

Rhymes of the Devil  
by  
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(The Rhmes of the Devil)

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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

AERIAL - A glittering MODERN CITY crawls with light and noise. BILLBOARDS pulse with ads for alcohol, drugs disguised as "lifestyle," and a HARD ROCK GOD on a massive screen - JAX KANE, 30s, hair whipping, guitar mid-swing.

We PUSH PAST the billboards, leaving the noise behind...

...GLIDING across freeway rivers of headlights...

...drifting toward the OLDER EDGE of the city.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH - NIGHT

A small, slightly rundown CHURCH sits on a corner, its parking lot half-empty. A lone CROSS on the roof glows in soft, warm neon - tiny against the city blaze behind it.

A HAND-PAINTED BANNER flaps over the door:

"YOUTH TALENT NIGHT - JESUS LOVES YOUR SONG!"

Music leaks out: awkward guitar, giggling kids, feedback.

We MOVE IN through the open doors-

INT. CHURCH - SANCTUARY - NIGHT

Cheap string lights. Folding chairs. A MICROPHONE on a wobbly stand. Parents with camcorders. A WHEEZY SOUND SYSTEM.

On the low "stage":

JAXON "JAX" KANE, 14, skinny, nervous, clutches a beat-up ACOUSTIC GUITAR.

Beside him stands NATE HOLLOWAY, 14, sweet-faced, wired with nervous energy, holding a second guitar that's a size too big.

They wear matching, badly printed T-SHIRTS:

"GRACE YOUTH - PRAISE BAND"

A CHURCH LADY at the mic squints at a crumpled paper.

CHURCH LADY  
 (tiny voice, into mic)  
 Next up we have... Jaxon and  
 Nathan, doing an original song.

Sparse APPLAUSE. Someone coughs.

IN THE FRONT ROW

EVANGELICAL MOM (40s) — Jax's mom — beams, phone up to record, eyes already wet.

BACK ROW

A younger EVA (13), braces, watches Jax with obvious crush energy.

ON STAGE  
 Jax leans toward Nate, whispers:

JAX (14)  
 My hands are sweating on the holy song. That's gotta be a sin.

NATE  
 If we choke, we just say it was "speaking in tongues."

Jax snorts, almost laughs his fear away.

JAX (14)  
 Okay. When I nod, you start the verse. Don't rush the tempo this time.

NATE  
 I rush because I believe in you, man.

Jax rolls his eyes, but that lands. He takes a breath, steps up to the mic.

JAX (14)  
 (into mic)  
 Hey. Uh... we wrote this one. It's about how... sometimes you don't feel like God's listening, but He is.

A small "aww" from a mom somewhere.

Jax nods to Nate.

Nate hits the OPENING CHORDS – a simple, surprisingly soulful progression. Jax joins in, and suddenly the awkward church hall has MUSIC.

Not polished. But real.

JAX (14) (CONT'D)  
(singing; rough but  
honest)

When the night is loud and I'm all  
alone,  
And the world outside don't feel  
like home,  
If You hear my broken sound,  
Take these words and turn me  
around...

The congregation quiets. Even the kids stop giggling.

ON EVA – she's transfixed, seeing the future version of him already.

ON MOM – proud, whisper-praying through a smile.

ON STAGE – Jax glances at Nate. Nate stares back, grinning, playing like this is everything.

NATE  
(soft, mid-song)  
Told you, dude. We're gonna be huge  
one day.

Jax almost misses a chord, caught by the thought.

JAX (14)  
(singing)  
If I ever sing the wrong song loud,  
Pull me back from the wrong crowd–

Nate adds a harmony line, thin but sincere.

They hit the CHORUS together. For a moment, this ugly room feels... lifted. The closest thing Jax has ever known to peace.

ANGLE – THE BACK WALL

A FADED POSTER: a cartoon DEVIL with a red X through him.

TEXT: "DON'T LET THE ENEMY STEAL YOUR SONG."

We PUSH IN on the devil's smirking face...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT - YEARS LATER

The same chord progression from the church - now mutilated into a distorted, rage-soaked RIFF - VIBRATES the grimy walls.

A neon sign flickers: "THE PIT - LIVE MUSIC."

On stage:

JAX KANE, now 32, hair tangled, eyeliner smeared, three days past his last shower. A bottle of whiskey sits on an amp like a bandmate.

He and his battered band hammer through the final measures of a song NO ONE IS LISTENING TO.

THE CROWD

A handful of drunks, one girl doom-scrolling on her phone, a biker couple making out hard against a wall. That's it.

At a side table, a DEALER quietly makes a hand-off - the kind Jax pretends not to see anymore.

ONSTAGE  
Jax leans into the mic.

JAX  
(gravel, sarcastic)  
Hey, thanks for being here tonight.  
Try not to injure yourselves with  
all that enthusiasm.

DREW, drummer, early 30s, a sad loyal dog in human form, gives him a warning look.

A heckler shouts from the bar:

HECKLER  
Play something from the radio!

Jax grins poison.

JAX

Sure. I'll play something from your mom's playlist – but there's only so many polka classics I know.

LIGHT LAUGHTER from two people. Someone throws a peanut at him.

Jax catches it mid-air, pops it into his mouth.

JAX (CONT'D)

Mm. Tastes like minimum wage and custody battles.

The crowd GROANS. The bartender hits a switch and the stage lights BLAST OFF – that's the unofficial "you're done" signal.

Jax squints into the sudden darkness.

JAX (CONT'D)

Awesome. Blackout is my favorite effect.

He unstraps his guitar, snaps the strap off the peg, and walks offstage.

CUT TO:

INT. DIVE BAR – BACK HALL – CONTINUOUS

Jax pushes through a sticky curtain into a narrow hallway plastered with decades of band stickers and regret.

Drew follows.

DREW

Dude... you gotta stop pissing off the crowd.

JAX

What crowd? That was a support group for alcoholism with a cover charge.

Drew tries not to smile.

JAX (CONT'D)

(noticing)

Don't. Don't be loyal tonight. I can't handle hope.

From the other side of the hall, the CLUB OWNER approaches — fat cigar, fat attitude.

CLUB OWNER  
We're cutting your pay in half.  
Again.

JAX  
Because the lights failed?

CLUB OWNER  
Because your attitude failed.

JAX  
Ah. Well. Can't argue that.

He snatches the thin envelope.

CLUB OWNER  
Also, your sound guy said you  
screamed at him.

JAX  
He unplugged my pedalboard because  
I "interrupted" his nachos.

CLUB OWNER  
And?

JAX  
They deserved to be interrupted.  
They were soggy.

The Owner steps closer, eyes narrow.

CLUB OWNER  
This ain't comedy night, Kane. You  
wanna get paid, show some respect.

Jax SALUTES mockingly.

JAX  
Yes, sir. Respect restored.  
Envelope accepted. Soul shattered.  
You have a nice evening now.

The Owner shoves past him.

DREW  
(quiet)  
You're making this hard, man.

JAX

This? This is easy. Life is the hard part.

They step out the back door into—

EXT. DIVE BAR - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Cool air. Trash cans. A stray cat. Welcome to the glamorous world of rock.

Jax takes a long breath, then—

A LOUD CRACK.

He looks down.

His guitar — the same model he's played since he was a teenager — lies on the ground, neck SPLIT where someone must've stepped on it during the load-out.

Jax kneels, touches the cracked wood like a dead friend.

Drew sees the pain flash across his face.

DREW

Man... I'm sorry. Really.

Jax forces a crooked smile.

JAX

Nah. It's poetic. My guitar's quitting before you do.

DREW

Jax—

JAX

Don't. It's fine. I don't feel anything anymore.

Beat.

A HOMELESS MAN across the alley watches Jax, eyes hollow. He hums a familiar tune — the SAME SONG Jax and Nate sang in church, just slower... broken.

Jax freezes.

The man's voice trembles:

HOMELESS MAN  
 (singing)  
 "If I ever sing the wrong song  
 loud..."

Jax's throat tightens. Drew notices.

JAX  
 (low)  
 Where'd you hear that?

HOMELESS MAN  
 (faint smile)  
 From a kid... used to play it outside  
 the mission. Real nice boy. Name  
 was... Nate.

Jax's breath stops.

Drew steps forward.

DREW  
 Jax... maybe he just means—

JAX  
 (to the man, shaken)  
 Nate Holloway?

The man nods slowly.

HOMELESS MAN  
 Yeah. He... didn't make it.

The world tilts.

Jax staggers backward.

We HEAR FLASHES — Nate laughing, 14 years old, holding that  
 oversize guitar, saying:

NATE (V.O.)  
 "Told you, dude. We're gonna be  
 huge one day."

Jax swallows, eyes burning.

JAX  
 (whisper)  
 No... no, no, no—

The homeless man looks away, his voice small.

## HOMELESS MAN

Drugs. Bad batch. They said he was calling someone's name before he went... sounded like "Jax."

Jax chokes.

Drew puts a hand on his shoulder.

## DREW

Let's... let's get out of here, man.

Jax wipes his face, furious at himself for crying.

## JAX

No. I need air.

He starts walking. Fast.

Drew watches him go, worried.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY HILLTOP - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jax climbs the hill, breathing hard, emotional storm building.

The city glows below - indifferent, mocking.

He stares upward.

## JAX

(shouting at the sky)

What do you WANT from me?!

The wind kicks up.

## JAX (CONT'D)

I'm done. I'm EMPTY.

If you're up there - ANYBODY - JUST  
TELL ME WHAT TO DO!

Silence.

Then, faint... a low RUMBLE. A shift in the atmosphere.

HEADLIGHTS appear behind him where no road exists.

Jax turns-

A BLACK SEDAN idles, sleek and impossible.

Door opens.

LUCIEN BLACK steps out.

LUCIEN  
Jaxon Kane.

I've heard good things.

Jax's fate tilts.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. CITY HILLTOP - NIGHT

Wind churns. The city lights below flicker like a dying electrical vein.

Jax stands frozen as LUCIEN BLACK approaches - elegant, unhurried, dressed in a suit sharp enough to cut glass.

Lucien's smile is warm, practiced, a predator's version of kindness.

LUCIEN  
Rough night?

Jax wipes his face, trying to look tougher than he feels.

JAX  
If you're lost, the freeway's that way.

LUCIEN  
Oh, I'm not lost.

He looks Jax over, reading him like sheet music.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
You're Jaxon Kane.

Jax stiffens.

JAX  
Not sure that's something to brag about.

Lucien chuckles, stepping closer but never invading too much space.

LUCIEN

On the contrary. I've been  
following your career for some  
time.

Jax snorts.

JAX

Which part? The dive bars or the  
part where I ruin everything I  
touch?

Lucien's smile widens – sympathetic, but almost too  
sympathetic.

LUCIEN

You're not a failure, Jax.  
You're a man... in the wrong hands.

Beat. This lands harder than Jax wants to admit.

JAX

Look, I don't know what this is – a  
scam, a cult, an MLM thing where I  
have to sell vitamins –

LUCIEN

(smiling)  
I'm here because you screamed for  
help.

Jax freezes.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

I don't ignore an invitation.

Jax's eyes narrow.

JAX

What exactly are you?

Lucien steps closer. Not threatening – intimate, like a  
surgeon about to deliver a diagnosis.

LUCIEN

I'm a producer.

The oldest one there is.

He holds out a simple Moleskine notebook.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

Inside this are lyrics that can  
change your life – if you're  
willing to sing them.

Jax doesn't take it.

JAX

What's the catch?

Lucien opens the notebook. Pages filled with dark,  
mesmerizing phrases – echoes of the Rhymes of the Devil,  
restructured as lyrics.

We HEAR faint ROCK RIFFS under his voice – building,  
swirling, like the songs already exist in another realm.

LUCIEN

These are messages the world is  
hungry for.

(Anger. Desire. Division.  
Power.)

You put them to music... and you will become the biggest name  
in rock within a year.

Jax laughs, broken and bitter.

JAX

Yeah. And I'll ride a unicorn into  
the Grammys.

Lucien closes the notebook gently.

LUCIEN

You're talented, Jax. But talent is  
dust without amplification.  
Without... direction.

He gestures to the city.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

Do you know how many musicians  
drown unseen in this place?

Millions.

And do you know why?

Jax's jaw tightens. He does know. It's his life.

JAX

Nobody cares.

Lucien leans in.

LUCIEN

Exactly.

But I can make them care.

Jax meets his gaze. Something ancient flickers in Lucien's eyes – not glowing, not cheesy, just... too deep, too steady.

JAX

Okay. What's the real price?

Lucien's smile returns – polite, almost apologetic.

LUCIEN

Your soul.

Beat.

Jax waits for the punchline.

There isn't one.

JAX

You're serious?

LUCIEN

Deadly. But so is obscurity.

At least this way, you get the world before you lose it.

Jax scoffs, but fear creeps into his voice.

JAX

And people really... do this? Sell  
their soul?

LUCIEN

More often than you think.

Some for money.

Some for beauty.

Some for followers.

You?

You want to be heard.

Jax looks away, wounded by the truth.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Let me give you the stage your  
voice deserves.

Lucien reaches into his jacket and pulls out a LEATHER CONTRACT FOLDER.

He opens it.

Inside:

A beautifully typeset CONTRACT – corporate, professional, frighteningly mundane.

Jax skims it. His breath catches at a line:

"Upon execution, ARTIST forfeits all spiritual claim to self-determination, in exchange for worldly elevation and artistic immortality."

He flips to the last page – a signature line waiting for him.

JAX  
If I do this... what happens when I  
die?

Lucien shrugs with effortless cool.

LUCIEN  
You won't. Not for a very long  
time.

