

LOUD BLOOD

by

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BLACK

Sounds of running car interior.

MAG (V.O.)

Nobody knows when a story begins.
Not when you're in it. When it's
over, you can pick a point and
say, "It all began when...", but
you'll probably choose wrong.
So you end up with all these bits
and pieces you forgot at the
beginning that you have to fill
in along the way.

EXT. L.A. CEMETARY - DAY (PRESENT)

A small group of mourners sit in folding chairs beneath a tent shading them from the California sun. These profoundly normal people shift uncomfortably in their seats and steal embarrassed glances at their wristwatches as the MINISTER stoically reads through the funeral service.

MINISTER

Even though one short step
separates us from this thing
called death, when it actually
occurs, we discover that death
is not what we thought. Death
is not the destructive force we
feared it to be. Instead, we will
discover death to have been con-
quered already by our Lord who
experienced it for Himself, and
then came back to tell us that
we should not fear death because
He had made preparations for us.

LARK looks up from her program to see MAG hanging back, away from the mourners, leaning against a headstone. She smiles slightly, gracefully, and bows her head again.

LATER

As the mourners quickly drift away from graveside behind her, Lark walks over to Mag. She embraces him.

LARK

Mag. I'm glad you came.

MAG

I wish it would've been some
other way, but... it's good to
see you, Lark.

LARK

It's just "Julia" now. I left "Lark" behind. I guess that's true more than ever, with Crispin gone.

MAG

I'm so sorry, Lar-Julia. I haven't been around-

LARK

You know that's not true, Mag. We haven't been around. And Crispin-- He left "the life" behind and tried to be normal. But normal life had nothing for him.

MAG

The people who go to Heaven are the ones who never belonged in this world.

Lark bows her head, trying to stifle a giggle.

MAG

Christ. Yeah, I still say shit like that sometimes. What I mean is, Crispin didn't have any good illusions to believe in anymore.

Lark walks over to a bench and sits. Mag joins her.

LARK

I don't want to think about that now. I don't want to think about that night and what... what happened and... what it did to us. I won't allow myself to be defined by...

MAG

Is that what killed Crispin?

LARK

Crispin killed Crispin, Mag. Let's not have any illusions about that.

MAG

I'm sorry, I-

LARK

I've already forgiven him. Hmnh. How could I not?

MAG

Have you been to see the old man?

LARK

God, I'd almost forgotten we called him that. No, I haven't been back there since we were last together. I don't think I ever will go back.

MAG

It's not—it can't be the same.

LARK

No. Crispin went recently. Last month. Maybe that was the only goodbye he could make. His light was fading.

MAG

He loved you, Lark.

LARK

Of course he did. And I, him.

Lark gazes back across the cemetery.

Two WORKERS hurriedly disassemble the tent from the funeral service.

LARK

And I love you, too, Mag. Don't let this eat you up. Don't go see the old man. That way... lies death.

INT. MAG'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

TITLE OVER:

Three Years Ago

Credits roll over a montage of Mag, Tam, Crispin and Lark getting ready to go out for a night at the club.

Mag's apartment is Spartan: a single mattress lays on the floor in a corner, a black and white TV sits on an orange crate, cigarette butts spill out of stolen ashtrays.

Mag checks himself out in an unframed mirror leaning against one wall: Mag is early-mid twenties, gaunt and haunted, hair dyed black. His goth apparel is tastefully or economically restrained, plain and functional.

INT. TAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

She would never admit to it, but TAM's rent is paid by her father, enabling her to have a much nicer place than she could manage from her own means. Nevertheless, she has made it her own: Prints and posters adorn the walls, a collection of baby-doll parts hang from strings and wires suspended from the ceiling.

Tam does her prep at an ornate, antique vanity, applying black eyeliner and deep red lip-liner.

Noticing that "Ed Wood" is playing on a TV reflected in the mirror, Tam winces in disapproval and grabs a remote next to her; she changes the station and smiles as "The Hunger" appears on the screen, David Bowie and Catherine Deneuve in duet.

