

THE GRUEN EFFECT

Written by

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INT. BROOKFIELD MALL - DAY - 1998

A skateboard whizzes down the marble green floors of the shopping center. Riding on top of it, "JAY" JASON KAUFMANN (17) tosses his cigarette into the trash bin and Ollie's over an ELDERLY LADY, lounging on a bench.

ELDERLY LADY
(irritated)
Hooligan!

JAY
Sorry!

Jay continues onward and smacks right dab into MARCUS KAUFMANN (50s), a burly man in a well-dressed, business casual suit.

JAY (cont'd)
(dazed)
What the hell ma --- Shit.

Jay arises.

JAY (cont'd)
(embarrassed)
Dad.

Marcus snatches Jay's skateboard.

MARCUS
Why aren't you in school?

JAY
I got bored.

Marcus taps his fingers.

JAY (cont'd)
(nervous)
'Cause who likes, learning, right?

Two WELL SUITED MEN approach Marcus from behind.

MARCUS
If, I have to put you through another year of summer school, I'll...

FIRST MAN
Marcus? Is that you?

Marcus grits his teeth and flips around.

MARCUS

MR. EISENHOWER. DAVE. I thought you were both in California?

SIDNEY EISENHOWER (80s), wrinkly, crotchety, and sterile, wipes a piece of GUM off the bottom of his shoe.

SIDNEY

I'm visiting family, up near Toledo.
So --

DAVID "DAVE" MACY (60s), takes off his aviators and bites his tongue.

DAVE

We figured, we'd see how things were going on down here.

Jay narrows his eyes at the two geezers.

JAY

(to Sidney)

Who are these muffins?

Sidney and Dave turn red.

MARCUS

(flustered)

Jason -- you don't remember Mr. Eisenhower? The Mr. Eisenhower of Eisenhower Properties?

JAY

Oh, yeah!

Jay nudges his father aside and stomps forward.

JAY (cont'd)

You're the bastard, who bulldozed my skate park!

SIDNEY

Marcus, please. Control your little pup, before I --

JAY

Before you, what? Huh, old man?

Jay shoves his hot, garlic-filled breath, into Sidney's face.

JAY (cont'd)

I'm a bust a kickflip up your ass.

Marcus yanks Jay back.

MARCUS
(to Sidney)
He doesn't mean that.

Sidney scowls at Jay.

SIDNEY
Yes, I would certainly hope so.
(clears throat)
Dave.

Dave steps forward.

DAVE
Quite a lot of empty stores around
here, isn't there?

Marcus's eyes dart from empty storefront to empty storefront. He snickers, but his shaky demeanor says it all.

MARCUS
The Internet is a fabulous invention.

DAVE
Yes, Marcus. But --
(steps forward)
That doesn't excuse the fact that
vacancy rates have been on the uprise
since 92'.

Dave stares Marcus down. His right eye twitches.

DAVE (cont'd)
You care to explain that?

Jay nudges his Dad in the arm.

JAY
(whispers)
Dad? You don't have to take this
shi --

Marcus pushes him back.

MARCUS
(irritated)
Well, if you guys hadn't built that
new strip mall, just around the
corner...

DAVE
 Brookfield needs business, Marcus.
 New business. Fresh business. ---
 Aeropostale, Media Play, Justice,
 Build-A-Bear...

SIDNEY
 Not a mall with a Ward's on the verge
 of a collapse.

Marcus peers at the entrance to a MONTGOMERY WARD sign in
 the distance, snarls at the two large banners dangling above
 the tiles.

75% OFF - EVERYTHING MUST GO!

MARCUS
 I can save this place. All I need is
 just a little more time --

SIDNEY
 We've given you enough that, with
 your position.

JAY
 (confused)
 Dad?

MARCUS
 What are you saying, Sid?

SIDNEY
 I'm saying --

Sidney marches forward and rips off Marcus's tie.

SIDNEY (cont'd)
 It's been a pleasure.

Sidney tucks the tie in his pocket and marches away.

SIDNEY (cont'd)
 Dave.

MARCUS
 Dave, please...

Dave smirks at Jay.

DAVE
 (to Marcus)
 Maybe you should consider a career in
 parks and rec.

Dave strolls off, leaving Marcus to his thoughts.

JAY
Dad?

MARCUS
(hisses)
Go back to class, son. I'm going to stay here, just a little while longer.

Jay stares, transfixed on his father.

JESSICA (O.S.)
Jay?

INT. BROOKFIELD MALL - DAY - PRESENT

JESSICA KAUFMANN (50s), a modern day starlet with glasses, steps forward.

JESSICA
What are you staring at?

Jay, now around the same age as his wife, brushes back his hair and arises off the grimy brown tiles.

JAY
I think, I'm going to stay here, just a little while longer.

Jessica flips around and gazes at the Ward's store in the distance, now, vacant and sealed shut by an intimidating metallic gate.

JESSICA
You can't keep blaming yourself.

JAY
I was a stupid kid.

Jay trudges up to a former ZUMIEZ store and looks up at the sign.

JAY (cont'd)
A really stupid kid.

An arm wraps tightly around his. Jay flinches.

JESSICA
Jason?

Jay relaxes and squeezes her hand.

JAY
I have one chance to save this place.

Jessica looks left and snickers.

JESSICA
That should be easy.

JAY
Jess?

She playfully nudges Jay in the arm.

JESSICA
You've got your regulars.
(waves)
Morning, Maisie!

MAISIE MCCLOUD (70s) shuffles forward in bright purple top, floral leggings, and white crocs.

MAISIE
Oh, Jessica! How are you, dear?

Maisie's husband, PETE MCCLOUD (90s), is less than thrilled, by Jay's presence.

PETE
(snarls)
You know, I remember when this place
was filled with people.

Jay bites the insides of his cheeks.

JAY
Mr. McCloud.

Maisie pulls Pete along.

MAISIE
Come now, Pete, we musn't bother Jay
while he's on duty!

Pete shoves his finger into Jay's chest.

PETE
You're a disgrace to your father.

MAISIE
Peter! Apologize!

JAY
It's alright.

Pete drags Maisie away.

JESSICA
Ready to go now?

INT. JAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jay glares intently at his computer screen. As he carefully manipulates the mouse, beneath his hand, KATHY VALENTINO (40s) waltzes in. Her mouth explodes full of bubble gum.

KATHY
(muffled)
There's a man here to see you.

Jay winces.

JAY
Not now, Kathy, I'm busy.

Kathy huffs and marches over. She shoves Jay and his chair aside and glares at his computer.

KATHY
Now, what are you doing that's so ---
Solitaire? Jesus, Jay, you're making
me feel old.

Jay fixes his tie and suit.

JAY
Does he have an appointment?

KATHY
No, but, said he was interested in
leasing. Which, if I were you --

JAY
Send him in.

Kathy snickers and hurries back to the door.

KATHY
Oh, and Jay?

A packet of bubble gum flies into his hands.

KATHY (cont'd)
Relax.

Jay breathes a sigh of relief. As he pops a stick into his mouth, Kathy sticks her head out into the hallway and calls out too the darkness behind her.

KATHY (cont'd)
You can come in, now.

Jay hears the strange visitor's heavy footsteps clomp forward. He wipes the sweat from his forehead with a tissue, arises, and extends his hand.

JAY
A pleasure to meet you, Mr.?

The visitor grabs Jay's hand and gives it a firm shake.

THE VISITOR
ASHTON CLAUSE. But I prefer, Ash.

Jay examines Ashton's unusual appearance; hair as white as snow, eyes as red as fire, and a skinny physique.

JAY
(offers gum)
Gum?

Ash grabs a stick and takes a seat.

JAY (cont'd)
(sits down)
So, Mr. Clause...

ASH
Ash.

JAY
Excuse me, Ash. My secretary said you were interested in leasing?

ASH
(chews loudly)
Brookfield needs a new store, doesn't it?

Jay's eyes dart towards the picture on his desk. He breathes a heavy sigh and picks it up.

JAY
More than that, I'm afraid.

Jay traces his fingers over the Brookfield Mall in it's heyday; it's parking lot packed to the brim with vehicles.

Ash eyes the picture and smirks.

ASH
I can bring it back to life.

Jay sets down the picture and leans forward.

JAY
You don't strike me, as JCPenney?

ASH
JAMES, ROWLAND, JOHN, RICHARD -- I
knew them all.

JAY
(doubtful)
How are old you?

ASH
Old enough.

Jay pulls up the mall's lease plan on his computer.

JAY
What are you looking to sell?

ASH
Something of everything. You want it?
Chances are, I have it.

JAY
So, like a thrift store?

ASH
I sell beauty, not bargains, Mr.
Kaufmann.

Jay's eyes dart towards the doors behind Ash.

ASH (cont'd)
You don't, by chance, happen to be
related too, the Edgar Kaufmann?

JAY
He was my great, great, grandfather.
Now -- your store?

ASH
Ash's Antique's. With deals so good,
you'll just be dying too get them!

Jay glares at Ash, dumbfounded.

ASH (cont'd)
Charming motto, isn't it?

JAY
Have you considered eBay?

ASH
I'm not laughing.

Jay begins typing.

JAY
The lease is good for one year. If you make enough revenue by then, I'll consider extending it further.

ASH
That won't be a problem.

JAY
You sound confident.

ASH
I am the mere definition of confidence, Mr. Kaufmann.

JAY
Sure. OK then.

ASH
You should be blinded by my radiance.

Ash pulls out a copy of Victor Gruen's The Heart of our Cities.

JAY
A book?

ASH
Not just, a book. The book!

JAY
I don't read.

ASH
Victor Gruen. The man, the architect!

JAY
Never heard of him.

Ash glares at Jay.

ASH
He's what made your position, possible, after all.

Jay stops typing and leans back.

JAY
Look, Mr. Clause --

ASH

Ash.

JAY

I have a job to do. So, if you're interested in leasing, great, let's get to work. If not, than, I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you too --

Ash leaps from his seat and slams his hands down on Jay's desk.

ASH

I refuse to pay alimony for those bastard developments!

Kathy rushes in, phone in hand.

KATHY

Jay?

JAY

Stand down, Kathy. Return to base.

Kathy returns to her desk.

