

SCRIPT TITLE

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FADE IN:

EXT. FIREPIT - NIGHT - 1918

Delicate female hands reach down to scoop still smouldering ash from a firepit and dump them into an old metal pail.

Charred human bones can be seen within the ash as the woman dumps more and more ash into the pail.

The young female, KATE, 16, rises and picks up the pail.

As she turns to walk away, blood can be seen covering the lower part of the simple shift she is wearing.

She mutters to herself as she walks away into the night.

KATE

I'll git you back Percy, shuren I will.

EXT. MIDWESTERN COLLEGE TOWN -PRESENT DAY - DAY

It is early in the Spring semester. Mounds of greyish black old snow line the streets in a Midwestern college town. The town has grown over the 100 years or so that the University has been around. In the past century the university has grown as well.

Students in winter garb crisscross the quadrangle.

The overcast sky lends a gloomy wintry day look to the scene.

A slight wind picks up hearty autumn leaves left over from the winter.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A small laboratory classroom.

The students sit at tall chairs around the laboratory counters.

Wooden and glass cabinets line the walls behind the students. The cabinets contain artifacts relating to death and various sorts of burial containers, as well as books pertaining to death.

DR. JEFFREY MONTAGUE, a forty-five year old robust man, is teaching a course on Thanatology.

Montague dresses for the winter weather in Corduroy and Tweed.

The class consists of MICHAEL TIMMONS , a 25 year old man; TABITHA BURROWS ,27, thin, pale, blonde with black roots showing, dressed in black; and several other students.

Tabitha and Michael were lovers at one time but stayed friends when the passion cooled.

MONTAGUE

Humans have had ritual burial for over 70,000 years. Bodies were positioned in a fetal manner, whether that indicates a sense in our ancestors of a new birth in an afterlife, or for economy of space in digging shallow graves, the debate is lively. But burial has not been the only means of disposing of remains. Mummification was practiced not only by ancient Egyptians. Inca and Canary Islanders mummified their dead.

EXT. 404 INTERNET BAR - NIGHT

Patches of snow set in small mounds outside the entrance to a downtown college bar.

INT. 404 INTERNET BAR - NIGHT

An Internet bar at night. Two large screen monitors above the bar show two competitions going on in the other room; one a football game and one a car chase. Several patrons are watching the competitions on the several screens throughout the bar.

Several other patrons are hunched over their laptops at their tables.

A few booths have just people talking.

RAY, mid 30's, black, casually dressed, graduate law student, is sitting in a booth with his gay lover,

QUINN, 41, white, casually dressed, graduate student in Hospitality.

WENDY, 43, tall, gregarious, black female, Journalism student, has a small digital camera set up on a mini-tripod on the table next to her oversized purse.

She is looking over the glasses perched on the bridge of her nose as she takes notes on a steno pad.

She pivots the camera on to Quinn.

QUINN

Since you're asking I'm telling.

Ray snickers at the reference.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)

I was a Gunnery Sergeant going on 20 years. When Ray and I met...I couldn't live a lie...I knew we were meant to be together.

Ray squeezes Quinn's hand.

Quinn starts to tear up.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Being gay is natural, genetic. I'd known since I was a kid. When I entered the military, to please my dad, career military, I knew I couldn't express my...I couldn't be myself, but that didn't matter...until I met Ray.

RAY (O.C.)

I trained under Q.

Wendy swings the camera to Ray.

WENDY (O.C.)

Say that last part again.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DEN - NIGHT

The usual accumulation of effects that a life lived just off campus for 5 years can bring sets in piles: a TV, game controllers, pile of clothes in one corner.

Two bookcases hold books as well as hats, pens, and various toys collected over the years. Books on Engineering and Medicine are interspersed with Myth, Occult, and Death.

An overstuffed love seat sets in the middle of the den.

A bicycle leans up against a radiator.

The room is dingy; curtains drawn all the time are dusty. There are only two working lamps in the room.

MICHAEL is watching the bidding, dejectedly.

The desk lamp is on.

On a shelf above his desk sets an Egyptian statue of a worker in the afterlife, death mask of Tabitha, Victorian Hair Wreath and a small metal cremains jar.

On the computer screen of his laptop, a screen announces the current bid on U-Bid for an item called: Trapped Ghost.

The screen on his computer shows bidding at \$2000.00.

INT. 404 INTERNET BAR - LATER

Wendy has her camera trained on Ray.

RAY

All I'm saying is the military can be a good career. Q and I are getting our education essentially for free.

WENDY

You two...what's p.c. now days?

QUINN

Gays, fags, queers, queens. Oh God! Don't say I'm a queen.

Quinn bulks up then relaxes into a flaming queen pose.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)

20 years in the marines...and I'm a queen.

He pats Wendy on the hand.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Don't worry. You can't insult a leatherneck. Why do you want to interview a couple of fags, dear? Being gay is not news anymore.

He considers a moment.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Maybe gay baseball players on
steroids? That would be news.

Wendy turns off the camera as

TERRY, late 30's, anesthesiologist, wearing scrubs, comes to
the booth.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tabitha walks past construction plastic taped against the
wall. Through the plastic one sees a door to another
apartment.

She walks up to Michael's door and simply opens it.

INT. 404 INTERNET BAR - NIGHT

Several bottles of beer set in front of the four people in
the booth.

WENDY
(to Terry)
Late night?

TERRY
Couple of ER surgeries came up.
Always good for the checkbook.

Terry takes a pull from his beer.

TERRY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Another interview?

Ray looks at his cell phone.

RAY
I wonder how the bidding is going?

QUINN
Is it over, I wonder if he got it?

Wendy is putting her camera in her purse.

WENDY
Got what? Who?

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DEN - NIGHT

Michael tenderly picks up the small metal cremains jar from the shelf above his desk.

Tabitha pokes her head in.

TABITHA
How's the bidding? I mean, I
didn't disturb you, you got your
cat in your hand, his ashes...

Tabitha steps on a cat toy as soon as she comes in.

TABITHA (CONT'D) (CONTD)
I can help you pick up his toys.

MICHAEL
I'll get around to it.

He places the cremains jar on the shelf.

Tabitha sits in an overstuffed love seat that sets in the middle of the den.

TABITHA
I'm sorry. I just wanted to know
about the bidding.

MICHAEL
(dejectedly)
Two-thousand seventy-five dollars.
I should just give up.

Tabitha walks over to the desk.

She looks at Michael's collection of memento mori.

TABITHA
"Better is a bird in the hand than
twere in the Wood?"

MICHAEL
Something like that.

TABITHA
You don't have anymore money?

MICHAEL
I borrowed from everybody I know,
and I'll be behind on my rent if
the Museum doesn't give me more
hours.

INT. 404 INTERNET BAR - LATER

Several more bottles of beer are on the table.

WENDY

A real live ghost...trapped? In a jar or what?

TERRY

I think it would be a dead ghost...but in a jar? Or a box?

QUINN

I don't know what it is? Michael wasn't very clear.

TERRY

How...no, why would this guy want a ghost?

RAY

Something happened...with his Dad dying. Tabs knows all about it. He switched his major from Engineering to...What did he call it?

QUINN

Thanatology --He studies death. He told me his Thesis topic: Ritual death containers, like coffins or urns. This thing would be right up his alley, I guess.

TERRY

Processional for a dead guy. Wouldn't it be right up his processional? Catholic School education. Altar boy.

QUINN

And you're not gay?

TERRY

Not gay, but I'm drunk and I want to meet this guy. You think he's still up.

Ray looks at his cell phone.

RAY

The bidding is still going on if I got the time correct.

WENDY

Let's go.

Wendy grabs her purse.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DEN - NIGHT

Michael is on his cell phone with his mother.

MICHAEL

I know...dad died so I can be here.
I just need some money from the
trust...to buy something for
school...it's something I've got to
do...I'm not sorry I left
Engineering. I just need
answers...

(getting Angry)

Fine...love you too.

Michael closes his cell phone.

TABITHA

That didn't go so well. I mean,
I...I just want you to get what you
want, I always have, I mean, you
know, back when...

Michael takes her hand and for a moment his expression softens.

MICHAEL

It's okay.

A KNOCK at door interrupts their tender moment.

The door opens. Ray and Quinn come in followed by Wendy and Terry.

Terry, drunk, goes right up to shake Michael's hand.

Michael does not shake his hand.

TERRY

I think what you're doing is so
cool.

Michael starts to get up from his desk chair then notices the urn with his cat's ashes is still in his lap. He carefully and sorrowfully replaces the urn on the shelf above his desk.

MICHAEL
Who are you?

Quinn interrupts.

QUINN
Uh...Michael, meet Terry, Wendy's friend.

Tabitha gets up and goes over to Wendy.

TABITHA
I know Ray and Quinn, so you must be Wendy.

WENDY
Sure am, sug. And I'm fascinated by this guy.
(walking over to Michael)

Wendy looks at his laptop screen.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Looks like you're behind in the bidding.

Tabitha goes over to Ray.

TABITHA
(sotto voice)
Do you know these people? I mean, you trust them, or know them.

Ray starts to speak.

RAY
We were at the bar to be inter...

WENDY
Rested so much in what you are doing, getting a real live dead ghost. Can I watch the bidding?

Michael sits down.

MICHAEL
Not much to see. I lost it anyway. Can't afford it.

Wendy rummages around in her purse, pulls out a checkbook and goes over to Michael's desk. She finds a pen and writes out a check.

She tears out the check and hands it to Michael.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Five hundred dollars? Are you sure?

WENDY
Sure as shit, sweetie. I want you
to win this thing here.

Wendy taps the computer screen with Michael's pen, then puts
it in her purse.

Tabitha exchanges glances with Ray and Quinn who both shrug.

Michael moves his chair back to his desk and types on his
laptop.

Wendy stares at the screen, than at Michael.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Well, I didn't expect you to put
the whole amount in one bid! Jeez,
this dead guy must mean a hell of a
lot to you.

Michael stares at the screen and smiles.

MICHAEL
Bidding ended.

Everyone is still.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (CONTD)
I got it!

Tabitha claps.

Ray shakes his head.

RAY
You said this thing comes from
somewhere in the Ozarks? I know the
Ozarks. Congratulations. You just
bought yourself a Mason jar with
cigarette ashes in it.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The Master's Class in Thanatology is winding down.

MONTAGUE

Every culture we have studied disposes of their dead after some type of ritual or ceremony, placing their dead in a sacred space, be it under the house or in a designated common area. We remember our dead, whether by burying them with artifacts from their life or using them to create a memorial the living revere. That can be sacred, relics of saints, political, tomb of the unknown or personal, hair of the deceased woven into a wreath and kept by the family. All cultures studied have a ritual waiting period before remains are disposed of. This indubitably was due to the lack of a foolproof means of determining true death. Premature internment meant certain death, so a waiting period of 3 to 7 days was determined appropriate. Once the body began to smell bad, it was time for the ceremony.

Several students snicker.

The students get up to depart, Michael among them.

MONTAGUE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Mr. Timmons, I'd like to see you in my office.

INT. RAY AND QUINN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The room is Spartan but well appointed.

Wendy sits primly on the sofa, the only plush and extravagant piece of furniture in the room. Her purse is in her lap.

WENDY

Your friends are not the chatty type.

RAY

Not to strangers.

WENDY

I hope to remedy that.

She takes a steno pad and pen from her purse.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

You just give me some inside dope on Mike or Tabs and I can do the rest.

RAY

You want me to collude to invasion of privacy for some Journalism class crap assignment? Well, I refuse.

WENDY

Just makes my job more fun. Oh, and don't tell Q about this chat, 'k, sug?

INT. OFFICE OF JEFFREY MONTAGUE - DAY

Montague's office is in an 1940's campus building.

Montague has done some to furnish the office in a forty's style.

Michael is sitting in one of the three wing-back chairs.

Montague's desk, however, is state of the art modern computer desk with dual monitors. Montague sets in the wing-back chair behind his desk.

A laptop sets in front of Montague.

MONTAGUE

I'm troubled by the breathe of your thesis. I do not need a survey of burial customs. I would prefer that you concentrate on a specific era or type of internment vessel.

Michael shifts uneasily.

MICHAEL

I may have acquired an Ozarks funerary vessel I'd like to study.

MONTAGUE

You may have? Well, if you acquire such an item, I would concentrate your thesis on Ozark beliefs, superstitions, really, about internment containers, or Death customs. Did you deal with Matheson's? I consider them the best dealers in Ozark Collectables.

Michael looks sheepish.

MICHAEL

I came across it online. At a reputable site.

MONTAGUE

Ozark Backhills, you say. You should find Scottish and English folklore as the basis of their beliefs. I think studying the artifact you found, online, could be interesting, even though it is undoubtedly a hoax or a forgery. Keep me apprised.

Michael leaves.

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Wendy is carrying a cardboard box marked CLOTHES through the living room.

Books lay in piles on cheap kitchen chairs setting all around the room. Two wooden planks lean up against the window.

A daybed piled with pillows up against the far wall stands in for a sofa.

Black and white photos of gravestones and cemeteries are hung on the wall.

A death mask of Michael sets on a shelf attached to the wall, next to a black leather rose.

Two chairs set on either side of an old Dining Room table that serves as Tabitha's desk.

A digital camera sets beside Tabitha's laptop and cell phone.

Pottery vases and bowls set around the room. Some bowls hold dead plants.

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - SPARE ROOM - DAY

A small room with one wall lined with boxes.

The frame of a single bed is propped against the wall.

The mattress is folded in half on the floor.

Tabitha sets on the mattress.

MUFFLED BACKGROUND NOISE OF CARPENTRY.

Wendy, dressed in tight pants and tee-shirt with no bra, is bringing a box marked clothes into the partially assembled bed room.

WENDY

They say the renovation will take practically all semester. Fuckin' Admin didn't bother to tell me before school started. I wouldn't've known where to go if you didn't have this spare room. Thanks, pud.

She sets down the big box marked CLOTHING and sits on the folded mattress.

Tabitha looks up from reading her book of Elizabethan Death Poems.

TABITHA

"For home though homely twere, yet it is sweet."

Wendy looks askance at Tabitha.

WENDY

May-bee this isn't such a good idea.

TABITHA

No..I mean, yes, it's a good idea, Michael got used to it, the way I talk, sometimes, I mean you talk the way you talk, I won't understand that, all the time...The whole semester...Wow! No, I mean, I'm glad, happy, to have company, I mean, I have friends, some,...

Wendy puts her arm around Tabitha to give her a hug.

WENDY

It's alright, sug.

Tabitha stops talking, in shock.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

We'll have so much fun!

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Tabitha is sitting on the floor rearranging books on her custom made bookshelf.

The shelf is actually two straight backed kitchen chairs facing each other. Wooden planks set on the seats and on the chair backs, making a two level book case.

