

SOMEWHERE INBETWEEN

"Once Upon A Time In..."

by
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&

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TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. CHICAGO - BAR. NIGHT.

1

As the guitar intro of the 'Bartender' by hed(pe) starts to play, we fade up to the inside of a typically busy Chicago nightspot. A stage at the back of the high-ceilinged room holds the band, and before them is a packed dancefloor.

As the band kick in to their song and the crowd starts jumping, we pick up CHRIS, sitting quietly at the bar, staring at shot glass full of Jack Daniels' in his hand. He closes his eyes and knocks it back, placing the empty glass down with a large cluster of others before him.

PHIL, the beefy and amicable bartender of this place, looks back with a raised eyebrow at the sponge-like alcoholic absorption of Chris.

CHRIS

Another, please.

PHIL

You sure, pal? I mean, damn, you've drunk enough to kill a man by now and you're still standing! I don't want to tempt fate by giving you any more!

CHRIS

(sternly)

I'm fine. And I'm still paying. When I start slurring my words, then you can kick me out of here. Until then...

Chris taps his empty glass on the counter, and with a sigh and a shrug he tops up the shot. Chris nods thanks and holds the glass up again, staring into it as though looking for an answer.

WOMAN (O.S.)

You know, for a thin guy, you sure can pack 'em in!

Chris turns to his left.

A woman in her late twenties, BETTY, is sat a few stools along the bar from Chris, an intrigued smile on her face as she smokes a cigarette.

BETTY

Must be one hell of a woman, get you all messed up like that. I hope she was worth it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS
Something like that.

Betty sidles over - Chris doesn't look like he wants company but tries to be civil at least.

BETTY
What's your name then, handsome?

CHRIS
Chris.

BETTY
Betty Miller. Pleased to meet'cha.
So, what's your story?

CHRIS
My story?

Betty nods her head down at the heap of empty shot glasses, and Chris manages a smile.

BETTY
I figure, a guy drinks that much,
he's got to have one heck of a
story to back it up.

CHRIS
I suppose you're right... Look,
Betty, was it?

BETTY
That's me.

CHRIS
I don't mean to be rude, but I'm
really not looking for company at
the moment, and whenever women
start talking to me in bars, it
never seems to end well, so I-

TWIST (O.S.)
Hey, bartender? Hit me with a
double.

Dressed all in black with a beanie and her yellow curls spilling out from beneath it, and black camouflage paint streaks beneath her eyes, she looks out of breath, as though she's been running. Betty frowns, but Chris just sighs and leans back in his chair, checking his watch.

CHRIS
Twenty-four hours, thirteen
minutes. I'd say you were slipping,
but this time I didn't want to be
found.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY

Who's this?

TWIST

The only person he should be
talking to right now. Beat it, Mrs.
Robinson!

Twist flicks her fingers out at Betty, indicating that she should leave. With a last look at Chris and a shrug, she gets up, takes her drink and walks off screen.

Chris turns slowly back to Twist as the vampire knocks back her shot gratefully, smacking her lips.

TWIST (cont'd)

Ah! Hit me with your rhythm stick!
(to Phil)
Two more, please. This could be a
long conversation.

Twist collects two more shots and settles down. Chris takes in her new look with a raised eyebrow.

CHRIS

So why the outfit? Have you been
watching 'Alias' again?

TWIST

I'm in stealth mode, aren't I!

CHRIS

(beat)
Why are you here?

TWIST

Why are any of us here? What's life
all about?
(grins)
If you want me to sing old Monty
Python songs at you, I can. I still
have all your old videos.

CHRIS

(patiently)
Twist...

TWIST

Well! You go leaving me a 'Dear
Twist' letter and then split,
running off into the night with
your guilty conscience like you're
the fricken Crow or something! Come
on! Of course I was going to go
looking for you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TWIST(cont'd)

Almost lost your trail a few times, too, you'll have to teach me how you did all that.

CHRIS

Twist, I don't want any company. I'm flattered that you came looking, but I mean what I said. I... I need some time to think about things.

Twist takes one of her shots and shoves the other in front of Chris. Chris throws a tired look up at her, but she taps the top of his glass and nods at him.

TWIST

So start talking. I want to know how you and Julie first met. I want to know why you feel you've got to give up on all our hard work, and I want to know why in the name of Almighty Barney The Dinosaur you think you've got any right at all to just ditch me and Danyael, go disappearing into the night like the Littlest damn Hobo, and expect us to just be okay with that?

Twist is pretty pissed - this isn't lost on Chris, who nods solemnly and knocks his shot back along with Twist.

CHRIS

Did you ever stop and think about why you do what you do?

TWIST

Sometimes. We all do.

CHRIS

I haven't. Not for a long time. Until tonight. And then all the other times I've stopped to think about it came back to me.

TWIST

This isn't going to turn into a 'I'm Spider-Man no more!' speech, is it?

CHRIS

Okay then. Julie. Let's go back twelve years. Chicago's Cook County hospital, August 1992. I'd been working there a few years on a forged transfer from England, and she was a fresh faced med student.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

As Twist makes the Wayne's World style flashback sequence motions, Chris continues.

CHRIS (cont'd)
And then, once upon a time in the
E.R, there was a girl...

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF TEASER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

2 EXT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - MORNING 2

Snow gently cascades down. An AMBULANCE comes skidding up to the hospital entrance, sirens blaring.

3 INT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - RECEPTION 3

TWO PARAMEDICS burst through the doors, pushing a gurney, and on the gurney is a stab victim. DR. SANCHEZ sees them and walks and talks with the PARAMEDICS.

DR. SANCHEZ
What happened?

PARAMEDIC #1
Stab-victim. Gang-fight.

Sanchez checks the victims vitals - he's lost a lot of blood but is stable for now.

DR. SANCHEZ
How long was he prone for?

PARAMEDIC #2
Ten minutes. Got the 911 soon as he got stabbed. His girlfriend wanted to ride in the ambulance, but...

DR. SANCHEZ
I know, Chicago Policy. Get him to the E.R, stat.

The paramedics and Sanchez glide towards the E.R. Chris walks past them, reading a chart and dressed in full doctor's garb - white coat, stethoscope and scrubs. He walks to reception and slots the chart into the trays on the desktop. SUE looks up at him from her typing.

SUE
Tough day, huh?

Chris gives her a look, and Sue laughs.

SUE
I forgot, we're in Paradise City.

She hands Chris another file. He flicks through it.

CHRIS
If this is Paradise City, I'd hate to see what Hell's like.

Both laugh, Sue a lot more than Chris.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUE
So... any plans for later?

Chris looks up, and she flashes him a million-dollar smile. He smirks, but shakes his head.

CHRIS
We talked about this.

SUE
Yeah...
(leans in)
... but maybe we can talk about it again.
(beat)
Look, if it's the employee relationship thing. I'm sure no one would mind!

CHRIS
I wish it were that simple.

SUE
Oh, come on, Chris. It's not like you'll turn into a monster if you allow yourself one night of happiness, is it?

CHRIS
Good point...
(beat)
... but I really can't.

SUE
(pouts)
Why not?

CHRIS
(without looking at her)
Because, my dear, in my world, the work never ends.

Chris walks off, taking the chart and the file with him. Sue looks after him, still pouting.

4 INT. HALLWAY - NEXT 4

Chris walks on, when with a BEEP, his pager goes off. He takes a look - it reads 'EMG 245.'

With a concerned look, he picks up speed and hurtles down the hallway.

5 EXT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - TWILIGHT 5

Two THUGS are banging on the hospital doors.

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CONTINUED:

THUG #1

Hey, open up, man! Open up!

Chris and Sanchez walk out to meet them.

DR. SANCHEZ

Alright, alright... what's up, guys?

Without warning, Thug #1 HEADBUTTS Sanchez, who spirals to the floor, blood gushing from his broken nose. Thug #1 storms forward, but Chris gets in his way.

CHRIS

Cool it. Before I call the cops.

Thug #1 looks at Thug #2, and laughs. He turns back around, all serious, and PUNCHES Chris hard in the face, but Chris shakes the blow off.