Tam is cruelly beautiful, defiance radiates from her taut body and withering stare. Her hair is deep red, her clothing a brazen mismatch of Victorian ruffle and bondage punk.

INT. LARK AND CRISPIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lark and CRISPIN are two of a kind: platinum blondes with androgynous, elfin features, they could be brother and sister or lovers—we never learn which.

They complement each other and finish each other's movements. Lark extends a safety pin to Crispin before he even discovers the small hole in his jacket. They dress with discrete elegance, emphasizing the fantasy of their costumes.

Their apartment reflects the same character and aspirations in its decoration—depictions of mythical creatures kindly, scary, and strange are represented in equal measure finding homes on shelves amongst abundant books. Books are everywhere, strewn about every surface available in an otherwise immaculate space.

Satisfied with themselves, Crispin and Lark turn off the light and go out into the night, as do Tam and Mag—

EXT. L.A. CITY STREET

Mag marches down the sidewalk, then turns down into a subway entrance.

INT. SUBWAY STATION

Mag gets onto a subway car and sits coolly, ignoring the sniggers of a group of terribly plain COLLEGE GIRLS.

The subway pulls into another station.

The college girls go to exit, but divide their group and back away as the doors slide open to reveal Tam, who moves contemptuously through their small throng as they shoot dirty looks her way, exiting the car.

One of the girls tosses back a

CO-ED

Bitch.

Tam jerks towards her and hisses through bared teeth.

The girls hurry out and away from the car.

Tam sits opposite Mag.

They stare at each other with no show of outward emotion.

Suddenly, they both leap to their feet and embrace, kissing passionately.

EXT. L.A. CITY STREET OUTSIDE STIGMATA - NIGHT

Mag and Tam goth-strut up the downtown street towards the club.

A well-preserved Lincoln Continental chugs up beside them.

BJ rolls down the window and calls out.

BJ is a 20-something classic rocker with no aspirations of modernity; he's an unapologetic anachronism with long, unkempt hair tumbling over a faded jean jacket and a Marlboro dangling from the side of his mouth.

BJ

Damn, Mag! You still slummin' on the subway and kickin' down the heel-toe? When're you gonna get yourself a car? L.A. is for driving.

MAG

Yeah, all right, BJ. I'll see you at closing time when you find a parking space for that behemoth.

BJ laughs and waves as he pulls away.

TAM

I don't understand how you can continue to associate with that throwback.

MAG

BJ's all right. I've known him for a long time.

TAM

Fuck. I've known my parents since birth. You don't see me talking to them.

MAG

Well—shall we be seen?

TAM

Let's fucking shine, lover.

INT. STIGMATA - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The nightclub is crowded and active.

Mag and Tam move through the dense crowd, irritably weaving through whirling dervishes on the dancefloor,

making their way to a table where Lark and Crispin are waiting.

They sit.

TAM

Christ, is there a fucking convention in town? I've got to remember to renew my fucking subscription.

MAG

How'd you even manage the table?

LARK

We got here early. All this is just in the last forty minutes or so.

CRISPIN

Anyone who's anyone we don't know is here.

TAM

We'll have to fucking dance in shifts or lose the table.

CRISPIN

I'm ready to dance. I don't give a damn.

LARK

Rebel.

A WAITRESS comes by their table and leans in.

WAITRESS

Anyone need anything?

MAG

One round here and we'll give it up, all right?

(to the waitress)

Two white russians, double well bourbon and a vodka-cran.

TAM

No vodka-cran. Shiraz instead.

MAG

Thanks.

The waitress departs.

TAM

I'm in the mood for something a little deeper red.

Tam winks at Mag and smiles at him knowingly.

Mag returns the smile before suddenly wincing, his smile turning to a grimace.

Tam follows his gaze to see DANNY MOSQUERA approaching their table.

Danny is a plump and past-his-prime scenester caked in make-up. His thinning hair points out at all angles with the aid on generous application of product. His manner is unctuous and gossipy.

MAG

By the prickling of my thumbs...

TAM

Fuck. And of course we just ordered.

DANNY

Hello, Magwitch, Tammy.