She reaches up and takes down a flat photo box containing 8x10 photos.

She looks through photos from happier times with Michael.

Pictures of Michael smiling and mugging for the camera show a much different side of Michael then the sullen creature he has become.

Tabitha looks through her developed pictures and finds her favorite one of Michael standing next to a decayed tombstone on which the name PERCY is clearly visible.

WENDY (O.C.)

Tab, come here!

INT. TABITHA'S SPARE ROOM

RENOVATION CARPENTRY SOUNDS IN THE BACKGROUND

Wendy is smoothing the covers on the newly assembled bed. The same boxes lining the walls have not been touched.

Tabitha comes in.

WENDY

I got the entertainment center put up.

Tabitha looks around but does not see any electronic equipment. Wendy falls back on her bed.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Right here, Sug.

Wendy pats her bed.

Tabitha remains standing.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

So tell me all about yourself.
What were you like as a kid?

TABITHA

When I was a girl and kids came
over to play, I played dead.

Wendy doesn't know whether to laugh or not. Wendy takes her
cue from Tabitha's serious expression.

WENDY

So Michael's way too serious, like
you or what?

TABITHA

Michael is Michael.

WENDY

You and him, you together?

TABITHA

We're...good friends.

She looks up at the gravestone photos hanging all over the
wall in random, collage fashion.

WENDY

All this death stuff seems morbid.

TABITHA

It is. Morbid means dying, the end
of it all. I've always been
fascinated by death, in paintings,
literature, poetry. We breathe,
eat, shit, and fuck our way through
a lifetime of at most 100 years and
what do people eventually know
about us?

Tabitha becomes angry. She goes over to the collage and
points to a picture.

TABITHA (CONT'D) (CONTD)

That we have a name. And most dead
don't have that much.

Tabitha catches herself and changes expression.

TABITHA (CONT'D) (CONTD)

I like gravestone pictures. It's
like having a family album of
strangers. Did you know the
carvings have a language of their
own?

She pulls one off the wall and shows it to Wendy.

She points to a relief carving of a dove in a tombstone.

TABITHA (CONT'D) (CONTD)
The dove symbolizes purity but also
the release of the soul.

The photo of Tabitha and Michael kissing in front of a
graveyard obelisk suddenly falls from the wall, startling
both women.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DEN - NIGHT

Tabitha is lounging on the love seat, typing on her laptop,
while Michael searches the web.

Tabitha sees Michael is getting agitated.

TABITHA
It's just been three weeks, I mean,
that's not long at all, coming from
wherever it's... coming from.

Michael looks up.

MICHAEL
I can't find the listing. And I
never got a confirmation e-mail.
Goddamit. Professor Montague was
right. I'm an idiot. I don't know
where it's coming from.

Michael stares.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (CONTD)
I don't even know what the hell I
bought.

TABITHA
Hope?

Michael sags back into the chair and just stares out into
space.

Wendy barges in wearing rubber gloves and a plastic apron.

WENDY
I'm done with the dishes, Sug.
Anything goin' on? Hi Michael.
What's wrong, Hun? You look kinda'
down.

TABITHA
We're fine.

Wendy concentrates on Michael.

WENDY

Well you don't look fine. Are you thinking about the five-hundred dollars you owe me?

Michael snaps out of his reverie.

TABITHA

The what?

MICHAEL

The what?

Wendy takes a defensive stance.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

I gave you money for some box, or something. Anyway, I haven't heard if the ghost-thingy's here yet, so, I figured you got taken. If that's the case, and you got nothing to show for my money, well, I want the money back.

Michael looks up dejectedly.

MICHAEL

Fine. Whatever. I'll pay you back somehow.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Students are attentive and typing on their laptops.

MONTAGUE

Embalming was first practiced on a large scale during the Civil War as a means of preserving bodies for shipment home. It fell into disuse after the war because so few people had the knowledge or equipment to embalm.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Present in Michael's kitchen are Ray, and Quinn.

Michael comes into the large kitchen from the hallway, holding a medium sized mailing box. He is wearing surgical gloves.

Tabitha brings a tray of chocolate cupcakes through the back door just as Michael arrives with the box.

Each cake has a lit black candle. Tabitha's digital camera sets in the middle of the tray.

RAY

Is it somebody's birthday?

Michael busies himself with the package, carefully setting it down on the old kitchen table covered with newspaper.

Tabitha sets the tray of cupcakes on the counter.

Wendy comes in, from down the hallway, holding a video camera, takes a cupcake, and blows out the candle.

She sets the cupcake down.

WENDY

Thanks for letting me film this.

Wendy moves into position to film the opening for the box.

Tabitha takes a few pictures of the unopened box.

Michael's address is typed with a manual typewriter. There is no return address. She talks while she snaps photos.

TABITHA

Nobodies, I mean, somebody's birthday, it's always some bodies birthday, somewhere, is it yours?

RAY

No. Why the cupcakes?

TABITHA

It's the 30th.

RAY

So, what's so special about the 30th"

TABITHA

Hekate.

Tabitha positions herself next to Michael and continues to shoot.

Michael is struggling with twine on the outer package.

Ray reaches into a drawer and grabs a knife. He hands it to Michael.

When Michael cuts the twine and opens the outside box puffs of black dust come from the package inside.

Tabitha gets a photo of the dust.

RAY

Maybe it's his birthday.

Michael sees the tray of cupcakes setting on the counter.

MICHAEL

Is it the 30th, already?

He carefully removes the Box from the mailing container and sets it to the side of the outer box.

The box is old-very old. Time had long ago dried the glue holding the cardboard together. Yellowed twine now provided what little security the contents maintained. It was not a Christmas box. Or a Birthday Present box. It was plain, utilitarian and long lived.

RAY

Would someone PLEASE tell me about the f-en cupcakes?

Wendy, still holding the camera on the opening of the box launches in about Hekate.

Tabitha moves around taking more pictures.

WENDY

Tab's been tellin' me all about this bitch. Hekate is the goddess of night, death and the crossroads. She is the one who leads the dead to the river Styx. Her sacred day is the 30th, right Sug? Tabby told me all about her. Tab worships her or something.

Tabitha sets her camera down and takes a cupcake.

The candle has burnt down. A puddle of wax covers the center of the icing.

TABITHA

We offer cakes with lit candles to her to protect the house from spirit attack.

MICHAEL

(cynically)

She also steals babies for her army
of the dead who are all around us.
Troubled souls trapped between
Heaven and Hell.

Tabitha winces at the mention of baby stealing then blows out her candle.

Michael carefully cuts the twine from the old box.

Tabitha eats the cupcake with the candle still in it.

TABITHA

(talking with her mouth
full of cake)

Michael dos'n't hav an altar or a'd
put a candl' on it.

Ray pinches out the flame, pulls the candle from a cupcake and drops the candle on the kitchen table next to the box.

MICHAEL

Hey.

Ray starts to eat the cupcake.

RAY

I like chocolate, no matter who has
to die.

Tabitha's digital camera stops working. She toys with it for a little while than sets it down.

The tatters, formerly known as the box, give way in large scabrous flakes of cardstock revealing excelsior packing yellowed and crumbled with age. Centered in the packing material lay a sooty, crudely thrown pottery vase, wrapped in ledger paper, tied with what appears to be black hand-woven twine.

Wendy squints into the screen on the back of her camera.

WENDY

Yes! Got the box falling to pieces!

RAY

(impressed)

At least it's not a mason jar.

QUINN

I expected a bit more.

Ray nudges Quinn.

RAY
Smoke filling the room, hounds from
hell barking...

SIX RAPID KNOCKS

Ray and Quinn stand shock still.

Wendy's camera hand shakes.

TABITHA
I'll see who it is.

Tabitha starts down the hallway.

EIGHTEEN RAPID KNOCKS

INT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Full moon light shines onto Kate through the side window of her

Kate's bed is in the back room of her store. A night stand with a lantern on it completes her bedroom ensemble. What few dresses she has hang on pegs driven into the rough plank walls.

A curtain separates her bedroom from the storage area.

FIVE DISTANT RAPID KNOCKS

KATE, an old lady of about 50, in a patched cheap nightgown from the 20's, sits up in bed.

KATE
Percy? That you? You sound
far'way.

FIVE DISTANT RAPID KNOCKS

Kate lies back down and turns over.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Let an old woman sleep.

INT. MICHAEL'S FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

TABITHA
Quit pounding on the door!

Tabitha opens the door just as Terry is about to knock.

TERRY

I didn't...I just got here.

TABITHA

Whatever.

They walk down the hallway to the kitchen.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ray is holding the Ledger Papers which have come apart into two halves. The pages are sooty.

Michael watches Ray carefully scrape soot from the pages onto the newspaper.

All react to the SOUND OF SHATTERING GLASS AND CERAMIC

Terry goes over to the dishwasher. When he opens the dishwasher door all of the plates, glasses, and bowls in the dishwasher are broken.

TERRY

Whoa.

(to Michael)

Do you have, like, a glass jar,
something to scape the soot into?

Michael motions to a cabinet over the sink.

Terry opens the cabinet and picks out a clean glass pickle jar with its lid. He walks over to Ray.

Ray squints at the faded pages.

RAY

The ink is faded but I'd like to
try to establish provenance, at
least to the age of the Jar.

TERRY

Could you scrape some that soot
crap into this jar? It looks like
black mold. It could be dangerous,
if inhaled.

Everyone but Michael and Tabitha slowly back away.

Wendy trains the camera on Terry.

Terry scrapes some of the soot into the pickle jar and screws the lid on.

TERRY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Or it could be dirt. I know a guy
in the lab who can test it.

WENDY (O.C.)
That's sweet.

She swings the camera back to Michael.

Michael holds up the jar and soot cascades from the surface to reveal a plain greyish silver hand thrown cylindrical jar; more like a vase.

Michael turns the Jar over in his hands.

Both ends are closed. One end is sealed with cracked Red wax running over the sides. What appears to be black thread peeks out from under the wax seal. The opposite end is flat with a mark pressed into the clay.

Wendy zooms in to get a picture of the mark.

Tabitha motions to Michael for her to handle the Jar.

Michael hesitates.

MICHAEL
You're not wearing gloves.

TABITHA
So? I know pottery marks, It's
lasted this long, I don't think, it
should be alright, I won't drop it
or anything..

Michael reluctantly hands her the Jar. Tabitha turns the Jar over to peer at the mark.

TABITHA (CONT'D) (CONTD)
It's light.

TERRY
How much does a ghost weigh?

WENDY
(to Quinn)
You mind taping. We got to go.

Wendy gives Quinn her camera and rubs his butt before she leaves.

Quinn playful yowls.

QUINN

Watch where you playing,
girlfriend. My man might get
riled.

Wendy looks over at Ray and winks.

WENDY

I could take him.

Wendy looks over to see Terry is not pleased.

Quinn notices.

QUINN

Don't worry, boy toy. I'm a
flaming queer. She was just
warming her hands. It's cold out
tonight.

WENDY

We have to go. Don't wait up, Sug.

Quinn shoots Wendy and Terry as they leave.

He swings the camera back to see Michael cleaning up the
box's remains. He stops to pick up what appears to be black
twine.

MICHAEL

I guess this came off the Jar?

Michael stares closely at the twine.

Quinn zooms in on Michael's hands holding the "twine".

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (CONTD)

It's braided hair.

INT. LIBRARY- DAY

Wendy is typing on her palmtop. Photos taken from Tabitha
and captures from the tape set in neat rows in front of her.

Michael walks up. He sees the pictures.

MICHAEL

What' s all this?

Wendy doesn't miss a beat.

WENDY

After I got down on you about the money, and sure as shit, the jar shows up a couple of days later. And I feel like a fool. I hurt you.

Wendy reaches out to take Michael's hand.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

And I'm real sorry I acted that way, so I've been doing research. I want to help you...

She squeezes Michael's hand.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Anyway I can. So, sit down, you can tell me all you know...

MICHAEL

Can't, got a lecture to attend.

He pulls his hand slowly from hers.

Michael sees a picture of the glyph on the bottom of the jar. He picks it up.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (CONTD)

My laptop's been acting up. Can I take this? Thanks.

Michael leaves.

Wendy picks up Tabitha's photo of the dust exiting the box. It looks like the face of an older man shouting.

Wendy gathers up her palmtop and pictures and stuffs them in her bag.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

MONTAGUE

Coffins were made by the local carpenter or furniture maker. Some cabinet makers kept more than one finished coffin, just in case.

(MORE)

MONTAGUE (CONTD)

Up until the late Nineteenth Century funeral arrangements were a chaos of everything from getting professional mourners and bathers of the body, as practiced in Rome, to arranging for transportation of the body. There was no one person willing to undertake all the preparations a ritual entails. The turn of the Twentieth Century saw the beginnings of the profession of Undertaker.

A male student raises his hand.

MONTAGUE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Mister Evans?

MR. EVANS

Can you back up to cremation? I'm not sure when you said cremation became popular.

MONTAGUE

Cremation has been practiced since 300 BC, but I think you are asking about American burial customs. Cremation fell out of favor during and right after the Victorian era. It gained popularity in the 1930's and has been growing ever since.

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is sparse. A twin size mattress sets on the floor in the middle of the room. An altar dedicated to deities of Death and the Underworld sets just inside the door. A child's chair setting next to the mattress acts as her night stand.

Tabitha is asleep.

TABITHA'S DREAM

- A) Framed picture of a handsome young black man in a World War 1 army uniform falling off a wall.
- B) From total darkness to Spring afternoon thunderstorm; Tabitha sees lightning as she climbs from a broken hand-made coffin.
- C) Tabitha looks down to see her hands on fire. She does not feel the flames.

She calmly goes through the door from the Sawmill to Percy's workshop. She extinguishes the flames when she grabs on to a handsaw.

END TABITHA'S
DREAM

INT. TORN UP APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tabitha stands in a torn up apartment awaiting renovation. Plastic sheeting covers furniture pushed up against a wall. A section of wall has been replaced by drywall. An open tool box sets on a makeshift table.

Tabitha wakes up holding a handsaw. She is slowly drawing it across her wrist. Droplets of blood are just beginning to seep through the shallow cut flesh.

She grabs her wrist and runs through the open door and plastic sheeting beyond.

INT. RAY AND QUINN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Quinn wakes up to find Ray gone.

Quinn gets up and pulls a robe on.

INT. RAY AND QUINN'S APARTMENT - KITCHENETTE

Ray is wearing his pajama bottoms

Ray has the Art Deco Kitchen table turned on its side. A professional tool kit sets on the floor.

QUINN

I've been nagging you for months to
fix the chairs.

Ray is silent. He examines the chair closely, oblivious to Quinn's presence.

He speaks without looking up.

RAY

Can you smell it, boss? Spring is
coming.

Quinn spies the coffee pot.

QUINN

All I smell is coffee. And why are you Uncle Toming all of a sudden?