Thug #2 KNEES him in the gut, and Chris doubles over in pain. As he falls, both Thugs start laying into Chris with all they've got.

6 INT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - RECEPTION

6

Sue hears the commotion and looks out to the front doors. From this angle, we can see Sanchez lying on the ground, clutching his nose, and Chris doubled up as the two Thugs carry on kicking him.

Her face drops as she registers what's happening.

SUE

Hey! Somebody! Security! Help them!

People stop to watch, horrified, but no one goes to help, not even Sue.

7 EXT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

7

The Thugs continue their assault, kicking the hell out of Chris. He's bleeding from several parts of his body, including a nasty cut by his mouth.

Thug #1 lifts up his boot and makes to stamp on Chris' head, but with lightning speed Chris reaches up and grabs his boot. With a heave, he throws it backward, sending Thug #1 flying to the concrete.

Chris spins to his feet as Thug #1 hastily gets up. Thug #2 looks a little shaken by this, and Chris stares them down, smirking.

CHRIS

Normally, it takes two to dance,
but here we have three.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS(cont'd)

Well, you know what they say...
 (wipes blood from mouth)
 Two's company - but three's a crowd.

The thugs exchange a look, then they turn back to Chris, who holds out his hands.

CHRIS (cont'd)

(grins)
 How about it, boys? Shall we dance?

Thug #1 runs forward at Chris, who grabs his arm and spins him round, sending him flying with a SMACK into the side of the ambulance in the bay.

Thug #1 slumps to the ground, out cold as Chris and Thug #2 trade punches. After a few blows, Chris is coming out on top, and grabs Thug #2 by the neck. With a sweep of his right foot, Chris sends Thug #2 crashing spine-first to the ground.

Thug #2 quickly gets up, dazed, grabs Thug #1, and burns rubber out of there like Speedy Gonzales.

Chris calmly dusts himself off and turns to face the crowd inside, who stare at him for a spell, and quickly scarper. All except Sue, who keeps staring.

8

INT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - ANOTHER HALLWAY

8

Chris walks along, tenderly pressing a finger to the cut on his lip as Sue breaks from the desk and jogs up.

SUE

What was that?

CHRIS

Same old story, just two Boosters looking to bully their way into my E.R. and grab something for their next fix.

SUE

Not that, I mean all that Bruce Lee stuff you just pulled out there!

CHRIS

(beat)
 Let's call that 'making a difference.'

Chris walks around the corner towards a supply cabinet, leaving Sue standing in the corridor.

9

INT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - STAFFROOM

9

Chris walks in, dabbing at his split lip with a roll of bandage. He takes his scrub top off but doesn't notice that a girl, APRIL, is sitting in the corner. She has orange hair, blue eyes, and a great smile.

APRIL

Alright, a floor show!

Surprised, Chris turns to face her.

APRIL (cont'd)

Not that I object or anything, but I'm kinda curious as to the nature of this little strip tease of yours... I mean, I trust that your intentions are honourable, but just in case...

CHRIS

(smirks)

Do you not understand the concept of a staff room? There's a clue in the name as to who's normally supposed to be in here!

April smiles back - the kind of smile that always gets just what it wants.

CHRIS (cont'd)

Why are you here, anyway?
(pulling a t-shirt on)
Shouldn't they be examining you?

APRIL

Probably, but you know Chicago. Most people don't know their ass from their elbow. And besides - they cancelled it.

CHRIS

Why?

APRIL

Budget cuts.

Chris stares at her for a long spell before April cracks and breaks into laughter. Chris joins in.

APRIL (cont'd)

I am so messing with you!

CHRIS

Yes, I'm afraid the laughter clued me in on that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

April stands, walks over to Chris and wraps her arms round his neck. He looks a little less comfortable.

CHRIS (cont'd)
So how are you feeling?

April kisses him, but he pulls away.

CHRIS (cont'd)
April, I asked you a question.

APRIL
(pouts; leans back)
Twenty twenty, doc.

She turns her back to Chris, who senses something is up.

CHRIS
April?

APRIL
(sighs)
I'm just fine. It's all of you
tight-ass doctors who are the
problem round this place!

April sits back down, staring at the window. Chris smiles, obviously used to her behaviour by now, as he hangs his coat inside his locker door.

CHRIS
Alright then, here, let me show you
a magic trick. At this present
moment, I'm a doctor, and on duty,
and apparently one of those 'tight-
asses' as you so succinctly put it.
But when I close this door..

He pushes the locker closed, and it shuts with a 'click.'

CHRIS (cont'd)
I am magically transformed into..
dun dun daah! An off-duty doctor.
(checks watch)
For the next four hours, in fact.
So there's no need for false
pretences.

April grins, stands and walks back over to him. This time, he takes her arms and wraps them round himself. They stare deep into each other's eyes for a long beat, and she leans in to kiss him, when:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JULIE (O.S.)
 (entering staff room)
 Okay, yeah, I'll see you in five,
 Bernice, then we can- oh, sorry...

April and Chris look back towards the door.

Looking ten years younger than when we last saw her, JULIE is dressed in the plain blue scrubs of a med student and looking a little embarrassed to have interrupted things.

JULIE (cont'd)
 Um, hi. Sorry, I didn't mean to-

APRIL
 It's cool.
 (pecks Chris on cheek)
 I'll see you later, handsome.
 (whispers; smirk)
 And bring the white coat again..

Chris nods with a grin. They kiss again, and with a nod to Julie, April leaves. Julie slams the door shut behind her and folds her arms over her chest, seething.

JULIE
 What the hell was that?

CHRIS
 That, my dear Julie, was what I like to call 'goodbye.' A very pleasant one at that.

JULIE
 She's a patient, Chris!

CHRIS
 Not my patient.

JULIE
 Is this a joke to you? Some kind of a game? Fall for a terminal patient and see if they'll fall for you too?

CHRIS
 Of course it-
 (beat; realises what she said)
 ... did you say 'terminal'?

Julie sighs - she thought he knew. Chris leans in.

CHRIS (cont'd)
 Julie? What is it? Tell me!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JULIE
Chris, she has... she has cancer.
It's inoperable.

Chris reacts in horror.

JULIE (cont'd)
She doesn't have long left.

Without a word, Chris hurries to the door and races outside.
Julie lets him go, watching after him.

JULIE (cont'd)
I'm sorry...

10 EXT. GENERAL HOSPITAL. MORNING.

10

April is walking away, lighting a cigarette. Chris exits the
hospital in the background and jogs to catch up to her.

CHRIS
Hey! April!

She turns and sees him approach and waits, smiling.

APRIL
Couldn't wait to see me again?

CHRIS
Why didn't you tell me?

A long beat as April works out that he knows about her
condition. She sighs, looking everywhere but at him.

APRIL
I didn't want you to worry. I just
wanted to have a normal
relationship with someone for a
change, without being treated like
I was made of china or something..
you know? Didn't you ever get that?

CHRIS
April, I'm a doctor.

APRIL
Exactly.

She stares at him.

CHRIS
I could have helped.

APRIL
(angrily)
How? How could you help, Chris?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

APRIL(cont'd)

Explain to me, how you could help me? You know, maybe the reason I liked you is because you weren't a doctor for me, did you ever think of that? That I wanted to be around you because you were the one thing in my life that didn't remind me of the fact that I'm going to die soon? The only thing that's any good right now?

Chris is lost for words as April finishes her cigarette and flicks it away. There are tears in her eyes.

APRIL (cont'd)

Well, it's been swell Chris - but I think we better end this.
(quietly)
Before I get hurt.

April storms off, and Chris can only watch her go.

11 INT. MOTEL ROOM - TWILIGHT 11

Chris sits in the middle of the room, holding a bottle of Jack Daniels, sipping from it before suddenly hurling it across the room, where it SMASHES on the wall.

Chris leans back, head in his hands, before a thought strikes him, and he stands. A triumphant smile starts to spread across his face.

