

**DRAG ME TO HELL**

Written by

Ivan Raimi & Sam Raimi

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**INT. BEDROOM - BEFORE DAWN**

22 year old Stephanie Browne is jarred from a peaceful sleep as the alarm clock BUZZES. She hits the snooze button and plops back down onto the pillow. After a few seconds of pure sleeping bliss, she wills herself up.

in She moves through her Ikea furnished bedroom, past a "Hang there, baby" poster and into the bathroom.

**INT. BATHROOM - A MOMENT LATER**

to Stephanie turns on the shower. While waiting for the water heat up, she looks into the mirror and with exaggerated pronunciation, recites:

**STEPHANIE**

There is no friction, with proper diction. Good sounds abound, when the mouth is round.

She catches herself on the last word, a hint of "Missouri twang" slipping through.

**STEPHANIE**

Round.

Yawn. She slips off her nightgown and lumbers into the steaming shower.

**INT. KITCHEN -- MORNING**

an She opens the refrigerator: A half grapefruit sits next to inviting slice of chocolate cake. She's tempted, but chooses the grapefruit.

**EXT. VENTURA BOULEVARD PARKING STRUCTURE - MORNING**

A sunny Southern California day. Commuters speed by. Stephanie's FORD FOCUS pulls into the PARKING STRUCTURE, across the street from the BANK OF CALIFORNIA. She steps from the car, smartly dressed for work and walks briskly toward the intersection. The traffic signal changes to "Don't Walk". A BUSINESS MAN next to her, sprints across the street. Stephanie almost follows but decides to obey the sign. She looks down to see a little KITTEN. It rubs against her ankles and PURRS.

**STEPHANIE**

Well, you're a little cutie.

**2.**

A car's HORN blares, spooking the kitten. It darts into the intersection and freezes at the sight of an oncoming VAN. Stephanie races into the intersection, snatches up the kitten and places it safely down on the other side of the street.

**STEPHANIE**

Hey! Slow down!

The Van roars past. She pets the Kitten. It PURRS and licks Stephanie's face. She sets it down.

**STEPHANIE**

Go on home. Shoo now!

She heads for the Bank. The kitten follows. She turns back, frowning.

**STEPHANIE**

Shoo!

**INT. BANK OF CALIFORNIA -- DAY**

Stephanie sits at her desk, across from a young MEXICAN COUPLE. She studies their mortgage application.

**MEXICAN MAN**

We keep getting the same thing.

Because I'm not employed by an American company, they won't take my application until they get my solvency statement. And the Mexican Treasury Department says that's going to take at least four more weeks.

**MEXICAN WOMAN**

And the house will be gone by then.

**STEPHANIE**

It says, here your employed by Pemex?

**MEXICAN**

That's right.

**STEPHANIE**

Isn't Pemex a subsidiary of Union Oil?

**3.**

a MEXICAN MAN

Yes. So? 0

**STEPHANIE**

So technically, your employer is an American company. I think we can make this work. I'll call you this afternoon and let you know.

The happy couple shake Stephanie's hand and exit. ELLEN, Stephanie's pretty, twenty two year old, roommate, flops

down

into the seat across from her.

**ELLEN**

I need clarification on the shoe issue.

**STEPHANIE**

Okay...

**ELLEN**

First of all-- you know you've got the only perfect pair of black dress shoes in L.A. So was that a definite, irrevocable, "no way" or t just a rather not at this time, "no way"?

**STEPHANIE**

It's an absolutely, positively, forget about the shoes already, "no way". They're my only good pair and I need them in good shape for tomorrow.

**ELLEN**

What's Up?

**STEPHANIE**

Dinner with Ray's parents.  
Ellen picks up a desktop photo: A shot of Stephanie and her handsome boyfriend, Ray, locked in an embrace, standing in the spray of a waterfall.

**ELLEN**

Ray's got a nice butt. Really tight

**AND---**

Stephanie takes back her photo.

**4.**

**STEPHANIE**

1 --I know. Thanks.

**ELLEN**

He's a keeper. But I told you about his mom, she's another story. I used to waitress at her country club, and with her, it's all about what private school you went to and who you know. You still up for that promotion? That would help.  
Stephanie looks longingly to...

**THE VACANT OFFICE**

of the former Assistant Manager. The large oak desk. The executive chair. Waiting to be filled. Stephanie turns back, pushing the thought away.

**STEPHANIE**

I'm not putting on a show. She'll either accept me for who I am or not.

**4**

**ELLEN**

Are you reading self help books again?  
The Kitten peers out through Stephanie's partially opened desk drawer.

**ELLEN**

Hello there!  
Ellen reaches for the Kitty but Stephanie waves her off.

**STEPHANIE**

--Shhhl I can't let my boss see him.  
Stephanie glances to her manager, MR. JACKS, a heavysset man sitting behind a large desk.

**ELLEN**

What about the shoes?

**STEPHANIE**

I told you. No. Now beat it.

**5.**

Mr. Jacks sneezes, rubs his nose. He looks suspiciously  
about the bank for the source of his allergy. 0

**STEPHANIE**

Uh Oh. You better bring the kitty home for me.

**ELLEN**

Sure. If I can take the shoes.

**STEPHANIE**

I told you, no.

Mr. Jacks sneezes again, his eyes water. He turns to his

**SECRETARY.**

**MR. JACKS**

Has someone brought a damned animal  
into my bank?!

Mr. Jacks looks about the Bank, his twitching nose leading  
him toward Stephanie's desk.

**STEPHANIE**

Okay, fine! Take the shoes!

Hidden from Mr. Jack's view, Ellen quickly scoops up the  
Kitten and places it into her purse.

As Mr. Jacks arrives at Stephanie's desk, he overhears:

**ELLEN**

Just don't expect me to take care  
of it.

This catches Mr. Jack's Attention. He turns to the ladies,  
wondering what they're talking about. Stephanie takes

Ellen's

hand and vigorously shakes it goodbye.

**STEPHANIE**

Of course not. I'll take care of  
everything. And thanks for choosing  
Bank of California.  
Ellen plays along.

**T**

6.

**ELLEN**

Okay. Then I'll see you later. I  
mean--- whenever the next time I'm  
in the bank. You know-- for a loan.

OR--

**STEPHANIE**

Goodbye.

As Ellen passes, Mr. Jacks sneezes again, harder.

**MR. JACKS**

Someone has definitely brought an animal in here.

He eyes Ellen suspiciously as she exits.

**STEPHANIE**

I don't see any cats. Or any animals.

**MR. JACKS**

Hope to hell, not.

**STEPHANIE**

By the way, I put the paperwork for the Mcpherson loan on your desk.

**MR. JACKS**

Mcpherson?

**STEPHANIE**

That big corporate loan I've been trying to set up? It's just preliminary but--

**MR. JACKS**

Oh, right. I'll look it over when I get the chance.

**STEPHANIE**

Mr. Jacks, I was wondering if you had made any decision regarding the Assistant Manager's position yet?

**MR. JACKS**

I'm still deciding. Right now it's between Stu and yourself.

7.

**STEPHANIE**

Stu? The trainee?

sits

Stephanie turns to see Stu, the balding loan officer who  
at his desk, watching, trying to figure out what Jacks is  
saying to her.

**MR. JACKS**

I know he's new but he's also quite  
aggressive and we like that. Don't  
get me wrong, you're well liked  
here, but we're also looking for  
someone who's not afraid to crunch  
the numbers and make the tough  
decisions.

**STEPHANIE**

Mr. Jacks, I feel that I'm  
perfectly capable of--

**MR. JACKS**

--I'll let you know as soon as I  
decide. In the meantime, take him  
through our loan qualifying  
procedures... just in case.

**STEPHANIE**

Oh. okay.

**MR. JACKS**

And would you mind taking your  
lunch now?

**STEPHANIE**

Sure.

**MR. JACKS**

And on your way back, maybe you  
could bring me a turkey club?  
Stu overhears them as he passes by.

**STU**

Turkey club. Excellent choice, J.J.  
Then to Stephanie:

**STU**

Mind picking one up for me?

8.

**STEPHANIE**

No problem.

Jacks heads back toward his desk. Stephanie grabs her purse and keys and as she heads out, Stu calls after her:

**STU**

On toasted rye! And spicy mustard!

Stephanie doesn't like fetching lunch for the trainee but hides her displeasure.

**STEPHANIE**

Sure.

**EXT. UCLA - WESTWOOD CAMPUS - DAY**

Stephanie enters the Ivy-covered red bricked Department of Psychology Building.

**INT. UCLA LECTURE HALL - DAY**

RAY DALTON, a handsome twenty-nine year old man is lecturing before a class of UCLA students. They listen attentively.

**RAY**

The conscious mind abhors uncertainty. It seeks a pattern or reason for everything. When we can't find that pattern or reason, we sometimes ascribe it's cause to the world of the supernatural. The spiritual world is created by the human mind to conveniently explain everything we can't. So when does a belief in the supernatural cross into the field of abnormal behavior? Where do you, the Psychologist, come in? When these beliefs negatively affect our patients activities of daily living. Their jobs, their friends, their sense of well being--  
The class bell RINGS.

**RAY**

Tomorrow we'll be covering the clinical manifestations of psychosis. You'll find it all t referenced in the text.

**9.**

The students pack up their books. Ray smiles as he sees Stephanie enter the lecture hall, holding a bag of deli food.

**INT. RAY'S UNIVERSITY OFFICE - LATER**

Stephanie eats a salad as she goes over a financial statement of the Mcpherson Corporation. Ray grades papers.

**RAY**

How're things at the bank? How's that new position looking?

**STEPHANIE**

I don't know.

**RAY**

Really? You sounded so sure.

**STEPHANIE**

Well, now there's this new guy... they're considering him too. Ray sees how bummed out she is. He moves close, taking her in his arms.

**RAY**

That job needs somebody with your experience. They know that. Stephanie nods.

**STEPHANIE**

Oh, I've got something for you. She rummages through her purse and hands Ray an envelope. He

removes a coin. An old nickle.

**RAY**

A 1925 Indian head! Hey, good find.  
Where'd you get it?

**STEPHANIE**

One of the tellers found it for me.  
Ray puts the coin back into the envelope and tucks it into  
his pocket.

10.

**RAY**

Thanks.

**STEPHANIE**

I'd better get back to work.  
She quickly gathers her things. Ray returns to grading his  
student's exams. The telephone RINGS. Ray hits the  
speakerphone.

**RAY.**

Doctor Dalton.  
It's the voice of an older woman, TRUDY.

**TRUDY ON SPEAKERPHONE**

Hello dear.

**RAY**

Hi Mom, can you hold on a sec?  
He turns from the phone, whispering to Stephanie:

**RAY**

I'll call you tonight.  
She kisses Ray and exits.

**INT. HALL OUTSIDE RAY'S OFFICE - DAY**

Stephanie stops at the water fountain for a drink.

**RAY'S VOICE**

Nothing much. Just had lunch with  
Stephanie. And trying to get these

midterms graded--

She halts as she hears her name mentioned on Ray's speakerphone. She moves closer to Ray's office to eavesdrop:

**TRUDY'S VOICE**

--Stephanie? The one from the farm?

**RAY'S VOICE**

You know who she is. She's coming over for dinner tomorrow night to meet you and dad.

0

11.

**TRUDY'S VOICE**

Ray, I'm sure she's sweet, but she doesn't sound...

**RAY'S VOICE**

What?

**TRUDY'S VOICE**

I mean she's just a teller at some bank right? Raymond there's a reason that your father and I raised you in a certain way. We have expectations.

**RAY'S VOICE**

Please, mom, not this again--

**TRUDY'S VOICE**

I heard that Julie Kulick is looking for someone to play tennis with. You know she graduated Yale law with honors. I'm told she's quite a successful attorney now. I gave you her number but her mother says you never called.

**RAY'S VOICE**

Because I'm with Stephanie. I'm not looking for anybody else.

**TRUDY'S VOICE**

Would it kill you to--

**RAY'S VOICE**

--Mom. I have to go. See you tomorrow night. Okay? Bye.  
A downhearted Stephanie quietly exits.

**INT. BANK OF CALIFORNIA - BREAK ROOM - DAY**

Jacks As Stephanie pours herself a cup of coffee, Stu and Mr. take the first bites of their sandwiches. Stu makes a face. He inspects the sandwich, shakes his head.

**STU**

(quietly to Mr. Jacks)  
She messed up my order.  
Stephanie heard that.

12.

**STEPHANIE**

No I didn't, Stu.

**STU**

Steph, I said "no mayo".

**STEPHANIE**

You never said that.  
Stu rolls his eyes to Mr. Jacks.  
Stephanie caught Stu's look, but what can she do? She exits.

**INT. BANK OF CALIFORNIA - LATER**

Stephanie sits at her desk, entering data into her computer.

emerging She glances across the bank to see Stu and Mr. Jacks  
game from the break room. Stu is about to return to his desk when  
he remembers something: he's got two tickets to a Dodger  
that he can't use. Mr. Jacks happily accepts the tickets.  
Stephanie looks to the vacant office of the Assistant  
Manager. She can feel her promotion slipping away.

**SCRATCH... SCRATCH...**

Stephanie looks to the source of the sound...  
A withered hand. An involuntary tremor causes it's yellowed  
fingernails to SCRATCH across the surface of Stephanie's  
desk...