Ray carefully selects a screwdriver from the tool case.

Quinn pours himself a cup and watches Ray.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Keep going. Don't let me stop you.

Ray tightens the screws on the chair.

Quinn moves closer to Ray.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Honey?

Quinn spills hot coffee onto Ray's back.

Ray shivers as the hot liquid runs down his back.

Ray wakes with a start as Quinn is apologizing.

RAY

What the Fuck! What are you trying to do? How'd I get...

QUINN

Oh God! I am so sorry.

Quinn uses his robe to pat up the hot liquid.

Ray looks at the upended table and chairs.

RAY

What the fuck's going on?

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Michael comes through Tabitha's front door as she is about ready to leave. He looks around, then goes into her bedroom. He is enraged when he comes out from her bedroom, holding the jar.

MICHAEL

(snotty)

I didn't know you wanted the jar for your collection of pots, otherwise, I would've just handed it over to you.

Tabitha is genuinely hurt.

TABITHA

I didn't...

MICHAEL

Well, it didn't walk over here by itself.

Michael takes the jar and leaves.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Montague walks past the students as he lectures.

MONTAGUE

Anthesteria was an ancient Greek festival occurring in Spring, specifically, February fifteenth through the seventeenth. The first day, Pithoigia, was, as its name implies, the "opening of the casks". A libation was first given to the Gods after which New wine flowed freely from sunrise to sunset. Everyone, including children, were more or less drunk by nightfall.

Montague slides a display case open and retrieves an classical Greek amphora.

MONTAGUE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

The second day, Choes, or cups is given over to celebrating the wedding of Dionysos, sometimes confused with the Roman god, Bacchius. Remember that for it comes into play in the final day, Chytroi, or day of pots.

He passes the amphora around.

MONTAGUE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

The ritual performed on that day concerned ghosts that went about the city. A ritual meal of seeds and grains was given to the god of the underworld, Hermes Chthonios, often considered a dark form of Dionysos...

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The girls are setting on Wendy's bed.

Wendy is wearing an elegant night ensemble.

Tabitha is wearing a long-sleeved tee shirt with no bra and sweat pants.

Tabitha is barely sober.

TABITHA

I'm just telling you ritual incantation has been around, I think, for over 10,000 years, but ritual movement predates it by 30,000 years, people danced before they could write. At least I hope so. As much as I know about grave symbols, I should make that my thesis, graven images.

Wendy has a large bottle of Absinthe between her legs.

Tabitha has just taken a shot of Absinthe in a cordial glass.

WENDY

This licorice shit all you got.

Tabitha drinks down the shot. Her speech is more controlled, even eloquent.

TABITHA

My turn, Truth or Drink, wait, let me think...I only have one question...

Wendy lies back on some pillows.

TABITHA (CONT'D) (CONTD)

How did you come by sufficient disposable income that you could safely risk losing on a wild venture? My dad's a Commodities Dealer. He hates I'm in Thanatology Studies, I mean, he doesn't hate me...My family keeps paying for me to stay away at college... My Thesis is: Communication with the Unseen through Trance Rituals. What's your major?

Wendy puts her hand up.

WENDY

Got married to a nice man, had a kid, nice man turned mean, stayed with him for sake of kid, kid grows up okay and enters military, file divorce papers but leave date open, fucker wins lottery and I asswipe him by taking half. So, money's no problem. And that's two questions. You're only allowed one per drink.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DEN

Michael is sitting on his love seat while Ray sits at Michael's desk.

The jar sets on the shelf above Ray. Soot has collected on the shelf. Ray takes note of this.

RAY

What is this dust?

Michael goes over to the shelf.

MICHAEL

I know. It keeps leaving soot rings. I've been cleaning it everyday.

Michael picks the jar up and dusts off the soot into a trash can. He brushes the soot from his hands as well.

RAY

Has that guy Wendy knows ever gotten back to you? The one that took a sample?

MICHAEL

Not a word.

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Wendy slugs down a shot of Absinthe.

WENDY

That stuff is nasty. Well. Here goes. I've seen your tampons for the last couple of weeks now and you look so pale. What's the deal? You sick or something?

Tabitha takes the bottle and looks at it.

TABITHA

I should see a doctor but when I went to the doctor last time...the abortion...I mean...Michael just lost his Dad...and Morrey...

WENDY

So Michael got into this death thing right after his dad died?

TABITHA

It was all so sudden, his Dad suffocating at his gas station. It was really bad for awhile. The same time as the funeral, I mean, the graduation, same time. I didn't want to burden him.

Tabitha clutches her stomach.

TABITHA (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Too much Truth tonight. I think I'm...

Tabitha rushes from the room. To the SOUND OF VOMITING IN A TOILET Wendy retrieves her mini-recorder from its hiding place.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Michael is asleep in his bedroom.

The jar is next to him on a night stand.

MICHAEL'S DREAM

Michael, in his graduation gown, is running through a cathedral. He comes upon a funeral procession and stops to watch. Shadows of a cat's legs run along a church wall while the crowd walks towards the altar.

Michael notices the cat shadow and follows it out the side door. Outside the side church door is a small courtyard.

Michael sees his classmates at graduation moving past an open casket. As soon as they pass the casket they receive their diplomas. As Michael runs to get in line, the exaggerated shadows of a cat's legs run along side him.

He approaches the open casket only to find his dead cat lying on its side. Candles on either side of the coffin blaze. When the fire hits Michael's face he wakes.

END MICHAEL'S
DREAM

INT. RAY AND QUINN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A cigarette burns in the ashtray on the night stand as Ray sits examining the papers in bed.

Quinn lies in bed next to him. Both have their shirts off. Ray is using a handheld magnifying glass.

RAY

These are birth and death records.
See here, some of these birth dates
are from the 1830's. Slave days.

QUINN

Why were the pages torn out? Just
to wrap the jar?

RAY

I don't think so. See here, I
think something terrible happened
to these people. All these dates
of death occur within a week, I
think. See this list of recurring
names? This dirt sticks to
everything.

Ray sits up in bed. He moves the ashtray to the bed. While taking a drag from his cigarette, he gently scrapes more soot from the pages.

RAY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

That appears to be the name of the
town. Brood. I think. The pages
are so faded.

Quinn is getting playful. He kisses Ray's stomach.

QUINN

You've been going over and over
those papers. So the Jar is old, we
know that. Why don't you put that
fag out and light this one up,
honey.

Quinn notices something on the paper. He points but does not touch the paper.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Honey, look here.

Quinn points to the ledger.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)
This name appears twice, in one
week, in two different hand styles.

Ray puts the papers, magnifying glass, and ashtray on the night stand, crushes out his cigarette and turns out the light.

RAY
Could be a junior but I don't think
so.

INT. RAY AND QUINN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Light from a street lamp illuminates Quinn tossing in the bed next to a perfectly still Ray. Every time Quinn brushes up against Ray, Quinn instinctively recoils as if in pain.

Quinn wakes up and tries to wake up Ray.

QUINN
Hun.

Quinn touches Ray's bare skin and recoils.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)
You're burning up. Are you okay?

Quinn touches Ray's forehead to take his temperature. His hand comes away with first degree burns on his palm.

RAY'S NIGHTMARE

Ray is trapped in a burning furniture store. More and more furniture is coming into the room, as if it is being thrown. Ray has less and less freedom of movement. His clothes catch on fire, then his skin. He has only enough room to stand and watch his body burn to ash.

END RAY'S
NIGHTMARE

INT. RAY AND QUINN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

SOUND OF RUNNING WATER IN BACKGROUND

Quinn comes into their bedroom with a bathroom glass and pours cold water onto Ray, waking him up.

Ray screams, flails around, and falls out of bed.

Quinn turns the light on. In his best drill sergeant's voice, he calls Ray to attention.

QUINN
Soldier! A-ten-hut!

Ray leaps to attention. Then comes fully awake. His words come out in panting labored breaths.

RAY
What...the...Hell...hooooo

QUINN
Honey, you scared me. At ease.

Ray falls into Quinn's arms and they fall back into bed together on the wet spot.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)
You're sleeping in the wet spot tonight.

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tabitha is fast asleep. The jar sets on a low chair Tabitha uses for a night stand.

INT. KATE'S CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kate sleeps on one side of the back room of her store.

KATE'S AND TABITHA'S VISIONS

INT. PERCY'S SAWMILL - WORKSHOP - DAY - 1918

The workshop is a room just off from the sawmill. Parts of chairs next to table legs lean up against the wall opposite his tools. A pot-bellied wood stove sets in the middle of the room.

The workshop has all manual woodworking tools.

Percy is planing a board with his hand planer. He carefully shaves a small amount of wood at a pass.

Sampson has his head covered and is breathing in steam from the pot of boiling water on the wood stove. Sampson has bacon wrapped around his neck and a poultice made from moldy bread taped to his chest.

Kate sits on a plain wooden chair watching a 16 year old version of herself, Kate 16, care for Sampson. There is rough cloth sling bag on the floor next to her.

KATE 16

You know my momma's med'cine good
for you, ain't it, Sampson.

She goes over and checks the poultice on his chest. When she pulls the moldy bread from his chest some of the soggy moldy bread sticks to his chest.

Kate pats the poultice back in place.

KATE 16 (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Draw that grippe right outta ya.

Percy drops the planer and stumbles.. Kate16 runs over and tries to hold Percy up. Percy and Kate16 fall to the ground. Percy coughs then starts laughing. Almost at the same time, Kate16 starts to laugh.

PERCY

I guess you right.

Percy struggles to rise but gets himself up. He waves his hand at Kate16.

PERCY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Go on with ya. You'se got plenty
other people to take care of. My
boy's gonna be fine, you see.

Kate16 goes over to where Kate sits. She picks up the sling bag, oblivious to Kate sitting there, and heads out.

EXT. CEMETERY - PIT - DAY - 1918

Kate16 peers into a trench dug into the ground. Corpses in gayly colored striped winding clothes lay in the bottom of a pit.

A couple of elderly men pour kerosine over the bodies. Then light them afire.

ELDERLY GUY

(coughs)

Gotta burn the devil out.

(MORE)

ELDERLY GUY (CONTD)
 No use burying these folks, that
 Hoodoo man bring em right back.

INT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE - FRONT DOOR - 1918

Kate watches in horror as several men lead Percy past the General store.

Percy is being half dragged along by the rope tied around him.

END KATE'S AND
TABITHA'S
VISIONS

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Tabitha wakes up from the dream she just had. She looks at the clock and jumps from the bed. She does not notice the jar setting on the chair she uses for a night stand.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

MONTAGUE

Whereas, the Egyptian concept of an afterlife required organs being presentable to MAAT, for weighing, leading them to Canopic jars, the Greeks had amphora and pithos, amphora being flat bottomed while pithos had a bottom coming to a point, the pithos being usually larger and sunk into the ground for grain and liquid storage, they quite naturally would evolve the concept of Keres, souls or spirits inhabiting jars as easily as grain or liquids, hence Anthesteria, the three-day, Spring Festival of the Cups. Review Nuland and Mitford for our next discussion.

INT. KATE'S CABIN - BEDROOM - DAY - PRESENT DAY

Kate wakes up from her vision of the last night. She gets out of bed and throws a robe over her nightgown.

INT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE - STORAGE ROOM - DAY

The storage area of Kate's general store resembles a botanica as much as a pottery shack. Stalks of dried herbs hang from the ceiling. Mason jars of herbs and liquids set on old wooden shelves. Pottery fills the rest of the spaces, including a pile of broken pottery in the corner.

Kate is moving old boxes around on the floor. She pulls a few boxes from under a shelf and just stares at the empty space where a box obviously once sat.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DEN - DAY

MUFFLED SOUNDS OF CARPENTRY IN THE BACKGROUND

Ray and Michael are talking. Ray is smoking a cigarette. Michael stands by a partially opened window.

RAY

If the papers were wrapped around the jar as soon as the jar was formed, that jar is at least 100 years old.

Michael seems dejected.

MICHAEL

At least that's something. I can't find anything on the style of pottery or any use of burial urns in the Ozarks.

RAY

The ledger paper is from a Recorder of Deeds, and Births, and Death. Problem is those papers tell about some sickness that killed most of the town within a week or two. The handwriting changes on the last few lines.

MICHAEL

So?

RAY

So you should put the jar away somewhere until we know about the soot. Wasn't some guy supposed to test it?

MICHAEL

Wendy's friend or boyfriend, with her who knows.

RAY

Well, find out. About the handwriting changing? Whoever had entered the deaths in the register died. From the scrawl here, I think it just says Momma.

Wendy comes in unannounced. She is holding her Hi-def video camera.

WENDY

The door was unlocked. I let myself in.

She smiles at Ray as he departs.

RAY

(to Michael)

I'll let you know more when I find out.

WENDY

Find out what?

MICHAEL

Stuff about the jar. Is that the tape?

Wendy hands Michael the camera. He looks at it for a few seconds, then expertly handles the camera. When he tries to rewind to the beginning, the tape sticks. Michael is disappointed.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (CONTD)

I was going to include video in my dissertation.

He hands the camera to Wendy who puts it in her purse.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Lotta' good that's going to do. I don't know where the jar comes from or who made it or why. I was counting on this to help me.

Wendy sees his depression. She moves close and hugs him in a sensual manner.

WENDY

I can make you feel better.

Michael puts his hands on Wendy's shoulders just as Tabitha enters. She turns and walks out.

Michael pushes Wendy away.

MICHAEL

Did your boyfriend ever get that
soot tested?

WENDY

I don't know. I forgot all about
it!

MICHAEL'S DREAM

Michael is in his Dad's garage.

A few vehicles are up on lifts. All the garage doors are open.

Michael is working on a car when the engine starts of its own accord. He jumps back from the engine.

Michael gets in the car to shut off the engine.

One by one the garage doors close.

The engine is now spraying out black soot that is choking the air.

The soot gets denser when the last garage door closes.

Michael sits back in the seat. Up until his last gasping breath, Michael appears relaxed, almost enjoying the experience.

END MICHAEL'S
DREAM

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Michael wakes up gasping for air. The jar is at his bedside.

SOUNDS OF RENOVATION

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

MONTAGUE

When you get back from Spring
Break, incidentally another time of
placation of the dead, Daria.

(MORE)

MONTAGUE (CONTD)

Well, read Kubler-Ross and the
downloads about Freud's vs. Jung's
view of the after death experience.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DEN - DAY

MUFFLED SOUNDS OF CARPENTRY IN THE BACKGROUND

Michael is putting the last screw into a wooden and glass
case. The case has a door that padlocks shut.

Michael sets a screwdriver back in his tool box on the floor.
He picks up the jar and locks it away.

INT. RAY AND QUINN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -DAY

MUFFLED SOUNDS OF CARPENTRY IN THE BACKGROUND

Wendy is sitting on the sofa with Ray.