JAY (cont'd)

(to Ash)

You really think, one store is enough to save an entire mall?

ASH

Do you want to make that bet with me?

Ash extends his hand.

Jay ponders his options, his family, his livelihood, and his father's dream.

ASH (O.S.)

It's what you're father always wanted, right?

Jay narrows his eyes towards the picture of himself (15) with Marcus, and his mother PAULINE (40s) at the grand opening of the Brookfield's Macy's store (now closed).

JAY

What will it cost?

ASH

We can work out all the finer details later, but, for now -- all you need to do is say, yes.

Jay takes out his wallet and stares at a photograph of GABRIEL "GABE" KAUFMANN (16), a mere splitting image of his father, complete with skateboard.

JAY
You're really sure, you can do this?

Ash extends his hand further.

JAY (cont'd)
Alright.

Jay shakes Ash's hand/

JAY (cont'd)
But you better not be lying.

ASH
I am a man of my word, Mr. Kaufmann.

Ash arises.

ASH (cont'd)
You can fax the agreement over to my office.

Ash whips out a pen and paper and jots down a note.

JAY
(confused)
Why not just do it here?

ASH
I have to begin inventorying my stock.

Ash slams the sticky note down on Jay's desk, winks, and exits. As he disappears down the hall, Kathy sticks her head in.

KATHY
Well?

Jay picks up the sticky note and stares at the address on it.

JAY
I'm going to need some more, gum.

INT/EXT. ZUMIEZ STORE - DAY

As Gabe leans against the cold white arch of the Zumiez store behind him, an ELDERLY WOMAN (70s) in Chico's apparel hobbles by.

GABE
70 percent off!

The woman scowls at Gabe's ripped jeans, red flannel jacket, and tattooed face.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Young man, in my days, we had a thing called modesty.

GABE
I bet so CHICO.

The elderly woman raises her cane to Gabe's nose ring.

ELDERLY WOMAN
The Lord will protect and strengthen you from the evil one.

GABE
Too late.

LISA SAKS (18) hears the commotion and hurries over.

LISA
Hold on, Gabe!

Lisa puts herself in-between the squabbling pair.

LISA (cont'd)
We welcome all customers, don't we?

The elderly woman gasps at Lisa's baby pink crop-top and blue-streaked hair.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Young lady, you should be ashamed of yourself.

LISA
Oh, I am.

Lisa flips back her hair.

LISA (cont'd)
But, it gets me noticed so...

The elderly woman snarls and stomps away. Gabe and Lisa sigh, relieved.

GABE
Wow, aren't you blunt.

LISA
Well, what's wrong with a little honesty? Right?

Lisa struts her kicks back into the store and waltzes up to a rack of clothes.

GABE
You could try being nice. Oh! Wait --

Lisa begins refiling the clothes.

LISA
I don't get paid enough for that.

JESSE (O.S.)
I resent that.

Gabe marches up to JESSE WALSH (early 30s); a college dropout with absolutely no plans for the future, jamming to the latest Y2K pop punk.

GABE
You're just jealous.

JESSE
Nah man. Jesse here don't get jealous.

LISA
Oh? OK.

Lisa salsa dances her way over to the counter.

GABE
What the hell are you doing?

LISA
I'm the white GLORIA ESTEFAN.

Lisa leans against the counter, grabs Jesse's chin, and pulls him forward.

LISA (cont'd)
(in Spanish)
Kiss me.

JESSE
(in Spanish)
Whatever you say, gorgeous.

As the two move in for their big moment, Gabe yanks Lisa back by her arm.

LISA
(in Spanish)
Ooh, now who's the jealous one?

GABE
Bite me.

Lisa snickers and approaches an entering CUSTOMER, wearing Cyndi Lauper's unusual drabs.

LISA
Nice skirt!

Gabe leans against the counter and grumbles.

GABE
Don't worry, man. One more month and will be out of this shit hole.

Jesse cracks open a bottle of prescription medicine.

JESSE
Yeah? And where am I supposed to go?

GABE
Put in for a transfer.

JESSE
Too where? Philly? -- I don't feel like fucking moving.

Jesse downs the bottle.

GABE
Dude!

Gabe grabs his arm.

JESSE
Relax man. Hydroxizine.

A YOUNG THRASHER (15) approaches the counter with a jacket. Jesse begins ringing him up.

GABE
New York offers free tuition.

JESSE
The land of political corruption and
garbage plates? No thanks.

Jesse places the pill bottles in his pocket.

GABE
(to the Thrasher)
Hey, what do you think, he should do?

YOUNG THRASHER
(anxious)
I don't know, bro. I'm just a
freshman.

As Jesse's fingers whizz across the register, Lisa waltzes
over and eyes the jacket.

LISA
Nice jacket. Who are you buying it
for?

YOUNG THRASHER
Uh, me?

JESSE
\$25.99

The young thrasher hands Jesse the money.

GABE
You should respect your elders kid.

YOUNG THRASHER
You delulu man, don't make me crash
out.

GABE
What?

LISA
It means delusional.

GABE
(to the young
thrasher)
That's lowkey insulting.

YOUNG THRASHER
Ok, boomer.

Lisa chuckles.

GABE
(whispers)
I'm 22!

Jesse hands the young thrasher his money and jacket.

JESSE
Enjoy the jacket, little bro.

YOUNG THRASHER
Thanks, bruh.

The young thrasher fists bumps Jesse and flips around.

YOUNG THRASHER (cont'd)
Yo, T!

TATIANA (17) a walking glamour shot, struts into the store with her arms full of shopping bags.

TATIANA
Dillard's is closing soon!

Lisa and Gabe gawk at Tatiana's appearance.

LISA
Well, that's one way to wear a crop top.

GABE
(young thrasher)
Hey, kid --

YOUNG THRASHER
Dylan.

GABE
Don't you think that girl's a little, you know --

DYLAN
Sexy?

Gabe's eyes drop to Tatiana's exposed jigglng breasts.

GABE
Well yeah, I can see that but --

Lisa struts forward and takes Gabe's hand.

GABE (cont'd)
Good luck.

Dylan snickers, puffs out his chest, and marches towards his girlfriend.

DYLAN
Sup, babe, look what I got.

GABE
(yawns)
Welp, I'm going on break.

JESSE
Deserter.

Gabe kisses Lisa, trudges forward, and gives Jesse the bird.

GABE
Emo breath.

Jesse grumbles and turns up the music.

LISA
Bring us back something crispy!

Gabe walks out of the store.

GABE
The Hearty Harry's special?

JESSE
With waffle fries.

GABE
Right. Waffle fries.

INT. MALL - DAY

Gabe strolls down the wing, passing by empty store after store. His hands drum to the soft sounds of Carly Simon, anticipating for something.

As he passes a beauty store, he peers. Inside, a BRIGHT-COLORED WOMAN argues with CONNIE (40s) at the counter.

Gabe huffs and continues onward. He breezes past a couple on a bench, glued to their phones, a cell phone kiosk, with the lights off, and a row of candy machines, with gumballs older than him.

INT. FOOD COURT - DAY

SHELLY (18) slams a giant bag of Hearty Harry's meaty specials in front of Gabe.

GABE
Thanks, Shelly.

Gabe takes the bag. As he flips around, he slams right into a very hungry Ash.

GABE (cont'd)
(stunned)
Holy, Skeletor...

ASH
Who?

GABE
He-Man. The master of -- How tall are you really?

ASH
6 feet, 9 inches.

GABE
Sick.

Ash huffs, nudges Gabe aside, and steps up to the counter.

ASH
I'll have the grilled cheese.
American.

SHELLY
We don't have American.

ASH
Muenster, than.

SHELLY
We ran out.

ASH
Mozzarella.

SHELLY
Gone.

ASH
Provolone!

SHELLY
Moldy.

ASH
Well, what do you have?

SHELLY

Swiss.

ASH

(to himself)

What you'll be when I'm done with you.

GABE

Huh?

ASH

Swiss it is than.

Shelly groans and rings the bell next to her.

SHELLY

One cheese Sammy with Swiss!

GABE

(to Ash)

You new in town?

ASH

(glares at Gabe's
tattoo)

First things first.

Ash points to the tattoo.

GABE

They're flames, can't you tell?

ASH

I'm more curious, as to what they represent.

GABE

(whispers)

My uh, mother. She died last summer in a car accident.

Ash pats Gabe's shoulder.

ASH

Believe me, when I say she's in a better place now.

Gabe jumps back.

GABE

How would you know?

ASH
It's all part of my business.

GABE
You a mortician?

ASH
Contractor. A dealer of -- many
things.

Shelly slams Ash's meal down on the counter.

SHELLY
One cheese Sammy!

Ash glares down at the sloppy sandwich and scowls.

ASH
(to himself)
Sacrilege.

GABE
Did you know her?

Ash picks up the tray and trudges over to a table.

ASH
She may have wandered into my shop
one day...

GABE
Your shop? Wait, when --

Ash plunks down in a chair and picks up the sandwich.

ASH
Ashton's Antiques. I'm a well
recognized chain, you know.

Gabe takes a seat across from him.

GABE
I've never heard of it, before.

ASH
You wouldn't. I only have stores in
California.

Ash takes a bite.

GABE
Then, why mention it?

ASH
Too get your attention. Did it work?

GABE
Now, you sound just like my
girlfriend.

Ash spits out the sandwich in disgust.

ASH
Repulsive.

GABE
I know, Swiss, right?

Ash wipes his lips with a napkin.

GABE (cont'd)
So...

ASH
So what? That's all they had.

GABE
Did she say anything to you?

ASH
(snickers)
She bought one thing.

Ash reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small pendant.

GABE
What is that?

Ash hands Gabe the pendant.

ASH
For you.

Gabe takes it and places it into his palm.

GABE
(unsurprised)
A lion.

ASH
Strong, honest, and loyal. Much
unlike your father, I'm afraid.

GABE
My father? Wait...

ASH
Yes, that's right -- ?

GABE
Gabe.

ASH
Gabe. Quite a stubborn man, if I do
so say myself.

GABE
Yeah, I'll say.

Ash smirks.

ASH
My new store is set to open here this
weekend.

Ash arises and cackles.

