZ IS SEEING TIME MOVE BACKWARDS.

She shakes her head and the vision stops. Back to the same old crime photo. Pez - thrown by the vision - forgets about the bracelet on her wrist. THE INTENSITY OF THE VISION MAKES THIS COMPLETELY PLAUSIBLE.

YEE (cont'd)

You ok?

PEZ

.. (doesn't know what to think)
Sometimes I feel like I'm losing my mind.

YEE

Don't worry pal. You did that a long time ago.

PEZ

Let's go back to the crime scene.

YEE

Are you serious?

She strides out of the room and Yee reluctantly, dutifully follows.

CUT TO:

39 EXT BROOKLYN STREET - DAY

39

Nottingham walks up to a non-descript door and with great economy kicks it open revealing a Social Club; Thomas Gallo's posh and personal Social Club.

A guard just inside starts to draw on Nottingham and is laid out with one quick chop to the wind pipe. Without even breaking stride and without even really looking, Nottingham pulls a pool stick out of a rack and then breaks it on another guy's head. C ya.

He then picks up the eight ball and hurls it at another bruiser that is drawing on him. The pisan goes down and out. Cold.

Thomas Gallo sits at a table in the back. Up to this point he had been enjoying a pasta and a glass of Chianti. His personal bodyguard, DINO, takes a shot that misses Nottingham.

In one swift move Nottingham draws a gun and shoots Dino's gun right out of his hand, puts his own gun away, and sits down at Gallo's table.

Gallo wipes his mouth with his napkin, and just looks around.

GALLO

That was pretty damn good. Who do you work for.

NOTTINGHAM

My client owns the old Rialto.

GALLO

Really.

NOTTINGHAM

He is aware of your repeated inquiries regarding the Rialto and is now willing to sell. Be there at 11:00 tomorrow and you can take a look at it.

Nottingham gets up and leaves. Nobody makes a move to stop him.

GALLO

(looking at his fallen men)
I wish that guy was working for me.

CUT TO:

40 INT. HOTEL ROOM - MEANWHILE

40

Sara and Michael enter, let in by a smarmy hotel MANAGER. The room is perfectly clean, the chalk outline on the floor has been washed and the blood stains are gone, but it's still recognizable as the room where Maria Buzanis was killed. There are several mirrors.

MANAGER

I really don't see why this is necessary. I was assured that you were done. For over a week now we've accommodated you: fingerprint dust everywhere, unsightly yellow tape on the door, noise at all hours...

SARA

(interrupting him)
Hey...

MANAGER

Yes?

SARA

Shut up.

Sara moves into the room, looking at it, while Michael stands at the door, watching her. The manager looks on, intimidated by Michael, but bored by what is obviously routine. As Sara looks around the room, Michael asks questions of the manager.

YEE

Ms. Buzanis rented this room?

MANAGER

I really don't see why we have to go into...

(off Michael's nasty look)

Yes, Ms. Buzanis took this room on the evening in question. I've already told the police all this -- more than once I might add. Ms. Buzanis was a frequent guest at our hotel.

YEE

And nobody saw who she was with?

MANAGER

We run a discreet operation detective.

Michael continues to question the manager, but we don't hear any more of these obviously redundant questions.

Sara approaches a mirror, looks at herself for a beat. then The room becomes darker (we do an onscreen lighting transition). In the mirror we see MARIA BUZANIS come in the door, throw off her coat and approach the mirror. She stands where Sara just was and primps. INTERCUT Sara and Maria's faces.

41 WITCHBLADE 2ND SIGHT

41

A man steps in front of Maria (he looks like Gallo from the back. We do not see his face) Maria pulls him out of frame.

FLASHES: (THIS TIME IN FORWARD MOTION) Maria pouring champagne... the male companion snorts up a line of COKE from a mirrored surface ... hands grope... some clothes are pulled off... PILLS spill from a bottle and Maria washes them down with booze... a MATCH flares, lighting a cigarette... Maria Buzanis smoking, her eyes red, her tired face showing the toll of the drugs... the MIRROR, the one Sara looked into in the previous vision. In this mirror Sara catches a glimpse of the man Maria is with... It's not Tommy Gallo. We get a very brief look at an OLDER man in a very expensive suit.

We barely get a look at this man, just enough to establish the fact that he's not Gallo, and then BLINK.

42 BACK ON SARA -

42

Back in reality. Michael is still questioning the manager. Sara is stunned by this vision -- the face in the mirror was supposed to belong to Tommy Gallo. Michael looks up and sees this.

MICHAEL

What's up?

SARA

Nothing. Let's get out of here.

Sara heads for the door and Michael follows, leaving the perplexed manager behind.

43 THE HALL OUTSIDE -

43

Sara heads for the elevator, she wants badly to get outside, to get away from this vision. Michael follows.

MICHAEL

D'you learn anything in there?

SARA

I'm not sure..

The elevator comes and Sara gets on without saying another word. Michael can only follow her, puzzled.

44 INT ELEVATOR

44

As the elevator descends Sara realizes she is still wearing the bracelet. Too distracted or maybe just too confused to really deal with it, she just puts it in her pocket.

CUT TO:

45 INT. A DIVE BAR - POOL TABLE - NIGHT

45

Eight ball in the corner pocket... a loser moans and hands five dollars to the winner... Sara Pezzini, who has come here tonight to drink and shoot pool and forget this afternoon. Sara turns to the "next game" chalk board where people sign up and crosses off the name of the opponent she just beat.

SARA

Who's got next game?

(reads the name, looks around)

Jake?

Even as Sara recognizes the name the smiling face Jake McCartney comes into view, brandishing a pool cue.

JAKE

Hey, Pez, uh I mean Sara.

SARA

(racking the balls)

I'm here cause I'm trying to forget about the job. What do you want?

JAKE

To shoot pool.

(looks at the table)

Your break.

Sara gives Jake a long look, and then she turns to the game. Over this next conversation Sara shoots pool, running the table without missing a shot. (INTERCUT with this scene is an unknown POV. Somebody is watching.)

JAKE

I heard that Tommy Gallo is thinking of opening a club at the old Rialto Theater. I also heard he's gonna be there tomorrow to check it out in person.

SARA

(without looking up, doubtful)

Says who?

JAKE

Guy named Drexler.

SARA

(shooting, still not looking at him)

Drexler? I busted him once. He's a hard case, a punk, why would he tell you anything?

JAKE

(shrugs)

I've got my ways.

SARA

(still not looking)

Really.

JAKE

Since Gallo has done time, he can't get a liquor license which means he's going to have to use a front. I would imagine that will be one of the smaller legal infractions Tommy's going to commit when he opens this place up: money washing, narcotics, girls. You want to bring Gallo down, the Rialto Theater could be a place to start.

SARA

(finally stops shooting and looks at him)
You might actually have a point...

JAKE

What time do you want to go?

SARA

Go where?

JAKE

C'mon, Sara...I give you some scratch like this the least you can do is share it with me.

PEZ

Some scratch?

JAKE

Yeah, you know, information. Intell. Data. Tomorrow when you stake out the Rialto, let me go with you.

Sara sinks another ball then gives Jake a long look.

SARA

You're OK, Jake, I'll give you that.

She hammers a ball across the table with great precision.

SARA (cont'd)

But I've already got a partner.
(looks at the pool table)
Eight ball, corner pocket.

Sara sinks the eight ball and puts her pool cue down.

NEW ANGLE

Sara's jacket is draped over a chair in the foreground. A SLIGHT GLOW emanates from the pocket. PUSH in to the pocket and find the glowing Witchblade bracelet. Camera pushes right into the glowing gem.

CUT TO:

46 EXT. THE RIALTO THEATER - DAY 46

42nd Street and 13th Avenue. Forty Deuce. Way over here on the far far west side it's still a shithole. And the deserted old (though once glorious) Rialto Theater is part of the hole.

47 ACROSS THE STREET - 47

The unmarked car of Sara and Michael Yee sits, parked where it can observe the club.

YEE (V.O.)

Tell me again: why are we here?

48 INT. THE CAR - SAME TIME 48

Sara and Jake sit inside.

SARA

Because Jake McCartney has a contact that says Tommy Gallo's going to be here.

MICHAEL

(almost derisively)

Jake McCartney...

SARA

Jake's a good kid, Yee.

YEE

You know, if I wasn't aware of your preference for drummers and other sorts of bad boys I might think you liked him.

PEZ

Very funny.

YEE

I don't know. I don't quite trust the guy. It's like he's hiding something.

PEZ

You getting paranoid Yee?

YEE

No.

PEZ

Don't tell me it's that East coast West coast thing.

YEE

(riffing)

No dude. (beat) But why would anybody leave San Diego to come here? It's not like he's even got family here.

SARA

(shrugs)

Hey, he gave me some good information on Gallo.

MICHAEL

I understand. Forewarned, forearmed. Grasshoppa.

49 SARA'S POV: ACROSS THE STREET - 49

Ian Nottingham stands there. At least, it looks like Ian Nottingham.

50 BACK ON SARA & MICHAEL - 50

Michael sees the look on her face.

MICHAEL

What?

Sara blinks and... Nottingham is gone. Maybe he was never there.

SARA

Nothing.

The Nottingham vision causes Sara to remember the weird trinket in her pocket. She takes it out again, puts it on her wrist.

SARA (cont'd)

Hey Yee, remind me later I've got to see if this is from the display at the . . .

(MORE)

SARA (cont'd)

CUT TO:

51 EXT. THE STREET - SAME TIME 51

TWO CARS pull up in front of the Rialto. Stepping out of these cars: Tommy Gallo and his crew, all eight of them, each one tougher than the last. DREXLER is one of them. We'll meet him in a bit.

SARA (VO)

Here we go.