WENDY

The tape of Michael's jar keeps
getting stuck when I rewind it. Do
you know anything about cameras?

Wendy hands Ray the video camera she used to record the
opening of the jar.

RAY

Is it just this one or do all the
tapes stick at the same spot?

Wendy is sheepish.

WENDY

Well...I don't know.

Wendy rummages in her purse and brings out a fresh tape.

Ray removes the tape and sets it on the coffee table.

Ray unwraps the new tape, places it in the camera, and tests
it several times by unwinding and rewinding the new tape.

Ray puts the tape into the camera, fast forwards, then
rewinds. The tape sticks. Ray looks into the screen.

RAY

It's the tape, not the camera.

He hands the camera back to Wendy, the scene on the screen
still on.

SLOW PUSH INTO HANDHELD CAMERA SCREEN TO SEE THE DUST THAT CAME OUT FROM THE BOX AS IT WAS OPENED HAS MADE THE FACE OF A MIDDLE-AGED BLACK MAN, PERCY, SCREAMING

The scene shifts as Wendy closed the camera screen and puts it and the new tape back in her purse. She takes out her mini-recorder.

Ray confronts Wendy.

RAY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

It's been weeks since you moved in with Tabs. Have you told her you're writing a story for your class?

WENDY

No and you and Quinn won't either. I found out only honorably discharged military are entitled to free education. I think my interview might change the minds of a few folks at Veteran's Affairs if they knew about it.

RAY

You bitch!

WENDY

Just doing my best to get a story. So what do you know about the papers wrapped around the jar?

Wendy starts the mini-recorder and places it in her cleavage.

RAY

Why should I tell you anything?

Wendy pulls out a used tape from her bag and waves it at Ray who grabs it and rips the tape from the casing.

Wendy seems nonplussed.

WENDY

My...if that's what you do to a blank tape, I'm glad I hid the real one. Now tell me about the papers.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Wendy is in the shower.

SOUND OF PIPES KNOCKING SIX TIMES

She partially opens the curtains on the tub style shower.

WENDY

Michael?

PIPES KNOCK IN SIX GROUPS OF THREE KNOCKS IN QUICK SUCCESSION

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

What's with the pipes?

Wendy adjusts the stream and the knocking stops. She yells out at Michael.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

I can't believe they turned the water off to our side of the building.

FIVE PIPE KNOCKS FROM FAR AWAY

The shower stops. Wendy turns the spigot on and off.

FIVE KNOCKS IN QUICK SECESSION THEN WATER FLOW

A sudden blast of ice cold water causes Wendy to jump out of the tub and grab a towel.

INT. MICHAEL'S DEN

Tabitha comes into Michael's den just as Wendy is walking in covered by a towel.

Michael is trying to charge his cell phone.

MICHAEL

Are we having problems with the electric, too? My cell phone can't keep a charge.

Tabitha is shocked.

Michael is confused.

Tabitha is cold to Wendy.

TABITHA

How long will the water be turned off?

WENDY

A few days, I think. The manager wasn't real clear on that.

Wendy smiles at Michael as she gathers up her clothes.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 Michael's nice letting us use his
 shower. And his bathroom for the
 party tonight.

Wendy takes her clothes into Michael's bedroom and closes the
 door. Tabitha turns to leave, then turns back.

TABITHA
 Could I use your bathroom? I gotta
 pee real bad.

INT. RAY AND QUINN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ray and Quinn are dressing for the night out.

Ray avoids any playfulness with Quinn.

QUINN
 What's wrong? Is it my breath?

RAY
 My momma taught me dreams have
 meaning. That nightmare, I was
 suffocating, couldn't move...and
 furniture was burning all around
 me.

QUINN
 So?

RAY
 Well, I..have to...tell..

Quinn stares at Ray for fully 25 seconds before he responds.

QUINN
 You feel suffocated. Is it me? Am
 I getting to old for you?

RAY
 No...not that...

QUINN
 I'm gaining weight...
 (small sobs)
 Like an old queen. Are you going
 out on me?

Ray reaches out.

Quinn's attitude quickly changes.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 OH NO! You're not making up for
 this with a hug, mister! OH God!
 We had sex...we're making an
 appointment at the clinic. And
 don't sweet talk me out of this.
 You bastard.

Quinn gets up. He starts to pace.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 So how long have you been bouncing
 your black ass all over town?

Ray jumps up and gets into Quinn's face.

RAY
 I'll have you know...

Ray hesitates, thinking about what Quinn has just said.

Quinn reaches into a drawer and pulls out the shredded tape.

QUINN
 We don't own a video camera,
 although, I really want to get one
 someday. And I know who carries
 this brand of tape in her giant
 bag.

Ray makes a grab for the tape.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 You on the DL? Or are you just
 trying to pass for straight? You
 love her? Or what she's got in her
 crotch?

Ray goes to stop Quinn about to slap him. Marine training
 takes over and they fight like two men trying to kill each
 other with their bare hands. The fight stays in the bedroom,
 knocking over the many candles they have in their room.

Finally Quinn puts Ray into a head lock.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 Who is it? Say it. Who's your fuck
 toy? Say it.

Ray chokes out the name.

RAY
 Wendy

Quinn lets Ray fall to the ground. He is matter of fact.

QUINN

You can stay here, on the couch,
for the rest of the semester, or
until you can find a place. Don't
touch me and don't bring ANYONE
home. And you still pay half the
bills.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Michael is sitting at a table on the second floor of the museum looking through reference books on modern pottery and pottery marks. His laptop sets open in front of him plugged into a wall socket.

Michael goes to a book shelf to take out a book on hex signs and symbols. He starts to leaf through it.

INT. MICHAEL'S DEN - NIGHT

The jar sets enclosed in its case.

SOUNDS OF A PARTY GOING ON NOT TOO FAR AWAY

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

The hall shows signs of partial renovation. All of the fixtures and socket covers have been removed. Painter's tape lines the edges of the door frames.

Bare bulbs, hanging from exposed wires, cast harsh shadows

A full-on party celebrating the goddess Hecate is spilling out of Tabitha's place and moving towards Michael's apartment.

Terry is dressed in a skeleton tee-shirt and black pants. Around him, women with faces painted to resemble skulls and zombies dance to Trance.

Terry is talking to two guy friends in front of Michael's front door.

One guy is wearing a Zombie mask and dressed in ragged clothes.

His Buddy has his face decorated like a Day of the Dead skull candle. An unlit candle sets on top of his head.

TERRY

(drunk)

If you want Death, this guy
collects it. He even has a trapped
ghost. Oh and get this, the lab guy
I know tells me the dust on the
thing is dried hemoglobin, blood.

INT. MICHAEL'S DEN - NIGHT

The jar sets outside of its case.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Terry tries the door.

BUDDY

No way. Is it open?

It is unlocked. All three push into Michael's apartment. The crowd follows.

INT. LIBRARY- NIGHT

He goes back to his laptop on the table and tries to type some notes. The laptop is dead. Michael checks that the cord is plugged into the wall. When he bends down, the overhead lights flicker six times slowly.

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

People in Day of the Dead costumes linger in small groups or dance to the mind numbing loud trance music. The place is lit by black light and skull candles.

Wendy, beer in hand, is SHOUTING to Tabitha.

TABITHA

(shouting)

I don't know any of these people.

WENDY

(shouting)

They're cool. I thought we'd
celebrate that Hekate bitch in
style. Hell, if we can have a
party like this every month, I'll
pray to her.

Wendy sees Tabitha is nervous so she hugs her.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
It's okay Sug. You need to party
more.

She lets go of Wendy and looks around.

TABITHA
Life celebrates Death. I guess
this is nice, I mean, you went to a
lot of trouble, I can enjoy it.

Wendy did not hear a word of what Tabitha just said.

Wendy sees Ray and Quinn at the door trying to push in
through the exiting crowd.

WENDY
(shouting)
See. You know them.

Tabitha follows the exiting crowd towards the couple.

The music is less loud at the door.

It is obvious they have been in a fight since each one is
wearing make-up badly.

QUINN
Tell her.

Ray looks cautiously over at Wendy getting two beers from a
plastic tub of ice.

Wendy nods her head ever so slightly.

Quinn notices but says nothing. Quinn avoids Ray.

RAY
I think I found where the jar comes
from.

Tabitha perks up.

Wendy comes over with the beers.

RAY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
It's not that far away. Overnight
trip.

Ray and Quinn each take a beer. Ray is oddly quiet.

WENDY
What's not that far away?

QUINN

Thank you. Where the Jar comes from.

Wendy notices Ray's poor makeup job.

WENDY

You come with me. I've got a shade that will match your skin better.

Quinn stares daggers at Ray.

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tabitha watches the partyers depart through her front door. She turns to Quinn.

TABITHA

Where is everybody going?

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM

Wendy is daubing makeup on Ray's discolored face.

WENDY

So, Sugar, where does the jar come from?

RAY

I'll let Michael tell you that.

Wendy presses on his face.

RAY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Ouch.

INT. LIBRARY- NIGHT

Michael packs his laptop into his backpack as lights flicker off and on throughout the room for a total of 18 times.

Michael grabs his stuff and runs down the stairs towards the exit where his bicycle sets in the foyer.

Lights behind Michael go out in a sequence of 2 sets of 5 lights.

Michael runs to the glass exit door just as the final lights go out.

Michael confronts Percy's reflection in the glass door as he heaves himself through and grabs his bike.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Tabitha is making her way through the crowd.

Wendy and Ray show up.

Wendy has her video camera running, panning the crowd.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

As Michael bicycles through the quadrangle towards his apartment, a plume of black smoke follows him. The smoke gets denser the closer Michael gets to his apartment.

EXT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Tabitha and Quinn follow the crowd through Michael's front door.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

The black smoke is getting thicker as Michael furiously bicycles up to his apartment.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DEN - NIGHT

Tabitha enters Michael's den in time to see a woman handing off the open jar to Terry's buddy to use as an ashtray.

Tabitha sees several people wiping soot from their hands.

The lid of the Jar is setting on Michael's desk.

Tabitha screams.

TABITHA

What the FUCK are you doing?

TERRY

He needed an ashtray and besides
who cares about a vase?

Tabitha runs over and grabs the Jar. She is hysterical.

TABITHA
Get OUT! All of you, just leave,
GET OUT!

She cradles the Jar as the party goes quietly depart.

Terry, drunk, tries to comfort her.

TERRY
Glue will fix that right up.

WOMAN AT PARTY
The top came off in my hand...I
didn't know...

TABITHA
Just get the HELL OUT!

Wendy gives Terry a dirty look. She turns her camera off and they walk out together.

Terry stumbles over to Tabitha.

TERRY
The dirt coming from the jar...not
infectious...it's hemoglobin...it's
blood.

Tabitha just stares.

Terry stumbles out, held up by a smiling Wendy.

Quinn quietly comes through the door to where Tabitha is cradling the jar in Michael's favorite chair.

Ray stands at the door.

QUINN
You want me to help you clean or
anything?

Tabitha is almost in tears.

TABITHA
(quietly holding back
sobs)
Just leave.

EXT. APARTMENT FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Panting, Michael abandons his bike at the front door, the smoke getting closer to enveloping him.

As he reaches the door the smoke forms the face of Percy.

EXT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Sounds of a party winding down come from behind him. Empty cups and some clothing litter the hallway.

Michael runs to his front door and finds it open. He finds Tabitha rocking back and forth in his large chair.

She is holding the lid closed on the Jar.

Michael rushes in and over to his desk. He roughly clears empty cups and cigarette ashes from the top of his desk. Michael throws his backpack down.

MICHAEL

Goddam it! I just went through Hell and look at this fuckin' mess. What the hell happened to my place? How'd the jar get out of it's case? What is going on?

TABITHA

I don't know, people got in, I mean Terry's friends, I guess they were friends, one wanted an ashtray, I told them all to go, the lid, it just came off, somebody said, I'm so sorry...and the dust is blood, or dried blood, dust blood.

Michael takes the jar from Tabitha, places the lid back on and sets it on the shelf. He sees the glass and wooden case is still locked.

MICHAEL

Look, all I want to fuckin' know is who is moving my jar. And they don't disturb anything else...and my laptop battery is dead... again...now you tell me the jar is bleeding for god's sake...

Michael becomes still, pondering the possibilities he could have a trapped ghost.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (CONTD)

I don't know what to do. I don't know where the pot comes from, who made it or why. There's nothing in Ozark Folklore that talks about trapping spirits in pottery.

Tabitha goes over to his turntable, looks down and smiles. She sets the needle on the record, and starts the music.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (CONTD)

I just don't know what to do.

Tabitha goes over to Michael and looks up at him.

TABITHA

I got nothing better to do.

As if they have done this a hundred times before, Michael takes Tabitha's hand and they slow dance to swing music.

INT. TERRY'S APARTMENT - LATER

As soon as Wendy and Terry come through the front door, they hear a STACCATO POUNDING ON THE KITCHEN PANTRY DOOR.

Wendy relaxes in the living room while Terry goes to investigate. He turns on the overhead kitchen light before opening the door.

Terry's Buddy, still in Day of the Dead makeup, armed with a wood saw, lunges at Terry but misses because he is blinded by the light.

Terry goes to grab his buddy from behind but Buddy swings around. Terry grabs for the saw and gets his arm cut.

Terry tries to wrestle the saw from Buddy's hands but winds up pushing Buddy to the ground.

Buddy falls so that the wood saw cuts half-way through his neck and he lies there face-down watching his blood pool under him.

TERRY (O.C.)

I'm at 5202 Plover, apt 3B.
There's been an accident. Still
alive, I think...

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Tabitha gets out from the shower and wraps a towel around her.

Tabitha reaches for the Medicine cabinet door and opens it.

The long blade of Michael's screwdriver comes shooting through the back of the cabinet; coming to rest centimeters from Tabitha's eye.

Tabitha screams and faints.

Michael rushes in. He stares at the screwdriver blade.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DEN - LATER

Tabitha lies asleep on Michael's love seat.

She is wearing a long sleeved tee-shirt and old high-school gym shorts.

TABITHA'S DREAM

Tabitha lies in bed. A dark shadow crosses her and she moans. From the shadows a hand starts to caress her thigh. Where the fingers lightly graze, drops of blood begin to sweat out from her skin.

The hand withdraws.

Tabitha gets up to follow. Bright light hits her.

END TABITHA'S
DREAM

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - SPARE ROOM - NIGHT

Wendy is asleep in bed. She wakes to the sound of heavy breathing like panting. She looks over to where Terry is asleep. It is not him.

Wendy smiles and is about to go back to sleep when she hears crying and pounding.

She grabs her robe from the foot of the bed to cover her nude body, gets up and goes to her door.

Terry snores and rolls over.

Wendy peeks out into Tabitha's living room and sees nothing unusual.