JAX  
Look, I don't believe a person can  
sell his soul, but if you can help  
me, I'll sign.

He extends a PEN – metal, heavy, engraved with a symbol that shifts subtly like it's alive.

Jax's hand trembles.

We FLASH IMAGES:

- young Nate at the church, smiling
- Eva watching in the audience, 14, full of hope
- Jax's mother recording him, eyes glowing with pride
- Nate's last words: "We're gonna be huge one day."

Jax squeezes his eyes shut.

JAX (CONT'D)  
(whisper)  
Nate didn't get huge.

LUCIEN  
(smiling softly)  
No. But you can.

Jax's shoulders slump.

He sighs.

The wind stops instantly – unnatural silence.

Lucien closes the folder.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Welcome to the big leagues, Jax.

He pats Jax's shoulder, then walks back toward the sedan.

The headlights flicker once...

...and the car is gone.

Jax stands alone on the hill.

The world below blazes brighter, as though already bending toward him.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. JAX'S APARTMENT – MORNING

A cracked window. Blinds half-broken. Pizza boxes. Empty liquor bottles. A life that never made it past "almost."

Jax lies face-down on the couch, dead asleep in yesterday's clothes.

SUNLIGHT cuts through the room like a judgment.

His phone BUZZES.

He groans, reaches blindly, knocks it off the table, curses, picks it up.

ON SCREEN: 47 MISSED CALLS. Most from numbers he doesn't recognize.

JAX  
(half-awake)  
Did I join a cult last night...?

BUZZ. Another unknown call.

He ignores it.

BUZZ. Text message:

"Call me. - Drew"

Jax sighs, hits dial.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. DREW'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Drew is in a whirlwind - pacing with manic excitement, hair unbrushed, shirt half tucked. In the background, his girlfriend stares wide-eyed at the TV.

DREW  
(answers, breathless)  
JAX! Are you awake?!

JAX  
Barely.

DREW  
Dude. Turn on the radio. Or TV. Or  
the internet. Or the sky-just turn  
something on!

JAX  
You drunk?

DREW  
Just do it!

Jax fumbles for the remote, clicks on his battered TV.

STATIC. Then-

A MUSIC NEWS  
SEGMENT:

A female HOST stands before a screen displaying... JAX  
performing at last night's dive bar - but not how it really  
went.

HOST (ON TV)  
...mysterious rock vocalist seen in a surprise performance last night, delivering what fans are calling "the birth of a new sound."

Jax bolts upright.

JAX  
What the...?

CUT TO THE TV VIDEO:

The footage is polished. Stylized. The lighting perfect.

Jax looks sober. Confident. Electric.

Not at all like the actual chaotic mess.

The HOST continues:

HOST (ON TV)  
Clips are already trending. Some are calling him "the next evolution of hard rock."

Jax stares, slack-jawed.

JAX  
That... that's edited. I didn't- Drew. I didn't look like that. That's not-

DREW (O.S.)  
Jax... the whole city's looking for you. Clubs. Labels. Managers. My cousin said he heard you on a Spotify playlist already.

JAX  
But I haven't released anything.

Beat.

Drew goes quiet.

DREW  
Jax... did you sign something last night?

Jax freezes.

JAX  
(long beat)  
Yeah. I think I did.

Drew doesn't ask. He doesn't want to know.

DREW  
Get dressed. We're meeting at the  
studio in an hour.

JAX  
What studio?

DREW  
Apparently... yours.

Jax hangs up, stunned.

He looks around his crappy apartment.

Something has changed.

The air feels charged.

He notices the notebook Lucien gave him on the table.

It glows subtly in a sliver of sunlight – not literal  
glowing, just... alluring, alive.

Jax opens it.

The lyrics are there. Dark. Hypnotic.

He reads one line.

It hits him like an electric jolt – a RIFF forms in his mind  
instantly, thunderous and addictive.

His fingers twitch.

JAX  
(whisper)  
Where did that come from...?

He grabs his guitar – the backup one, dusty, under his bed –  
and strums.

THE RIFF EXPLODES.

Raw. Heavy. Perfect.

Jax's eyes widen. He plays it again, louder.

His walls rattle.

Neighbors pound the ceiling.

And Jax begins LAUGHING – shocked, exhilarated, terrified.

JAX

Holy–  
(beat)  
No. Not holy.

He plays harder.

THE MUSIC BUILDS – dark, magnetic, unstoppable.

CUT TO:

EXT. RECORDING STUDIO – LATER THAT DAY

A sleek, modern building Jax has NEVER been inside.

He and Drew approach like two nobodies sneaking into the Grammys.

JAX

You sure this is the right place?

DREW

They emailed me a contract, man.  
Real one. With your name. And the  
deposit they sent me is not a prank  
because my bank is too dumb to  
prank me.

The STUDIO DOORS SLIDE OPEN automatically.

INSIDE:

A RECEPTIONIST beams like she's been waiting for them.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Kane! Welcome. Studio A is  
prepped for you.

Jax's jaw drops.

JAX

(to Drew)

This is a prank, right? I'm on a  
hidden camera show?

Drew just stares back, pale.

They step forward—

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - STUDIO A - CONTINUOUS

High ceilings. Million-dollar equipment. A room built for legends.

And sitting casually at the producer's desk...

LUCIEN BLACK.

Same suit. Same calm smile.

LUCIEN  
Gentlemen.

Shall we make history?

Jax takes a small step forward, breath shallow.

JAX  
So this is real.

Lucien gestures toward the mic.

LUCIEN  
It will be once you sing.

Jax glances at Drew — then at the notebook in his hand.

He steps into the vocal booth.

He puts on the headphones.

The room goes silent.

Lucien speaks into the talkback mic.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Whenever you're ready, Jax.

Jax looks at the lyrics.

He takes a breath.

And he sings—

I let them walk... round... and... round...

One last turn... down to the ground...

Nothing left here... nothing left there...

Just the comfort... of despair...

YOU FACED YOURSELF WRONG! TURNED INSIDE OUT!

YOU LEARNED TO FEAR! YOU LEARNED TO DOUBT!

And when you had nothing left to find...

You welcomed... my kind.

—THE FIRST “DEVIL’S VERSE” SONG.

The sound is monstrous.

Beautiful.

Corrupt.

Lucien closes his eyes, savoring it like fine wine.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE – THE SONG’S METEORIC RISE

- The track hits local radio within hours.
- Social media explodes: “WHO IS THIS GUY?!”
- Jax’s face spreads across playlists.
- Reaction videos.
- Music bloggers calling him “the future of rock.”
- Nightclubs blasting his song.
- Teens filming themselves screaming the lyrics.

Finally:

A giant billboard downtown...

“JAX KANE – NEW SINGLE OUT NOW”

Jax stands in front of it, stunned, tiny compared to his new image.

Drew is beside him, equally overwhelmed.

DREW  
Dude... you're famous.

Jax stares up, heart pounding, exhilaration mixing with dread.

JAX  
(quietly)  
What did I do?

Behind them, unseen, Lucien watches from a distance.

Smiling.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. REHEARSAL WAREHOUSE - DAY

A cavernous rehearsal space filled with equipment Jax has never even touched.

THE BAND is running through the new single - the Devil's Verse - and it HITS like a freight train.

DREW on drums watches Jax carefully, sensing something different in him... something sharp-edged.

Jax strums harder, faster, almost TOO precise - like the song is playing HIM.

They finish the run-through.

Silence.

DREW  
(exhaling)  
Jesus, man... where'd you pull that from?

JAX  
(shrug, uncomfortable)  
It just... came out.

Drew studies him.

He knows Jax better than anyone - and something feels off, even in the success.

DREW  
You okay?

JAX  
(lying)  
Yeah. Never better.

Lucien enters from behind, slow-clapping.

LUCIEN  
Boys... that was transcendence.

Jax flinches – he didn't see him enter.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Jax, your voice... your command...

This is who you were meant to be.

Lucien steps closer, too close, placing a hand on Jax's shoulder.

Jax stiffens – it feels reassuring and invasive at the same time.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
And the world is ready.

DREW  
(half-joking, half-serious)  
Think they're ready for THIS?

Lucien turns his gaze to Drew – a subtle pressure in the air.

LUCIEN  
The world listens when greatness  
compels them.

Drew looks away, uncomfortable.

Lucien smirks.

CUT TO:

EXT. MUSIC VENUE – NIGHT

A line stretches around the block.

Fans scream Jax's lyrics already – and the song has only been out for 48 hours.

Digital billboards show:

"JAX KANE - SOLD OUT"

Jax watches from the wings, heart pounding.

He's overwhelmed, scared, exhilarated.

Drew slaps him on the back.

DREW  
(grinning big)  
Look at this, man! We MADE it!

Jax forces a smile he doesn't fully feel.

JAX  
(soft)  
Yeah... we did.

Then a voice, from behind:

LUCIEN  
Correction.

You BEGAN.

Jax turns. Lucien hands him an in-ear monitor.

Jax accepts it with shaking hands - Lucien sees the tremor.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Nerves are natural.

What's unnatural...

is destiny.

Jax swallows hard.

CUT TO:

INT. ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Lights dim.

Crowd ROARS.

Jax steps onto the stage - blinded by lightning strobes, deafened by adoration.

This is EVERYTHING he dreamed of.

But he looks... terrified.

ON JAX – internal panic flickers:

Am I ready? Am I enough? Am I even me anymore?

Lucien appears in the shadows backstage, perfectly still.

The BAND kicks into the opening riff.

The CROWD LOSES ITS MIND.

Jax grips the mic like a lifeline.

JAX  
(voice cracking, but  
powerful)  
Los Angeles...

LET'S RISE.

And he launches into the song.

THE CROWD  
moves like a single organism.

Hands thrashing.

Heads banging.

Eyes rolling back.

Some scream the lyrics with unnatural intensity – as if possessed.

ON JAX  
He FEELS the energy – but also  
something pulling at him, draining  
him, using him.

His eyes widen.

He steps back from the mic, shaken.

DREW catches his eye – worried.

But the SHOW must go on.

Jax forces himself back in –

JAX  
(screaming the line)

SAY MY RHYME — FEEL THE BURN—

THE CROWD  
erupts.

Some people shove violently.

One girl collapses into a seizure.

SECURITY pulls her out.

But everyone else keeps going as if it's normal.

ANGLE ON CROWD

A TEEN GIRL stands perfectly still, eyes dilated, whispering the lyrics word for word, even lines Jax hasn't sung yet.

CLOSE ON HER ARM —

She's carving JAX'S LOGO into her skin with a broken bracelet.

JAX sees it. His voice falters.

JAX  
(whisper)  
Oh God... what is happening...?

In his earpiece, Lucien's calm voice:

LUCIEN (V.O.)  
Don't break.

They're not here for you.

They're here for the message.

Jax grips the mic stand like he might collapse.

The music swells — unstoppable.

The song ends in a thunderous crescendo.

The CROWD SCREAMS:

CROWD

JAX! JAX! JAX! JAX!

Jax stands in the spotlight.

He should feel triumph.

Instead...

he looks like a man standing on the edge of a cliff.

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jax stumbles offstage, breathless, drenched in sweat.

Drew follows him fast.

DREW

Dude - what the hell was that?! Did  
you see that girl? The seizure?  
People were going... feral!

Jax leans against the wall, shaking.

JAX

The song did that.

DREW

Songs don't do THAT.

JAX

(fear creeping in)  
Mine do.

Lucien steps into the hallway like he's been waiting behind a curtain.

LUCIEN

Gentlemen. Enjoying the fruits of  
your labor?

Drew glares at him.

DREW

People got hurt out there.

Lucien tilts his head, amused.

LUCIEN

Enthusiasm always has casualties.

Jax steps forward - for the first time, angry.

JAX  
I didn't sign up to hurt people.

Lucien steps inches from him, lowering his voice.

LUCIEN  
You signed up to be SEEN.  
HEARD.  
WORSHIPPED.  
And they ARE worshipping you,  
Jaxon.

Jax's breath shakes – he hates how true it feels.

Lucien taps his chest lightly, almost affectionate.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Don't ruin this with conscience.  
Conscience is for the small.

And just like that, Lucien walks away – leaving Jax and Drew in the long, flickering hallway.

DREW  
(low)  
I don't like that guy.

JAX  
(whisper)  
I don't think he's a guy.

Drew looks at him – concerned, scared.

DREW  
Jax... what did you sign?

Jax doesn't answer.

He just stares down at his trembling hands.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. NATE'S OLD NEIGHBORHOOD – EVENING

Golden hour. A quiet, low-income neighborhood – cracked sidewalks, chain-link fences, kids kicking a ball in the street.

A sleek BLACK SUV pulls up awkwardly among rusted Hondas and dented minivans.

Jax steps out wearing sunglasses and a hoodie, trying to be invisible...

but he sticks out like a sore thumb.

He removes the hood, breathes in the air – a mixture of nostalgia and regret.

This is where he and Nate grew up playing music on porches.

Where things felt simple.

Jax walks slowly down the street, each step heavier than the last.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLOWAY HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

A small, faded blue house with peeling paint and a dead lawn.

A CHILD'S BICYCLE lies abandoned on its side.

Jax stops at the gate.

He stares – almost willing Nate to walk out the front door, 14 again, guitar too big for him.

Jax's throat tightens.

He steps forward...

But the front door opens.

MRS. HOLLOWAY, mid-50s, worn by grief but still dignified, steps onto the porch with a bag of trash.

She sees him.

Freezes.

Her eyes widen – not in awe... in pain.

MRS. HOLLOWAY  
Jax... Kane?

Jax lowers his head in shame.

JAX  
Mrs. Holloway...

I –  
He can't finish the sentence.