12 INT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL WARD. 12

15 INSERT OVER - TWO MONTHS LATER 15

April, much paler and weaker looking, lies in a bed, with a DOCTOR and NURSE either side of her. The heart monitor beeps feebly, and the doctor sighs as he reads her chart.

DOCTOR

It's just a mater of time now. Damn shame, too, pretty girl like that..

The doctor hands the chart to the nurse, who makes a note of April's details, and draws the curtains round her bed as the two of them leave her.

After a few moments, another shadow appears behind the curtain, and Chris pulls them aside to step up to the bed. He leans down to her and tenderly brushes some hair from her face, and kisses her once on the forehead.

CHRIS

Don't worry. It'll all be better soon, I promise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Chris puts his hand forward and places it on her stomach.

His hand illuminates, and the entire room quickly starts to fill with white energy. His hand begins to smoulder, but Chris fights on through the pain.

An unholy HOWL starts to pick up, and wind starts to fly across the room. Chris struggles to keep his balance.

The door opens and Julie walks in, staring down at some files. She hears the strange noise straight away.

From behind the curtain round April's bed, there is a flare of bright white light, which quickly dies down.

She races over to the bed and throws the curtains back. Chris is stood over April, his hand over her stomach. She's no different, and he looks on the verge of tears.

JULIE

What was that?

Startled, Chris turns round and tries to act innocent.

CHRIS

What was what? I... I didn't hear anything.

Julie walks over to the bed and looks at first April, then Chris. He's staring down at her, his face full of sadness. Julie twigs that something screwy is going on around here.

JULIE

There was a bright white light, and some kind of screaming wind... what were you doing with April?

CHRIS

How come you're here this late?

JULIE

Don't change the subject, what did you do?

CHRIS

(long beat)

Not enough...

Chris turns and starts to walk away, but Julie cuts him off. She glares up at him, arms folded.

CHRIS (cont'd)

What are you accusing me of?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JULIE

I don't know, yet. What can I
accuse you of?

CHRIS

I don't have time for this.

JULIE

Well, you better make time! I don't
expect Hospital Policy is very keen
on whatever you just did to her.

CHRIS

Don't concern yourself with this.
It's beyond your comprehension.

JULIE

(indignant)

How about I take it up before the
Review Board?

Chris just shakes his head and walks away.

JULIE (cont'd)

(calls out)

Well then, I'll *make* it within my
comprehension!

Julie watches Chris leave, then turns back to April. She
looks no different, and with a glance at her chart, Julie
sees that April is still at Death's door.

She turns and glances back after Chris, but he's long gone.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

13 INT. BAR. NIGHT.

13

Back with Chris and Twist. The place is just as full, but several empty beer bottles have gathered around the two of them by now. Twist is still wearing her cammo paint but has smudged it a lot, while Chris looks like he is finally starting to loosen up with all the drinking.

TWIST

Wow. So what happened with that girl in the end?

CHRIS

She died a few days later. I tried to ask the guardian spirits to take away the cancer, but they...

(beat)

It's not important. What matters is that they rejected her. She was damaged goods. That little encounter did set Julie on the path that led her to yesterday, however.

TWIST

What, you mean how she started off as Little Miss Medical and then started reading books dustier than yours and diagnosing your hexed mojo thingy?

CHRIS

I explained to her what I'd tried to do some years later, and the interest she showed led me to introduce her to our world a little more. I left her to it after that, looks like she was a good student in my absence.

TWIST

No arguments here! So what then?

CHRIS

Not long after that, I moved out of Chicago and left it all behind. I hid out up in Canada for a while, in a cave up in one of the mountain ranges, meditating and trying to work out why I felt so useless all of a sudden. And then I started to think about the last time I felt like that.

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CONTINUED:

TWIST
Which was when?

CHRIS
(thoughtful)
Once upon a time in Austria, a little valley town surrounded by mountains called Zell Am See. It was 1975, and I was on the trail of a very territorial fire-breathing creature...

DISSOLVE TO:

14 EXT. AUSTRIA - ZELL AM SEE - STREET. DAY. 14

INSERT OVER - Zell Am See, Austria - May 1975.

Chris walks into frame, sporting longer hair and a particularly offensive 70's style moustache. He's dressed in a long, brown leather coat and is wearing a pair of large shades, a backpack slung over one shoulder as he walks down the main street of the pleasant valley town.

CHRIS (V.O.)
The demon in question was a three-hundred year old yllib that had just woken up from a long hibernation period, to find that the fields and ranges it once 'owned' were now covered with human settlements, and it wasn't too happy about this at all. I'd headed out there at the request of a friend to solve the problem. I was in the area anyway, looking for these rare flowers that grew up in the mountains.

TWIST (V.O.)
Flowers? Boy, you really bought into the Seventies, didn't you...

CHRIS (V.O.)
(a little peeved)
It was an ingredient in a spell I was making up!

We watch as Chris retrieves a sheet of paper from his jacket pocket, checking off the house numbers as he walks down the street, stopping outside a house with a large, garishly-painted Cadillac parked outside.

He smirks at the car and steps up to the door, knocking twice on it. After a beat, Chris' friend ROLF opens the door, grins and beckons Chris inside.

15 INT. ROLF'S HOUSE. DAY.

15

The house itself is a cleanly-furnished town house, plenty of potted plants, landscape paintings and open windows with little balcony plantboxes outside. Rolf and Chris shake hands warmly.

ROLF

Glad you could make it, Chris. We were beginning to worry about what we were going to do!

CHRIS

I'll always help out a friend in need, Rolf. What can you tell me?

Rolf motions to a table and clears away some dinner plates so Chris can lay his bag down. Rolf unfurls a rambler's map of the local mountain range on the table.

ROLF

Well, here we are. This is the town.

Rolf's fingers point out the landmarks.

ROLF (cont'd)

The demon's attacks have been in the hotels and chalets around this area, and also out here, near the cable car station. It's a fair bet to say his base is somewhere round here.

Chris nods, pushing his shades up into his hair and using a red pen to make marks on the map.

CHRIS

What information can you give me about the creature itself? I don't have any of my books on me at the moment, I had to travel light.

ROLF

Yllibs, uh, kind of like a low-level fire elemental. Can create small fires with low-power magic spells, but if it has a fire burning to start with, it can augment that and create one much bigger. You put a few of them together and they could probably start a forest fire, but individually they're less dangerous.

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CONTINUED:

CHRIS

So why is this one causing so much damage?

ROLF

We're not sure, we were hoping you could find out! Do you have any weapons?

CHRIS

A few magic items, but customs would have picked up me trying to board a plane with a big sword tucked into my suitcase!

ROLF

(chuckles)

Not a problem, my friend.

Rolf walks over to a large dresser against one wall and opens it to reveal several rows of weapons - swords, axes and maces, glinting in the sunlight. Chris smiles.

16 EXT. ZELL AM SEE - HILLTOP. DAY.

16

Chris is hiking up into the mountain ranges, sword slung over his back, pausing to mop his brow and scan the area. There is a large guest house off to the right, and as we watch, the shadow of a cable car passes overhead.

Chris looks up as it passes by overhead, and sees a small child inside waving down at him. Grinning, he waves back.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I headed up into the hills to start looking around, but it didn't take me long to find what I was looking for.

Chris spots a small house about half a mile away, the unmistakable glow of flames rippling across its roof.

17 EXT. ZELL AM SEE - HOUSE. DAY.

17

Chris races into scene and up towards the house, a white-painted house with wooden fascias that are crackling in the flames. A panicked looking WOMAN is screaming back towards the house as Chris reaches her.

CHRIS

(in German)

Hey, hey! What's happened? Is anyone still inside?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOMAN
 (in German)
 My husband, he's, he's still in
 there, with this... this thing! Help
 him, please!

Chris nods and races up to the front door of the house.

In a slow-mo action shot, Chris heroically leaps through the air and JUMP KICKS the door open, disappearing into the flames that lick out at him.

18

INT. BURNING HOUSE. DAY.

18

Chris scans the inside of the house, thick with smoke and flames, listening out for sounds of movement through the crack of burning timbers.

He hears a YELL and sounds of a struggle, and draws his sword, darting off to the left.