TABITHA'S NIGHTMARE

Tabitha is running for her life.

SOUNDS OF A DOG BARKING AND PEOPLE COUGHING closely following come from behind her.

She finds a hiding place behind a tree and watches as a small group of middle-aged men determinedly help each other through the woods.

The men appear sick; some coughing, others staggering, one coughing and spitting blood. All the men have a strangely bluish purple cast to their white skin.

An old woman is following them.

She turns to run and finds herself in a pine box, sounds of people praying over her and calling her Percy.

She pounds on the lid of her coffin and yells.

END TABITHA'S
NIGHTMARE

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - SPARE ROOM - NIGHT

When she opens the door wider, she hears crying and pounding coming from Tabitha's bedroom.

INT. TABITHA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wendy comes into Tabitha's bedroom only to find Tabitha outside the closet, pounding on the door.

A slice of flesh has been gouged from her thigh. Blood is running down on her bare thigh.

A blooded hand planer sets next to her.

Wendy bends down.

WENDY

Sug? Tabby? Hun?

Wendy sees the blood running from her cut.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

What the fuck? Wake up, sugar!

She grabs Tabitha who stops pounding the closet door. The pounding does not stop.

SIX RAPS

Wendy shakes Tabitha who remains asleep.

SIX LOUD GROUPS OF THREE RAPS

Wendy has to shout over the pounding.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Tabitha, WAKE UP.

FIVE EVEN LOUDER RAPS

Wendy slaps Tabitha awake.

Tabitha looks around dazed.

FIVE SLOW QUIET RAPS FROM WITHIN THE CLOSET

Wendy looks frightened.

Tabitha does not hesitate in opening her closet.

Wendy's scream jolts Tabitha fully awake.

Both women stop and stare at the Jar setting on the floor of Tabitha's closet.

The planer is gone.

Terry comes from the spare room. He is wearing just his scrub pants.

He sees Tabitha's injury.

TERRY
What's going on? What happened to
you.

Terry goes into the kitchen.

SOUNDS OF DRAWERS AND CABINETS OPENING AND CLOSING

He comes back holding dish towels. He kneels down and applies pressure to Wendy's oozing wound.

TABITHA
I could see them chasing me.
Sick, I think dying, people chasing
me. Then, I don't know. I
couldn't breathe.

WENDY
Some sick fuck moved the jar. This
shit is getting too crazy for me.
Michael is fucking with our heads.

TABITHA
No. Michael's not like that.

TERRY

Maybe it moved itself. Mike did
buy a ghost, right?

Both women look frightened.

Michael comes in.

MICHAEL

I heard screaming.

He sees Terry holding a bloodied towel.

Michael is angry.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Are you cutting yourself again?

Wendy's eyes fly open.

Tabitha pulls back her long sleeves to reveal many healed
small razor cuts and one healed deep cut down the middle of
her forearm.

TABITHA

(quietly)

I used to cut myself.

Michael sees the jar and retrieves it from the closet. He
gets irate.

MICHAEL

Is this some kind of joke? Moving
the jar and pounding the hell out
of the walls? Which one of you
took it?

TERRY

Mike, this isn't such a good
time.

WENDY

Nobody took your piece of
shit - mud jar anyplace.

Everyone is focused on Wendy.

WENDY

It just moved.

Michael stares at her then turns and leaves with the Jar.

Wendy follows.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hall shows signs of partial renovation. All of the fixtures and socket covers have been removed. Painter's tape line the edges of the door frames.

The hall is lit by bare bulbs in the ceiling fixtures.

Wendy grabs Michael as he walks down the hallway.

WENDY
I'm scared shitless.

Wendy pauses to calm herself.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
But I'm excited, too. I think you have a trapped ghost and you're too closed-minded to admit it.

MICHAEL
(SNEERING)
People have been interring the dead since before the time of the Pharos. Beliefs vary but all cultures who put their dead in some form of container believe in an afterlife. Not a "I'm a trapped ghost, Let me out" life.

He breaks her grip and continues down the hallway.

Wendy yells after him.

WENDY
The jar moved, Michael. The ghost moved it.

INT. RAY AND QUINN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Quinn has invited Tabitha and Michael over for wine and conversation.

Wendy is conspicuous by her absence.

QUINN
Have you noticed any odd occurrences since you got the jar?

He looks at Ray.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 Any dreams or anything out of the
 ordinary?

Quinn notices Michael looking at Tabitha.

KATE'S DREAM ABOUT SAMPSON IN 1918

EXT. PERCY'S BEDROOM WINDOW - NIGHT

Through the bedroom window, an old woman watches:

INT. PERCY'S CABIN - BEDROOM

Percy's cabin is a one bedroom shack. The wooden building looks like it was built during slave days. Percy has kept it up as best he could. It is neat and tidy.

The bedroom has a handmade bed and a chair. The room has one window. A picture of his son, SAMPSON, a 19 year old man in a World War I army dress outfit, hangs on the wall.

By the light of oil lamps, two figures are talking in bed. A young white girl, 16 years of age, KATE DENNY is talking to the figure lying next to her.

KATE

I gotta get back 'fore Momma
 catches wind I was gone. She won't
 undastand our love is true, right
 Percy.

A 40 year old black man, PERCY JOINER raises up on one elbow and looks at the form of Kate under the sheets.

PERCY

You are so beautiful. I don'
 undastand why you chose me. I'm
 old and I'm colored. You know how
 folk's'd feel 'bout that.

Kate sits up in bed, the flimsy sheet falling, revealing her breasts. She is indignant.

KATE

We's meant, that's all there's to
 it. Tha apple tole me so....I cut
 a hunk a apple off and threw it in
 the fire and youse was the face I
 saw. It's settled.

The framed picture of Sampson drops.

Both Percy and Kate stare in horror at the picture on the floor. Kate holds Percy.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)
He's most likely all right. Signs
don't always mean the same thing,
all the times. Don't always mean
som'uns gonna pass.

PERCY
I just got this bad feelin'.

KNOCKING AT THE DOOR

Kate stands straight up in bed and scrambles to gather up her clothes while Percy gets up and pulls some pants on.

Kate runs out the back door clothes in hand.

Percy goes to the front door.

INT. PERCY'S CABIN - FRONT ROOM

Percy opens the front door.

SAMSON JOINER, 19 years old, has just come back from the war. Both hear the back door slam shut. Percy pays no attention to it. He hugs his son.

PERCY
Praise the Lord! My boy's back
home.

Samson coughs. He is unsteady on his feet. He drops his bag on the doorstep and comes inside.

Percy retrieves Sampson's bag.

SAMSON
It was a long trip. I just need to
lie down a bit.

EXT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE - DAY

Sampson sits in a chair while a small country party goes on about him. Bunting hangs from the rafters of Kate's store.

Several portable tables with checked cloths hold meager amounts of food.

Several of the towns folk sit near to Sampson as recounts his war experiences. Some people come by and shake his hand. He coughs frequently.

Kate sits off to the side and watches a young Kate have to stay away from Percy. Percy is clapping his boy on the back and shaking hands.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

SIX SLOW PEALS OF A CHURCH BELL IN THE DISTANCE

Kate is watching townsfolk as they make their way from the clapboard chapel to the graveyard.

It begins to rain.

Six sickly pallbearers struggle with a poorly made plain pine box.

When they pass her, Kate instinctively touches a button on her dress as a sign of good luck.

The button comes off in her hand.

Kate stares at it and throws it down.

The few mourners begin to disperse.

One of the pallbearers gets too close to the grave, slips on the wet grass, and falls in. The other pallbearers drop the coffin. The coffin falls on top and crushing him.

The coffin shatters and Percy shakes himself awake.

All the townsfolk flee except Kate.

Kate, still wearing the blood-covered shift, runs up to the edge of the pit to help Percy scramble out.

KATE

I told Momma I could bring ya back.
Rain at a funeral don't always mean
death. And the button come off my
dress, no dying here.

She hugs him in the rain.

EXT. WOODS - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Kate is following a group of sick men as they chase Percy in the woods. The men appear sick;

some coughing, others staggering, one coughing and spitting blood. All the men have a strangely bluish cast to their white skin. The ablest of the group carries a length of strong rope.

A dog BARKS as the sick men hold each other up as they pursue Percy. A rooster crows in the distance.

Percy is running for his life.

Percy watches from his hiding place behind a large fallen tree as the small group determinedly help each other through the underbrush.

Percy's lungs are heaving as he gasps for air. He slides down the tree, too exhausted to run.

Kate watches from the back of the group as they come upon Percy, too tired and sick to struggle. They tie him up and lead him away.

END KATE'S DREAM

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

A CARPENTER, mid-twenties, is tearing out an old wall with a hatchet. He goes to set the hatchet down to get his crowbar and slices his finger on Percy's planer, just sitting there.

The planer has a soot handprint from how it was set down.

The Carpenter turns to get a rag for his finger. When he turns back, the planer is gone.

INT. OFFICE OF JEFFREY MONTAGUE - DAY

Michael is showing Jeffrey a picture of the pottery mark on the bottom of the jar.

MICHAEL

I looked through the catalogue of pottery marks...

Jeffrey stops him.

MONTAGUE

You won't find this symbol in the catalogues. It's not a pottery mark. There must be some Scandinavian heritage in the prior owner's history. It's a bind-rune.

(MORE)

MONTAGUE (CONTD)

Norse used these to hold spirits at bay. Whatever was put in the jar was meant to stay there.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING- FRONT DOOR - DAY

The sky is overcast and threatening rain.

Quinn is loading sleeping bags and camping equipment in his Suburban while talking with Michael.

Wendy bounces up carrying a cloth overnight bag and her large purse.

WENDY

I'm ready for the road trip.

Quinn does not hide his distaste.

QUINN

Does she have to come along?

MICHAEL

See? That's what I'm talking about. Wendy said she'd film the interview, if I can find anybody who knows anything.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

The woman who handed the jar to Buddy dives head first in to a concrete pour.

Workmen dig to pull her out but she is already dead.

INT. HOSPITAL - SURGICAL SUITE

A team of surgical nurses completes setting up surgical trays. They leave.

Terry follows them up to the door. When they exit, he locks the door behind him, and goes over to the anesthetists' set up. He turns several valves. He strikes a lighter.

INT. HOSPITAL - DOOR OF SURGICAL SUITE

Two nurses and a surgeon watch through the window as the room ignites. One nurse pounds on the door while the other hits a red button on the wall.

LOUD SPEAKERS
Code Red, Surgery 12. Code Red,
Surgery 12.

EXT. STRETCH OF GRAVEL ROAD - DAY

It is raining hard.

Michael's older model Jeep follows a Quinn's Suburban.

INT. MICHAEL'S JEEP - DAY

Michael stares through the driving rain.

Wendy is looking at a map while talking on the phone with Ray, in the truck up ahead.

WENDY
All I'm saying is we're off the
map. The last bit of civilization
was 8 miles back...the gas station.
I told you we should have asked for
directions...

Wendy's cell phone cuts out.

INT. QUINN'S SUBURBAN - DAY

Quinn is having difficulty seeing through the pouring rain, his wipers doing little to stem the cascade on his windshield.

Quinn and Tabitha sit in the front seat of his Suburban with Ray in the back navigating.

Ray is on his cell phone with Wendy giving directions.

RAY
Don't tell me we should have
stopped at that gas station.

Ray's cell phone cuts out.

RAY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Bitch, she hung up!

INT. MICHAEL'S JEEP - DAY

Michael stares ahead, watching Quinn's truck through the driving rain.

WENDY

He hung up! Great navigator. In the Ozarks without a shotgun...or a banjo.

Michael cracks a small smile.

MICHAEL

(smiling)

Racist.

Wendy smiles.

WENDY

You got me, calling the kettle black.

The rainstorm is slowing.

Wendy gets serious.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

You got the real thing there, Michael. I didn't think the ghost thingy was real until...what happened to Buddy.

MICHAEL

Who's Buddy?

WENDY

Terry's friend. He died...I watched him die, Michael, choking on his own blood...that jar you got...I saw Buddy handing it to Terry at the party.

MICHAEL

Buddy died after touching the jar?

Michael thinks about it and decides it's implausible.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Or he was too drunk to control himself.

WENDY

I think it's the real thing. And the way it moves.

Michael gets serious and drives along for a short while.

MICHAEL

He died.

INT. QUINN'S SUBURBAN - DAY

The rain is letting up.

In the front seat Quinn makes a snug smile that Tabitha notices.

TABITHA

What is it? I mean....I'm not supposed to ask...I think, but, what is going on with you two and this isn't a gay truck, what's with that?

QUINN

Last question first. First of all there are no gay trucks, or cars, for that matter. And, second of all, I bought this truck before I left the military ...

(in his best queen voice)

...but I am thinking about having it repainted lavender.

After a moment, Tabitha gets the joke and they both laugh.

Quinn turns serious.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)

I thought you'd want to ride with Michael.

TABITHA

And his bitch? I don't think so.

Quinn drives on silently.

INT. MICHAEL'S JEEP - DAY

Wendy is scrolling through her phone.

WENDY

What's with all these missed calls from the hospital.

MICHAEL

Easy to lose signal in the hollows.

INT. QUINN'S SUBURBAN - DAY

Quinn and Tabitha see a sign advertising Frank's Rock Shop and Minerels. Quinn mentions the misspelling.

QUINN

This looks good. If they can't spell, I'm sure they'll know every inch of...

Quinn puts on his best country impersonation.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)

This'n here hollar.

Quinn's car turns down the gravel road, Michael's car follows.

INT. MICHAEL'S JEEP - DAY

The rain is letting up. Michael is telling his thesis to a bored Wendy.

MICHAEL

Ozark folklore is replete with harbringers of death. Cocks crowing, pictures falling from the wall. But I can't find any references to spirits trapped in pottery. In fact, the only reference to pottery is it breaking as a sign of death. I'm hoping to find out from the locals.

WENDY

I see trees, more trees. Oh look, it's stopped raining. I hope there's a decent motel somewhere. Or maybe we'll have to stay in a hotel run by cannibals. It could happen, you know.

MICHAEL

There are worse things.

Wendy perks up.

WENDY

So you have been listening all this time. Like what? Zombies?

Michael's serious look dissolves into a smile.

MICHAEL

No. A cannibal hotel, without room service.

Michael, again, has a serious look on his face.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (CONTD)

He died.

Wendy pats Michael's leg.

Michael turns down a gravel road.

EXT. MICHAEL'S JEEP - DAY

Michael follows Quinn down the gravel road.

EXT. FRANK'S ROCK SHOP -SIDE OF SHOP - DAY

RED, cocky, 15-18 years, son of Frank, called Red because of his sunburned complexion, is taking new wheel covers for his pride and joy, a 1968 Thunderbird Convertible from a mail order box. The car is partially painted, more a hodgepodge of mismatched colors and parts. The mainly powder blue car has just acquired a new set of white wall tires.