ASH (cont'd)
If you're curious to know more about
her, doors open at 11.

Ash marches off. Gabe whips out his phone.

INT. JAY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Jay rubs his saggy eyelids.

JAY
What did you expect me, too do?

GABE
Hmm, I don't know? Tell him to piss
off?

Kathy barges in, cigarette in mouth.

JAY
Kathy?

KATHY
I'm clockin' out.

Jay waves goodbye.

GABE
(to Kathy)
That'll kill you, you know.

KATHY

Sweetie. I've survived stage four breast cancer, herpes, and the Clinton administration.

(points to cigarette)

This? Is like candy...

JAY

Good night.

Kathy steps out and closes the door behind her.

JAY (cont'd)

And good night too you.

Jay stands up and gathers his belongings.

GABE

He knows about, Mom!

JAY

You're mother and I traveled many places, before you were born.

GABE

And you've never seen him, before?
Ever?

Jay closes his briefcase and huffs.

JAY

Let's do this another time.

Jay hurries to the door.

GABE

Like hell!

Gabe shoves himself in front of it.

GABE (cont'd)

You can't trust him.

JAY

Why?

GABE

Because he -- he's...

JAY

A man willing to save my childhood.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Kathy searches for her keys inside her purse. Halfway across the lot, she passes a 1937 DUESENBERG MODEL J; a peculiar sight in her eyes.

KATHY
(to herself)
Huh. Where's the mafia?

ASH (O.S.)
Right here.

Ash steps out from behind Kathy's striking red, 93' CHRYSLER LEBARON CONVERTIBLE and strolls forward.

ASH
Duesenberg. Model J. Manufactured
from 1928 to 37.

KATHY
Sorry, but visiting hours are over.

ASH
I'm not here to see Mr. Kaufmann.

Ash stops in front of Kathy. His eyes meet hers.

ASH (cont'd)
You ought to put that out.

Kathy takes another puff of her cigarette.

KATHY
You're in my way, sunshine.

Ash smirks, opens the door of her Chrysler for her, and steps aside. Kathy steps in.

KATHY (cont'd)
You better zip up, you'll catch a
cold.

Ash looks up at the stormy gray clouds above him and snickers.

ASH
I don't get sick, or ill.

Kathy shuts the door and puts on her seatbelt.

KATHY
What kind of word game, are you
trying to play here?

Ash shushes Kathy and pats her shoulder.

ASH
Enjoy the ride, home.

Ash saunters up Jay's office building.

KATHY
Freak.

Kathy turns the key. The car engine sputters.

KATHY (cont'd)
Dammit.

Kathy presses the TRUNK RELEASE button and undoes her seatbelt. She hurries over to the hood, pops it open, and stares inside.

KATHY (cont'd)
Alright, I can fix this.

Kathy tosses the cigarette to the ground, pops in some bubble gum, and leans forward.

INT. JAY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jay stomps back over to his desk.

JAY
I think you're paranoid.

Gabe rushes after him.

GABE
It makes sense though!

Jay retakes his seat and glares at the vintage Brookfield photograph, next to his computer.

GABE (O.S.)
Dad!

Jay fidgets in his seat.

JAY
Brookfield was everything to your grandfather. Did you know he helped finalize its design?

GABE
(annoyed)
It's a mall, Dad. Who the fuck cares?

Jay jumps out of his seat.

JAY
This mall is what got you that
scholarship to Duke -- and those
clothes on your fucking back!

Gabe glares down at his skater swag.

JAY (cont'd)
I still can't believe you turned that
down.

GABE
No one said I wanted to be a lawyer.

JAY
You did, once. But --

Jay glares at his wallet in his pocket.

GABE
Don't you want to know, what happened
to her?

Jay picks up his briefcase.

JAY
It's bad business to pry.

Jay hurries to the door. Gabe races after him.

GABE
Come on, Dad!

As Jay reaches for the handle, Gabe grabs his wrist.

GABE (cont'd)
You still can't believe it was an
accident?

Jay shoves Gabe's arm aside, flings open the door, and
marches away.

GABE (cont'd)
Dad!

Gabe gives chase.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Kathy slams the hood shut and sighs.

KATHY
You better work.

As she heads to the door, she fails to notice the GASOLINE dripping out the sides of the hood.

Kathy gets in and turns the key. The engine turns over.

KATHY (cont'd)
Come on.

Kathy turns the key again. The engine grumbles. She smacks her hand on the wheel.

KATHY (cont'd)
Mary, Jesus in July.

Kathy takes a deep breath, places her fingers on the key, and twists it one more time. The engine roars to life.

KATHY (cont'd)
(relieved)
Piece of shit, Chrysler.

Jay exits the building and unlocks his Lincoln.

GABE (O.S.)
Asshole!

Jay stops in his tracks and flips around.

JAY
What did you, just call me?

Gabe steps out of the building and marches forward.

GABE
You don't care about her, or me.

Gabe stops in front of his father and snarls.

GABE (cont'd)
Just you and your stupid mall.

Jay slams his fist into Gabe's cheek.

GABE (cont'd)
You -- you hit me?

JAY
Don't think I don't know, what it's like to be a teenager.

Gabe wipes the blood from his lip and chuckles.

GABE

Touche.

As he reaches for Jay, his nose flares up.

JAY

Gabe?

GABE

(anxious)

I smell gas...

Jay follows Gabe's gaze up to Kathy's convertible, the puddle of gasoline below it, and the cigarette in her mouth.

JAY

Kathy!

Jay's voice shakes Kathy to the bone. She drops the cigarette, right into the thick oil below.

Jay steps forward.

The car explodes. As pieces of shrapnel and flesh rain down on Jay and Gabe, Ash pulls back the blinds from inside Jay's office, and looks down at the carnage with a smirk.

INT. FOOD COURT - DAY

A large fruit punch shakes in Gabe's trembling hands.

JESSE (O.S.)

You didn't have to come in, today.

GABE

(anxious)

Beats being at home. Sitting in bed -- watching Kathy --

Lisa leans forward and squeezes Gabe's hand.

LISA

There's nothing you could've done.

Tears well up in Gabe's eyes.

GABE

Dad always told her, she should get a new car.

(blows nose)

Idiot.

JESSE
So, did you tell him about the
mystery man?

LISA
(annoyed)
Jesus, Jesse, read the room.

JESSE
I was just --

GABE
He didn't believe me.

Gabe touches the red welt on his cheek and winces.

GABE (cont'd)
The store's supposed to be opening
today.

JESSE
Time?

LISA
(hisses)
Jesse!

Gabe checks the time on his phone.

GABE
15 minutes from now.

Jesse arises and cracks his knuckles.

JESSE
Great. I'm ready for a throw-down.

LISA
You're insane!

JESSE
You have your way of getting answers,
and I have mine.

Jesse cracks his neck and boxes the air in front of him.

JESSE (cont'd)
(to Gabe)
Lead the way, my man.

As Gabe arises, Lisa sits him back down.

GABE
Don't worry, I'll stop him.

LISA
That's not what I'm worried about.

Lisa tightens her grip over Gabe's hand.

GABE
I'll be fine.

Gabe pecks Lisa's cheek.

GABE (cont'd)
Promise.

Lisa kisses him back.

LISA
OK.

INT. ASH'S STORE - DAY

Gabe, Lisa, and Jesse waltz up to Ash cleaning the shelves with a feather duster.

GABE
Hey, you!

ASH
Yes, me?

Gabe marches up to Ash and pokes him in the chest.

GABE
We're onto you.

LISA
Gabe.

Ash lowers the duster.

ASH
Oh. Pish pish, whatever have I done?

GABE
Kathy, you frumentaceous freak!

Ash shudders.

ASH
I'm not that pale.

Lisa pulls Gabe back.

LISA
Calm down.

Gabe nudges her aside and steps forward.

GABE
She knew something, didn't she? That
why you took her out?

Ash's left eye twitches. He smirks.

ASH
Maybe.

Ash saunters over to the front counter.

ASH (cont'd)
Or maybe...

Ash steps behind the cash register, places his palms on the
counter, and leans forward.

ASH (cont'd)
I just wanted to see some fireworks.

Gabe clenches his knuckles.

GABE
You piece of shit. Come here!

Gabe charges forward.

LISA
Jesse!

Jesse and Lisa hold him back.

JESSE
Geez, Gabe. Doing all the work for
me.

GABE
(to Ash)
You killed my mom too, didn't you?!

LISA
Gabe!

JESSE
Who?

ASH
 Incorrect. I believe that was the
 bumper of an '02 Grand Am traveling
 at 100 miles per hour.

Gabe breaks free and relaxes.

GABE
 What are you?

ASH
 I believe the correct word, is who?
 Who am I?

GABE
 No. You ain't worth the thought.

Ash purses his lips and strolls forward.

ASH
 I am a traveling salesman. A
 proprietor of antiques and oddities
 across the world.

GABE
 (glares at snow globe)
 Well, that would explain all this
 junk.

Ash eyes the snow globe and plucks it from the shelf.

ASH
 Junk, you say?

Lisa wraps her hand around Gabe's and squeezes it.

GABE
 Lis?

LISA
 Let's bail, I don't like --

ASH (O.S.)
 We all live inside our own little
 bubbles...

Ash raises the snow-globe to eye-level and glares at an
 impressive scale-model of the Brookfield Mall inside of it.

JESSE
 Is that --

LISA
 The mall.

GABE
Where did you steal that from? My
dad's office?

ASH
...afraid of the slightest bit of
change.

Ash gives the snow-globe a good shake.

ASH (cont'd)
He wants to save this place, correct?

Gabe, Lisa and Jesse take a closer look. Snowflakes fall
inside the snow globe, blanketing the mall below.

GABE
Yeah? So?

ASH
You want me to leave?

GABE
Yes, that would be perfect.

ASH
(to Lisa)
And you? Miss licorice lips?

Lisa bites her grape painted lips.

LISA
We don't want any trouble.

ASH
(glares at Gabe)
Somehow, I don't believe that.

ASH (cont'd)
(to Jesse)
Baphomet. The Sabbatical Goat.

Jesse peers over his shoulder and looks down at his
aforementioned tattoo, plastered on his back.