Jinking left and right to avoid the flames as he heads for the staircase, quickly dashing up it and onto the first floor landing.

He sees the YLLIB throttling the woman outside's husband, the black-skinned monster dropping the dead man as Chris approaches.

The two opponents square off against each other as flames lick the wooden floorboards all around them. The yllib looks like a bulky humanoid that'd been charbroiled - it's blackened skin resembling a layer of charcoal. It growls and takes a step towards Chris.

YLLIB
 They must all die, all of them!

CHRIS
 Just for living? Is that such a
 crime?

YLLIB
 Once, all of this land was mine. I
 slept for two hundred years, and
 when I awoke, they were everywhere!
 Like vermin! Bacteria!

The yllib slams his fist angrily into the wall opposite him, punching a hole clean through it. Chris gulps as he starts to realise how powerful this enemy is.

CHRIS (V.O.)
 Now, I don't think you've ever
 taken on a yllib before...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWIST (V.O.)

Yeah, I did, that forest a few weeks back, remember? When we went looking for that tree with the sap you needed for the healing spell, and then this mad monster thing started burning all the trees down like it wanted to signal to the aliens or something!

CHRIS (V.O.)

So you remember how resilient and how hot they are to touch?

TWIST (V.O.)

Still got the scars to prove it.

CHRIS (V.O.)

So have I...

The yllib PUNCHES Chris, and he flies backwards through the air, arms flailing as he SMASHES through one of the roof pillars, dislodging a section of burning timber.

As Chris frantically rolls to put out the flames, the yllib marches over to him, grabs him by the coat and THROWS him out of the landing window.

19 EXT. ZELL AM SEE - HOUSE. DAY.

19

Chris lands in a heap at the woman's feet, and she screams in distress. Above us, we see the yllib stand in the shattered window frame, bellowing defiantly.

YLLIB

You dare to encroach on my home, to settle and breed like insects on my precious land! You will all burn!

His hands IGNITE, erupting into flames, and the yllib gathers two fireballs in each hand and launches them out of the house towards Chris, who gathers up the woman and dives out of the way as the fireballs SLAM into the ground where they were standing.

The yllib leaps out of the house and lands on the hilltop, racing off towards a cluster of buildings just over the next rise. Chris scrambles to his feet and starts off after it, not fast enough to keep up.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I wasn't fast enough that day. I'd been doing what I do for almost two years, and no innocents had ever died because of me. Until that day. Until I took on that thing.

20

EXT. ZELL AM SEE - CABLE CAR STATION. DAY.

20

We're looking into a creaky cable car station - the large central building where the cars slow down to pick up and drop off, and then the cables and gantries running down the mountainside and into the town below, as a family including the boy Chris waved to step out of one of the brightly coloured cable cars.

Growling angrily, the yllib charges down the hillside towards the station, gathering more fire in its hands.

The families see the creature and scream in terror, trying to stampede away but finding that the only way in or out of the central building leads back to the monster.

It bursts into the station with a guttural ROAR, and starts hurling gobs of flame left and right. The panicked men, women and children inside the station yell in fear and start to crowd towards the back of the building.

The young boy gazes up as a shadow falls over him. The yllib glares down at the boy, sneering.

YLLIB

One of the harmless little ones...
pity they do not stay that way
long! Better to end your life...

The yllib raises his hand and creates a fresh handful of fire, holding it up over the boy. In the background, the boy's mother SCREAMS at him to move, but he's frozen.

The yllib grins, but before it can move, Chris SLAMS into it from behind, knocking it to the floor. The boy looks down as Chris picks himself up.

CHRIS

Go! *Schnell, schnell!*

The boy scampers over to his mother, and Chris assumes a fighting stance as the beast stands again, sword ready.

YLLIB

(furious)
You... worm!! You defy me? You defend
these... these animals?

CHRIS

(defiant)
If it's a choice between that, and
letting you murder them all, then
yes, you're damn right I'll defend
them!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The monster swings for Chris, but he has the measure of it now and ducks the blow, slicing at its exposed belly with his sword.

The yllib HOWLS, the sword cutting through its thick skin. Chris urgently motions for the trapped families to get the heck out of the station while the creature is distracted, and they do so as Chris takes a punch and staggers back.

YLLIB

When I am done stripping the flesh
from your bones, I will burn
everything in my path down this
mountain, until I reach the
village, and then I will roast
every soul here alive! The night
shall be filled with the roar of
flames and the torment of the
dying!

It ROARS again as the flames grow in intensity all around. Chris is on the floor, looking up at the towering form of the yllib.

CHRIS

I really need to find out why you
ancient monsters have such a talent
for hyperbole..

He LUNGES with his sword and slides it cleanly into the yllib's neck, and it chokes, stuttering backwards, its hands still ablaze and dribbling flame everywhere it staggers. Chris hears a loud PING and looks round.

The thick high tension cables holding the cable cars up are starting to melt in the intense heat, snapping apart one strand at a time. The metallic ringing sound of the loose strands flailing around echoes outside.

A look of horror crosses his face as he looks out along the cables' path.

A packed car is still on its way up the mountain, rocking violently back and forth from the breaking cables.

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

And that was when I realised my
mistake.

Chris pants a boot in the beast's chest and drags his sword free from its neck, before wrapping a bunch of the thick cables in his hand and somersaulting through the air over the creature, looping the cable round its neck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

With a heave, he pushes the yllib off the access platform for the cars, and leaves it suspended in mid-air with the cable knotted round its neck.

As it chokes and scrabbles at the cables, Chris grits his teeth and pushes his sword right into its heart. The monster ROARS one last time, and then falls still.

The flames rippling across the yllib's body run up and along the cable, the damage there already done.

Chris races to the edge of the central building, looking out towards the car in trouble further along.

CHRIS (V.O.) (cont'd)
I'd gotten the creature too close
to the people I was trying to
protect...

As we watch, and with terrified screams from its passengers, the cables holding the car in the air SNAP, and the car DROPS like a stone towards the rocky mountainside.

He tears his eyes away at the last second, shouting out in frustration as we hear the CRASH and EXPLOSION of the car hitting the ground.

CHRIS (V.O.) (cont'd)
... and twenty-four people died.

Chris starts to sob, sinking to his knees despite the inferno of the flaming cable car station all around him.

21 INT. BAR. NIGHT.

21

We're close on Chris as a single tear rolls down his cheek.

CHRIS
Sometimes, I dream I can hear them
screaming out for help as the car
falls... every time, I try to save
them, and every time I fail.

Twist is silent for a long beat. She's never heard that story before, and she's moved by how emotional Chris is.

TWIST
Chris, think about how many people
would have died if you hadn't
stopped that thing. It'd have
burned the town down, hundreds'd be
dead. It was just bad luck that
those people were in that car when
it went down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS

I've tried to tell myself that, I really have. But it just got harder and harder to justify it to myself. For almost seven years, I wandered from place to place. I wouldn't take on any offers of help because I was petrified of causing innocent deaths again.

Chris stares solemnly down into his glass. Twist takes on a determined look, and she knocks back another shot.

TWIST

Okay, fine. That was a sucky story, no arguments here. But remember how you finally got your groove back?

Chris looks up, confused, and Twist grins at him.

TWIST (cont'd)

See, I know this story. Once upon a time in Tokyo, 1986. Remember?

CHRIS

(smiles)

How could I forget...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

22 EXT. TOKYO STREET - DUSK 22

INSERT OVER - Tokyo, Japan - 1986

The City is buzzing tonight. Pedestrians crowd the busy streets, as we pan along to rest outside a beaten-up looking old bar.

Two Yakuza bodyguards stand outside, dressed smartly in black suits and scanning the streets. A black limo rolls up to the curb, and the guards step up to it as it stops. As the door opens, we cut to:

23 INT. BEAT-DOWN BAR - NEXT 23

At a corner table sits WOO. He's an unassuming man in his early forties, surrounded by the same two bodyguards as he takes sips from a tiny teacup. In front of him sits a silver briefcase.

Across from Woo sits KITANA. He's a much more menacing figure, thirty-two years old and housing a certain intensity in his eyes.

