

FATHER TRINITY

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*Pack up all my cares and woe
Here I go, singing low
Bye bye blackbird*

*Where somebody waits for me
Sugar's sweet, so is she
Bye bye blackbird*

*No one here can love and understand me
Oh, what hard luck stories they all hand me*

*Make my bed and light the light
I'll arrive late tonight
Blackbird, bye bye.*

- Bye Bye Blackbird (1926)
A song by Mort Dixon and Ray Henderson

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

A pink moonlit glow over a sinking man -- Life-ravaged stagehand **ACE** (50s) has an unkempt beard and hair, long by neglect rather than choice. Blood ribbons from his wrists. A music box eerily tings 'Bye Bye Blackbird' by Mort Dixon.

His eyes OPEN. His face is peaceful. Sinks into blackness. The music, sinister, winds down to discordantly -- stops.

ACE (V.O.)
...and we drown in absent tears.

FADE TO BLACK

OVER BLACK: FATHER TRINITY

INT. STUDIO 3 - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

SHNK! Ace's large hand pulls a light cord. He wears a wedding ring. An old vertical scar traverses his wrist.

SUPER: 3 YEARS EARLIER

A naked bulb in a wooden corridor casts a dull light on Ace's face. He's a hulking man with hunched shoulders. In the light he looks defeated, in the dark he looks dangerous.

The light flickers. A long, low sigh.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Ace, torch in hand, checks a fuse box -- nope, all good.

INT. WALL CAVITY - NIGHT

Ace crawls, chasing the source of the fault. From the roof, a rat HANGS -- then DROPS on his ear. He jerks back.

A PLAGUE OF RATS runs at and crawls over Ace. Ace screams. Rats race into his open mouth, a TUNNEL FOR RATS. Snaps out of it. Nothing there. Just his fear of rats.

ACE
You big pussy.

Ace crawls further and further. Finds an electrocuted rat.

ACE (cont'd)
Karma's a bitch.

There is a stream of consciousness feel to TRANSITIONS between PROTAGONISTS -- ACE, FLASH and JACKIE -- like the disjointed recollections of a dying man.

INT. LIVING ROOM SET - NIGHT

The LIGHT FLICKERS on daydreamer **JACKIE** (9), Eurasian, male, the opposite of cool. He slumps on a retro couch, head down. Sobs softly. 'Bye Bye Blackbird' plays on the radio.

SINGER (V.O.)

No one can love or understand me...

Light and music fail. Jackie remains haloed by a standing lamp. It dimly lights this DISUSED SET.

ACE (V.O.)

Father Trinity wasn't just a television show, any more than a circus is just a tent.

Jackie gazes into a CRYSTAL BALL in his lap. It glows soft pink. He strokes a purring fat BLACK CAT beside him.

ACE (V.O.) (cont'd)

It was a life force, converging us into one, big, fucked-up family.

Jackie's mother **DOT** (mid 30s), Chinese American, opens a door. Wordlessly sings 'Bye Bye Blackbird.' Dot's a tactile head-turner, the kind of woman that makes wives nervous.

Dot settles a PURPLE BLANKET around Jackie's shoulders and a box of tissues beside him. Exuberantly kisses him the crown of his head three times.

DOT

My baby.

Jackie lifts his face. A bruised eye. His nose is snotty from crying.

JACKIE

I'm not a baby. I can see the future.

DOT

But those boys can't, my love.

Dot wipes his trailing tear and offers a tissue. Jackie blows his nose. Dot cocoons him in her arms, singing again.

A microwave DINGS. Dot crosses the '80s vibe living room.

Jackie's chest heaves. He takes deep breaths, making wide circles on an imaginary table as he speaks.

JACKIE
Calming waters.

Dot dances in, shaking a cocktail shaker to an '80s tune.

A piña colada is poured into a cocktail glass on a coffee table. Two steaming bowls of Chinese noodle soup and a bowl of spaghetti bolognese rest beside it.

Jackie beams at Dot. Best mom ever. Dot clicks on a kids' movie, casting a TV glow over Jackie.

BLADE (O.S.)
Babe! Uh, why are you in the dark?

The cat darts away.

Jackie hides his crystal ball in the couch. Wipes his tears.

Jackie's father **BLADE** (40s), white, is body-to-body with Dot. Blade is a battle-hardened, well-built, martial arts stuntman, brutish in a way that is inexplicably attractive.

DOT
Circuit's blown again. Surprised?

BLADE
By the circuit, no. By you, always.

Jackie watches Blade squeeze Dot's ass with one hand and cup an unopened beer with the other.

DOT
Control yourself. How'd the shoot go?

BLADE
I doubled for Ron. You heard he's getting fired for --

DOT
Breaking the morality clause. I heard. Like we're a moral beacon. And yet the next reincarnation of Father Trinity has to "drive women crazy".

BLADE
Like I don't got enough crazy.

Dot swats him with a tea towel. Blade smacks her ass. He spots the tissues next to Jackie.

BLADE (cont'd)
Again? Hey! No tears.

Blade closes on Jackie. Tilts Jackie's face to the light.
Presses his cold can of beer against Jackie's eye.

BLADE (cont'd)
Keep the pressure on. Did you at
least get a punch in?

DOT
Blade! Can we just eat dinner nicely
together, like a normal family?

Blade sits in front of the spaghetti.

Dot nestles between Blade and Jackie. Jackie opens and
passes the beer to Blade.

Jackie closes his eyes. Breathes in the aroma of the soup.
He slurps his soup, eating with chopsticks.

Dot sips her cocktail. Blade catches her eye.

DOT (cont'd)
What? It reminds me of Cuba.

She recites 'I Dream Awake' by the Cuban poet José Martí.

DOT (cont'd)
(longingly)
I always dream with open eyes,
Of the wide turbulent sea,
And merrily riding on the gentle neck
Of a mighty lion,
(sexily, to Blade)
Monarch of my heart,
(hugging Jackie)
I always see a floating child
Who is calling me!

BLADE
We never went to Cuba.

DOT
Exactly.

BLADE
How many of those have you had?

Dot turns up the TV. A death scene from E.T. or similar.

BLADE (cont'd)
Not this again.

JACKIE
I'm going to be an actor.

BLADE
Over my dead body!

DOT
Ignore your father.

JACKIE
(teary, in unison with TV)
...I love you.

DOT
(teary, in unison with TV)
...I love you.

BLADE
Oh brother!

Emotional movie score fades into...

INT. DARK SPACE - NIGHT

Ace lumbers through the dark, empty Studio 3. Faint music.

His face is tense, menacing. Cocks his head. Listening.

Horror show props in the shadows.

A man talks indistinctly in the distance.

Ace's body hardens. Fight or flight? Fight.

Ace closes in. Sees a glow.

SNIFF! A smell. He follows it.

The sound, louder now. A television. Floorboards creak.

INT. LIVING ROOM SET - NIGHT

The family eat, captivated by the television.

DOT
You hear that?

Dot turns off the TV. Boards creak. Blade kills the light.

Torchlight sweeps in front of the family's feet.

Jackie pulls his feet out of sight, just in time.

Hu-Hu-Hu-Hu. Jackie's breath, shallow and fast.

His wide eyes follow the light.

SNIFF! He hears someone sniff deeply. As if to find prey.

INT. DARK SPACE - NIGHT

Ace closes his eyes, SNIFFING the soup's aroma.

A soft smile. Opens his eyes, his gaze far away. His feet recede on creaking floorboards.

INT. LIVING ROOM SET - NIGHT

The family talk softly and quickly, their faces barely seen.

BLADE

We're not supposed to eat in here.
Attracts the rats. Damned rats!

DOT

Probably your apprentice. He follows
you like a shadow.

They listen, alert. Silence. Blade clicks on the TV. Changes the channel. FOOTBALL. Push into TV...

EXT. BLACKBIRDS STADIUM - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The squinting eyes of **FLASH** (22), CONSIDERED WHITE, wearing eye black, focus on the goal line.

The college quarterback star RAMS opponents out of his way. The field swarms red and black, Cardinals versus Blackbirds.

Flash high steps, arching out of reach of hands as he sprints across the field. CROWD chants like a heart beat.

CROWD

Flash! Flash! Flash!

He glances over his shoulder, grinning. *Eat my dust.*

Touchdown! Flash does a cocky strut and a sexy dance. He's a god and he knows it.

Flash leaps into the stands. His jersey is clawed to shreds by a frenzy of YOUNG WOMEN. It could be a horror scene except he's loving it.

EXT. SIDELINES - DAY

Flash slips into a jersey. On his back, a PHOENIX TATTOO.

A SPORTSCASTER (20s), Black, with swagger, interviews him. Flash runs his hand through his black, pretty boy hair.

CROWD
Flash! Flash! Flash!

Flash is the reason girls have curfews. Captivating, not just his looks -- ripped, tall, a roguish smile, GREEN CAT'S EYES -- but his presence.

Flash accepts a trophy. He punches the air with it.

FLASH
This one's for you Dad!

SECURITY STAFF attempt to restrain the crowd. Young Women spill over the guardrail. Fanatical chanting, fast, loud.

CROWD
FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

SPORTSCASTER
This is out of control!

Flash signs his showy autograph in a black marker on the breasts of a surprised **FEMALE FAN** (20s), Asian American.

SPORTSCASTER (cont'd)
So what do you see in your future?

Flash chuckles, the throng seething around him.

FLASH
What do I see in my future?

Flash grabs the Female Fan. Dips her in a kiss. She startles. Cameras flash madly.

SPORTSCASTER (O.S.)
Boo-yah!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The room teems with FOOTBALL PLAYERS and FAN GIRLS, drinking and doing drugs, making out against walls.

PLAYER ONE videos PLAYER TWO having sex on a pool table, with a nearly UNCONSCIOUS BLONDE GIRL.

A row of FOOTBALL PLAYERS, blindfolded at small tables, lean back in chairs. Under the tables are girls on their knees.

The Female Fan, seen from behind, stands awkwardly. A long blonde wig falls down her midriff top and RED JEANS.

She looks over her shoulder, brows furrowed. She wears blue contact lenses. She sucks her bottom lip anxiously.

A **MEAN GIRL** (20s), white and blonde, in baby-pink cashmere locks eyes with the Female Fan. The Mean Girl is backed by her SORORITY SISTERS.

MEAN GIRL

(singsong)

No turning back now. We're right behind you.

Female Fan's fingers scratch at her palms in nervous fists.

SORORITY SISTERS (O.S.)

Alpha Phi Alpha Phi Alpha Phi!

She wills herself forward, breathing and moving in slow motion toward her designated target -- Flash.

Flash leans back, eyes closed, hands behind his head.

The Female Fan gets on her knees. Grimaces.

Flash's lips part. GROAN. Football Players chant.

FOOTBALL PLAYERS

Flash! Flash! Flash!

His hands dig into the arms of the chair.

Flash peeks under his blindfold -- blonde hair, red jeans and a midriff top, revealing a fresh hand-sized lower back TATTOO. It's his autograph '*Flash*.'

He groans loudly. His body convulses in pleasure.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASH FORWARD)

A table lamp snaps on.

A woman's hand glues a newspaper cutting into a scrapbook: 'FLASH FEVER - BLACKBIRDS SWOOP IN.' Her nails are savagely bitten.

She underlines the caption 'JACK FLASH KISSES UNKNOWN WOMAN,' Underlines 'UNKNOWN WOMAN' furiously. LAMP OFF.

INT. STUDIO 3 - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A TORCH FLICKS ON and off as Ace hits it, muttering.

ACE
Everything's fucking broken.

Ace tamps down loose carpet at the door with his foot.

He unholsters a nail gun from his tool belt. Aims it at the carpet. Channels his inner movie star, ready to shoot.

A pack of cigars falls on the floor. Much better idea.

EXT. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Ace leans against the door, cigar in mouth.

Tugs at his shirt to create a breeze against the L.A. heat. Dull streetlights cast shadows in the empty studio lot.

Chirrup. Chirrup. Chirrup. A deep pulse of CRICKETS. Ace straightens, tense.

Ace checks to his left. A recreated 1980s suburb. No one.

A BLACK FAT CAT ambles up the middle of the road.

Ace checks to his right. Life in the 2020s.

A light in the distance. Small, steady, red. Ace squints.

A moving shadow. Then it's gone.

Ace leans back against the door. His body exhales.

Ace blows three smoke rings into the dark, his face pensive.

Ace is silhouetted, small against a supermoon.

His eyes jump to his feet.

The cat circles them, mewing hungrily.

Ace strokes her. Sees she's PREGNANT.

ACE
Sorry mama. I got nothing.

The cat catches and CRUNCHES a big, black, cricket. Disturbing. The orchestra of crickets thunders in protest.

A SUDDEN SWARM OF BLACK CRICKETS. Ace hides his face.

He wrestles with the door. Opens it. Slams it behind him.

Crickets bombard the door.

INT. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Ace trips on the loose carpet.

Thoop-Thoop-Thoop! Crickets attack the door.

ACE
(rubs his knee)
What the hell?!

Ace kneels. Ker-Thunk! He shoots nails into the torn carpet.

An OLD ENVELOPE pokes from under the carpet, nailed down.
He tears it free, It's sealed with a RED LIPSTICK kiss.

He turns it over. Face clouds. Pockets it.

A few more nails. Ker-Thunk! Ker-THUNK!

CUT TO BLACK

INT. ON SET - DAY

Ker-THUNK! In darkness, a train approaches. Casts light on--

Blade battles a VAMPIRE on train tracks. Train screeches.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
And cut!

Lights up on set. Jackie hovers beside the motley FILM CREW.

BETTY (9), his Asian American best friend, shadows him.
Misshapen braids, uncool glasses, mismatching everything.
Inside and out, she's awkward with attitude.

Betty strolls to her father **FAI** (mid 30s), a Japanese
American stuntman. Fai removes his vampire teeth.

BETTY
Dad, can I have a Coke?

FAI
Have you done your homework?

Betty nods, crossing her fingers behind her back.

Jackie, bearing an icepack for Blade, sidles up.

JACKIE
You were amazing, Dad.

Blade notes Fai raise an eyebrow. *Show no weakness.*

BLADE
Go back to your mother.

FAI
(to Jackie)
Wow! That's a hard lesson.

BLADE
You should see the other guy. Keep
the pressure on.

Jackie takes Blade's cue, pressing the icepack to his eye.

INT. MAKEUP ROOM - DAY

Jackie leans back in a makeup chair. His crystal ball rests on the table. Dot's lush makeup brush SWEEPS powder over Jackie's face. It's slow, sensual, intimate.

DOT
Remember what your wàipó said? Show
me the boy, I'll show you the man.

JACKIE
(eyes downcast)
Show me the man, I'll show you the
boy.

DOT
Dad's just like his pop. Except not
so much of the ol'
(gestures drinking)
glug glug glug.

They laugh. Dot dabs concealer on Jackie's blackening eye.

MEMORY HIT

A fist smashes Jackie's eye. He hits the dirt. A circle of faces, his SCHOOL BULLIES (9-12), white, crowd over him.

SCHOOL BULLIES
Jap, Jap, Jap -

BACK TO SCENE

DOT
Dad's just not good at expressing
himself. Not like us.

Dot hands Jackie a script.

DOT (cont'd)
Let's give this another try.

Jackie smiles weakly. He puts on Coke-bottle glasses to read 'Under Milkwood,' by Dylan Thomas (or similar).

JACKIE
(uncomfortably)
I'll tell you no lies. The only sea I saw was the seesaw sea, with you riding on it. Lie down, lie easy. Let me shipwreck in your thighs.

DOT
Knock twice, Jack, at the door of my grave, and ask for Rosie.

Dot takes the pages from Jackie.

DOT (cont'd)
From memory.

JACKIE
Can't.

DOT
Can.

JACKIE
Can't!

DOT
Can.

JACKIE
I'm a kid. I got nowhere else to be.

Jackie removes his glasses. Dot dabs on more concealer.

DOT
There, can you see it now?

Jackie's eyes widen.

His EYES TRACK to the next chair -- a VISION OF HIS FUTURE.

A smoky SPECTRAL VISION of a WOMAN (60s) bends over a man.

JACKIE
Yes. Can't you?

BUNNY (30s), a retired Playboy Bunny and fellow makeup artist, leans against the wall, smoking. She's got a body to die for, a face to live for. She has a Southern accent.

Jackie, slack-jawed, fixes on Bunny as her breasts bounce toward him in a red low-cut top. An explosion of blonde curls and blue eyes add to her angelic glow. Her full RED LIPS pout, exhaling a long stream of smoke. Jackie sighs.

Bunny wraps her arms around Dot. Leans her chin on Dot's shoulder. She looks at Jackie in the mirror. Jackie blushes.

BUNNY
Really cutie, ya cain't see it.

DOT
Someone's in love.

Dot and Bunny lock eyes in the mirror and smile.

Something FLASHES in the mirror. Bunny freezes, eyes Kewpie-doll wide.

Someone watches from the dark corner behind her.

She wheels around as a fearsome ZOMBIE lurches toward her.

AAAARRR! Bunny's blood-curdling shriek.

Betty, moving the zombie, pokes her head out. Jackie's and Betty's unbridled LITTLE-KID LAUGHTER infects Dot and Bunny.

DOT (cont'd)
Seriously Bunny, you think you'd be used to the props.

BUNNY
Is that from the boneyard?