JESSE
Yeah. How did you --

ASH
Are you a worshiper?

JESSE
I'm a full-time thrasher. Part-time
junkie. And --

Jesse whips out his pocket knife, flicks it open.

JESSE (cont'd)
Defender of this mall.

LISA
(embarrassed)
God.

GABE
Dude...

ASH
(chuckles)
Would you be opposed to wearing a
collar?

JESSE
What?

ASH
Choker.
(coughs)
Excuse me.

Jesse lowers the knife.

JESSE
Only if, it's studded.

ASH
Duly noted. Now, before you all
leave...

Ash hands Gabe the snow globe.

ASH (cont'd)
I bear gifts.

Gabe pushes it away.

GABE
For all I know, that was made by some
poor little girl from India.

ASH
My sources are slave free.

Gabe takes the snow globe, gives it a small shake.

LISA
I -- I don't really need anything.

Ash approaches another shelf.

JESSE
I could use a new skateboard.

Lisa jabs Jesse in the arm.

JESSE (cont'd)
What?

ASH (O.S.)
I believe, I have just the thing, for
you both.

Ash returns with a small floral accented mirror in one hand,
and a skateboard in the other. He hands the mirror to Lisa.

ASH
For you.

Lisa takes the mirror.

GABE
Well?

LISA
It's -- cute.

Ash hands the skateboard to Jesse.

ASH
And, for the gentleman.

Jesse takes the board.

JESSE
Sweet.

He flips it around and stares at the graphic of a Pentagram
underneath it.

JESSE (cont'd)
Now I got something to match my
tattoo.

ASH
Don't ride it on the streets.

JESSE
(annoyed)
Whatever.

ASH
(to Lisa)
And don't talk too it.

LISA
(glares at mirror)
It?

Ash claps his hands together.

ASH
Now than, I have a lot of work to do,
so...

Ash ushers the three to the exit.

GABE
Wait, don't we owe you?

Ash shoves the three back into the mall and bows goodbye.

ASH
Ta-ta.

Ash marches back into the store.

JESSE
Damn, I didn't even get to use my
secret weapon.

LISA
Wasn't that the knife?

Jesse whips out a small can from his pocket.

JESSE
Mace.

As Lisa whacks Jesse in the shoulder, Gabe can't keep his eyes off the miniature mall inside the globe.

LISA
Gabe?

GABE
You guys head off to the store. I
need to make an apology.

EXT. JAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gabe approaches the doors with the snow globe and stops at Kathy's former desk.

GABE
Well, that was quick.

MARNIE (50s), the woman behind the desk, scowls, underneath her oval-rimmed glasses.

MARNIE

Marnie.

GABE

Sorry, Marnie. But --

Gabe stares, transfixed at Marnie's yellow teeth. He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a packet of gum, and chucks it into her hands.

GABE (cont'd)

You'll never replace her.

Jay bursts out of his office.

JAY

What is -- Gabe?

GABE

Dad -- I...

Marnie pops a stick of gum in her mouth and resumes typing on her computer.

GABE (cont'd)

Wanted to say...

Jay takes the snow globe from Gabe.

GABE (cont'd)

Dad?

JAY

Where did you get this from?

GABE

The creep in Unit 15B.

Jay's eyes twinkle at the mall inside.

JAY

It's so lifelike.

GABE

I'm sorry ---- For uh, making you mad.

Jay reaches forward and pats Gabe's shoulder.

JAY
You remind me so much of myself, when
I was your age.

GABE
Is that a good thing?

JAY
(snickers)
Well, I remember it made your
grandfather very angry.

GABE
That?

JAY
That -- I used to spend my afternoons
breezing through old ladies and
grinding railings overlooking the
atrium.

GABE
You? On a skateboard?

JAY
I thought, I knew everything. Turns
out --

Jay glares back at the mall inside the globe.

JAY (cont'd)
I never did.

JAY (cont'd)
Marnie.

Marnie blows a bubble.

JAY (cont'd)
Look up anything you can on an Ashton
Clause.

MARNIE
Anything?

JAY
Residency, tax records, leasing
history, anything that might pinpoint
where he was before --

MARNIE
Say no more.

Marnie cracks her knuckles and resumes typing.

JAY
(to Gabe)
You head on back to work now.

GABE
But, Dad...

Jay hugs Gabe tightly.

JAY
Jess and I will keep you updated.

Gabe hugs back and trudges away.

JAY (cont'd)
(to Marnie)
Did you ever want to rebel against
your parents?

MARNIE
I tried, once.

JAY
And?

MARNIE
I got sent to an all-girl's Catholic
school.

Marnie shivers and quickens her pace. As her fingers fly over the keyboard, Jay takes a deep breath and re-enters his office.

INT. LISA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Lisa brushes her hair in the mirror.

LISA
So, how'd it go?

GABE (O.S.)
He'd said he'd look into it.

Lisa sets down the brush and exits.

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa walks up to Gabe sprawled out across her snazzy purple sheets and red blankets.

LISA
You give the snow globe to him too?

She jumps onto the bed.

GABE
Yeah, it was kind of like my make-up
gift too him.

Lisa nuzzles Gabe on the nose.

GABE (cont'd)
Geez, Lis.

Gabe nudges her aside.

LISA
You're so sweet!

GABE
When's Jesse's coming over?

Lisa checks her text messages on her phone.

LISA
Got stuck in traffic. Make sure to
give me my own bowl.

GABE
What a noob.

Lisa puts her phone away and drapes a blanket over their
shoulders.

LISA
Are you scared?

GABE
Pfft. I've seen scarier dudes on my
dad's old MySpace.

LISA
God, those were the days.

Lisa grabs the remote and flicks on the television.

GABE
The days we both weren't around.

LISA
Shut up!

Lisa hits Gabe with the remote.

GABE
Ow! Brain damage!

Gabe puts a hand to his forehead.

GABE (cont'd)
I need medicine!

Lisa arises.

LISA
Mountain Dew?

GABE
Code Red, please.

Lisa exits.

LISA
You're lucky you're cute.

Gabe chuckles, grabs her copy of JAN DE BONT'S "The Haunting" on Blu-ray off her nightstand and purses the back cover.

INT. LISA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lisa tears open a packet of popcorn and puts into the microwave. As she walks towards the fridge, she spots the small mirror from Ash's store, glaring back at her from the table behind her.

Lisa huffs, grabs three cans of soda out of the fridge, and slams it shut.

She places them down on the table, re-adjusts at the mirror, and checks herself out.

LISA
Ugh, gross.

Lisa touches her round hips, chucks one of the soda cans in the trash, and grabs a water from the fridge.

INT. JESSE'S CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT (MOVING)

Jesse strokes his chin, raps his hand against the wheel, jamming to his favorite band.

As he accelerates, he winces.

JESSE
Damn.

Jesse reaches down and touches the scrape on his kneecap.

JESSE (cont'd)
Double damn.

Jesse scowls at his new skateboard in the rear view mirror.

JESSE (cont'd)
I'm returning you, tomorrow.

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gabe fidgets on-top of Lisa's bed, eyes glued too the television.

LISA (O.S.)
Did I miss anything?

Lisa returns with a bottle of water and two sodas.

GABE
No, just Jerry Goldsmith's haunting melodies.

LISA
Superb.

Lisa hands Gabe his soda and takes a seat next to him.

GABE
Water? For a movie?

LISA
It counteracts the salt.

GABE
OK?

Gabe cracks open his soda.

LISA
Am I fat?

Gabe chokes on his Coke.

GABE
No, no way.

LISA
Are you sure? Because, when I looked into the mirror downstairs, I -- my hips looked like a watermelon.

GABE
You're too hard on yourself.

LISA
I just wish I was built like you.

Lisa scoots forward and traces her fingers across Gabe's chest.

LISA (cont'd)
Strong, muscular --

GABE
I'm only 120 pounds you know.

LISA
Close enough.

Lisa shoves Gabe onto his pillow and plants her lips against his.

INT. JESSE'S CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT (MOVING)

As the rain pelts the windshield, the radio turns static.

JESSE
Aw, man.

Jesse takes two more pills, fiddles with the dial.

JESSE (cont'd)
Come on, you old Pioneer piece of
shit.

A wolf crosses the road in front of him.

JESSE (cont'd)
Shit!

Jesse turns the wheel, but he's too slow. The bumper plows right into the wolf, killing it instantly.

Jesse stops the car and unbuckles his seatbelt.

JESSE (cont'd)
Oh, no -- no no...

EXT. JESSE'S CONVERTIBLE - CONTINUOUS (PARKED)

Jesse walks up to the wolf's corpse and winces.

JESSE
Where did you come from?

Jesse scratches his knee wound. He looks around the darkness, searching for anyone to help him, but finds no one.

JESSE (cont'd)
Please, please don't give me rabies.

Jesse grabs the wolf's body and pushes it off the road and into the woods below.

JESSE (cont'd)
Phew.

Jesse winces. As he reaches down to scratch his wound, his hand grazes against a tuft of black fur.

JESSE (cont'd)
What the hell is this?

ASH (O.S.)
You didn't read the disclosure?

Jesse squints his eyes toward his convertible and steps forward. As he approaches the headlights, Ash jumps off the hood and sighs.

JESSE
What disclosure?

Ash pulls out Jesse's skateboard from behind his back.

ASH
Those who willingly accept a gift
from the Reaper...

Ash tosses the board to Jesse. He catches it with ease.

ASH (cont'd)
Forfeit their souls.

INT. LISA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The bag of popcorn in the microwave bulges like a balloon, and popping like firecrackers.

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gabe shoves Lisa off of him and arises.

GABE
Damn. That felt --

LISA
Good?

GABE
Really good.

Lisa chuckles and flops back against her pillow.

LISA
Where the hell's Jesse?

Gabe whips out his phone and checks his messages.

GABE
Nothing. Hmm.

Gabe dials his number.

EXT. JESSE'S CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT (PARKED)

Jesse clenches his fists.

JESSE
You sly bastard.

Ash smirks.

ASH
Here.

Ash tosses Jesse something round. He catches it and lifts it to his nose. It's the studded collar, just as Ash described earlier.

JESSE
What the fuck?

Ash whistles.

ASH
Come, pup.