He puts his Glock handgun on the table respectfully, and motions to Woo, who nods, putting a sharp dagger with a dragon emblazoned into the metal onto the table.

All of Kitana and Woo's conversation is in subtitled Japanese.

KITANA
(bows head)
Good evening, Mr. Woo.

WOO
(nods a greeting)
Good evening to you.

KITANA
Nice briefcase.

WOO
Yes, it is.

Beat. Woo sips his tea as Kitana shifts impatiently.

KITANA
Why did you call me here? You know
I hate the smell of this part of
town.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOO
We need to talk, Mr. Kitana.

KITANA
Couldn't we talk over the phone?
(eyes briefcase)
So what is in the briefcase?

WOO
The truth, Mr. Kitana!

KITANA
About what?

Kitana starts to reach for the briefcase, captivated.

WOO
Matters that don't concern you.

Woo snatches the knife up from the table, and with lightning speed STABS it down through Kitana's hand, impaling it to the glass tabletop. Kitana grimaces with the pain, but Woo just leans calmly forward.

WOO
Don't get too close to the truth,
Mr. Kitana. It is unwise.

One of Woo's bodyguards places a hand on his arm, and Woo nods back at him, taking his attention off Kitana.

KITANA
(through gritted teeth)
I'm afraid... I was never... very wise!

Kitana snatches his pistol up with his free hand, and in one sweeping movement GUNS DOWN both of Woo's bodyguards. They clatter to the floor, and Woo throws a shocked look at Kitana as he calmly aims his gun at Woo's forehead.

WOO
You betray me? I will have you
hunted down and fed to my dogs!

KITANA
(wry smile)
I haven't betrayed you yet...

WOO
(coldly)
Et tu, Kitana?

Kitana's grin gets a little broader, before he FIRES. Woo is killed instantly, thrown backwards with the force of the bullet to land between his two dead guards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Kitana looks down at his impaled hand, and with a grimace he WRENCHES the dagger free. He howls in pain and throws the dagger away in disgust, examining his wounded hand.

A thought strikes him, and he kneels to retrieve the dagger. Looking up and down it, he smiles as he realises it's actually worth something, and deftly slips it into his pocket before tearing a strip from the tablecloth and wrapping it tightly around his hand. He turns to leave.

Eyes shut, blood running down his head as Kitana's footsteps start to head away. Woo's eyes suddenly FLICK OPEN, this time heavily bloodshot.

Walking away from us, he is almost at the door when:

WOO (O.S.) (cont'd)
Mr. Kitana?

Kitana freezes, and slowly turns around, a look of disbelief on his face.

Woo stands, smiling as he buttons up his suit jacket and smooths it out, vampire features now on display. His two bodyguards also rise, not too happy about being shot.

WOO (cont'd)
It's never that simple.

24 EXT. TOKYO STREET - TWILIGHT

24

We're back on the street outside the bar. All is quiet for a moment, before Kitana SMASHES through the window, arms flailing before he hits the deck with a crunch.

People scream and hustle out of the way as broken glass spills out in all directions, and Kitana, dazed, tries to pick himself up as Woo and his vampire bodyguards step through the bar's entrance.

Woo grins down at Kitana, blinking in disbelief, before grabbing him by his hair and dragging him up into the air. Despite his small size, Woo easily lifts Kitana off his feet, Kitana yelling in pain and trying to break Woo's iron grip on his hair.

WOO
The Beast will reign again, Mr.
Kitana! You were foolish to believe
you could stop it, and even more
foolish to think you could stop me!

Woo throws Kitana into the air, and he lands on top of the black limo, denting its roof. Kitana groans, groggy with pain, and tries to roll off the roof as Woo approaches, chuckling to himself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Somebody is watching the fracas from across the street, all we can see is a pair of black boots as panicked citizens race past us, away from the bar. The figure then whistles at Woo to get his attention.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Three against one? That hardly seems fair. Do you need any reinforcements?

In Chris' right hand, he's holding a lit match. In his left, a canister of gasoline.

Woo and his bodyguards suddenly look panicked.

We see Chris at last, beard thankfully neatly trimmed, and a wry grin on his face as he drops the match in the canister of gasoline, and throws it forward.

The can BURSTS into flames in mid-air, and lands right in front of Woo and his bodyguards. They throw their arms up, but the flames spill over them, and within moments the three screaming vampires slump, dead, to the floor.

Watching as they burn, Chris' hand reaches into frame to help him up. Kitana grins and takes the hand.

Chris helps Kitana off the limo roof and onto his feet, and Kitana starts to straighten his clothes and hair, the epitome of professionalism.

KITANA

I am fine now. Thank you.

CHRIS

(tongue in cheek)

Not a problem, I could see you had everything under control.

Kitana stares at Chris as Chris kneels down to inspect the remains of the three vampires, carefully scooping up a handful of Woo's ashes.

KITANA

Who are you? And what... what were those things?

CHRIS

For the first answer, I'm a friend.

(beat)

Well, actually... I'm part vampire. But those miscreants were *all* vampire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KITANA

I have heard the stories. I have just never seen it with my own eyes before now... Are you like them?

CHRIS

Not exactly. See them?
 (points to vampires)
 Evil. And now dead.
 (points to himself)
 Not evil. And still going strong.

KITANA

This... this doesn't make much sense.

CHRIS

Yes, I do hear that a lot.

Chris looks off camera as we hear the sounds of approaching police sirens, before turning back to Kitana.

CHRIS (cont'd)

Shall we have a wander? I think we have a mutual problem that we can help each other with, and I'd also rather not have to explain what just happened to the local police!

Kitana smirks and turns to the limo, yanking the door open with some difficulty thanks to the crushed roof.

25 INT. LIMO (MOVING). TWILIGHT.

25

Several police cars whizz past us, sirens wailing. Chris watches them go as Kitana drives, his eyes studying his new acquaintance carefully.

KITANA

So let me make sure I understand this... you're a vampire, but half?

CHRIS

A bit more than just half, but yes, that's the short version of it.
 (grins)
 Do you think I got short-changed?

Kitana grins, sensing that he can trust Chris.

KITANA

What brings you to Tokyo?

CHRIS

In a word, trouble. In two words, igni reptilicus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

That registers with Kitana, who stares at Chris before suddenly realising who he is.

KITANA

Mr. Chris?

CHRIS

(smirks; nods)

Took you long enough! Christopher Berkeley, at your service, your chapter boss Mr. Tanazaki called me out here to help you with your reptile problem. You must be Kitana Agamuchi.

He extends his hand. Kitana nods, shakes.

CHRIS (cont'd)

Good to meet you at last. So, I hear that you're actually part of a Yakuza spin-off group?

KITANA

Yes. We are the Tokyo chapter of "The Shadow," a society dedicated to maintaining the peace of this city.

Kitana pulls the car to a stop at the opposite end of the street to a burning building. A fire engine howls past us, and a crowd has gathered outside the building.

KITANA (cont'd)

I used to be a committed Yakuza, but then "The Shadow" contacted me and told me that forces within the Yakuza hierarchy were planning to raise a dangerous mythological creature as part of their bid for control of this city. They enlisted me as a mole in the organisation.

Visible through the limo's cracked windscreen, firemen race out of the fire truck, grabbing their hoses as they try to contain the fire. A handful of police officers are keeping the crowd back.

KITANA (cont'd)

I learned about demon involvement, right the way up to the highest ranks of the Yakuza. Not everyone approved, Boss Tanaka in particular fought against it.

CHRIS

What happened to him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KITANA

He was killed. Two holes in the neck. Understand that at the time, with no real evidence, I believed it to be a simple Yakuza death. Top-level Yakuza hitmen use a drill as a symbol of their kills.

CHRIS

When did you find out conclusively about the demonic involvement?

Outside in the street, the fire ERUPTS as another explosion wracks the building. The firemen are sent scattering by an almighty blast of fire. Both men inside the car pause as they take in the scene.

KITANA

Not a few minutes ago, when I saw that Woo had the face of a devil. They did not die like men.