MAG

Crispin, Lark, you remember Danny Mosquera.

LARK

(with diffusing
warmth)

Yes. Hi, Danny.

DANNY

Well, hello and hello. The
gang's all here, then. Your
whole graveside groupies thing.

Lark and Crispin give a little start and exchange a quick
glance.

Tam flashes a defensive glare at Danny.

DANNY

Don't look so surprised,
Tam. Five million people and
everybody's in everyone else's
fucking business.

MAG

Exactly what I was just thinking.

DANNY

Naughty thing. I assume we
now that Jimmy DeSade has the
cape.

TAM

What cape?

Danny raises an eyebrow in a learing "you know" look at Tam.

TAM

(suddenly
interested)

What? Fucking what?

MAG

It's a bullshit rumor that's been
drifting on the fringes for years.
It's just bullshit.

DANNY

Au contraire, ma chere.

EXT. TWILIGHT NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

ROB K, a muscular black man with multiple piercings, sits
on a stool outside the nightclub entrance, taking cover
charges and checking IDs on a short line of Goths and
college club kids.

Across the parking lot, Rob K sees Jimmy DeSade pull the cape out from the trunk of the Gristle Twins' Buick and present it to the rapturous pleasure of a PLUMP MEXICAN in a cream-colored suit.

(The Twins hang nearby, smoking and pinching the asses of passing co-eds).

DANNY (V.O.)

Rob K, doorman at Twilight? He saw DeSade flashing it to a Mexican businessman out of the trunk of the Gristle Twins' Buick. Rob says Jimmy's looking for a buyer, he's sick of sitting on it.

TAM (V.O.)

(getting excited)

Is this for fucking real, Mag?

MAG (V.O.)

No, it's-

back to INT. STIGMATA

CRISPIN

Wait. The cape? Bela's--

CUT TO

Clip of Universal's Dracula, Lugosi spreading his arms wide or drawing to cloak across his nose in classic pose.

TAM (V.O.)

The cape that Bela fucking Legosi was buried in. The Dracula cape.

back to INT. STIGMATA

LARK

Are you serious?

CRISPIN

That's impossible. How did they get it out?

DANNY

The old fashioned way.

CRISPIN

No, I get that, I mean-

CUT TO

We see a quick montage of stock footage from the riots, then

EXT. HOLY CROSS CEMETERY - DAY

The Buick turns in to the cemetery as emergency vehicles scream by behind it.

EXT. THE LUGOSI PLOT

The Twins dig at the Lugosi plot as DeSade gulps indelicately from a bottle of Jack.

DANNY (V.O.)

The riots! Back when you children were still anticipating your first high school locker-room beatdown, DeSade and the Gristle Twins walked in the front gate of Holy Cross with a pair of shovels and a fuck-you-can-do attitude. They didn't care if the cops saw them 'cause why would the cops give two shits about some dead actor when the whole fucking city is coming down around their ears?

back to INT. STIGMATA

MAG

It never happened.

DANNY

It did. The whole world tuned in and missing the action.

MAG

It never happened.

TAM

You knew about this?

MAG

Like I said: it's drifted around for years. DeSade's just working the rubes.

LARK

Why would he want to sell it now?

DANNY

I don't know. Maybe he forgot he had it. Maybe he needs to finance a buy.

Lark appears confused.

MAG

Drugs, Lark. DeSade's got his fingers in everything. He's bad news and we should stay the fuck away from this.

TAM

(animated)

If there's even a chance that this is real, then we've got to find out, Maggie! Could you imagine? The fucking cape! Even just to see it, to touch it one time. And if he sells it, it's gone. It might as well be back in the ground.

INT. STIGMATA - NIGHT

Mag sits at the bar, turned to observe the crowd with sullen displeasure.

BJ sees Mag and goes to greet him, leaving VERONY with a friend.

Verony is early-20's, cute, a casual goth-black chemise over blue jeans, black eye-liner over peach lip-gloss.

BJ

Mag! Whassup, man? Ain't seen you in a minute.

MAG

BJ. Couldn't keep away.