Quinn's suburban pull up, followed by Michael's Jeep.

They all get out and head towards Frank's shop.

INT. FRANK'S ROCK SHOP - DAY

Wooden top-loading cases line two walls of the modest rundown store. An old style soda vending machine stands in the corner.

Michael and Tabitha enter the store.

A desk in the middle of the shop stands in for the front counter. FRANK, 60, scraggly beard, sits in his desk chair smoking an unfiltered cigarette. On the desk is a newer model computer and a traditional model handset phone. Taped to the back of the phone, a hand printed sign reads: PAY BEFOR YOU CALL I'LL TALK TO YOU FOR FREE

FRANK
(coughs)
Look 'round. Won't cost ya.

Quinn, Ray and Wendy enter. Frank stands up, clearly showing the .45 calibre semi-auto pistol in the holster on his belt.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONTD)
You two looking for something? Be
witch'a in a minute, sir.

Quinn wanders over to a case that contains a hand stapled folded book entitled BLOOD: THE TRUE STORY OF THE NIGGER WHAT KILLED OUR TOWN, signed on the outside with Frank's scrawl. On the cover of the book is a hand drawn map of the area with the location of the town of BLOOD clearly pointed out.

A yellowed typed sign next to the book says: NOT FOR SALE
LAST COPY

Quinn gets Wendy's eye and motions for Ray to come over. Ray calmly walks over, browsing the cabinets along the way.

Tabitha and Michael lay out the crude map Ray made.

Red walks in and gets a pop from the machine. He hangs back watching the strangers. He watches Quinn and Ray look at the book in the case.

TABITHA

Is there a town around here? We're looking for information about the pottery jar we bought.

When he hears the word "jar", he bolts for the door.

FRANK

Well, Miss Kate used to throw pots, if it's a pottery jar. She sold a few so far as Red tells me.

MICHAEL

Is there a place to stay the night close to here?

FRANK

Don' know about close but theys a town a ways up ahead.

Frank is occupied by Michael and Tabitha so he does not notice Ray looking down at the book cover.

RAY

(mouthing to Quinn)
Oh my God.

Wendy comes up and puts her arm around Ray.

Quinn glares at Ray.

WENDY

(loudly)
Any kind of soda would do, lover.
Just get some change from the man.

Frank turns away from Michael and Tabitha.

Ray separates from Wendy, goes over to Frank and gives him a five dollar bill.

Frank opens the top desk drawer and gets out a one dollar bill, gives it to Ray, gets 2 warm sodas from a crate next to the machine and hands them to Ray.

RAY

Much obliged, sir. May the Lord
give you what's surely coming to
you.

Ray walks away, gets Wendy and they exit.

Frank turns back to Wendy and Michael.

Quinn exits.

FRANK

(pointing to the map)
That don' mean squat ta me. Lemme
take you outside and jes point out
the direction to Kate's. She'd
prob'bly know something. Been
'round longer than I have.

EXT. FRANK'S ROCK SHOP - DAY

Red's car is nowhere to be seen.

Wendy and Ray are in the back seat of the Suburban.

Quinn stands outside scouting the area.

INT. QUINN'S SUBURBAN - DAY

In the background, through the rear side window, Frank is
gesturing a set of directions for Michael and Tabitha.

Quinn casually watches Frank gesticulate.

Ray and Wendy sit in the back seat.

WENDY

I saw a phone in there. I'm going
back in and use it.

RAY

I don't think that's prudent.

Wendy adjusts her clothing to look slutty.

WENDY

Honey, black women have been
controllin' black and white men for
centuries.

She opens the car door to get out, then turns back.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
I'm really worried about Terry.

INT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE -FRONT ROOM - DAY

SOUND OF A CAR DRIVING THROUGH ROCKY MUD

Kate's store has a few odds and ends on the shelves behind the counter. Various pottery bowls and jars set on the counter.

Kate is over by the window watching Red arrive.

One bowl suddenly shatters. Kate turns to stares at it in horror.

SOUND OF CAR ENGINE SHUT OFF

EXT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE - DAY

Red parks and exits the car as Kate comes out to greet him. He runs up Kate.

RED
Theys strangers in town, evil
looking, sin-filled people. I over-
heard what they said at Frank's.
Ever'thing they ses is lies. If
they come this way, I'd just turn
them out, send them on they way, I
say.

Kate looks at the new rims and tires on Red's car.

KATE
So's I 'spect they's the folks got
my Percy.

RED
I don't know what you talkin'
about, Miss Kate.

SIX LOUD RAPS FROM THE DIRECTION OF RED'S CAR

Red reacts to the sound but Kate pays no attention to it.

Kate approaches Red who takes a step back.

RED (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 I always did you right, Miss Kate.
 Any the junk I sold at auction I
 gave you the money, most of it
 anyway. Some things jes' fetch
 more.

THREE GROUPS OF SIX KNOCKS COME FROM ALL DIRECTIONS

RED (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 I can pay ya.

Red pulls out a wad of bills.

Kate starts marching toward him, menacingly.

Red drops the money. He fumbles for his keys.

KATE	RED
'Fore I tan your hide, boy, you'd best fess up. You took from me...	I been helping ya clean out some stuff. You 'member Miss Kate. You showed me some your pots and such and tole me I take 'em to auction.

Red breaks into a run as Kate walks determinedly after him.

Red gets to his car just in time to hear FIVE LOUD RAPS from
inside his car, when he opens the door.

Red pisses in his pants and drops his keys.

Red picks up his keys and jumps in his car. Before he can
turn the engine on, FIVE LOUD POUNDING SOUNDS come from the
hood of his car.

Kate is behind the car.

KATE
 Go on boy, run, you can't hide
 fo'ever.

Kate stands her ground in the middle of the parking space,
behind Red's car.

Red slams the car into reverse and frantically backs the car
towards Kate. Just at the last moment, Red stops and throws
the car into forward, driving away in a cloud of dirt and
gravel.

Kate ambles back to her shop. Just before she crosses the
threshold, a broom falls across the door. Kate is startled.
She kicks the broom across the floor.

She shutters while she shouts out to Percy.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 Nobody gonna die. You got that
 rat, Percy? Ain't no dyin' today.

Silence.

INT. FRANK'S ROCK SHOP - DAY

Wendy is bending forward to read the sign taped to Frank's phone. Her breasts are clearly visible to Frank who sits up in his chair to pay attention.

WENDY
 Says here it'll cost you to talk
 but you'd use your mouth for free.
 So would I for the right man.

She bends towards Frank, seductively.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 Now how much you charge for a call?

Frank hands Wendy the phone.

Wendy turns her back on Frank who eases back in the chair and unzips his pants.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 (on phone)
 I'll hold.

In the background Frank unbuckles his belt.

WENDY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 Is he alright? Oh God! What
 happened? What?

Wendy hangs up the phone and runs outside.

FRANK
 Shit!

EXT. FRANK'S ROCK SHOP - DAY

Wendy runs to Michael and Tabitha.

WENDY
 I gotta go back. Sixty percent
 burns on his body.
 (MORE)

WENDY (CONTD)

Terry was in some kind of horrible
accident at the hospital.

Michael throws Wendy his keys.

MICHAEL

Sure. We'll call when we get back.

Wendy gets into the Jeep and drives away.

Tabitha looks at Michael, confused.

INT. QUINN'S SUBURBAN - DAY

Quinn and Tabitha are in the front seat while Michael and Ray
have been banished to the far back seat.

Quinn is driving on dirt roads like he's been here before.

TABITHA

Could you make out these directions
just from watching that guy.

Quinn pulls out Frank's book from the side pocket of the door
and hands it to Tabitha.

QUINN

I'm just following the map.

Tabitha leafs through the book as they drive along.

TABITHA

Says here almost the whole town
died in just a week, all due to
some curse, by some cabinet
maker...owned the sawmill.

Tabitha's voice trails off as she continues to read.

They come to a crossroads.

Quinn stops the car.

Tabitha gives him the book. She studies the cover.

QUINN

Part of the cover is worn. I'd say
we are off the map here.

Quinn gets out and goes to the crossroads.

INT. QUINN'S SUBURBAN - DAY

Ray talks to Michael in a hushed voice.

RAY

I've been wanting to get you out of sight of Wendy...and Quinn.

MICHAEL

Yeah. You two a...couple.

RAY

Fuck no. She's been on my ass to get information on you for some shitassed Journalism class. The Traped Ghost in a Jar. She's been working everybody but Quinn. She's just got...some...stuff on Q and me. He could lose his pension and I love the guy, what can I say? Keep Tabbs away from her.

MICHAEL

If Quinn doesn't know, you should tell him.

RAY

I know I should, but not yet. After we get back. I'll deal with her then.

EXT. CROSSROADS - DAY

Several weather worn signs precariously hang from posts driven in the ground long ago. Some signs, over the decades, have fallen to the ground.

He sees a faded Victorian Pointing Hand indicating the direction to B OO laying on the ground. He looks closer to see the remaining faded letters: BLOOD

EXT. THE TOWN OF BLOOD- NIGHT

The Suburban drives through the abandoned town of Blood.

Tabitha is looking at the town and Frank's book.

TABITHA

Says here some...guy came back from the dead and cursed the town. All this happened in a week?

Quinn looks uneasily at the crumbling town.

QUINN
Yeah, about a hundred years ago. I
brought gear. We can set up camp
in any of these buildings.

He pulls up in front of the Jail.

INT. OLD JAIL - NIGHT

Quinn is carrying in two sleeping bags. Two more are on the floor in one cell. He puts one sleeping bag in a cell and throws the other at Ray.

QUINN
I'm sleeping in here. By myself.

Ray sets his sleeping bag in a corner and goes to sleep.

Tabitha moves her sleeping bag into Quinn's cell.

TABITHA
Is it alright? I mean, you said
you were sleeping alone, I mean, I
not going to sleep with you...

Quinn takes the sleeping bag from Tabitha and opens it on the floor.

QUINN
It's fine.

Tabitha climbs into her sleeping bag.

INT. MICHAEL'S CELL

Michael climbs into his sleeping bag and turns his back to Tabitha and Quinn.

INT. QUINN'S CELL

Tabitha is lying next to Quinn. Tabitha and Quinn talk quietly.

QUINN
Has anything unusual happened to
you since Michael got the jar?

TABITHA

I've had these dreams about some black guy getting burned alive.

QUINN

Oh my God! That's the same dream Ray had.

Michael takes notice.

TABITHA

And the jar moves. Or someone moved it, but, whatever, it showed up in my room. I swear I never moved it unless, maybe, I was sleep walking, I mean, I did that and...

INT. MICHAEL'S CELL

Michael turns to face Tabitha.

MICHAEL

Engineering taught me the world is based on certain laws of matter. A suspension bridge can only take so much weight. There is a certain height beyond which brick buildings will collapse upon themselves. I can't believe a pottery jar can move itself. But, when I showed Professor Montague the picture you took of the mark...

INT. QUINN'S CELL

Tabitha sits up and takes notice.

TABITHA

I didn't print out any photos. They're still in my camera.

INT. MICHAEL'S CELL

MICHAEL

Wendy gave it to me.

INT. QUINN'S CELL

TABITHA

That fuckin' bitch downloaded my photos? Why, Michael? Why did she take my pictures, Michael?

Quinn sits up.

QUINN

Ray's been...different...distant, since that whore's been sniffing around.

INT. MICHAEL'S CELL

MICHAEL

She said she wanted to help with the research.

INT. QUINN'S CELL

QUINN

What did she find out?

INT. MICHAEL'S CELL

MICHAEL

She didn't tell me anything.

INT. QUINN'S CELL

TABITHA

There's something really wrong about this whole thing, Wendy, the jar moving itself around.

Quinn is surprised.

QUINN

The jar moved?

TABITHA

It attacked me!

INT. MICHAEL'S CELL

MICHAEL

Now you're being ridiculous.

INT. QUINN'S CELL

QUINN
Michael, what if it did? It
attacked Tabs, and Ray's been
acting strange from the day that
jar showed up.

INT. MICHAEL'S CELL

MICHAEL
So you think it's real.

INT. QUINN'S CELL

Tabitha snuggles down into her sleeping bag.

TABITHA
It moved, Michael.

Quinn snuggles down in his sleeping bag. They listen to the
wind and the rain blowing outside.

EXT. MUDDY ROAD - DAY

A mud and rock path leads to The General Store.

He winks at Tabitha.

QUINN
I'll show you what a gay truck can
do.

Quinn puts his car in low gear and drives down the path.

EXT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE

A curtain of misty rain is beginning to drift down.

The General Store sets in a clearing. Long ago the rock
driveway was worn down to bare earth. One side of the
clearing is a large circular area containing a fire-pit. An
old open air kiln sets off to the side.

The other side of the store is a shady clearing. A single
large tree provides all the shade. The Tree is just coming
into leaf.

Quinn pulls up to Kate's store.

Tabitha is shooting pictures. Tabitha becomes hysterical.

TABITHA

I saw all this, in my dreams, this is where he burned to death. We have to get rid of that jar, it's death, that's all it is.

Quinn shakes her and she stops, tears streaming down her face.

QUINN

I know. I say just throw the damned thing out the window and hightail it out of here!

Tabitha stops crying.

TABITHA

That might not be possible, I mean...

Michael knocks on Quinn's door as he passes by.

Quinn opens his door and gets out before Tabitha can finish.

Ray stops to let Tabitha out the door. Tabitha is visibly shaken by her surroundings.

Michael comes over to her.

TABITHA (CONT'D) (CONTD)

We have to leave. This is all wrong. There's something evil about this place.

MICHAEL

I'm not leaving until I get some answers.

Michael marches up to the door of the General Store. The others follow.

INT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE - DAY

SOUND OF DISTANT THUNDER

Kate has her back to the group as they come in.

KATE

I 'spect you got sumdin belongs to me.

She turns to see the stunned looks on their faces.

Tabitha looks out the window at the Suburban.

Michael turns back to look outside at Quinn's vehicle. He shakes his head up and down as if he is hitting an imaginary wall.

MICHAEL

Stupid, stupid, stupid.

Tabitha waits for Michael to stop.

TABITHA

That's what I was wondering about.
The jar's in your car, truck, you
know what I mean.

INT. MICHAEL'S JEEP - DAY

Wendy drives through a misty rain.

As Wendy crests a hill, she tries again to make a phone call.

Wendy's cell phone slips out from her hand as she tries to open it. It falls to the back seat, landing next to the Jar, on the floor. Wendy fishes in the back to get her phone and brushes against the Jar.

With her eyes on the road she fumbles around the floor to get the phone. Her hand brushes up against the jar and gets soot on her hand. Suddenly, she sees a horse-drawn hearse galloping towards her, through the rear view mirror.