CHRIS

No, they certainly don't! They do die, fortunately, as you saw. I think it's time I started showing you and your colleagues how to fight back against these creatures. Now, I think firstly we should go and meet-

A loud ROAR sounds outside, and Chris pauses.

CHRIS (cont'd)

What was that?

Kitana is gazing over to the burning building.

KITANA

We may already be too late...

26 EXT. TOKYO - BURNING BUILDING. NIGHT.

26

We're looking up at the burning building from street level, as the remaining firemen scramble back out of the way of the flames.

The crowd around the fire start to yell and shove each other out of the way as the police try to move them back, but everyone stops and starts to point up towards the roof as a tall, black figure appears in the flames.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It stands there for a few moments before a huge pair of wings FLIP out from its back, and there are several screams from the crowd as the creature steps out to the edge of the roof and then out into space, slowly starting to descend to street level.

Yelling, screaming and pointing up at the descending creature, the crowd start to run away, followed by the terrified looking police and firemen.

Chris and Kitana jump out of the car, Chris drawing his sword and looking across to Kitana, whose face is graven.

CHRIS

What on Earth is that thing? Isn't that a-

KITANA

It's a Jun Mao... the Fire Demon.

We're looking up from street level again, much closer now as the demon lowers itself gracefully down to land lightly on its feet. It's a tall, thin, jet black humanoid with scaly skin and a long, reptilian head. Its long, leathery wings stretch out behind it as its golden eyes scan the crowd around it. Little ripples of flame dance across its skin, and after a beat it throws its head back and LAUGHS, a cross between a roar and a full-throated belly laugh that just completes the picture.

CHRIS

(resigned)

Well, *this* can't be good...

The demon takes a step forward, a nervous circle of police officers before it, guns raised. The demon's eyes narrow as it scans them, before a shouted order from one officer has them all FIRING at the monster, their bullets pinging off the Jun Mao's thick scaly hide.

The officers run out of ammo, still edging backwards as the Jun Mao takes another step forward, then with what seems to be a grin, it rears back and BREATHES FIRE out at them.

The police scream as several officers are burnt to a crisp where they stand, others running away in flames. The nearby firemen start spraying the police and the demon with water, but to no avail.

The crowd has dispersed by now, and the fire crews are starting to run as the Jun Mao charges over, slamming into the fire truck and rocking it on its wheels.

The demon reaches out and grabs hold of one of the firemen, lifting him off his feet and into the air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The FIREMAN screams, both in fear and from the red-hot touch of the demon.

FIREMAN

Please! I have a family!

With a grunt, the Jun Mao SNAPS the fireman's neck and throws him off screen.

Chris and Kitana dive to the side as the dead fireman crashes into the windscreen of the limo like a rag doll. Chris stands, looks at the fireman and sighs.

CHRIS

Poor bugger...

Kitana grits his teeth and reaches for his pistol, but then remembers something and draws the ornate dagger from his pocket. Chris' eyes go wide as he sees it.

CHRIS (cont'd)

Is that a Takeshii dagger?

KITANA

(looks at dagger)

I don't know. Woo attacked me with it in the restaurant.

CHRIS

(grins)

Good old vampires, they always plan ahead! That's a Takeshii dagger you're holding, Kitana, it's the only thing that can kill one of those demons. Woo must have kept one handy as a back up plan, in case his new pet got a little too rowdy for him...

The Jun Mao demon is shoving the fire truck onto its side when it spots Kitana and the dagger. ROARING at the two men, it leaps into the air, using its wings to cover the distance in a single bound, preparing to roast Chris and Kitana from the air.

Chris shoves Kitana out of the way, both of them narrowly avoiding the flames that ignite the battered limo.

Chris is first up, and he looks up as the Jun Mao lands with a THUD a few feet away. Chris steps carefully forward, sword ready as the demon GROWLS at him.

CHRIS (cont'd)

Good job I like my steaks well done!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Chris LEAPS forward, but the demon is too fast and SWATS him out of the air. Chris flies backwards and THWACKS into the side of the fire truck.

Kitana is next up, trying a stab with the dagger but the Jun Mao knocks it out of his hand, and then hits him with a ferocious backhand that sends Kitana through the air, into and straight through the wall of a nearby building.

Chris slowly gets to his feet, shaking the cobwebs clear, and stares at the Jun Mao. It stares right back at him, the Mexican stand-off lasting a few moments before the Jun Mao smiles, jumps into the air, and with wings flapping flies out of sight. Chris shakes his head.

CHRIS (cont'd)
Priceless. Bloody priceless.

Chris runs forward, scooping up the abandoned Takeshii dagger and running out of frame after the Jun Mao.

27 EXT. TOKYO SKYLINE - TWILIGHT 27

Its mighty wings flapping, the Jun Mao flies through the sky. Hanging in the air, it stares down at the bright lights of the Carnival below. A slight smile crosses its features.

28 EXT. FINAL TOKYO STREET - TWILIGHT 28

The most colourful, and outlandish Carnival ever is in progress, with firecrackers popping as model dragons prance down the street, flanked on both sides by crowds of cheering citizens.

With a ROAR, the Jun Mao lands in the middle of the street, but the crowd clap, believing him to be a Carnival attraction. The Jun Mao cocks its head to one side, not understanding why they're not afraid and running away!

Chris burns round the corner, racing for the carnival.

The Jun Mao approaches a small JAPANESE GIRL, who is cheering the demon on and waving a sparkler. The demon reaches one huge black claw out towards the girl, who starts to look a little frightened, and the Jun Mao starts to grin, before:

SMACK! Chris jump-kicks the Jun Mao so hard that it is sent sprawling the other way. Chris turns to the crowd.

CHRIS
Get out of here! Quickly!
Definitely not part of the show!

The crowd continue to clap, and Chris sighs, shakes his head and turns to face the Jun Mao, picking itself up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS (cont'd)
Now then, I believe we had some
business to attend to!

The Jun Mao whips round to face him, ROARS and darts forward, claw lashing out. It's too fast for Chris, and the blow gashes him across the chest.

He staggers backwards, managing a tidy backflip as the Jun Mao tries to sweep his legs out from under him.

Chris turns and PUNCHES the Jun Mao, but as his hand hits the demon's superheated scales, there is a HISS and Chris leaps back, clutching his smoking hand with a yelp.

The Jun Mao chuckles as it sizes up its foe. Chris rubs his injured hand, and then slices out with his sword. It SHATTERS as it hits the demon, who laughs again and KICKS Chris in the chest, sending him rolling to the floor.

Chris picks himself up, and draws the dagger, causing the Jun Mao to GROWL at him. Chris grins.

CHRIS (cont'd)
This ought to do the trick...

Chris lunges forward, and the Jun Mao grabs for his hand, but Chris dodges the swipe. The Jun Mao lunges for Chris' neck, but Chris KICKS him away.

CHRIS (cont'd)
Come on, is that all you've got?

The Jun Mao inhales, and Chris' eyes go wide.

CHRIS (cont'd)
Apparently not...

The Jun Mao BREATHES FIRE out towards Chris. Chris leaps out of the way, the blast igniting one of the abandoned carnival floats behind him in a burst of firecrackers.

Chris lands on his feet, and quick as a flash turns and THROWS the dagger towards the Jun Mao.

It glides towards the Jun Mao, but at the last moment the demon casually knocks it away.

The Jun Mao looks back round to see Chris, standing right before him, his arm reaching out behind him. Chris has snatched the dagger out of the air, and is poised to plunge it into the demon's chest.

CHRIS (cont'd)
Now *that* was clumsy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

With a SLAM, Chris stakes the dagger down hard into the demon's chest, right into its heart. The Jun Mao HOWLS in pain, and Chris holds on grimly, gritting his teeth as his hand starts to smoke and blister from the heat of the demon's skin, before he lets go of the red-hot knife at last, letting the dead demon sink to the floor.

Chris stands over it for a few moments before the frightened crowds start to emerge from their hiding places, and within moments, Chris is surrounded by a crowd of grateful, cheering carnivalgoers, and the music and buzz of the carnival soon starts up again, everyone carefully avoiding the steaming body of the Jun Mao.