**SCRATCH... SCRATCH...**

great The hand belongs to MRS. SYLVIA GANUSH, the aged woman who  
sits across from Stephanie. She wears a formal dress and hat  
from another era. The outfit is threadbare in spots but  
care has been taken to maintain it.

**MRS. GANUSH**

(Hungarian accent)  
Will you help me?

**STEPHANIE**

them. Of course. What can I do for you?  
Mrs. Ganush coughs up phlegm and spits it into a linen  
handkerchief, which she tucks back into her purse. She hands  
Stephanie a bunch of crumpled papers. Stephanie reviews

13.

**STEPHANIE**

Mrs. "Ganush"?  
The old woman nods.

**STEPHANIE**

This is a delinquency notice... it  
says that the payment on your loan  
was due a number of months ago. And  
this other document... is a court

order for repossession. The bank is informing you of their intent to repossess-your property at 325 Brandon street, tomorrow.,

**MRS. GANUSH**

The trucks are there now. The men are packing all my things. Private things. Please, make them stop. This is my home for twenty years. And I make every payment until the sickness took my eye. Mrs. Ganush turns her head to reveal a milky white eye. Stephanie hides her revulsion.

**STEPHANIE**

Well... do you have the payment with you now?

**MRS. GANUSH**

I hope to get it soon. I just need a little more time.

**STEPHANIE**

I don't think my manager is going to extend you anymore credit. I'd like to help but...

**MRS. GANUSH**

Please. Won't you try?

**STEPHANIE**

Okay. Wait here. Stephanie stands and moves off. The Old Woman picks through a bowl of hard candies on Stephanie's desk. Stephanie stands before Mr. Jacks. He acknowledges her without looking up from his work.

**1B**

**14.**

**MR. JACKS**

What's up?

**STEPHANIE**

I've got an elderly woman asking for an extension on her mortgage payment.. They're in the process of repossessing her home. She's on a fixed income and she's had some medical problems. I was wondering if we could give her a break. Stephanie hands Mr. Jacks the loan file. He puts on his bifocals, studies it. Stephanie glances over her shoulder.

**STEPHANIE'S P.O.V. - HER DESK**

then  
she  
Mrs. Ganush looks around to. make sure no one's watching,  
tips the bowl of hard candies into her purse. She reaches.  
into her mouth and removes a set of stained dentures that  
wraps in her linen handkerchief.  
She places a piece of hard candy into her mouth and gums it  
with a wet SUCKING sound. The Old Woman's one good eye,  
wanders about in ecstasy as she sucks on the sugary treat.

**MR. JACKS**

Apparently, we've already granted her two extensions. And you know on this type of foreclosure, the bank makes a sizable amount in fees.  
He hands her back the file.

**STEPHANIE**

It would mean I'd have to throw her out of her house.

**MR. JACKS**

Tough decision. Your call.  
He leans back in his overstuffed leather chair and studies her. Stephanie glances to the vacant office of the Assistant Manager. The large oak desk. The thick carpet.  
She sees a calculating Stu Rubin eyeing her from his workstation.

15.

**STEPHANIE**

I'll take care of it.  
Stephanie returns to her desk.

**STEPHANIE**

Mrs. Ganush, another extension on  
the loan is out of the question.

**MRS. GANUSH**

What?

**STEPHANIE**

I'm sorry.

**MRS. GANUSH**

No. Please, it's my home... I'm  
begging you.

**STEPHANIE**

I tried to talk my boss into it but  
he just wouldn't approve.

**MRS. GANUSH**

But where will I live?

Stephanie leafs through the loan documents. She finds a  
name.

**STEPHANIE**

Mrs. Ganush, you've given your  
granddaughter as a reference... It  
says here, she lives nearby...  
Wouldn't you be better off living  
with her?

**MRS. GANUSH**

I would not burden her.

**STEPHANIE**

Okay well, there's several fine  
"assisted living" facilities for  
the elderly.

**MRS GANUSH**

A nursing home? No. I will never  
live in one of those places!

**STEPHANIE**

Well, of course, that's your choice.

16.

**MRS. GANUSH**

It's yours.

**STEPHANIE**

I'm sorry there's nothing I can do.  
Mrs. Ganush begins to sob.

**MRS. GANUSH**

I am proud woman, Miss Brown, and never have I begged for anything. But I will beg for you now. This one time. I humble myself before you.

**STEPHANIE**

That isn't necessary, please. Let's not make this personal. It's just the bank's policy. I'm really sorry Mrs. Ganush.

Stephanie takes the loan documents and places them neatly into a manila folder. she glances up but Mrs. Ganush is

gone..

Stephanie turns in her chair and is startled to see the old woman, kneeling before her. She clutches Stephanie's leg

with

her gnarled hands.

**MRS. GANUSH**

Have mercy on me.

Stephanie stands, tries to pull free, but the old woman will not release her leg.

**STEPHANIE**

Please, let go.

Customers turn to look. Mr. Jacks glances up from his desk.

**MR. JACKS**

What the hell?

**MRS. GANUSH**

I, Sylvia Ganush, beg. On my mother's grave, I beg you.

**STEPHANIE**

Please, take your hands off me.  
But the old woman only clutches tighter.

17.

**STEPHANIE**

t  
I'm calling security.  
She picks up the phone and presses a button.

**STEPHANIE**

(into the phone)  
Could you please come over?  
Mrs. Ganush finally releases her grip and bows her head in humiliation.

**MRS. GANUSH**

You shame me.  
She composes herself. Then, slowly stands, puffing up her chest. Muttering her damaged pride.

**MRS. GANUSH**

I begged you...  
Her one. good eye fixes it's hardened gaze upon Stephanie.

**MRS. GANUSH**

.and you shame me.  
Mrs. Ganush suddenly grasps Stephanie's arm. Stephanie tries to pull away but the old lady's grip is strong. Mrs. Ganush reaches out to pluck the charm bracelet from Stephanie's wrist-- but the Security Guard intervenes.

**SECURITY GUARD**

I think your business here is finished, ma'am.  
The Guard escorts Mrs. Ganush from the bank. Through the bank's window, Stephanie watches the Guard lead Mrs. Ganush

to a old, Chevy Cavalier on the street.  
Stephanie composes herself and when she again looks up, the  
old woman's car is gone.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. BANK - LATER**

work  
16 The bank is closing. Stephanie is finishing some paper  
when Mr. Jacks stops by her desk. 0

18.

**MR. JACKS**

That was one nutty old lady. You  
okay?  
Stephanie nods.

**MR. JACKS**

You handled that just right. And by  
the way, as far as the Assistant  
Manager's position... You're at the  
top of the list.

**STEPHANIE**

Thanks.  
Mr. Jacks nods, heads for home. Stephanie loads a pile of  
contracts, a ruler and a desk stapler into a cardboard box  
and exits the bank. The Security guard locks up behind her.

**EXT. BANK OF CALIFORNIA - PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY**

It's  
parked  
Stephanie waves as the last of her co-workers drive off.  
then that she notices the battered Chevy Caviler. It's  
in the structure.  
Stephanie looks closer. There's no one behind the wheel.  
She nervously glances about. No sign of Mrs. Ganush.  
Stephanie makes her way toward the safety of her car.  
Her FOOTSTEPS echo in the deserted structure, more loudly  
than she would like.  
She arrives at her car and quickly gets inside, locking the

doors behind her. She places the box of contracts on the  
seat  
next to her. As she starts the engine, she notices a strange  
sight: something moving, skimming along the surface of the  
lot.  
It's Mrs. Ganush's linen handkerchief.  
It whisks about like a ghost, swirling closer and closer.  
Stephanie watches transfixed, as it flies right toward her  
car. It dips beneath her hood and is gone. It suddenly  
sweeps  
up into view, flittering up, over her windshield, and is  
carried off by the wind.  
Stephanie breathes a sigh of relief just as two wrinkled  
hands come up around her face! Mrs Ganush sits up in the  
back seat of her car! SHRIEKING with rage at Stephanie!

**4**

**19.**

**MRS. GANUSH**

(In Hungarian)

You bitch! I pluck out your fucking  
eyes!

wrists,  
Mrs. Ganush's razor sharp fingernails lash out towards  
Stephanie's eyes. But Stephanie grabs the old woman's

halting her.

The withered hands drop down to wrap around Stephanie's  
throat. Stephanie fights for breath as she frantically  
searches for a weapon. Her hand finds the box on the seat  
next to her. She grabs a handful of colored push pins and  
jams them into the old woman's arm. Mrs. Ganush releases her  
grip. Stephanie has time for only a single gulp of air  
before

back  
Mrs. Ganush grabs two fistfuls of Stephanie's hair!. The old  
woman yanks upon it. Stephanie's head is pulled back, over  
the edge of the seat. Ganush braces her feet against the

of the front seat to pull even harder... Stephanie's neck is  
now bent so far back it's about to snap!

Stephanie's hand finds the stapler, trips the release. It  
springs open. She swings it back over her shoulder!  
Ka-Thunk! Ka-Thunk! Ka-Thunk!

With each blow, she delivers a staple into Mrs. Ganush's forehead.

Ka-Thunk! A lucky shot-- the old lady's white eye is stapled shut.

The old woman HOWLS, but her grip on Stephanie's hair only tightens.

Stephanie, about to black out, throws the car into gear and hits the gas. As the car' accelerates, Stephanie fastens her shoulder harness with the last of her strength.

The old woman's stapled eyelid POPS open just in time for

her

to see... an oncoming concrete column.

Stephanie's car slams into it. Stephanie is held fast by her shoulder harness.

But Mrs. Ganush's body hurtles forward over the front seat, impacting against the dashboard with tremendous force.

Close shot of the old woman's head slamming into the dash.

In

a spray of broken teeth, her dentures eject from her mouth.

## 20.

Both women are dazed from the impact. Stephanie regains her wits first. She reaches across Mrs. Ganush and opens the passenger door.

Mrs. Ganush stirs, but before she can come to, Stephanie's foot shoves her out. The old woman hits the ground hard but she sits up suddenly with a SNARL and starts to climb back in. Stephanie shifts the car into reverse. The opened passenger door knocks Mrs. Ganush back down to the pavement. The car's rear bumper slams into a concrete column.

Stephanie

is dazed.

Mrs. Ganush crawls to her feet and begins limping toward the car.

Stephanie tries to focus. A blurred image in the rear view mirror: Mrs. Ganush running closer, 'SHRIEKING with old world rage!

The Old Woman reaches for the opened passenger door but Stephanie closes it and locks it just in time! Mrs. Ganush furiously pulls on the door handle to no,avail.

## **STEPHANIE**

I beat you, you old bitch! Next time take your Geretol!

The old woman bends down, beneath Stephanie's view.

Stephanie

looks about. Where'd she go?

The old woman pops up into view, raising a chunk of concrete and... CRASH! Stephanie SCREAMS as the window shatters.

The old woman's head juts into the car. She clamps her toothless maw down upon Stephanie's chin. Suckling it, gumming. The old woman's good eye rolls about in ecstasy. Stephanie SHRIEKS as she pushes the slobbering head away. Strands of spittle form a bridge from the old woman's mouth to Stephanie's jaw.

The old woman's wrinkled hands grope about the front seat. She finds her dentures, now damaged from the fight. She GRUNTS as she jams them back into her mouth. She comes at Stephanie, mouth wide open and SHRIEKING!

Stephanie grabs the wooden ruler from her cardboard box and shoves it down the old lady's throat. Mrs. Ganush gags, trying to retch up the ruler.

## 21.

Then Stephanie is suddenly screaming herself, as the old woman has grabbed her legs and is dragging her from the car.

Stephanie hits the pavement. She shields her face with her hands, waiting, but the blow never comes. The old woman standing above her, WHEEZING.

### MRS. GANUSH

You shamed me.

The Old Woman reaches down. Stephanie flinches. Mrs. Ganush's

gnarled hand plucks a thin brass button from the sleeve of Stephanie's coat. She waves the button through the air, and breathes out a single word:

### MRS. GANUSH

Lamia...

Clouds move past the setting Sun. A shadow falls over Stephanie. A cold wind makes her shiver.

### STEPHANIE

What--? What are you doing?

woman Stephanie sits up, reaching for her button. But the old  
1 moves it out of reach.

**MRS. GANUSH**

You want it?

Stephanie snatches the button back. Mrs. Ganush smiles cryptically as Stephanie stuffs the button into her coat pocket.

**MRS. GANUSH**

Soon it will be you, who comes begging to me. It begins tonight when you hear the cry.

**STEPHANIE**

What cry?

**MRS. GANUSH**

The Lamia. It's coming for you.

A large black, BUZZING fly lands on Stephanie's face. She swats it away. Her vision blurs and she grows dizzy. She leans against the car for support. When she finally looks

up,

Mrs. Ganush is gone.

22.

**INT. POLICE STATION - SARGENT'S DESK - NIGHT**

Stephanie and Ray have just finished filing a report with

**OFFICER NAIMARK.**

**RAY**

What about a restraining order?

**OFFICER NAIMARK**

Well that's usually only something we do if there's a pattern of harassment. But like I said, we'll file a report and keep it on record

in case you do have a continuing problem. But once we send an officer around to have a word with, her, I don't think she'll be bothering you again.