As Gallo and his men enter the Rialto theater we -

CUT TO:

52 A PHONE BOOTH DOWN THE STREET - 52

Jake McCartney is in the phone booth, watching Sara and Michael as they watch Tommy Gallo. He wants to be part of this so he's followed them. We HOLD for a moment on Jake, and as we do we hear the following -

CUT TO:

53 EXT. BACK ALLEY - RIALTO THEATER - TEN MINUTES LATER 53

Sara and Michael Yee are climbing on top of some garbage cans, reaching for a broken fire escape that is out of reach above them. Michael boosts her up and she struggles to grab the bottom rung of the fire escape.

After several aborted attempts Sara grabs a hold of the fire escape and pulls herself up. She turns back to Michael to give him a hand.

MICHAEL

(whispering)

You wearing your vest?

SARA

Yeah. You?

MICHAEL

Uh yeah, sure of course.

He nods. Sara yanks Michael up next to her. A boarded-up WINDOW blocks their path, but the boards are rotten and easily displaced. The two of them slide into -

54 INT. THE RIALTO THEATER - BALCONY - SAME TIME 54

This place gives new definition to the phrase "rat trap" -- all manner of vermin skitter around in the dark. It's so dank and ancient we can smell the musty air. VOICES sound from down below, and Sara and Michael move to the edge of the balcony and peek down into -

55 THE THEATER BELOW - 55

Where Tommy Gallo and his men are walking down the aisles towards the old stage of the Rialto. Walking next to Gallo we see Drexler, uber-hip, ultra-sleazy. He's Jake's informant.

GALLO

This is perfect.

DREXLER

Yeah, you gut the inside, but leave all the retro touches in place: the molding, the woodwork, the hand-carved stuff you can't get anymore, we don't touch one bit of that.

GALLO

Louie Stomp in Staten Island is silent partner in a construction company that does quality work, we'll give the job to them.

DREXLER

(conspiratorially)

The place is great Mr. Gallo.

Gallo suddenly turns and shoots one of his thugs who goes down. DEAD.

The others all exchange quick, furtive glances. It's a weird and unexpected beat - sudden yet almost mundane - and illustrates Gallo's utter cold bloodedness.

GALLO

(matter of fact)

This is going to be a legitimate enterprise. Three months from now it's gonna be the hottest night spot in New York. Now if the cops were to find out I was involved, that would be a problem. And if I have a problem...

He scans the faces of his sullen men.

GALLO (cont'd)

. . . I take care of it. (beat) He was a problem. An information leak.

Gallo is very calm. He looks straight at Drexler who maintains a poker face.

56 THE BALCONY -

56

Michael is watching -- he's seen and heard all this.

MICHAEL

(a whisper)

We finally got him the act.

Michael stops when he realizes that Sara isn't standing next to him.

MICHAEL

Pez?

ANOTHER ANGLE -

Sara is already scrambling up the aisle, crouching the whole way to keep out of sight. Michael is furious.

MICHAEL

(sotto)

Damn.

Michael takes out his gun and goes back to the window to keep a lookout. After a moment -

A SHADOW appears, sneaking towards Michael, but his focus is on the theater below.

57 ELSEWHERE IN THE THEATER -

57

Sara creeps along, her gun drawn, her focus keen. The Witchblade bracelet is glowing slightly as if it senses something.

Suddenly a HAND throws itself over Sara's mouth... a strong ARM locks her so she can't move.

NOTTINGHAM (O.S.)

You really shouldn't be here, Detective Pezzini...

ANOTHER ANGLE -

Nottingham has come up behind Sara. Nottingham lets go of Sara -- she doesn't scream. Instead she scrutinizes him.

SARA
You're not one of Gallo's.

NOTTINGHAM
(a slight smile)
Perish the thought.

SARA
You've been following me, haven't you?
(its coming back to her) Ever since the
Cloisters. What do you want?

58 BACK ON MICHAEL - 58

Who's still looking out onto the theater below, he never notices that he's about to be... JUMPED from behind by two of Tommy Gallo's boys. They grab him... Michael cries out... throws a punch but is almost immediately sapped on the back of the head and overpowered.

59 ON SARA - 59

She hears Michael's muted cry.

SARA
What was that?

NOTTINGHAM
Karma.

60 EXT. THE RIALTO THEATER - MEANWHILE 60

Detective Jake McCartney is trying to get into the Rialto. He tugs on a door, which won't open.

JAKE
Goddamnit...

61 INT. RIALTO THEATER - ON STAGE - SAME TIME 61

Tommy Gallo watches as his men deposit a nearly unconscious Michael Yee in front of him.

GALLO
Detective Yee of the N.Y.P.D.

Gallo drives a vicious kick into Michael's side.

GALLO
 Hey Pezzini - if you don't come out
 he'll be sorry.

62 ON SARA -

62

She turns to Nottingham.

SARA
 He'll do it. Help me.

NOTTINGHAM
 I can't.

GALLO (O.S.)
 (calmly)
 I'm waiting, Pezzini.

Sara gives Nottingham a dirty look, then turns to face Gallo.
 But Nottingham stops her with a word of advice.

NOTTINGHAM
 You won't need a help, Sara. When the
 time comes...
 (a whisper)
Use the Witchblade...

SARA
 The what?

Nottingham abruptly grabs her forearm and holds it up.

NOTTINGHAM
 This.

SARA
 What're you talking . . .

63 ON GALLO -

63

He's getting impatient, seconds away from killing Michael.

GALLO
 Come on out Pezzini.

64 ON SARA -

64

She's turned her head to look at Gallo. She turns back to
 Nottingham and... he's gone.

GALLO (O.S.)
 Now . . .

Sara doesn't have time to wonder about any of this. She steps out onto -

65 THE STAGE -

65

Gallo turns his attention from Michael Yee to the approaching Sara.

GALLO
Bonjourno, Bella.

As she moves forward Gallo nods at Dino, the huge thug we saw earlier. Dino moves to Sara and frisks her. For a moment he lets his hand wander a little bit.

GALLO
(irritated)
Just search her OK Dino.

Dino finds and removes Sara's gun.

Sara crosses towards Gallo, who takes a few steps towards her. The semi-conscious Michael Yee remains on stage where he is.

A QUICK CUT TO:

66 WITCHBLADE POV:

66

The jewel's eye view of things. Tommy Gallo's distorted image framed in the skewed view. Gallo SOUNDS differently when heard from this POV.

67 ANOTHER ANGLE -

67

Back to normal, leaving behind the skewed vision of the Witchblade.

GALLO
(matter of fact)
You have no idea how much money you just saved me.

Yee struggles to a sitting position. Gallo turns to him and shoots Yee in the chest.

Yee goes down.

Pez, believing that he's wearing his vest, keeps her cool although the gem and her eyes are aglow.

GALLO (cont'd)

In this case ladies first would be bad form.

Sara looks from Gallo to Yee who is starting to bleed. He in fact was NOT wearing his vest. Sara is stunned... bolts to Michael's side.

SARA

MICHAEL!

Tommy Gallo tracks Sara with his gun... sights down on her... gets ready to shoot. She gets to Yee and immediately pulls his jacket back a bit. He is not wearing a vest.

68 EXT. RIALTO - FRONT DOOR - MEANWHILE 68

Jake has heard the gunshot, he throws his weight into the door that suddenly swings open. Jake falls forward into

69 THE LOBBY - 69

Jake lands on his face but starts to get up when A FOOT plants itself in Jake's back, pinning him to the ground. Jake strains to look up, and he catches a glimpse of the dangerous smile of Ian Nottingham.

NOTTINGHAM

Does your mum know you're here?

Jake goes for his gun.

Nottingham gives Jake a brutal kick in the face which knocks him out. Then he steps

70 BACK INTO THE THEATER - 70

and takes a seat from which he has a good view of the show.

Sara cradles a bleeding Michael in her arms. Gallo still has his gun aimed at Sara.

SARA

Do it, Gallo, kill me and get it over with.

GALLO

Arrivederci Pezzini.

71 A SLOW MOTION MOMENT - 71

Gallo pulls the trigger... we TRACK the bullet... it screams towards Sara and...

TIGHT ON SARA'S GLOWING EYES

It's as if she's possessed. She is.

72 BACK IN REAL TIME - 72

Sara rolls with incredible speed and the bullet just misses her head.

ROCKET DOLLY

into Sara's eyes.

FAST PULL OUT

from the WITCHBLADE gem (which matches her eyes) It has transformed into an armored gauntlet. An astonished Gallo fires again. Sara swats the bullet away.

73 IN THE PROJECTION BOOTH - 73

The bullet ricochets in - an explosion of sparks cascades out of an electrical outlet box as the bullet finds a home, and suddenly . . .

An old PROJECTOR comes to life, turned on by this new flood of electricity and now . . .

74 BACK IN THE THEATER - 74

The out of focus projector light plays over this entire next scene, STROBING THE ACTION as

Dino makes a move for his gun.

Sara jumps to her feet and steps into a fierce close up - eyes ablaze.

Dino fires. Sara dodges.

Everyone else now fires on Sara (except for Drexler who bails immediately) She spins as if throwing a discus - the armored gauntlet arcing as it deflects multiple rounds. Sara spins into Dino, and in one smooth move grabs his gun, puts him in a headlock and uses him a shield.

The big guy is hit repeatedly until... Sara drops him so that she can run and shoot with ease... Sara takes down her targets as if she's in a shooting gallery - most of this plays in silhouette, shadows and strobing flashes. It's hallucinogenic.

One of Tommy's men grabs his boss, pushes Tommy towards the exit even as -

We see sporadic flashes of Sara knocking bullets away with the gauntlet.

Tommy's other guys continue to fire at Sara, but she's impossible to kill. For some reason Tommy's men can't hit her (or so it seems to them).

Tight on her eyes - they shimmer like the gem on the Witchblade. She runs out of bullets and hurls the gun at the floor.

Ian Nottingham watches closely, almost mesmerized by the dance of violence and the power of the Witchblade.

For an instant we see a shadow thrown against the wall it appears that a knight with a sword is single-handedly taking out the remaining members of Gallo's crew.

And still the movie projector light flashes weirdly out of focus as -

In another stroboscopic flash we see the knight silhouette impale Gallo's last bodyguard.