BJ

The roar of the greasepaint, the smell of the crowd, yeah? Drinking alone requires-

BOTH

--too much imagination

MAG

I remember.

BJ

You shaking your moneymaker?

MAG

Propping up the bar with the other faded glories. I'm a bit out of my scene here, anymore.

The stool beside Mag opens up and BJ sits, likewise facing out to face the crowd.

BJ

Yeah, I thought you had a mad-on against Stigmata. Me, I hate all these fucking places with equal gusto. But the ladies, oh, the kinky ladies!

MAG

Maybe you could help me find someone, BJ.

BJ

You lookin' to hook up? Name your cup size, my friend.

A WOMAN passing by recoils at BJ's remark.

WOMAN

You're a fucking pig.

BJ

Feel the love in this room.

She moves on.

WOMAN

Asshole.

MAG

Not the kind of someone I'm looking for. It's business. My business.

Mag turns in towards BJ, towards the bar. BJ leans in and gives Mag his attention.

BJ

Okay, I'm intrigued. What's the dealie-o?

MAG

They would've been at the bottom of the scene a few years back. Freak shit. A woman with teeth filed down to points. All of them. Her whole fucking smile. And a tall, pale man with no ears and his nose half gone.

BJ

Jesus!

MAG

Bald, too. They were associates of Jimmy DeSade and the Gristle Twins.

BJ raises his eyebrows and blows out an ominous whistle.

BJ

You don't fuck around, do you, Mag? I guess I'm not gonna ask what this is about. I guess I ain't gonna tell you to stay away from whatever the hell you're getting into.

They look at each other. BJ sees in Mag's eyes that the decision is firm.

BJ

All right. Associates of Jimmy DeSade I don't need to know. But the file-tooth thing sounds like a "real vampire" kick.

MAG

Yeah. That was my thought.

BJ

I can ask about some no-name clubs around L. A. where the hardcore elements linger. As for the other mutt, you might be the beneficiary of extraordinary coincidence.

BJ turns out to the crowd and raises out of his chair.

He motions Verony over.

BJ

Verony! Hey, Verony!

Verony excuses herself from her friend and walks over to the bar.

VERONY

What's up, BJ?

BJ

Hey darling. Verony, Mag. Mag, Verony.

BOTH

Hey.

BJ

V, tell my buddy Mag about that shit Aloysius and your real swell time, backstage at the Abby's show.

Verony traces the rim of her glass with a finger.

VERONY

Really?

BJ

Yeah, yeah. Mag needs to know this. You're among friends, right?

VERONY

Yeah, sure. Aloysius is this guy who's, like, the ultimate hanger-on, right? Like, people give him what he wants so he'll go away.

BJ

Do you know him? He really is an annoying little bitch.

MAG

I think I know who you mean.

VERONY

So, anyway, he can score shit, like backstage passes to the Abby's Black Streak show last month. Don't judge too harshly, I went with him, 'cause "how many opportunities", right?

BJ

O-ho!

VERONY

Shut up, BJ.

MAG

I understand.

VERONY

Well, it fucking sucked.

INT. CLUB BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

A backstage area is filled with smoke and crowded full of sound guys and groupies and various drunken assholes, passing joints and laying out lines of cocaine.

Actions occur as described in Verony's dialogue.

Aloysius is a weasely, pallid 20-something clean T-shirt goth with shifty eyes and uniformly even hair.

VERONY (V.O.)

The Show? Awesome. But backstage?
I don't think the band was even there. And that shit Aloysius disappears and I get cornered by this troglodyte-looking thing. This guy had, like, no ears and his nose was fucked up and I don't think he had hair at all. Like, no eyebrows and shit.

BJ (V.O.)

Sound familiar?

VERONY (V.O.)

So I'm physically fighting off this disgusting skeeze and Aloysius turns up just in time to apologize to the fucker who's molesting me, because I guess this fucking medical experiment used to be somebody or something.

INT. STIGMATA BATHROOM - LATER

ALOYSIUS preens in the mirror.

Mag confronts him, a jumble of expectant tension.

MAG

Hey.