**STEPHANIE**

Thank you, you've been very helpful.

**EXT. VENTURA BLVD - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Stephanie and Ray eat ice cream cones as they walk past the shops.

**RAY**

I just thank God you're okay. You are okay, right?

**STEPHANIE**

I'm fine.  
Ray waits, sensing that there's more to it.

**RAY**

Your fine, but...

**STEPHANIE**

I-- It's just that I could have gotten her another extension. But I didn't.

**RAY**

Loo]. You said the bank had already granted her two extensions.

**(MORE)**

**4**

**23.**

RAY (cont'd)  
When you don't pay your mortgage you lose your house, what did she expect?

**STEPHANIE**

I guess.

A breeze. She shivers. He wraps his arms around her protectively and after a moment, they walk on. Stephanie watches wistfully as a YOUNG COUPLE coo over their BABY. Behind the couple, Stephanie notices a neon sign in a storefront window. It reads: PSYCHIC.

**STEPHANIE**

Let's get our fortune's read!

**RAY**

You're kidding right?

She cajoles a protesting Ray through the front door of the establishment.

**INT. STOREFRONT - NIGHT**

A tiny waiting room. A poster on the wall indicating the energy meridians of the human body.

**RAY**

I just hope to God none of my students see me here. Five bucks says he's wearing a turban. A beaded curtain parts, revealing... Rham Jas, a small, dark skinned, fifty year old Indian man. He wears a plain black suit and a white turban. His inquisitive eyes evaluate the couple.

**RHAM JAS**

I am Rham Jas. Seer.

**STEPHANIE**

How do you do? I'm Stephanie Brown and this is Ray...

**RAY**

But you probably already knew that. Just kidding. Rham Jas gives Ray a tight smile.

**RHAM JAS**

How can I help you?

**STEPHANIE**

We'd like to have our fortunes read. Can you do that? Read the future?

**RHAM JAS**

I have the ability to see certain energies... Sometimes these 'energies are a foretold of things to come. Sometimes not. Sixty dollars, please.

**RAY**

Sixty dollars? Isn't that a little steep for this kind of thing?

**RHAM JAS**

Then go. There are many who would claim to be seers. But they are not. Although you would pay them little... you would receive nothing. If you are not serious, go.

Rham Jas turns to depart through the beaded curtain.

**STEPHANIE**

Wait.

She removes some bills from her purse but Ray waves her off, handing Rham Jas a credit card.

**RHAM JAS**

Platinum card. Very good.

He swipes Ray's card through the credit card machine.

INT Rham Jas'S BACK ROOM - NIGHT

A sparsely furnished, dimly lit room. The walls are lined with old books. Rham Jas stands before Stephanie and Ray,

who

sit at a card table. Stephanie giggles with excitement.

**STEPHANIE**

Sorry.

Rham Jas smiles back.

25.

**RHAM JAS**

That's quite all right. So, you wish to know something of your destiny. Very good. We shall see what the fates have in store.

Rham Jas crosses to the window and closes the curtains.

**RAY**

Freud said destiny was not an act of fate but rather something created by our subconscious to control our conscious choices.

**RHAM JAS**

That is true. But... "We should not pretend to understand the world only by intellect."

**RAY**

Carl Jung...

**RHAM JAS**

Yes. From his treatise "Psychological types".

lights  
brushes

Ray studies this strange man as he strikes a match and a candle. There's more to him than meets the eye. Ray it off.

**RAY**

Jung-- the New Agers' favorite psychologist.

**RHAM JAS**

Because he wasn't afraid to bring God into the equation.

Rham Jas takes a seat at the table, across from Stephanie.

**RHAM JAS**

Your hand, please.

Stephanie extends her hand to Rham Jas. He closes his eyes and concentrates. Stephanie smiles excitedly to Ray, who raises a skeptical eyebrow.

**RHAM JAS**

You,work with money.

**TO**

**26.**

**STEPHANIE**

That's right! 4

**RHAM JAS**

But... you've lost something.

**STEPHANIE**

No. I don't think so.

**RHAM JAS**

No. No, you're right. Something's been taken from you.

**STEPHANIE**

No, I-

Rham Jas grabs her arm and turns it, revealing the threads. that once held the button on her coat sleeve.

**RHAM JAS**

A button.

**STEPHANIE**

Well, yes! Some Old Woman...

**RAY**

Well anyone can see she lost a button. So what?

**STEPHANIE**

But Ray, it was very strange. At the bank today. The old woman... the one I told you about... she plucked the button right from my sleeve.

**RAY**

Why would she do that?

**RHAM JAS**

If you would please, both be quiet.  
Rham Jae concentrates, his eyelids flutter. Stephanie  
appears  
uneasy. The flame of the candle begins to flicker as a  
breeze  
sweeps through the room. The wind chimes TINKLE. Ray pulls  
his collar closed against the sudden chill in the air. Rham  
Jas's back stiffens.

**4**

**27.**

He releases Stephanie's hand and stands. He moves away from  
the table, uncomfortable. With a handkerchief, he dabs  
perspiration from his brow.

**RHAM JAS**

I think that is enough for now.

**STEPHANIE**

Wait. You saw something. What?

**RHAM JAS**

I'm sorry. I'm tired and I see it's  
become quite late. Of course I will  
refund your money.

**STEPHANIE**

Tell me. Please.  
Rham Jas hesitates, then...

**RHAM JAS**

A bad spirit has come upon you.

**STEPHANIE**

How?

**RHAM JAS**

Did you blaspheme the dead while  
visiting a grave site?

**STEPHANIE**

No.

**RHAM JAS**

Do you play with Ouija board or confer with those who practice the black arts?

**RAY**

What is this?!

**STEPHANIE**

No. No, I didn't.

**RHAM JAS**

Then perhaps someone has cursed you.

**STEPHANIE**

Who? 0

**28.**

Rham Jas turns her wrist, exposing the loose threads on her coat sleeve.

**CLOSE ON THE THREADS**

where the brass button once was.

**EXT. HILLS OF SILVER LAKE -- NIGHT**

Ray and Stephanie cruise along the dark, winding hills. Ray looks over at Stephanie.

**STEPHANIE**

How did he know all that?

**RAY**

Know what? That you lost, a button? He makes some good guesses, stirs you up, leaving you with a lot of questions. And conveniently, his business card. C'mon, he's a scam artist.

**STEPHANIE**

He didn't want the money. He tried to give the money back.

**RAY**

In the end, he took it, didn't he?

**STEPHANIE**

I guess so.

**EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

iron  
Ray and Stephanie step from the car. They open a rusting gate, and walk up the hilly path to Stephanie's slightly funky Silver Lake rental house.

**INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT**

Ray and Stephanie step inside. The kitten PURRS around Stephanie's feet. Ray picks it up.

**RAY**

So this is him. Got a name?

**STEPHANIE**

Uh... just "Kitty" so far.

**29.**

She takes the cat from Ray, cuddles it.

**RAY**

Sure you don't want me to spend the night?

**STEPHANIE**

Don't tempt me. I've got to prep a presentation for the morning.

**RAY**

okay.

Ray kisses her, opens the front door and exits. He calls  
back

to her from his car:

**RAY**

Remember, dinner at my folk's house, tomorrow night. We're supposed to bring desert. I could pick something up?

**STEPHANIE**

No. I'm planning on baking my special cake.

**RAY**

Sounds good. Try not to stay up too late.

drive  
Ray waves and steps into his car. Stephanie watches him off.

**INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Stephanie sits at the kitchen table in her flannel pajamas, entering financial data into her laptop. An episode of "Desperate Housewives" plays in the background on TV. A baking timer CHIMES. Stephanie removes a beautifully browned cake from the oven and sets it on the counter to cool. Her roommate, ELLEN, comes down the stairs, snuggling the kitten.

**STEPHANIE**

Isn't he adorable?

**ELLEN**

Let's hope the landlord thinks so. She sets down, the kitten and picks up her overnight bag. 0

30.

**ELLEN**

**T**

What about you? You going to be

okay? You know, I don't have to go out tonight.

**STEPHANIE**

No, I'm fine. Have a good time.

**ELLEN**

Do I look great? Be honest.

**STEPHANIE.**

You look great.

Ellen smiles, grabs her car keys and heads for the door.

**STEPHANIE**

But... Isn't that Marci's dress?

**ELLEN**

Yeah. And if she calls, tell her not to go bi-polar on me, I'll get it back to her by tomorrow. Or the next day. Bye!

Ellen exits.

Stephanie places butter into a mixer for the cake frosting. Through the kitchen window we can see Ellen walking down the path, toward the street. She steps through the iron gate, latching it closed behind her.

**EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Ellen's car pulls away. The wind kicks up, whisking leaves about, as though something were moving up the path and toward the front gate of the house.

**INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

An unsettling SHRIEK! what the hell was that? Stephanie sets down the measuring cup.

She moves to the front door. Locks it.

She looks out the kitchen window. The iron. gate is now

open.

It SHRIEKS as it swings back and forth in the wind.

**31.**

Suddenly, the latch gives way and the windows swing open!

about. 1 Wind sweeps through the kitchen, whipping dead leaves

The hanging pans bang together! KLANG! KLANG!  
Stephanie forces the windows closed.

The wind dies. The room grows eerily quiet.

A car passes in the street below. It's headlights sweep  
on across the house. The headlight beams throw moving shadows

the wall. Stephanie notices that one particular shadow is  
darker than the others. It becomes the silhouette of Mrs.  
Ganush, but there's no one in the room with her.

The car passes and the shadows vanish.

Stephanie Sensing something, the Kitten arches it's back. Now

feels it. A presence. The light bulb begins to sputter.  
She holds her breath, listens.

The floorboards CREAK. Something is walking towards her. She  
spins around, but there's nothing there. The SOUND of  
footsteps drawing closer.

She backs against the wall, trembling.

She Suddenly Stephanie's face is struck by an invisible hand!

cries out. Her mouth is bleeding.

She runs for the door. She's almost there. Her hand reaches  
for the knob, when something unseen picks her up. She

SCREAMS

as she is thrown against the wall. She falls to the floor.  
Lifting her head, she catches her own reflection in the

**WINDOW:**

flash In the reflection, as the light bulb flickers, we see a

of ghostly hands that grope at her body. They reach up  
through the floor, and clutch at her legs, buttocks and  
breasts.

**STEPHANIE**

Get off me! Get off!

The phantom hands vanish. Stephanie looks about, eyes wild.

**INT. RAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

**32.**

Stephanie is wearing Ray's overcoat atop her pajamas. She nervously paces the room. Ray hurries in, handing her a pack of frozen peas that she presses against her bloody lip.

**RAY**

So she came to your house? This is crazy. I'm calling that police officer.  
He begins to dial but Stephanie stops him.

**STEPHANIE**

Ray, you're not listening. It wasn't her. It was something that she sicked on me...

**RAY**

I don't understand.

**STEPHANIE**

I didn't tell you the whole story. That old woman... after she knocked me down, and pulled the button from my coat, she told me that...

**RAY**

What?

**STEPHANIE**

She said that something was coming for me... and it did.  
Ray stares at her with concern.

**INT. RAY'S HOUSE - LATER**

living  
DOCTOR RANGIVERTZ, wearing jeans and a UCLA basketball sweatshirt, concludes his interview with Stephanie. He carries a small black medical bag as he steps from the room to speak with Ray.

**DOCTOR RANGAVERTZ**

Ray, you were right to call me.  
Never a good idea to be personally involved with your patient.

**RAY**

What do you think?

**4**

33.

**DOCTOR RANGAVERTZ**

1b Medically, she's fine. She's just very distraught. She's displaying some paranoia and a sense of panic. Classic symptoms of a post traumatic stress disorder. Probably a result of being assaulted by that old woman.

Doctor Rangavertz scribbles out a prescription and hands it to Ray.

**RAY**

How worried should I be?

**DOCTOR RANGAVERTZ**

We'll have to wait and see.

**INT. RAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

of 'Stephanie lays peacefully in bed, almost asleep. A bottle sedatives on the bedside table. Ray pulls up the blanket around her exposed shoulder. Stephanie sighs, turns to him.

**RAY**

How you doing?

**STEPHANIE**

Better now. At the time it just seemed so real. I'm so embarrassed.

**RAY**

Don't be, you had a terrible day and you got a little wiggled out. It happens.

**STEPHANIE**

po, what now, Doc?

**RAY**

I was gonna surprise you, but what the hell. I've been planning a little trip for us this week end. Saturday morning we're taking a train to Santa Barbara.

**STEPHANIE**

Really?

**34.**

**RAY**

My family owns a cabin up there. In, the hills. Overlooking this little river. We'll light a fire, drink some champagne and screw our brains out.

**STEPHANIE**

You sure know how to talk to a girl.

**RAY**

It's a chance to just be together. Undisturbed. There's a lot of stuff I want to talk to you about but it never seems to be the right time.

**STEPHANIE**

Sounds nice.