BETTY
Um -- maybe?

DOT
You know that's off limits. That floor's rotten through.

BETTY
You have no idea how stressful it is being nine! Sometimes I just have to get away from it all...

Jackie nods. Dot and Bunny suppress a laugh.

BUNNY
Well, there's ghosts and demons down there, so stay out or they'll get you! You seen the Exorcist right?

JACKIE
 (scared)
 Really?!

BETTY
 (intrigued)
 Really?

DOT
 Bunny, they'll have nightmares!

A GRIP (30s), male, ducks his head in the door.

GRIP
 Dinner's served. Lookin' good ladies.

Dot and Bunny strike a sexy pose playfully, then leave.

JACKIE
 Shall I read your future?

Betty nods. Jackie does 'spooky hands.' Peers into the ball.

JACKIE (cont'd)
 (demonic)
 You're pregnant. He's not going to
 leave her. He'll never leave her.

Betty reels back, BREAKING the ZOMBIE PROP.

INT. BONEYARD - DAY

Ace descends the stairs carrying a ZOMBIE PROP. The gloomy basement below set is a BONEYARD of damaged horror props and building materials. Ace tosses the broken zombie onto a pile of other damaged undead. Contemplates them.

INT. JACKIE'S HOUSE - JACKIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Above Jackie's bed are photos and posters: A ZOMBIE, a YOUNG BLADE runs in his Blackbirds jersey, '80s movies posters.

Jackie dreamily hugs a BLUE TEDDY BEAR.

DING! A microwave. Jackie's eyes flash open.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jackie tiptoes on eggshells into the kitchen.

Stealthily removes an icepack from the freezer.

Blade, absorbed in SKETCHING STUNT RIGGING, is oblivious. He squeezes the joints of one hand, then the other, wishing away arthritis. Swigs from a large glass of WHISKEY.

Jackie places the icepacks near Blade. Blade startles.

BLADE
Why aren't you asleep?!

JACKIE
Nightmare. Can I stay up with you?
Just for a bit.

Blade notices the icepacks and nods. Jackie sits.

JACKIE (cont'd)
I got an art award at school. Did Mom
tell you? Mrs. Nable said --

BLADE
I have no idea who that is.

Blade continues to sketch.

JACKIE
I drew Darth Vader --

BLADE
Look, I'm working here! Gotta focus.

JACKIE
(wincing)
Are you okay, Dad?

Blade, clearly in pain, looks fondly and deeply at Jackie.

BLADE
Yeah. Our mind has an amazing ability
to overcome pain and fear. You need
to hurt for what you love.

Blade lays his hand, bruised and cut, over Jackie's hand. He squeezes it affectionately.

INT. STUDIO 3 - SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Ace SKETCHES STUNT RIGGING. The SCRATCH of pen on paper.
An EMMY AWARDS roach-laden ashtray. Smoke from a roach
ribbons through the light.

A work light highlights Ace. A MIRROR hangs behind the desk.

Ace treads to the makeshift kitchen in the windowless room.

ON THE BENCH: a dozen empty craft beers, mugs serving as
Petrie dishes, and a Valentine's Day themed RED ENVELOPE.

Ace wears a white singlet and boxers. The gym is a memory.

Ace opens mesh-front cupboards. Messy contents include --

A WHITE TIN with gold trim.

Ace removes a WHISKEY bottle and glass. Picks up a shirt from the floordrobe. Sniffs it. Wipes the glass clean.

Ace pours a large shot of whiskey. Reconsiders and pours a second shot. Then a third. It's been that kind of day.

Ace speaks to an invisible friend or himself. *Hard to say.*

ACE

Happy birthday to me.

(skulls his drink)

Fifty. The slow march to death.

Ace opens the red envelope. Half pulls out a Valentine's Day party invite. A woman's writing: *'Hope to see you Ace xxx.'*

ON A SHELF: A small TV, books about set-building and a dusty, faded WEDDING PHOTO.

Ace picks up the wedding photo.

A young couple's SHINY LAUGHTER echoes. Ace's face is pained. Puts the photo back. Bins the Valentine's invite.

Ace expertly rolls a joint. Leans into the electric burner. Sucks deeply. *Yeah, that's better.*

The patter of kids running and LITTLE KID LAUGHTER above.

Ace looks to the ceiling. Lost for a moment.

Ace turns on fun '90s music. Clicks a remote. Looks up.

A spinning DISCO BALL casts disco sequins on his face.

Ace cuts some moves, joint in one hand, drink in the other.

Still got it. The CHEER of a studio audience. He bows.

Ace's EYES DART to his right.

Haunting little-kid laughter, right by his ear.

He whips around, spooked. In the mirror -- his reflection.

Ace removes the mirror.

A MAN-SIZE HOLE is behind it. He looks inside.
Little-kid laughter echoes down wall pipes.

INSIDE THE WALL CAVITY: Bricks of HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS, a
box of toys, a MUSIC BOX, space enough to hide and --

A RED SHOEBOX. Ace stows the OLD ENVELOPE that he found
under the carpet inside it.

Ace replaces the mirror.

Stares at his face, speckled with disco light.

Fakes a smile. Tries again.

Attempts a light-hearted laugh. Smiles. Looks genuine.

Lips twitch. His laughter booms until it sounds MANIACAL.

PRELAP: Slam!

INT. JACKIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Blade slams cupboard doors. Scours the floor.

Behind him on the wall is a framed WAR MEDAL.

Dot sings half the words to a chirpy song on the radio.

GRRR! Blade growls in frustration.

BLADE

DOT!

Dot fries eggs, unmoved.

DOT

I can hear you. It can't have
disappeared.

Dot opens the well-stocked fridge and closes it.

ON THE FRIDGE: Dot's POETRY award, Jackie's awards for drama
and art, his Darth Vader drawing and BLADE'S SKETCH.

DOT (cont'd)

Um, honey?

Blade seizes the sketch. He glares at Dot.

BLADE

I'll kill him. Actually kill him.

DOT
He just wants your attention.

BLADE
He'll get my attention alright!

DOT
For god's sake! If you can't share
his interests, share yours! Soon he
won't want your attention!

Dot STABS THE EGGS with her spatula.

PRELAP: A CROWD CHEERS.

EXT. STADIUM - STANDS - DAY

Jackie sits between Blade and Fai in a sea of black and white jerseys - Blackbirds versus the Detroit DEMONS. Blade puts his arm around Jackie, who glows with the attention.

BLADE
You know, I used to play for the
Blackbirds. Maybe one day...

JACKIE
(under his breath)
In your dreams.

Fai holds in a chuckle. The CROWD CHEERS.

BLADE
Here we go!

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The BLACKBIRDS run onto the field, including Flash and MAX (20s), Asian American, Flash's best friend. CROWD cheers. The BLACKBIRDS MASCOT conducts the crowd like a maestro.

An empty can of beer hits Max in the head, thrown by RACIST.

CROWD
Flash! Flash! Flash!

RACIST
Yellow peril!

Max and Flash slow down. The rest of the pack passes them.

FLASH
Max, you okay?

MAX
(overlapping)
Just keep running.

They catch up to the team.

The Blackbirds do a war dance in a rage of testosterone. Flash and Max are fury incarnate.

FLASH
This is WAR!

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Whistle blows. A guttural war cry. Blackbirds RAM Demons. Flash spins on a dime. Demon hands grasp at him. Flash jukes and weaves out of reach. Untouchable!

EXT. STADIUM STANDS - DAY

Blade points out mini-figures on the field.

BLADE
The quarterback is the guy out front. He's like the star of the show and the director, calling the shots, see?

Jackie, bored already, scans the crowd. They become characters from time-travel movies, 'TIME BANDITS,' etc.

He spots Bunny. She squeezes along the row toward them.

BUNNY
Well! What are the chances?

BLADE
Sit yourself down.

Fai, beside Blade, nods at Bunny. She sits next to Jackie.

BLADE (cont'd)
Just explaining the game to Jackie.

BUNNY (TO JACKIE)
I never understood it either.

BLADE
Did I tell you I played for the Blackbirds?

Bunny shares a look with Jackie.

BUNNY
You may have mentioned it once or twice.

The quarterback, seen in miniature from the stands, rams through the enemy. Blade and Fai spring to their feet. Bunny and Jackie follow suit. The crowd chants. Blade hugs Jackie.

BLADE
Blackbirds-Blackbirds-CHAA-
CHAA-CHAA!

JACKIE
Blackbirds-Blackbirds-CHAA-
CHAA-CHAA!

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Flash zones in on the goal line, almost in reach.

Flash is thrown across the field.

A MAMMOTH OPPONENT, teeth bared, lands on him.

Stampeding feet. Flash covers his head and yells as a wave of white Demons crashes on top of him.

SPORTSCASTER KEITH (V.O.)
And Flash has gone down! This is the
fourth time in a month, Bob.

Dread on Blackbirds' faces.

A Medic leans over Flash's unconscious body. Shines a torch in his eye. Max holds Flash's head as the Medic fastens his neck in a cervical collar.

SPORTSCASTER BOB (V.O.)
Yes Keith, this might just be the end
of Jack 'the Flash' Jackson.

EXT. STADIUM STANDS - DAY

The Crowd gasps collectively. Faces awash with emotion.

BLADE
That's history right here, son. Jeez.
I need a beer. Hey Jackie, go with
Fai and get us some beers and get
yourself anything. No rush.

Jackie snatches the money. Fai glowers at Blade.

Jackie races up steps, into the underbelly of the stadium.

INT. CONCESSION STAND - DAY

Jackie and Fai wait at the front of the civilized crowd. Fai offers Jackie bubblegum.

FAI
You like the game?

Jackie shrugs as he chews gum. TV screens show half-time entertainment.

An angry white man, JOE (30s), in a white DETROIT DEMONS CAP and jersey, pushes in and shoves against Fai. Fai bristles.

JOE
(slurring)
Shoulda kept you guys locked up. Hey,
turn et up! And gimme a Strohs.

The ATTENDANT (20s), a surfer dude, Black, turns toward Joe.

ATTENDANT
It's broken. We don't have Strohs.
How about an Anchor?

The whistle blows. Patrons jostle.

Joe grabs the attendant by his collar.

JOE
Arrya messin' with me?!

FAI
Let him go.

JOE
(squaring up)
Wanna fight?

FAI
Easier to fight than admit fear?

Fai rolls up his sleeves, revealing strong tattooed forearms. His face is resolved then alarmed as --

Joe morphs into a WHITE DEMON.

Its face is white and cracked, as if unearthed from a clay grave. Its pale blue eyes flicker between anger and fear. It bears its vampiric teeth like a cornered, slathering dog.

The bar crowd is mottled with WHITE DEMONS and PATRONS WITH UNSEEING EYES. White Demons growl, push Fai to the ground.

Fai panics, punches and kicks, but is overwhelmed.

White demons freeze, sniff, alert to Jackie's presence. They turn as one toward him. Fai twists to Jackie.

Jackie is oblivious. Fai snaps out of it as A FEMALE PATRON pushes between Joe and Fai, standing at the bar. Joe is squeezed out by the heaving crowd. Fai rubs his temple.

FAI (cont'd)
Three Buds, a Pepsi, pack of crisps.

Fai pops open ANTIPSYCHOTIC MEDICATION, his hands shaking.

EXT. STADIUM STANDS - DAY

Jackie struggles through the crowd. Beer sloshes over his hands. He stops and takes a sip from both cups. *Ergh.*

Jackie breaks into the light at the top of the stairs.

Jackie scans the crowd, popping gum. Drops the beers.

Jackie sees his father. He sees his father kissing Bunny.

INT. CHAMPIONS BAR - NIGHT

A couple MAKE OUT at the bar. Flash, opposite them, notices.

Flash has a THREE-WEEK BEARD. He blankly turns a coaster over and over. Fumbles. It rolls off the table. He slumps.

Flash looks over his shoulder. A group of YOUNG GUYS in the distance push their YOUNG ALPHA into a cluster of women.

MEMORY HIT

Flash wedges between TWO PARTY GIRLS at the bar. He flicks his hair at one, grins his roguish grin at the other.

Flash leans over the bar to emphasize his rump. The Party Girls check him out. He turns, holding two beers.

FLASH
Ladies, do you like to gamble?

Sure.

PARTY GIRL ONE

Sure.

PARTY GIRL TWO

FLASH
I bet you these two delicious beers
that I can make your tits jiggle
without touching them.

They giggle. Flash rolls up his sleeves. Does 'spooky hands' over their breasts. He grabs and jiggles their breasts.

The Girls squeal and slap him. He hands them their beers.

Flash looks to his MATES who vulgarly gesture what to do. He puts his arms around the girls. Smirks.

BACK TO SCENE

Flash scans the room. He's still powerful, the man men want to be and women want to fuck.

Flash fixes on doe-eyed ingenue **ALLY** (20s), white, wanting to be bad but failing.

Ally perches with perfect posture. Her blonde hair skims her waist. She self-consciously pulls down the hem of her high-end leather mini skirt.

Max, now at his bar job, puts two piña coladas on the bar.

MAX

Can't believe it's been ten years.

FLASH

Best mom ever.

(they clink glasses)

Happy birthday Mom.

Flash's face crumples.

FLASH

I found a shoebox of Mom's stuff.
Poems, old photos. Do you think...

(voice quaking)

Do you think you can die from a
broken heart?

Flash rubs his fingers over an L-SHAPED SCAR at his temple.

FLASH

Sometimes I think I'd be a completely
different person, if she were alive.

MAX

Nah, you'd still be an asshole.

Ally's perfectly manicured hand, with a huge RUBY RING, slides a platinum card over the bar: 'ALLISON W. STANFORD.'

Flash notes it and catches Ally's eye.

Ally gives a sympathetic half-smile. She turns away shyly. She looks back at him again. He stares at her frankly.

FLASH
You're Allison Stanford of Stanford
Railways. Allison Wonderland, right?

ALLY
(embarrassed)
The tabloids love that one. And
you're Flash, Blackbirds quarterback.

Ally's vowels are padded with old money, her consonants
polished like the family diamonds. Her lips draw you in.

FLASH
Not any more. Too many hits to the
head. Don't know what I'll do now.

ALLY
You went to college.

FLASH
Not to learn anything.

They share a laugh. Flash stares into her eyes. She flushes.

Young Alpha staggers forward from the group of Young Guys.
He pushes Flash with both hands, hard.

YOUNG ALPHA
You're a fucking loser.

Flash rises to his full height. The music is frenetic.

Young Alpha throws drunken punches. Flash lazily blocks
them. Young Alpha stumbles back and falls.

FLASH (TO MAX)
Why does every drunk guy want to
fight the biggest guy in the room?

MAX
(faux punches)
No one messes with the Yellow Peril.

Ally moistens her lips. She pulls her baby-pink singlet top
down low and pushes her chest out. She takes a deep breath.

Flash glances at Ally. She holds his eyes, steadily, boldly,
braver than she's ever been.

FLASH
Wanna get out of here?

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Flash and Ally stand in the rain. Flash's face comes close to hers. Her lips part.

He hesitates just before the kiss. Breather her in, teasing. She breathes hard.

He kisses her tenderly. A she's-the-one, love-at-first-sight kiss. He kisses her again. The rain pelts on their faces.

Soon after, they're dwarfed by the industrial warehouse they lean against. He's carrying her and shagging her, amidst the RAIN and the lightning.

It might be love, but it's still Saturday night.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

Floating up from the alleyway, over the city, the studio lot, into the Studio door, the set, Boneyard, settling on...

INT. STUDIO 3 - SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Ace dries his WET HAIR with a towel. From above, little-kid laughter and steps. Ace looks up. His forehead creases.

ACE

Not again...

He climbs the ladder slowly. Opens the hatch. No sound.

He comes face-to-face with a bloody, MAULED RAT at the top of the ladder. He almost falls but steadies himself.

ACE (cont'd)

Man up.

Just a dead rat. He leans in closer.

The rat OPENS its eyes. Staggeres away.

Ace falls DOWN the ladder, out of sight.

The THWUMP of him landing and GROAN.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Scanning UP a tree, we find Jackie and Betty with Asian-style packed lunches. Betty eats with gusto. Jackie sighs. He can't eat.

BETTY
You still haven't told her?!

JACKIE
It was Valentine's Day then her
birthday --

BETTY
You have to! If she was my mom --

JACKIE
She's not your mom.

BETTY
(wounded)
She's the closest thing I've got.

Jackie, contrite, puts his hand over Betty's hand.

Betty considers Jackie's hand.

BETTY (cont'd)
I'd kill my husband if I caught him
cheating. Maybe your mom will too!

JACKIE
Or worse. Divorce him.

BETTY
Fifty percent of marriages end in
divorce, Jackie. Dad says
(mocking Fai)
you need to hurt for what you love.
(back to herself)
And love hurts Jackie.

Jackie shakes his head.

JACKIE
No. Dad would kill me and Mom would
marry someone rich, and write poetry,
and travel the world.

BETTY
Maybe Peter Coyote. I remember my mom
said, "I wouldn't mind his shoes
under my bed."

JACKIE
She'd never marry the man that hunted
E.T.. Why would he put his shoes
under your mom's bed?

Betty shrugs. Jackie looks past his hanging feet.

School Bullies and their RINGLEADER (12), white, male, peg rocks at Jackie and Betty. Nothing unusual.

BETTY

We just have to come up with a plan to get rid of Bunny.