But Tommy Gallo is gone. For one moment the air is still, everything is quiet except for the sound of the projector and the flicker of its light, and then... Sara starts to run, a look of violence on her face.

75 INSIDE THE THEATER LOBBY -

75

Tommy Gallo tears out of the theater and heads for the front door, where he's intercepted by Jake McCartney. Jake has his gun trained on Tommy but (because of the kick to the head) is having a hard time focussing.

JAKE

Don't move!

Sara's VOICE calls from a distance, coming closer.

SARA (O.S.)

Gallo!!!!

Jake's focus is drawn towards the interior of the theater, the light of the Witchblade flaring again as it senses Gallo's presence, and in this moment -

Tommy Gallo knocks Jake over and runs out. Jake - still reeling from Nottingham's blow - gets up as Sara moves into the lobby, covered with blood that isn't hers.

She's about to run after Gallo, but he grabs her by the shoulders and shakes her.

JAKE

Sara...

(no answer, shakes harder)

Sara! Where's Michael?

The mention of Michael's name seems to bring Sara partially back to earth.

SARA

(confused)

Michael? Michael.

(remembering, horrified)

Oh my God, Michael... (she is literally shell shocked) *He didn't have his vest on.*

Sara runs back into the darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

76 EXT. CALVARY CEMETERY - DAY

76

A DRIZZLING cold gray rain falls on MONUMENTS shaped like angels and other spirits of God, an altogether otherworldly place... The cemetery so VAST you can't possibly see where it begins or ends... The soft rain slowly soaks those MOURNERS who have attended the funeral of detective Michael Yee. COPS in dress uniform make up the honor guard -- Sara, Jake McCarty and Joe Siri are among their number. MUSIC plays in lieu of dialogue, and even as we come upon this scene the funeral is finishing up... Ceremonial SHOVELS of dirt tipped into the grave... the CROWD breaking up... Michael's FAMILY escorted into waiting limousines... Michael's little boy, holding a small toy tractor, is stoic but his WIDOW shares a single LOOK with Sara -- is it a look of forgiveness? Blame? Both?

But the look doesn't last long, Michael's wife gets into a limousine and then... Everyone is gone, Michael's GRAVE is empty.

For a moment we sit in the rain, alone with our thoughts, and then we realize we're not the only ones here... Sara Pezzini has stayed behind to mourn her partner.

JOE SIRI (O.S.)

Sara...

She jumps - startled.

77 ANOTHER ANGLE -

77

Joe Siri stands here in the rain with Sara. Behind Joe we can see a CAR waiting for him, a bruised Jake McCartney behind the wheel.

SARA

What's up, boss?

JOE SIRI

The brass have a lot of questions about what happened at the Rialto Theater. Three of Gallo's men were stabbed to death so . . .I've got a few questions myself.

SARA

What've you told the boys upstairs?

JOE SIRI

I told them you need a little time off before you come in and talk about it.

SARA

And?

JOE SIRI

And they bought it. For now.

SARA

(a beat, then -)

What'd you tell yourself?

JOE SIRI

I told myself you need a little time off before you come in and talk about it.

SARA

Thanks, Joe.

Joe Siri puts a hand to Sara's cheek -- an almost fatherly gesture. Then Joe gets into the car where Jake McCartney waits for him. They drive off, leaving Sara alone.

78 MICHAEL'S GRAVE -

78

Sara looks down at the coffin, still visible beneath a light covering of dirt.

SARA

Oh, Michael... I'd tell you I'm going to avenge your death, but I know what you'd say...

MICHAEL'S VOICE

That's what got you into trouble in the first place, Sara...

Sara frowns -- it's almost as if she really heard Michael's voice. She looks down into Michael's grave, and it looks normal: the coffin visible beneath a thin coating of dirt. Sara turns her head -

And Michael Yee is standing right behind Sara. He looks down into the grave.

MICHAEL

What're you looking at?

Sara can't believe what she sees -- this is no "living dead" zombie, but a completely fresh, warm-blooded, very much alive man.

MICHAEL

Hey Sara, relax. It's me, Yee.

Sara just stares. Unbelieving.

MICHAEL

(kind of nonchalant for a dead guy)

I'm here to tell you that there's a lot more happening around you than you think. Things are a lot more connected. Open those doors of perception, there's people knockin. You'll see.

SARA

Go away.

MICHAEL

I'm already gone. Let me ask you this.
How is it you survived the Rialto? How
could you, one cop not only survive, but
kill all of those guys?

Sara turns to leave, but Michael is somehow now in front of
her.

SARA

I don't really know what happened. I sort
of blanked out.

MICHAEL

You can't run away, Sara -- it's time for
you to know some things.

SARA

Like what?

MICHAEL

Like a little more about yourself.

SARA

Here's what I know. You're a goddamned
hallucination, and not the first one. I'm
having a melt down. My father, Maria, and
now you. Gone. I'm losing it Mikie.
Everyone I care about gets killed, and
I'm standing here in the rain by myself,
talking to myself cause I wish I was
talking to you.

MICHAEL

Pez, this is really happening.

He gives her a serious, even look.

YEE

Listen Pez, you are special, you were
chosen, and you are less alone then you
think.

SARA

(not buying a word of it)
Uh huh.

YEE

You're the one who said, "every day above
ground is a special day." Take it from
me, you were right. . . .

SARA

Yee, why weren't you wearing your vest?:

YEE

That was the first day in five years I didn't wear the the thing. Like the man said, Karma

SARA

How do you know he said that?

YEE

I just do. (beat) I also know that you are wearing the WITCHBLADE. (he points to it) That's the reason you can see me. Keep it on.

SARA

(dropping her guard)

What do you know about this thing?

YEE

Not much really. Talk to Joe Siri. He'll give you some information that will help.

SARA

Help what?

MICHAEL

Ask him who you are.

A VOICE (O.S.)

Hey miss...

79 FLASH -

79

This vision -- if that's what it was -- is over. Michael is gone, and a CARETAKER stands in his place, giving Sara a funny look.

CARETAKER

Miss are you alright?

An overwhelmed Sara gives the Caretaker a helpless look, then turns and stumbles blindly off into the rain, which has started to turn to snow. Sara passes -

A GRAVESTONE CHERUB that marks the resting place of some small child. As she goes the stone cherub turns its head, watching her until... Sara turns back, she's seen the cherub move except... it's back to normal.

Maybe it didn't move at all. Now, totally freaked, she exits the cemetery and as she does -

A figure watches her from the shadow of a mausoleum. It's Ian Nottingham. We HOLD for a moment on this, and then we hear a THUD, the sound of a fist punching something as we -

CUT TO:

80 INT. A DIVE GYM - DAY

80

This place is only for hard core workout fiends, you can smell the mildew just by looking at it. Only two or three people are here, and one of them is Sara, who's wailing away on a heavy bag, kickboxing the living crap out of it. An empty boxing ring is nearby.

IN THE SHADOWS

Nottingham continues his surveillance. Camera PUSHES in on the mysterious Nottingham.

CUT TO:.

81 FLASHBACK - INT CHATEAU - DAY

81

somewhere in France. A twelve year old Nottingham stands at rapt attention listening to a voice off-screen. A giant fire burns in the old stone fire place behind him. (This dialogue will be in French with subtitles)

OFF SCREEN VOICE

(in French)

It is written that no man has ever successfully worn the Witchblade. .
 . And though I tried, for all my force of will I could not keep it on my hand. The gauntlet burned me, seared my flesh until I had to rip it from my hand. But even my brief exposure was enough to bind me to the Witchblade forever, to make me a part of it. To allow me to see some of what it sees but not all. That is my blessing and my curse. (passionate about this) I understand the way it thinks, I know what it wants.

YOUNG NOTTINGHAM

(in French)

And what does it want?

A hand with a firebrand rune on it gestures in the foreground.

OFF SCREEN VOICE

It wants something that cannot be explained in words, to know one must directly experience the WITCHBLADE.

CUT TO:

82 INT. DIVE GYM - LOCKER ROOM - LATER 82

Sara, her hair wet and freshly combed, is pulling on her leather jacket when the lights flash twice and a distorted electric voice comes over an ancient sound system.

DISTORTED VOICE

Closing time...

Sara takes the Witchblade out of her pocket - looks at it for a long beat, then puts it on.

83 THE GYM - 83

It's empty now, and mostly dark, a very spooky environment. Sara starts to cross towards the glowing red exit sign at the far corner when -

A NOISE from the empty boxing ring... the sound of boxing gloves hitting skin. Sara stops... turns to the ring... sees... TWO FIGHTERS really going at it. They look, somehow, old. Like fighters from a 1930's film. And then one of them stops and looks at Sara -

His face is hollow... a death's mask of a skull, though not simply a skull. Rather, skin stretched so tight it's ready to break... eyes deep sockets pooled with no light. The empty face grins a cadaverous smile at Sara... the other apparition throws a punch at this smile and then -

HUH! Sara jerks as if the punch hits her. The boxing ring is empty. Sara hurries out and we -

CUT TO:

84 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE - NIGHT 84

Sara exits the gym even as its lights go out behind her. It's half-raining half-snowing as she runs into the wet night.

CUT TO:

85 INT. JAKE MCCARTEY'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT 85

Jake McCartney lies in the dark on a couch, lit only by the glow of the television set. A Personal Power Infomercial is playing.

The front door BUZZER wakes Jake up.

JAKE
 Alright, alright...
 Lay off the goddamned buzzer, would y...

Jake reaches the front door, and his voice dies off as he looks through the -

86 PEEPHOLE POV: SARA - 86

Stands in the hall. She's wet and exhausted.

87 THE DOOR - 87

Opens. Sara stumbles into the apartment.

JAKE
 Sara?
 (getting a good look at her)
 Jesus, Sara, what the hell happened to...

Sara pushes past Jake, mumbling as she goes -

SARA
 I need a place to crash, Jake.

JAKE
 No sweat.