She draws in a deep breath and for the first time that evening, she looks at peace. Ray watches, her as she closes her eyes and drifts off to sleep.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**INT. RAY'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

the  
.Tweeting birds and filtered sunlight streaming in through window, awaken Stephanie. She stretches and looks to the empty pillow next to her. Ray is gone. She tries to fall back asleep, but the sound of a dripping faucet keeps her awake. Frustrated, she gets out of bed and

steps into the bathroom.  
WITHERED HANDS clamp around Stephanie's throat, violently  
SHAKING her!

**MRS GANUSH**

You shamed me!  
MATCH CUT to:  
Ray SHAKING her!

**RAY**

Steph! Wake Up!

**4**

**35.**

She awakens in her bed, SCREAMING!

**10 40**

**STEPHANIE**

Oh my God: Oh God!

**RAY**

It was just a dream. It's okay.  
She gets control. Ray smooths out the tangled hair from her  
sweaty face. He looks deeply into her eyes, afraid of what's  
happening to her. The phone in the next room, RINGS.'Ray  
looks over, decides to ignore it. It keeps RINGING.

**STEPHANIE**

Go ahead.

**RAY**

I'll be right back.  
He steps into the next room and we hear him answer the

phone.

Stephanie sighs and lays back down... next to Mrs. Ganush!  
The Old Woman is covered in a swarm of BLACK FLIES!

Stephanie

**SHRIEKS!**

The Old Woman opens her maw, exposing sharp broken teeth.

She

lunges for Stephanie!

Stephanie grabs the old woman by her hair, halting the chomping teeth inches from her face. She tries to push Mrs. Ganush away.

But the Old Woman's yellowed teeth SNAP and press ever closer.

The muscles in Stephanie's arms are trembling. She is weakening. Mrs. Ganush, closes in, about to clamp her teeth down upon Stephanie's face when--

Stephanie suddenly awakens with a GASP. It was all a dream within a dream.

She bolts up out of bed. Takes her bearings. She's alone in Ray's bedroom. She checks the bathroom. Under the bed. All normal.

Ray enters.

**RAY**

You, okay?

0

36.

**STEPHANIE**

No. No-- Oh my God. I had some 4 dreams. Awful.

**RAY**

Want to tell me about them?

**STEPHANIE**

The old lady. She was here... I couldn't wake up.

Stephanie shakes her head. She can't finish.

Ray pulls back the drapes. Sunlight pours into the room.

Stephanie tries to put the dream out of her mind. Ray sits next to her, strokes her hair.

**RAY**

Doctor Rangervertz said you could stop by his office during your lunch hour.

Stephanie nods.

**EXT. BANK OF CALIFORNIA - MORNING**

Ray's car stops in front of the Bank.

**INT. RAY'S CAR**

Stephanie looks across the street to the parking structure. Her car is there. The window has been replaced.

**RAY**

I had them replace the window last night. Still needs some body work.

**STEPHANIE-**

Thank you, Ray.  
She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.

**RAY**

We've got to be prepared that it might take some time for you to get over this.  
She nods.

**INT. BANK OF CALIFORNIA -- DAY 4**

**37.**

Stephanie enters the bank. She guilty glance to the clock. It's 9:40. She's late. She tries to be discreet as she moves to her desk, hoping Mr. Jacks won't notice. She's almost there when Stu Rubin "accidentally" knocks a note book off his desk.

Mr. Jacks glances up and notes Stephanie's tardiness. Stu approaches Stephanie's desk.

**STU RUBIN**

Hi Steph. Just getting here?

**STEPHANIE**

What are you, the hall monitor?

**STU RUBIN**

Ha ha! You're funny, Steph.

**STEPHANIE**

What do you want?

**STU RUBIN**

I need you to finish teaching me the loan procedures.

**T**

**STEPHANIE**

I've got a lot on my mind. Let's do it tomorrow.

**STU RUBIN**

Sure. I'll just tell Mr. Jacks that you don't have the time right now. Maybe he can show me. She glances up. Mr. Jacks'is still watching her.

**STEPHANIE**

No, no, that's all right. I'll do it. Where were we?

**STU RUBIN**

We were going over the asset-based lending guidelines.

**STEPHANIE**

Right. Okay. Let's say your client is a company that can't get traditional bank financing but 10 needs a secured loan. We offer--

**38.**

**SCRATCH... SCRATCH...**

Stephanie looks around for the source of the sound, but  
can't find it.

**STU**

Yeah?

**STEPHANIE**

.uh, we offer several types of

asset-based lending which consist  
of revolving lines of credit and  
term loans secured by accounts  
receivables, their inventory,  
machinery-- ,

**SCRATCH... SCRATCH...**

Stephanie sees...

That Stu's hand has been replaced by MRS. GANUSH'S... it's  
yellowed fingernails SCRATCH across her desk. She looks

again,

and Stu's hand has returned to normal.

**STU**

---and?

**STEPHANIE**

(in her full Missouri twang)

--And get your filthy pig knuckle  
off my desk!

Stu is taken aback by Stephanie's outburst. He retreats to  
his desk in confusion.

Stephanie sits, rattled. A drop of blood falls onto a piece  
of paper on her desk. The blood is trickling from her nose.  
Stephanie grabs a tissue to halt the bleeding. She looks  
down to see a large black fly land upon the drop of blood.  
She gasps and stands, her mind racing. She knows what she  
must do. She finds Mrs. Ganush's loan documents. She stuffs  
them into a folder, grabs her purse and bolts for the exit.  
Mr. Jacks engaged with a customer, calls after her:

**MR. JACKS**

Stephanie? Where are you going?

She moves quickly out the door, pretending not to hear him.

**4**

**39.**

Stu watches Stephanie go and gets up from his desk. She's  
left some files behind. He snoops around his desk. He

notices

a folder marked CONFIDENTIAL. It's the McPherson loan file.  
Interesting. He picks it up.

**EXT. MRS. GANUSH'S HOUSE - DAY**

An old, wood bungalow that has seen better days. A MOVING TRUCK in the driveway.

Stephanie's car pulls up. she steps out, carrying Mrs. Ganush's loan documents.

She passes the MOVING MEN who load the last of Mrs. Ganush's things.

She arrives at the opened front door, gathers her courage

and

KNOCKS. No answer. She calls out:

**STEPHANIE**

Mrs. Ganush?

No answer. She steps inside.

5 5

**INT. MRS GANUSH'S FOYER - DAY**

It's dark and musty here. The place is barren but for some flattened cardboard boxes. Stephanie tries the light switch. No Power.

**STEPHANIE**

Mrs. Ganush? '

She moves forward into the living room.

**INT. MRS. GANUSH'S LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Its too dark to see much of anything. Stephanie stumbles

over

something left on the floor. A voice:

**MRS. GANUSH**

I knew you'd come.

Stephanie almost jumps out of her skin. As her eyes adjust she sees Mrs. Ganush sitting on a crate in the corner of the room. Her arthritic hands clutching a yellowed photograph.

0

**STEPHANIE**

Hi. I'm here because I think I can help you. I can get your house back for you.

**MRS. GANUSH**

It's so empty now.

**STEPHANIE .**

I can arrange for all your furniture to be brought back. Would that be okay?

Mrs Ganush does not look up from the photograph.

**STEPHANIE**

So... on behalf of the bank I just want to resolve this to your satisfaction. This whole thing got personal and there was really no reason for that. The bank made a mistake and I can fix it for you and in return I'd like you to cancel or call off, whatever you... you know-- that thing you did to me. Okay? No hard feelings. So...

**STEPHANIE**

My mother was a proud woman.

Dignity. That's what she had.

Stephanie nods. Waits an appropriate moment, then: places

the

document gently down on the floor next to Mrs. Ganush.

**STEPHANIE**

All you need to do is. sign here...

Stephanie offers her a pen.

**STEPHANIE**

.and I'll take care of the rest.

Mrs. Ganush's hard eyes find Stephanie's. They bore in.

**MRS. GANUSH**

No.

41.

**STEPHANIE**

1

No? But... I'm saying I'll make things right. Just sign this and you can keep the house. Isn't that what you wanted?

**MRS. GANUSH**

It was what I wanted before you shamed me. Now I want to see you suffer.

**STEPHANIE**

Please! I've suffered enough!

**MRS GANUSH**

Not yet!

Mrs. Ganush suddenly erupts in a broken toothed CACKLE.

**STEPHANIE**

You're insane! Just... just a crazy old woman! I don't even know why I came here!

1 **MRS. GANUSH**

You know why.

Terrified, Stephanie runs from the place.

**EXT. MRS. GANUSH'S HOUSE - DAY**

The Old Woman's CACKLING can still be heard as Stephanie hurries to her car and drives off.

**EXT. SEVEN ELEVEN PARKING LOT - LATER**

Stephanie sits in her parked car.

**INT. STEPHANIE'S CAR**

Stephanie is eating from a package of DOUBLE STUFF OREOS, joylessly jamming one after another into her mouth. Her eyes dart about: Who could help her? Then she remembers something. She sets down the cookies and rummages through her purse. She finds the business card of Rham Jas. She starts the car and drives off.

**EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY**

TO

42.

Stephanie halts at a red light. out of the corner of her eye she sees something odd.

**STEPHANIE'S POV - ON THE STREET**

Stu Rubin walking with two well dressed executives.

**STEPHANIE**

Stu?

The men warmly escort into the First National Bank.

**STEPHANIE**

What's he doing at First National?

The car behind her HONKS! She drives on.

**EXT. RHAM JAS' STOREFRONT - DAY**

Stephanie's car is parked in the street.

**INT. STOREFRONT - DAY**

Stephanie stands before a counter facing Rham Jas. He swipes her credit card through the machine.

She signs the receipt. He motions for her to follow him through the beaded curtain.

INT. BACK ROOM OF RHAM JAS'S STOREFRONT - DAY

on a plain wooden table.a samovar brews a musty tea. Rham

Jas

is reading from an ancient text. He looks up from the book,- solemn.

**RHAM JAS**

What did it sound like.

**STEPHANIE**

Like... shrieking. It was awful.

He nods. Closes the book.

**RHAM JAS**

That would be the Lamia. The "Black Goat".

43.

**STEPHANIE**

Lamia. Right. That's the word the old woman used.

**RHAM JAS**

It is a nasty spirit. A taker of souls. A creature of misfortune for you and those around you. It is often summoned by the Gypsies for their dour deeds. On the third day the Lamia comes for the owner of the accursed object.

**STEPHANIE**

Accursed object? What object?

**RHAM JAS**

Something that the old woman took from you, cursed, then gave back. Now it dawns on Stephanie. She looks to the threads on her coat.

**STEPHANIE**

The button...

Stephanie's hand slowly emerges from her coat pocket. The thin brass button in her palm.

**STEPHANIE**

.this?

She holds the button up for him to inspect. But it's presence

makes him uneasy..He wags his finger back and forth. She lowers it.

**STEPHANIE**

What if I just burn the thing?

**RHAM JAS**

No matter what condition the button is in, you would still be the owner. The Lamia would still come to take you.

**STEPHANIE**

Take me where?

**NO**

**44.**

Rham Jas gives her a sad smile and closes the text. She knows where. Stymied, she tucks the button back into her pocket.

coat

**STEPHANIE**

There's got to be something I can do.

**RHAM JAS**

Yes. There are many ways to appease a spirit. The simplest is a blood offering. An animal sacrifice. A small creature would do. You could sacrifice a chicken. It's all in here...

Rham Jas produces a modern book on animal sacrifice which he sets before her.

**STEPHANIE**

No way. I'm a vegetarian. I'm a member of PETA, for Christ's sake. I don't go around killing animals.

**RHAM JAS**

You will be surprised what you will be willing to do when the Lamia comes for you.

She considers his words, looks down to the book.

CLOSE ON A DIAGRAM OF AN ANIMAL SACRIFICE - A creature's heart being cut from it's body.

CAMERA pulls back to reveal that Stephanie now sits at her kitchen table, reading the book. We see other diagrams: The

heart being placed into a skillet over an open fire. The burial of the smoking heart. Stephanie's kitten PURRS, as it rubs against her leg.

Stephanie closes the book, shutting out the disturbing images.

She hears the SHRIEK of the rusty gate outside. She moves to the window and peers out. The rusting iron gate is open. Stephanie senses a change in the room... Shadows shift and grow deeper. The air is suddenly oppressive. Something is coming.

**45.**

She moves to the front door and puts her ear to it. Quiet.  
1b But then--

**SCRATCH... SCRATCH...**

She runs upstairs into her bedroom and locks the door.

**INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM**

She can hear the sound of the SCRATCHING, even here.,  
She rushes to the phone picks it up: No dial tone, only high pitched static, the sounds of the Lamia buried within.  
She sets the phone down.

For a moment all is quiet. Should she go back down? Then she hears a tiny SQUEAKING. The knob on the front door, turning. Then the CLICK of the lock, followed by the CREAKING of

rusty

hinges as the front door swings open. She calls through her bedroom door.

**STEPHANIE**

Ellen? !

But it's not Ellen.

Stephanie puts her ear to the door. The sound of an animal's hooves on wood. Something is climbing the stairs. It stops outside her bedroom door.

Stephanie holds her breath, listening.

She sees a shadow beneath the crack in the door.

**STEPHANIE**

I know that you're there!

The window behind her explodes into the room with a  
deafening

**ROAR!**

She ducks for cover. Another window is blown inward and the glass sent her way. She SCREAMS and runs toward the bathroom door. It SLAMS shut in her face!