We pull back as a smiling Chris accepts the thanks of the people around him, shaking hands warmly.

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

I'd just planned to go in there as an advisor, let other people do the work in case my involvement got anyone killed, but once I saw the Jun Mao, my instincts kicked in and I just ran to help out. Once I'd finished it off, and the people around me were thanking me for saving them, well... it all just started to make sense.

29 INT. BAR. NIGHT.

29

Chris looks a little happier, and Twist smiles proudly at him. She nudges him, and he breaks into a chuckle.

CHRIS

Alright, so... that was a good moment.

TWIST

And don't forget the other bit! You know, the present off the grateful townsfolk of downtown Tokyo?

30 EXT. TOKYO - STREET. NIGHT.

30

Standing on the steps of a temple in the city centre, Chris bows respectfully as a bearded old PRIEST holds out a sword in its scabbard to him.

A crowd of respectfully quiet onlookers watch as Chris takes the katana from the Priest, before unsheathing it and slicing it a few times through the air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's the master-crafted katana we've seen Chris using before now, and with a broad grin and another bow, he puts the sword back away. The gathered crowd cheer Chris on, and he bows to them as well.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Bloody nice sword, too!

31 INT. BAR. NIGHT.

31

Twist knocks back another shot.

CHRIS
Alright, I see where this is going.

TWIST
Good. Now let me remind you of my motivation. Maybe it'll make you see that running away is just going to lead to another cycle of hiding in the wilderness, and that's no good for anybody.

Chris looks blankly at her.

TWIST (cont'd)
Oh, come on, you must remember the second mission you ever took me out on? We'd crossed swords with Malkuth, but a few days later I went back into my shell as I started remembering more about what I'd just been through in... well, you know, down there. You took me out to track down a kidnapper that'd snatched this rich family's daughter... remember? Once upon a time in California.

BLACK OUT:**END OF ACT THREE**

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

32 INT. CALIFORNIA - MOTEL. AFTERNOON.

32

INSERT OVER - California.

Twist is sitting on the edge of one of the two single beds in the plain motel room, wrapped up in a thick blanket. Her unwashed, straggly hair spills down across her shoulders as she hunches up, staring blankly at a chirpy cartoon on the TV in front of her.

She looks like she's been up drinking for a week, but she's only been out of her private room in Hell for a few weeks, and it's taking some time to readjust.

The curtains are drawn and gaffa taped to the wall against the sunlight, but Twist still shuffles back nervously as Chris opens the door to the room and heads inside.

CHRIS

Ah, you're up. Goodness, you look rough! Bad dreams again?

TWIST

Yeah, pretty much. Sorry chief, I don't think I'm gonna be much use for anything today. I just want to sit here, phase out and watch TV till my head stops going 'yaaargh!'

Twist manages a weak smile, her eyes lighting up as Chris deposits a jar full of blood on the drawer next to the TV.

TWIST (cont'd)

Is that for me?

CHRIS

As long as you promise to do one thing for me.

TWIST

What?

CHRIS

I'm going out on a job this evening, and I want you to come with me.

TWIST

W-what? No! Didn't you hear me mention the nightmares? Or the screaming?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWIST(cont'd)

Listen, I know I'm getting better,
and kicking Malkuth's ass last week
was cool and all, but-

CHRIS

Twist, after that last mission,
you've just been sat around,
waiting for me while I go out and
work. I know you've been through
Hell, literally, and I'm sure your
relapse is all part of the healing
process, but you need to start
occupying yourself again. The
quickest way to speed up your
recovery process is to just get out
there and start doing things again.

(grins)

Trust me, I'm a doctor.

TWIST

I... I don't know if I'm ready...

CHRIS

Don't be silly, of course you are.
You've been through an experience
that would have reduced most people
to gibbering wrecks with nothing
more than a slight case of Prozac
Nation chic. I think you'll be
fine.

Twist's eyes can't stop flicking back to the jar of blood,
and Chris reaches over to it, grabs a disposable plastic cup
and pours out a cupful. Twist reaches out grateful hands for
it and takes a deep gulp.

CHRIS (cont'd)

It's only pig's blood, but it'll do
the trick. Now then. This is a very
simple mission. I've been dealing
with this local wizard family to
get hold of a supply of rare
potions, but it seems that one of
the family head's daughters has
gone missing, and they fear that
she's been kidnapped.

TWIST

So what, we find the kid and you
get your potion-y stuff?

CHRIS

That's the plan, yes. It should be
pretty straightforward, so I'd like
you to come along. You did a great
job last time out, and I think
this'll help you a great deal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Twist considers this for a few moments, sipping the blood again before nodding.

TWIST
 Alright. I'll do it.

CHRIS
 (smiles)
 Excellent.

33 EXT. CALIFORNIA - STREET. NIGHT.

33

It's the evening now, and Chris and Twist are standing across the street from a large, mansion-like family home. Three luxury cars are parked on the drive, sealed behind high gates. Similar houses line the road. The duo are dressed in blacks to blend into the background.

TWIST
 So what are we waiting for?

CHRIS
 Rattray, the father, is setting off tonight to go and deliver the ransom money, and we're going to follow him!

TWIST
 Sounds simple... too simple. What's gonna go wrong?

CHRIS
 In theory, nothing, this is a relatively simple operation. We follow Rattray, and when he makes the drop for the cash, we spring to action and rescue the girl.

Twist opens her mouth to reply, but Chris holds up a finger for quiet as the gates outside the house slide open, and a black Jaguar pulls off the drive and heads down the street.

Twist glances across at Chris as he gets to his feet, gathering up his katana and backpack.

TWIST
 (incredulous)
 We're going on foot? He's driving a fricken Jaguar! What are we gonna do, *fly* all the way there?

CHRIS
 Don't worry, we're taking a shortcut.

34

EXT. CAR PARK. NIGHT.

34

The Jaguar rolls into view on a deserted car park next to a closed supermarket, with one other car in view parked beneath a broken street lamp.

As the car stops, RATTRAY steps out, a tall, immaculately dressed man with long, dark dreadlocks. He takes a large metal briefcase out of the car and starts to pace slowly over to the second parked car.

We're closer to the second parked car, a black sports model, as the gruff-looking PENZON steps out of it, watching Rattray approach.

We pull back a little to pick up a row of bottle banks, and then with a muffled WHOOMP there is an explosion of smoke, and Chris and a startled looking Twist appear. She leans against the bottle bank, dazed.

TWIST

What the... what did you just do?

CHRIS

Transport spell. Low level stuff, really, but it does the trick.

Chris looks out towards Rattray and Penzon, and puts a finger to his lips to keep Twist quiet.

The business-like Rattray tries not to show his nerves as he strides up to Penzon, who is smoking nonchalantly.

PENZON

Glad you could make it, I was gettin' kinda lonely, and I know that the girls in this part o' town make for some pretty good company...

RATTRAY

(coldly)
Where's my daughter?

Penzon motions back towards the car.

PENZON

Relax, suit, she's safe.

A second, smaller man steps out from the back of it with ELENA, Rattray's daughter, held tightly. Rattray gasps at the sight of her, but before she can speak she is bundled back into the car.

RATTRAY

I swear, if you've so much as scratched her, I'll-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PENZON

Hey, would I do that? I'm a
businessman, same as you.

RATTRAY

You're nothing like me, scum. I
brought you the money, now give me
back my daughter!

PENZON

Sure thing. Why don't you toss it
on over here?

RATTRAY

Elena first. I want to know she's
safe before I hand this over.

PENZON

(shrugs)
It's your funeral.

Penzon calmly draws a handgun and FIRES at the shocked Rattray, who crumples to the floor. There is a SCREAM from inside the car as Penzon scoops the briefcase up out of Rattray's fingers, badly wounded but not dead. He glares up at Penzon, who throws a mock salute.

PENZON (cont'd)

Thanks.

Twist starts to dash out, but Chris holds her back. She throws a look back, struggling to be let go.

TWIST

What are you doing? Let me go!