88 GUEST ROOM - ONE MINUTE LATER 88

A DOOR opens and light pours in from the hall, illuminating the room.

SARA (O.S.)
 You've got a guest room? On a cop's salary?

Sara and Jake walk into the room.

JAKE
 (a little embarrassed)
 I... uh... yeah.

For one moment Sara looks at Jake as if they're two normal people and the Witchblade doesn't exist. Then Sara pushes by him and collapses.

JAKE

Sara?

Jake gives her a little nudge, but she's already asleep. Jake smiles gently to himself, spreads a blanket over Sara, and goes out of the room, shutting the door as he goes, sending us to -

BLACK. We hear the chanting we've heard before -- the muted whispers as we -

FADE IN ON:

89 SAME PLACE

89

The chanting continues as Sara tosses under the covers, her sleep troubled by a bad dream. As we watch, the Witchblade bracelet on her arm starts to glow.

JUMP CUT TO:

90 INT. A LONG DARK HALL - SARA'S DREAM

90

A torch held in a male hand flickers, providing the only light as it moves. Spaced along the hallway, like exhibits in a museum, we see portraits of the women from Sara's earlier dream: the Egyptian princess and Joan of Arc as well as several more; an Assyrian Queen, an Amazon Warrior, a female Samurai, an Icenian Warrior Queen. All of them are wearing the Witchblade. In the flickering torch light we don't see their faces.

At the end of the hall are two rows of torches held by cloaked figures in hoods. They turn as Sara approaches. Nottingham stands sternly watching from the other end of this gauntlet. Sara is wearing a suit of armor including the armored gauntlet.

As Sara begins to run the gauntlet, the cloaked and hooded torch bearers strike at her.

SLOW MO. The torches strobe off the metal of her armor as Sara runs.

INTERCUT with the running of the gauntlet are brief flashes of Nottingham and a woman. Her hand moves across his body - her wrist bears the WITCHBLADE bracelet.

We see only fragments of their lovemaking - evocative rather than explicit.

As Sara approaches the end of the gauntlet a huge torch is swung directly at her head.

SLAM CUT TO:

91 BACK IN JAKE'S GUEST ROOM - DAY 91

The chanting stops suddenly as Sara sits bolt upright, terrified, looking down at the Witchblade, which is just losing its glow.

CUT TO:

92 NOTTINGHAM IN A CHAIR 92

next to a fire place. Asleep. He slowly opens his eyes. Was he having the same dream?

CUT TO:

93 JAKE'S KITCHEN - TEN MINUTES LATER 93

AN EGG cracks into a frying pan and we PULL BACK on Jake cooking breakfast. Off to the side is a shelf full of surfing trophies as well as a poster of JAKE IN ACTION on a monster wave. There is also a huge stack of comic books.

Sara enters and gratefully takes the cup of coffee Jake offers.

SARA

I didn't know that you were THE Jake McCartney.

JAKE

(busted)
Uh, yeah.

SARA

Jake McCartney the surfing champ. That explains the nice place.

JAKE

I'd appreciate it if you didn't say anything about it at work.

SARA
About what, your late night infomercial
habit?

JAKE
That either. You alright this morning?

SARA
(sipping the coffee)
I will be once I've had this.

A FOLDER sits on the table in front of her. Jake turns back to his cooking and talks over his shoulder to Sara as he cooks.

JAKE
Listen, I checked out a few things for
you.

SARA
What kind of things?

JAKE
Things like the Rialto Theater.

SARA
And . . .

JAKE
The building is owned by a multinational
corporation called Vorschlag Industries.
Look in that folder there.

Sara opens the folder and sees something that rivets her gaze, but we don't see it. Jake, for his part, cooks and talks at the same time.

JAKE
(continuing)
Vorschlag is the domain of one Kenneth
Irons. You've probably heard of him.

SARA
Kenneth Irons. The billionaire.

JAKE
He's at the top of the Fortune 500, a
major international player, and
supposedly he owns more than five percent
of the real estate in New York.
(flips the eggs)
There is also speculation that he made
his fortune years ago as an arms dealer.

SARA
He's a big art collector right?

JAKE
YES. Sometimes he donates stuff to museums like the Met and MOMA. That Joan of Arc collection at the Cloisters, that's his.

Sara looks up, suddenly deeply intrigued by Ken Irons. Jake scoops the eggs onto a plate as he continues to talk.

JAKE
There's some newspaper photos in the file of Irons.

In the back of all of these photos, always on the outskirts of the crowd, always watching and guarding Irons: Ian Nottingham.

JAKE
He gave this huge charity party to raise money for AIDS research. REM played.

Jake turns with the plate of eggs and sees that... Sara is gone. Jake just shakes his head.

Jake looks down, sees the computer printouts of newspaper photos Sara was just looking at... pictures of Ken Irons with Rudolph Guliani ... Sting... Sean Penn . . . Christie Turlington.

An older photo shows Irons with JFK and another with Jim Morrison. (Irons looks the same as in the other shots)

CUT TO:

94 EXT. IRONS INTERNATIONAL BUILDING - DAY 94

Sara stands here, looking at the building, as if making up her mind as to what she should do. Then she pushes into -

95 INT. THE LOBBY - A MINUTE LATER 95

A SECURITY GUARD with the voice and manner of an ex-marine looks down at Sara from his high-tech security podium. Security CAMERAS are mounted all over the lobby, including one directly above the guard.

GUARD
 (with a careful politeness)
 I'm sorry, Miss, but Mr. Irons doesn't
 see anyone without an appointment.

SARA
 (flashing her badge)
 NYPD. I want to see Ken Irons.

The LENS in the camera above the guard zooms in on Sara.

GUARD
 (with a little edge in his
 voice)
 When you have a warrant, Miss
 Detective...

The PHONE rings, cutting off the Guard.

GUARD
 (picks up the phone)
 Yes?
 (quick beat, hangs up, looks at
 Sara)
 You're expected.

CUT TO:

96 INT. KENNETH IRONS' PENTHOUSE OFFICE- MINUTES LATER

96

A PRIVATE ELEVATOR door opens and Sara Pezzini stares into the face of Kenneth Irons. This is the first good look at him that we've had. His name fits him well. He is silver haired and powerful. He smiles his most charming smile and offers his hand to Sara. Once again, when inside Irons' apartment, we need to note its splendor.

IRONS
 Detective Pezzini? I'm Kenneth Irons.

Sara takes out a newspaper clipping she took from Jake.

SARA
 Do you know this man?

IRONS
 Ian Nottingham, yes. He works for me.

SARA
 He's a material witness in the death of
 my partner.
 (gives Irons a look)
 (MORE)

SARA (cont'd)
If you're in any way involved in this,
Mr. Irons...

IRONS
Ken, please, Detective Pezzini...

SARA
(polite but firm)
If you're in involved, Mr. Irons, you'd
do well to talk to me now.

IRONS
I assure you, detective, that whatever
Mr. Gallo might have done to your
partner, he was in no way working for me
when he did it.

SARA
How do you know about Tommy Gallo?

IRONS
I own the Rialto, but I'm sure you
already know that. Mr. Gallo was
considering it as a possible investment.
I also read the paper. . . I own that
too.

SARA (cont'd)
Mr. Irons. Can you tell me where I might
find Ian Nottingham ?

IRONS
At present I have no idea where Ian is.
With regard to Mr. Gallo, I've told you
everything I know. May I call you Sara?

SARA
(a long beat as they look at
each other)
I'd prefer if you didn't.

IRONS
Is there anything else you want to ask me
about Ms. Pezzini?

SARA
(another long beat - she takes
the bracelet off of her wrist)
Do you know what this is?

She hands it to him.

IRONS
That is the Witchblade.

Its been a long time since he's held it. She watches him closely.

SARA

The Witchblade huh. Somehow during a shoot out at the Cloisters the Witchblade found it's way onto my wrist. At least that's when I think it did. Does this belong to you?

Irons smiles, somehow deeply satisfied.

IRONS

Does anything belong to anybody Sara?

SARA

(not expecting this kind of response but weirdly attracted to the guy)

That is an evasive answer, Mr. Irons

IRONS

If the Witchblade belongs to anybody, it belongs to you Sara.

He hands it back to her. She doesn't really know what to say.

IRONS (cont'd)

(smiles, hands her a card)

Don't hesitate to call either number. Anytime. I'd love to show you some of my art. I have a whole room devoted to the Witchblade. (beat) And I will have Ian Nottingham pay you a visit.

CUT TO:

97 INT SIRI'S OFFICE - DAY

97

A weary Joe Siri listens to Jake.

JAKE (VO)

I know it's really none of my business, but since I don't have a partner yet, and since Pezzini doesn't have one anymore, maybe we should team up.

SIRI

I appreciate the suggestion Jake, I really do, but you should know Sara Pezzini does not make an easy partner. .

JAKE

Yeah I know all of that. But it seems like this might not be a bad time for her to have a little back up, a little support.

SIRI

You're right, but I don't know if you're the one to give it to her. Yee was the only one who's been able to partner with her.

CUT TO:

98 A STILL PHOTO OF MICHAEL YEE AND SARA

98

Pull back to reveal it is on the table at her apartment - the latest addition to her photo altar for deceased friends and family. Sara stares at the picture. She is wearing the beat up old red flannel shirt and a pair of socks.

SIRI (VO)

Let me think about it. Pez and Yee were very close and I am worried about her. .

Sara checks her message machine.

MACHINE

You have no new messages and one saved message.

She hits play and starts to pace.

YEE (VO)

(the old message)

Hey, Pez. Yee here. Spot check. You cool. Gimme a ring if you need anything.

Sara starts to pace.

CUT TO:

99 SNIPER POV ON SAME ACTION.

99

The cross hair drifts with Sara as she paces back and forth. Whoever this sniper is, Sara's raw beauty is stalling him and prolonging her life.

The sniper continues to voyeuristically explore her with his lens.

TIGHT on his eye blinking through the scope.