BOOM! Another window is SHATTERED by the angry, unseen thing.

The force knocks her to the bed. The blankets are torn from the mattress, throwing Stephanie to the floor. The bedsheets whisk around the room, flapping and twisting about like 1b drunken ghosts.

**46.**

her She tries to run but they tangle around her legs and yank

into the air, suspending her upside down, taking her on a wild and harrowing ride about the room.

Abruptly all the madness halts: She drops to the floor. The bedsheet wafts to the ground beside her. Whatever it was, .it's gone. It's quiet now. A terrified Stephanie sits, shaking, in the wreckage of her room.

**INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - LATER**

With a trembling hand, she jams a ZAGNUT BAR into her mouth, and drops the wrapper onto a pile of others on the floor. She chases it with a double shot of Maker's Mark Whiskey.

She

removes a knife from the butcher block and hefts. it's

weight.

She sings out, in a sweet but trembling voice.

**STEPHANIE**

Here kitty-kitty... Here, kitty-kitty-kitty...

She moves closer until her face fills the screen.

**EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DAY**

The distant SCREAM of the kitten is heard. We hear it again and again until it is finally silenced. 4

**INT. BATHROOM - DAY**

wiping

Stephanie having been sick, emerges from the bathroom,  
her mouth.

**INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN -DAY**

Stephanie throws something small and bloody inside the  
microwave oven and turns it on.

**STEPHANIE'S BACKYARD GARDEN AFTERNOON**

She buries the heart in a corner of her garden.  
She turns on the garden hose, washing the cat's blood from  
the knife.

**ELLEN'S VOICE**

Steph?  
Stephanie quickly tosses the knife into the bushes. Ellen  
appears.

47.

**ELLEN**

t  
Didn't you hear me calling? I was  
looking all over for you. Are you  
power eating Clark bars again?  
'Cause there's about ten thousand  
wrappers all over the-- Oh my God,  
is that blood?1  
Stephanie glances guiltily to the corner of the garden. But  
no blood shows.

**STEPHANIE**

No. Why would there be blood?

**ELLEN**

Right there, on your sleeve.  
Stephanie glances at the red spot on her sleeve.

**STEPHANIE**

That's just tomato juice. I was  
inside making a salad and... I cut  
a tomato and I must have gotten it  
on my sleeve.

Ellen gives her roommate a worried look.

**ELLEN**

Look, Steph, we're friends so if something's wrong...

**STEPHANIE**

I had some problems. A situation. But I think everything is going to be good now. Ellen isn't so sure.

**INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - DAY**

Stephanie closes her bedroom door so Ellen can't see the damage. Stephanie cleans up the place. As she picks up some of her things, she comes across an old photograph. CLOSER: It's a photo of 16 year old Stephanie. She was obese. Her belly unflatteringly protrudes from beneath a "4-H" tee shirt. She stands before some barnyard animals, a bucket of feed in her hand.

**48.**

Stephanie looks distastefully down at her former self. She tears up the photo and dumps it in the waste basket.

**INT. KITCHEN -- AFTERNOON**

The music grows lighter as Stephanie models a couple of dresses in front of Ellen, who's helping decide on the evening's wardrobe.

**ELLEN**

Go with the short skirt.

**STEPHANIE**

What about this one? She hold up a longer, more formal dress.

**ELLEN**

Uh uh. That one's saying "I'm trying to impress you with my conservative taste."

the

**STEPHANIE**

But that's what I want it to say.  
Ellen shakes her head, no. Stephanie takes a last look in  
mirror, decides to go with the short skirt.

**STEPHANIE**

Okay. This is it.

**ELLEN**

Tell me again... the exact words he  
used.

**STEPHANIE**

Just that this little cabin would  
be a great place for us to really  
connect and that there was  
something he'd been meaning to talk  
about with me.

**ELLEN**

Oh my god, you are so engaged!  
Ellen's smile fades. She shakes her head despondently.

**STEPHANIE**

What's wrong? I

49.

**ELLEN**

t  
I just know that Rob's never going  
to ask me.

**STEPHANIE**

But I thought you said that  
relationship was only physical.

**ELLEN**

Oh, I'd never marry a guy like  
that... but I'd still like him to  
ask me.

**STEPHANIE**

Huh.

**EXT. NICHOLAS CANYON - DUSK**

Stephanie's car pulling up in front of Ray's hillside house. The convertible top is down and Stephanie looks radiant in the golden sunlight.

**RAY'S VOICE**

Let's get a look at that dress.  
She steps from the car and models the dress. S

**STEPHANIE**

You like

**RAY**

I like.

**INT. STEPHANIE'S CAR - DUSK**

**RAY AND STEPHANIE**

drive through the streets of Bel Air, Stephanie at the wheel.

She tunes in a rock station and turns it up loud. She smiles at Ray and takes his hand. She hits the gas and her Ford Focus opens up, accelerating down a long, tree lined street, the wind blowing through their hair.

**EXT. DALTON HOUSE - DUSK**

Stephanie and Ray approach the front door. Stephanie carries her home made cake. They ring the bell. Stephanie suddenly seems apprehensive.

50.

**RAY**

Something wrong?

**STEPHANIE**

It's just that I'm not, some ivy leaguer with an impressive resume.

I have a feeling that's what your folks really want.

**RAY**

Maybe. But in the end, it's about what you and I want.

**STEPHANIE**

Is that so?

Ray gives her a reassuring nod.

The front door opens revealing Ray's parents, GEORGE AND TRUDY DALTON. Behind them we glimpse an exquisitely

furnished

foyer.

**TRUDY**

**RAYMONDL**

She kisses her son.

**RAY**

Stephanie, this is my mother,

Trudy, and my Father, George.

Trudy glances at Stephanie's revealing cocktail dress with thinly veiled disapproval. Stephanie self-consciously tugs

it

lower.

**TRUDY**

How do you do?

**GEORGE**

Nice to meet you, Stephanie.

**STEPHANIE**

It's very nice to meet you, too.

**GEORGE**

Please, come in.

**STEPHANIE**

Thank you.

**A**

'51.

She steps inside.

1

**INT. DALTON'S HOUSE**

**STEPHANIE**

You have a lovely home.

**GEORGE**

Thanks. I'll get us something to drink.

As George exits, Stephanie presents her home made cake to Trudy.

**STEPHANIE**

I hope you don't mind. I baked something for you.

Trudy hesitates, then takes the cake from Stephanie.

**TRUDY**

It's lovely. Homemade.

**STEPHANIE**

It's a harvest cake.

**TRUDY**

Harvest cake? Is that some kind of cake you make on a... farm?

**STEPHANIE**

We used to, yeah, when you have a lot of extra duck eggs. Especially right before spring; that's when you get a real dense yolk. Makes for, rich cake.

The mother forces a smile.

**TRUDY**

You must give me the recipe sometime.

**STEPHANIE**

Sure. It's easy. The real secret's in the milk. You want it unpasteurized.

0

52.

**TRUDY**

Unclean... Uh... I mean  
"unpasteurized"? Is that safe?

**STEPHANIE**

Uh huh. And you want that milk  
still warm. Straight from the cow.  
Trudy has to stifle her gag reflex. George returns and hands  
Ray and Stephanie a cocktail.

**TRUDY**

Excuse me while I go find someplace  
to put this.  
As Trudy takes away the cake, a cat rounds the corner. It  
HISSES at Stephanie. She takes a step back.

**GEORGE**

Never could understand that damned  
animal. Hate cats.  
Trudy returns from the kitchen.

**TRUDY**

That's strange. Hecuba's usually  
very sweet.

**STEPHANIE**

That's okay. I had a cat. I  
understand.

**RAY**

What do you mean "had a cat"? What  
happened to him?

**STEPHANIE**

How would I know what happened?  
Probably nothing. You know how cats  
are. They come and they go.  
Ray nods slowly. About to say something but let's it go.

**INT. DALTON HOUSE - DINNING ROOM - LATER**

Stephanie, Ray, George and Trudy are finishing dinner.

53.

**GEORGE**

Still keeping up with your coin collection, Ray?

**RAY**

I try to. In fact Stephanie just found me a 1925 Indian Head nickel at her bank.

**GEORGE**

Really? So, how long have you been working there, Stephanie?

**STEPHANIE**

Almost two years now.

**TRUDY**

The job of a bank teller must be so difficult. I'd think with all the counting and the repetition, it'd become so tedious.

**STEPHANIE**

Yes, you're right. But I'm not a teller.

**TRUDY**

Oh?

**RAY**

Stephanie's a loan officer in charge of small business and home loans. And she's on a fast track for a promotion. Right, Steph?

**STEPHANIE**

I'd like to think so... actually,

It depends. If I could close this big account that I'm working on, it would really help.

**GEORGE**

Must be a very important loan.

**STEPHANIE**

It would be the biggest that my branch has ever handled.

**GEORGE**

How'd it come to you?

54.

**STEPHANIE**

Well, I was reading the Wall Street Journal and found this innovative medical supply company that was interested in expanding but didn't have the liquidity. I met with their CFO and presented a formula for restructuring-some of their long term debt. It created an environment where I was able to offer them a rather attractive loan

**PACKAGE**

**GEORGE**

You sure sound like you've got a lot going for you, Stephanie.

**TRUDY**

Your mother must be very proud.

**STEPHANIE**

I suppose. I don't see her much.

**TRUDY**

Why is that?

**STEPHANIE**

Well, ever since my dad died she doesn't talk much. She mostly stays on the farm and... keeps to herself. Because...  
There is an awkward silence.

**TRUDY**

Does your mother have a drinking problem?

**RAY**

Cut her some slack, mom, she--

**STEPHANIE**

Yes. I'm afraid she does.

**TRUDY**

I'm sorry. It's nothing to be ashamed of. And I find your honesty refreshing.

**STEPHANIE**

Thank you.

**5.5 .**

**TRUDY**

t  
You've got back bone. Not like that other girl Ray brought by... What was her name? Alicia? She was dreadful. So ill-mannered. And no ambition.

**RAY**

**MOM-**

**TRUDY**

(stage whisper to

**STEPHANIE)**

He found her through the, internet.

**RAY**

Mors, please.

**TRUDY**

Stephanie, am I being too tough on  
Ray?

at

Stephanie, happy to be taken into the family circle, winks

Ray.

**STEPHANIE**

No. Not at all. That's what mom's  
are for.

**TRUDY**

Thank you, Stephanie. Maybe I will  
try that Harvest cake of yours,  
after all.

Trudy cuts herself a piece. Stephanie tastes the cake and  
emits a tiny cough.

**STEPHANIE**

Excuse me.

She clears her throat. But the cough returns, grows larger.

**STEPHANIE**

Just a little tickle in my--

She stands and takes a few steps away from the table. Ray  
looks on concerned.

**RAY**

Are you okay?

**56.**

She waves him off, clearing her throat. Tries to smile  
demurely, but erupts with a harsh cough. She's choking on  
something and is trying to bring it up from deep within her  
throat. With all her might she emits a BARK and a large  
black fly buzzes out of her mouth.

**TRUDY**

Oh! OH MY GOD!

The fly lazily BUZZES across the table, slowly circling Trudy's head.  
Trudy spits out a mouthful of harvest cake into her napkin. George lowers his fork and pushes away his plate of unclean farm cake.  
Ray is baffled, too stunned to speak.  
Stephanie's gaze shifts to the kitchen door. From The other side, she hears the sound of a hoofs.  
Ray tries to cover for Stephanie:

**RAY**

I'm so sorry, Stephanie. I don't know how that fly got. into your--

**STEPHANIE**

--Wait. What's that sound?

**TRUDY**

What sound-?

**STEPHANIE**

SHHH! Listen!

Trudy listens along with the others. They can't hear anything. But Stephanie hears the FOOTSTEPS drawing closer.

**TRUDY**

I'm sorry, I can't hear anything.

**STEPHANIE**

(mutters under her breath)

Must be deafer than a post!

But Trudy heard that and takes offense. But before she can say anything, a SHADOW appears at the base of the door. Stephanie stands and shouts at it:

57.

**STEPHANIE**

**T**

Leave me alone! Just leave me the fuck alone!

Stephanie grabs her dinner plate and hurls it just past Trudy's head. It shatters against the base of the door,

spraying everyone with bits of broken china and fish. The shadow and FOOTSTEPS are gone.  
Ray rushes to her side.

**RAY**

Steph, it's okay! There's nothing there.

She looks about. George and Trudy regard Stephanie as if she were mad.

**STEPHANIE**

I... I think I'd better go.

**TRUDY**

I think that's best, dear.

She heads for the door. Ray starts to go after her but his

mother stops him.

**TRUDY**

Let her go, Ray. She's a sick girl.

**RAY**

She needs me.

Trudy grabs Ray's arm.

**TRUDY**

I'm telling you not to go after her.

Ray gently pulls free of his mother's grasp and chases after Stephanie.

**EXT. DALTON HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

Ray rushes outside stopping Stephanie as she is about to get into her car.

**RAY**

What did you see in there?

58.

**STEPHANIE**

**4**

You don't want to know.  
Ray pulls her close.

**RAY**

Tell me!

**STEPHANIE**

The thing that's coming for me.  
What the old woman sent.