JACKIE

Not another plan. We'll just get caught again, like a rat in a trap.

BETTY

Erck. You're not a rat. But a trap, that's an idea.

Betty's index fingers tap together under her chin.

BETTY (cont'd)

And accidents do happen on set...

A rock grazes Jackie.

RINGLEADER

Hey Jap!

Betty stares the Ringleader down.

BETTY

He's Chinese, you idiot.

SCHOOL BULLIES

(chanting)
Jap, Jap, Jap --

RINGLEADER

What ya gonna do? Origami my ass?

QUICK FLASH

Jackie, in a quarterback helmet, RAMS through enemy lines.

CROWD (V.O.)

CHAA-CHAA-CHAA!

BACK TO SCENE

The Bullies are now a snapping mass of WHITE DEMONS, still in school uniform.

Jackie jumps down in slow motion from the tree.

He rams into Ringleader, who pushes Jackie to the ground.

Betty jumps down nimbly. She's her father's daughter, a karate fighter.

GAAAAAARGH! Jackie springs up. Unleashes his prepubescent rage with a guttural growl.

YAAAAA! Betty charges in behind, karate kicking the gang.

A flock of black ORIGAMI BIRDS attacks the Bullies. CAW-CAW.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Seagulls CAW and soar.

Flash lies in Ally's lap. She leans over to kiss him. They glisten in swimsuits, hair wet, on an unfurled blanket.

ALLY

Do you believe in destiny?

Flash snorts as he lights a cigarette.

FLASH

Fuck destiny.

ALLY

Smoking's a sign of weakness.

Flash blows a smoke ring. He snaps his fingers gently, transforming the smoke ring into a love heart.

Ally pouts. He stubs out his cigarette. Ally beams with her small victory. She admires the sea. Sighs.

ALLY (cont'd)

If I die now, I'd be perfectly happy.

Ally studies Flash's face. He's lost in some dark place.

ALLY (cont'd)

What are you thinking?

Ally strokes his hair. He looks away.

FLASH

I know Mom and Dad are gone but, I keep thinking -- If next week I'm the new Father Trinity, they'll be proud of me, you know? I know it's stupid.

Ally turns his face to hers. Her eyes bore into his.

ALLY

You don't have to be a star to make them proud. You're my star.

(MORE)

ALLY (cont'd)
 (picks up a script)
 Now, let's get you that part.

FLASH
 I should remember. Read it again.

ALLY
 (teasing)
 Why don't you get your eyes fixed?

FLASH
 What if I don't like the look of you?

Ally swats him with the script. He feigns shielding himself from a vicious attack. Ally's laughter tinkles like money.

ALLY
 I'll tell you no lies...

FLASH
 (passionately)
 I'll tell you no lies. The only sea I saw was the seesaw sea, with you riding on it. Lie down, lie easy. Let me shipwreck in your thighs.

He buries his face between her thighs.

ALLY
 Jesus, Flash! We're in public! Oh, you made me swear.

FLASH
 Jesus is a swear word?

ALLY
 In my family, yes. My parents are everything in America you're afraid of. Gun-toting, church-on-Sunday Republicans and kind of racist.

FLASH
 Which means racist.

In one move he lies on top of her and pins her down.

FLASH (cont'd)
 Maybe you can take them to a Chinese restaurant, ease them in.

ALLY
 They like General Tso's Chicken.

FLASH
Militant poultry. My dad would be pleased.

A seagull SHRIEKS right beside their head, its beak wide.

FLASH (cont'd)
Jesus!

Ally laughs, jumps up and runs into the water.

Flash gives chases. She squeals. He scoops her over his shoulder and bites her ass.

ALLY
Put me down, caveman.

Flash throws her into the water. Ally locks eyes with Flash, turns slowly, then dives through the heavy waves.

Flash, not a swimmer, struggles to stay upright in the wash.

Flash marks the rolling peaks. Can't see her. Anywhere.

A SHARK ALARM sounds.

INT. SCHOOL - CORRIDOR IN FRONT OF PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

The SCHOOL BELL sounds. Betty sits with Jackie outside the Principal's office, folding a black origami bird.

BETTY
Don't worry. I'm here all the time.

Dot rushes in, palms skyward. Blade, behind her, grins.

BLADE
That's my boy.
(seeing Betty)
Tell me you didn't get a girl to fight for you.

JACKIE
You should see the other guys.

Jackie and Betty snicker.

BLADE
Good. No one likes a pussy.

DOT
Blade! This is not to be applauded!

BETTY
 Speaking of applauded -- drum roll.
 (does drumroll)
 We got into auditions!

She shoves chummily into Jackie.

BLADE
 You are not going to be an out-of-
 work actor!

DOT
 Like you?

Jackie's eyes drop. Betty squeezes his bruised and cut hand.

BETTY
 (mouthing to Jackie)
 You should tell her.

Jackie shakes his head.

BLADE
 What the hell is it now, Jackie?!

DOT
 Leave him alone. I'm sure there's a
 good explanation.

Jackie meets Dot's unwavering eyes. Blade's jaw clenches as he stares down Dot. She doesn't notice or doesn't care.

Blade examines Jackie's bruised hand.

BLADE
 At least you dealt with it.

PRELAP: The shark alarm wanes.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

BEACH-GOERS mill on the beach as the shark alarm wanes. Flash hunts through the crowd. His heartbeat, everything around him, is slow. *No Ally*.

He runs to a LIFEGUARD (20s), female. Doesn't check her out.

FLASH
 I can't find my girlfriend! She was
 over there!

Flash, hyperventilating, points.

FLASH (cont'd)
 She's got long blonde hair, deep blue
 eyes, white bikini. I can't lose her!

The Lifeguard talks on her radio.

LIFEGUARD
 We got a missing woman, blonde.

LIFEGUARD 2 (V.O. ON RADIO)
 We're pulling her out of the water.
 We're going to need an ambulance.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Ally and Flash recover on the steps of an ambulance. Ally,
 wrapped in a blanket, is on oxygen, but Flash looks sick.

An AMBULANCE OFFICER (60s), female, checks Ally's vitals.

ALLY
 I just swallowed some water.

Ally settles her blanket around a distraught Flash.

FLASH
 I can't lose you. You're all I got.

AMBULANCE OFFICER
 Someone's in love.

Ally flicks to Flash brightly. *Yes, she might be right.*

INT. STUDIO 3 - SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Ace channel surfs.

ON THE TV: A SHARK SIGHTING, a nanny cam ad, AIR! flavorless
 alcohol, Romeo and Juliet. Stops on 'Where Are They Now?'

Ace sucks on his joint. The TV blurs on like an anesthetic.

SHOW HOST (V.O.)
 Turn off the lights and lock the
 doors. Here come the stars that had
 us shaking in our seats...

Ace, at the cooktop, taps a WHITE EGG on the frying pan.

Tap. Tap. TAP.

He hears a CRYING BABY.

Ace lifts his head. Listens. No sound. Pan starts to spit.
 CRACKS egg into pan. Yolk is bloody. Baby CRIES, louder now.

SHOW HOST (V.O.) (cont'd)
 It's time to track down horror's most
 memorable heroes and unforgettable
 villains. Find out what happened when
 the screaming finally came to an end!

Ace clicks off the TV. Baby's cries are urgent.
 Egg fries. He takes the pan off the cooktop. Crying STOPS.
 He puts the pan on the cooktop. BABY'S SCREAMING.
 The egg is screaming. Ace is hypnotized by the bubbling egg.
 Oil spits onto Ace's forearm. He cries out in pain. The
 joint flies out of his mouth. He turns off the cooktop.
 Stubs out the joint with a bare foot, burning it. Ace hops.
 Ace STABS THE EGG. Revenge. Screaming stops.
 He laughs. Picks up the joint. Inhales. It comes to life.

ACE
 That's strong stuff.

DESPERATE SCREAMING pierces the silence. Is it above?
 Ace scrambles up the ladder at the side of the room.

INT. STUDIO 3 - BONEYARD - CONTINUOUS

Ace warily opens the hatch, searching for the undead rat.
 Ace emerges in the murkiness of the boneyard.
 Props and timber are scattered around with everyday weapons:
 a circular saw with cord coiled, a nail gun, hammers, etc.
 Baby screams echo around the room. In the corner --
 A CRADLE. A lace shroud over it spills onto the floor.
 Ace edges toward it. Boards CREAK.
 The cradle ROCKS.
 Ace rushes to it. It's empty.

Tortured SQUEAKING --

A RAT IN A TRAP.

Lace, caught in the trap, is tugged as it fights for life.
Ace's face is perturbed but he won't get closer to that rat.

INT. MOVIE THEATER SET - NIGHT

The trap door, in the set floor, levers OPEN. Ace climbs onto the dark set, a retro movie theater stage. Silence.

His eyes adjust. Layers of blood-red velvet curtains.

Ace scans rows of empty seats.

A light switches on in the lighting booth above.

A SHADOW appears in the booth.

Behind Ace, the screen lights up. He jumps.

Blood drips down the screen. A baby SCREAMS.

ACE

Okay, you got me! Now cut it out!
I hate April Fool's.

Effects go into rewind, then stop.

Ace's shadow is large against the screen. He growls.

Ace retraces his steps to the trap door. A low ghoulish light pushes out. His shadow moves along the wall.

A SHADOW OF A CHILD unfolds from it. He halts. Spins around.

ACE (cont'd)

Wha --

Jackie's there, his mouth agape. Jackie turns and runs.

ACE (cont'd)

That's uh... perfectly normal.

Ace walks.

A SHADOW UNFOLDS from his shadow -- an adult. Ace stops.

The shadow stands behind Ace, almost touching him.

Ace spins. The lights fail.

Curtains move. Ace follows.

Ace pushes aside one layer of curtain after another. No one.

CREAK. Ace looks to the RAFTERS.

A GIANT HOOK swings slowly.

CRASH! Ace jumps back into the curtains. Phew!

In his peripheral vision --

OUTLINES OF TWO HANDS press out from the curtain and close around his neck.

Ace startles. Pushes through the curtains. No one.

A MOUTH BY HIS EAR whispers. A woman's ghostly voice.

SHADOW (O.S.)

What's my name?

ACE

I don't care. Get out here!

Light running footsteps. Ace follows the sound.

INT. MAKEUP ROOM - NIGHT

Jackie silently opens the door to the makeup room. He watches Bunny rub cream into Fai's bruised ribs.

Jackie spies Bunny's open makeup case. Just out of reach.

BUNNY

No ancient proverbs for an ass-kicking?

FAI

I'm from Little Tokyo not Tokyo.

BUNNY

Sorry Fai, I --

FAI

Just kidding. Nana korobi ya oki.

Bunny raises an eyebrow. Fai puts on a Japanese accent.

FAI (cont'd)

Fall down seven times, get up eight.
Japanese have best proverbs and best
car factories. Hence the ass-kicking.

Fai bows. Bunny chuckles as she rubs cream on his shoulder.

Jackie crouches low. Floorboard CREAKS.

Bunny turns.

Jackie closes his eyes to make himself invisible.
Bunny turns back, blocking Jackie him from Fai's view.

Fai winces as Bunny rubs on cream.

FAI (cont'd)
Does this make America great again?

Bunny turns on music, shaking her hips.

Jackie watches her ass. *Concentrate!* The makeup case.

From his pocket, he removes a red bag of ITCHING POWDER.

Jackie starts to crawl. The makeup case is in reach.
Freezes. His face jolts up.

ACE LOOMS LARGE. *Bad idea.*

Jackie edges away.

INT. MOVIE THEATER SET - NIGHT

Ace re-emerges onto the movie theater set.

Slam! The trapdoor.

Thap-thap-thap. Footsteps below.

Ace bolts to the trapdoor. Opens it. Kneels. Peers down.

He warily lowers his head out of sight as he inspects below.

He is PULLED DOWN, his legs PROPELLED UP and disappears.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. BONEYARD - NIGHT

An **UNKNOWN WOMAN** looms over Ace. He lies unconscious, askew.

UNKNOWN WOMAN
Fucketty-fuck!

She wears a balaclava. A long RED BRAID hangs over her shoulder. She bends. Feels his pulse over his vertical scar.

A sigh of relief. She pulls her phone from her back pocket, revealing her back tattoo -- A BLACKBIRD.

EMERGENCY OPERATOR (V.O.)
Nine-one-one. What is your emergency?

Ace breathes raggedly.

INT. MILKWOOD CASTING AGENCY - CORRIDOR - DAY

Flash takes deep breaths whilst running lines in his head.

FLASH (V.O.)
Lie down, lie easy.

He sits next to other hopefuls, waiting to audition.

Flash looks at a TWEEN BOY, face-down in his script.

TWEEN BOY
I can't, I can't!

FLASH
Breathe. In the future, this will
just be a moment in your past.

FEMALE ASSISTANT (V.O.)
Next!

Flash stands and looks down at the Tween Boy.

FLASH
You're going to be a star.

Flash turns to walk down a CREAKY wooden corridor.

INT. JACKIE'S HOUSE - PARENTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Blade nuzzles into a pillow on one shoulder. Dot sleeps on his other shoulder. Blade snores softly.

A FLOORBOARD CREAKS.

Blade stirs. He disentangles himself and sits up, alert.

Dot gasps and sits bolt upright.

Jackie is by the bed in his pajamas, a knife by his side.

Jackie's face is VACANT. He scans the bed.

RAISES the knife and STABS. Narrowly misses the pillow.

BLADE
 (softly but sternly)
 Back to bed.

Jackie sleepwalks out the door. The knife SPEARS THE FLOOR.

BLADE (O.S.)
 It's okay. He won't remember a thing.

INT. STUDIO 3 - ON SET - DAY

A SPEAR IS PULLED from floorboards by Flash. In one move, he pulls it out and kicks, starting a martial arts sequence.

Flash is dressed as a priest. A martial arts TRAINER (50s), Asian, observes him.

TRAINER
 Good. Now faster.

Flash speeds through the moves, balletic, powerful.

TRAINER (cont'd)
 Bang! Bang! You're dead.

Flash lands on his back, feigning death.

SASHA KING (50s), Flash's manager, Black, all business, watches on. She's substantial, internally and externally.

Sasha surveys various CREW MEMBERS in different states of arousal. He's going to make her rich.

Sasha stands beside an ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (30s), Asian American, female.

GRUFF DIRECTOR (O.S.)
 Father Trinity! You ready?!

FLASH
 Actually, I've been thinking. What if I don't die? What if I just dodge the bullets like Neo?

Flash runs his hand through his hair, flashes that grin. Audible sighs from Crew Members.

GRUFF DIRECTOR (O.S.)
 It's a METAPHOR!

Flash leans in to the Assistant Director.

FLASH
A metaphor. Fancy.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
(chuckling quietly)
Shut up or he'll kill you off for
good.

Sasha starts. Flash winks, walking backwards to the center of the set. Sasha twists to the Assistant Director.

SASHA
I'm Sasha King, Flash's manager.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Oh, uh, hi! I hear Flash is marrying
California royalty.

SASHA
Never. Bad boys are better for
business.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Well, he might drive you crazy --

SASHA
But it'll be in a brand new Porsche.

Now Sasha flashes that grin.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST CONSULTATION ROOM - DAY

Flash is ensconced in a chair in a psychologist's office.

PSYCHIATRIST (O.S.)
So your manager is worried because?

FLASH
She's completely overreacting.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE - WHY SASHA WORRIES

EXT./INT. STUDIO 3 - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A sign 'STUDIO 3 - FATHER TRINITY.' Flash and a GIRL GROUPIE, both in bunny ears, stumble in drunk and laughing.

FLASH
Shhhh!

They trip over the carpet, ripping it. They lie on the floor, laughing.

INT. FLASH'S MANSION - ENTRANCE - DAY

Sasha enters the mansion. She strides past a gigantic poster of Flash as a priest. He wears a cross, halo, black wings. The tag: 'The New FATHER TRINITY - EXORCISE YOUR DEMONS.'

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sasha's jaw drops. The living room is a beach: a chest-high sandcastle, grass skirts, bikini tops, palm trees.

SASHA

LI JING!

GIRL GROUPIE is passed out, fashioned into a sand mermaid.

LI JING (60s), Chinese, rushes in, wearing an apron and flour-dusted hands. She wears a PHOENIX NECKLACE.

GIRL GROUPIE sits up, sandy breasts bare, and vomits.

SASHA (cont'd)

Li Jing, get our mermaid some water.
And clothes. And a taxi.

Sasha traces a rope, tied around a palm tree, toward the balcony. Li Jing trails behind her.

EXT. BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

The rope falls over the balcony. They look down to the...

EXT. POOL - SAME TIME

Flash's wasted ENTOURAGE is below. A United Nations of wannabes are unconscious, in various states of undress.

INTERCUT - BALCONY AND POOL

SASHA

This is a small housewarming?

LI JING

(shrugs)

I'm not his mother.

Sasha scans the debris.

SASHA

Where is he?

Li Jing points to Flash, naked and facedown on a floating set of giant blow-up breasts.

EXT. POOL - DAY

Sasha marches past a long table. It's decorated with a cocaine-sketched outline of a giant penis.

SASHA
Flash! FLASH!

Flash remains naked and facedown in blow-up breasts.

Sasha telescopes out the pool leaf scoop. She prods him. He drifts away. She consults her watch.

SASHA (cont'd)
Shit!