She walks slowly down the steps.

Her face softens just enough to show she's been waiting for this moment, though she never wanted it.

MRS. HOLLOWAY  
You came.

Jax nods, barely breathing.

MRS. HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)  
You boys... you were always making  
noise in my garage.  
Nate was so proud of you.

Jax swallows hard.

JAX  
He was better than me.

MRS. HOLLOWAY  
(smiles sadly)  
He thought you hung the moon,  
Jaxon.

Beat.

JAX  
I didn't come to... interrupt.  
I just wanted to say...  
I'm sorry.

Mrs. Holloway studies him - deeply.

MRS. HOLLOWAY  
The last night he was alive...  
He was playing that little song you  
two wrote in church.  
Over and over.

Jax looks away, tears forming.

MRS. HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)  
He said -  
"He's gonna be huge one day, Mom.  
I can feel it."

The words gut Jax.

JAX  
(whisper)  
But he didn't get to be.

Mrs. Holloway steps closer, voice trembling.

MRS. HOLLOWAY

Nate didn't die because of you.  
But he died wishing he could have  
followed you.

Jax wipes his face, angry at himself, at the world.

JAX

I wasn't... good enough to save him.

Mrs. Holloway shakes her head gently.

MRS. HOLLOWAY

He didn't need saving.  
He needed his friend.  
We all did.

Jax winces – the truth landing like a punch.

Mrs. Holloway softens, touches his arm.

MRS. HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

But I'm glad you came, Jax.  
It means... there's still something  
human in you.

Jax looks at her sharply.

JAX

What does that mean?

Mrs. Holloway raises a hand – her fingers trembling.

She gently touches his cheek.

MRS. HOLLOWAY

Your eyes...  
They're different.  
Harder.  
Like someone else is looking  
through them.

Jax recoils – horrified, shaken.

JAX

I should... I should go.

MRS. HOLLOWAY

Jax?

He turns back.

MRS. HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)  
(with quiet certainty)  
Whatever deal you made...  
Break it.  
Before it breaks you.

Jax freezes, breath catching in his throat.

She retreats up the steps, leaving him alone in the dying light.

Jax turns and walks away – faster, almost running.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET – CONTINUOUS

Jax heads back toward his SUV with shaky hands.

He fumbles for the keys.

He hears something – faint... familiar...

A GUITAR.

He looks up.

Across the street, an OLD MAN on a porch is playing – quietly, gently – the same song Jax and Nate wrote as kids.

The chord progression haunts the air.

Jax stands rooted, breath broken.

OLD MAN  
(seeing him)  
You Jaxon Kane?

Jax's stomach drops.

JAX  
Y... yeah.

OLD MAN  
(points with his pick)  
Then you should know...  
Some songs don't belong to you  
anymore.  
Not once the world starts singing  
them.

Jax's eyes widen - like the man has pulled the truth out of his soul.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)  
And some songs?  
They never should've been written.

Beat.

Jax backs away slowly.

He gets into the SUV.

His hands tremble violently as he starts the engine.

Suddenly-

A PHONE BUZZ.

Unknown number.

He stares at it, breathing hard.

It buzzes again.

And again.

And again.

He finally answers.

LUCIEN (V.O.)  
(Jax hears the smile)  
Enjoy your little nostalgia trip?

Jax's blood runs cold.

He looks around - Lucien is nowhere, but feels everywhere.

LUCIEN (V.O.)  
Lovely neighborhood.  
Shame about the poverty.

Jax grips the wheel.

JAX  
Stay away from here.

Lucien chuckles softly.

LUCIEN (V.O.)

Jax...

You have a show in two hours.  
No time for ghosts.

CLICK.

Jax throws the phone onto the passenger seat, knuckles white with rage and grief.

He slams the accelerator, tires screeching.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. MEGA ARENA - NIGHT

Lights explode. Pyro fires upward.

Thirty thousand fans SCREAM JAX'S NAME like he's a deity.

Jax strides onto the stage - larger than life - guitar in hand, hair whipping in slow motion.

CLOSE ON JAX'S  
EYES:

They burn with adrenaline, fear, and the faintest flicker of longing.

JAX  
(into mic)

LET'S WAKE THE DEAD!

The crowd erupts.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

A cramped, cheap motel just off a highway.

Dark curtains. Flickering lamp. Cigarette-stained walls.

Jax enters alone. No entourage. No Drew. No band.

He doesn't even take off his jacket. He stumbles toward the bed like a ghost.

He tosses his gear aside and empties a bottle of liquor in two swallows.

He collapses onto the mattress.

His body SHAKES – not cold, not fear – withdrawal from the supernatural high of the stage.

He opens a pill bottle.

Takes two.

Then two more.

Sits back, void-eyed.

—

BACK TO:

INT. MEGA ARENA – NIGHT (INTERCUT)

Jax RIPS into the opening riff – monstrous, transcendent.

The crowd becomes a single organism, hundreds of arms rising and falling in unison.

Lucien watches from backstage – smiling like a proud father.

Fans chant the lyrics:

CROWD

BURN! BURN! BURN!

The arena vibrates with ferocity, with madness, with worship.

Jax raises his arms – and thirty thousand bodies mirror him.

ON JAX  
This moment is pure oxygen.

A drug stronger than anything he can snort, pop, or inject.

His smile looks real.

Too real.

—

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Jax sits in bed illuminated by the glow of a silent TV.

Sweat pours down his face.

His hands tremble uncontrollably.

He crushes a pill and snorts it.

Tries to replicate the "high" of the stage.

It doesn't work.

JAX  
(whispering to himself)  
Come on... come on...

He shakes violently, gasping.

Then he screams into the empty room:

JAX (CONT'D)  
I'M STILL HERE!  
WHY AM I STILL HERE?!

He punches the wall - hard - splitting his knuckles.

He collapses into silence, chest heaving.

-

BACK TO:

INT. ARENA - LATER IN THE SHOW

The band drops out.

Jax stands alone in the spotlight.

Fans scream hysterically.

Jax drinks it in - the acceptance, the devotion, the addiction of being seen.

This is the only place he feels alive.

He whispers into the mic:

JAX  
You want more?

The arena EXPLODES with noise.

Lucien whispers through the in-ear monitor:

LUCIEN (V.O.)  
Give them everything.

Drain yourself.

Empty yourself.

I'll fill the rest.

Jax's expression shifts – pleasure mixed with terror – like his soul is slipping.

He screams a guttural note.

The crowd matches him – one massive, demonic echo.

Some of them collapse.

Some fight.

Some stare blankly as if entranced.

Jax looks almost euphoric.

—

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM – DAWN

Jax sits on the cold tile floor, shaking, eyes bloodshot.

He splashes water on his face.

Stares into the mirror.

He doesn't recognize the man looking back.

JAX  
(softly)  
Who the hell are you?

NO ANSWER.

Only emptiness.

He looks down – his hand is trembling uncontrollably.

He pulls out a small bag of powder from his jacket.

He hesitates...

then pours some out with a shaky breath.

But then –

his phone buzzes.

He ignores it.

It buzzes again.

He finally checks:

TEXT FROM EVA:

"I heard your new song...

I'm praying for you.

Please call when you can."

Jax freezes.

Something passes through him – a memory of innocence, of church lights, of Nate's harmony.

He locks the phone.

Shoves it facedown on the counter.

JAX  
(broken whisper)  
You're too late.

He bends down to snort the powder–

BUT THEN–  
The mirror behind him SHIMMERS.

For a split-second, his reflection SMILES independently of him.

NOT HIM.

Not human.

Not sane.

Jax jumps back, horrified.

His reflection returns to normal.

A chill crawls up his spine.

JAX  
(panicked breath)  
Jesus...

BACK TO:

INT. ARENA - FINALE

Jax stands at the edge of the stage, breathing fire, drenched in sweat.

The crowd chants his name rhythmically:

CROWD

JAX-ON! JAX-ON! JAX-ON!

The arena lights swell like a rising inferno.

Lucien watches him with pure satisfaction.

LUCIEN  
(under his breath)  
Yes...  
Give them everything.

Jax leans forward toward the sea of fans - godlike, untouchable.

And for the first time...

he looks terrified of the love being thrown at him.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Jax lies on the bed, barely conscious.

Sunlight creeps across his face.

He looks dead inside -

a man who can command nations at night and can't stand himself by morning.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - NIGHT

The final echoes of the concert still pulse through the concrete walls - fans chanting outside, lights flickering down as the arena prepares to sleep.

Jax staggers down the hallway, exhausted and wired at the same time - the paradox that's eating his life alive.

His makeup smeared.

Hands trembling.

Pupils blown wide.

He nearly drops his guitar case.

From behind-

EVA (O.S.)

Jax?

Jax freezes.

He knows that voice even before he turns.

He slowly pivots.

Standing there, under a buzzing fluorescent light, is EVA RIVERA - early 30s, still soft-featured but stronger now, grounded, a quiet fire behind her eyes.

She's dressed simply - jeans, warm coat, hair back - completely out of place in the chaos of rock stardom.

But she looks at him like he's the same boy from the church talent night.

Jax's breath catches.

JAX

Eva...?

What are you doing here?

EVA

I tried calling. You never answered.

Jax looks away - shame prickles under his skin.

JAX  
Yeah, things have been... insane.

Eva steps forward, studying him – not the rock star, but the wounds behind the armor.

EVA  
You look... sick.

Jax forces a crooked grin.

JAX  
That's just the lighting.  
Fluorescents hate me.

Eva's expression doesn't change.

EVA  
Jax... you're shaking.

Jax hides his hands in his pockets.

JAX  
It's adrenaline.

Crowds that size – they take it out of you.

EVA  
No.  
(shakes her head)  
This is something else.

Her eyes glisten – grief, recognition.

EVA (CONT'D)  
Did you start using again?

Jax goes still.

A dangerous kind of still.

JAX  
(quiet, defensive)  
What would you say if I did?

EVA  
I'd say you're lying to yourself  
again.

He looks away – anger rising like a shield.

JAX  
You don't know what it's like out  
there.

You don't know what I have to give every night.

EVA  
I know the cost of hollow praise,  
Jax.  
And I know when someone I care  
about is drowning.

This hits him harder than the applause ever could.

He laughs – short, bitter.

JAX  
Drowning?  
Eva, I'm headlining arenas.  
People scream my name like I'm–

He stops himself.

Eva finishes it.

EVA  
Like you're their god.

Jax falters.

She sees the horror flicker across his face.

She knows she hit the fracture.

EVA (CONT'D)  
Jax... that isn't love being thrown  
at you.  
It's hunger.  
And hunger eats everything that  
feeds it.

Jax steps back, stung.

JAX  
You don't understand this world.

EVA  
I don't have to.

I understand YOU.

Beat.

EVA (CONT'D)  
I watched your show tonight.

Jax stiffens.

EVA (CONT'D)  
Something is wrong with your music.  
With your fans.  
With you.

Jax's jaw clenches – he's not ready to face this.

JAX  
Maybe you just don't like my sound  
anymore.

Eva steps forward, touching his forearm.

EVA  
Jax...  
What did you do?

He jerks away instinctively, terrified she'll see the truth  
he can't hide.

JAX  
I didn't do anything!  
I just–

(long beat)  
I finally got the break I deserved.

Eva looks at him with heartbreakingly gentleness.

EVA  
At what price?

Jax goes pale.

She doesn't know the contract exists – but she feels it in  
her soul.

He turns, grabbing his guitar case – trying to escape the  
conversation.

EVA (CONT'D)  
Jax, look at me.

He doesn't.

EVA (CONT'D)  
(voice cracking)  
Nate would've been here tonight.  
Screaming for you.  
He loved you.

Jax freezes mid-step.

EVA (CONT'D)  
You know what he'd say if he saw  
you now?

Jax whispers - barely:

JAX  
Don't.

EVA  
He'd ask you why you didn't bring  
him with you.  
Why you left us behind.  
Why you left yourself behind.

Jax closes his eyes, pained.

JAX  
You don't get it.  
I HAD to do something.  
I was NOTHING.  
No one cared, no one listened-

EVA  
I listened.

Beat.

EVA (CONT'D)  
You were never nothing, Jax.

He turns - finally looking into her eyes.

He looks terrified.

JAX  
Eva...  
I can't stop.  
I can't slow down.  
If I do-  
(beat)  
Everything will fall apart.

EVA  
Sometimes things need to fall apart  
so you can see what's still real.

He tries to hold her gaze.

He can't.

Jax turns away.

LUCIEN (O.S.)  
(interrupting, smooth)  
Am I interrupting... something?

Both turn.

Lucien stands at the end of the hallway, immaculate, smiling like a shark dressed in a saint's suit.

Eva stiffens instantly.

EVA  
(under her breath)  
That's him... isn't it?

Jax swallows hard.

LUCIEN  
Jax, they need you for press  
photos.  
(looks Eva over)  
And you must be... nostalgia.

Eva doesn't flinch.

EVA  
I'm someone who cares about him.  
Who are you?

Lucien's smile widens.

LUCIEN  
Oh, I'm his future.

Eva steps in front of Jax, protective.

EVA  
No.  
You're what's killing him.

Jax looks between them – his past and his damnation facing off.

Lucien leans close to Jax's ear.

LUCIEN  
(soft, poisonous)  
She'll only hold you back.  
Let her go.

Eva whispers:

EVA  
 Jax... please.  
 Come home for a night.  
 Just one night.  
 Let yourself breathe.

Jax's eyes fill with tears – the longing is real.

But then—

Lucien's hand tightens on his shoulder.

A subtle, supernatural pressure.

Jax winces.

LUCIEN  
 Come, Jax.  
 Your worshipers await.