Wendy grabs the steering wheel with both hands to let the hearse pass. She swerves as the hearse passes, watching it from the driver's side window.

When she rights the car, the hearse is nowhere to be seen. Soot is on her hand and pants.

She sees in her windshield the dark shape of Percy in flames.

WENDY

Oh God, Terry.

Wendy speeds up.

INT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE - DAY

SOUND OF DISTANT THUNDER

Rain runs in rivulets down the panes of the front window.

MICHAEL

We just want some information about
a pottery jar I bought.

Kate stands firm.

KATE

Seems to me if I didn't sell it
than you never bought it. It was
stole from me so I want it back.

MICHAEL

Maybe we can come to some
agreement.

Kate stands in the middle of the group, fearless and in
command.

KATE

I'm at the crossroads, tell ya
that. Gotta let one ya get Percy
back here.

(to Michael)

Youse already stay'n put, much as
you hanker after this un.

(waving toward Tabitha)

Kate motions to Ray.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

(to Ray)

You don' seem the type to be
messing in the dirt with this un.

She looks Ray up and down.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

You'd best go fetch ma prop'try
back.

(to Quinn)

He's afeared mightily to lose you

(to Ray)

so it'd only be right to send him.

'Sides the frail one

(pointing to Tabitha)

And I gotta talk women talk 'bout
her sickness.

Michael stares at Tabitha.

Tabitha's look confirms Michael's concern.

Kate stares at Tabitha. There eyes lock.

A sudden fear comes over Tabitha.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Child, you pale as death eatin' a cracker.

Kate takes Tabitha by the arm and starts to lead her to the back room.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Now, come on wit'ya. You in sore need of fixin'. I can smell it.

Tabitha turns.

TABITHA
It won't hurt to talk to the old lady while we wait. You go with Ray.

Kate turns back.

KATE
Not likely, is it boy, what with the way you hanker after the puny one here?

Tabitha and Michael lock eyes.

MICHAEL
I'll stay.

Quinn reaches in his pocket, pulls out keys and tosses them to Ray.

Ray heads out the door with Quinn.

Michael watches Kate lead Tabitha to the back room.

KATE
(menacingly)
Percy's taken a likin' to you, I reckon.

INT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE - BACK ROOM - DAY

Kate is mixing up a compound for Tabitha.

KATE

You lost a chil' jes like I did.
Jes befo' my Percy came back from
the dead.

KATE'S FLASHBACK - SUMMER - 1918

INT. KATE'S CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Momma is getting sleepy on the couch. Her head falls forward, jerking her awake.

Kate, 16, is standing over her. Several framed pictures fall from the wall at once as Kate 16 yells at her mother.

KATE 16

You never come tween us again
Momma. That's rat. You ain't jes
sleepy...you gonna die, Momma. I
poisoned you.

Momma starts to laugh.

Kate clutches her belly and starts to dry heave.

Blood flows down the front of her dress.

MOMMA

Jes like I done you, child. Signs
a death all 'round us and you and I
dinn't see.

She laughs and coughs.

EXT. FIREPIT - NIGHT

A small fire is burning in the firepit.

Kate, bleeding, drags her still breathing Momma to the fire.

Kate collapses onto her momma.

She take some herbs and throws them into the fire which starts to smoke and sizzle.

Kate murmurs some words.

Momma wakes up to try to stand.

Kate pushes her down.

MOMMA

I know'd as soon as laundry time
came and no rags to hang.

Momma is gaining a bit more strength.

MOMMA (CONT'D) (CONTD)

I know the one got you in the
family way...and I killed 'im.

Kate pushes Momma down.

MOMMA (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Got rid of his Pa, too, fo' good
measure.

With rage giving her new found strength, she pulls out a
large carved wooden knife that Percy made and plunges it into
her momma's chest.

KATE 16

Eye fo' an eye, the good book sez,
life for a life.

END FLASHBACK

INT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE - BACK ROOM - DAY - PRESENT DAY

KATE

Momma show'd me ever'thing she
learned from her momma, and so on.

Tabitha looks at a strange looking fruit.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

That's a Paw Paw, reckon you didn't
never seen one afore. Rare this
time o'year, but theys a few still
out.

Kate takes a knife and splits the fruit lengthways.

She hands half to Tabitha.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Go 'head girl try it.

When Tabitha hesitates, Kate finds a spoon, wipes the dust
off with her dress and hands it to Tabitha.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Go'on girl, you'll like it, might
fatten you up a bit, you need that.

Tabitha dips her spoon into the custard-like fruit and tastes it. She eats more as she does enjoy the taste and sensation.

When she asks for the second half, Kate carefully removes the seeds and sets them to dry.

She hands Tabitha a potion in a Mason jar.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)
That'll fix up your woman trouble
jes fine.

Tabitha stares at Kate then drinks the potion.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Now you go take a rest on the
swing. I'll be out shortly.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Michael comes over to where Quinn is standing in the clearing.

MICHAEL
Ray was talking to me.

QUINN
I'll bet! About his conversion or
his conquest.

MICHAEL
Ray loves you. It's Wendy.

QUINN
Fine, so she's a fag hag with
privileges.

Michael grabs Quinn who quickly brushes him off.

MICHAEL
She blackmailing him...and you.

Quinn's attitude abruptly changes.

QUINN
What do you mean?

MICHAEL
She was going to the VA to try to
get your pension and education
yanked if he didn't cooperate.

QUINN

Oh God! The interview. What was I thinking? And she's got the jar.

Michael realizes the implications of Wendy stealing the jar.

MICHAEL

Godammit! She's got all the proof she needs her story's real.

QUINN

We've got to get Tabbs and get out of here. She's an old lady. We can easily disable her...

Michael looks shocked.

QUINN (CONT'D) (CONTD)

If we have to.

EXT. APARTMENT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A campus bonfire is being built off to the side of the parking lot.

Ray watches as students bring out all manner of wooden furniture to pile on the bonfire.

Ray pulls up. The driver's side door of Michael's Jeep is wide open.

Ray retrieves the jar and the keys from the Jeep. He locks the Jeep.

INT. SAWMILL - NIGHT

Shafts of moonlight peering through the warped boards of an old Sawmill illuminate Red as he sits in the partial shadows in the corner, his legs drawn up to him.

EXT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Two lantern burning on the porch illuminate the scene. A fire is burning in the muddy firepit.

Michael and Quinn approach.

Kate is looking older.

Kate sits on a rocking chair calmly pulling hair from Tabitha's unconscious form lying in a suspended porch swing next to Kate's rocking chair.

KATE

When I seed he wasn't commin' back
in a body, I binded Percy real
good; once with the mark and twice
with the hair.

Michael runs over to Tabitha while Quinn surveys the surrounding ready to strike.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Thought you two might be cooking
som'thin' up so I quieted this 'un
down so's you wouldn't even try.

Michael tries to rouse Tabitha. When he can't, he gently lies Tabitha back and prepares himself to attack Kate.

Michael and Quinn exchange glances. Quinn shakes his head ever so slightly to signal NO.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Good thing the moon it'll be full
tonight elsewise I'd never see if
it's Percy you bringing back.

MICHAEL

Dammit. Who's Percy?

Kate is casually plucking hair from Tabitha, lying in the porch swing and weaving it while they wait for her jar.

KATE

I 'spect you cut the binding cord
on Percy's jar, elsewise, I'd never
sense he'd gone too far'way.

Michael just stares at her.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

I think he laked them young, but no
tell'n. I bet he got hissself in a
lot of mischief with you folks.

Kate laughs then gets lonely for her Percy.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

He was so lonely fo' a time what
with his son off to The Great War
and his wife dead.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 When the apple tole me we's to be
 together fo'ever... Didn't think
 fo'ever be'd this long.
 (to Michael)
 The one you brung to the dance...

MICHAEL
 Tabitha. Her name is Tabitha.

KATE
 ...is fresh...jes right for Percy.
 I'm all dried up.

SIX RAPS

Kate continues to pluck hair from Tabitha. Michael winces every time a hair is pulled out.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 Hush, Percy. Momma never did like
 I hung around him, says it jes not
 right, him bein' colored and all.

EIGHTEEN LOUDER RAPS COMING FROM ALL DIRECTIONS

QUINN
 What the Hell is that?

KATE
 You gonna let me talk or what? He
 did me no harm; more like a daddy
 sometime than my husband, I guess.

FIVE SLOW RAPS

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)
 When folks started dying, I thought
 t'was cause momma forbid ma seein'
 him, and I told her so.

KATE'S FLASHBACK

--Kate is in the back room of the shop, mixing poisons together to kill her mother.

KATE (V.O.)
 That was rat af'er the fight and
 him cursin' out my momma.

--Kate watches as Percy calls out her Momma. Kate is already showing her pregnancy.

PERCY

You killed my son! With poultice
for the grippe and berries fo' the
cough. My boy's dead! Your Hoodoo
killed him! I HOPE EVER'ONE YOU
EVER TOUCHED COMES BACK TO HAUNT
YOU.

Percy breaks into a coughing fit. The towns folk around the coffin start to murmur.

PERCY (CONT'D) (CONTD)

And I'm likely next.

This causes alarm in Kate. Momma notices but does not react.

END FLASH BACK

EXT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

KATE

Ain't that rat?

FIVE QUICK RAPS

Kate is angry.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Ain't gonna happen, Percy, you'se mine!

Quinn and Michael look confused.

QUINN

Which war are you talking about?

KATE

Which? There's jes the Great War,
ain't been none since, the War to
End War, you'se dumb as a stump,
boy, you don't know that. Sampson,
Percy's boy, the one that come
back, he the one what got sick.
Momma did no harm, she fixed him,
'cept he died...

SOUND OF KATE FADES OUT

As Kate rambles, Quinn asides to Michael.

QUINN

She's talking about 1918. The Spanish Flu! It killed millions right after World War 1.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Michael follows Kate as she gathers herbs and roots for her potions.

Kate is wearing a simple shift, the weather being warm enough for a light dress. She carries the same sling bag her mother used in 1918, though you wouldn't know it from the many repairs made over the years.

The woods are just beginning to bud. They come upon a patch of ill-tended turned soil that serves as Kate's garden.

EXT. KATE'S GARDEN - DAY

MICHAEL

So, how long have you had the jar?

KATE

Pert'near all my days.

Kate loosens some soil around a plant and pulls up a few potatoes. She puts the potato plant, dirt and all in her bag. She searches around in the weeds and pulls up a few dried out carrots. They follow the potatoes into the bag.

MICHAEL

But you inherited it. You got it from your momma?

KATE

Momma never cared I threw pots. She wouldn't have none of it. Wasn't for her. Now 'shine, that she could make real good.

MICHAEL

Then your Grandma?

KATE

Maw Maw been gone a long time before Percy.

They cross the garden plot when Kate spies a paw-paw fruit in a tree.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Kate is having trouble getting the fruit down.

KATE

Well, help me, for land's sake.

Michael looks around and finds a stout limb, just right for knocking fruit or heads.

Michael comes up behind Kate, trying to reach for the fruit.

KATE (CONT'D) (CONTD)

Mind you don't hit me, boy. Your
girl likely stay sleeping for a
long time, that happen.

Michael swings and knocks the fruit into Kate's waiting hands.

INT. CRAMPED SPACE

Wendy squirms in a tight space. When she looks up all she sees is darkness. She raises her hands and feel the cover above her. She starts to pound.

EXT. GAS STATION - PRESENT DAY - DAY

A rundown gas station that has old style gasoline pumps.

Ray pulls up to a pump, gets out and looks for the place to insert his card.

INT. GAS STATION - OFFICE

The attendant watches Ray try to push a card at the pumps and comes out to investigate.

EXT. GAS STATION

ATTENDANT

Pump your gas if you pay me now.

RAY

How much?

ATTENDANT

How much you got?

Ray pulls out a wad of bills. Attendant takes them all, then gives back one dollar.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Not quite fair, you gettin' nothing
back, now ain't it.

Attendant starts to pump gas, sees the jar on the back floor.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Now ain't that nice.

Attendant opens the back door, reaches in and picks up the jar.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D) (CONTD)
How much you want for this?

Attendant pulls out the wad of bills Ray gave him.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D) (CONTD)
Give ya a dollar?

Soot gets on his hands. He sets the jar back in place, closes the door, finishes pumping gas and just stands there.

Ray gets in and quickly drives away.

As Ray rounds the corner leading to the gravel road, he sees through the Driver's side window, the attendant pouring gasoline on himself.

As he turns on to the gravel road, trees hide an obvious blaze.

Ray drives on.

INT. CRAMPED SPACE

Wendy squirms in a tight space. When she looks up all she sees is darkness. She is whimpering. She scratches the boards above her

EXT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

The moon is full and low in the sky when Ray drives into the parking lot in front of the store.

Fog licks the low bushes.

A fire is blazing in the fire pit.

Michael is sitting on the porch drinking tea from a Mason jar.

Quinn watches from the end of the porch.

Michael gets up to greet Ray as Ray is opening the back door. Michael stumbles and falls to the ground.

Ray leaves the jar and runs to Michael.

KATE

Thing about Paw Paw seeds; they
make a powerful tea; knock you
right out.

Ray and Quinn run to him. Their eyes meet.

QUINN

Why did you lie to me?

RAY

I wasn't lying. I was just letting
you draw your own conclusions. I
was protecting us.

QUINN

You are going to be one hell of an
attorney. You don't have to protect
me, just love me.

Ray shakes Michael.

Michael groans.

KATE

He ain't dead, jes dead tired,
that's all.

Quinn and Ray help Michael to stand.

Michael stumbles along with them towards the porch.

QUINN

Let's get him inside.

Ray yells over his shoulder.

RAY

The jar's in the back you old
witch.

EXT. SAWMILL - NIGHT

A fog crawls over the land.

Red's Thunderbird is parked beneath skeletal trees.

SOUND OF THE WIND PICKING UP, rustles the branches.

One breaks and falls on the car hood.

INT. SAWMILL - NIGHT

Red has fallen asleep with his back to a large saw wheel. The wind is coming in through several warped boards. The overhead fan slowly begins to turn.

Smaller saw wheels begin to turn as the wind rustles Red's jacket. The largest wheel begins to turn catching Red's belt in the mechanism.

He wakes up and begins to jerk on his belt and pants. He yanks and pushes up at the same time, freeing himself but propelling him frontally into a turning vertical saw that cuts nearly through his shoulder, severing the right arm, it hangs now only by some attached muscle and skin.

Bleeding profusely, Red pushes himself with his weaker left hand. Red trips and falls backwards on to a rip saw wheel that severs both legs at the knees.

He uses his one good arm to push him away from the rip saw.

When he can finally lay his head down, too late Red realizes he has lain his head eye level to the blade on the cutting through of the large saw wheel swiftly rolling towards him.