**RAY**

Listen to me. What you're going  
through right now-- It's like the  
doctor said, it's a stress reaction  
and --

**STEPHANIE**

No. I wanted to believe that-- but  
it's real, Ray. You just don't want  
to open your eyes to it because it  
threatens you. Because if I'm right  
and there is something out there,  
then you'd have to throw out  
everything you teach. And where'd  
that leave you? Like a plow without  
a mule.

Ray just stares at her. A long moment passes as he wonders  
if maybe she isn't right.

**STEPHANIE**

Unless you're willing to take a  
chance and believe in me, I can't  
be with you any more.

She steps into the car and drives off. Ray watches her tail  
lights, as they vanish into the night.

**EXT. ECHO PARK HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT**

An older home with bars on the front windows. Stephanie  
knocks at the front door.  
She turns toward a distant sound: A chilling, high-pitched  
SQUEAL. Was it just a bus's air brakes... or something more?  
When Stephanie turns back, the door has been opened a crack.  
An EYE peers out at her.

59.

**VOICE OF THE EYE**

What is it?

**STEPHANIE**

Hi. Yes. I came to see Sylvia Ganush. Is she here?

The door opens wider, revealing a sexy twenty-four year old Gypsy girl. ILENKA GANUSH. Bottle of beer in her hand, long black hair, earrings and a snake tatoo on'her neck. She wears a low cut shirt and tight shorts.

EASTERN EUROPEAN HIP HOP and LAUGHTER are heard from within the house.

**ILENKA**

I'm Ilenka, Sylvia's granddaughter. Who are you?

**STEPHANIE**

Stephanie Brown. I'm... sort of... a friend of hers. Actually, I've been trying to help her with a loan

**THAT-**

**ILENKA**

Wait. I know who you are. Grandma told me you'd come. You're the woman from the bank. The one who took her house.

**STEPHANIE**

It was really the bank that took the house. I just work there. In fact, I tried to help your grandma get-the house back, but my boss wouldn't let me.

Ilenka knows she's lying. Stephanie knows that she knows.

**ILENKA**

That's not what happened, is it? Are you going to stand here on my porch and lie to my face?

**STEPHANIE**

. no.

**ILENKA**

You used to be a real fat girl,  
to didn't you?

60.

**STEPHANIE**

Yes.

**ILENKA**

I can tell. You know, you caused my  
grandma a lot of pain. That house  
was her pride. When you took that  
from her, she had nothing left.  
You're not welcome here.

She starts to close the door. Stephanie halts her. Desperate  
now, no where else to turn.

**STEPHANIE**

Okay! I did it. It was me who  
denied her the loan. I was trying,  
to get ahead at work and I  
shouldn't have done it. It was  
wrong.

**ILENKA**

Damn straight it was wrong.

**STEPHANIE**

And I'm ashamed about it. And I'm  
going to get down on my hands and  
knees and beg her to forgive me.  
She said-that I hadn't suffered  
enough. But now I think she'll see  
that I have and then maybe she'll  
let me...

**ILENKA**

.make everything all right for  
her, is that it?

**STEPHANIE**

Yes.

Ilenka gives a bitter, cryptic smile. She motions for

Stephanie to follow. They enter a room filled with young Gypsies drinking, smoking and talking loudly in a Slavic tongue.

A WOMAN WITH A CANE shouts as she throws a pair of dice. A Hungarian man with a long, braided ponytail, curses his bad luck as he pays cash to the woman.

' **STEPHANIE**

Where is she?

**61.**

Ilenka gestures to an area beyond the party goers. Stephanie t pushes her way through the crowd. She stumbles and falls

atop

the Corpse of Mrs. Ganush!

As per the custom of the Gypsy wake, there is no coffin,

just

her dead body that rests atop a coffee table.

Stephanie has landed atop the corpse! The leg of the coffee table breaks under the weight of the two women. Stephanie tumbles to the ground, the corpse landing atop her. The

crowd

of mourners GASP.

The dead woman's opened mouth bobs up and down upon Stephanie's chin, as through it were once again suckling it. Stephanie shoves the corpse off of her and backs away in revulsion.

**ILENKA**

Still going to make everything all right?

The mourners replace the corpse atop the coffee table.

Ilenka addresses the crowd in Hungarian. She tells them that it was this white trash farm girl that threw her grandmother t from her home and that she now bears the curse of Lamia.

A mother shields her daughter's eyes from the sight of Stephanie, the cursed one, then hurriedly kisses her .crucifix. A man spits at her feet then walks off.

**STEPHANIE**

No, please-- I needed her to take this thing off me.

**ILENKA**

It will never come off.

**STEPHANIE**

You know about it? Then, please help me. I'm begging you.

**ILENKA**

She said you'd come begging. I only wish she could have lived to see it.  
The blood drains from Stephanie's face.

62.

**ILENKA**

.maybe she can...  
Stephanie glances down to the corpse. It's head is now facing her. It's dead eyes, OPEN!

**INT. RHAM JAS' HOUSE -- NIGHT**

Stephanie puts her foot through RHAM Jas' TV set. Shattering the tube, commanding his. attention.

**STEPHANIE**

Fuck that! I paid you a hundred and seventy nine dollars for that book!

**RHAM JAS**

It was a limited printing! Please control yourself!

**STEPHANIE**

I did what you said- that blood offering... I killed that little kitty deader than Hogan's goat. Lotta good that did me.

**RHAM JAS**

We are dealing with elusive and powerful forces. There are no guarantees.  
She wants to shout, but instead, closes her eyes and sits.

**STEPHANIE**

Just tell me what to do.

Rham Jas considers. A dark look crosses his face. Stephanie tries to read his expression.

**CLOSE ON STEPHANIE'S MASTERCARD**

It's run through the carbon paper. Rham Jas hand her a receipt. She signs it. He sits.

**RHAM JAS**

We must somehow dissuade the spirit from taking your soul.

**STEPHANIE**

How?

63.

**RHAM JAS**

1 A seance. And it should be soon. For tomorrow will be the third night...

**STEPHANIE**

Have you done this before?

**RHAM JAS**

No. But I know someone. I can arrange what is necessary, but you must understand that everyone involved in this would be taking a great risk with their lives.

**STEPHANIE**

What would you need from me?

Rham Jas thinks for a moment, weighing the dangers. He pulls out a pipe and packs it with tobacco. He tamps it down and lights up.

**RHAM JAS**

Twenty thousand dollars. Cash. By tomorrow. 5

**VA**

**INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Stephanie is hastily piling all her valuables atop her bed: sporting equipment, TV, VCR/DVD COMBO, CD player, IPOD, Etc. Ellen enters, rattled.

**ELLEN**

I need to talk to you.

**STEPHANIE**

Ellen. I'm sorry. This a bad time right now. I got a little emergency and... say you got any cash I can borrow?

She starts stuffing the valuables into a large duffle bag.

**ELLEN**

No, I don't. But Steph I--

**STEPHANIE**

--what about your credit cards?  
What's your cash advance limit?

**(MORE)**

**64.**

**STEPHANIE** (cont'd)

I'll pay you back. You know I'm good for it.

**ELLEN**

Steph, we need to talk about the cat.

**STEPHANIE**

Where has that little rascal been? He's always running off, have you noticed that?

**ELLEN**

Stephanie. I was in the back yard and I saw where the ground was dug up. I started digging and... You

buried that little kitty in our backyard. What happened?

**STEPHANIE**

I didn't want to tell you. It fell out the window and died. It's sad,

**BUT--**

**ELLEN**

I found the bloody knife in the bushes.

**STEPHANIE**

What are you, a cat detective?

**ELLEN**

Steph? I'm going to tell you this as your friend. There is something seriously wrong with you. Stephanie looks up from,her frantic panting.

**STEPHANIE**

Uh... Duh!

**ELLEN**

I'm moving out. I can't live like this.

**STEPHANIE.**

Fine.

Ellen exits. Stephanie angrily calls after her:

65.

**STEPHANIE**

An' don't let the barn door hit you on your ass on yer way out!

**INT. STORE - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Stephanie is speaking into a pay phone.

**STEPHANIE**

I can't get the twenty thousand.  
You're gonna have to help me with  
what I've got.

**RHAM JAS' VOICE**

What do you have?  
She covers the mouthpiece, speaking to someone off camera.

**STEPHANIE**

How much?!  
CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal that we are in a PAWN SHOP. Men  
haggle loudly in Arabic over the price of a gold chain. The  
PAWN BROKER stands before-all of Stephanie's worldly  
belongings: A toaster oven, computer, racing bike, stereo,  
microwave oven, necklaces, jewelry...

**PAWN BROKER**

Thirty-eight hundred for  
everything.

**STEPHANIE**

Including my jewelry?

**PAWN BROKER**

Including.  
Stephanie curses under her breath, checks the balance on her  
checkbook, does the math, speaks into the phone;

**STEPHANIE**

Six thousand.

**RHAM JAS**

I'm sorry. Not possible.

**STEPHANIE**

Look, I'll give you six now and--

66.

**RHAM JAS**

No. There will be others involved  
and I cannot-ask them to accept

such a risk for less. Good night.  
He hangs up. The line goes dead. She tries to throw the  
phone but it's attached with a short metal cord. She turns to the  
Pawn Broker.

**STEPHANIE**

I'll take it!  
Stephanie thinks about how she'll get the extra cash. She  
hesitantly dials a number on the pay phone. It rings and  
rings as she glances to a picture buried deep in her wallet:  
A. photo of...  
The younger, obese Stephanie and her stern looking Mother.  
Both stand before a bleak snow covered, mid-western farm.

**STEPHANIE**

Mom? Hi, it's me. Did you get, the  
Christmas card? Yeah, I guess it  
has been a while. Listen, I'm in  
kind of a fix, here. I've been  
pretty sick and I need to borrow  
some money for an operation. I need  
fourteen thousand dollars right  
away. Now I know you still have  
that pension fund at the credit  
Union so-- yeah, but... okay. Okay,  
it's just that--- I understand.  
Okay, mom. Bye.  
The line goes dead. She slumps down against the pay phone.

**CLOSE SHOT - STEPHANIE**

She pouts her lips in the mirror, carefully applying  
lipstick. Looking good.

**PULL BACK**

tiny To reveal we are in the employee bathroom at the bank. She  
fixes her hair so it's just right. She. straightens out a  
wrinkle in her business suit, smiles her best upbeat smile  
and exits the bathroom.

67.

**INT. BANK OF CALIFORNIA- DAY**

Stephanie approaches Mr. Jacks.

**STEPHANIE**

Mr. Jacks, this is kind of awkward for me... I know it's not official yet, but I was wondering if I could get a copy of the employment contract for the new position you offered me?

**MR. JACKS**

The assistant manager's position?

**STEPHANIE**

Yes. See, one of my family members is having a little emergency which requires me to get them an immediate loan--

**MR. JACKS**

--Stephanie... There's a problem. The McPherson deal was cancelled last night.

**STEPHANIE**

What? 1

**MR. JACKS**

Yeah, right after I informed the main branch that we had this big loan pending,, I find out that they just made their deal over at First National. I got a call in to see, what exactly happened but right now this doesn't look too good for you or me. So this assistant manager promotion has been delayed. In fact, I think that with everything that's been happening, I'm gonna have to give that job to Stu. Stephanie is devastated.

**STEPHANIE**

Stu. I see.

Mr. Jacks sees tears begin to well up in her eyes.

68.

**MR. JACKS**

I'm sorry. Look. If you've got family problems. Maybe you should take the day off and sort them out. Stephanie nods and exits the bank.

**INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - DAY**

**CLOSE SHOT - THE WALL CLOCK**

As it TICKS away the seconds.  
CLOSE SHOT - THE Inadequate PILE OF CASH  
That sits atop Stephanie's Kitchen table.

**CLOSE SHOT - A DESPONDENT STEPHANIE**

stares down at the cash. Her mouth mechanically opens to accept a large serving spoon of Rocky Road ice cream which she eats directly from the one gallon tub. The door bell rings. A moment later Ray walks in.. Stephanie stands, surprised.

**RAY.**

I paid Rham Jas

**STEPHAINE**

But I thought you didn't believe...

**RAY'**

I don't. But you do. I know this is important for, you .  
she embraces him.

**EXT. PASADENA HOUSE - DUSK**

An old Pasadena home site alone atop a hill. Ray's car drives up, parks.

**STEPHANIE**

Are you coming in?

69.

**RAY**

**T**

I wanted to but Rham Jas said non believers weren't welcome. I still don't like this.

**STEPHANIE**

I know how crazy this must seem. But it will all be over after this I swear to you. He nods. She kisses him.

**STEPHANIE**

I'll call you when it's done.

**RAY**

I'll be waiting.

**STEPHANIE**

We'll laugh about it on the train, tomorrow.

**RAY**

t Yeah.

Stephanie steps from the car. Ray drives off. She turns to face the old house.

**INT. OLD PASADENA HOUSE - STUDY - DUSK**

into Milos, a thirty year old, Hungarian Man, leads Stephanie a large room with-tall, teak bookshelves and Indian tapestries that adorn the walls. Rham Jas is seated in a wicker chair, ' speaking with someone obscured by shadows...

**RHAM JAS**

Miss Brown. Allow me the pleasure of an introduction... A woman rises from the shadows.