Eva sees the fear in Jax's eyes.

EVA  
 Jax...

This isn't you.

Jax whispers:

JAX  
 (voice cracking)  
 I know.  
 But I don't know how to stop it.

Eva reaches for him.

Lucien pulls him away.

LUCIEN  
 He already made his choice.

Jax watches Eva – heartbreak mirrored.

Then Lucien leads him down the hall.

Eva's voice echoes behind:

EVA  
 (shouting after him)

JAXON KANE – THIS ISN'T THE END OF YOUR STORY!

Jax flinches.

Lucien smirks.

LUCIEN  
Oh, but it is.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CONCERT ARENA - NIGHT

Fans spill out into the street after another explosive show.

Police lights flicker. Ambulances.

Something feels... wrong.

Crowd members whisper:

FAN #1  
Did you see those kids?

FAN #2  
They were tearing each other apart...

FAN #3  
(smirking)  
That song hits different, man.

The doors BURST open as PARAMEDICS rush inside with gear.

Jax steps out a back entrance with Drew, both sweating, adrenaline still pumping.

But Jax notices the emergency lights. His stomach drops.

JAX  
What's going on?

DREW  
Not our problem. C'mon, we-

A PARAMEDIC brushes past them.

PARAMEDIC  
(to another)  
Two teenagers, possible overdose—  
One was seizing, the other non-  
responsive.

Jax stops cold.

JAX  
(overdose?)  
Wait- where?

PARAMEDIC  
Section C, near the rail.

Jax's breath SHORTENS - Nate. Nate. Nate.

He follows the paramedics before Drew can stop him.

CUT TO:

INT. ARENA - SECTION C - CONTINUOUS

A section of the floor cordoned off.

Two TEENS lie motionless.

One foaming at the mouth.

Another pale, eyes open and empty.

A crumpled VIP PASS lies beside them - JAX's logo smeared in blood.

Jax steps forward, horrified.

PARAMEDIC 2  
(to partner)  
These kids said they wanted to  
"feel the music more."  
God... just kids.

Jax trembles.

One of the teens - a GIRL, maybe 17 - is strapped to a stretcher, barely conscious.

She looks up at Jax as he approaches.

GIRL  
(weak whisper)  
Jax...  
you're... amazing...

Jax kneels, devastated.

JAX  
What did you take?

GIRL  
(smiles)  
Your... song.

Her eyes roll back.

She flatlines.

PARAMEDIC  
We're losing her! Move!

They haul her away at lightning speed.

Jax stands alone in the chaos – frozen, broken.

Then –

VOICE (O.S.)  
This happens more than you think.

Jax turns.

Detective MARTINEZ, mid-40s, hardened but fair, stands with a notebook.

MARTINEZ  
Overdoses spike at all kinds of  
shows.

But yours are...

(chooses her words carefully)

different.

Jax swallows.

JAX  
Different how?

MARTINEZ  
Your song was the only thing both  
victims had in common.

They said it “opened them up.”

(hesitates)

One witness said they were chanting things they didn't understand.

Jax's blood runs cold.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)  
Did you know either of the victims?

Jax shakes his head.

JAX  
No. I don't know any of them.

Martinez studies him - deeply, sharply.

MARTINEZ  
You sure?

Because the girl...

she was found holding a photo of you and a friend.

Looked old. Faded.

Two boys playing guitar in a church.

Jax's heart STOPS.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)  
(softening)  
She said his name before she went  
unconscious.

"Nate."

Does that mean something to you?

Jax steps back as if punched.

JAX  
(shaken whisper)  
Nate...?

MARTINEZ  
If you know something that can help  
us understand what these kids were  
doing-

Jax stumbles backward in panic.

JAX  
I... I can't-

I have to go.

He turns and RUNS.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARENA PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jax bursts out into the cold air, gasping like he's drowning. He leans against a wall, trembling violently.

JAX  
(broken whisper)  
No... no...  
Not again...

A SHADOW moves beside him.

Lucien steps forward, calm, collected, as if he were taking a quiet stroll in a garden.

LUCIEN  
You're trembling, Jax.  
Excitement? Fear?  
Responsibility...?

Jax looks up - eyes filled with disbelief and rage.

JAX  
Two kids DIED tonight!

Lucien shrugs, almost bored.

LUCIEN  
And millions lived.

Millions heard your voice.

Millions worshipped you.

JAX  
I didn't ask for worship!  
I didn't ask for ANY of this!

Lucien's eyes harden for the first time.

LUCIEN  
Oh, but you did.  
You screamed for someone to hear  
you.  
To see you.  
To make you matter.

He leans in, voice a venomous whisper.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
I delivered exactly what you begged  
for.

Jax's breath rattles.

JAX  
(soft tearful anger)  
Nate would hate who I've become.

Lucien's expression shifts – cruel amusement.

LUCIEN  
Your friend died because he was  
weak.  
He was never meant to follow you.

Jax SNAPS – he grabs Lucien by the collar.

JAX  
DON'T–  
(voice breaks)  
Don't talk about him.

Lucien's eyes glint – sharp, delighted.

LUCIEN  
There it is.  
Anger.  
Pain.  
That's the part of you I OWN.

Jax releases him, horrified by himself.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Come now.  
We have a new single to record.  
And tragedy always tests well.

Jax shakes his head, overwhelmed.

JAX  
I need time.  
I need... I don't know what I need.

Lucien circles him slowly.

LUCIEN  
I know what you need, Jax.

He whispers in Jax's ear:

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
A distraction.

CUT TO:

INT. VIP AFTERPARTY - NIGHT

A frenzy of lights, alcohol, pills, bodies, cameras, adoration.

Music booming.

Fame cracking the walls.

A girl kisses Jax.

Another hands him drugs.

Hands touch him.

Paparazzi flash.

Everyone wants a piece.

But Jax looks EMPTY through all of it - a man drowning in excess, haunted by Nate, by Eva, by the dying fans.

He takes a pill.

Then another.

Then another.

Drew watches from across the room - helpless, heartbroken.

Lucien watches too - proud.

Lucien whispers to the air, a private victory:

LUCIEN  
Good boy.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. LUXURY HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

A penthouse view. Floor-to-ceiling windows.

City lights glitter like a false heaven.

Jax stands at the glass, staring out at the world he supposedly owns.

But his reflection looks like a stranger - pale, hollow, sick.

## ON THE DESK

Lucien's black notebook sits open, glowing faintly under a lamp.

Inside: more "Rhymes of the Devil" waiting to be turned into songs.

Jax approaches it cautiously.

He flips a page.

The lyrics seem to pulse – whisper – seduce.

He slams it shut.

Jax grabs his old, battered leather notebook – the one he kept from his teenage years.

Dog-eared. Ink-stained.

A relic of who he USED to be.

He sits.

Takes a breath.

Picks up a pen.

JAX  
(whispering to himself)  
Just write...  
Write something true.

The pen trembles between his fingers.

He writes a single line:

"I don't want the world if I can't wake up in my own skin."

Jax stops.

Something in the room shifts.

The air grows colder.

The lights flicker.

He ignores it. Tries again.

"I lost my brother long before I lost myself."

A tear falls onto the page.

Suddenly—

THE ROOM VIBRATES.

A low rumbling.

Like a growl.

Jax freezes.

JAX

...Lucien?

No answer.

He keeps writing, hand shaking violently.

"If Nate could see me now—"

BANG —

The hotel lights BLOW OUT.

Darkness swallows the room.

Jax jumps to his feet.

JAX

(shouting)

Lucien! Stop it!

But it's not Lucien standing in the shadows now.

It's something else.

A HUM builds — distorted, demonic, like an amplifier melting down.

Jax clutches his guitar for protection — the only thing that ever truly felt like home.

Suddenly—

A SHADOW slams him backward.

Hard.

Jax hits the floor, gasping.

The SHADOW splits into multiple tendrils — wisps of darkness snaking across the walls, converging toward his handwritten page.

Jax crawls toward the notebook — desperate.

JAX (CONT'D)  
NO!  
That's MY song!  
That's MINE—

The SHADOW grabs the page and IGNITES IT in mid-air.

It burns into ash instantly.

Jax watches his first real attempt at salvation dissolve into smoke.

His face breaks — horror, grief, rage.

JAX (CONT'D)  
(voice cracking)  
Please...  
Please let me write something of my  
own...

A VOICE rises from all around him — deep, layered, mocking.

VOICE (V.O.)  
You don't write anymore, Jaxon.

Jax's eyes widen.

VOICE (V.O.)  
You deliver.

Lucien steps out of the shadow — but his eyes are darker, colder, like the thing that destroyed the page lives inside him.

LUCIEN  
You made a contract.  
You don't get to improvise your  
soul.

Jax stands, fists clenched.

JAX  
I didn't know what I was signing!

LUCIEN  
Of course you didn't.  
No desperate man ever does.

Lucien moves closer — too calm, too composed.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Your songs do not come from you  
anymore.  
(MORE)

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
They come from a place with  
purpose.  
A place that makes kings... and  
breaks nations.

JAX  
(through tears)  
You're killing people.

Lucien steps even closer – face inches from Jax.

LUCIEN  
I'm awakening them.

Jax trembles.

JAX  
I won't write your verses anymore.

Lucien smirks – the way a parent smirks at a toddler  
threatening to move out.

LUCIEN  
Oh Jax...  
You don't write the verses.

He places a hand on Jax's chest –

Jax convulses, breath ripped from his lungs.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
The verses write you.

Suddenly, Jax SEES–

visions slamming into his mind like a strobe light:

- Crowds rioting to his music
- Governments falling
- Churches burning
- Children chanting his lyrics
- Nate whispering: "You left us."

Jax SCREAMS.

Lucien releases him.

Jax collapses to the ground, shaking uncontrollably.

Lucien crouches beside him with predator calm.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

Write.  
Perform.  
Deliver the message.

He lifts the Devil's notebook and drops it in Jax's lap.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

Or the next life I take...  
won't be a stranger's.

Jax's breath stops.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

(soft, chilling)

Your friend Nate was just the  
beginning.

A beat.

Lucien stands, smooth and flawless, as if nothing happened.

He walks toward the door.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

Rehearsal at 7 a.m.  
Don't be late.

The door closes gently behind him.

Jax lies on the ground, holding the Devil's notebook like a bomb.

Tears streak down his face.

He whispers:

JAX

(utterly broken)

God...

I need help.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A black sky.

Empty asphalt stretching forever.

Rain pouring hard enough to erase the horizon.

Headlights surge through the darkness –  
JAX behind the wheel of a rental car, speeding 95 mph.  
His hands shake.  
His breath is ragged.  
He looks half-alive, half-haunted.  
Beside him on the passenger seat:  
– His battered teenage notebook  
– A pack of cigarettes  
– A photo of him and Nate as kids  
The Devil's notebook is NOT with him.  
He left it behind.  
Jax wipes tears from his eyes.

JAX  
(whispering)  
I have to get out.  
Just... get out.  
Just breathe somewhere else.

He drives into the night like the world is chasing him.

CUT TO:

INT. RENTAL CAR – MOVING – LATER

The rain gets worse.

Visibility drops.

Jax leans forward, squinting.

The radio, which has been silent, suddenly TURNS ON by itself.

Static.

Then...

Jax's hit song begins playing – the Devil's Verse.

Jax's face drains of color.

JAX  
No. No no no—  
(turns it off)  
The radio turns ON again.

Louder.

Lucien's voice whispers over the track:

LUCIEN (V.O.)  
Running is adorable, Jaxon.

Jax SLAMS the radio with his fist.

It breaks.

Silence.

Jax pulls over to the shoulder, shaking uncontrollably.

He reaches for his phone.

He dials EVA.

It rings.

One ring... two... three—

VOICE (ON PHONE)  
Jax?

He closes his eyes, relieved, emotional.

JAX  
Eva...

CAN I COME TO YOU?

PLEASE. I— I CAN'T BREATHE.

I'M LOSING MY MIND.

EVA (O.S.)  
Where are you?

JAX  
I don't know... somewhere past the  
city line. I just— I need to see  
you. I need—

The line GOES DEAD.

JAX (CONT'D)  
Eva?

EVA?!

He stares at the phone.

Suddenly, ALL the streetlights behind him shut off.

One by one.

Like something is approaching.

Jax looks in the rearview mirror – nothing but darkness.

He panics, throws the car into drive, and FLOORS it.

Tires SCREAM.

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION – DESERT ROAD – NIGHT

A lonely gas station under buzzing neon.

Two old pumps.

A rusted ice freezer.

A desert stretching infinitely beyond it.

Jax pulls in too fast, skidding.

He jumps out, shaking, drenched in rain and sweat.

He rushes inside.

CUT TO:

INT. GAS STATION – CONTINUOUS

A small, quiet, eerie little convenience store.

An OLD CASHIER, mid-70s, thin as smoke, watches Jax enter with deadpan eyes.

CASHIER  
Rough night?

Jax grabs water bottles, snacks, anything – hands trembling.

JAX  
I need–  
I need to get out of here.

(MORE)

JAX (CONT'D)  
Is there a bus? A train? Anything  
out of this county?

The cashier studies him.

CASHIER  
Nobody leaves this place after  
midnight.

Jax freezes.

JAX  
What does that mean?

CASHIER  
(leans in, whispers)  
He'll find you anywhere.

Jax's blood turns to ice.

CASHIER (CONT'D)  
You made a deal, boy.

Jax steps back.

JAX  
How do you know that?

The cashier looks at him with pity – ancient pity.

CASHIER  
I've seen his deals.  
For sixty years.  
You're not the first.

Jax's voice cracks.

JAX  
How do I break it?