As Jesse steps back, his legs snap. He drops to the ground and grimaces.

JESSE
What, what is this?

Jesse's back arches upwards, his teeth grow into large fangs, his mouth and nose become a snout, shrouded by black fur.

Ash claps his hands.

ASH
Perfect, now...

Ash walks over to Jesse, silences his phone, and takes out a lock of Lisa's hair.

ASH (cont'd)
Fetch.

Jesse sniffs the hair, howls, turns around, and races down the road, into the darkness.

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

LISA
Well?

Gabe lowers his phone.

GABE
This isn't like him.

Gabe hurries to the door.

LISA
Where are you going?

GABE
Too find him, stay here.

Lisa huffs and grumbles. She fidgets on the bed and rubs her hands and arms over her hips.

LISA
Grr.

Lisa jumps up and stomps into the bathroom.

INT. LISA'S FOYER - NIGHT

Gabe races down the front steps and grabs the door handle. He opens it and steps out, and right back down the stairs.

As he reaches the final step, he stops, flips around.

GABE
What?

INT. LISA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Lisa flicks on the light and grabs the mirror from Ash's store.

LISA
Let's see what you think.

Lisa places the mirror onto the vanity and steps back. To her surprise, she is as slender as a supermodel, perfectly sculpted, and brimming with confidence.

LISA (cont'd)
Hell, yeah.

INT. LISA'S FOYER - NIGHT

Gabe hurries down the steps, opens the front door, and steps out. He races down the steps, opens the front door, and steps out, again.

Halfway down the stairs, he stops and takes a moment to catch his breath.

GABE
OK, think Gabe, think.

Gabe whips his head towards the door leading to the backyard in the kitchen.

GABE (cont'd)
Gotcha.

As Gabe races forward, he enters the living room, he walks back into the foyer.

GABE (cont'd)
Oh my god.

ASH (O.S.)
Enjoying my little labyrinth?

GABE
Where's Jesse, you bastard?

ASH (O.S.)
Right behind you.

Gabe hears a growl from behind. He freezes, takes a deep breath, and peers over his shoulder. Behind him, a large black bloodhound snarls at him, teeth sharp, and ready to kill.

Gabe eyes the collar around his neck and snickers.

GABE

Oh, man.

Gabe hurries up the staircase. Jesse leaps after him.

INT. LISA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Lisa pulls off a few poses in the mirror, her hands stroking her hips.

LISA (MIRROR)

Yeah, you wish you looked this good.

Lisa stops and grimaces.

LISA

What?

The Lisa in the mirror's reflection snickers. She places her hands on her hips and smirks.

LISA (MIRROR)

Take a deep breath.

The mirror Lisa presses her hands into her sides. Like a water balloon, her stomach explodes. Her blood and intestines drop to the floor.

Lisa gurgles. As blood trickles down the sides of her mouth, she looks, down, raises her hand and touches the inside of her stomach.

Gabe rushes in.

GABE

Lisa --

He shrieks.

GABE (cont'd)

Lisa!

Lisa looks to him and collapses.

GABE (cont'd)

No, no. Why...

Gabe hears Jesse howl in the distance. He shudders, slams the bathroom door shut, locks it, and bends down to Lisa's side.

GABE (cont'd)
Lis, what happened? Why would you...

LISA
The mirror.

Lisa raises her arm and points to her reflection in the mirror. Gabe sets her down, grabs the mirror off the vanity, and throws it to the floor. The glass shatters.

ASH (O.S.)
Well done, Gabriel.

Gabe flips around and jumps back.

GABE
Why? Why'd you kill her?

Ash steps in and brushes the dust off his suit jacket.

ASH
I take it you didn't read the disclosure?

Gabe swipes the mirror off the floor and readies it like a rock.

GABE
Yeah? Disclose this...

Gabe chucks it at Ash. He groans, catches it, and points to the text at the bottom of the mirror.

ASH
All customers agree to forfeit their souls upon purchase of any merchandise, gifts included.

GABE
What for?

ASH
It is my job.

GABE
You're job?

Ash flicks out a small wand and flicks it open. In a flash, the wand becomes a scythe, with an impeccably cured blade and ornate jeweled handle.

ASH
I am Death.

GABE

You mean...

Gabe steps back.

GABE (cont'd)

Like the angel?

ASH

No, he's been missing for almost
twenty years now.

Gabe stumbles back into the tub and catches a whiff of
smoke.

GABE

Shit, what did you do, now?

Ash looks towards the door and grumbles.

ASH

I'm not ready, for you yet.

GABE

What?

ASH

Close your eyes.

Gabe glares at the scythe and shudders.

GABE

What so you can impale me with that
thing? No thanks.

ASH

Fine, die with your insecure excuse
of a girlfriend. I don't care.

The smoke seeps under the door frame and into the room. Gabe
winces, takes a deep breath, and shuts his eyes.

Ash smirks, whips out his two magnificent black angel wings
from behind, and grabs Gabe's shirt.

INT. JAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

As Jay and Jessica read in bed, Ash and Gabe flash into the
room. Jessica shrieks, Jay grimaces.

JAY

What the hell?

Jay drops the book, throws on his reading glasses, and gasps.

JAY (cont'd)

Gabe?

Gabe breathes a sigh of relief.

GABE

Dad.

Ash folds his wings up and twirls his scythe back into a wand.

ASH

Now than, I hope to see you both at the grand opening, tomorrow.

Jay jumps out of bed and stomps forward.

JAY

Now wait just a damn --

Ash vanishes in the blink of an eye.

JAY (cont'd)

Dammit.

Jessica takes out her phone and puts it to her ear.

JESSICA

Jay?

JAY

Don't bother.

Jay rushes forward and hugs Gabe.

JAY (cont'd)

What happened?

Gabe weeps in his Dad's arms.

GABE

Lisa, he killed Lisa.

Jessica gasps. Jay grumbles, his eyes glued to the television in front of him, where the NEWS REPORTER, reports the latest tragedy.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)
Firefighters were called to a residence this evening, where they found 25 year old Lisa Saks, dead and gutted on her bathroom floor.

INT. FOOD COURT - DAY

Gabe twirls the straw inside his unfinished lemonade. Shelly, and two other Hearty Harry's employees, LUKE (18) and BRIANA (22) do their best to comfort him.

SHELLY
At least you made it out of there, alive.

LUKE
Yeah, but how? You said --

GABE
I really don't want to talk about this, anymore.

BRIANA
Boy, you gonna finish that lemonade?

Gabe huffs and slides his drink over to Briana. As she claps with glee and sucks it down, Jessica steps forward and clears her throat.

JESSICA
Gabe.

Shelly arises and gives Gabe a hug.

SHELLY
Remember, we're here for you.

Shelly heads back to the restaurant and waves for Luke and Briana to join her. The two groan, arise, pat Gabe on the back, and exit.

GABE
What are you doing here?

JESSICA
May I sit?

Gabe throws his arm out and motions to the chair across from him. Jessica breathes a sigh of relief, sets her purse down on the table, and takes a seat.

JESSICA (cont'd)
I know you've been thinking about your mother lately. And, I just want you to know, that I'm here for you. No matter, whatever it is, I want you too know you can come too me.

GABE
Did Dad tell you too say that too me?

Jessica fidgets in her seat.

JESSICA
He doesn't know that I'm here.

GABE
Oh?

JESSICA
He thinks I'm still at work. At --

GABE
Your modeling career. Whopty doo. You know how jealous Lisa was of you?

Jessica reaches for Gabe's hand. He pulls back, stiffens.

JESSICA
I'm so sorry, for what happened to her.

GABE
Why are you really here?

Jessica snickers.

GABE (cont'd)
Why's that funny?

JESSICA
I really just wanted to check on you.

Jessica checks her watch, groans.

JESSICA (cont'd)
Well, I better go before my manager finds out I've been gone.

GABE
Don't you want to stay for the grand opening?

Jessica gazes around the empty mall, vacant stores, and rotting benches.

JESSICA
Eventually, he's just going to have
to move on.

GABE
You know that will never happen.

Jessica steps forward and plants a kiss on Gabe's cheek.

JESSICA
You know my number.

Gabe wipes her lipstick off his cheek.

GABE
Get out of here.

Jessica chuckles and exits. As she heads into the elevator,
Gabe looks over to the Zumiez store and grumbles.

GABE (cont'd)
Jesse.

INT. MALL - DAY

Gabe strolls down the wing, his eyes dart from empty store
to empty store.

JAY (O.S.)
Pretty eerie, isn't it?

Jay steps forward and grumbles at the label scar above him.

GABE
Yeah. Are all malls like this now?

JAY
Not all of them. We're just one of
the lucky ones, I suppose.

Gabe glances over to Ash's store in the distance, filled to
the brim with customers.

GABE
What was this place really like, back
in the day?

JAY
It was my favorite place to hang out.

Jay walks over to a rusted bench and places his hand on top.

JAY (cont'd)
And pull off some major grinds.

GABE
I can't believe you used to skate.

Jay pats the bench.

JAY
It was nothing serious, just a way to
blow off some steam, from home.

Gabe walks over, stares at the bench.

GABE
Grandpa?

JAY
Poured his heart and soul into this
place. Only to see it crumble, at the
and hands of Eisenhower and his
lapdog.

GABE
Who?

JAY
A man whose name you'll never know.

Jay takes a seat, grumbles.

JAY (cont'd)
Sidney Eisenhower.

Gabe sits down next to him and leans in.

JAY (cont'd)
A media mogul and rich tyrant. He
owned pretty much every mall from
Maine down to Florida.

GABE
He was that big, huh?

JAY
He gobbled up any strip mall and mom
and pop store he could find, like a
goddam turkey on thanksgiving.

GABE
Heh, must've been a fatass.

JAY
No that was Dave. Dave and his thick-rimmed aviators.

Gabe looks back to the empty store, stares inside it, sighs.

GABE
I wish there was something I could do. -- Too save this place.

JAY
Peoples tastes have changed Gabe. Now of days, you can get anything just by the click of a button.

Jay scoops up a fallen brochure off the floor, opens it.

JAY (cont'd)
Gone are the days when you actually wanted to socialize.

Gabe glances back at Ash's store, snarls.