**RHAM JAS**

.Shaun San Dena The eighty year old woman smiles a toothless smile to Stephanie.

70.

**RHAM JAS**

Shaun San Dena is an experienced 41 medium. Furthermore, she has a personal knowledge of the Lamia.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

I first encountered this spirit forty years ago in a small village outside of Bucharest.

**STEPHANIE**

And...?

**SHUAN SAN DENA**

I lost a young boy's soul to the beast.

**STEPHANIE**

That's reassuring.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

I was an. inexperienced seer then. I've learned much since that woeful day. I have waited these long years for a chance at redeeming myself. A chance to destroy the foul thing. Tonight my chance will come. But to summon it, I will need your help.

**STEPHANIE**

I'll do whatever it takes. And the sooner the better.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

Our business must wait till darkness falls. Enough time for tea.

**INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT**

A ceiling twenty feet high, with massive windows covered by dark burgundy drapes. An ornate crystal chandelier hangs above a round table in the room's center. Stephanie, Rham Jas, Shaun San Dena and Milos, are finishing their tea.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

My late husband, Sandor, was also a medium. He chose this site to build the house upon because he sensed certain energies that intersected here...

**(MORE)**

**71.**

SHAUN SAN DENA (cont'd)

He knew I would sense his spirit in this place as I have sensed others. It was to be our way of being together after he died. In earlier times it was a sacred place to the Tuanteteck indians. And their stories told that the place was a burial ground of the "old ones" that inhabited the earth before them. Here, there is a particular alignment of energies. A confluence, that allows doorways to be opened. Through which, we might pass.

**RHAM JAS '**

And through which, others might pass into our world.  
Milos removes the tea.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

It is time for us to begin.  
Shaun San Dena turns out the electric lights, leaving only the tables' candlelight for illumination.  
We hear the BLEATING of a goat. Stephanie startles. Milos reenters the room pulling a black goat along by a chain. The goat catches sight of Stephanie. It BLEATS in fear and attempts to run. But Milos holds it fast and tethers it to a post. He moves to the table and lifts a velvet cloth revealing a large cattle slaughtering blade.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

Lord Jesus bless this knife and  
allow it to do your holy work.  
She makes the sign of the cross. she pours a .vial of holy  
water over the blade. She turns to Stephanie.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

Once the spirit has entered me,  
place my hand upon the animal. Do  
you understand?

**STEPHANIE**

Yes.

72.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

I will force the spirit of the  
Lamia into the goat. Milos, that's  
when you strike.  
Stephanie blanches but remains silent.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

We must all.be receptive.  
Shaun San Dena begins to intone a Romanian Gypsy chant.  
Stephanie leans close to speak quietly with Rham Jae.

**STEPHANIE**

What do I have to do?

**RHAM JAS**

You must allow the darkness in. You  
must invite the dead to co-mingle  
with your spirit..

**STEPHANIE**

I'm scared.

**RHAM JAS**

Yes. Now repeat these words... I  
welcome the dead into my soul...  
Rham Jae waits for Stephanie's response. She's shifts in her  
seat uncomfortably.

**STEPHANIE**

I welcome the dead into my soul...

**RHAM JAS**

You must believe it!

Stephanie takes a deep breath and they begin the chant  
again.

This time,, together.

**RAM JAAS STEPHANIE**

I welcome the dead into my I welcome the dead into my  
soul... soul...

Stephanie looks around the darkened room. Shadows from the  
candles dance upon the walls.

73.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

I sense something here with us.

**RHAM JAS**

Yes.

The parlor's crystal chandeleir tinkles.

A tea cup and saucer tremble for a moment. Stephanie's eyes  
search the room.

**SOMETHING UNSEEN**

emits a wheezing breath...

We hear FOOTSTEPS as something walks on the ceiling above  
them.

**A MAN'S LOUD LAUGHTER**

echoes about the room.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

It is not the Lamia. It is the  
spirit of some unsettled soul from

1

years ago... The unsettled ones  
wait near the door.

**THE PITCHER OF WATER**

upon the table is drained. Then the water is spat out in a  
stream at Milos' face.

The MAN'S LAUGHTER again.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

Be gone, foolish spirit!  
There is a HOWLING OF WIND and the room is again quiet.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

Show yourself Lamia. We invite you  
into our circle.  
Quiet. Stephanie looks about. Nothing seems to be happening.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

He's coming...

**74.**

A faint sound.

**SCRATCH. SCRATCH.**

The SCRATCHING OF FINGERNAILS on wood. A sound that  
Stephanie's heard before. It grows louder, more distorted.

**SCRATCH SCRATCH!**

Stephanie grips the table.  
And just when the SCRATCHING SOUND is deafening... All  
becomes silent.  
Stephanie holds her breath.  
A wind whips up in the room sending papers whirling about,.  
yet all the windows are closed.  
Shaun San Dena's eyes roll up into her head. She emits a low  
and powerful MOAN. Her head slumps onto her shoulders. Then  
she straightens with a new vigor. Stephanie and Rham Jas  
watch as her lips move rapidly and a garbled sound comes out  
of her throat. she speaks in a strange and incomprehensible  
tongue.

**RHAM JAS**

Who now inhabits the body of Shaun  
San Dena?

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

(demonic voice)  
Lamia...  
Rham Jas nods discreetly to Milos who quietly uncovers the  
slaughtering blade.

**RHAM JAS.**

Lamia, what is it that you desire?  
Shaun San Dena's chair abruptly spins about to face  
Stephanie. The mouth jerks opened and closed as if  
controlled  
by a bad puppeteer. Then, out of.sync, the demonic voice is

**HEARD:**

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

(demonic voice)

The soul of Stephanie Brownl We  
will feast upon it, as she festers  
in the gravel

**4**

**75.**

**STEPHANIE**

It was my manager, Jim Jacks.  
He was the one ! He--

**RHAM JAS**

Silence! Lamia, please, surely we  
can dissuade you from taking this  
insignificant woman? Surely she's  
not worthy of your greatness.  
The possessed Shaun San Dena laughs.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

(demonic voice)

No! I will enjoy watching her skin  
blister and pop in hell's flame. I  
come for her!

Stephanie quickly grabs Shaun San Derna's hand and places it  
on the goat's head.

Shaun San Dena's eyes clear for a moment as she struggles to  
regain control.

Now there are two spirits battling within her. She attempts  
t to force the spirit of the Lamia from her body and into

the

goat. The Goat BLEATS and bucks wildly as the spirit is

transferred. Milos raises up the slaughtering blade.

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

(demonic voice)

No! You--

**GOAT**

(demonic voice)

--tricked me!

The possessed goat emits a terrible cry! The bone chilling SHRIEK of Lamia! It's oval eye reflects the blade as it descends toward it. The possessed Goat jerks aside and the blade misses, slicing into the chair.

As Milos raises the blade for another blow, the goat bites his hand. In that moment, the spirit of the Lamia is transferred to him.

glaring  
A Possessed Milos SCREAMS and spins toward Stephanie,  
at her with black goat eyes. He SHOUTS at her in a gibberish of tongues! His body jerks up into the air. He dances a jig atop the table, now laughing uncontrollably.  
t

76.

Stephanie watches in horror.

**RHAM JAS**

Lamial I command you to leave this--

A chair sails through the air and shatters across Rham Jas' back, knocking him to the ground.

Milos' body is hurled up against the chandelier, shattering it. Glass rains down upon Stephanie.

on the ceiling, Milos is spun about like a pin wheel.

Stephanie races for the door but a

.huge bureau lurches in

front of her, blocking her path.

Rham Jas rouses a stunned Shaun San Dena.

**RHAM JAS**

You must banish the spirit!

Shaun San Dena places her hands on her eyes, then over her heart and chants an ancient Gypsy incantation up toward Milos.

Milos SHRIEKS. A white vapor streams from his body as the

Lamia is torn from him.

**MILOS**

(in his normal voice)

Stop the chanting. I beg you!

But Shaun San Dena only chants louder. Milos SCREAMS grow more intense as-his body spasms in pain. Stephanie grasps at Shaun San Dena.

**STEPHANIE**

For god's sake, stop the chanting,  
it's killing him!

Rham Jas pushes her aside.

**RHAM JAS**

You must not stop!

A withered pair of hands reach down from above and clutch at Stephanie's face! It is Mrs. Ganush that now floats above her! Her long yellowed fingernails scratching at Stephanie's skin.

4

77.

**MILOS/MRS. GANUSH**

Make her stop, you dirty pork  
queen!

**STEPHANIE**

No! Get her off!

Mrs. Ganush grabs at Stephanie's head. Stephanie pulls away but it costs her a clump of hair that Mrs. Ganush rips from her head.

Mrs. Ganush opens her mouth... wide... wider still... she vomits out Stephanie's dead cat. It lands atop the table. Stephanie screams uncontrollably.

Shaun San Dena, is trembling as her chanting comes to a climax.

Mrs. Ganush changes back to the possessed Milo. The last of the white vapor is torn from Milos body as the spirit of the Lamia leaves him. Milos falls to the floor and all is quiet. An ashen faced Shaun San Dena halts her chant.

**10 STEPHANIE**

Is it gone?

Stephanie notices that the cat has vanished. Was it ever there?

Rham Jae kneels at Milos' side. He's starting to come around.

Milos stands, shaken. The Lamia is gone.

Shaun San Dena grabs at her chest, struggles for breath.

Stephanie rushes over to steady her.

**STEPHANIE**

Let me help you...

**SHAUN SAN DENA**

My heart.

Shaun San Dena collapses into Stephanie's arms. Rham Jas moves to assist her. They lower Shaun San Dana to the floor.

**RHAM JAS**

Milos, call an ambulance!

0

**78.**

Milos rushes from the room to call for help... Rham Jas checks for a pulse.

**RHAM JAS**

She's not breathing.

Rham Jas attempts to administer CPR to no avail.

**STEPHANIE**

My God. My God...

He checks her pulse one last time. The CPR is finally halted.

Rham Jas closes her eyes, then touches her forehead, praying:

**RHAM JAS**

Gata, gata, para gata... bodhi suaha. Gone, gone, gone beyond. Gone beyond the beyond. Hail the goer.

**EXT. PASADENA HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER**

Stephanie and Rham Jas watch as PARAMEDICS load the covered body of Shaun San Dena into the ambulance. They close the doors and drive away.

**STEPHANIE**

It's sad:

**RHAM JAS**

Yes.

**STEPHANIE**

Strange how things work out. She waited years for another chance to overcome the lamia ..and finally she did.

**RHAM JAS**

No. I'm afraid you misunderstand.  
Rham Jas looks at her with pity.

**STEPHANIE**

What?

**RHAM JAS**

The, Lamia can not be banished by a medium. This was our lesson tonight. I'm sorry.

79.

**STEPHANIE**

0

But I saw her get rid of the thing...

**RHAM JAS**

No. You saw her drive the Lamia from the seance. That is all. It will be back.

**STEPHANIE**

But then, what am I supposed to do?  
Rham Jas shrugs. He fishes in his pocket for his car keys.

**RHAM JAS**

Perhaps on this final evening, you should finish up the business of this world. For before the night is through, the Lamia will come for the owner of the accursed object.

**STEPHANIE'S HAND**

Slowly emerges from her coat pocket. She studies the thin brass button in her palm. 0

**RHAM JAS**

Unless, of course... you were no longer the owner.

**STEPHANIE**

No longer the owner? I don't understand.

Rham Jas reaches into his coat pocket and removes a blank envelope. He places the button within and seals it.

**RHAM JAS**

The Lamia comes for the owner of the accursed object. Just make a gift of it...

To demonstrate, he hands the envelope to Stephanie.

**RHAM JAS**

.and you've given away the curse.

80.

**STEPHANIE**

Why didn't you tell me this before?!

**RHAM JAS**

Because we are speaking of murder.

Stephanie looks from the envelope containing the button to Rham Jas. She places the envelope carefully into the side 'pocket of her purse. Rham Jas tries to conceal the sadness

and fear he feels for her.

**RHAM JAS**

Whatever you decide, you have until sunrise.'

She nods goodbye as Ray's car pulls up. Ray opens the door. for her and she gets in.

**INT. RAY'S BMW - NIGHT**

Ray and Stephanie drive through the quiet Pasadena neighborhood.

**RAY**

Is it over?

Stephanie, stares at her envelope, thinks about telling him, then...

**STEPHANIE**

Yes. It's all over.

Ray squeezes her hand. Appreciating the two of them now more than ever.

Stephanie SCREAMS as...

MRS. GANUSH.appears in the headlights, standing on the road before them! Ray hits the breaks. The car SCREECHES to a halt!

Stephanie's purse with the envelope and.some of Ray's papers fall to the floor.

**RAY**

Are you okay?

Stephanie nods, catching her breath.

81.

**RAY**

**R**

That guy came out of nowhere.

Stephanie looks to the figure in the road. Mrs. Ganush is gone. In her place is an old man who mutters angrily at them and moves on.

**EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT -- LATER**

RAY'S BMW pulls up and Stephanie gets out.

**RAY**

Are you'still okay about the Santa Barbara trip?

**STEPHANIE**

Yes, everything's fine.

**RAY**

Okay. Our train leaves tomorrow morning. Seven A.M. When do you want me to pick you up?