The cashier takes a breath, hesitating – almost afraid to  
speak the truth.

CASHIER  
You don't break a deal with him.  
You survive it.  
Or you die in it.

Jax's face collapses in despair.

CASHIER (CONT'D)  
But...  
there is one who can challenge him.

Jax leans forward, desperate.

JAX  
Who?

The cashier looks toward the ceiling – toward heaven.

CASHIER  
You already know.

A beat.

Jax swallows hard.

JAX  
I don't deserve that.

CASHIER  
None of us do.

Suddenly–

THE LIGHTS GO OUT.

Pitch black.

The cashier gasps.

CASHIER  
(low whisper, terrified)  
He's here.

A HUM builds.

Low. Menacing.

Like the world vibrating wrong.

A SHADOW seeps under the door.

Jax stumbles backward, knocking items from a shelf.

The front door slowly CREEEAKS open.

A silhouette stands in the doorway – backlit by impossibly bright light.

Lucien.

Dripping wet.

Calm.

Immaculate.

LUCIEN  
(tutting)  
Jax...  
this is disappointing.

Jax backs into the shelves like a trapped animal.

JAX  
Stay away from me.

LUCIEN  
(smiling)  
You say that like you have a  
choice.

Lucien steps into the store.

With each step, light bulbs SHATTER above him.

One.

Another.

Another.

Glass rains down.

The cashier cowers behind the counter.

Jax grips a broom handle, shaking.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
(soft, mocking)  
What's the plan?  
Beat me with a stick?  
Write me a heartfelt ballad?

Jax's rage breaks through his terror.

JAX  
I wrote something that wasn't  
yours.  
And it felt REAL.  
It felt like ME.

Lucien stops walking.

For the first time – real anger flickers across his face.

LUCIEN  
(voice deepening)  
Your soul belongs to me, Jaxon.  
There is no "you" without ME.

Jax lifts the broom handle like a weapon.

JAX  
Then you're gonna have to kill me.  
Because I'm not writing another  
damn word for you.

Lucien steps closer, voice dropping to a terrifying whisper.

LUCIEN  
Kill you?  
Oh no.  
Death would set you free.

Lucien places one finger on Jax's forehead.

Jax's body SEIZES – paralyzed – eyes bulging in pain.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
I choose to keep you alive.  
To keep you making MY music.  
To keep you crawling back to me  
like the addict you are.

Jax collapses to the floor, gasping, shaking violently.

Lucien crouches beside him.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Run again...  
and I'll make someone you love take  
your place.

Jax's breath stops.

He whispers:

JAX  
(terrified)  
Eva...

Lucien grins darkly.

LUCIEN  
Now you're learning.

He stands.

Turns to leave.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Be at the studio at nine.  
We're writing the next single.

He crosses the threshold—

LIGHTS SNAP BACK ON.

The gas station is normal again.

The shadow is gone.

Lucien is gone.

The cashier peeks out, trembling.

CASHIER

Kid...  
get right with God.  
He's the only one that bastard  
fears.

Jax wipes tears from his face, trembling so hard he can barely breathe.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

A pristine, luxury marble bathroom - immaculate, expensive, soulless.

Jax sits on the cold tile floor with his back against the bathtub.

His hands trembling so violently he can't even open the water bottle beside him.

The remnants of the gas station confrontation are still on him:

Bruised.

Shaking.

Pale.

Shattered.

His shirt clings to him with sweat.

His eyes are bloodshot and hollow.

The Devil's notebook sits on the counter, closed but somehow threatening – like a loaded gun.

Jax stares at his own reflection in the mirror.

He barely recognizes the man staring back:

- The stubble
- The hollow cheeks
- The panic in the eyes
- The spiritual rot creeping in

JAX

(voice barely a whisper)

I'm done...  
I can't...  
I can't take this anymore...

He grips the edge of the bathtub, trying to force himself up – but collapses.

He begins to sob.

Not performative sobbing.

Deep, silent, ashamed sobbing – the kind a child does when they're alone and scared.

He grabs the pill bottle.

Shakes it.

Empty.

He throws it.

It shatters across the tile.

Jax chokes on his own breath.

JAX (CONT'D)

(whispering to the air)

Why...  
Why did you let me get this far?

He closes his eyes, tears streaming.

FLASHES OF HIS  
LIFE:

- Nate laughing with a guitar

- Eva cheering at the church talent show
- His mother recording him
- The crowd chanting his name
- Fans seizing and bleeding
- Lucien whispering in his ear
- The silhouette at the gas station
- The cashier saying:

“There is one who can challenge him.”

Jax opens his eyes.

For the first time in the entire film –

He looks truly, spiritually afraid.

He bows his head.

He tries to speak.

Nothing comes out.

Jax clenches his fists, trembling.

He tries again.

JAX (CONT'D)  
(voice cracking)  
I don't...  
I don't know how to do this.

He forces the words, each one breaking something inside him.

JAX (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry.  
God, I'm so sorry.  
For everything.  
For running.  
For...  
(beat)  
For selling myself.

His voice collapses.

JAX (CONT'D)  
I know I don't deserve anything.  
Not forgiveness.  
(MORE)

JAX (CONT'D)

Not help.  
Not... grace.

The last word barely leaves his lips.

He wipes his face with shaking hands.

JAX (CONT'D)

But please...  
Please.  
I can't fight him alone.  
I tried. I really tried.

He sobs again, curling forward, forehead against the floor.

JAX (CONT'D)

(whisper)

Jesus...  
If you're there...  
If you can hear me...  
Please.  
Please take me back.

Silence.

Long, aching silence.

Jax waits.

Nothing.

He presses his palms to his eyes, despair washing over him.

Then—

A SINGLE DROP OF WATER hits the back of his hand.

He looks up.

The showerhead is leaking – a steady drip.

But the room is silent.

Air still.

Time thick.

The water glows faintly in the light.

Jax stares at it – confused, mesmerized.

He reaches out and touches the drip with a trembling finger.

A FLASH OF WHITE LIGHT

Not bright enough to blind.

Just enough to WARM.

For an instant...

Jax feels something he hasn't felt since childhood:

Peace.

Stillness.

Love.

Presence.

His breath stops.

He whispers:

JAX  
(soft, stunned)  
...You heard me.

A tear falls – not from despair this time, but awe.

Then–

The warmth fades.

The room returns to normal.

Jax looks around – heart pounding, breath shaky.

He isn't "saved" yet.

He isn't transformed.

He isn't suddenly strong.

But for the first time...

He has HOPE.

Jax presses a hand to his chest – where the warmth lingered.

JAX (CONT'D)  
(whisper)  
Alright...  
Okay...  
I'll fight.  
I'll try.

He wipes his face, steadies his breath.

And for the first time in a long time...

He stands.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jax walks out of the bathroom like a newborn animal - weak, shaky, but determined.

He approaches the Devil's notebook on the table.

He stares at it with new eyes.

No fear.

No addiction.

Just... clarity.

He reaches out...

...then pulls his hand back.

JAX  
(whisper)  
Not anymore.

He steps away.

And for the first time...

Lucien isn't instantly there to stop him.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - CONTROL ROOM - NEXT MORNING

The studio is dark despite the daylight outside.

Huge glass window overlooking a silent recording booth.

Equipment hums faintly - like something alive.

Drew sits at the mixing desk, sipping coffee, exhausted.

He hasn't slept.

He scrolls social media—  
Another fan collapse video.  
Another “Jax is possessed” meme.  
Another parent blaming the music.  
He sighs, rubs his eyes.  
Then —  
A flicker.  
The studio lights dim.  
Drew looks up.

DREW  
(soft groan)  
Not again...

Behind him, the temperature drops.  
His breath fogs.  
A shadow moves.  
Drew turns—  
Lucien stands behind him.  
Immaculate suit.  
Expression unreadable.  
Not quite smiling.  
Drew jumps.

DREW (CONT'D)  
Jesus!

You scared the hell out of me.  
Lucien's eyes glint.

LUCIEN  
That's ironic.

Drew forces an awkward laugh.

DREW

Uh... Jax isn't here yet.  
He said he'd be late.  
Rough night, I think.

Lucien steps closer.

Too close.

LUCIEN

Did he say... anything?  
Do anything unusual?

Drew frowns.

DREW

Uh... not really.  
He was freaking out last night.  
Said he needed air.  
Probably just burned out—

Lucien stops walking.

Stillness.

Predatory stillness.

LUCIEN

Burnout is not what happened.

Drew doesn't like his tone.

DREW

Look... if Jax needs a break, then  
maybe—

Lucien turns his head slowly, eyes cutting into Drew like a blade.

LUCIEN

Jax does not "get breaks."

He steps toward Drew.

The floor seems to darken under his shoes.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

He delivers art.  
That is the arrangement.

Drew forces himself not to back away.

DREW

Well... maybe the arrangement is  
killing him.

Lucien smiles.

Cold.

Perfect.

Predatory.

LUCIEN

Killing him is not the problem.

Beat.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

What matters is who he turned to  
last night.

Drew goes pale.

He didn't know Jax turned to anyone.

DREW

(turns fully to Lucien)

What does that mean?

Lucien doesn't answer.

He moves toward the recording booth.

The moment he steps inside, the glass fogs over.

Lucien closes his eyes.

The entire studio hums... vibrates... pulses.

Like it's listening.

Lucien reaches out and places his palm on the mic.

A FLASH - like static lightning.

Lucien's eyes SNAP OPEN.

Black anger ripples across his face.

LUCIEN

(under his breath)

He prayed.

The room seems to SHRINK with tension.

Drew stands, shaken.

DREW  
He... what?

Lucien turns slowly.

His voice is calm, but cracks with fury beneath the surface.

LUCIEN  
He called out to Him.

Drew doesn't understand.

DREW  
(to himself)  
Him...? Who—  
(realizes)  
...oh God.

Lucien laughs.

Not cheerful.

Hollow.

Dangerous.

LUCIEN  
Exactly.

He steps out of the booth.

The floor vibrates with each step — an almost imperceptible quake.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Prayer is a breach of contract.  
A violation.  
An insult.

Drew swallows hard.

DREW  
Then... then maybe he's just scared—  
He's going through a lot—  
He needs help—

Lucien appears in front of Drew in a blink.

No movement.

Just there.

Too fast.

Too close.

LUCIEN  
(soft)  
You cannot help him.

Drew tries to hold his ground.

Barely.

DREW  
I've known him since we were kids.  
I'm not walking away.

Lucien steps even closer.

He whispers:

LUCIEN  
Then you will drown with him.

Drew's breath stops.

Lucien straightens his suit, as if bored with the conversation.

A studio light CRACKS overhead, showering glass.

Lucien doesn't flinch.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Get him here.  
Now.

Drew hesitates.

Drew looks down at his phone.

He doesn't want to call Jax.

He knows Jax is in danger.

Lucien watches him.

One eyebrow lifts – amused impatience.

Drew finally grabs the phone with trembling hands.

He calls.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SAME TIME

Jax sits on the bed, exhausted but calmer than before.

Still fragile.

Still broken.

But lighter somehow.

His phone rings.

He checks caller ID.

DREW.

He answers.

JAX

Hey man...

I-

(beat)

I'm not ready to come in today.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - SAME TIME

Drew glances at Lucien.

Lucien gives him a small nod -

LUCIEN

"Lie to him. Bring him in."

Drew's face twists.

He hates this.

DREW

(strained)

Jax...

You gotta come.

Emergency meeting.

Studio wants new mixes.

They're pissed.

Jax sighs.

JAX

Can't you handle-

Suddenly -

an EXPLOSION of LIGHT flickers in the studio hallway behind Drew.

Someone SCREAMS.

Jax hears it.

JAX (CONT'D)  
(concerned)  
What was that?  
(Drew?)

Drew panics - he improvises.

DREW  
Bad wiring.  
Everyone's fine.  
Just get here, okay?

Jax hesitates.

His hand shakes.

He looks toward the bathroom - where he prayed.

Where he felt the warmth.

He wipes his face.

Takes a deep breath.

JAX  
Okay.  
I'll come.

Lucien stands behind Drew...

Smiling.

Drew lowers the phone, defeated.

DREW  
(to Lucien, broken)  
Please don't hurt him.

Lucien cups Drew's face gently - like a father consoling a child.

LUCIEN  
Hurt him?  
Oh Drew...

He leans in.

Whispers:

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
I don't want to hurt him.  
I want to own him.

Lucien turns and walks away as—

Every light in the studio EXPLODES at once.

Glass rains down around Drew.

He stands trembling, alone in the dark.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - BOOTH - DAY

Jax stands in the center of the vocal booth.

He looks wrecked — pale, exhausted, haunted.

His hands tremble as he adjusts his headphones.

Lucien stands on the other side of the glass in the control room, perfectly still, arms folded, eyes like knives.

Drew sits beside him, visibly terrified for Jax.

The Devil's notebook lies open on the console.

Its dark lyrics seem to pulse.

Lucien presses the talkback button.

LUCIEN  
Gentlemen...  
we begin.

Drew flinches.

Jax swallows hard.

He tries to sing the first line of the Devil's new verse.

Nothing comes out.

His throat closes.

Emotion chokes him.

Lucien tilts his head.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Jaxon?  
We are waiting.

Jax tries again.

JAX  
(strained)  
I... I can't...

Lucien's whisper travels through the entire studio, unnatural and omnipresent.

LUCIEN  
You prayed.

Drew jerks his head up, staring at Jax.

Jax freezes.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Your voice belongs to me.  
Your music belongs to me.  
Your breath belongs to me.

Lucien raises two fingers.

Suddenly—

Jax's chest tightens violently.

He gasps, clutching his ribcage, collapsing to his knees.