JAY (cont'd)
Gabe?

GABE
Don't worry, Dad.

Gabe arises.

GABE (cont'd)
I won't let this place, shut down.

Jay snickers.

JAY
Your mother would be proud to hear you say that.

In the distance, Ash steps out from his store, bows to Gabe.

GABE
You still want to believe it's an accident?

Jay stares at Gabe, looks over to Ash, huffs.

JAY
Come on.

Jay arises and marches over to Ash. Gabe hurries after him.

ASH
Mr. Kaufmann. For what do I owe, the
surprise visit?

Jay and Gabe stop at Ash's feet.

JAY
Tell me a little bit about your
obsession.

ASH
Very well.

Ash strolls over to a shelf and adjusts a rusted old
cowbell.

ASH (cont'd)
I like to keep a tidy place.

Jay groans and steps forward.

JAY
Victor Gruen. The man who made the
shopping mall.

Ash smirks.

ASH
He was a visionary. Someone who knew
how to bring a community together.

JAY
Is that what you're trying to do?

ASH
I am on a mission from my boss.

GABE
Your boss?

JAY
Someone I know?

ASH
Someone everyone knows.

Ash cackles.

ASH (cont'd)
Pauline did.

Jay stiffens, steps forward, and grabs Ash by the scruff of
his neck.

JAY
What did you just say?

Gabe hurries forward.

GABE
Dad, wait --

Jesse stomps forward and shoves Gabe back.

GABE (cont'd)
Jesse?

Jay gazes into Jesse's glossy white eyes.

JAY
(to Ash)
What did you do to him?

ASH
It takes more than one reaper to run
a farm.

Ash grabs Jay's hand and shoves it off.

ASH (cont'd)
Jesse.

Ash whistles and cocks his head towards the cash register.
Jesse sneers, growls at Gabe, and marches away.

Gabe arises.

GABE
People are looking for him, you know.

ASH
And they'll find nothing.

JAY
What makes you so sure?

Ash snaps his fingers. In an instant, Jesse disappears,
right in front of a large crowd of shoppers, but no one
seems to notice.

ASH
People have such selective memories,
don't they?

JAY
I want you out of this mall.

ASH
I'm afraid that violates the terms of
our agreement.

JAY
Too hell with it. I don't like you.

Ash turns up his nose.

ASH
As do I.

ASH (cont'd)
(to Gabe)
I have a surprise for you.

GABE
Whatever it is, you can --

LISA (O.S.)
Gabe?

Gabe's jaw drops.

GABE
Lisa?

Lisa steps forward, not the least bit surprised to see him.

LISA
Where were you last night?

JAY
(to himself)
Impossible.

GABE
But, the bathroom, you, the mirror...

Gabe takes a minute to breathe.

ASH
(to Jay)
Now, if you don't mind I would like
to have a little private chat with
you.

JAY
About?

Ash cocks his head towards the back room.

JAY (cont'd)
(to Gabe)
Don't go anywhere.

Jay follows Ash into the back room.

LISA
Gabe.

Lisa reaches for him.

GABE
No.

Gabe swats her hand away.

GABE (cont'd)
You can't be real.

LISA
Of course I am! Look!

Lisa punches the wall behind her.

GABE
Lisa!

Lisa shows Gabe her bloodied knuckle.

LISA
See?

Gabe relaxes.

GABE
Alright, well you might not believe
this but --

Jay shrieks.

GABE (cont'd)
Dad?

Gabe and Lisa race towards the back room. As the customers look on with curious eyes, Jesse pops up from seemingly nowhere and blocks the door.

He growls.

GABE (cont'd)
Move, Jesse.

LISA
Gabe? Who is this guy?

GABE

What?

Jesse whips out his claws, digs them into Gabe's shoulder, and hurls him clear across the store.

LISA

Gabe!

The customers flee the store in a panic.

GABE

Shit, where the hell did he get all that strength?

Lisa races over and helps him up.

LISA

We gotta move.

GABE

No, I'm not leaving him.

Gabe steps forward.

GABE (cont'd)

Jesse? Come on man, this isn't you.

Jesse snorts, cocks his head and shows off his fangs, dripping with saliva.

GABE (cont'd)

Think back, man! Us! You, me, Lisa --

Gabe points to the Zumiez store across the wing.

GABE (cont'd)

\$15 an hour minimum hour wage.

Jesse winces, clutches his forehead.

JESSE

Gabe? Shit.

Gabe and Lisa hurry over.

GABE

You alright?

JESSE

I think so --

Jesse raises his hand and spots his very long claws.

JESSE (cont'd)
What, what the fuck is this?

ASH (O.S.)
Oh darn, you woke up.

Ash steps into the store.

ASH
No matter. You are still mine.

JESSE
What the hell are you talking about?

The door to the back room creaks open.

GABE
Dad?

Jay places his pale green hand against the door and groans.

GABE (cont'd)
Da -- dad?

Lisa gasps and pulls Gabe back.

LISA
I don't think that's your dad.

ASH (O.S.)
Oh, he is.

Ash takes out a small glowing white orb and twirls it around in his palm with his fingers.

ASH
Just missing something very important.

GABE
Is, is that --

Jay lurches out of the back room, his skin pale green and decrepit, eyes bright white.

JESSE
Get back.

Jesse puts himself in front of his friends and growls.

GABE
Wait, you can't!

JESSE
Relax, I won't aim for any vital
areas.

Jay staggers forward.

JESSE (cont'd)
(to Gabe and Lisa)
Go!

Gabe takes Lisa's hand. As the two hurry away, Ash stops them near the exit and cackles.

ASH
It's funny.

Ash looks up at the mall.

ASH (cont'd)
That this is what the soul
represents.

GABE
Soul?

ASH
Greed, want. That compulsive need to
consume.

Gabe tries to leave, but Ash blocks his path. Behind them, Jesse swipes at Jay's arms with his claws, but he barely makes a dent.

JESSE
Dammit.

GABE
Please, just let us go.

ASH
Go? Where?

Ash steps aside and looks left.

ASH (cont'd)
This place is now your tomb.

Gabe and Lisa step out, look left, and grimace.

GABE
No fucking way.

Down the corridor, a horde of customers stagger forward, eyes bright white, and skin sagging; pure zombies in the flesh.

LISA
Are those zombies?

ASH
They are what humanity really is.
Insignificant gluttons with an
endless desire to feed.

GABE
I guess none of them read the
disclosure?

Ash glares both Gabe and Lisa down and smirks.

ASH
I'll be rooting for you.

Ash waves goodbye and strolls away.

LISA
Rooting for us?

GABE
(to Ash)
What is this, a game to you?

ASH (O.S.)
My own personal Resident Evil.

As Ash disappears down a corridor, Jesse staggers out of the store, out of breath.

GABE
Jesse?

Gabe and Lisa rush to his aide.

JESSE
I'm alright.

GABE
My dad?

Jesse peers over his shoulder.

JESSE
Sleeping.

Jay lays on the floor, fast asleep, with a bright red bruise on his head.

JESSE (cont'd)
For now.

JESSE (cont'd)
(to Lisa)
Lisa?

LISA
Why are you looking at me, like that?

JESSE
(whispers to Gabe)
What's wrong with her, bro?

A deafening roar shakes the mall.

GABE
We'll deal with that later.

Gabe snickers at Jesse's claws.

GABE (cont'd)
Where gonna need your help, again.

Jesse looks towards the swarm of zombies in front of them and chuckles.

JESSE
You know, this reminds me of a video game I once played.

LISA
The one with that camera guy trapped in a mall?

JESSE
Uh huh. Not the sequel though.

GABE
The sequels suck.

Jesse takes a deep breath, cracks his neck, and steps forward.

JESSE
Alright, meatheads.

Jesse snarls and takes a step back.

JESSE (cont'd)
Let's fucking go!

Jesse leaps forward and into the crowd. As he slices and dices his way through, Lisa squeezes Gabe's hand.

LISA
Why can't I remember him?

Gabe flips her around and kisses her.

GABE
He's the tall guy who works in the
skate shop.

LISA
Ain't that you?

Gabe groans and pulls Lisa forward.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Jessica steps out of the store, coffee in hand, and checks her message to Jay and Gabe on her phone, all unanswered. She shudders, hurries to her car, and steps in.

INT. JESSICA'S CAR - DAY (PARKED)

Jessica puts on her seatbelt and turns key, but it won't start. She tries again, and again.

JESSICA
Come on.

She hears a knock at the window, rolls it down.

JESSICA (cont'd)
Yes?

Pauline sticks her head in.

PAULINE
You look like you could use some
help.

JESSICA
I need to get the mall.

Pauline cocks her head left.

PAULINE
Hop in.

Pauline walks away. As she gets inside her shiny new 98' Ford Mustang, Jessica spots the large dent on the trunk. She gets out of her car and walks over.

JESSICA
That's quite a dent.

Jessica gets in.

PAULINE
I know.

Pauline smirks, puts on her seatbelt and speeds forward.

INT. FOOD COURT - DAY

Gabe and Lisa enter the food court where they find Shelly, Luke, and Briana fighting off a wave of zombies with a broom, fryer basket, and trash can, in front of their restaurant.

GABE
Shelly?

Shelly impales one of the zombies with the broom and chuckles.

SHELLY
All the exits are locked.

The zombie falls to the floor and dies.

LISA
All of them?

LUKE
I knew it. I knew I shouldn't have skipped out on that McDonald's interview.

BRIANA
Oh, quit your whining, Luke!

Briana decapitates a zombie with the can and relaxes.

BRIANA (cont'd)
This is the most action, you'll ever see in your life.

GABE
Where's everyone else?

SHELLY
You mean --

A zombie lurches for Shelly. She dodges left and smacks the back of it with her broom. The creature falls forward and right into the boiling fryer vat in front of it.

SHELLY (cont'd)
The one's not already dead?

A zombie staggers towards the couple.

LISA
Gabe!

Gabe grimaces, picks up a chair and hits it straight to the floor.

GABE
Well?

Luke cowers behind the counter, batting away the zombies with his fryer basket like a child.

LUKE
I saw a few trapped in some of the stores on the lower level.

Gabe takes a deep breath and hurries into the restaurant's kitchen.