TIGHT on his finger on the trigger, we hear the sniper grunt.

WIDEN OUT TO REVEAL a now unconscious Asian sniper/assassin with Ian Nottingham standing behind him.

Nottingham picks up the rifle and looks through the scope.

TIGHT on Sara. A single tear runs down her cheek.

BACK ON NOTTINGHAM

He actually seems pissed off. Ian looks from the rifle to the dead assassin as if pondering some nefarious deed.

CUT TO:

100 INT IRONS' MANSION - NIGHT

100

Kenneth Irons watches a film on a large screen TV with the sound off. Some mellow Wagner (if there is such a thing) plays in the BG. Nottingham pets one of the Wolfhounds.

IRONS

There are no casual connections, Nottingham. Sara Pezzini, the Witchblade, myself. Call it what you will, destiny, fate, fortune. (beat) Napoleon used to say that fortune is like a woman, she favors the bold.

NOTTINGHAM

And what would he say of a bold woman?

IRONS

I'll ask him sometime. (smiles) Do you not find her striking Nottingham?

NOTTINGHAM (cont'd)

Striking and willful.

IRONS

She is in the full bloom of her beauty and power. But there are many of those. What is it, do you think, about Sara Pezzini that has attracted the Witchblade?

(MORE)

IRONS (cont'd)
NOTTINGHAM

Her courage. . . her well concealed
vulnerability.

IRONS (cont'd)

Perhaps. And now she is more vulnerable
than ever.

CUT TO:

101 EXT SARA'S APARTMENT/FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

101

Now fully dressed she sits there. Nowhere to go, nobody to
call. Almost nobody. She sticks her hand in the window and
pulls out a cordless phone. She dials and then gets a
machine.

SARA

Hey Jake, its Pezzini, Sara, I was just
wondering if you felt like shooting some
pool. Gimme a ring.

She hangs up the phone. After a moment she dials another
number.

IRONS (VO)

Hello Sara.

SARA

How did you know it was me.

INTERCUT WITH IRONS

IRONS

Caller ID.

SARA

Sorry, didn't take you for the caller ID
type. Any word on Nottingham?

IRONS

As a matter of fact we were just speaking
of you and he is aware of your desire to
question him. He said he would contact
you tomorrow. Would you like to stop by
this evening,

SARA

(long beat)
Yes. I'd like that.

CUT TO:

102 EXT. IRONS MANSION - NIGHT 102

Sara pulls up on her bike.

103 INT. IRONS' PRIVATE GALLERY - A LITTLE LATER 103

A PAINTING of Joan of Arc, even more detailed than the one we saw at the Cloisters. The Witchblade on her wrist is unmistakable, it blazes a white hot blade of fire.

IRONS (O.S.)

It's written that Joan's sword seemingly came to life during her battles.

We PULL BACK ON Irons and Sara, standing in front of the painting.

IRONS

(continuing)

After her capture at Compiegne, her weapon disappeared from her hand. The Witchblade has a way of slipping from its wielder's grasp just when it is needed most.

Sara and Irons are in his private gallery, devoted solely to the Witchblade. This setting bears more than a passing resemblance to the dreamscape of Sara's dream from the night before.

Spaced out along the walls of the corridor we see paintings and sculptures of the women who have worn the Witchblade -- these women are all out of Sara's dream. ALL of them rendered in a way that their faces can't be seen. Now -

We MOVE with them through this long hall, allowing Sara (and the rest of us) to see the other wielders of the Witchblade.

SARA

How do you know so much about ...

Sara's voice trails off, as if she's almost embarrassed to call it by name.

IRONS

To name is to know, to know is to control. . . Sara.

SARA (cont'd)

How do you know so much about the Witchblade.

IRONS
(smiling)
I read a lot.

SARA
And *this* Witchblade is not yours?

IRONS
There is only one, but as you can see,
only women can wear the Witchblade.

SARA
Why?

IRONS
Women are more elemental, they are closer
to nature than men. The Witchblade finds
them superior. Do you believe in destiny
Sara?

SARA
I believe that . . . things are a lot
more connected than they appear.

IRONS
They are.

SARA
What is this thing? What is the
Witchblade?

IRONS
A mystery wrapped in a riddle and cloaked
in a conundrum.

SARA
That doesn't help very much.

IRONS
Language is a labyrinth we can easily get
lost in. (beat) I do want to help you
Sara. I can help you solve the mystery.
The Witchblade has powers, many powers,
but only the person who wields it can
truly know them all. Haven't you felt
different since it's found you.

SARA
That's an understatement.

Irons says nothing but looks at her knowingly.

SARA (cont'd)
(almost like she's confessing)
I . . . yes. In fact, I feel like I'm
losing my mind.

IRONS
You're not, but without my help that is
not only a distinct possibility, it is
probable.

SARA
Mr. Irons. The bottom line is I don't
want this thing. You can have it back.

IRONS
You can use the Witchblade to pierce the
veil of the senses, to see in an entirely
new way, to extract more information from
the universe than the normal human
sensorium allows...You already have.

SARA
No offense Mr. Irons but I don't want it.
My life is complicated enough.

IRONS
Sara you were destined to wear the
Witchblade (a sweeping gesture) as were
all these women. Embrace your destiny
Sara.

SARA
What do you mean.

IRONS
The Witchblade, the gauntlet, has chosen
you. You must accept it. Use it or lose
it. And if you don't deserve it, if you
don't earn it, it will abandon you.

SARA
I don't believe in any of this. . . this
magic.

IRONS
(shrugs).
Magic, alchemy, science. All different
names for the same thing.

SARA
I don't agree . . . (she starts to pull
it off)

IRONS

Don't you want to avenge the death of Michael Yee and Maria? Don't you want to find your father's killer.

Sara is now stupified. This is too weird. Too close to home. And yet Irons is truly mesmerizing.

IRONS (cont'd)

(the coup de grace)

Don't you want justice?

Sara is still trying to pull it off.

SARA

Yes, but I can do all of the above myself.

IRONS

I see.

His obvious sarcasm goes straight to Sara's guilt center.

IRONS (cont'd)

Carpe Diem Sara. Seize the day. Choose the Witchblade, it's already chosen you.

By now they've reached the end of the long hall of the gallery. There's a blank space at the end, a place of honor, that seems to be awaiting a work of Witchblade-related art.

A horrified realization dawns on Sara, and we do a quick SERIES OF JUMP CUTS, as Sara FLASHES BACK to several memories...

The Witchblade flies onto her hand at the cloisters. The Witchblade deflecting bullets. The fire sweeping over her. FLASHES from the Rialto.

It's over. Sara realizes that Irons is telling the truth. She reaches for the Witchblade bracelet, trying to pull it off, but it won't come. It transforms into the gauntlet as if in self-defense -- wanting to prevent Sara from ripping it off. As Sara fights the Witchblade, Irons whispers to her with the intensity of a satanic Vince Lombardi.

IRONS

You can't take it off, Sara, it won't let you, and if you search your heart and soul you'll find that you don't want to... You were meant to wield it! I can help you if you only let me.

(MORE)

IRONS (cont'd)

Teach you to use it, to control it, to become one with it. Don't you see, don't you understand? This was meant to be. You were meant to find the Witchblade, and I was meant to find you!

Sara can take it no more. She runs out of the gallery, leaving Irons behind as we -

CUT TO:

104 INT BASEMENT HIDEOUT - NIGHT

104

Gallo in the shadows on the phone.

GALLO

(trying not to explode)

What do you mean the job's not done? The rifle was up his . . .? And the top of his head was blown off? (pure malice)
Nothing but a miracle is gonna save her.

CUT TO:

105 EXT. DESERTED CITY STREET - A LITTLE LATER - NIGHT

105

A blinding RAIN whips down. We SUPER a title that tells us we're in the -

*Meat Packing District
Below 14th St.*

Sara stumbles through the rain, hearing VOICES in her head.

IRONS (V.O.)

It's already chosen you.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Open those doors of perception.

Sara screams in a rage... she balls the armor into a fist... PUNCHES a wall... an EXPLOSION of BRICKS, a force Sara couldn't possibly generate on her own.... it almost seems to have control of Sara, she turns her as if looking for something else to destroy... a NOISE from an alley... a HOMELESS MAN has seen this ... he runs like hell, terrified. The Witchblade tugs Sara's arm in the man's direction... a long blade starts to extend, the Witchblade smells prey, but... Sara refuses.

SARA

No!

Sara clenches her hand back into a fist and SLAMS it into the side of a building, punching again and again and again, reducing brick to dust.

INTERCUT WITH SARA'S ASSAULT

on the wall are flashes of the animated Sara as she merges with the WITCHBLADE - as it wraps around her.

Finally she exhausts herself. She pulls her hand out of the side of the building and looks down at the Witchblade, which slowly retracts back into bracelet form.

SARA

(slowly catching her breath)

No...

We HOLD on this image for a moment before we

CUT TO:

106 EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY 106

We watch as Sara enters the precinct, determined to get through another working day.

107 INT. PRECINCT HOUSE - SARA'S OFFICE - SAME TIME 107

Sara walks in. Michael Yee's possessions are still here: pictures of his wife, his kid. Several large styrofoam coffee cups. On the bulletin board we see the Tommy Gallo headlines and assorted Maria Buzanis crime scene photos. Sara sighs, ready to get down to work, when she sees a note on her desk: See me, Siri.

CUT TO:

108 INT. JOE SIRI'S OFFICE - DAY 108

Sara enters to find Joe Siri reading a statement at his desk. He waves Sara into a chair doesn't look up until he finishes reading.

JOE SIRI

You know what this is? A statement filed by Tommy Gallo's attorneys saying that you and Michael Yee attacked Tommy and his men, and that Tommy killed Michael in self-defense.

SARA
That is bullshit.

JOE SIRI
His lawyers, and he's got the best, state that Tommy's so scared he's gone into hiding because he doesn't trust the police not to kill him the minute they take him into custody.

SARA
You don't believe that do you?