Drew STANDS.

DREW  
(shouting)  
STOP IT! You're killing him!

Lucien doesn't look at him.

LUCIEN  
Killing him is not in my interest.  
Breaking him is.

He flicks his wrist.

The booth door SLAMS shut on its own, locking.

Jax tries to stand, gasping, trembling.

JAX

Lucien—  
Please—  
(stop)  
I won't sing it.  
I WON'T—  
Lucien's smile is cold.

LUCIEN

Then I will extract it.

He places both hands on the console.

The room darkens.

Equipment flickers.

The microphone glows faintly — red.

Jax screams as his throat tightens again, involuntary sound ripping out of him.

It's not singing.

It's torture.

Drew pounds the glass.

DREW

LET HIM OUT!  
HE CAN'T DO THIS!  
He's not your puppet!

Lucien turns — glacial, amused.

LUCIEN

He signed away his strings.

Lucien looks back at Jax.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Sing the verse.  
Or I will carve it out of your  
soul.

Jax forces breath into his lungs.

He tries to resist.

Tries to stay quiet.

Tries to hold onto the tiny flicker of peace he felt the night before.

But the supernatural pressure increases.

He can't breathe.

He can't think.

Jax SLAMS his fist against the booth wall, desperate.

JAX  
(screaming)  
Somebody HELP ME!!

Lucien's face falls.

Disappointed.

LUCIEN  
Oh, Jax...  
not Him.  
Not today.

A pulse of invisible force hits Jax in the back.

He is thrown to the floor.

He crumples, gasping.

Drew is crying now – helpless.

DREW  
JAX!  
Hold on!

Hold–

(pleads to Lucien)  
STOP IT, PLEASE!  
HE'S GOING TO DIE!

Lucien releases the console.

The glow stops.

Jax lies on the studio floor, trembling violently, barely conscious.

His breathing is uneven.

His heart stutters.

Lucien enters the booth, steps around Jax's broken body like stepping over spilled paint.

He kneels.

LUCIEN  
(softly)  
You belong to me until the final  
note.

Jax's voice is barely audible.

JAX  
(whisper)  
...no.

Lucien pauses.

LUCIEN  
What was that?

Jax lifts his head – shaking, blood at the corner of his mouth.

JAX  
(whispering, weak)  
No...  
I belong...  
to Him.

Lucien's eyes ignite – fury buried under ice-cold calm.

He slaps Jax across the face – a violent, supernatural blow that knocks him out instantly.

Drew screams.

Lucien stands, straightens his jacket.

LUCIEN  
Take him home.  
Let him remember pain.  
It will keep him obedient.

Lucien leaves the booth without a backward glance.

Drew rushes inside and kneels next to Jax.

DREW  
(voice trembling)  
Jax...  
Come on, brother.  
Wake up.  
Please...

Jax doesn't wake.

CUT TO:

INT. DREW'S CAR - MOVING - EVENING

Drew drives with one hand, the other gripping Jax's arm, trying to keep him conscious.

Jax's head rests against the window, eyes half-open, barely breathing.

DREW  
(voice breaking)  
Why didn't you tell me, man?  
Why didn't you tell me he was  
hurting you?

Jax whispers, barely audible:

JAX  
He... knows.  
About the prayer...

Drew swallows hard.

DREW  
Then pray again.

Jax's eyes flutter.

JAX  
I... don't know how...

Drew's voice steadies - small, unsure, but full of love.

DREW  
Just talk to Him.  
He's not Lucien.  
He listens.

Jax closes his eyes.

For the first time, Drew sees a flicker of peace crossing Jax's face.

CUT TO:

EXT. EVA'S STREET - NIGHT

Drew pulls up to a small, warm, modest house with a porch light glowing gently.

Jax is semi-conscious.

Drew shakes him gently.

DREW

Jax...  
We're here.

Jax opens his eyes – barely.

JAX

(weak)  
Why... here?

Drew looks down at him.

DREW

Because she still sees the real  
you.

Jax's eyes fill with tears.

Drew helps him out of the car, holding most of his weight.

They stagger toward Eva's porch.

Drew knocks.

LIGHTS turn on inside.

The door opens.

Eva appears.

Her face changes instantly –

from confusion

to recognition

to horror.

EVA

Oh my God.  
Jax–

She rushes forward, catching him as he collapses into her arms.

He clings to her like a drowning man.

JAX

(weak whisper)

Eva...  
please...  
help me...

Eva holds him tightly, stroking the back of his head, her voice shaking with compassion.

EVA  
I've got you.  
You're safe.  
You're safe, Jax.

Drew stands behind them, eyes wet, knowing something holy is beginning – and something hellish is about to break.

Eva guides Jax into the house.

As the door closes–

A shadow passes in the street.

Watching.

Waiting.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. EVA'S LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

A small, warm, modest space.

Soft yellow lamps.

Bookshelves filled with devotionals, old photos, and family trinkets.

A cross on the wall – simple, wooden, unassuming.

This room radiates PEACE – the opposite energy of Jax's world.

Jax lies on the couch, wrapped in a blanket.

Sweat on his forehead.

Breathing uneven.

Body trembling.

Eva kneels beside him with a damp cloth, wiping his brow gently.

Her touch is steady, maternal, safe.

Drew stands in the doorway, arms crossed tightly, guilt and fear eating at him.

Eva speaks softly.

EVA  
Jax...  
I need you to tell me the truth.

Jax closes his eyes – ashamed.

EVA (CONT'D)  
(soft but firm)  
What's happening to you?

Jax swallows hard.

He wipes a tear with the back of his hand.

JAX  
(whisper)  
You won't believe me.

EVA  
Try me.

He hesitates... then breaks.

JAX  
I made a deal.

Eva's breath catches – she keeps wiping his forehead, but slower now.

EVA  
A deal?  
  
JAX  
(voice cracking)  
With...  
with him.

The word hangs heavy in the room.

Eva closes her eyes – not in shock, but in recognition.

EVA  
Lucien.

Jax freezes.

JAX  
You knew?

Eva nods.

EVA  
 Not what he was...  
 But I felt something wrong the  
 moment I saw him.

Like standing in a shadow that doesn't belong to the room.

Jax exhales a sob – finally someone UNDERSTANDS.

JAX  
 Eva...  
 I didn't know.  
 I swear I didn't know what I was  
 signing.  
 I was broken... desperate...  
 And he promised the world.

Eva takes his hand.

EVA  
 You don't have to justify it.  
 People don't fall into darkness  
 because they're evil.  
 They fall because they're hurting.

Jax's shoulders collapse.

He sobs – raw, childlike.

JAX  
 I prayed last night...  
 And for a moment...  
 I felt something good.  
 Something... warm.

Eva's eyes soften – tears glistening.

EVA  
 You weren't alone.

JAX  
 But he knew.  
 He felt it.  
 And he...  
 He punished me, Eva.

His breath shakes.

JAX (CONT'D)  
 My body...  
 my voice...  
 (MORE)

JAX (CONT'D)  
I couldn't breathe...  
I thought I was gonna die.

Eva squeezes his hand – fearless, protective.

EVA  
Jax...  
He doesn't fear your talent.  
He fears your soul waking up.

Silence.

Deep, spiritual silence.

Jax looks at her – broken and hopeful.

JAX  
I don't know how to fight him.

Eva takes a deep breath, the weight of her faith gathering strength.

EVA  
You don't fight him with fists.  
You fight him with truth.  
With light.  
With the One he hates.

Jax shakes his head.

JAX  
(whispers)  
I'm not good enough.  
Not anymore.  
Not after everything I've done.

Eva cups his face gently – grounding him.

EVA  
Jax...  
Grace isn't for the good.  
It's for the wounded.  
For the lost.  
For people just like you.

Jax breaks again – this time in relief.

EVA (CONT'D)  
Do you want help?  
Real help?

Jax nods – desperate, trembling.

JAX  
(Yes...)  
(God, yes.)

Eva sits beside him, takes both his hands, and bows her head.

Her voice softens into a prayer – not dramatic, not theatrical.

Just pure, human, trembling devotion.

EVA  
Jesus...  
We come to You because we don't  
know where else to go.

Jax sobs quietly.

EVA (CONT'D)  
Jax is hurting.  
He is lost.  
And the enemy has wrapped chains  
around his soul.

The room subtly darkens – as if the air itself reacts.

Drew shivers – goosebumps rising.

Eva doesn't stop.

EVA (CONT'D)  
We ask You to break those chains.  
To send Your peace into this room.  
Into his mind.  
Into his heart.

Jax clutches her hands tightly – his whole body trembling.

For a moment –

The lamp flickers.

A wind moves through the room though the windows are shut.

Jax gasps – not in fear, but in awe.

He presses a hand to his chest –

the warmth returns.

Eva opens her eyes – sees it.

She smiles.

EVA (CONT'D)  
(whisper)  
He's here, Jax.  
Suddenly—

A SHADOW shifts in the corner.

Drew sees it.

His breath stops.

DREW  
Eva...  
Someone's in the room.

Eva's expression hardens — she doesn't turn.

EVA  
I know.

The shadow PULSES — then disperses with a hiss like steam.

Comparatively small.

Wounded.

Rejected by the light.

Eva stands.

She faces the empty corner, voice steady.

EVA (CONT'D)  
You don't have authority here.

Jax watches her with awe — and fear.

The room BRIGHTENS slightly.

The darkness is gone.

Eva sits back beside Jax.

EVA (CONT'D)  
You're not fighting alone anymore.

Jax wipes tears from his eyes.

JAX  
(whisper)  
Eva...  
I don't deserve you.

She shakes her head, squeezing his hand.

EVA  
You don't have me.  
You have Him.

Her eyes soften with deep, aching compassion.

EVA (CONT'D)  
I'm just here to remind you who you  
really are.

Jax breaks – in the best way.

He collapses into her arms.

She holds him tightly.

Drew watches, emotional, relieved, terrified – because he  
knows Lucien will retaliate.

CUT TO:

EXT. EVA'S HOUSE – SAME TIME

A sleek black car sits idling silently across the street.

Inside:

Lucien watches through the windshield, eyes burning with  
suppressed rage.

His jaw clenches.

He whispers:

LUCIEN  
(to himself)  
So the war begins.

The streetlight above him FLICKERS violently.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. EVA'S HOUSE – NIGHT

The neighborhood is quiet.

Streetlights buzz softly.

A warm glow spills from Eva's living room window.

The black car that watched earlier is gone.

For now.

INT. EVA'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eva sits on a worn sofa chair, a Bible open on her lap.

Her fingertips rest on the pages, but she isn't reading.

She's watching Jax sleep on the couch - his breathing  
steadier, his face softer.

Drew sits on the floor with his back against the wall, half-  
asleep, drained.

Eva brushes a strand of hair from Jax's forehead with tender  
care.

EVA  
(quietly, to herself)  
You're going to be alright.

She closes the Bible gently.

The room is peaceful.

Until -

The lamp flickers.

Eva notices.

She glances at the ceiling.

EVA (CONT'D)  
(whisper)  
Not tonight.

The lamp flickers again.

Harder.

Drew stirs, groggy.

DREW  
Did you pay the electric -

The entire ROOM goes black.

Except for the window.

Which is now a perfect mirror.

In the reflection—

Someone stands behind Eva.

Tall.

Still.

Silhouetted.

Eva turns slowly.

Nobody is there.

Jax twitches, whispering in his sleep.

JAX  
(soft, distressed)  
No... stop... please...

Eva kneels beside him, placing a calming hand on his shoulder.

EVA  
It's okay.  
You're safe.

But the air changes —

Cold, crushing, heavy.

As if something filled the room that shouldn't exist.

A faint scratching sound comes from the hallway.

Drew jolts upright.

DREW  
What the hell was that?

Eva stands, steady but tense.

She walks toward the hallway.

The scratching stops.

Then—

A loud BANG shakes the front door.

Eva jumps.

Drew stands, heart racing.

DREW (CONT'D)  
Who's out there?

Eva moves toward the door slowly.

EVA  
Stay with Jax.

She reaches the door.

Her hand hovers over the knob.

Silence.

Then—

A familiar voice speaks through the door:

LUCIEN (O.S.)  
Eva...  
open the door.

Her blood runs cold.

He shouldn't know where she lives.

He shouldn't know her name this intimately.

He shouldn't exist in this calm suburban space.

Eva steps back, trembling.

EVA  
You're not welcome here.

Lucien chuckles — low, amused, chilling.

LUCIEN (O.S.)  
Hospitality, my dear, is a virtue.

Eva's jaw clenches.

EVA  
Not for you.

He knocks softly —

A polite, elegant knock.

Somehow worse than pounding.

LUCIEN (O.S.)  
You meddled tonight.

You interfered with my artist.

Drew moves closer, whispering.

DREW  
Don't open that door.

Please don't open—

The doorknob TWISTS on its own.

Slowly.

Silently.

Eva steps forward and SLAMS her hand against it, stopping the turn.

She presses her forehead against the wood and whispers:

EVA  
In the name of Jesus Christ...

The doorknob stops moving.

Silence.

Then—

Lucien speaks again, his voice dripping with venom and charm.

LUCIEN (O.S.)  
Do you think He'll protect you  
forever?

Eva doesn't back down.

EVA  
Yes.

Lucien laughs.

A distorted, layered laugh that seems to crawl down the walls.

He speaks in a whisper that feels like it's inside the house even though he's outside.

LUCIEN (O.S.)  
You're a lovely girl, Eva.  
But you are fragile.  
Everyone breaks.  
Even the faithful.

Eva shuts her eyes, but her voice stays strong.

EVA  
Not tonight.  
Not here.  
Not him.