GABE
Perfect.

LISA
Gabe?

Gabe heads over to a drawer, cracks it open, and pulls out two pistols and a few rounds of ammo.

BRIANA
Where the hell did you find that?

GABE
I used to work here, fun fact.

Gabe tosses Lisa the second pistol and loads his.

GABE (cont'd)
It was to stop us from getting robbed.

Shelly kicks away another zombie and huffs.

SHELLY
Well, wish I knew about that, earlier!

Lisa loads her gun and dashes into the kitchen.

LISA
What do you think you're doing?

GABE
Saving the mall? What does it look like?

Gabe pecks Lisa on the cheek, takes aim at a zombie behind Briana and fires. The creature falls to the floor and dies.

GABE (cont'd)
Now, are you with me?

Lisa takes a deep breath. Gabe takes that as a yes, grabs her hand and pulls her forward.

EXT. MALL - DAY

Pauline pulls up to the mall entrance in her car and stops. Inside the car, Jessica undoes her seatbelt.

JESSICA
I can't thank you enough.

PAULINE
I wouldn't go in there.

JESSICA
Why?

Pauline glares inside the mall. Jessica follows her gaze and grimaces at Jesse, clawing and biting his way through the horde of unending shoppers.

JESSICA (cont'd)
Jesse? Oh my god.

PAULINE (O.S.)
Open the trunk.

Jessica peers towards the trunk, walks over, and opens it. She gasps, pulls out a flamethrower, grimaces.

JESSICA
What --

PAULINE (O.S.)
A flamethrower.

Pauline winks.

PAULINE

Tell Gabe and Jay that I love them.

Pauline speeds off.

JESSICA

Wait!

The car drives right into a cloud of fog and disappears inside. Jessica re-examines the flamethrower.

JESSICA (cont'd)

Gabe.

A rumble of thunder fills the sky.

JESSICA (cont'd)

OK.

INT. MALL - DAY

Jessica shatters the glass door with the flamethrower and steps in. Above her, Lisa and Gabe stop shooting, look down and gasp.

GABE

Jessica?

Down below, the zombies turn their attention away from Jesse and lunge toward Jessica.

JESSE

A flamethrower?

Jessica smirks and pumps her gun.

JESSICA

Sorry guys, it's closing time.

Jessica shrieks, takes aim at the zombies, and fires away. She blazes through the zombies like butter, creature after creature, incinerating each and every one of them that cross her path.

JESSE

That's so epic.

Ash steps out from a kiosk behind Jesse and whips out a leash. Lisa and Gabe hurry down the escalator.

GABE

Jesse!

JESSE
Dude! Look --

Ash lassos in Jesse and reels him in.

JESSE (cont'd)
Let me go!

ASH
No.

Ash jabs his scythe into Jesse's chest.

JESSE
Now, howl.

Jesse does, very loudly. His scream shatters the nearby store windows and glass elevator.

LISA
Oh my god.

GABE
Bro!

Jesse's eye turn bright white. He sneers at his former friend, grabs the scythe, and rips it right out of his chest.

JESSICA
Gabe!

Gabe and Lisa take aim at Jesse.

GABE
Don't make me do this, man!

ASH
He can't hear you, now.

Gabe glances over to an abandoned kiosk, looks to Lisa, cocks his head towards it.

GABE
(to Jesse)
Wake up!

Jesse snarls, drops to all fours, and leaps forward. As he lunges for Gabe's neck, Lisa rolls over to the kiosk and fires at Ash.

The bullet hits him in the chest.

ASH
Tch, damn.

Jesse pins Gabe to the floor and chuckles.

GABE
Come on bro, it's me.

Ash staggers towards a bench and falls into it.

ASH
(to Lisa)
I should've kept you dead.

LISA
Too bad.

Lisa fires again, straight at his forehead; a clean shot.

ASH
Damn this body.

Lisa steps forward, her hands trembling over the pistol.

LISA
What the hell are you talking about?

Back near the entrance, Gabe struggles to keep Jesse off him.

GABE
Uh, Lisa? Jessica?

Jessica scorches another zombie with the thrower, hurries over, and takes aim at Jesse's back.

JESSICA
I'm sorry.

Jessica fires. The flames set his shirt and skin ablaze.

Gabe scrambles to his feet and rushes to Jessica's side.

GABE
(weeps)

JESSICA
Gabe.

Jessica hugs Gabe.

ASH (O.S.)
Enough of this!

Ash forces himself up, his body twitching, eyes pitch black, and suit covered in blood.

ASH
I have a mission to complete.

Lisa fires at Ash's foot.

ASH (cont'd)
Son of a --

LISA
Wow, I'm pretty good. Aren't I?

JESSICA
Stupendous.

Ash jerks his head left, glares at Lisa's gun, and extends his hand.

The gun vibrates in Lisa's hands.

LISA
What?

It flies out, and into Ash's palm.

ASH
Now than.

Ash strolls over to Jesse, snatches his scythe back, and kicks the crying pup to the floor.

ASH (cont'd)
Useless.

Lisa hurries over to Gabe's side. He and Jessica take aim at Ash.

GABE
Sorry Jack, you're outmatched.

ASH
Jack?

LISA
Really? No one's ever told you?

Ash takes a deep breath, leaps into the air, hovers over the trio.

ASH
Memento Mori.

BRIANA (O.S.)

Gabe!

Behind Ash, three zombies pull Luke out from the restaurant.

GABE

(to Jessica)

Go, I'll stop him.

Jessica kisses him goodbye, hugs Lisa and dashes up the escalator.

ASH

You have no chance of winning.

Jesse staggers to his feet. Lisa rushes to his side and helps him up.

JESSE

Am I cool now?

GABE

(to Ash)

What did you do Lisa?

ASH

I never said bringing her back from the dead was an easy process.

Lisa helps Jesse to his feet.

JESSE

(to Ash)

I'm going to do so many bad things to you.

Ash glares at Jesse's collar.

ASH

I still own you, don't forget that.

Jesse tugs and scratches at the collar.

JESSE

Shit, I can't get it off!

Ash takes aim at Gabe and fires with his pistol. He dodges just in the nick of time and ducks into an empty store.

LISA

Gabe!

INT. ASH'S STORE - DAY

Jay groans and arises. He hears the shrieks of the mall patrons from outside and staggers forward.

INT. MALL - DAY

Jay trudges down the corridor, his feet tripping over dead bodies, dismembered, scorched, shot bodies. He hears a WOMAN scream.

Inside the store next to him, Connie swats at a group of zombies reaching for her over the counter.

Jay picks up an umbrella off the floor and marches forward.

JAY

Hey!

Two of the zombies flip around and moan. As they hobble toward him, Jay roars, sprints forward, and jams the tip of the umbrella through their necks.

CONNIE

Jay.

Jay opens the umbrella, kicks a third zombie to the floor and grab's Connie's hand.

JAY

You alright.

CONNIE

Yeah, must be Black Friday.

Jay pulls Connie out of the store.

INT. MALL - DAY

Ash waltzes into the store, kicks away a shopping bag and searches for Gabe.

ASH

What a waste of good architecture.

Gabe crawls from one shelf to the next.

ASH (cont'd)

(whistles)

Jesse.

Jesse trudges in, with Lisa by his side.

JESSE

What?

ASH

Use your nose.

JESSE

You must got some serious wax in your ears, if you think I'm going too --

Ash ropes Jesse in and slaps him across the face.

ASH

Do it!

Jesse spits in Ash's face, cracks his neck and prowls around.

ASH (cont'd)

(to Lisa)

And you...

Ash sics a pack of zombies onto Lisa.

ASH (cont'd)

I'll see you back in hell.

As the zombies reach for her, Lisa picks up a dismembered mannequin arm off the floor, whacks it at the creatures.

LISA

Gabe!

INT, FOOD COURT - CONTINUOUS

Above the store, Jessica's flamethrower runs out of juice.

JESSICA

Shit.

BRIANA

What, you run out?

Jessica holds the flamethrower like a bat and swings away. She plows through the zombies filling the area, reaches Luke, and takes his hand.

LUKE

Thanks.

JESSICA

Exit's downstairs.

As Luke, Shelly, and Briana race down the escalator, more zombies claw their way towards Jessica. She backs up, into the elevator and presses the down button.

INT. MALL - CONTINUOUS

Jay, Connie, JIM (30s), and XAVIER (40s) rush down the corridor.

XAVIER
That's it, I quit.

JIM
Anyone got a TV handy?

Connie whips out a pen.

CONNIE
I've got a pen?

JIM
Nice, Connie, that ought to stop them.

The group reach the atrium and spot the exit.

XAVIER
Thank god.

Xavier sprints forward.

JAY
Xavier, wait!

AS Xavier flips around, a zombie MAINTENANCE MAN steps out from behind a kiosk.

XAVIER
What? I ain't waiting --

The maintenance man grabs Xavier's head, twists it off and sinks his jaws into his flesh.

Connie loses her balance.

CONNIE
Lord.

Jay helps her too her feet.

JAY
We just have to find another way around.

Jay hears the elevator descend. He looks towards it and gasps at Jessica, all blood-soaked inside.

JAY (cont'd)
Jessica?

Jay rushes forward.

JIM
Jay, wait! Dammit.

A group of zombies approach the two from behind. Jim winces, takes Connie's pen, and clicks it open.

CONNIE
Oh, you're incredible.

INT. MALL - DAY

Jay pulls Jessica out of the elevator and hugs her tight.

JAY
What the hell are you doing here?

JESSICA
You and Gabe didn't answer my calls.

Lisa shrieks.

EXT. MALL - CONTINUOUS

Lisa rushes into the parking lot, up to her car, and enters.

LISA
Come on, come on.

Lisa turns on the engine, glares at the zombies advancing towards her, and puts the car in drive.

LISA (cont'd)
Sorry, Gabe.

INT. MALL - DAY

Ash rips a store advertisement off the wall.

ASH
75 percent off, huh?

JESSE
Nothing wrong with a good sale.

ASH
That's just it though!

Ash turns his attention towards a mannequin.

ASH (cont'd)
They never end.

Ash tears it in half with his scythe.

ASH (cont'd)
America in a nutshell, don't you
think?