**STEPHANIE**

It's better if we meet at the D station. There's something I've got to do on the way.  
Stephanie suddenly' clutches at her purse. The envelope is gone!

**STEPHANIE**

Wait! Where's my envelope?

**RAY**

What envelope?  
She opens the car door and frantically rummages around the floor, through Ray's papers.

**STEPHANIE**

It's got to be here!  
Then, Stephanie comes upon something under the seat. She smiles and stands. A white envelope held tightly in her hand.

**STEPHANIE**

Got , it .

0

82.

**RAY**

Tomorrow's gonna be a new start for,  
us. Don't be late.  
They kiss and Ray drives off.

**INT. DENNY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

**A WALL CLOCK**

The time is 1:30 A.M.

**STEPHANIE**

drinks coffee and stares at the white envelope that's tucked  
into the side pocket of her purse. She scans the patrons and  
considers giving it to each of them, then one by one,

rejects

the idea.

**A WAITRESS**

Comes by, removes a dirty dish and refills her coffee.

**STEPHANIE**

Banana Boat Sundae.

**WAITRESS**

Another one?

Stephanie nods absently. The waitress exits.

**THE WALL CLOCK**

The time is now 2:15 A.M.

**A WITHERED OLD MAN**

sits alone at a table in a wheelchair. A portable oxygen  
cylinder, supplying him with air.

**STEPHANIE**

takes a deep breath, stands and walks to his table.

**STEPHANIE**

I wonder if you could help me out?

The Old Man looks up, sees her desperation.

83.

OLD MAN 0

Yeah?

**STEPHANIE**

I just need you to hang on to this envelope for me. Just until tomorrow.

She extends the envelope to him. He hesitates.

**OLD MAN**

What's this all about?

**STEPHANIE**

Just take the envelope and I'll explain. Please.

The Old Man considers. He reaches for the envelope when an OLD WOMAN, his wife, hobbles toward the table. The Old Man helps her sit and puts away her cane. They turn to Stephanie who withdraws the envelope.

**STEPHANIE**

Never mind.

Stephanie returns to her seat, ashamed at what she almost did.

She returns the envelope to the purse pocket, racking her brains, trying to think of some way out of this. Her gaze lands upon a stack of newspapers on the next table. She grabs the paper and finds the OBITUARIES.

**CLOSE ON THE NEWSPAPER:**

MRS. GANUSH'S OBITUARY: A photo of the old woman. The location of the burial is listed: Oakwood Cemetary. Stephanie rips the listing from the paper and rushes from

the

restaurant.

**INT. RHAM JAS' HOUSE - BACK ROOM - NIGHT**

Stephanie, lit by a barren light bulb, paces the room. Rham Jas in his pajamas, studies an old leather bound text.

**STEPHANIE**

Well? Is it possible? 0

**FA**

**84.**

He closes the book and gives it some thought.

**RHAM JAS**

There are Gypsy blessings that are bestowed upon the dead... And the Gypsies give gifts to their departed to curry favor with the deceased soul. Yes. I do believe you could give the curse to someone who has passed on... for truly, the soul never dies.

**INT. STEPHANIE'S CAR - NIGHT**

**CLOSE ON STEPHANIE**

As she drives we hear the voice over from the preceding

**SCENE:**

**RHAM JAS (V.O.)**

.but you must make a formal gift of the cursed object to the deceased.

**STEPHANIE (V.O.)**

Formal gift... ?  
Car headlights sweep over her grim face. She fingers the envelope, then glances to the seat next to her... a SHOVEL.

**RHAM JAS (V.O.)**

Give it to the corpse personally.  
Put it in their hand... their' pocket...

**STEPHANIE (V.O.)**

Oh, I'll do better than that...  
CAMERA moves in tight.

**STEPHANIE**

.I'll shove it down her goddamn throat.  
She zips up her raincoat. SOMETHING flits past the window. Too.quick to.see. Then it reappears. It's Mrs. Ganush's hankie. It.flies against Stephanie's windshield and gets caught on the wiper blade. Stephanie GASPS. It flaps in the wind, blocking her view. Stephanie hits the wiper button. The hankie is yanked-back and forth across the windshield.

**T**

**85.**

She turns up the wiper speed. No sooner is it knocked loose than it's whisked into the driver's side window. It slaps over Stephanie's eyes, plastered there by the wind! The car swerves.

Her car crashes into a tree.

**LONG SHOT - CRASHED CAR**

Stephanie pulls herself from the crash. She glances up to a flash of lightning. It illuminates:

The wrought iron gates of the OAKWOOD CEMETERY. A hill of tombstones beyond.

**EXT. OAKWOOD CEMETERY - RAINY NIGHT**

for  
at  
A light drizzle falls as Stephanie searches the graveyard  
the burial place of Mrs. Ganush. She carries the shovel  
defensively, ready to swat at anything that might leap out  
her.

She stops before a freshly dug grave. A temporary marker reads the name. "Sylvia Ganush".

She's scared now, not sure if she can really go through with it. A church bell TOLLS five times. There's no time to think about it. Stephanie looks around to make sure no one is watching, then starts to dig.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

LATER - It's raining harder. The hole Stephanie digs is now several feet deep.

CLUNK: The shovel has hit the buried coffin. The rain intensifies.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

white  
LATER - Mud is pouring down the sides of the grave. In the bottom of the pit Stephanie has unearthed the simple pine casket. She jams the shovel blade between two boards and pries off the coffin's top and shoves it aside.

A lightning flash illuminates the corpse. Mrs. Ganush's

eye is open and staring at Stephanie.

Stephanie stows her fear and pulls the white envelope from

her coat.

16 40

86.

**STEPHANIE**

I'm giving it back to you.  
She grabs Mrs. Ganush's hand and tries to get her clenched fist to open, but rigor mortis has locked it shut. Stephanie pulls with all her might, causing...

**MRS. GANUSH'S CORPSE**

corpse  
to lurch up and out of the coffin. Her dead arms, thrown forward from the momentum, wrap around Stephanie. Stephanie SCREAMS! The withered face leers! Stephanie pushes the  
away from her and the lifeless body falls back into the mud.

**STEPHANIE**

You'll take it, all right...  
She picks up the shovel and jams the blade into the old woman's mouth, wedging it between her teeth. She pries the jaw open. Mud and rivulets of water begin pouring down into the grave from all sides. The body of Mrs. Ganush is quickly being re-buried.

**STEPHANIE**

I, Stephanie Brown, do hereby make  
a formal gift of this button to  
you, Sylvia Ganush.  
She jams the white envelope down the old woman's throat.

**STEPHANIE**

up  
Choke on it, bitch.  
She kicks the old woman's jaw.. It SNAPS shut, trapping the envelope between her broken teeth.  
Muddy water cascades down into the grave, flowing over Mrs.. Ganush's face. It covers everything, except the jutting envelope and a single, staring white eye.  
Stephanie tries to climb out but the walls are too slick. She grabs at a clump of sod at the top of the hole but it tears away, unleashing an avalanche of mud that buries her

to her armpits.

**THE HEAD OF MRS. GANUSH**

the  
Bobs up, through the mud. The Old Woman is grinning, with  
envelope still jammed between her teeth.

87.

**LONG SHOT - THE GRAVE**

Rivers of muddy water now pour in from every direction. It has become the drain hole of the cemetery.

**THE INFLUX OF MUD**

SCREAM  
pushes the old woman corpse against Stephanie. Her grinning face led mashed against Stephanie's cheek. Stephanie's

is cut short as she and Mrs. Ganush disappear beneath the mud.

TO  
The only sound is the PITTER-PATTER of rain. CAMERA STARTS  
PULL AWAY when...

**STEPHANIE'S HAND**

rips up through the mud, grasping the tree root.

**STEPHANIE'S HEAD**

Breaks the surface of the mud, sucking in air. She claws her way out, then staggers away, through the pouring rain.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE -- BATHROOM - PRE-DAWN**

She  
STEPHANIE steps from the shower, quickly towels her hair.

stops for a moment and studies herself in the mirror. She has survived. The phone RINGS in the bedroom; the machine picks up.

**MR. JACKS' VOICE**

Stephanie. It's Jim. Jim Jacks.  
Sorry I'm calling so early-- but  
Last night I found some troubling

information about our friend Stu  
Rubin...

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. CITY STREET - PRE DAWN**

her  
A cleaned up Stephanie, her hair still wet from the shower,  
drives the empty morning streets. A smile slowly comes to  
face as we hear the rest of Mr. Jack's message:

**88.**

**MR. JACKS' VOICE**

Apparently he stole your file on 4  
the Mcpherson loan and then tried  
to broker his own deal at First  
Federal. I guess he thought we  
wouldn't find out. When I  
confronted him he broke down crying  
and well, we won't be seeing him  
around anymore.

**EXT. TRAIN STATION - PARKING LOT - PRE DAWN**

The Eastern sky is growing brighter. Stephanie's car pulls  
into the lot. She removes a week end bag from her trunk and  
walks briskly toward the station.

**MR JACKS**

**(V.O.)**

It looks like the loan's coming  
back to us. And I just wanted you  
to know that come Monday morning,  
that assistant manager's position  
will be waiting for you.

**INT. TRAIN STATION - GRAND ENTRANCE - PRE DAWN**

Stephanie is smiling as she enters the station.

**A MRS. FIELDS REPRESENTATIVE**

holds a platter of freshly baked cookies and offers free samples to passersby. One is offered to Stephanie. She politely declines as she walks past with a bounce in her step.

**INT. TRAIN STATION - CLOTHING BOUTIQUE**

She stops at the window, admiring a coat on display. She glances down at her own coat. Notes the missing button. with distaste.

Inside, a SALESWOMAN is preparing to open the shop. Stephanie taps on the window, shouts through the glass:

**STEPHANIE**

Hey! Good morning.

**NO 4**

**89.**

The Saleswoman opens the door a crack.  
t

**SALESWOMAN**

I'm sorry, we're not open yet.

**STEPHANIE**

Please. I know what I want. That coat in the window.

The Saleswoman considers.

**STEPHANIE**

My boyfriend and I are taking a very special trip this morning. Stephanie's smile is bright. Her joy is contagious. The Saleswoman relents and lets Stephanie in.

**EXT. TRAIN STATION - TRAIN PLATFORM - DAWN**

Moments before sunrise, the sky is streaked red. Ray waits on the train platform, clutching two tickets and a small garment bag. Behind him, other Passengers arrive. From his pocket, he removes a velvet case. He opens it and peeks t inside A diamond ring. He stows it back in his pocket. He looks for Stephanie.

crowd,

Then, his face brightens as Stephanie emerges from the radiant in her, new coat.

**STEPHANIE**

Ray!

Ray embraces her and grabs her luggage. A TRAIN WHISTLE sounds as the train approaches.

**RAY**

Is everything okay?

**STEPHANIE**

Great.

**RAY**

I'm so glad you're here. There's so much I've been meaning to tell you.

0 She takes his hand. 0

**90.**

**STEPHANIE**

But let me say this first while I have it straight in my head. You never stopped believing in me. I'll try and live up to that.

They share an intimate moment. A romantic kiss. He breaks  
off and smiles.

**RAY**

Did I tell you, you look great?

**STEPHANIE**

Thanks.

Stephanie models her new coat.

**STEPHANIE**

You like it? It's brand new.

**RAY**

What'd you do with your old coat?

Just the mention of it, makes her face darken.

**STEPHANIE**

I got rid of it. I never want to see it again.

**RAY**

Too bad, 'cause I just found this. Ray produces the envelope. And from it, withdraws... THE

**CURSED BUTTON!**

CAMERA RACES INTO A HUGE CLOSE UP OF THE BUTTON with a terrible CLASHING of symbols!. Stephanie can't breathe.

**RAY**

Yeah, it was in my car. Hey, have you seen my Indian Head nickel? I put it in an envelope just like this one. Stephanie stares at the button, shaking her head in disbelief. The RUMBLING of the approaching train builds on the sound track.

**4**

**91.**

**RAY**

What? What is it? She backs away in horror, but Ray follows her with the

button

still in his hand. The RUMBLING grows louder. She's backing up toward the edge of the platform.

**RAY**

Stephanie. Stop! Ray steps forward, still holding out the button. Stephanie SHRIEKS as she falls backwards, off the platform and onto

the

tracks. In her last moment of life, she turns her head to see...

**THE ONCOMING TRAIN**

Racing at her!  
Through the swirling smoke, the engine's mechanical face,  
resembles the goat like face of the demon Lamia.  
It VOMITS STEAM as it angrily bares down upon her.

**THE TRAIN WHISTLE SHRIEKS!**

Stephanie recognizes the sound. It's a cry she's heard  
before. In every door creak... in every cold night wind... a  
haunting, soulless sound... the cry of Lamia.  
Ray races to the edge of the platform. The two lover's eyes  
find each other one last time.  
Stephanie SCREAMS as the Lamia swallows her and pulls her  
down into hell.

**THE PEOPLE ON THE PLATFORM**

Believe they have witnessed a train accident but Ray knows  
the truth. He looks to...

**THE BUTTON**

still in his hand.

**CAMERA MOVES CLOSER ON RAY**

**92.**

A look of dread. Finally, he believes.

**THE END**