Sasha looks around for another solution. Nothing.

Sasha removes her business clothes. Shudders into the pool in her underwear and singlet. She wades to the float.

SASHA (cont'd)
This is ridiculous.

The FIN of a dolphin arcs beside her.

SASHA (cont'd)
Mother-FUCKER!

Sasha shakes Flash. He stirs. He swipes at Sasha's hair.

FLASH
(slurring)
Sasha, you've got horns. Am I dead?

SASHA
No, but I could kill you! You've got an interview with Rolling Stone!

A gate SQUEAKS open.

It's Ally. She locks on the drugs, naked women, Flash.

RUSTLE of bushes. Ally whips around.

A PAPARAZZO snaps a photo, the remains of the orgy behind.

INSERT - GOSSIP MAGAZINE

Inside the magazine, the Paparazzo photo with headline
'Allison Wonderland and Father Trinity - It's Over!'

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE**INT. CONSULTATION ROOM - DAY**

Flash leans forward in his chair.

FLASH

See, these women, it's like a
smorgasbord. A man's gotta eat.

PSYCHIATRIST (O.S.)

Not the whole table. Flash, is this
how you see your future?

FLASH

I saw my future -- but she's gone.

INT. STUDIO 3 - BUNKROOM - NIGHT

Jackie slinks into the bunkroom, knocking his CRYSTAL BALL
from a table. CLUNK! He looks to Betty, sleeping. *Phew!*

The room has bunks, a desk and lockers.

Jackie opens Bunny's locker. Betty, feigning sleep, watches.

Jackie puts ITCHING POWDER into Bunny's foundation.

Betty grins. Jackie climbs into bed. Hugs his teddy bear.

INT. BUNKROOM - NIGHT

Betty and Jackie sleep, hugging teddy bears. Cherubs.
Door SLAMS open. Lights on. Blade shakes Jackie fiercely.

BLADE

You two! Up! Out!

The children shuffle out, clutched by their shoulders.

INT. MAKEUP ROOM - NIGHT

Bunny's cheeks are covered in icepacks, her eyes swollen.

An ON-SET MEDIC (50s), male, white, kneels beside her.

Film Crew circle around, whispering. Production has stopped. The DIRECTOR (50s), white, male, is pink with rage.

Betty spies Jackie's red hand. She sniggers.

Blade's hands slowly clench into fists.

Betty swivels from Blade's wild face to Jackie, who shakes.

BETTY

I did it.

FAI

What? Why? Why would you do this?

Betty's eyes bore into Bunny, then Blade, Bunny, then Dot.

Bunny watches Betty's piercing looks. *She knows!*

BUNNY

(boring into Betty)

There's no permanent damage. It was just a bit of fun. Let's all move on.

Bunny shares a look with Dot.

FAI

Your mother would be ashamed if she were alive. You're grounded.

Fai views the angry faces, seeing him as the enemy.

FAI (cont'd)

For one month.

Jackie's face burns with shame. He pivots from Blade, to Betty, back to Blade. He doesn't speak.

Betty's tears flow, watching Jackie turn away. In her face, a child's hurt becomes a young woman's betrayal.

FLASH (V.O. PRELAP)

WOO-HOO!

INT./EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - PORSCHE - NIGHT (DRIVING)

Flash, shirt unbuttoned, clearly drunk, swerves his black Porsche convertible. His Entourage in the car crow wildly.

Flash slugs whiskey from a bottle. Music pumps out.

Flash brakes at the lights, next to a convertible full of BEAUTIFUL WOMEN (20s). Behind, a 'Father Trinity' billboard.

FLASH
Hey ladies!

BEAUTY
(teasing)
Who are you?

FLASH
You know who I am.

The cars REV and SCREECH out. Flash flings off his shirt. It lands in the face of a DRIVER behind, whose car skids.

PAPARAZZI, ahead of the pack, snap photos and egg him on.

Flash shifts into neutral.

Flash stands on his seat. Max grabs the wheel.

MAX
Are you crazy?!

FLASH
I'M A GOD!

Flash leaps. Flies in the air. Lands in the Beautiful Women's car. Their car swerves and CRASH! It hits a pole.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Every click of Sasha's high-end shoes says damage control.

Sasha punches open the door. Her hands burrow into her hips.

Flash, drugged up on a hospital gurney, propels himself from one side of the triage room to the other.

FLASH
Whheeeeeee!

SASHA
You're lucky no one got killed!
(softening)
And not a scratch on you.

FLASH
Maybe I am a god...

SASHA
Cushioned by breast implants more likely.

FLASH
Hey Sasha?

SASHA
Hmmm?

FLASH
These meds are making you funny.

INT. REHAB FACILITY - NIGHT

Sasha signs Flash into rehab. He hands her his phone.

SASHA
What's the code?

FLASH
(sheepish)
Ally.

SASHA
I thought that was over.

FLASH
I just... hoped, you know?

A brawny male ORDERLY (40s), Black, points to a door.

ORDERLY
Head there for a cavity search.

Flash looks to Sasha. His chin trembles.

SASHA
We're going to be alright.

EXT. REHAB FACILITY - NIGHT

Paparazzi mob Sasha. She storms to her shiny new Porsche.

INT./EXT. SASHA'S PORSCHE - NIGHT

Sasha starts her car. Snaps off the radio's happy song.

Sasha's phone rings. A call from Flash's AGENT.

AGENT (V.O.)
Sasha, the studio's looking for
another Father Trinity. We need a
miracle to turn this around.

Paparazzi intrude at the window. Sasha reverses sharply. They leap out of the way. She speeds down the ramp.

Sasha roars. Thump-thumps the wheel. Grabs Flash's phone.

SASHA
(while phone rings)
It's just temporary.

ALLY (V.O.)
(answers hopefully)
Flash?

Sasha grits her teeth. She speaks in sugary tones.

SASHA
Ally, it's Sasha King, Flash's manager. He's uh, unwell. I think you're just the medicine he needs.

SERIES OF SHOTS - TWO YEARS PASS

A happy, sweeping version of 'Bye Bye Blackbird' plays.

-- Ace, in a neck brace, learns to walk.

-- Flash gives Ally a puppy, **FINN**, and a BLUE TEDDY BEAR.

-- A girl in RED JEANS enters a tattoo parlor.

-- Ace (no brace) tips his whiskey stash into a dumpster.

-- Jackie watches Bunny and Dot laugh, chummier than ever.

-- Ace gets his one year chip at Alcoholics Anonymous.

-- Flash and Ally on audience cam at the EMMY AWARDS.

PRESENTER (O.S.)
And the winner is -- Flash Jackson!

-- Betty (12) spies on a taller Jackie. Puberty has hit. Jackie kisses his crush, an ALICE-IN-WONDERLAND type.

-- Ace (53), fighting fit, trains in martial arts.

-- Ally supervises MOVERS heaving a WARDROBE to the base of the stairs in their mansion. Finn, TWO YEARS OLD, runs past. Entourage, Sasha and ASSISTANTS mill about.

-- Flash (25) draws A BABY on Ally's belly.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. STUDIO 3 - BUNKROOM - NIGHT

Jackie (12) opens a crack in the closed blinds. Peeks out.

QUICK CUTS

-- Flash stunt-fights. Kick-punch-Kick! Flash falls.

-- Blade, fists raised, smirks.

-- Flash is up! A high KICK chin contact to his adversary.

INT. BUNKROOM - NIGHT

Jackie still peeks through the blinds. The lights are off.

JACKIE

KAY-AH!

Betty reads in her bunk with a torch.

BETTY

You're going to ace the audition this year. Third time lucky.

Betty leafs through an old 'Playboy' magazine. Gasps.

BETTY (cont'd)

Jackie, check it out. It's Bunny!

JACKIE

Let me see!

Jackie scrambles onto Betty's bed. She opens the centerfold.

The door SQUEAKS opens. They jump into their own beds, flick off their torches. Fai pokes his head in.

Betty rubs her eyes and yawns, pretending Fai has woken her.

FAI

Nice try Betty. Torches off. Sleep!
We'll be shooting all night.

The door closes. Torches on. Jackie and Betty huddle together. They open the centerfold.

JACKIE

She's an angel.

BETTY

She's ancient, not dead.

Betty and Jackie shove each other playfully. Turning the magazine pages, they land on an ad for CONDOMS.

BETTY (cont'd)
Look, it says 'Worn by men. It drives women wild. And it's not aftershave.'

Jackie stares blankly. Betty shakes Jackie by the shoulders.

BETTY (cont'd)
It drives women wild!

Betty sighs dramatically. She hops out of bed.

Betty opens and closes the lockers one by one.

BETTY (cont'd)
Found it!

IN BUNNY'S LOCKER: a makeup case, purse, perfume and keys with a RABBIT FOOT KEYCHAIN. A mirror hangs inside the door.

Betty puts on Bunny's red lipstick. She pouts in the mirror. She sprays herself lavishly with Bunny's perfume.

Betty turns to Jackie. She spoofs Bunny's centerfold pose.

BETTY (cont'd)
What do you think? Ooo, yeah.

Betty puts things back exactly. Opens another locker.

JACKIE
That's Mom and Dad's locker!

Betty searches Blade's jacket. Finds a pack of CONDOMS.

Betty throws the condoms to Jackie. Continues searching.

A set of keys clatter to the floor. She picks up the keys. Keys with a RABBIT FOOT KEYCHAIN. She gapes at Jackie.

JACKIE (cont'd)
Do you think Dad's got the key to her house?

BETTY
Or more importantly, her heart. Jackie, he must be seeing Bunny again. Maybe he never stopped. You have to tell your mom!

JACKIE
But Dad...

BETTY
 (humphs)
 We've got to get rid of our rabbit
 infestation. Starting with this.

Betty hides the condoms in her bag.

PRELAP: WEDDING VIOLINS onto...

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Ally wears a skintight white cheongsam and long veil.
 Positions her bouquet to hide a three-month baby bump.

Ally's PARENTS (50s) scowl. Seated behind them are pews of
 similar somber, white, old-money CONSERVATIVES.

MOVIE STARS and PLAYERS sit amid Flash's CHINESE FAMILY:
 flamboyantly dressed, loud and gossiping.

In the front pew, Flash's white NANA and POP sleep near his
 beaming WAIPO and WAI GONG.

Sasha, glowering, takes the place of his dead parents.

The wedding has been somewhat shanghaied by the groom's
 heritage. Red decorations and other Chinese touches.

The TRADITIONAL MINISTER nods to Flash.

FLASH
 When I look at you, I see my future.
 You make me the best me.

Ally radiates. They are lost in each other.

MINISTER
 I now pronounce you husband and wife.

Ally and Flash kiss, long and passionately.

Over the shoulder of **AN UNINVITED FEMALE GUEST** are

Ally's parents -- They are WHITE DEMONS.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. STUDIO 3 - RAFTERS - DAY

High in the rafters, Betty's legs swing beside a GIANT HOOK.
 On the bottom of one foot, is a hand-drawn red love heart.

Betty looks past her feet, down to the milling Film Crew.
 Betty twists to Jackie. He clings to the wall for dear life.

BETTY
 What are you waiting for?

Jackie shakes his head vigorously.

Betty agilely jumps to her feet. TIPTOES over the rafters,
 toward the petrified Jackie. She holds out her hand.

BETTY (cont'd)
 I'll look after you. Always.
 (edging closer)
 Come on Jackie!

She tries to pry him from the wall. Sighs. Glues herself to
 Jackie. Jackie stares over his white toes to the ant people.

Betty gazes with puppy dog eyes at Jackie's terrified face.
Even when he's scared shitless he's beautiful.

BETTY (cont'd)
 Jackie?

JACKIE
 Yeah Betty?

BETTY
 Remember I said there's a boy I like?

JACKIE
 (distracted)
 Uh-huh.

BETTY
 Jackie -- it's you I like.

Jackie focuses on the ants. He doesn't hear or want to hear.

JACKIE
 I'm going to die.

Jackie teeters and succions back to the wall. Down below...

INT. MAKEUP ROOM - SAME TIME

Dot and Bunny whisper urgently, distraught.

A PREGNANCY TEST. It's positive.

Dot rubs her belly protectively. She hurries out.

Bunny slides against the wall, CRYING.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Ace, his face wet with TEARS, dreams in bed. He cuddles a worn blue teddy bear. Snores -- Koh-Koh-Kaaa-Koh-Koh-Kaaa.

ON THE NIGHTSTAND: A lamp, the remote control to the disco ball, a lighter, a joint, an ashtray, water, pill bottle.

Ace tosses. Hu-Hu-Hu-Hu. Breathes rapidly. Sweats.

His eyes OPEN, follow the dark corners of the room. Freezes.

An INDISTINCT FIGURE shifts in the dark. Hides.

Thap-thap-thap. Running footsteps.

RED WEBBED HANDS launch at Ace!

Ace screams. Another night terror. Exhales.

Ace clicks the lamp. Nothing. Clicks the remote control. Once, twice -- nothing.

A scraping sound -- CLOSE.

Ace crackles the lighter. Nope -- nope -- nope -- yep!

Ace's face is lit by the small flame. Ogles. Can't see anything. Lights the joint. Draws back deeply.

The room zooms out -- zooms in.

ACE

Whoa!

Ace stubs out the joint. Stands. Falls to his hands and knees. Everything is a blur.

ACE (V.O.)

Maybe I'm having a stroke.

Ace pulls himself up using a kitchen table. Slaps his face.

ACE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Toughen up.

Ace slaps his face again.

He staggers to his desk. Switches on the light.

A dusty PHOTO ALBUM lies on the table. He opens it slowly.

ACE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Must've been sleepwalking.

Underneath the table --

A black INDISTINCT FIGURE CROUCHES in a ball.

The Figure's shoulders and back pulse.

Ace collapses into the chair. Turns on radio. Funky music.

Ace turns the unseen pages of the phot album. He chuckles softly, hand covering his mouth.

Ace taps his foot to the music. The black figure shifts.

Ace's eyes brighten. He picks up a BLACK ORIGAMI BIRD from the pages. Looks at it fondly. Returns it to the album.

A THUMP from above. Ace jerks up.

Ace stands unsteadily. He staggers to the ladder.

Ace drags himself up the ladder. Pauses at the top.

Scuttling by the hatch. Clicks on the torch.

INT. BONEYARD - NIGHT

Ace turns on the dull light. Scans the boneyard. Nada.

FERAL GRUNTING. His hands shake.

THUMP! from a dusty wardrobe. Unsettled, he edges closer.

A hand print on the door. He bristles, ready to fight.

The door CREAKS open. He steps back.

A blanket and some boxes. Laughs at himself.

He lifts the blanket -- the SKELETON OF A KITTEN. Freaked.

THUMP!

He balks but rallies. Opens the other door of the wardrobe.

A BLACKBIRD FLIES OUT, CLAWING at him.

It hits the wall hard. It falls, motionless.

Ace, shaken, edges toward it. He nudges it with his foot.

Its neck is at an odd angle. Ace is mesmerised. Blackbird looks at him with a shimmering, black, accusing eye.

INT. FLASH'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Flash's face is lit only by a TV glow. He's alone in his king size bed.

TV HOST (V.O)
Here's what you've been waiting for.

The studio audience screams. Flash sits up straight.

INSERT - TV

A bright TALK SHOW SET. The comedic British TV HOST (30s) revs the crowd. The theme music for FATHER TRINITY comes on.

TV HOST
He's the one who can exorcise your demons...

Flash celebrity-jogs onto the set, waving at fans. TV Host and Flash give each other a bro handshake-hug.

Flash flops down on a seat. Smooths his suit jacket.

TV HOST (cont'd)
The sexiest reincarnation of Father Trinity we've seen in twenty years. I mean, look at this cover, ladies!

The TV Host holds up a Rolling Stone magazine cover. Flash is shirtless and winged, one hand down his leather pants.

Audience screams. Flash flicks his hair, flashes that grin.

TV HOST (cont'd)
You're the star of a martial arts horror show, set in the eighties, that's been running for two decades.

Audience cheers.

TV HOST (cont'd)
You're three seasons into the new Father Trinity. You have criminally revived eighties fashion.

Flash rests his motorcycle boot on the opposite knee.

TV HOST (cont'd)
Did you think you'd end up here?

FLASH
Yeah, I always saw this in my future.
(chuckles)
Nah, look I'm just so grateful to my
fans. They're so committed.

A naked CRAZY FAN (20s), female, streaks onto the stage.

A BURLY SECURITY GUARD hauls her off stage.

TV HOST
You mean they need to be committed!

The audience laughs.

AUDIENCE MEMBER (O.S.)
We love you Father Trinity!

Flash stands, hands on his heart. He points to the audience.

FLASH
I love you more!

The crowd howls. Flash leans coolly in the chair, legs wide.

SHOW HOST
So Father, I believe you have sinned.

MEMORY HIT

Flash and a couple of MOVIE STAR FRIENDS snort a long line
of coke off the back of a NAKED SUPERMODEL.

PRELAP: Male whoop-whooping in the talk show audience.

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER (O.S.)
Living the dream!

BACK TO TALK SHOW

Flash punches up in a 'Victory V.' He leans back, chuckling.

FLASH
(shows wedding ring)
Nah. Those days are behind me now.

END OF TV INSERT

INT. FLASH'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The TV drones on. Flash sleeps on his back.