JESSE
You're insane.

Ash snarls, tosses the mannequin aside, and tosses a rack of clothes to the floor.

ASH
(to Gabe)
Where are you?

Jesse looks over to Gabe, hidden behind a mirror and winks.

JESSE
So, I heard you really like this
Victor guy, huh?

ASH
He was a legend before his time.

Ash presses his hand against the neon lights lining the walls.

ASH (cont'd)
An inspiration for me to complete my
work.

JESSE
From who? The devil?

ASH
Yes. You'll meet him soon enough.

Ash glares at Jesse, tosses the pistol aside, and marches forward.

Jesse eyes the scythe in Ash's hand and backs into the wall.

JESSE
Do they have jobs down there?

Lisa and her convertible crash through the mall, into the store, and right into Ash. He soars through the air, collides with the wall behind the register, and slumps to the floor.

JESSE (cont'd)

Sick!

Gabe steps out from behind the mirror and rushes forward.

GABE

That was incredible!

LISA

Thanks. Sorry though about the --

JAY (O.S.)

It's alright.

Jay and Jessica step in, hands locked.

JAY

This mall could use a renovation.

GABE

But, I thought that he...

The group snickers.

ASH (O.S.)

No!

Ash arises from the pile of rubble and wags his finger at Jesse.

ASH

You are going to spend the rest of your days mining in the pits of Babylon.

Gabe.

ASH (cont'd)

You are now on my naughty list. All of you!

JAY

Sorry Mr. Clause, but, I'm afraid I will have to terminate our agreement.

Ash whips out the snow globe of the Brookfield Mall.

ASH

You think you've won?

Ash chucks the snow globe to the floor and crushes it with his foot.

GABE
Oh, shit.

JESSICA
What? It's just a snow globe.

ASH
Just a snow globe, she says.

Ash cackles, waves goodbye, and steps back into the darkness.

JESSE
Is, is that it?

LISA
You've still got those fangs?

Jesse checks his teeth.

JESSE
Well, at least now I can chomp down a mean rib-eye.

The mall wobbles back and forth.

JESSICA
Jay?

CONNIE (O.S.)
Jay!

The group race into the atrium.

INT. MALL - CONTINUOUS

The group dodges a falling skylight and looks up.

LISA
Oh, no.

JAY
Connie!

Jay races over to Connie and pulls her out from within a pile of dead zombies.

JAY (cont'd)
How did you --

GABE
Shit, don't you ever quit?

Ash lights a cigarette on top of his Duesenberg and blows.

ASH
If I did that, you'd all be dead.
Can't you imagine the carnage?

LISA
Beats having to listen to you anyway.

ASH
I'm hurt. Anyway, my mission is
complete.

JESSE
Wait, so --

GABE
You're not going to kill us?

ASH
I already did. Don't you remember?

Gabe freezes, grimaces.

---BEGIN FLASHBACK---

As Gabe ducks for cover behind one of the store displays,
Ash's bullet hits him straight in the head.

ASH (V.O)
People have such selective memories.

INT. ASH'S STORE - DAY

Jesse tears Jay's face to shreds with his claws.

ASH (V.O)
So easily forgotten.

INT. LISA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Mirror Lisa squeezes her stomach tightly. It explodes,
sending Lisa's real organs and guts all over the tile
floors.

GABE (V.O.)
You mean...

INT. FOOD COURT - DAY

As Jessica presses the down button, the zombies surround her and grab onto her clothes. She tries to fight them off, but she's too weak.

ASH (V.O)
I'm surprised none of you picked up
on the cues.

The elevator doors open.

Jessica falls in, kicks away the zombies with her feet. They tear both her legs off and reach for her head. As their hands touch her chin, the elevator doors slam shut around Jessica's waist, severing her in two.

---END FLASHBACK---

Gabe reaches above his forehead and touches the small hole behind his hair.

GABE
How?

ASH
It's all a matter of perception.

Ash whips out a remote control from his pocket.

ASH (cont'd)
Would you like to watch the replay?

LISA
That would explain why I can't
remember...

ASH
Oh no, that really was an error on my
part.

Ash points the remote control at Lisa and presses the red button. In a flash, she disintegrates into a pile of ashes.

GABE
No!

Gabe drops to his knees and weeps.

ASH
She was better off dead, especially
with those hips.

Gabe clenches his fists and grits his teeth.

GABE
I'll kill you.

JESSE
Don't worry.

Jesse nudges Gabe aside, cracks his knuckles and bares his fangs.

Ash points his finger to the ground. Like a dog, Jesse drops to all fours and growls.

JESSE (cont'd)
Dammit.

JESSICA
So, that's it. We're all dead?

ASH
All but one.

Ash jumps off his car, strolls over to Jesse and lifts up his chin.

ASH (cont'd)
I'm going to give you two options.

JESSE
OK.

Connie glares back to the sinkhole, looks down at the hole in her stomach.

CONNIE
Mercy.

Connie faints. As she hits the ground, she vanishes into a pile of ash.

JAY
Shit.

ASH
(to Jesse)
You can either say goodbye to your friends and I release you from my captivity.

Gabe tries to piece together Lisa's ashes. Jay and Jessica try to help.

ASH (cont'd)
Or, you come with me back to hell,
and, I'll let Gabe live.

GABE
What's the point, she's gone.

JESSE
Bring back everyone else, and you've
got a deal.

Ash grabs hold of Jesse's head.

ASH
You think I'm some kind of God?

Ash throws it aside.

ASH (cont'd)
I don't have that much power.

JESSE
Well than, how many can you do?

Ash narrows his eyes to Gabe and Jay.

ASH
Two, and two only.

JESSE
Deal.

Gabe arises.

GABE
Think about this, man.

JESSE
No, I'm done thinking.

Jesse arises, lifts up his jeans, and points to the scab on his leg.

JESSE (cont'd)
You want to know why was I late, that
one night?

---BEGIN FLASHBACK---

Jesse looks down at the giant half pipe below him, his feet planted on his gifted skateboard.

JESSE (V.O.)
I hadn't planned on killing myself,
but --

Jesse narrows his eyes towards the other side of the pipe, kicks forward. He flies down the half pipe and into the air.

JESSE
 Something about that night, just felt
 right.

Jesse loses his balance, falls off the board, hits the half
 pipe knee first.

---END FLASHBACK---

Jesse rolls down his pants leg.

JESSE (cont'd)
 Let's be real Gabe, you know what
 would've happened too me eventually.

Jesse tosses Gabe the pill bottle. He takes it, trudges
 forward, and gives Jesse a final goodbye hug.

GABE
 Send me some pics, alright?

JESSE
 Always.

Jesse and Gabe fist bump.

GABE
 Dad?

Jay and Jessica glare at Lisa's ashes, take each others
 hands, and kiss.

JAY
 I'm ready, if you're ready.

JESSICA
 Always been.

Jessica turns to Ash.

JESSICA (cont'd)
 There's just one thing I have to
 know.

Ash snickers.

ASH
 Oh, don't worry. That wasn't me.

GABE
 What? What's he talking about
 Jessica?

Jessica stares at Gabe's pendant.

JESSICA
You're as brave as your mother.

Gabe lifts up his pendant, examines it.

GABE
So, I guess I'll never really know.

As he shows it too Jesse, Jay and Jessica take each others hands and trudge up to Ash.

JAY
We're ready.

ASH
Before you go, one thing.

JAY
Name it.

ASH
Your father knew how to run a business.

Jay narrows his eyes at Ash, stares at the wrinkles underneath his eyelids, gasps.

JESSICA
Jay?

JAY
No way.

ASH
It's been a pleasure.

With the touch of his hand, Jay and Jessica disintegrate into ash. A gentle wind carries them into the breeze, over the mall, and up to the horizon.

LISA (O.S.)
Gabe?

Gabe flips around, breathes a sigh of relief, hugs Lisa.

LISA
What happened? Where --

Lisa glances over at the mall, grimaces.

LISA (cont'd)
What did I miss?

JESSE (O.S.)
A whole lot.

Jesse steps forward, shows off his fangs.

LISA
Cute costume, Jesse.

JESSE
No seriously, touch em.

LISA
Eww, like no?

JESSE
Come on.

LISA
Ugh, fine.

Lisa touches the tips of Jesse's fangs.

LISA (cont'd)
Holy shit. You're a --

JESSE
Hellhound. Pretty cool, huh?

GABE
Not if you have to spend an eternity
in hell.

LISA
What? No, there must be --

Ash glares at his pocket watch.

ASH
Tick tock, times up.

Ash snaps it shut and jumps off his car. He marches over to Jesse and grabs his collar.

ASH (cont'd)
Time to go meet your new master.

Jesse waves goodbye to his friends.

JESSE
(to Ash)
I just have to ask, why me?

ASH
Heaven doesn't take too kindly to
suicide.

Ash and Jesse vanish into a cloud of dust. Lisa and Gabe
look back at the sinkhole.

LISA
So, I guess we should be lucky, huh?

Gabe takes her hand, looks left, smirks.

GABE
Yeah. Now, I've got a mall to plan.

Gabe and Lisa share a tender kiss. As they walk away,
Pauline and Marcus look on from inside Pauline's ghostly
convertible.

INT. JAY'S OFFICE - DAY

As Marine types into her keyboard, a hand slaps a pack of
bubble gum onto her desk.

KATHY (O.S.)
You're in my seat.

Marnie stops typing and lowers her glasses.

MARNIE
And, you are?

KATHY
You're new guardian angel.

Kathy marches behind the desk and pulls Marnie's chair
aside.

KATHY (cont'd)
Now, move.

Kathy types into the keyboard.

MARNIE
What do you think you're doing?

KATHY
Covering the tracks.

Kathy drags all of Marnie's research on Ash into the trash
can. She then deletes the trash can, into another trash can,
aptly named TRASH CAN.

MARNIE
My research...

KATHY
Mr. Kaufmann won't be needing that
anymore.

MARNIE
But...

KATHY
Relax, sweetie.

Kathy pinches her cheek.

KATHY (cont'd)
You're fired.

Kathy walks away, down the hall, and around a corner. Marnie
arises, taps at Jay's door.

MARNIE
Jay?

END