A PERFECT SILENCE follows.

The kind that feels wrong.

Predatory.

Then—

A violent SCREAM from the living room.

Eva WHIPS around and RUNS.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jax is convulsing on the couch.

His body arches off the cushions.

His hands claw at the air.

His voice is choked, strangled.

JAX  
(agonized)  
Get out of my head!  
GET OUT!

Eva rushes to him.

Drew panics, grabbing Jax's shoulders.

DREW  
Jax!  
Wake up!  
Wake up!

Eva shouts toward the door.

EVA  
Lucien!  
STOP IT!

Jax CRIES OUT - a scream of pure spiritual agony.

Eva grabs his face, forcing him to look at her.

EVA (CONT'D)  
(yelling)  
Jax!  
LISTEN TO ME!  
You are NOT his!  
NOT anymore!

Jax's breathing shakes violently.

Tears spill down his face.

JAX  
(through gritted teeth)  
He's in my mind—  
I can hear him—  
I can FEEL him—

Eva places a hand over Jax's heart.

EVA  
Firm, commanding:  
JESUS, REMOVE HIM.

Suddenly—

The entire HOUSE SHUDDERS.

Lights explode back on.

A CRACK echoes in the hallway – like something breaking apart.

Jax collapses into Eva's arms, gasping for breath.

Eva holds him, whispering softly.

EVA (CONT'D)  
You're safe.  
He can't cross that line.  
Not when we call His name.

Drew is shaking uncontrollably.

DREW  
Jesus Christ...  
Is this what you've been living  
with?

Jax nods weakly.

JAX  
(whisper)  
Every day...

Eva looks toward the front door.

It stands perfectly still.

Too still.

A final whisper seeps through the cracks – low, venomous, defeated but promising war:

LUCIEN (O.S.)  
Enjoy your borrowed time.

The porch light flickers.

Then goes out.

Eva holds Jax tighter.

Drew locks the door, hands trembling.

The room is quiet again – but the danger is now undeniable.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. EVA'S KITCHEN – MORNING

Soft sunlight pours through the window.

Eva makes coffee quietly, exhausted but composed.

The house feels like a sanctuary – at least for the moment.

In the living room, Jax sits at Eva's small dining table, wrapped in a blanket, staring at the steam rising from his mug.

Drew stands by the counter, arms folded, protecting him with his presence.

A long silence.

Finally–

JAX  
(quiet, raw)  
I can't go back there.

Eva turns, giving him her full attention.

JAX (CONT'D)  
I can't record his songs.  
I can't step on another stage.  
I can't hear another whisper in my  
head.

He looks up – eyes tired, but clearer.

JAX (CONT'D)  
I need to leave the industry.  
All of it.  
Before it kills me.

Drew sighs deeply – knowing what's coming.

DREW  
Jax...  
It's not that easy.

Eva sits beside Jax.

EVA  
Why not?

Drew hesitates.

DREW  
Because Lucien isn't just some  
producer.

He's the label's golden boy.

Their miracle-maker.

They don't question him – ever.

Everyone who works with him becomes a superstar... or  
disappears.

Jax clenches his jaw.

JAX  
I don't care.  
I'm done.

Eva places a hand over his.

EVA  
Then let's go tell them.

Jax looks up, surprised by her courage.

JAX  
You'd go with me?

EVA  
(smiling softly)  
You shouldn't walk into darkness  
alone.

Drew runs a hand through his hair.

DREW  
Alright...  
But if we're doing this...  
we're doing it together.

CUT TO:

EXT. LUCID RECORDS - TOWER BUILDING - DAY

A tall, glass skyscraper.

Sleek.

Cold.

Corporate.

As Jax, Eva, and Drew approach the revolving doors, Jax visibly trembles.

Not from fear of Lucien -

But from what awaits inside.

INT. RECORD LABEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A massive open space with marble floors and digital billboards showing music videos.

Every screen features JAX KANE.

His face.

His voice.

His "dark genius."

Jax looks sick.

EVA  
(softly)  
You're not that man anymore.

Drew clears his throat.

DREW  
 Let's talk to Marla.  
 She's Head of Artist Relations.  
 She has to listen.

CUT TO:

INT. MARLA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

MARLA (50s), sharp, polished, surgical in her emotional distance, sits behind a sleek desk.

She looks at Jax with controlled annoyance - like he's a malfunctioning product.

MARLA  
 So...  
 You want to "take a break."

JAX  
 No.  
 I'm leaving.  
 Dropping out.  
 I'm done with the album.  
 I'm done with Lucien.  
 I'm done with the entire label.

Marla's pen stops mid-signature.

She looks up slowly.

MARLA  
 Jax...  
 sweetheart...

That patronizing tone makes Eva's eyes narrow.

MARLA (CONT'D)  
 You can't just "leave."  
 You signed a six-album contract.  
 Tour agreements.  
 Merchandising.

You are the single biggest marketing investment we've ever made.

Jax's voice cracks with desperation.

JAX  
 I don't care about the money.  
 I don't want the fame.  
 I don't want the music anymore.

Marla leans back, her smile thin and weaponized.

MARLA  
That's unfortunate.  
Because the music still wants you.

Jax freezes.

Eva leans forward.

EVA  
He's not well.  
He needs time.  
Rest.  
Help.

Marla's eyes flick to her.

MARLA  
(interrupting)  
And you are...?

EVA  
Someone who actually cares about  
him.

Marla laughs under her breath.

MARLA  
That won't get you far in this  
business.

Drew steps forward.

DREW  
He's serious, Marla.  
He's done.  
We're walking away.

Marla's smile disappears.

MARLA  
You don't seem to understand the  
scale of what you're saying.

She taps her desk.

The blinds close automatically.

Lights dim.

A sense of oppression fills the room.

MARLA (CONT'D)  
Jax is under contract.  
Contracts have consequences.

Eva swallows hard – she feels it too.

JAX  
(angry)  
I'm not your prisoner.

Marla leans in, voice lowering.

MARLA  
Legally?  
You are.

Jax's breath catches.

He looks at Drew – at Eva – searching for something he can hold onto.

Then–

The door opens.

Lucien steps in.

Perfect suit.

Perfect smile.

Perfect timing.

Lucien closes the door gently behind him.

LUCIEN  
Marla, you're needed downstairs.  
I'll handle this.

Marla rises immediately – relieved.

She touches Lucien's shoulder as she leaves, like a subordinate greeting a superior.

The door closes.

Lucien turns to Jax, Eva, and Drew.

Silence.

Then–

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Where were you last night, Jax?

Eva steps protectively in front of him – surprising even herself.

EVA  
He was with me.

Lucien's smile twitches – just a fraction.

LUCIEN  
Yes.  
I know.

He circles them slowly – like a wolf assessing prey.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
You want to quit?  
Walk away?  
Find God?

Jax stares at the floor.

Lucien stops moving.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
You don't get to leave.  
You are mine until your final  
breath.

Eva steps closer, defiant.

EVA  
No, he isn't.

Lucien turns to her – all amusement gone.

Something colder underneath.

LUCIEN  
(tender, lethal)  
You... are becoming a problem.

Drew moves between them instinctively.

DREW  
Touch her and I swear to God–

Lucien raises a finger.

Drew's throat tightens –

he CHOKES, gasping, clenching his neck.

Eva screams.

EVA  
STOP!

Lucien releases him.

Drew collapses to the floor, coughing violently.

Jax rushes to him.

JAX  
(horrified)  
Drew—  
Are you okay?  
Are you—

Lucien leans down, whispering near Jax's ear:

LUCIEN  
You walk away...  
and I destroy them.  
Starting with her.

Jax freezes.

His worst fear.

His chains tightening.

Lucien straightens his jacket.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Now be a good artist...  
and go back to the studio.

He opens the door casually — inviting, commanding.

No force this time.

No violence.

Just domination.

Lucien walks out.

Marla passes him in the hallway, smiling as if nothing happened.

Eva helps Drew up.

Jax stands in the doorway of the office, trembling, realizing:

Leaving the industry isn't just difficult.

It's deadly.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. STADIUM - NIGHT

Crowds flood inside.

Posters everywhere: "JAX KANE: THE NIGHT OF FIRE TOUR".

Energy.

Excitement.

Chaos.

Inside—

INT. STADIUM ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Lights blast.

The crowd roars.

Drums pound.

The stage glows red — TOO red, almost infernal.

Jax stands just offstage.

He's trembling.

Eva and Drew are beside him, having snuck backstage, both terrified he agreed to perform.

EVA

Jax...

You don't owe them anything.  
We should leave.

Jax shakes his head, eyes glassy.

JAX

If I run... he'll hurt you.

Both of you.

Eva grabs his arm.

EVA  
Jax, listen—  
God is stronger than—

Before she finishes—

A STAGEHAND approaches.

STAGEHAND  
Two minutes, Jax.

He claps Jax's shoulder.

Jax nearly collapses from the touch.

Drew steadies him.

DREW  
We'll be right here.  
Don't let him inside your head.

Jax nods — barely.

He steps toward the stage.

A low, deep whisper curls around his ears:

LUCIEN (V.O.)  
Good boy.

Jax stiffens.

CUT TO:

INT. ARENA — MAIN STAGE — MOMENTS LATER

Spotlights blaze.

The crowd EXPLODES with screams as Jax steps into the light.

But he looks... wrong.

Pale.

Haunted.

Unsteady.

He grips the mic with both hands.

MUSIC BEGINS —

The intro to his biggest hit:

“Rhymes of the Devil.”

The crowd sings along.

Jax flinches at the title.

He raises the mic —

Nothing comes out.

He tries again.

Still nothing.

The crowd starts chanting his name.

JAX  
JAX

JAX (CONT'D)  
A low vibration hums under the  
floorboards.

The LED screens glitch —

flashes of demonic silhouettes

hidden lyrics

Lucien's eyes.

Jax tries to sing.

A voice overlays his own —

Lucien's voice.

LUCIEN (V.O.)  
Deliver the message.

Jax screams — but the scream becomes a distorted audio blast  
that echoes through the arena.

The crowd FALLS SILENT.

Jax drops the mic, clutching his head.

JAX  
(panicked)  
STOP!  
(MORE)

JAX (CONT'D)  
Get out of my mind!  
GET OUT!

He crumples to his knees.

The LED screens turn blood-red.

A SIGIL appears behind him – the same one burned into the Devil's notebook.

The crowd GASPS.

People pull out phones.

The moment becomes VIRAL in real time.

Jax begins seizing – ONSTAGE – in front of 30,000 fans.

Security rushes in.

Eva SCREAMS backstage.

EVA  
JAX!!!

Drew grabs her hand.

DREW  
We have to get him OUT of here!

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE – SECONDS LATER

Security carries Jax past Eva and Drew.

His eyes are rolled back.

His chest spasms.

He whispers a broken prayer:

JAX  
Help... me...

They drag him down a hallway.

Suddenly—

All the arena lights SHUT OFF.

TOTAL DARKNESS.

A single spotlight drops on Lucien, standing at the opposite end of the corridor.

Perfectly clean.

Perfectly calm.

Perfectly demonic.

Lucien smiles at Eva.

LUCIEN  
You can't save him.

Eva steps forward, shaking – but resolute.

EVA  
I don't have to.  
I know someone who can.

Lucien smirks.

Then vanishes.

Eva grabs Drew.

EVA (CONT'D)  
We have to take him somewhere safe.  
Now.

Drew nods.

They drag Jax, half-conscious, into the parking lot.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMPTY CHURCH – LATE NIGHT

A small, unremarkable building on the edge of town.

A flickering neon sign:

"NEW HOPE OUTREACH CENTER"

Eva pounds on the door.

EVA  
Pastor Mike!  
Please—it's an emergency!

The door unlocks.

PASTOR MIKE (50s), rugged, ex-addict vibes, sleeves rolled up, no judgment in his eyes – just history – opens the door.

He sees Jax convulsing in Drew's arms.

He nods once.

PASTOR MIKE  
Bring him in.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY – MOMENTS LATER

The church is dim, quiet, humble.

No theatrical lighting.

No stained glass.

Just wooden pews and a worn cross.

Pastor Mike kneels beside Jax, who trembles on the floor.

PASTOR MIKE  
(to Jax)  
Son... can you hear me?

Jax's eyes flutter.

JAX  
(whisper)  
He... won't let me go.

Pastor Mike exchanges a dark, knowing look with Eva.

PASTOR MIKE  
(to Eva)  
Tell me everything.

Eva catches her breath.

EVA  
He made a deal with... someone.

A producer.

But not human.

Mike nods – like he's heard this before.

PASTOR MIKE

Name?

EVA

Lucien.

Pastor Mike pauses.

His face tightens.

PASTOR MIKE

That's... not a new name.

Drew swallows hard.

DREW

You believe us?

Pastor Mike looks Jax in the eyes, then places a steady hand on his chest.

PASTOR MIKE

Son...

I've seen this before.

Different faces.

Same chains.

Jax sobs.

JAX

Can you break them?

Pastor Mike doesn't sugarcoat – he meets him with brutal honesty.

PASTOR MIKE

No.

Jax's heart drops.

Pastor Mike leans closer.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)

But He can.

Jax trembles.

EVA

What do we do?

Pastor Mike stands, grabbing an old Bible that's clearly been held together by tape and prayer.

He speaks with the calm certainty of someone who's battled darkness before.

PASTOR MIKE  
We don't run.

We don't hide.

He looks at all three of them – seeing their fear, but also their potential.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
We fight.

Eva exhales – relieved and terrified.

Drew nods – ready, for the first time.

Jax looks up – barely conscious, but hope flickers in him again.