Ally and Flash's wedding photo is on the nightstand, next to a pill bottle and NOTE: 'See you soon. Be good xoxox Wifey'

The slender shadow of a DEVOTED FAN walks past the window.

Ally's photo lands on the floor.

A RED STILETTO smashes it. A TATTOO OF A LION HEAD peeps from the shoe.

Delicate feet step out of red underwear and under the quilt.

Silhouetted, the woman straddles Flash.

Flash snuffles, rolls over. She falls out of bed. Thud!

INT. STUDIO 3 - LIVING ROOM SET - NIGHT

Jackie is glued to the TV.

DOT (O.S.)
Please get your father for dinner.

Jackie doesn't move.

DOT (O.S.) (cont'd)
Jackie! Now!

Jackie rolls his eyes. Humphs and dislodges himself. Opens the living room door onto the set, abuzz with Film Crew.

BRIEF MONTAGE - JACKIE WALKING THROUGH SETS

Jackie trudges past the kitchen set. Past Fai in a martial arts fight scene. Waves to Betty who joins him. They laugh as they run through sets toward the movie theater set.

INT. BONEYARD - NIGHT

Ace leans over the dead blackbird then stands up.

Ace shudders. Ergh. He chews his bottom lip, rubs his jaw.

Ace bends, wraps the bird in newspaper. Climbs the ladder.

Ace puts the wrapped blackbird by the open trap door.

INT. MOVIE THEATER SET - CONTINUOUS

Ace climbs onto the set. His breath catches. He sees --

Jackie squeals as Betty, behind the curtains, reaches her hands around his neck. Jackie karate kicks Betty and falls. Their unrestrained laughter echoes through the theater.

Ace blinks rapidly.

Jackie faces him, his breath white. He touches Betty's arm.

JACKIE

Ghost.

They race away.

Ace turns back to the trap door.

The newspaper unfolds. The blackbird is ALIVE, beady-eyed, staring him down. Frankly, a little pissed off.

The blackbird watches him. Its sharp beak and eyes gleam. Ace keeps his eye fixed on it.

A high-pitched caw -- CHAA! CHAA! CHAA!

It FLIES AT HIM then up to the rafters.

INT. MOVIE THEATER SET - NIGHT

Jackie and Betty hide between the red curtains.

Jackie sees Ace run off the set cowering. The kids whisper.

BETTY

I didn't see anyone.

JACKIE

He was there. I swear.

They see the 'NO ACCESS' sign.

Betty scampers toward it. Jackie reluctantly follows.

They pause at the sign. The trap door is open.

BETTY

We've looked everywhere else. Go on,
I dare you.

Jackie's face is pale. He chews his bottom lip. Jackie kneels, his head out of sight as he looks below.

INT. BONEYARD - NIGHT

Jackie creeps down the ladder into darkness.

Looks up at the retreating square of light and Betty's face.

Jackie squints at props, tools. All look sinister.

FERAL GRUNTING. Jackie's fast heartbeat.

Jackie hides behind a wardrobe. Peeks through fingers.

TWO RED MONSTERS. A Female Monster, on all fours, cries out.

The Male Monster leans over her and chews her neck.

The monsters have black eyes, long curled horns like rams. Jagged, yellowed teeth. Webbed hands with long curled nails.

Jackie is rooted to the spot. A soft whimper.

The Male Monster turns its head slowly toward Jackie.

Jackie covers his eyes with both hands.

Urine trails from the bottom of his pants, onto the floor.

The grunting resumes.

Jackie, breathing raggedly, backs toward the ladder.

INT. MAKEUP ROOM - NIGHT

Jackie pummels in. He rocks into Dot's body in a trance. Dot's FIVE MONTH PREGNANCY is clearly showing.

DOT

What is it baby? What is it?

JACKIE

B-b-b-b-b-BONEYARD!

INT. BONEYARD - NIGHT

Dot silently, slowly, descends the ladder to the boneyard.

Dot hides behind the large wardrobe. She peeks. Gasps!

Blade is having sex with A SEXY REDHEAD.

INT. LIVING ROOM SET - NIGHT

Jackie, pale, drinks a glass of milk. He reads his audition script, wearing his thick glasses. The TV glows on his face.

The door SLAMS open. Jackie squirms to the end of the couch. Script pages scatter. Blade is trailed by Dot.

Blade kicks away the coffee table.

Pulls Jackie to his feet.

The glass of milk CLUNKS slowly to the ground.

Blade shakes him.

DOT

Stop! STOP!

Dot pulls Blade away.

Blade throws her against the wall.

Blade lifts Jackie into the air. Shakes him, out of control.

DOT (cont'd)

Why are you doing this?!

Blade drops Jackie. Jackie's head hits the floor, hard.

Blade stares, incredulous, shocked at himself.

BLADE

I don't know. I don't know.

Jackie's glasses are shattered. His temple is gashed. Blood trickles into the spilled milk.

Jackie opens his eyes. His vision is BLURRY. Dot is in a fog, fallen against the wall. Blood drips down her face.

Jackie looks up. A RED MONSTER bends over him. Vision dims.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. FLASH'S MANSION - ENTRANCE - DAY

Police officer **BEA TRAVERS** (25), Asian American, a striking redhead, peruses the foyer as she follows Li Jing.

Bea beholds a giant poster of Flash, now more sex object than priest. Tag: 'THE NEW FATHER TRINITY - SEASON THREE.'

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bea and Li Jing speak in Mandarin, SUBTITLED.

LI JING
I'm Li Jing. Are you from China?

BEA
My mother is from Singapore.

LI JING
I'll bring tea.

END SUBTITLES.

Before Bea can object, Li Jing is gone.

Bea unthinkingly rubs a BRUISE on her arm.

Bea gawks at the lavish surrounds. A glass pot of flowering tea, balled up tightly, is placed on the table.

Bea touches Flash and Ally's wedding photo, an Emmy Awards ashtray, a football on a stand of intertwining blackbirds. The flower tea blooms into a yellow chrysanthemum.

Sasha enters with a phone cradled against her tense jaw. Everything about her says, 'Don't fuck with me.'

SASHA
I like looking at the small type on contracts, Johnny. Just keep the crazies out, don't recruit them.

She hangs up. Scowls when she sees Bea.

SASHA (cont'd)
Who are you?

BEA
(showing her badge)
Officer Bea Travers. Miss King? You called about a break in.

THUMP-THUMP-THUMP on the front door. The Entourage enters.

SASHA
And the circus begins.

The Entourage settle on couches. Max smokes a cigar against the wall. They ignore Bea.

Sasha gestures 'Your problem.'

Bea wolf whistles.

BEA
I'm going to need everyone to leave.
This is a crime scene.

Flash descends the stairs. Bea gapes. His hair is wet, his body still damp. Bea strokes her collarbone.

BEA (cont'd)
I'm, um, um, I'm Officer Bea Travers.

Flash strokes his chin. A woman in uniform. Interesting.

FLASH
Bea, like in Plan B?

BEA
(embarrassed)
Yes. So, Mr Jackson, I-ah-understand
a woman broke in, crept into your
bed, then --
(coughs nervously)
stole your condoms.

The Entourage, who haven't budged, erupt.

MAX
I don't think there's a shortage.

SASHA
His used condoms. Probably trying to
make a baby with your semen!

Flash chuckles. Max bows, as if to a deity.

MAX
The precious seed.

The Entourage hoots. Flash notices the empty ball stand.

FLASH
My ball's gone! Sasha?!

SASHA
It's okay. We'll get Max on the case.
(to Bea)
He just got into the police force.
God help us.

FLASH
But not a word to Ally when she gets
home. She's only been gone a week --

SASHA

And you've got another woman in your bed? Don't worry. I'll cover for you. Again. Now boys, let Officer Travers get down to business.

The Entourage gesture and dances 'getting down to business' in various forms. Flash enjoys Bea's discomfort.

INT. MILKWOOD CASTING AGENCY - CORRIDOR - DAY

Jackie, anxious, waits to audition with other hopefuls.

He's not wearing glasses. A bandage covers his temple.

His face is in his script. Letters dance across the page.

In his peripheral vision he sees a large man, white, as a BLURRY FIGURE. Deep breaths by his ear compound his fear.

JACKIE

I can't! I can't!

Jackie sees the BLURRY FIGURE stand, turn toward him.

BLURRY MAN

You're going to be a star.

INT. CASTING AGENCY - AUDITION ROOM - DAY

Jackie walks on without the script. He's in a pale, cold sweat. He squints at three blurry, seated figures.

FEMALE ASSISTANT (O.S.)

You can start.

Jackie nods. He takes three breaths, then effortlessly --

JACKIE

I'll tell you no lies. The only sea I saw was the seesaw sea, with you riding on it. Lie down, lie easy.

The CASTING DIRECTOR nods her approval to the Assistant.

PRELAP: Shopping mall Muzak onto...

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Ace, a cap hiding his face, drops BATTERIES into a trolley filled with the basics. Whiskey, tuna, coffee beans.

And rat traps. Lots of rat traps.
His clothes, like him, are worn out.

A SQUIRRELY MAN (40s), white, with a trolley, follows him.
Ace catches his eye. The man reads the label on a can.

Ace continues. Looks back sharply. The Man looks up. Sprung.

SQUIRREL

Do I know you? I'm great with faces.

ACE

You don't want to know me, man. Keep
your distance.

Ace continues. Squirrel hangs back then follows him.

A FEMALE SHOPPER (60s), white, loiters. A face mask hangs at
her neck. She eyes Ace and puts it on.

She passes him and drops her mask. She reaches over Squirrel
for mushroom soup. He talks on his phone as he stalks Ace.

SQUIRREL

It's definitely him.

EXT./INT. FLASH'S MANSION - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Ally's on the phone. A present waits at the door.

ALLY

Bye, Mother. Mother, I have to go.

Ally hangs up. Picks up the present at the door. Beams.

A CHAUFFEUR, carrying a bag, opens the door. Ally calls out.

ALLY (cont'd)

Honey, I'm home! Flash?

She exhales heavily. Opens the present.

INSIDE THE BOX: A DEAD BLACKBIRD with a twisted neck.

Ally screams hysterically and drops it.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ally sits on the bed, ashen and shaking. She wears a white
nightgown and baby-pink silk robe.

She hugs Finn who has his ball in his mouth. Flash pats Fin.

FLASH

Calm down, my-love-my-life. It's just one crazy. Besides, you've got Finn.

ALLY

Probably the head of your fan club.

FLASH

Hey, I can't help it if I drive women crazy.

Ally throws a pillow at him.

ALLY

This is serious! If you can't protect me, how are you going to protect our baby? She's here in weeks!

Flash sits and holds Ally.

FLASH

I'll get more security, get Sasha to hire that police officer that --

ALLY

What police officer?

FLASH

Ah, Officer Travers. Worked on the last stalker. I can't be here all the time, Ally.

ALLY

You're never here.

FLASH

I'm working, not having a holiday! This ain't here forever baby. Any minute --

(snaps his fingers)
it's gone.

Ally buries her face in Finn's fur and SNIFFS.

INT. STUDIO 3 - BONEYARD - NIGHT

Ace SNIFFS, on alert. Standing with his shopping, he looks down at the trap door to the sub-basement. Sniffs again.

Ace kneels, listens. His heart beats hard. Boom-BooM-BOOM.

He peers into the hatch. Complete darkness below.

Sits up. Nope, not chancing it. He pats his pocket, pulls out and CLICKS THE REMOTE. Disco shimmers from below.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Ace lands ninja-style on the disco floor. His Kung Fu moves are ready. His eyes shoot into every dark corner. No one.

A pan of something is burning. He puts his hand over his mouth, as he moves to the stovetop. Gags as he turns it off.

A COCKROACH climbs out from rotting mince in the pan. Recoiling, he throws the pan in the trash.

Ace slugs down a carton of milk. Shoulders sag.

Ace opens his eyes. Sways. The room spins.

He drops the milk. Grips the bench.

He turns on the bench light.

Julienned vegetables are LINED UP.

Ace's heart pounds. BOOM-BOOM-BOOM.

The cupboard above the bench CREAKS open --

The white tin is MISSING.

Ace moves aside cupboard contents. SPINS AROUND panicked.

EXT. JACKIE'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

Jackie SPINS AROUND, walking backward as he and Betty chatter to Jackie's well-worn house. Car is in the drive.

BETTY

Don't forget me when you're famous.

JACKIE

Never.

BETTY

Do you want a brother or sister?

JACKIE

A brother. Girls are the worst!

A lasagna and a bunch of flowers are at the door. Betty motions Jackie to shush. She eases open the door.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Two sets of keys -- one with a rabbit foot keychain -- are on the hallway stand. Heavy silence.

Betty and Jackie share a look. They walk into...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dot, silently cocooned in the purple blanket, sits between her SISTER (30s), wearing a PHOENIX NECKLACE, and Bunny.

Betty and Jackie walk quietly into the...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Blade is bowed over a whiskey. His face is gray with grief.

He vacantly leafs through a high school PROSPECTUS. He dog-ears pages. Boxed in blue highlighter are karate, football and boxing. Circled are clubs for poetry, drama and art.

The CRACK of an ice tray. Ice cubes fall into Blade's glass. A chair SCRAPES back.

Jackie wraps his arms around Blade who pushes him away. Betty sits quietly, then stands. She walks into the...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Betty leans against the door frame. She looks at what is left of Dot, the only mother she has. Betty wipes a tear.

BUNNY

I'll be here, honey. Always.

Betty stiffens. Her face hardens. *Not on my watch, bitch!*

PRELAP: A knock on a door.

INT. FLASH'S MANSION - BEDROOM - DAY

Bea knocks on the open door. She's dressed in a black suit.

ALLY (O.S.)

Enter.

Ally, at a dresser, tries on rings from an open music box.

Ally sees Bea in the mirror, too close behind her.

BEA
I'm Bea Travers. I worked the case of
Flash's stalker.

ALLY
You mean Mr Jackson.

BEA
Yes, ah, Ms King hired me as your
bodyguard. Actually, we've crossed
paths before.

ALLY
Oh, I don't remember. It's your job
to be invisible though, isn't it?

BEA
Very true. You won't know I'm here.

INT. CONSULTATION ROOM - DAY

A PSYCHIATRIST (50s), Asian, female, sizes Ace up.

ACE
I haven't been drinking. Honest. Just
milk.

PSYCHIATRIST
Because we discussed this -- Alcohol
can interact with antidepressants,
and cause hallucinations.

The Psychiatrist flicks through a hefty file.

PSYCHIATRIST (cont'd)
Have you seen things before?

ACE
Just my future flashing before my
eyes.
(snorts)
Nah, usual kid stuff. Monsters under
the bed. Ghosts. I used to sleepwalk.

PSYCHIATRIST
I see.

ACE
But I'm, um, losing things, important
things, leaving the stove on, moving
stuff and forgetting. Seeing things.

PSYCHIATRIST

Hmm... how old would your daughter be?

ACE

(thinking)

Nearly twenty-six.

PSYCHIATRIST

Do you see her?

ACE

No.

Ace fiddles with his wedding ring.

PSYCHIATRIST

Grief manifests in strange ways -- the resurgence of childhood patterns, dreams, phobias, vivid flashbacks. I wouldn't worry at this stage.

The Psychiatrist writes a prescription and hands it over.

PSYCHIATRIST (cont'd)

I've changed your anti-depressant. And no drinking, no sleeping tablets. The interaction can cause suicidal thoughts. And look, try to get out, mix with people. Maybe get a pet.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ace walks past a mystic shop. Backs up. Looks at it.

ACE

May as well cover all the bases.

He pushes open the door. Music drifts out and into...

INT. STUDIO 3 - MAKEUP ROOM - NIGHT

A mirror is behind the makeup table on which are pedicured feet. Bunny leans over, her breasts almost overflowing.

In slow, sensual strokes, she brushes red paint onto her toenails. She leans back in the chair, eyes closed, smoking.

The spirals waft toward the rafters.

A GIANT HOOK, used to suspend stuntmen, swings slowly.

Sawdust, like snowflakes, lands on Bunny's eyelashes. She opens her eyes. She's petrified in her seat. She screams.

A heavy dull THUD.

Bunny lies unconscious on the floor, beside the hook and rope. Blood flows from her temple. Her hand is twisted.

CUT TO BLACK

OVER BLACK: Footsteps thunder in.

INT. MAKEUP ROOM - NIGHT

Blade's face leans over Bunny's, like a kiss. He strokes her hair. She moans softly.

BLADE
Bunny? Baby? Baby?

Jackie watches his father's face. He loves her. His father loves someone else. A tear trails down Jackie's cheek.

Sawdust flutters on Jackie's face. He looks up.

Betty's feet tiptoe silently over the rafters.

INT. FLASH'S MANSION - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Flash pads slowly to stand close behind --

A voluptuous redhead is on her hands and knees at the top of the stairs. Florid vines erupt from a hidden tramp stamp.

Bea looks up, gasps softly. She pivots on her knees. Hides something in her pocket. Blinks rapidly.

BEA
I-I noticed the carpet's torn.

FLASH
Officer Plan Bea. Glad Sasha talked you into working here.

SASHA
It was an offer I couldn't refuse.

Flash leers at her face, her breasts. *Fully fuckable.*

FLASH
I couldn't help notice your tattoo.

BEA
 (nervously)
 Mistakes of the past.

MEMORY HIT (FLASH'S)

Flash is at the row of desks. He sees his autograph tattooed above red jeans. His fingers dig into the chair as he cums.