JOE SIRI
The fact that all of his men are dead lends a certain credence to Gallo's claim, Sara.

(lets her stew for a beat)
But no, I don't believe him. However, you try and take him into a court right now and you might have a lot of trouble convincing a judge or jury otherwise. He was not breaking any laws by being in the Rialto and you didn't have probable cause.

(gives her a stern look)
You ready to tell me what's going on?

SARA
No.

Long beat as Siri processes this.

JOE SIRI
Sara, three of Gallo's men were killed with what forensics says was a sword with traces of an unidentified metal. I repeat, are you ready to tell me what's going on?

No response from Sara.

JOE SIRI
Your badge and gun, detective.

SARA
Joe, we saw Gallo kill one of his own men right there.

JOE SIRI

(even harder)

There were so many bullets from so many guns, you will never be able to prove that. (beat) Your badge and gun.

SARA

Who am I, Joe?

This question really catches Siri off guard. It's the question the dead Michael Yee told her to ask Siri.

JOE SIRI

(finally finding his voice)

What kind of question is that?

SARA

A direct one.

Siri doesn't say anything.

SARA (cont'd)

Joe. What's the deal? What is it that you're not ready to tell me?

SIRI

I don't know what you're driving at.

SARA

C'mon Joe. You've known me since I was born. You knew my mother who is nothing more than a photograph to me. You were my father's partner and best friend. There's gotta be something you can tell me. (beat) Wouldn't they want you to tell me?

JOE SIRI

(looks deep in her eyes)

You were adopted, Sara. I know, it's not supposed to be any big thing, you're supposed to tell the child when they're young, tell them how special they are, how wanted they are. But your mother, she took it hard that she couldn't have a baby. The way she saw it, you were hers. She'd hurt for so long before she got you she probably felt like she'd given birth to your herself.

(a beat, almost embarrassed)

(MORE)

JOE SIRI (cont'd)

After your mom died your dad got trapped in her story. Came to believe it as much as she did. Then he was murdered.

Sara winces as he says these last words.

SIRI

I couldn't tell you then, not after that. . . . and it still eats at me that we don't know who killed him.

A LONG BEAT, as Sara tries to process all this. Finally she speaks.

SARA

I can't believe you kept this from me all this time.

JOE SIRI

I'm sorry.

SARA

I need a week, Joe.

JOE SIRI

I can't give it to you.

SARA

What do you mean? On top of everything else you tell me all this and you expect me to just . . . I need a week to figure out what's going on, a week to get my head together, then we'll talk.

JOE SIRI

(reluctant)

Alright. One week. But there's a condition.

SARA

What kind of condition?

JOE SIRI

Jake is your new partner.

SARA

Joe. C'mon.

JOE SIRI

Now I'm gonna be direct. You're on the edge, Gallo's gone underground and I'm worried about you, not to mention that I'm taking a lot of heat.

(MORE)

JOE SIRI (cont'd)
 You've got to be careful. Extra careful.
 You seem different, off your game, and
 I'm not letting you go out there solo.

SARA
 OK.OK.

CUT TO:

109 INT CHATEAU - NIGHT

109

TIGHT on the young Nottingham.

OFF SCREEN VOICE
 In order to control the Witchblade I must
 control the woman who wields it. And this
 woman must be tested, must be made to run
 a grueling gauntlet and in so doing learn
 to wield the Witchblade. Her will must be
 tested. It must be measured. (beat) Tell
 me what you know about will, Nottingham.

YOUNG NOTTINGHAM
 The will is the link between the soul and
 the universe.

OFF SCREEN VOICE
 Well spoken young Nottingham, well
 spoken.

A hand pats young Ian on the head. The hand has a rune
 imprinted on it. Camera pans to reveal the hand belongs to
 Irons. He appears to be the EXACT SAME AGE as he does today.

DISSOLVE TO:

110 TIGHT ON NOTTINGHAM

110

As he stands vigil across the street from the 33rd Precinct.

CUT TO:

111 INT SARA'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

111

Sara sits on Yee's desk, her feet on the chair, her head in
 in her hands and stares at the bulletin board. After a beat
 she unconsciously rubs the Witchblade.

Suddenly everything is black and we hear a tremendously loud
 crack.

Camera pulls back out of the barrel of a smoking gun. We are
 now in the weird, wide angle Witchblade vision mode.

Holding the pistol, a large revolver, is Thomas Gallo. He fires again. The sonic punch is overwhelming.

Camera spins to reveal Maria's foot as twitches and her heel falls off from the impact of the second shot.

ECU on Sara's eyes. Ablaze with Witchbladean intensity. The gem matches the intensity of her eyes. She looks down at the bracelet.

SHE UNDERSTANDS WHAT IS HAPPENING -- THAT THE WITCHBLADE IS GIVING HER IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

FOR THE FIRST TIME WE SEE SARA MAKE A CONSCIOUS DECISION TO USE THE WITCHBLADE. She hastens out of the room.

CUT TO:

112 EXT 33RD PRECINCT - MOMENTS LATER

112

Sara moves briskly towards her unmarked car with Jake in tow.

JAKE
Where we going?

SARA
Shopping.

Jake makes the wise decision not to ask for what.

JAKE
I'll drive dude.

SARA
Don't think so dude. Where does your boy Drexler hang out?

JAKE
Usually at the Underground Velvet.

SARA
Meet me there at eleven. Outside.

She gets in the car and pulls out leaving Jake just standing there.

JAKE
Must be a hell of a sale.

CUT TO:

113 EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

113

Steam pouring out of a manhole cover. A silhouette emerges through the steam. A woman. A woman with a shape that instantly creates intense desire.

It is Sara wearing skin tight whatever.

THE MUSIC KICKS IN. HARD.

Jake stands not far from a non descript door where two extremely muscled bouncers stand on guard. He does a double take as he realizes that this feline vision is Sara.

Jake flanks her as she approaches the bouncers.

BOUNCER

She gets in, not you.

JAKE

(a bit cocky)
We're together brah.

BOUNCER

I don't care brah.

Jake is about to make a big scene out of this, but Sara looks at him.

SARA

Jake, it's cool. Wait here, I'll be back soon.

(asking in an almost seductive
whisper)

Please...

Jake, unable to resist her request, backs away from the rope.

SARA

Thanks, partner.

Sara turns and vanishes into -

114 INT. CLUB - SAME TIME

114

MUSIC pounds over the sound system... MOVING through the crowd... BODIES whirl on the dance floor... punks and hoods and molls, not an accountant in the bunch... STILL MOVING, heading for -

115 A TABLE IN THE BACK -

115

Where Drexler - Jake's informant - sits with his nocturnal friends. One of his friends sports a TATTOO of a serpent with an apple in its mouth.

Sara looks at it for a beat then plants herself on Drexler's lap.

SARA (cont'd)

Hey stud.

His friends perk up, impressed that Drexler would even know such a vixen. Drexler himself doesn't know whether to shit or wind his watch and he has no clue who Sara is.

SARA (cont'd)

C'mon. Let's go where we can talk a little more privately.

She wraps her arm around his neck and pulls him up.

SARA (cont'd)

Catch any shows at the Rialto lately.

Drexler starts to realize who Sara is but it still doesn't quite compute. He takes another long look at her and then bolts onto

116 THE DANCE FLOOR -

116

Which is a whirling mash of seething bodies writhing in a way that could be either sex or violence or both. And thus it doesn't look out of place when Sara catches up to Drexler on the dance floor and... HUH! She slams in the belly and he doubles over. Sara catches him so that he doesn't fall. Now Sara supports Drexler so that it looks like they're dancing, but she's actually physically dominating him, pushing him this way and that across the floor. During this next sequence they have to talk over the pounding music.

DREXLER

What do you want?

SARA

Tommy Gallo.

DREXLER

What about him?

SARA

Start with where he is.

DREXLER

I don't know.

SARA

I don't believe you...

DREXLER

I don't! Nobody knows.

Drexler tries to run again... again Sara catches him... again she SLAMS him with a blow... he hits the ground but Sara scoops him right back up. Nobody on the moshing floor notices

SARA

Alright, let's try an easier one. How did Gallo get his hands on the Rialto theater?

DREXLER

I hooked Gallo up with this guy, some really scary dude who came around

SARA

(her interest aroused)
What was his name?

DREXLER

I don't know.

Sara jabs a couple of fingers into a pressure point in Drexler's throat.

SARA

What was his name?

DREXLER

(barely able to speak)
He called himself Nottingham. Ian Nottingham.

SARA

(still jabbing him)
And . . .

DREXLER

He said he worked for Ken Irons. If I tell you any more they'll kill me.

Drexler makes one more attempt to bolt, and this time he gets as far as -

117 A CORRIDOR -

117

Leading to a payphone that no longer works. An exit door lies at the end of the hall. Drexler reaches it... yanks the door... it opens just enough to reveal that it's chained on the other side with a chain and padlock..

SARA (O.S.)

Looks to me like a firecode violatate.

118 ANOTHER ANGLE -

118

Sara stands there, blocking Drexler's way. He looks at her and then he whips out a switchblade and lunges for Sara and... She kicks him in the balls, laying him out. Drexler reaches for his knife but Sara kicks it down the hall where it vanishes into the dark. Now... she plants a foot on Drexler's chest.

SARA

Now: what do you know about Ken Irons?
How is he connected to Tommy Gallo.

DREXLER

(getting desperate)

I don't know nothing about Irons, nobody does! And if you know what's good for you Pezzini you'll back off before Nottingham comes to deal with you.

The Witchblade bracelet transforms into a razor-sharp stiletto. Sara yanks Drexler to his feet and puts the blade to his throat. From his POV it looks like a knife.

SARA

I think you oughta worry about how I'm going to deal with you, Drexler.

Sara really seems to be on the verge of killing Drexler, there's a look in her eye, she's gone past the point of restraint: the *Witchblade* has her.

SARA

(her voice becomes deeper)
Where's Gallo?

DREXLER

At a safe house in the Bronx. In the basement. Thirty Three Bennett Avenue.