CHRIS

Twist, no! We can't move till he's
gone, he could kill the girl!

TWIST

(frantic)
She's already dead if we let them
go!

Twist wrenches herself free of Chris' grip and jumps out from behind the bottle banks, starting to run towards Penzon, who is almost back at his car.

PENZON

What the-

Penzon throws his cigarette away and starts FIRING his gun at Twist, who keeps running for him despite two of his bullets clipping her as she runs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Penzon dives into the car and starts the engine as we see Chris reach the fallen Rattray in the background.

Chris sits the wheezing demon up, hand held to a bloody patch on his shirt.

CHRIS
Are you alright?

RATTRAY
I'm... still alive... if that's what
you... mean...

CHRIS
Here, let me take care of this.

Chris closes his eyes and holds his hand over the bullet wound. There is a soft glow of yellow light from beneath his hands, and Rattray gasps.

Chris yanks his hand back and then opens his palm, holding it out to Rattray. A blood-stained bullet lies there, which Chris drops into Rattray's hand.

Racing as fast as she can, Twist closes right up to Penzon's sports car, and LEAPS for it as it starts to smoke its tires and pull away.

Twist grabs onto its rear bumper, managing to haul herself up onto its roof as it tears away, out of the car park and off screen, to the tune of 'Korosu' by Boris.

35 EXT. CALIFORNIA - STREET. NIGHT. 35

Hanging on for dear life, Twist rears back and PUNCHES down on the roof of the car, leaving a fist-shaped dent.

36 INT. SPORTS CAR. NIGHT. 36

Penzon ducks as Twist punches the roof again, frantically reloading his gun and trying to drive at the same time. Elena is struggling in the back, kicking out at the second man trying to restrain her.

ELENA
You killed him! You killed my
father!

PENZON
Shaddap, damn it!

Penzon SLAPS her hard and she slumps backward in the seat, before raising his gun to the roof and FIRING.

37 EXT. CALIFORNIA - STREET. NIGHT.

37

Twist throws herself to the edge of the roof as several bullets tear up through the thin roof of the speeding car, twisting herself round and preparing to swing down through the passenger's window. Cars honk and swerve out of the way of the wayward roadster all around.

38 INT. SPORTS CAR. NIGHT.

38

Twist suddenly SMASHES feet first into the car, and as Penzon yells and the car swerves violently to the side, Twist lashes out and PUNCHES the second kidnapper, knocking him out cold.

Penzon recovers and aims his gun at her. A beat as he grins, then he FIRES again, emptying the rest of the clip into her.

Twist slumps back in the seat, and the terrified Elena moans as she sees her hope of a rescue slip away. Penzon takes the wheel again, but as he glances across at Twist a moment later, he double takes.

Twist sits slowly up, staring down at the bullet holes in her outfit. Her head looks up, and she glares at Penzon.

TWIST

(icily)

That... wasn't... nice... at all.

SMACK! Her fist streaks out, catching Penzon across the jaw and knocking him for six.

Twist lunges across and grabs the wheel of the car, bringing it to a stop in moments with a screech of tires and several more blares of angry car horns.

The car comes to a gentle stop at the side of the main road. Catching her breath, she shakes off her game face and turns round to the dazed Elena in the back seat.

TWIST (cont'd)

Hey. You okay?

ELENA

Y-yes... yes, I'm okay. Who are you?

TWIST

(beat; grins)

I'm Twist. I guess I'm one of the good guys now.

39 EXT. CALIFORNIA - STREET. NIGHT.

39

We're looking down on the car, which has skidded to a halt to the side of the road, as Twist gets out, helping Elena out too as Rattray's Jaguar pulls into frame, Chris leaping out of the car to make sure the girls are okay.

TWIST (V.O.)

That was a big night for me, you know. I don't think you ever realised.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I know it was the first time in a long time you'd helped anyone besides yourself, that's for sure... I suppose I didn't really get chance to think about it much after the event.

TWIST (V.O.)

The Malkuth thing was just following your lead. That was the first time I used my own initiative.

40 INT. BAR. NIGHT.

40

Back with Chris and Twist in the bar, Twist looking thoughtfully into her shot glass.

TWIST

It was... different. It was like, for the first time since I became a vampire, I cared about somebody other than myself. And moreover, I realised that I wanted to save that girl.

Chris looks across at her as she knocks the shot back.

CHRIS

I was just trying to get you out of the endless hotel rooms I kept leaving you in!

TWIST

(serious)

You saved me. You gave me another chance at the world, and it took that night for me to see that I could make things different for myself.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWIST(cont'd)

You gave me the skills and opportunities to make a difference, to turn back the things I've done in my past, and every time we do that, every time we save another life or help someone out, then that's one more good point notched up. Both for me, and for things in general. And that, my friend, can only be A Good Thing.

CHRIS

(smiling)

I had no idea you felt that strongly.

TWIST

Ever since then. I woke up the next day, and it was like the whole world felt different. I never want to go back to that room down there again, and if I can start to earn some karma for myself up here by doing good, then that's what I'm going to do.

Twist looks across at Chris, whose face has softened. She smirks back at him.

CHRIS

That's the most sentimental thing I've ever heard you say.

TWIST

Yeah, well, don't expect me to make a habit of it. Just trying to show you that you haven't got to feel like you're carrying the entire weight of the world on your shoulders all the time. Most of it, yeah, but-

JULIE (O.S.)

Not any more, at least...

Chris' head snaps round.

JULIE looks pale, and with a bandage still on her neck wound, but she smiles warmly at Chris. Twist takes this as her cue to sneak off, leaving them to it.

CHRIS

Julie, I... I mean, I'm...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JULIE

Ssh. I didn't drag myself out of my nice warm bed to come here and listen to you try and invent new words to tell me how sorry you are. Okay?

Chris grins and nods as Julie signals to the barman to get her a drink, raising an eyebrow at the volume of empty bottles and glasses in front of Chris.

CHRIS

Vampire's metabolism, human's taste for alcohol.

JULIE

Ah...

CHRIS

Julie, can I just say one thing?

JULIE

Only if it doesn't include the word 'sorry.'

CHRIS

You mean an awful lot to me, you know. I didn't realise it until I saw you in that bed, and the nurse told me you were dying.

JULIE

Yeah, thanks for that, by the way.

CHRIS

You... know?

JULIE

Wasn't hard to figure out. One minute, evil magical poison is turning my insides into mush, next minute I'm healed but you're nowhere to be found? I mean, come on, did you expect me not to work it out?

CHRIS

(chuckles)

I guess not.

Julie places a hand on Chris' arm.

JULIE

So in a nutshell, I forgive you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CHRIS

You do?

JULIE

Well... I mean, I am pretty mad at you for the way you rewarded my hard work in trying to cure you with a chunk out my neck and all, but it's a little pointless to stay mad at you, because I know none of it was your fault. You know, with the whole 'unlocked primal rage' thing.

CHRIS

I was afraid I'd lost you. I was looking down on you in that bed, and I just had to do something about it...

JULIE

I'm glad you did.

Julie smiles up at him, and Chris smiles back for a long beat. Twist clears her throat behind them.

TWIST

Sorry to break this up, chief, but we'd better get going. We've got to meet that art collector guy in San Fran tomorrow, and I don't fancy trying to fly with a million rays of sunlight chasing me up and down the plane! Not after last time.

CHRIS

(to Julie)

Julie, I'm afraid it looks like we've got to go.

JULIE

Yeah, I know, You go, save the world or do whatever it is you're doing these days.

TWIST

Yeah, saving the world? That'd be me. He's just along for the ride.

CHRIS

I'll be in touch, Julie.

JULIE

Don't leave it another three years this time, okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Twist heads off and Chris stands, and after a beat he and Julie hug. Without another word, he walks away, leaving their hands locked together for a moment before he walks away off camera. Julie watches him go and sighs, settling back down at the bar.

PHIL
So what'll it be?

JULIE
(grins)
Something for the pain.

PHIL
Comin' right up.

We pull back and up towards the ceiling, still looking down on Julie as the club settles into the night's routine.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF SHOW