BACK TO SCENE

Flash extends his hand. She takes it. Their eyes penetrate each other. He pulls her up. She's only a step away.

Flash takes a step back. Drops her hand. Nervous cough.

FLASH
 Yes, indeed. Mistakes of the past.
 Welcome aboard, Plan Bea.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ally slowly waddles back and forth, the phone in the crook of her neck. Finn, with his ball in his mouth, watches her.

She readies the corner of the room that will be the nursery. She pulls out disinfectant wipes and wipes the cradle.

ALLY
 Mother, she's not an it. She's a she.

Finn drops his ball, alert.

His head TRACKS something. He's a ball of muscle. Lips curl.

A WHITE DEMON HAND, with unnaturally long fingers, creeps over the edge of the cradle. Ally is unaware.

Finn barks. Ally shushes him. He stops barking. Growls low. She puts the phone on its cradle on speaker, as she tidies.

ALLY'S MOTHER (V.O.)
 Do you think the baby will have your eyes?

Distracted, Ally doesn't notice the white hand when she reaches to the windowsill.

Finn barks. Ally throws him a stern look. He stops.

She replaces the blue teddy bear on the windowsill with a PINK TEDDY BEAR.

ALLY

What are you asking, Mother? Will she look Asian?

Flash enters, raises an eyebrow. Ally motions him to shush. He stands behind her. He kisses her neck and rubs her belly.

ALLY (cont'd)

Flash is just a tad Asian.

Flash stifles a chuckle.

ALLY'S MOTHER (V.O.)

Still, his mother looked very Asian. I'm not racist but, well, she's going to face prejudice, the poor dear.

Flash presses the mute button.

FLASH

Stop trying to dilute me, like I'm ninety-nine per cent Asian-free milk.

Ally laughs and takes the phone off mute.

ALLY

It's like tea. It doesn't matter how much milk you put in, it's still tea.

Flash and Ally high-five. Door creaks. They turn. No one.

ALLY (cont'd)

Well, it's a moot point. You're not racist and my family is Asian. It all turned out for the best.

The Demon Hand over the baby's cradle retreats.

ALLY'S MOTHER (V.O.)

Alright, well --

ALLY

Goodbye mother.

Ally hangs up. Flash chuckles.

FLASH

Next time, my-love-my-life, tell her about my contact lenses.

Flash gets on his knees and puts his hands up Ally's dress. Her white underwear is pulled to the floor. Finn barks.

FLASH (cont'd)
Finn! Out!

Finn leaves. Flash looks up at Ally. She giggles.

INT. JACKIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Dot and Blade edge past each other. Jackie watches them, pretending to do homework.

BLADE
I wonder how Bunny's managing.

JACKIE
Who cares?

DOT
Jackie! Bunny's our friend.

Dot cuts carrots slowly, pensive.

BLADE
That looks great.

Dot looks suspiciously at Blade.

DOT
What have you done?

BLADE
Nothing. I just can't score a point with you, can I? I love your...

DOT
Lasagna. It's vegetable lasagna.

Blade turns to Jackie. Conspiratorially screws up his nose.

DOT (cont'd)
I saw that. I should take Bunny some food. Though knowing Bunny, she'd rather I do her makeup than feed her.

BLADE
I could run it over.

DOT
Thanks. I still feel -- and you know Bunny will want to talk about it.

BLADE
Happy to help.

Blade kisses Dot on the forehead. He did score a point.

PRELAP: BUZZ.

INT. STUDIO 3 - BONEYARD - NIGHT

Ace, earmuffs on, BUZZES through timber with a circular saw. From the radio, a doleful song of loneliness and lost love.

Ace stops. Removes earmuffs. Listens. Just the radio.

Back to work, earmuffs off. Buzz. Buzz. Stops.

A YOWLING, terrible sound -- COMING FROM THE CRADLE!

Ace picks up a shovel. Gingerly approaches.

His eyes dart into the cradle. Nothing. Of course.

He walks past the cradle --

A WOMAN'S ARM REACHES OUT from it. Grabs at him! Misses.

Ace walks into the shadowy recesses. Steps in something. SQUISH. Looks at his shoe. RAT ENTRAILS. Gags.

Something fights and turns in the dark. He edges toward --

THE CAT! Its paw is caught in a rat trap.

ACE
Jesus! Come here cat.

Ace drops the shovel. Looks around. Pulls the shroud off the cradle as he snaps open the rat trap with his foot.

Ace swaddles the cat in the shroud like a baby. It looks unimpressed. Ace laughs in spite of the situation.

ACE (cont'd)
You're right. It's not funny.
Are you the one leaving me dead rats?

Ace strokes her. The Cat rumbles.

INT. FLASH'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ally lies awake, spooned by a snoring Flash -- Koh-Koh-Kaaa-Koh-Koh-Kaaa. Crickets CHIRP. His arm is firmly around her.

She wriggles away from his snoring. He wriggles toward her. He nuzzles into her ear, snoring louder.

ALLY
Flash, stop snoring!

Flash stops snoring.

Ally closes her eyes. A few moments of peace.

The snoring starts again.

ALLY (cont'd)
Flash, roll over.

No joy. Ally, heavily pregnant, struggles out of bed.

Ally tries, comically and in vain, to roll Flash over.

ALLY (cont'd)
(as if to a dog)
Come on Flash! Roll over!

Ally sits on the edge of the bed. Sleep is a lost cause.

Ally closes the window. Quiet.

A soft THUD. Ally scans the room.

ALLY (cont'd)
Finn?

No Finn. Ally waddles out of their bedroom, in the dark.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ally flicks a light switch. Tries again. Only darkness.

Ally waddles to the stairs. Walks into Finn's ball.

Finn's ball jingles and rolls into the black hallway beyond the stairs. The ball hits something.

ALLY
Hello?

THUD! A branch hits the window beside her. She exhales.

ALLY (cont'd)
Your mommy's going to la-la-land.

THUMP! Ahead this time. Ally inches into the shadow.

ALLY (cont'd)
 Nothing to fear but fear itself.
 Nothing to fear but fear itself.
 Nothing to fear but fear itself.

Her fingertips brush the wall as she feels her way.

Wind WHOOSHES her hair back from her dewy face.

THUMP-THUMP-THUMP -- An open window.

Ally closes the window. She feels her way to the stairs.

INT. STAIRS - NIGHT

Ally pauses at the top of the stairs. She cranes her neck toward the blackness below. A voice suddenly behind her ear.

MALEVOLENT VOICE (O.S.)
 ALLY!

Ally spins.

SHADOWED HANDS push Ally.

Ally trips, screaming soundlessly, flailing as she falls.

WHOMP. Her head smashes against the wardrobe.

Ally's POV: Dazed, she looks at her hand. Blood. Everywhere. Flash leans over the railing. His eyes bulge.

FLASH
 (distorted)
 Aaaallyyyyy!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Ally sobs as she delivers the baby. Flash is beside her.

FLASH
 Breathe baby, breathe. Just like they
 showed us, remember?

She nods, squeezing his hand. One last, heart-rending sob.

NURSE (O.S)
 (tenderly)
 You have a beautiful baby girl.

Ally looks up, hopeful.

ALLY
Does she have all her fingers and
toes?

NURSE (O.S)
(sadly)
Yes. Everything's where it should be.

Silence. No baby cries.

The matronly Asian NURSE (50s) hands the baby, wrapped in a blanket, to Ally. Ally and Flash look at the (unseen) baby adoringly. They share this exquisite moment, never closer.

FLASH
She's perfect. She's you.

Ally keens. Rocks her (unseen) DEAD BABY to her chest.

ALLY
My baby my baby my baby...

Flash is ravaged.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Ally and Flash stand in front of a furnace. A small white coffin on a conveyor belt whirs into the fire.

Ally sobs.

Flash's face flickers with grief but he remains contained.

INT./EXT. ENTRANCE - DAY

Flash has his arm around Ally as they walk, bowed down, out of the funeral parlor. Paparazzi flashes pop.

Flash whispers in Ally's ear.

FLASH
No tears.

He raises his head. A blackbird dives.

INT. JACKIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Three flying ducks hang on the wall.

Dot puts a meal into a container. Her hands shake.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
-- after the murder of Vincent Chin
in a Detroit McDonald's --

Dot turns up the radio. Her chin trembles.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (cont'd)
Racially motivated attacks against
Asian Americans continue to rise --

Jackie furiously polishes his crystal ball at the bench,
watching his parents closely. Dot turns to Blade.

DOT
Can you believe it?

Dot leans on the bench. Her head falls into her hands.

DOT (cont'd)
I don't feel safe any more.

Blade kisses her forehead. They search each others face.

BLADE
You're safe with me.

The moment vanishes. Dot hands him the container.

DOT
Bunny's got a week's worth of
Tupperware. That's my last container.
How long are you going to be?

Blade pats his pockets.

BLADE
I've gotta stop in at work. You seen
my keys?

DOT
You said you'd stop working weekends.

Blade looks into the fruit bowl on the kitchen bench.

BLADE
Aerial scene tomorrow. I need to
check the rigging. Or are you trying
to get rid of me?

DOT
I'm thinking about it.

Blade comes to Dot, body-to-body. He kisses her tenderly.

BLADE
I will never leave you. I would never
break up our family.

There is a moment between them. A moment that might make or
break them.

Jackie glowers, watching Blade and Dot connect.

DOT
Take my keys. They're where they
should be.

Blade smacks Dot on the ass. He leans over Jackie, grabs the
toast off his plate, smiles cheekily and heads out.

Jackie's face bursts with rage.

JACKIE
Liar!!!

Jackie hurls his crystal ball at Blade. Blade catches it.

Jackie runs out. The front door slams. Blade shrugs at Dot.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Blade and Dot stand beside the parked family car.

DOT
Let's just check the usual places and
ring around okay?

BLADE
I don't know what got into him.

Dot chews her nails.

INT. CAR - TRUNK - DAY (PARKED)

Jackie and Betty curl toward each other, in the trunk of the
family car. A sliver of sunshine, from the not-quite-closed
lid of the trunk, lights their faces. They lock eyes.

The SLAM of the car door. The engine starts. Betty whispers.

BETTY
Operation Bunny is underway.

PRELAP: The sound of wind onto...

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A windy, overcast day. Ally and Flash walk, not touching, down the beach. It seems deserted. Finn runs far ahead.

A child's kite falls at their feet. A young girl picks it up. She runs, struggling to right it.

Flash, wearing an eye patch, helps her raise the kite.

Ally and Flash watch her run to her parents. Flash puts his arm around Ally. She bends to remove her shoes. Walks away.

Ally stands alone. Her feet freeze at the water's edge. Waves crash. She hugs herself. Fingers dig into her flesh.

Flash stays at a distance.

INT./EXT. CAR - DAY (MOVING)

The key chain with the rabbit foot swings from the ignition.

OUT THE WINDOW: parents hold the hands of their children, a kids' park, a milk bar, an empty schoolyard. No Jackie.

INT. CAR - TRUNK - DAY (PARKED)

The engine stops. The sound of the handbrake, then the car door closing. Betty whispers excitedly, Jackie fearfully.

JACKIE

Now what?

BETTY

We catch him in the act.

JACKIE

Then what?

BETTY

I'm not a criminal mastermind. That's as far as I got.

Betty punches him. Jackie punches back.

JACKIE

You're the worst.

No turning back now. They ease the trunk open.

EXT. BUNNY'S HOUSE - DAY

Jackie and Betty creep up to the house.

They look into the windows covered with translucent curtains. No sign of them.

BETTY
So, what's plan B?

JACKIE
There wasn't a plan A!

They continue down the side of the house. Jackie climbs a stack of crates. Betty is on the ground.

BETTY
Can you see anything?

JACKIE
No. But I can hear Bunny.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Bunny smiles in front of a mirror, eyes closed. A plush makeup brush sweeps over her face.

BUNNY
I'm definitely not ambidextrous.

No answer. Her blue eyes search the face of her lover.

BUNNY (cont'd)
You said it would only be another month and you'd leave.

No answer. Bunny stands, her robe tied around her.

BUNNY (cont'd)
Well say something goddamit! Now that there's no baby --
(no answer)
I'm sorry. I didn't mean that, okay?
Just talk to me.

Bunny slowly unties her robe. They don't need words.

A hand strokes Bunny gently, from her neck to her hips.

It's DOT! Dot leans in. They kiss, tenderly.

There is a moment between them. A moment that might make or break them. Dot's face is wrecked with emotion.

DOT
I can't break up our family.

EXT./INT. BEDROOM WINDOW - SAME TIME

Jackie and Betty peer in. Bunny's voice is clearly heard.

BUNNY (O.S.)
This is a once-in-a-lifetime love.
Romeo and Juliet.

BETTY
I think they saw us!

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET-SCAPE - DAY

A sun shower. Jackie tears down the street. Betty trails.

BETTY
Jackie! Jackie! Wait for me!

A loud crack of THUNDER onto...

INT. STUDIO 3 - SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

The soft echo of THUNDER. Ace strokes the cat on his lap. He hand-feeds her tuna. She licks his fingers.

Subtle flashes cross his face: grief, fear, happiness.

ACE
You love me, don't you mama?

The cat purrs. Ace lifts her onto his chest, nuzzles her in his neck. She licks his face. Ace looks at her adoringly.

ACE (cont'd)
Want a beverage?

He pours milk into a bowl for her, a glass for him.

Ace bins the carton. It has A TINY HOLE made by a syringe.

A cockroach escapes the bin. The cat jumps. Catches and CRUNCHES it.

The kitchen cupboard SQUEAKS open. As Ace reaches it --

Slam-Slam-Slam!

He stumbles back.

A SHADOW appears behind Ace's desk. It whispers eerily.

SHADOW (O.S.)
What's my name?

Ace spins around on the attack. On his desk --

The WHITE TIN.

Ace has a pained stare. His mouth twitches, fighting a roar.

The cat slurps milk.

Behind Ace, the range-hood fan switches on, humming.

The cupboard door again -- Slam-Slam-Slam!

Ace doesn't notice. He's riveted by the white tin.

The TV comes to life on the shelf behind him.

SHOW HOST (V.O.)
-- Flash Jackson, Hollywood's
heartthrob of horror, the sexy
exorcist Father Trinity. After the
tragic --

The cat weaves as if drunk then falls over.

INT. MAKEUP ROOM - DAY

BARB (60s), Asian American, motherly, leans over Flash, in a cloud of cigarette smoke. Flash faces away.

They mirror Jackie's spectral vision. A makeup brush tenderly sweeps Flash's face. He looks squarely at Barb.

FLASH
They say if you smile you can trick
your body into being happy. Do you
believe that, Barb?

BARB
It's just a trick.

A FEMALE STAGEHAND walks past. She stops, hesitant.

FEMALE STAGEHAND
How are you?

FLASH
Fine. Thanks for asking.

Barb puffs a cigarette in silicone-plump lips.

A MALE STAGEHAND hesitates, says nothing, walks past.

BARB

Maybe it's too early to come back.

How's Ally?

Flash takes Barb's cigarette. Familiar. Inhales slowly.

FLASH

I don't know. Her grief is so...

(exhales smoke)

heavy. I can't hold it.

Barb puts her hand on Flash's arm.

FLASH (CONTD)

I took a week off, like she was a bad cold.

Flash smiles at himself in the mirror. Smoke tendrils.

FLASH

Some people ask how I am. No one really wants to hear the answer, that death is real and close.

(voice cracking)

I do not know where all this love will go...

He winces, balling his fist at his heart. But no tears. Flash looks at the mirror. SMILES at himself.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. JACKIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

CLICK on-off-on of A LIGHT SWITCH.

JACKIE (O.S.)

Light's out. But Mom must be here.

We've looked everywhere else.

Betty opens the fridge to light their way. Inside are only beer, wine and take-out containers.

BETTY

You can't watch her every minute.

JACKIE

Someone has to. She's been so sad the last month. But like scary sad.

Jackie plays the answering machines. Puts down the flowers.

BLADE (V.O.)
Hey, I'm working late again. Don't
keep dinner. I'll pick something up.

BETTY
Maybe he'll pick up herpes.

Jackie flicks Betty.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jackie peers into the near-dark living room.

JACKIE
Mom?

The light illuminates only the faces of Jackie and Betty.

BETTY
This is romantic. You, me, the dark.

JACKIE
Shut up, Betty!

Betty flicks Jackie. They stumble in the dark.

A lamp SWITCHES ON revealing a GHOUL -- Dot. Betty shrieks.

JACKIE (cont'd)
Mom?

Dot clicks the light on, off, on, off. Her face is lifeless.
Except for clicking the lamp, she is motionless.

Baby clothes are strewn on the couch and table.

ON THE COFFEE TABLE: Valium and an open bottle of red wine.

An open RED SHOEBOX contains photos and folded pages.

JACKIE (cont'd)
Mom, are you okay?

A long silence. Jackie squeezes his hands anxiously. Betty
looks at him and shrugs, palms skyward. Dot shivers.

DOT
Jackie, bring me the blanket.

Jackie settles the purple blanket around Dot. Dot runs her
hands over it. Tears leave black trails over her cheeks.

DOT (cont'd)
I need to feel where I used to be.

JACKIE
Mom, don't cry. Try to be happy okay?

Dot wrings the edges of the blanket.