This answer still does not stop Sara's aggression.

DREXLER
 (suddenly really scared)
 What're you doing? Pezzini?

Sara presses the blade to Drexler's throat... a drop of blood beads beneath it. He looks at her with pathetic, huge eyes.

DREXLER
 You can't do this, you can't, you're a
 cop...
 (begging)
 Please...

Sara blinks. Maybe it was the reminder that she's a cop. Maybe it was Drexler's own pathetic plea. Whatever it is, Sara shakes her head... the blade retracts... she slides off of Drexler and, in a daze, punches open the door and leaves.

CUT TO:

119 EXT. THE CLUB - NIGHT

119

Sara heads towards the car. (The Gauntlet is now back in its bracelet form.)

NOTTINGHAM (VO)
 Blood lust is a powerful thing.

Sara spins and draws. Suddenly she is tackled from behind and goes down with Nottingham right on top of her.

NOTTINGHAM (cont'd)
 The desire for revenge. The desire to
 control. Can you control that desire . .
 . Sara . . . or is it better unleashed?

The more she struggles the stronger his grip. The Witchblade glows but does nothing more.

NOTTINGHAM (cont'd)
 Your toy doesn't seem to work against me.
 (he puts his lips to her ear and
 whispers) Is it because you don't really
 want it to? Are you are having a hard
 time controlling the Witchblade Sara?

SARA
 What do you want?

NOTTINGHAM
 We always want what we cannot have.

SARA

What is it with you and Irons and that
mysterioso shit.

NOTTINGHAM

Don't ever compare me to Irons.

SARA

Get the hell off of me.

NOTTINGHAM

Why this compulsion to kill Gallo?

SARA

He killed two of my best friends.

NOTTINGHAM

If you hadn't been so intent on
persecuting Mr. Gallo in the first place,
Michael Yee would still be alive. Was it
worth it?

SARA

No. But that doesn't let Gallo off the
hook.

Nottingham spins her over so that they are now face to face.

NOTTINGHAM

(smiles)

How do you know the whole thing isn't a
trap, a set up?

SARA

What do you care?

NOTTINGHAM

I don't really.

SARA

Why did you set us up at the Rialto? Or
was that just a coincidence?

NOTTINGHAM

There are no coincidences.

SARA

Right. Let me go.

NOTTINGHAM

To do what?

SARA
Kill Gallo.

NOTTINGHAM
As you wish. But remember, to fully grasp the Witchblade you must first spill some of your own blood.

SARA
Yeah whatever Nottingham. Maybe now you can ungrasp me.

He is suddenly standing over a still supine Sara .He offers a hand which she refuses. She gets up, starts to walk away, then stops.

SARA
Is it a set up?

NOTTINGHAM
Expect the unexpected. . . Forewarned, forearmed.

Nottingham rubs his forearm, referring to the Witchblade.

SARA
I'll get back to you on that one . . .
Ian.

Sara now knows it is a set up. But so what. She starts to walk away.

NOTTINGHAM
Had any dreams lately Sara?

She stops cold and turns around. They lock eyes. Nottingham disappears into the darkness as Jake approaches.

JAKE
How'd it go.

SARA
You didn't miss a thing. I'm freezing.
Would you grab us some coffees from that deli down the street?

JAKE
Sure.

As he walks away for the coffee Sara gets in the car and takes off in a Pezzini-esque pedal to the metal way.

120 INT CAR - NIGHT

120

GALLO (OS)
Bonjourno Bella.

Gallo has emerged from the back seat with one of his typically immense pistols which is now pointed at the base of Sara's skull. Sara did not expect this.

SARA
(a beat)
Hey Killer.

GALLO
I've always liked that moniker.

Gallo rubs the back of her neck with the barrel of his gun.

GALLO (cont'd)
(conversational - NOT ARCH)
Watch out for pot holes, I want to talk to you for a minute before I snuff your vapid little martyr life.

Sara drives in silence. Gallo cocks his head a bit.

GALLO (cont'd)
I like the way those little peach fuzz hairs on the back of your neck are standing up.

Sara looks at the Witchblade. How to use it? How to trigger it. Maybe this was the moment of choice Irons' was talking about. The Witchblade does nothing.

Pezzini remains stoic. If she's gonna die like this, she's going to do it with as much dignity as possible.

GALLO (cont'd)
(almost like he's confessing)
Your holier than thou attitude really used to make me angry. Now I just find it amusing. (weirdly sincere) You and me, we are not that different. We're both hunters. We both like to kill.

Suddenly Pezzini's eyes flare. So does the Witchblade. She turns her wrist so that the now radiant gem faces Gallo. It momentarily blinds him. She swerves into a fire hydrant and ducks as the car crashes. Gallo's gun fires and shatters the windshield.

Sara kicks Gallo in the face and then jumps out of the car, scrambling over the dash and over the hood. She runs into a building with Gallo tight on her tail.

121 INT DESERTED BUILDING 121

Street-level concrete steps leading down to a basement door. Sara stumbles... falls into -

122 INT. A BASEMENT 122

She looks frantically looks around, sees a

123 FREIGHT ELEVATOR 123

Dimly lit. She jumps in and slams the lever. The elevator starts to rise.

Sara looks to the bracelet on her wrist.

INTERCUT Gallo - in total predator mode. He sees the elevator going up and heads for the stairs. Sara stares at the Witchblade. Nothing happens. **NOTHING.**

SARA

Alright then. I'll do this myself.

She slams the lever and jumps out of the elevator. She runs towards the steps but Gallo is already there.

He and Sara see one another, and for a moment neither says a word. The window blows... snow and rain continue to blow in through shattered windows...there are small snow banks in the corners . . . the jewel on the Witchblade seems to focus, and we literally MOVE inside the jewel -

124 WITCHBLADE POV: 124

Looking at Tommy Gallo. His voice and visage somewhat distorted.

SARA (O.S.)

You're a dead man, Gallo.

GALLO

I was just thinking the same thing about you.

A QUICK CUT TO:

125 INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - MEANWHILE

125

Ken Irons is looking down from his window, his hands pressed against the glass. He can't possibly see what's going on far below him. And yet, somehow, he seems to know what's going. The Witchblade firebrand rune on his hand pulses, as if connected to the Witchblade. The still of the apartment is punctuated by the sudden CRACK of -

126 BACK IN THE DESERTED BUILDING

126

Gunfire... Tommy Gallo has opened fire... a TORRENT of bullets ripping through wood and glass... Sara running... rolling out of the way... coming to hide behind -

STEAM PIPES

That block Sara from Gallo's line of fire. But this doesn't stop him, he fires again... a SHOT hits a pipe, blows it open... STEAM pours out of the pipe, burning Sara, causing her to bolt from her hiding place and now -

For one second Gallo has an open line of fire... he squeezes off one two three four shots that hit at Sara's feet as she runs... jumps... lands behind a protruding skylight, hunkers down low. We see her face: now she's mad.

ROCKET DOLLY

into Sara's eye and pull out through the gem. The WITCHBLADE is now a FULL GAUNTLET and a LONG BLADE.

ANOTHER ANGLE

STEAM is starting to fill the rooftop, making it more difficult to see. Now we INTERCUT between the two of them as they play cat and mouse, MOVING over the rooftop "arena"

ON GALLO

And his confidence is starting to ebb... STEAM billows around his feet... obscures his vision... GUN raised... spinning this way and that... waiting for... nothing... not even a sound of Sara reveals where she is.

GALLO

(calling out)

C'mon out, Pezzini, and I'll make it quick. Two in the back of the head...

(trying to bait Sara)

(MORE)

GALLO (cont'd)
Like I was just about to. *Just like*
Maria.

Tommy tenses, expecting Sara to rush him instantly and... nothing.

She does step out of her hiding place.

Gallo smiles and fires. Sara uses the Gauntlet and the blade to deflect the bullets and send them back - like a game of extreme tennis.

She seems to be in TOTAL CONTROL of the WITCHBLADE. From Gallo's POV it seems like she is bulletproof. He pulls a second gun and fires both simultaneously.

One bullet gets by her defenses and hits her in the shoulder - spinning her backwards.

SUDDENLY the WITCHBLADE BLADE is gone. Only the Gauntlet remains. FOR A SECOND Sara wavers. She watches a drop of her own blood fall onto some snow. The BRIGHT RED against the white is startling.

Sara is jolted back to her senses. She charges through the steam and fog directly towards Gallo. He fires but she blocks the bullets with her armored fist.

127 WITCHBLADE POV: 127

Looking through the fog... only the Witchblade can see a lot better than Tommy Gallo. Inside a CLOUD of steam the Witchblade isolates Tommy's silhouette... MOVING towards Tommy... running and -

128 ANOTHER ANGLE - 128

HUH! Sara slams into Gallo... tackles him.

SARA
You son-of-a-bitch!

They hit the ground hard... Tommy loses his guns. For a moment they flail at one another... Tommy is strong, but Sara is better... a Gauntlet punch... a kick... Tommy drops to the ground.

ON SARA

She stands over Gallo... the Witchblade smells blood... the GEM GLOWS like angry lava...so do Sara's eyes. A stiletto blade shoots out of the Gauntlet. Sara could easily kill Gallo, and yet she doesn't make the move.

129 ON IRONS -

129

Who somehow can see all of this, though he can't possibly see it.

IRONS

What are you waiting for, Sara?

130 ON SARA -

130

She still hasn't made a move. The blade starts to retract... the Witchblade sensing it's not about to be used.

ON GALLO

BLOOD drips from his nose.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Gallo looks around... his guns are a few feet away... out of reach. Suddenly he pulls yet another gun from his coat. With a scream of rage Gallo opens fire, unloading an entire clip as... Sara dives out of the way before she can even think to use the Witchblade. And then... silence, a moment of peace.

Both of them are breathing hard, both are hiding behind suitable cover. After a moment, Sara calls out.

SARA

Tell me something, Gallo.