Pastor Mike kneels beside him.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
But first...

He places a hand firmly over Jax's heart.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
We take back what was stolen.

Jax gasps – a shock of spiritual warmth surging through his chest.

Eva grabs his hand.

Drew steadies his shoulders.

Pastor Mike opens the Bible.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
Let's begin.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. NEW HOPE CHURCH – PRAYER ROOM – NIGHT

A small room lit by candles.

Wooden floor.

Simple chairs.

Nothing grand – just space, silence, and presence.

Jax sits in the center on a chair.

Eva sits on his left, gripping his hand.

Drew sits on his right, jaw clenched, ready to fight anything physical or not.

Pastor Mike stands in front of them.

Bible in one hand.

A small wooden cross hanging from his neck.

He studies Jax gently, like a doctor assessing a wounded child.

PASTOR MIKE

Jax...

before we begin, I need to know something.

Jax lifts his head – trembling.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)

Do you want to be free?

Jax closes his eyes.

Tears spill silently.

JAX

(whispering)

Yes...

More than anything.

Pastor Mike nods.

He places a hand over Jax's heart.

PASTOR MIKE

Then He hears you.

Jax exhales shakily.

Pastor Mike pulls a chair and sits directly in front of him.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)

This isn't Hollywood.

I'm not here to scream demons out  
of you.

(MORE)

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
I'm here to find the wounds...  
...and introduce them to the Healer.

Mike flips open his Bible.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
We start simple.

Tell me the moment you gave yourself away.

Jax shakes his head.

JAX  
I don't...  
I don't want to talk about it.

PASTOR MIKE  
Which means we need to.

Jax grips Eva's hand harder.

His breathing becomes ragged.

JAX  
I was alone.  
Desperate.  
I felt worthless.  
He knew exactly what to say.

A faint metallic sound echoes through the room.

Clink.

Drew looks around.

DREW  
What the hell was that?

Pastor Mike doesn't flinch.

PASTOR MIKE  
Ignore it.

He stays locked on Jax.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
What did he offer?

Jax's voice shakes.

JAX  
Everything I ever wanted.  
Fame.  
(MORE)

JAX (CONT'D)

Money.

The world chanting my name.

Mike nods.

He's seen this before.

PASTOR MIKE

And what did he take?

Jax's mouth opens, but no sound comes.

His chest tightens.

He gasps -

JAX

(strangled whisper)

My... voice...

Eva grips his shoulders.

EVA

Jax!

Look at me - breathe!

Pastor Mike leans forward, whispering.

PASTOR MIKE

Lucien...

you don't get to silence him here.

A violent gust of COLD wind blasts through the candles.

Three go out.

Drew stands instantly, fists raised.

DREW

Where is he?!

Pastor Mike speaks calmly - the authority in his voice cutting through the fear.

PASTOR MIKE

Sit.

He wants you panicked.

Drew swallows and sits.

Jax begins crying - uncontrollable.

JAX  
I can feel him...  
in my mind...  
He's pulling...  
He's pulling—

Pastor Mike places a hand firmly on Jax's forehead.

PASTOR MIKE  
(quiet but commanding)  
The power of Christ compels you!.

Jax jerks —

as if something hit a wall inside him.

His breathing steadies.

Mike exhales.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
Alright...  
We found the chain.  
Now we test it.

Mike stands, stepping behind Jax.

He places both hands on Jax's shoulders.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
Lucien...  
I know you can hear me.

Eva tenses.

Drew looks ready to punch the air.

Mike's voice deepens, unwavering.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
You have no authority over him  
here.

A whisper fills the room.

A voice only Jax hears — but we see the effect.

LUCIEN (V.O.)  
(taunting)  
He belongs to me.

Jax gasps.

His nails dig into the chair.

He looks like he's being pulled backward by invisible hands.  
Eva grips him tighter.

EVA  
Jax – stay with us!

Pastor Mike circles to face him.

PASTOR MIKE  
(sharply)  
No.  
Listen to me –  
YOU LEFT THE DOOR OPEN.  
Not him.

Everyone freezes.

Jax looks up – confused.

JAX  
What... what does that mean?

Pastor Mike kneels in front of him.

He speaks softly, intensely, without judgment:

PASTOR MIKE  
Pain opens doors.  
Trauma opens doors.  
Shame opens doors.

He squeezes Jax's trembling hand.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
Tell me the wound he used.

Jax begins shaking violently.

Images flash in his mind:

- Nate overdosing
- EMTs trying to revive him
- Jax crying on the pavement
- Lucien appearing afterwards
- "You weren't enough to save him, were you?"

Jax collapses into sobs so deep they sound like broken bones.

JAX  
(screaming)  
It's my fault!  
Nate died because of me!

Eva is crying now too.

She grabs his face.

EVA  
No, Jax – no.  
Nate made his choice.  
You didn't abandon him.

Pastor Mike nods, supporting.

PASTOR MIKE  
That's the wound.  
That's what he latched onto.  
That's how he convinced you to sell  
yourself.

The candles flicker violently –

a wave of unseen anger.

Pastor Mike raises his voice, calm but fierce:

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
You're not guilty of Nate's death.  
You're guilty of believing the LIE.

Jax shakes – violently – like the world is tilting.

LUCIEN (V.O.)  
(hissing)  
He left you.  
Everyone leaves you.  
Even she will leave you.

Jax screams.

Eva holds him tighter.

EVA  
Jax – look at me!

He looks up – eyes filled with pain.

EVA (CONT'D)  
I'm not leaving you.

Her voice breaks.

EVA (CONT'D)

Not now.

Not ever.

Something snaps inside Jax.

A spiritual thread disconnects.

The candles BRIGHTEN.

Pastor Mike exhales – relieved.

PASTOR MIKE

Good.

Very good.

Drew wipes tears without hiding it.

DREW

Is he... is he free?

Pastor Mike stands, grabbing the Bible.

His voice is serious, weighted:

PASTOR MIKE

No.

Not yet.

Eva grips Jax's hand.

EVA

What do we have to do?

Pastor Mike looks at them – all three – knowing the road ahead is brutal.

PASTOR MIKE

We need to break the contract.

Jax swallows.

JAX

But...

how?

Mike closes the Bible.

PASTOR MIKE

We find the object that bound you.

Where's the book?

Eva's eyes widen.

Eva and Drew speak at the same time:

EVA / DREW  
The Devil's Notebook.

Pastor Mike nods.

PASTOR MIKE  
That's the binding anchor.  
Destroy it...  
and you sever his influence.

Drew stands.

DREW  
Where do we find it?

Pastor Mike looks toward the church doors.

The air gets colder.

PASTOR MIKE  
We don't.

He does.

They all look at Jax.

The weight of destiny settles onto his shoulders.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
Tomorrow...  
you face him.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. NEW HOPE CHURCH - SANCTUARY - LATE NIGHT

Jax sits alone in the dim sanctuary, holding a worn acoustic guitar.

His hands shake.

His breath falters.

His soul knows what tomorrow means.

Eva walks in and sits beside him.

EVA  
You don't have to be perfect  
tomorrow.

You just have to show up.

Jax nods – barely.

JAX  
What if I'm too weak?

Eva smiles softly.

EVA  
Then let Him be strong.

Drew enters with Pastor Mike.

They stand like soldiers before battle.

PASTOR MIKE  
Tomorrow... the goal isn't to fight  
him.  
It's to take back what belongs to  
God.

He kneels in front of Jax.

PASTOR MIKE (CONT'D)  
You are not going into hell to win.

You're going in because you've already been claimed.

Jax's eyes fill with tears.

Drew puts a hand on his shoulder.

DREW  
We've got your back, brother.

Eva takes Jax's hand.

EVA  
And He has the rest.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. LUCID RECORDS – BASEMENT STUDIO – NIGHT

A dark, unused recording studio –

the place where Lucien first "signed" Jax's soul.

The Devil's Notebook sits on a stand at the center, closed but radiating power.

Jax enters with Pastor Mike, Eva, and Drew.

The door SLAMS shut behind them.

Lucien steps out of the shadows.

Perfect suit.

Cold eyes.

A smile too calm for what's coming.

LUCIEN  
So here you are.  
My masterpiece.  
My prophet.

Jax steps forward – trembling, but brave.

JAX  
I'm not yours.

Lucien circles him.

LUCIEN  
If you weren't mine...  
you wouldn't be here.

Pastor Mike raises the cross.

PASTOR MIKE  
In the name of Jesus–

Lucien LAUGHS.

A cold, echoing sound that rattles the lights.

LUCIEN  
Do you really think waving symbols  
will save him?

Pastor Mike doesn't flinch.

PASTOR MIKE  
It's not the symbol.  
It's the authority behind it.

Lucien's smile falters – just slightly.

Battle lines drawn.

The air thickens with supernatural tension.

Lucien gestures toward the notebook.

LUCIEN

Destroy it...  
and he dies with it.

Jax freezes.

JAX

What...?

Lucien leans close.

LUCIEN

You tied your soul to every word.  
My rhymes ARE your breath.

Jax stumbles back.

Eva holds him steady.

EVA

He's lying.

Lucien turns to her - amused.

LUCIEN

Am I?  
Would you bet his life on that?

Eva's eyes fill with fear - but she stands firm.

EVA

Yes.

Lucien's smile dies completely.

LUCIEN

Then you've chosen war.

Suddenly -

THE ROOM ERUPTS.

Lights explode.

Equipment blasts off tables.

Wind whips in a tornado of papers and dust.

Lucien transforms slightly – not a monster, but a more terrifying version of a man who's shed his human disguise.

Eyes like obsidian.

Skin pale, sharp, cold.

He lifts a hand –

Jax is SLAMMED against the wall.

Eva SCREAMS.

Drew RUNS – tries to grab Jax – gets thrown across the room.

Pastor Mike stands strong, shouting scripture.

The demon ROARS.

But the Bible in Mike's hands glows faintly – warmth vs. cold.

Lucien recoils.

LUCIEN  
ENOUGH!

He appears in front of Jax instantly, gripping his face.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)  
Sing for me.  
ONE LAST TIME.

Jax gasps – suffocating – as if Lucien is pulling the air from his lungs.

Eva rushes forward, holding onto Jax's hand.

EVA  
JAX – LOOK AT ME!

He meets her eyes.

She whispers:

EVA (CONT'D)  
You don't need his breath.  
You have His.

Something shifts inside Jax.

A spark.

A memory.

Nate's laughter.

Eva's smile.

Pastor Mike's words.

God's warmth.

Jax breathes.

NOT by Lucien's will.

By choice.

Lucien steps back - startled.

LUCIEN

What-  
NO.

Pastor Mike shouts:

PASTOR MIKE  
NOW, JAX - BREAK THE CONTRACT!

Jax stumbles to the notebook.

Lucien screams:

LUCIEN  
TOUCH IT AND YOU DIE!

Jax places his hand on the cover.

It BURNS.

His skin sizzles.

But he doesn't let go.

JAX  
(through tears)  
I'm... not... yours.

Lucien lunges.

Eva grabs Jax's shoulders.

Drew grabs his arm.

Pastor Mike presses the cross against Jax's back, praying loudly.

Jax OPENS THE NOTEBOOK.

A BLAST OF DARK ENERGY fills the room –  
a demonic scream shakes the walls –  
Lucien SHRIEKS in agony –  
the words inside the notebook writhe like living serpents.

Jax rips the pages out.

Lucien collapses.

The room shakes violently.

Jax throws the pages into a burning trash can.

The notebook catches fire –

screaming, twisting, writhing –

until finally–

IT EXPLODES INTO LIGHT.

Lucien is thrown backward, slamming into the far wall.

He lies there, smoking, weakened – his power severed.

Jax collapses into Eva's arms.

The room falls silent.

PASTOR MIKE  
(soft, reverent)  
It's done.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL COMMUNITY PARK – SUNSET (WEEKS LATER)

A humble outdoor gathering.

No stage lights.

No pyrotechnics.

Just people.

And peace.

Jax sits on a wooden stool with his guitar.

Eva is in the front row.

Drew and Pastor Mike stand nearby.

Jax taps the mic gently.

JAX  
This song...

is the first one I've ever written without chains.

The crowd quiets.

He closes his eyes.

He breathes – freely.

He begins to play.

A soft, haunting melody –

sacred in tone, but deeply human.

JAX (CONT'D)  
(singing)  
I walked in shadows I called my  
home  
Chasing echoes I should've known  
But mercy found me where darkness  
stole  
And whispered softly... "I want your  
soul."

Eva smiles – tears in her eyes.

JAX (CONT'D)  
Not to bind  
Not to break  
Not to claim the scars I make  
But to lift a heart that fell too  
low–  
To give me back what I let go.

The audience listens in silence – holy silence.

The camera slowly circles Jax as he sings, free for the first time.

JAX (CONT'D)  
Light in the fire  
Grace in the pain  
(MORE)

JAX (CONT'D)  
Love in the ruins I made with my  
name  
And I will sing – for the One I  
know  
Who took my ashes...  
And made me whole.

He finishes.

Silence.

Then – the crowd rises in applause.

But Jax doesn't smile for fame.

He smiles for FREEDOM.

Eva comes up and hugs him.

Drew claps his shoulder.

Pastor Mike nods, proud.

Jax looks out over the crowd – humble, grateful, redeemed.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK – EDGE OF THE CROWD – SAME TIME

A lone man in a long coat watches from the shadows.

Not Lucien.

Just a man.

He turns and walks away.

Evil isn't gone from the world...

but it no longer owns Jax.

FADE OUT.

TITLE CARD:

THE RHYMES OF DEVIL

ROLL CREDITS under Jax's final song – now a full arrangement  
– playing triumphantly.