DOT
You can't wring out grief, hang it
out in the sunshine so the texture
changes, so the color fades.

Betty's cheeks are wet with tears in the light -- on, off...

INT. SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Light ON over Ace's face. He starts to sketch at his desk.
Hears a small SNEEZE. Looks up at the cat on the couch.

Scans the room, now littered with protective objects: an
evil eye, a dreamcatcher, burning JOSS STICKS etc.

Looks at the WHITE TIN on the kitchen table.

Returns to sketching. Scratch of pen on paper.

Soft baby cries. Ace looks around for the source.

The baby cries are coming from the tin!

He steps toward it, breath shaky, face covered in sweat.

A YOUNG WOMAN sings 'Bye Bye Blackbird' to calm a baby.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)
*Where somebody waits for me,
Sugar is sweet, so is she,
Bye Bye Blackbird.*

The wedding photo VIBRATES on the shelf, then falls.
Glass smashes. Ace doesn't flinch.

Ace walks slowly around the white tin. Embossed letters come
into view -- 'NOSKCAJ YBAB.' The front of the tin reads
'BABY JACKSON.' The word 'BABY' has been fiercely scratched.

REVEAL: Ace stares at the white tin -- A **BABY'S URN.**

The baby screaming intensifies. The singing is strained.

Ace is frozen. The white tin on his desk starts to --

RATTLE -- Stops.

Rattles again. Stops.

Ace is transfixed. Waiting.

A long rattle.

Ace is frozen.

PRELAP: Screech of a car.

INT./EXT. STUNT CAR - NIGHT (MOVING)

A car screeches around an empty lot. Flash, driving, jerks from side to side, taking the turns too fast. Flash screams as he drives, his pain fueling the car.

In the far distance, the end of the parking lot. He shifts gears. Revs. Charges forward.

An unnatural shrieking, like death calling.

BLACK WRAITHLIKE FIGURES chase the car.

The Wraiths throw themselves against the windows. The hideous rasping of a tortured soul.

The faster Flash drives, the more ferocious their attack.

Flash aims at the clifftop. CRASH! Flash hits the barrier. His face smacks the steering wheel.

Flash, dressed as a priest, emerges from a Mustang. He bleeds from a cut eye.

FLASH

Let's go again!

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

You got a death wish?!

INT. FLASH'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ally sits up in bed in the near-dark. She is rapt by gossip magazines. Finn is asleep on the bed.

IN THE MAGAZINE: A photo of the couple leaving the funeral, MOVES in the magazine. The headline is 'WILL THEY SURVIVE?'

Heavy rain. Ally gulps red wine. Tears leave gray tracks of mascara down her face.

ON THE NIGHTSTAND: a half-empty bottle of wine, pills and --
A GUN.

The cradle and pink perfection corner remain ready.
Ally's pink robe is on a hook beside the bed.

Three loud knocks. Bea enters. Takes in the scene.

BEA
Mr Jackson will be working late.

Ally hurls the wine glass against the wall. SMASH!

Finn walks up the bed. He licks Ally's tears.

Bea mops up the red puddle with a towel. She cuts her hand.
Sucks the blood. Her wrist has shallow nicks.

BEA (cont'd)
My dad used to say, relationships are
like water. They take the shape of
their container.

Ally gulps wine from the bottle.

ALLY
I can't contain Flash.

BEA
Maybe not.

They laugh quietly. Bea clocks the gun.

BEA (cont'd)
Well, I'll leave you. If there's
anything I can do...

ALLY
There's nothing anyone can do.

Finn jumps off the bed and follows Bea. The door closes.

Ally sings half the words to 'Bye Bye Blackbird.'

ALLY (cont'd)
*No one here can love and understand
me. Oh! What hard luck stories they
all hand me.*

Ally vacantly stares past the cradle, out the window. The
light on the nightstand cuts out.

Outside the window -- the FACE OF A FIVE-YEAR-OLD GIRL.

Ally gasps. The face is gone. Ally skulls wine.
 Thunder. Lightning. Ally smiles at nature wreaking havoc.
 Suddenly rigid, she looks down.
 Her wrist is grasped by the ICY HAND of the little girl.
 The girl looks at Ally with affection. Ally is overwhelmed.

ALLY (cont'd)
 My baby...

Ally's breath is white in the now freezing room. She strokes
 the child's cheek then shrinks back from the cold.

GIRL
 (demonic)
 Mommy.

BLACKBIRDS FLY OUT OF HER MOUTH.

The blackbirds push Ally to FLY over the cradle toward the
 windows. They SLAM open.

Ally flies feet first out the window, hands flailing.

Flash grabs Ally! He pulls her to him, wet with fear.

FLASH
 What were you trying to do? What were
 you trying to do?

He carries her to their bed. The bedside light turns on.

Ally smiles eerily, captivated by something in the cradle.

ALLY
 Look my love, she's here. We're a
 family.

FLASH
 Ally, we are a family. But she's
 gone, she's gone.

Flash cups Ally's beatific face in his hands. Her face
 changes from happy to confused to tormented.

Flash glances at the magazine.

FLASH (cont'd)
 Baby, you've got to stop reading this
 poison. I will never leave you. No
 matter what. You're all I've got.
 (MORE)

FLASH (cont'd)
 'Til death do us part, remember?
 Remember us Ally, remember us...

Flash clasps Ally tightly, rocking them both.

Ear-splitting thunder. The light goes out.

A SHADOW by the door.

INT. STUDIO 3 - SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Ace looks at his slack face in the mirror.

Ace removes the mirror from the wall.

Ace gently places the white tin inside the wall cavity, next to the RED SHOEBOX.

The MUSIC BOX falls into a box of toys. He picks it up. Opens it. 'Bye Bye Blackbird' fills the room.

Ace removes a RUBY RING from the music box. The ruby is huge, like a weapon.

His face reflects in the music box mirror. DISSOLVES TO...

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT (PARKED)

Flash's face reflects in the rear view mirror. Deep in thought. He lights a cigar. Draws deeply.

Flash rolls down the car window. He blows out cigar smoke.

HONEY (30s), a blonde hooker, walks up to the parked car.

Honey leans into the window. She's Bunny's doppelganger.

HONEY
 Hey handsome, wanna give me a ride?

Honey gets into the car.

Flash reclines in his seat. Honey unzips his pants.

Bright lights glare from behind. WHOOP-WHOOP. A police car.

They're just another casualty of Saturday night.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Max types. A low commotion. He goosenecks with other cops.

Flash is led out of the corridor and past his desk.

FLASH
Max! Call Sasha.

Flash is propelled forward by the arresting POLICE OFFICER (40s), a white donuts-eater.

POLICE OFFICER
You gonna ask her to pray for you,
Father Trinity?

Those in earshot snigger. Max picks up the phone.

INT. BOOKING ROOM - NIGHT

Flash's mugshot is taken front on.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
Turn.

Flash turns. The photo flashes again.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.) (cont'd)
Is that your good side?

EXT. FLASH'S MANSION - NIGHT

REPORTERS mob the front gate. It whirs open.

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT

In the back seat, Ally retreats from camera flashes intruding through the window. She turns on Flash.

ALLY
What are my family going to think?

FLASH
Is that all you care about?

He averts his eyes. He squeezes his right hand with his left, his left hand with his right, repeatedly.

ALLY
Is that all I care about? Is that all
you have to say?

Bea, in the driver's seat, smirks.

ALLY (cont'd)
They were right about you. I should
have married someone more like --

FLASH
(sneering)
What are you saying, Ally?

ALLY
I can't take any more.

Flash reaches for her. She flinches. Presses her lips tight.

Ally locks eyes with Bea, in the rear-view mirror. Looks
away. Covers her face with her hair.

Bea drives through the gates. Tries to restrain a smile.

INT. STUDIO 3 - SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Ace, melancholy, rolls the ruby ring, in one hand. He turns
photo album pages with the other.

INSIDE THE PHOTO ALBUM:

- A newspaper cutting of Flash dipping the female fan.
- Flash walks down the hotel corridor toward the camera,
with a line of women at the team's door.
- Ally cutely cuddles a puppy and a BLUE TEDDY BEAR.
- Ally proudly in front of the pink perfection corner with
the PINK TEDDY BEAR on the windowsill.
- Flash and Ally's wedding.
- Newspaper cuttings of Flash and Ally at various
premieres. Bea stands in the background.
- Flash with Bea and the rest of the entourage, at the
bottom of the stairs, in front of the big wardrobe.

A clock ticks. Ace lights a joint. Sucks deeply.

The cat lands on the table, settles on the album, looks up.

ACE
Don't judge. It's medicinal.

Ace puts her on his chest. Rubs his face in her fur. Thinks.
Looks into the cat's face.

ACE (cont'd)
 She'd have liked you.

SERIES OF SHOTS - BETTY CARES FOR DOT (LIVING ROOM)

Dot absently pats the cat, immovable in her chair. Autumn turns to winter out the window. Her grief wastes her away.

-- Dot unfolds a poem, in her delicate writing, from among the items in the shoebox. She reads as time passes by.

DOT (V.O.)
 Your hand will not hand me my
 grandchild. Your hand will never
 stroke my cheek with love...

-- Betty puts the purple blanket around a sobbing Dot.

-- Betty brings Dot tea.

-- Betty looks at photos of Dot with Jackie and herself.

-- Dot is a shell of herself. Her breath is labored.

Betty kisses Dot's forehead and bursts into tears.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Flash, motorcycle visor up, face distant. A Harley RUMBLE. He weaves through traffic. Paparazzi weave after him. He glances over his shoulder.

INT. FLASH'S MANSION - STAIRS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Flash leans over the railing. His face is panic-stricken. His heart races -- boom-boom-boom. Ally is unconscious at the bottom of the stairs.

FLASH
 Aaaallyyyyyy!

Flash's bare feet fly down the stairs.

He stands above Ally, eyes bulging. Blood gushes from her face. She bleeds through her white nightgown.

Her blood spreads on the white marble floor.

He looks down at his BLOOD-SOAKED FEET. He kneels in Ally's blood. Shakes her. Holds her unconscious body to his.

FLASH (cont'd)
Somebody help me!

He looks up. Bea stands at the top of the stairs.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Flash winds down a dark road. Nothing but the headlight and the angry ROAR of his bike.

He turns off the headlight. The moon is full.

The motorbike ROARS as he rides into the dark. Demon riding.

From the corner of his eye --

A BLACK FIGURE, head bowed, at the side of the road.

He jerks his head toward it. No, he's alone.

He focuses his eyes on the road.

Flash shouts, releasing all his grief, his rage.

He sees something again, for an instant.

A BLACK FEATURELESS HEAD beside his face. He races forward.

A LOUD RASPING. Not an animal. Something big, dark.

He sees it now -- a FACELESS BLACK SPIRIT flies beside him.

It REACHES ITS HANDS toward him.

He revs the bike forward.

He's lost it, whatever it was. He's not stopping.

He looks over his shoulder.

Suddenly, they're EVERYWHERE.

BLACK WRAITHS at every side claw at him. The loud rasping twists into creatures, shrieking in ear-splitting pain.

His bike slides, screeches. He's almost lost control.

He rights himself. Looks behind him. Nothing. His face sags. He exhales. *Almost got me.*

He looks ahead -- An EYELESS BLACK FACE right at his face.

The bike skids loudly.

Flash's body flies, flips.

He lands with a sickening thud on the asphalt.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Flash is bruised and beaten, head bandaged, intubated.

Ally's head rests on the hospital bed. The room is choked with flowers. Ally squeezes his hand gently. Sasha enters.

SASHA

The nurse said they gave him some drugs, to bring him out of the coma.

Ally sits up.

ALLY

It's been two weeks. They said he should be dead.

SASHA

He's too much of an asshole to die.

Sasha squeezes Ally's shoulder. Ally is surprised by Bea.

ALLY

Bea, what are you doing here?

Bea's eyes well as she surveys the wreckage of Flash.

Bea lays her hand on a small BABY BUMP.

ALLY (cont'd)

(face pained)

Are you pregnant?

BEA

Yes, just started to show. I was hoping to speak to Flash.

Flash snaps open his BROWN EYES, no longer disguised by green contact lenses. His eyes bulge.

Flash starts to pull out the intubation tube, trying to escape something unseen in the corner of the ceiling.

A SCRATCHING NOISE from the ceiling.

Flash chokes on the tube as Ally and Sasha hold him down.
His eyes are wide, wild.

FACELESS BLACK WRAITHS -- CROUCH on the ceiling --
watching -- SLITHER down the wall then -- JUMP!

ALLY

Nurse!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A heart monitor shows a struggling heartbeat.

Electrodes cover the chest of Dot. She is drained of all
color and propped up in bed.

Jackie and Betty hold each of Dot's hands. Dot looks into
their distraught faces, from Betty to Jackie.

DOT

Hey, I'm going to make it to your
birthday, okay?

Betty crumbles. Dot strokes her hair. Dot gazes at Jackie.

DOT (cont'd)

I will always be there, when you need
me.

Blade leans against the door. Looks at the trinity.

Dot smiles at Blade. She blows him a kiss. He catches it and
holds it to his heart.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Jackie's face is expressionless in the rain. Loud Chinese
funereal wailing. Blade looks ahead.

BLADE

No tears.

Jackie looks up at his father's emotionless face.

BY THE GRAVE: A large framed photo of Dot and a wreath.

Red barrels burn Joss paper.

Betty SNEEZES, allergic to the JOSS STICKS under her nose.

TWO RATS nibble at food offerings.

Around the grave are Dot's Chinese family, and the multitude of people that have made up her family in America.

The Chinese family turn their backs to the coffin.

The Western guests look for cues. They turn their backs.

The coffin is lowered into the ground.

Jackie slowly turns his back on the grave.

Betty, openly weeping, stands beside Jackie.

Blade squeezes Jackie's shoulder. Jackie stares ahead.

Betty's hand reaches for Jackie's hand. He pushes it away.

Jackie turns. Looks down at his mother's grave.

He throws a handful of dirt onto the coffin.

Jackie looks from the coffin to the photo of his mother. He treads slowly to the joyous photo. He takes in her forever silent laugh. He touches her cheek. His face crumples.

Jackie looks at Blade, who is stone.

Taking his cue, Jackie wipes his face.

He buries his softness with his mother.

Betty lingers at the grave. The last few MOURNERS throw dirt onto the coffin as they pass. Betty stands alone.

DOT (V.O.)

Betty. Betty.

Betty looks around. No one.

DOT (V.O.) (cont'd)

Betty. Betty!

Betty inches toward the grave. Peeps over the edge.

Betty sees an empty coffin.

Dot REACHES OUT FROM THE GRAVE.

Dot grabs Betty's ankle. Betty is pulled into the grave, clutching at the surface, screaming. From the distance --

BLADE (O.S.)

Betty, we're leaving!

Betty, back in reality, looks down at the closed coffin, face panicked, breathing hard.

BETTY
Fucketty-fuck!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Flash is up smiling. Ally feeds him Jell-O.

Bea watches on, unseen by the couple.

BEA
You look like a new man. Can we talk?

An awkward moment. Ally's not budging. Bea takes out the photo of Honey, the blonde sex worker.

BEA (cont'd)
Can we talk privately?

Ally's still not budging.

BEA (cont'd)
The police want me to ask if you've seen her since that night?

Flash and Ally darken. Flash shakes his head.

BEA (cont'd)
She came up on charges again and uh, she said someone paid her to approach you. And uh, contrary to her media interview, nothing happened.

Ally buys it completely. Flash pushes his hair back.

FLASH
Whoa.

ALLY
Who would...

Ally looks intently at Flash.

ALLY (cont'd)
I'm sorry I doubted you.

FLASH
No, I'm sorry. I'm telling you Ally, from now on, I'm going to be the best man I can be. I will never leave you.

Bea watches the touching scene. Clenches her jaw.

INT. STUDIO 3 - SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - DAY

Ace (now 53) stands dressed in a jacket, designer T-shirt and jeans. His beard is neatly trimmed. He scrubs up well.

Ace whistles an upbeat '80s tune. It's Dot's song.

He sprays cologne. The room is clean and bright, like Ace. Birthday gifts are on the table next to photos of the cat.

He reads a birthday card. Chuckles. Opens the accompanying present. Felted handcuffs.

ACE
You little minx.

Ace picks up a box. No card. Opens it. It's vintage WHISKEY. Looks at it for a long moment. The cat looks unimpressed.

ACE (cont'd)
Don't look at me like that. I'm not going to drink it.

He puts a condom in his wallet.

ACE (TO CAT)
Tonight's the night. It's Valentine's Day and my birthday.

Ace walks to the mirror. Removes it. Puts the whiskey inside the wall cavity. Pockets a wad of cash.

Ace open the red shoebox to put in the birthday card.

Sees the OLD ENVELOPE. He considers it.

Ace takes the shoebox to the table. Opens it.

INSIDE THE SHOEBOX: Folded papers in a woman's delicate writing, old photos, a pink teddy bear, the old envelope.

Ace pops bubblegum. Smiles. Remembers. Winces.

He opens the OLD ENVELOPE. It's addressed to FLASH JACKSON.

INSIDE THE ENVELOPE:

-- Photo: Betty and Jackie are intertwined. Best pals.

-- Photo: The Female Fan with red jeans poses for a photo outside a hotel door. 'Flash' is tattooed on her lower back.

-- The 'FLASH FEVER' newspaper cutting, with the caption
'Flash kisses unknown woman.'