(no answer)

Why'd you do it? Did Maria see something she shouldn't have seen? Know something she wasn't supposed to know? Was she stealing? What?

GALLO

You wanna know what happened to Maria?
I'll tell you!

131 FLASH -

131

As Gallo talks Sara sees everything he's saying. The OLDER man from the previous vision, drinking and partying with Maria... Maria passing out... turning BLUE... Older man picking up a phone, calling... Tommy Gallo, who brings... a DOCTOR, who checks out Maria and shakes his head with bad news. And over these images we hear -

GALLO (V.O.)

Maria went out with one of my clients, a freaking judge. The two of them consumed a goddamned pharmacy.

(MORE)

GALLO (cont'd)

She OD'd and his honor called me in a panic. I got there and Maria was still breathing, but just barely. I have this guy, doctor who lost his license, I use him for things like bullet wounds you can't take to the hospital. He said that Maria was gone -- even if she lived, which was doubtful, but even if she lived she was brain dead.

132 BACK IN REAL TIME -

132

The vision is over. Gallo continues, taunting Sara even as he complains about Maria.

GALLO

She didn't even have health insurance, She was gonna cost the taxpayers a bundle till she died of old age in her coma.

133 FLASH -

133

In the past Tommy Gallo raises a gun to Maria's head... his finger squeezes the trigger.

GALLO (V.O.)

It was a mercy killing.

Tommy pulls the trigger and -

134 BACK IN REAL TIME -

134

Sara shudders, feeling the force of the shot Tommy fired. She's raging mad, ready to kill, and she's ready to use... the Witchblade. Only -- it's not on her wrist any more. Sara looks down, stunned to see that it's gone, has no memory of losing it. Irons' voice sounds in her head.

IRONS (V.O.)

It is written that the Witchblade has a way of slipping from its wielder's grasp just when it is needed most.

With a horrified realization Sara looks across the room... sees the Witchblade lying on the opposite side, a cold gray gauntlet, nothing more.

135 FLASH -

135

Joan of Arc burns at the stake, and this time we get a good look at her: she not only has Sara's face, she is Sara. As the FLAMES rise, obscuring our view, Joan/Sara calls out to the missing Witchblade.

JOAN/SARA
Why have you abandoned me?

136 BACK IN REAL TIME -

136

Gallo jams a fresh clip into his gun, ready to go back to war.

GALLO
 Hey Pezzini, ready to die?

And Gallo attacks... BLASTING away... coming for Sara who is suddenly on the defensive in a way we hadn't seen before... diving... rolling out of the way of... BULLETS that whine by... RIPPING into the surrounding rooftop... sending up DEBRIS, and then -

Gallo and Sara come face to face... a pause, a deep breath, the two of them staring at one another, both breathing hard. The lifeless gauntlet is nearby. Gallo sights down on Sara.

GALLO
 You wanna know something weird, Pezzini?

SARA
 No...

GALLO
 Here I am, I killed your best friend in the world, I killed your partner, and now I'm about to kill you.

SARA
 You hit the homicidal maniac trifecta, you oughta be proud.

GALLO
 That's the thing, Pezzini, it isn't a trifecta.
 (a nasty smile)
 I'll let you in on a secret. It's like a bad B-movie cliché but it's true. I KILLED YOUR FATHER. (beat) Somebody wanted him whacked, and I was the guy that got to do it.

SLAM CUT TO:

137 FLASHBACK - 20 YEARS EARLIER - AN ALLEYWAY 137

James Pezzini comes around the corner with his hands up. Gallo is behind him. Gallo fires two shots and calmly walks away.

138 BACK TO SCENE 138

Sara reels from the vision as if she's been hit in the head.

GALLO

But it wasn't personal. Just like Maria wasn't personal, and not even your partner, even though the guy never liked me either. But you?

(with great grim pleasure)

You're personal.

Gallo smiles at Sara and for one moment... his face TRANSFORMS... a brief flash of vision, the worst of all the visions Sara's seen so far: Gallo is the grinning face of death, and he means to take Sara. And then just as quickly the vision is over, Gallo is himself again and we do -

A SLOW MOTION MOMENT

Gallo pulls the trigger... the BULLET exits the gun...

SARA UNLEASHES A PRIMAL SCREAM

Her rage is absolute. She HOLDS OUT HER HAND.

Sara looks over at the Witchblade and it's hard to tell if it comes to her or she goes to it -- it's almost as if the space between them doesn't exist and then -

BACK IN REAL TIME

Gallo unloads, and he can't believe it, his point blank shots do nothing.

Because Sara is now wearing the Witchblade... armor covering her wherever a bullet lands... deflecting each shot before it does any damage -

A bullet ricochets off the Witchblade... hits Gallo in the face. He drops his gun, howling in pain, throws his hands to his face. It's only a flesh wound, a thin stream of blood starts to fall down his face and then -

Sara is on top of Gallo - the Witchblade a fire-hot GAUNTLET. She punches him relentlessly with her metal fist. With both fists.

Gallo, who has dropped his weapon and now raises his arms, trying to fend off the blows.

QUICK CUT TO:

139 INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - MEANWHILE 139

Irons stands at his window, his eyes closed, "watching" this scene in his mind's eye. The rune on his hand pulses in the same manner the Witchblade does.

CUT TO:

140 BACK ON THE ROOFTOP - 140

Tommy Gallo lies face down on the rooftop, filthy and soaking wet... blood streaks his face and clothes, though his wounds so far are all insignificant. Sara is making this last. Now -

Sara stands over Gallo... the Witchblade is at its fullest transformation... a full suit of armor. Her eyes ablaze with hate, Sara bends over and grabs Tommy by the hair, lifting his head so that he can see her.

GALLO

What are you?

SARA

I'm justice, Tommy. Get ready to dance.

Sara puts the stiletto-blade to Tommy's throat, she's going to kill him when

141 FLASH - 141

She's back in the long hall of her dream, torches flicker as before. All of the women we've seen before are present, but this time we see the *FACES*... the Egyptian Princess... the Amazon... Joan of Arc. *Each one of these women has Sara's face.*

142 BACK IN REAL TIME - 142

Vision over. Sara is shaken by her vision. She hesitates.

143 ON IRONS - 143

Standing in his penthouse. His eyes are closed... the rune on his hand an angry pulsing red. Is he in agony OR ecstasy OR both?

144 BACK ON SARA & GALLO - 144

Sara looks down at Gallo, who has been beaten but is still defiant.

GALLO

Go ahead Pezzini. Enjoy it. I would if I were you.

A long moment, and then Sara retracts the Witchblade blade. It recedes, slowly at first, and then quickly. After a moment, Sara hauls Gallo to his feet and slaps handcuffs on him.

SARA

Gallo, you're under arrest.

145 ON IRONS - 145

Who whispers softly in disgust.

IRONS

You disappoint me, Sara...

146 EXT. STREET BELOW - A FEW MINUTES LATER 146

We WATCH from a distance as Sara drags Tommy Gallo to a waiting police cruiser. After a moment we realize we're not alone: Ian Nottingham is with us. He watches as Sara takes Tommy Gallo off, and though we can't be sure, Nottingham seems to be smiling.

Sara watches the cruiser pull away.

FADE TO:

147 EXT THE 33RD PRECINCT - DAY 147

We SUPER a title that tells us it's -

One week later . . .

148 INT. SARA'S OFFICE - DAY

148

Sara is having her morning cup of coffee. A folded-up newspaper sits on her tiny table next to her coffee -- she hasn't yet looked at it. Jake sticks his head in the door.

JAKE

The boss wants to see you in ten minutes.

SARA

OK

She sips her coffee and starts to unfurl the newspaper just as... the phone RINGS. Sara looks at it, debates letting her machine pick up, and then reaches over and answers.

SARA

Yes?

NOTTINGHAM (V.O.)

Looked in your morning paper yet?

SARA

What?

NOTTINGHAM (V.O.)

The morning paper.

Sara looks down at the paper she's literally just opened in front of her. A big photo of a body lying on the ground in front of a luxury building. A huge banner headline reads SUICIDE JUMP. Sara flips the paper open and looks at the corresponding article.

SARA

(reading aloud)

Organized crime figure Tommy Gallo committed suicide last night, jumping from the balcony of his heavily guarded apartment. Gallo was out on bail on two pending charges of murder...

CUT TO:

149 EXT. CITY STREET - MEANWHILE

149

Ian Nottingham leans against a wall, talking on a cell phone. Now we're going to INTERCUT between Sara and Nottingham as they talk.

NOTTINGHAM

It looks as if Tommy Gallo had a crisis of conscience.

SARA

Either that or he had help.

NOTTINGHAM

Perhaps a bit of both. It's been an interesting, Ms Pezzini.

SARA

You're on my list, Nottingham.

NOTTINGHAM

You have no idea how happy that makes me. Till we meet again.

SARA hangs up the phone.

SARA (VO)

And that's the story of how I came to have this thing on my hand called the Witchblade.

CUT TO:

150 EXT.NYC - DAY

150

ESTABLISHING SHOT of the cityscape.

SARA (VO)

I still don't know exactly what the Witchblade is or how to use it. Everyday I gain a bit more control, but this control requires will and vigilance. (beat) I think of Yee a lot.

SARA

He was right. Everything and everyone is more connected than we realize.

CUT TO:

151 INT. IRONS' PRIVATE GALLERY - A MINUTE LATER

151

Tom Nottingham has hung a painting in what was the blank space at the end of the hall.

SARA

So . . . There is no pat ending, no neat finale, no single final image . . .

Irons looks on, and for one moment we don't see the painting... and then we do. It looks like pop art... an airbrushed (Michael Turner-esque) comic book painting of Sara, a modern-day Sara in leather jacket and jeans, police badge on a chain around her neck, and... the Witchblade on her hand. THIS IS THE SINGLE FINAL IMAGE of the show. Sara has taken her place in Irons' gallery, though only as a painting for the time being.

SLAM CUT TO:

152 BLACK.

152

The End.