He screams as the blade slices the top of his head off. Blood and brains fly everywhere.

INT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE

Quinn and Ray lay Michael down on the counter.

QUINN

I should never have doubted you.

RAY

I wanted to tell you, but when you
accused me of being
unfaithful...you would have to hold
a gun to my head before I'd fuck
her ragity ass...front or back, and
I agreed, I thought you would
investigate further, but you
didn't.

QUINN

I...

Kate comes storming in. She is looking much older.

KATE

He's out! You let him out! Now's
we got ta get him back! Good thing
the puny one's got her moon. And
where's them papers I wrapped
around him ta keep him warm?

EXT. CAMPUS - BONFIRE - NIGHT

A crowd is chanting something indecipherable as students run
towards the flames with furniture to throw onto the bonfire.

The murmuring chanting clears to Kate's voice.

EXT. FIREPIT - NIGHT

Tabitha is nude, trance dancing slowing around a fire. She is
holding the open jar between her legs.

Kate is off to the side chanting. Kate is looking older
still.

KATE

*Wax seal broken. Jar's open.
Spirit though he can't escape,
Through raps and seein'
communicates.
Tools and fire and suffocation,
Tells all his situation.
Ashes from my darlin' man,
Pottery clay fired in sand.
Menstrual blood, strands of hair,
Traps him; binds him there.*

Quinn is off to the side. As he watches the fire, an
agonized face, then a torso of a man tied to a stake and
burning to death appears in the flames.

Quinn peers into the flames for a few seconds before realizing what he has just seen. He shivers as the creepiness of the experience sinks in.

Quinn jumps back and sits down on the step.

Black smoke starts coming from the ground where Tabitha has stopped dancing and is just turning around.

Smoke is entering the jar. As the smoke from the ground clears, ash from the fire begins to swirl around her and flow into the jar.

Michael staggers out from the store, held up by Ray, to watch the ritual. He regains consciousness slowly as he and Ray approach the firepit.

MICHAEL

(to Ray)

Is Tabitha safe?

RAY

I really don't know, Michael.

Michael stumbles.

Ray eases Michael down and sits next to him just outside the firelight.

Michael slumps sideways and lays in the mud. Occasionally Michael makes flaccid arm movements to try to right himself.

Ray's face becomes flaccid as he gazes deeper into the flame.

EXT. CAMPUS - BONFIRE - NIGHT

Students dance around the roaring inferno of a large bonfire. The dancing slows when the Blonde who was holding the jar at the party deliberately walks into the flames.

The dancers stop when they hear SCREAMING.

Too late the bonfire collapses in on itself and the blonde.

EXT. FIREPIT - NIGHT

The last of the soot is being drawn into the jar.

Tabitha staggers. The jar falls from between her legs.

Kate catches it and sits down.

Tabitha collapses.

Kate gets up and staggers to where Ray is watching the fire. She holds the lid of the jar close to the flame to melt the wax on top.

Suddenly Ray begins to speak softly with Percy's choice of words:

RAY

Kate...Kate

Kate pulls back. Kate sits next to Ray, then playfully rubs Ray's leg. Kate is looking older.

KATE

Percy, you mine fo'ever. Said it then and I say it now. Never took it off.

Kate wiggles her wrist to show the old woven bracelet.

RAY

This ain't right what you doin'.
Let me go.

Kate is more playful. She snuggles up to Ray.

KATE

You planning on staying in there?
You comin' back to me, Percy?

RAY

He's just letting me in fo' now. I ain't a sinful man, Kate..won't hold on to nothing ain't mine to begin with. Just let me go.

Kate gets irate. She pulls the large wooden knife and goes to attack Michael lying still in the mud.

KATE

Life fo' a life. I can get all of you back.

Ray grabs hold of her.

RAY

Just let me move on!

She proudly shows Ray her bracelet. They struggle.

KATE

I never took it off, not once.
We's 'sposed to be tagather.

In a rage, Ray tears the bracelet from her wrist and throws it in the mud. He throws Kate to the ground.

RAY
(angry)
Ain't your decision to make, woman!
It's mine!

Kate crawls closer to the fire, terrified of what Ray may do next.

KATE
(taunting)
You won't come near me, 'slong as
I'm close to the fire, now will ya?

Kate melts part of the wax on the lid in the fire.

When the wax softens but does not run, Kate scoots closer to Tabitha.

Michael forces himself up and grabs hold of Ray. He shakes him awake.

RAY
Goddamn!

Michael forces himself to stand. Ray restrains him.

RAY (CONT'D) (CONTD)
(sounding like Percy)
Sumtin' gotta be done first.

Quinn, Ray and Michael look on.

Kate wipes some of the blood that Tabitha has bled onto the outside of the jar and wipes around the lid of the jar.

She pulls a hair from her head and presses it into the still warm wax. She puts the lid on the jar and it is sealed again.

Kate sets there for a moment, breathing hard.

KATE'S FLASHBACK OF MAKING THE JAR

Kate is piling more and more of Percy's ashes on her pottery wheel as she pours powders and water on the wheel.

She shapes the jar on the wheel.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. FIREPIT - NIGHT

Kate is just about to tie the hair twine around the jar when Tabitha clumsily grabs for the jar.

KATE

Let me go! I gotta bind him good
this time, no tellin' how fierce he
is.

They struggle.

Kate lets the jar fall into the mud. She attacks Tabitha, who easily fends her off.

A frail Kate struggles to stand over Tabitha, knife in hand, poised to attack.

Tabitha makes a grab for the knife and holds it blade first. Kate struggles to pull it away.

Tabitha wrenches the knife away from Kate and throws it into the fire.

Without thinking, Kate rushes over to the fire to try to retrieve the knife.

Tabitha easily pushes Kate into the fire where she ignites like kindling.

Flames flaring brightly, showing Tabitha bleeding and rooting around for something.

The SOUND OF KATE SCREAMING rouse the men into action.

Michael drags his way over to where Tabitha is rooting around in the mud.

MICHAEL

We have to go, now.

Tabitha finds the torn bracelet Percy gave to Kate.

Michael helps Tabitha stand up. She lunges for the jar but Michael is strong enough by this time to restrain her.

EXT. KATE'S GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Quinn grabs the blanket from the porch swing.

EXT. FIREPIT - DAY

Morning light breaks over the hills.

As Quinn covers her, Tabitha breaks away from Michael's grasp. She grabs hold of the jar, blood from her cut hand running slowly down the jar.

SCREAMS DIE DOWN

MICHAEL

We're not taking the jar. Leave the jar. Let go. Leave it here.

Tabitha will not let go of the Jar.

Quinn runs up ahead to his truck.

Ray and Michael escort Tabitha to the truck. Michael gently tries to take the jar from her.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (CONTD)

We can't take the jar, Tabbs. We have to leave it here.

She breaks away holding the jar when they arrive at the truck doors refuses to surrender the jar.

TABITHA

(sobbing)

I can't. He's mine. We 'sposed to be together forever.

Ray and Michael escort the sobbing woman and the jar to the truck.

Quinn has the motor running. They barrel out of there into the morning.

The braided hair twine sets in the mud.

INT. CRAMPED SPACE

Subdued light from the side of Wendy, silhouetting her, as she tries to dig her way out of her predicament. Her hands are bloody from her repeated attempts.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DEN - DAY

Sunlight falls from open curtains onto the shelf where the jar is securely locked in its case.

SOUNDS OF JACKHAMMERS

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

The sun is shining bright through open curtains promising a beautiful Spring day.

SOUND OF JACKHAMMERS

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING- FRONT DOOR - DAY

Quinn is carrying a grocery bag that has flowers and a bottle of wine showing. He comes up to the front door that is always unlocked.

SOUND OF JACKHAMMERS ON BASEMENT CONCRETE

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DEN

The jar is no longer in it's case. SOUNDS OF JACKHAMMERS vibrate the jar to the edge of the shelf and off.

It does not break.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Michael comes into the kitchen carrying the toys, bed, and litter pan of his dead cat.

Tabitha is SHOUTING to Michael over the constant SOUND OF JACKHAMMERING.

TABITHA
I THINK WENDY JUST LEFT CAMPUS.
NOBODY'S HEARD FROM HER SINCE THE
TRIP. I THINK SHE GOT SCARED AND
RAN OFF.

Michael deposits the cat's belongings into the trash.

THE JACK HAMMER SOUND STOPS

MICHAEL
Time to let him go.

Tabitha is in a sleeveless top. The cut marks up and down her arms clearly show as she cooks breakfast for Michael. She is wearing Percy's bracelet.

TABITHA
SO how old...

MICHAEL
A hundred and four or six, I'm
guessing.

Tabitha stops cooking to sit in Michael's lap.

TABITHA
So, you think the jar kept her
alive all that time?

Michael is playful.

MICHAEL
Time will tell.

Michael glances at a shadow crossing the floor. Tabitha
seems to read his mind.

TABITHA
I miss Morrey, too.

Michael stares out into space, remembering.

MICHAEL
My dad's funeral on graduation day
was bad enough. When mom told me he
killed himself in a faked accident
to get money so I could finish
Engineering school...

TABITHA
You handled it.

MICHAEL
Barely, but when I found Morrey
dead when I got back. It was only
overnight.

TABITHA
He was 20 years old, Michael.

MICHAEL
My only true friend and I wasn't
with him when he died.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DEN

The jar is laying on its side when the JACKHAMMERING sound
begins. Vibrations cause the cat cremation jar to roll off
and shelf and crush the middle section of the jar.

Black sooty smoke billows out from the jar.

INT. RAY AND QUINN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Ray lies comfortably in bed reading a Law review while drinking a cup of hot chocolate. A cigarette lies burning in the ashtray to his side.

Sooty dust mingles with cigarette smoke, creating a haze in the room.

Ray coughs.

He spills some of the hot chocolate on the bed when he sits up. Where the drops of hot chocolate land, goutts of flame appear. He tries to beat out the flames with the magazine that goes up in flame like flash paper.

When he tries to beat the flame out with his hands, his hands become engulfed in flame that ignites all it touches, including Ray. The more he tries to beat out the flame, the more his clothing catches fire.

After that he spontaneously combusts and is reduced to ash.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING- FRONT DOOR - DAY

As Quinn approaches the front door he looks up at his apartment only to see the warm glow of a fire.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

The black sooty smoke wafts into the kitchen and over the stove.

Tabitha gets up from Michael's lap when she sees the eggs smoking.

By the time she gets to them, the pan is on fire. Liquid fire spreads along the stove and down to the floor.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING- FRONT DOOR - DAY

Quinn can not get the door to budge. He fumbles for a key. Through the door he can hear

SCREAMS AND SOUNDS OF BODIES FALLING.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - WENDY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

A fog of soot fills the room.

A screwdriver-wielding crazed psychopathic CARPENTER bursts into the room where two single beds used to set. Something is moving in shadow under the remaining bed.

Wendy can just see the coffin lid above her. Suddenly the coffin lid is raised.

The Carpenter raises the bed to find a half starved bloody Wendy screaming and trying to get up.

The first stab to Wendy goes through the heart followed by a stab through her eye pins her back to the wood flooring. Her struggles slow as more blood pumps out from the chest wound and runs down the side of her face from her eye wound.

From her one good eye, through the increasing black smoke, Wendy sees:

The crazed psychopath carpenter runs into a closet door, screams, but continues to run into the door until smoke obliterates Wendy's sight.

All she can hear are his bloody gargles and the SOUND OF A SKULL CAVING IN.

MONTAGE OF DEATH SCENES

Through a fine black haze, almost washing the color from the scenes:

A) a young female college student is heaving in the toilet while blood runs down her legs. She slips on her own blood and hits her head on the tub. She suffers a head wound and just lies there while blood continues to ooze from her head wound and her crotch until she bleeds to death.

B) A male college student hangs himself in the closet. When the closet door tries to swing shut, it is kept opened by the student's swinging torso.

C) One male roommate projectile vomits blood onto his dead roommate until he is reduced to vomiting small globs of blood while choking to death.

D) A nude, blood covered woman repeatedly throws herself at a closed window.

E) Michael's entire den is covered in a fine layer of black soot.

INT. EXPENSIVE HOTEL - MAIN LOBBY- 30 YEARS IN THE FUTURE

Quinn, now in his 70's, in good health, immaculately dressed, crosses the lobby to enter the formal dining area and exits to the service area.

INT. EXPENSIVE HOTEL - SERVICE AREA - BREAKROOM - 30 YEARS IN THE FUTURE

Quinn stops his walk down a corridor when he sees the old apartment house, closed and allowed to decay, on the roll screen TV taped to a couple of cabinet doors.

A couple of off duty chefs notice Quinn watching.

CHEF 1

Sir, didn't you attend school there.

On the screen, a window is falling from the building hit by a wrecking ball. Quinn just makes out two halves of a jar falling amongst the debris.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - PRESENT DAY

The grease fire has spread to the curtains. Tabitha and Michael hold on to each other as they slow dance to swing/ballroom music.

Eventually the fire spreads out to the furniture and to their clothing as they continue to dance. Tabitha lies her head on his shoulder and stares out from one eye.

SLOW PUSH TO XCU OPENED EYE

INT. EXPENSIVE HOTEL - SERVICE AREA - BREAKROOM - 30 YEARS IN THE FUTURE

Quinn watches the screen as the two chefs chatter away.

CHEF 2

I heard it was a terrorist attack, some biowarfare agent... some kind of superflu...everybody died in there.

CHEF 1

I heard it was haunted by a big cat that slashed peoples' throats...

CHEF 2

Homeland Security sealed the building . The lawsuits nearly bankrupted the University.

CHEF 1

They say the Devil himself came through the wall, like a wind of black smoke and killed everybody.

Quinn silently watches the building fall to pieces, tears running down his face.

QUINN

That's not how I remember it.

INT. NURSING HOME - TABITHA'S ROOM - 30 YEARS IN THE FUTURE

SLOW PULL FROM XCU OPENED EYE TO REVEAL

Burn scars cover every inch of Tabitha's face and body. One eye is fused shut. A feeding tube snakes under what little cover she has. An IV line goes into her neck artery. She has contractures.

Where her monitor would normally be, the image shows a tread crushing the jar to dust.

As soon as the treads crushes the jar a ROUGH WHISPERING BARELY AUDIBLE VOICE MORE LIKE WIND

VOICE

FREE

At the same time that Tabitha speaks for the first time in thirty years:

TABITHA

Free.

A burn scarred hand reaches out to close her eye and the scene shifts to a much older Michael, also covered in burn scars.

He lies down on his adjoining hospital bed.

Tabitha's TV screen turns into a monitor and ALARMS at the same time the picture hanging on the wall behind Michael's bed becomes a monitor and signal his vital signs diminishing.

The alarm sound morphs into a slow swing dance.

FADE TO BLACK.