ACE (TO CAT) (cont'd)
I'm missing something.

EXT. ENTRANCE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The Female Fan stands at the studio door. Hesitates.

She holds an envelope addressed to Flash Jackson with a
'Season's Greetings 2000' stamp. She bends, revealing a
'Flash' LOWER BACK TATTOO. Kisses the envelope.

She slips the envelope under the ripped carpet, hidden for
over twenty years.

INT. SEX ADDICTS ANONYMOUS - MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

A dozen worn out people on foldout chairs, including Flash.

THE GROUP LEADER (50s), has an evangelist's flair.

GROUP LEADER
If we don't deal with our inner
demons they become real. They
terrorize us.

Claps from the audience. Flash nods, taking it in. He flips
a red one-month chip between his fingers.

A JESSICA Rabbit type sits beside Flash. She stirs coffee
slowly. Red nails. Flash watches her stirring, stirring.

GROUP LEADER (O.S.)
We must recognize and not repeat the
relationship patterns of our parents.

Jessica sucks her spoon. Plump red lips. They lock eyes.

INT. FLASH'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ally runs her hand along the cradle. A MUSIC BOX plays 'Bye
Bye Blackbird.' Ally is disheveled, decimated, desperate.

Ally drags her nails down one cheek. Her eyes dart. She
paces the room, paranoid, a phone in the crook of her neck.

FLASH (V.O.)
I was with my sponsor. I'm on my way.

ALLY
 You said that an hour ago! And the
 hour before that!

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Flash gets dressed, the phone in the crook of his neck.
 Jessica lies naked in the bed. Flash is irritated.

FLASH
 Just calm down. I'm almost there.

EXT. FLASH'S MANSION - FRONT GATE - NIGHT

Flash arrives on his motorbike. A supermoon halos the house.
 Fans carry signs: 'ADOPT ME FATHER TRINITY,' etc.
 Flash signs autographs, still on his motorbike, stalling.
 He looks up at the bedroom window as the gate whirs open.
 Flash rides in. Takes off his helmet.
 Ally's visceral crying rises above an ORCHESTRA OF CRICKETS.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Flash showers, taking his time. He rubs soap painfully
 against his skin. Hot water falls hard on his face.

A GUN SHOT.

Flash freezes. Did he hear that right?

BEA (O.S)
 She shot herself!

Flash opens the bathroom door. TWO SECURITY GUARDS run past.
 Tinny MUSIC from the music box plays from above.

EXT. JACKIE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

DOT'S WAKE. Betty and Jackie sit on a low wall.
 CRICKETS CHIRP softly. Jackie cups a BLACK ORIGAMI BIRD.

JACKIE
 She loved the blackbirds you made.
 She loved you, Betty.

Betty sniffs. She settles Dot's purple blanket around them. Betty holds Jackie's hand. He doesn't resist.

A YOUNGER LI JING (30s) approaches.

YOUNGER LI JING
You kids want some Coke?

Betty looks hopefully at Jackie. Jackie stares at his feet. Scratches unconsciously at the L-SHAPED SCAR at his temple.

Li Jing lifts Jackie's chin. Looks at him lovingly.

YOUNGER LI JING (cont'd)
I'm not your mother. But I will
always be there for you. Look.

She hands him a beautifully wrapped red present. He doesn't open it. She opens it for him.

YOUNGER LI JING (cont'd)
Your mother and I were given these by
our mother on our thirteenth
birthday. So today she would have --

REVEAL: Li Jing composes herself. The box holds a phoenix necklace matching that worn by Li Jing -- DOT'S SISTER.

Jackie strokes the PHOENIX NECKLACE. His eyes well.

JACKIE
Thanks, Auntie Li Jing.

The screen door CREAKS opens. Blade comes out.

Li Jing squeezes Jackie's hand. She leaves.

Blade grabs a football from the porch. It's never been used.

BLADE
Come on, son.

He throws it to Jackie, who drops it. Jackie slowly stands.

The purple blanket falls to the dirt.

Jackie walks to the ball.

He throws the ball clumsily.

Blade fumbles but catches it. He throws it back to Jackie.

BLADE (cont'd)
Look quick! Pass!

Jackie smiles. Holds his hands up. Catches it. He's amazed.

BLADE (cont'd)
That's my boy.

INT. STUDIO 3 - SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Ace looks for his shoes. Music plays. It's Dot's '80s song.

ACE
Here puss, puss, puss. Where are you?
Did you take my shoes again?

He bumps his desk. Knocks off a glass of milk. It shatters. Spreads over the floor like blood.

ACE (cont'd)
Bloody cat!

Ace, under his desk, picks up shards of glass. Looks up --

A man's BLOOD-SOAKED FEET.

Ace hits his head. Stands. No one there. He laughs sharply.

Looks at his hands. They're cut deeply.

From behind Ace, as if from the mirror --

SHADOW (O.S.)
What's my name?!

Ace turns, slowly, to see --

His own reflection. He laughs, unbalanced.

A YOUNG WOMAN, BURNED AND DECAYING, flashes in the mirror.

Ace screams.

LATER

Ace sits at his desk. Hands bandaged. Blood seeps through.

ON THE TV: A SHARK SIGHTING.

Ace picks up a magnifying glass. Hands shake. He focuses on -- the Unknown Woman in the 'FLASH FEVER' newspaper cutting. -- the 'Flash' tattoo on the back of the woman in the hotel.

The album is open. The photo of Ally hugging the BLUE teddy bear is beside the photo of the cradle and PINK teddy bear.

In the open shoebox on the table is the PINK TEDDY BEAR.

ON THE TV: An ad for a nanny cam.

Ace stops. Thinks. He examines the pink teddy bear.

Ace rips off the teddy bear's head.

A NANNY CAM! He pulls out the chip.

Ace puts the chip in his laptop.

The glow plays on his face. Ace recoils, horrified.

INSERT - LAPTOP

Bea, in her old police cap, handcuffs Flash to his bed. A TATTOO OF A LION HEAD with a mermaid body is on her foot.

A red bra lands on the bed near RED STILETTOS.

FLASH

I love a woman out of uniform.

Bea turns. A large TATTOO OF A BLACKBIRD covers her lower back, surrounded by florid leaves and curlicues.

BACK TO SCENE

Ace freezesit. Zooms in on the tattoo. Under the tattoo is seen another -- '*Flash.*'

ACE

Is that? Flash!

INT. BONEYARD - NIGHT

Ace walks calmly across the boneyard. The MUSIC box plays.

The WHITE TIN is clasped to his chest.

His wife's wedding and ruby rings are on his fingers. He carries a half-drunk bottle of whiskey.

At his feet are rats. LOTS OF RATS. EVERYWHERE.

EXT. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Smoke pours out of Studio 3. A BABY'S DESPERATE CRIES.

INT. MOVIE THEATER SET - NIGHT

A FIREMAN pushes through the smoke and blazing red curtains. She falls through the open trap door -- to the boneyard -- to the sub-basement --

INT. SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

The face of the Fireman (20s), Asian American, female. Eyes closed. Her eyelids flutter. A BABY'S CRIES. Urgent.

She stumbles to her feet. The smoke clears for an instant.

A mirror. The baby's cries. Fireman takes down the mirror.

She pulls out THE CAT. Tucks the cat into her jacket.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Ace stumbles along the beach, with an almost empty bottle of whiskey. Clouds obscure the moon. An eerie glow in the sky.

A CACOPHONY OF CRICKETS. An unnaturally motionless sea.

YOUTHS (20s) sing a soulful 'Bye Bye Blackbird' by a fire.

Ace stops. Senses someone behind him. Turns. No one.

Ace lays down the purple blanket. He plonks down beside the white tin. He opens the bottle and looks out to sea.

INT. STUDIO 3 - SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

An **OLDER BEA** (50s) descends the ladder. A RED BRAID hangs over her shoulder. Bea nods at Fireman and scans the room.

BEA

It was an electrical fire?

FIREMAN

Detective Travers. Yes. Rats. Ate through the wiring. It happens more than you'd think.

The Fireman looks around. Sees the photo album.

FIREMAN (cont'd)
 There was this cat. Did you hear
 about it? We broke this place apart.
 Sounded just like a crying baby.

Bea sees the open pink teddy bear nanny cam. NO CHIP.

Bea rifles through the SHOEBOX: folded papers, Dot's photos.

The Fireman opens the photo album. In the inside cover is
 written in a child's hand 'Property of Jackie Jackson.'

Bea picks up the wedding photo. Shakes out the broken glass.
 The CHEERS and happiness of a wedding echo quietly.

MEMORY HIT (BEA'S)

Over the shoulder of AN UNINVITED FEMALE GUEST, are Ally's
 parents -- They are WHITE DEMONS.

The guest turns -- It's the younger Bea who morphs into...

BACK TO SCENE

Older Bea recovers. The Fireman leans over to see the photo.

BEA
 This is Flash Jackson.

FIREMAN
 Yeah? I saw him on 'Where Are They
 Now?' They tracked him down.
 Shopping, working at some old studio.

BEA
 I knew him when we were kids. Said
 he'd never forget me... He lost his
 baby, his wife. Then, one night --

INT. FLASH'S MANSION - BATHROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Flash, pale, sucks deeply on a joint, neck-deep in the tub.
 A near-empty bottle of whiskey is on the side of the tub.
 An upbeat '80s tune plays. Dot's song.

Flash takes a swig of whiskey. His wrist is slit lengthwise.

Blood flows freely. He throws the roach out of the bath.

A SCRATCHING NOISE from the ceiling.

FACELESS BLACK WRAITHS -- CROUCH on the ceiling --
 watching -- SLITHER down the wall then -- JUMP!

They PUSH Flash under the surface.

He doesn't struggle. He sinks below the water, pink,
 streaked with red.

His eyes are open as his pain, his life, ebb away.

His heartbeat. Slowing.

The crash of the door being busted up. Bea leans over Flash.

BEA
 Jackie, Jackie, what did you do?!

Bea strips off her shirt. She ties it around Flash's wrist.

Two Security Guards pull him out of the tub. One soundlessly
 shouts into her radio. The other compresses his chest.

Bea gives him mouth-to-mouth.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. STUDIO 3 - SUB-BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Bea, still traumatized, continues.

BEA
 And he just walked out of the
 hospital and disappeared, with
 millions in cash. Just gone without a
 word. For over twenty years.

The Fireman turns on the computer. It slowly starts up.

FIREMAN
 God, so he's down here, literally
living in his past? Jesus.

The computer opens up where it closed. A freeze-frame of
 Flash having sex with Bea.

FIREMAN (cont'd)
 Well call the fire truck!

Bea flinches. The Fireman fast forwards through. Flash and
 Bea leave, Ally calls Flash repeatedly. Starts playing at --

INT. FLASH'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT (BEA'S FLASHBACK)

Ally is wracked with sobs, rocking. She wears the long-sleeved baby-pink silk robe, that trails over her fingers.

She hears the front door open. Leaves the room. Returns.

ALLY

Probably washing some whore off him.

Ally wails. She hugs herself, hitting her back over and over against the wall.

Bea (20s) enters.

Bea's POV: WHITE DEMONS emanate from Ally. Bea walks up to her and grabs Ally's gun from the table as --

ALLY TRANSFORMS INTO THE MEAN GIRL, that pressured Female Fan into the college blow job party.

Bea puts the gun to Mean Girl's chest.

Bea TRANSFORMS INTO THE FEMALE FAN.

FEMALE FAN

(singsong)

No turning back now.

Bea is no longer the Female Fan, her younger self.

Bea shoots the Mean Girl point blank in the chest.

ALLY SINKS, leaving a trail of blood on the wall behind her.

Blood spouts from Ally's mouth onto her white nightgown. A gurgling sound.

Bea wipes her hands and the gun with a disinfectant wipe. Puts the gun in Ally's hand. Neat. Quick. Done. She exits.

BEA (O.S)

She's shot herself!

Bea re-enters. She squats next to Ally.

BEA

I told you. You won't know I'm here.

Bea watches the life in Ally's eyes dim. Bea picks up Ally's wrist, cocks her head, feels for a pulse. Lets it drop.

Bea lets out a huge breath. She cries. Joyful relief.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Ace wakes next to a near-empty whiskey bottle.

Ace unfolds a piece of paper. A poem in the delicate writing of his mother -- Dot. His face crumples. He reads.

ACE

Your little hand will not grasp my
finger in your first breaths of life,
Nor clasp mine as I walk you to your
first day of school.
Your hand will not tremble with your
first kiss,
Or raise a toast to your family or
friends.
Your hand will not hand me my
grandchild.
Your hand will never stroke my cheek
with love.
How I wish to hold your hand.

He swigs the last of the whiskey from the bottle.

Ace's bare feet are next to his piled clothes, bloody bandages and the whiskey bottle.

Ace's FIVE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER stands at the sea's edge. She holds out her hand. 'Bye Bye Blackbird' weaves in and out.

DOT (V.O.)

*Where somebody waits for me,
Sugar is sweet, so is she.*

FIVE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER

(playfully)

Come on Daddy!

Ace stumbles to the sea. A PHOENIX TATTOO is on his back.

Ace falls hard, opening his wounds.

Ace wades into the still sea, nursing the white tin. He's alone and naked, but for his white boxers. He is waist deep.

Ace opens the blood-smeared white tin. His palms bleed.

The clouds fly past the moon, casting shadows over the water. The moon is full, bare. The water glimmers.

A SHARK FIN breaks the water. Ace is oblivious.

The crickets get louder.

Ace eases the ashes into the water. They spread, iridescent. Blood seeps into the water.

Ace looks to his Daughter who transforms before his eyes.

FIVE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER

What's my name?

TWENTY-SIX-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER

What's my name?

Ace sees Dot, briefly.

DOT

Knock twice, Jack, at the door of my grave, and ask for Rosie.

ACE

(to his Daughter)

Your name is Rosie. Rosie Ally Jackson, like your mother.

Ace places the lid on the white tin. Clasps it to his chest. Ace sobs. Ragged keening.

DOT (O.S.)

(singing)

*Make my bed and light the light. I'll
be home late tonight.*

The music fades. Crickets suddenly silent.

Ace is pulled underwater by an invisible force.

HE SURFACES AS FLASH, flailing and fighting for air. He is pulled down.

EXT. SEA SURFACE - NIGHT

REVEAL: Ace flails during his drowning flashbacks to -- his **CHILDHOOD AS JACKIE** and **ADULTHOOD AS ACE**.

INSERT - SERIES OF SHOTS

Ace narrates over flashbacks.

ACE (V.O.)

These moments are years.
I see myself through the eyes of
every woman I touched
and I am repulsed.
And I know that the man I have been
is the man my father was and his
father before that.

(MORE)

ACE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 And that demons, our demons, are
 real, and we pass them on to our
 children and our children's children.
 And they must be exorcised.

-- Jackie looks down at Blade in bed with Dot. He brings the knife down, narrowly missing -- not the pillow, but Bunny.

-- Betty MORPHS. Betty spoofs a sexy pose, turns away, turns back as Female Fan with autographed breasts, then Bea as they have sex. **REVEAL:** Betty, Female Fan and Bea are one.

-- Ally cries, surrounded by baby clothes.

-- Female Fan walks into the room of Players getting blow jobs. Transforms into Betty. Transforms into Rosie (5).

-- BLADE'S FATHER (40s) throws Blade (12) a football. Blade (40s) throws that football to Jackie (12).

-- SHARK'S TEETH flash through the water.

-- White demons emanate from Ally. Bea shoots Ally.

-- Bea (50s) scrambles down the ladder to Ace's sub-basement room. Hurriedly she -- spikes his milk carton with AIR! flavorless alcohol -- removes the white tin from the cupboard -- scratches out the word BABY -- attaches a device to the bottom of the tin -- puts the tin on his table -- presses a remote control. The tin rattles. Ace's feet descend the ladder. Bea hides under the table. A black pulsing figure.

-- Jackie gazes into his crystal ball. He sees --

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

A wrathful Ally and Rosie (now 26) hold Flash under the surface. Flash thrashes for the surface, bleeding profusely.

Flash transforms into Ace. Ally and Rosie smile lovingly, welcoming him home. Ace surrenders, at peace at last.

ACE (V.O.)
 And I know forcing yourself to smile
 is just a trick.
 And we drown in absent tears.

His body sinks into the depths in a pink, moonlit glow.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The white tin floats on the surface, on gentle waves.

Bea (50s) looks out to sea. Picks up Ace's clothes, whisky. She strolls down the empty beach.

No trace of Ace remains.

FADE TO BLACK

OVER BLACK:

DOT (V.O.)
I always see a floating child
Who is calling me!

EXT - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Dot, Ally and Rosie float Ace up from the blackness.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Ace drags himself onto the beach. Coughs up water. He lies back, eyes closed. Whitewash swirls around him.

He presses his bleeding hands together. On his little finger is Ally's huge RUBY RING.

The moon is full on his face. His breath is rasping.

ACE
Fuck destiny.

A shadow leans over him.

Ace's eyes SNAP open. Widen in terror. He punches wildly.

MOMENTS LATER

Bea lies in the shallows. Ally's ruby ring has sliced through her temple. Blood gushes. Her eyes are open. Vacant.

The tinny sound of the music box thinly plays 'Bye Bye Blackbird.' The music winds down to discordantly -- stops.

FADE OUT.