ALOYSIUS

(absently)

Hey.

MAG

Aloysius, right?

ALOYSIUS

Yeah. Do I know you?

MAG

Let's keep this civil.

ALOYSIUS

What?

MAG

The guy with the fucked-up head molesting Verony at the Abby's Black Streak show. Who is he?

ALOYSIUS

Man, I don't fucking know you. I'm out.

Aloysius goes to move past Mag, towards the door.

Mag puts a hand on his shoulder to stop him.

MAG

I said, let's keep this civ-argh!

Aloysius knees Mag in the groin.

Mag tries to keep himself from collapsing by supporting himself on the sink.

Aloysius puts a hand on the door handle to go out.

BJ bursts through and grabs him.

ALOYSIUS

Get off of me! Get the fuck off!

Aloysius twists away, but BJ pushes him back towards Mag.

Mag cocks a huge roundhouse and lays Aloysius out,

his head bouncing on the tile.

Mag grabs his hand in pain.

MAG

Fucker! Fucking bitch!

BJ bends over Aloysius's motionless form.

BJ

Dude. I think you knocked him out. Mag, you're a bad-ass. You're gonna want to ice that hand.

MAG

Come on. Pick him up. Let's
get him outside.

INT. AUTO MECHANIC'S GARAGE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

JIMMY DeSADE and the "Gristle Twins" (MANNY and NOT MANNY)
harangue Mag.

Jimmy DeSade is a leather-clad mid-30's vision of writhing
sex and dark feeling. He is a messiah to himself, tall,
thin, serpentine, and charismatic. Penetrating eyes gaze
out from the drooping curl of a prodigious pompadour;
everything about DeSade is deliberately fake and dangerously
real.

The Gristle twins are not only not twins, they are clearly
unrelated, one Latino, one Irish, late 20's-30's. They pick
up DeSade's greaser spectacle in a low-rent grit sort-of-
way. The "Twins" are clearly more interested in crime and
satisfaction than personal presentation.

DeSade stands nose to nose with Mag.

DeSADE

I understand we like to call
ourselves Magwitch, do we? I
don't know how I could make fun
of that name.

Manny, perched atop one of the lifts, lowers himself down to
the floor.

MANNY

We could call him "Fagbitch".

DeSADE

Yes, I was going for a certain
verbal irony there, Manny, but
I applaud your keen grasp of
the obvious.

Not Manny grabs Mag's ankles from behind and pulls himself
through Mag's spread legs, rolling with his back on a
server.

NOT MANNY

Are you a fucking cop? If you're
a fucking cop, you have to tell
us so that we can kill you.

DeSADE

Darlings, please. Not even an
L.A. cop is dumb enough to call
himself Fagbitch.

Manny pushes himself away.

DeSade saunters away from Mag and luxuriously spreads himself across the hood of a sportscar.

DeSADE

No, our concern here should be whether or not this night-mite is deserving enough to share our precious possession.

MAG

We'll have it. Five hundred.

DeSADE

Silence, Fagbitch! I should hope there's no question of you having the money. If I thought you didn't have it, we'd roll you for your fucking kidneys right now.

MANNY

(right at Mag's ear)
Kidney pie!

MAG

(unflinching)
Then what's the problem?

DeSade creeps forward.

Not Manny also advances threateningly at Mag.

DeSADE

The problem is I suspect you're a fucking useless waste of flesh—a gangrenous pustule on the ass

(MORE)

DeSADE (CONT'D)

of humanity. What we have to offer is fit for no pretender.

NOT MANNY

Fucking poseur. Pop you like a zit.

DeSade kicks the back of Mag's knee and pushes him down to the ground.

DeSADE

And I know that it's not your place to question me, you shit.

(MORE)

DESADE (CONT'D)

We set the terms. You follow the terms. You fucking pay us. Those are the generalities. We'll proceed to the specifics as soon as you lick the floor clean. I do hate a messy office.

MAG

Wha-

DeSADE

Show me you're desire, Fagbitch. Show me how much you fucking want what I have. This is non-fucking-negotiable.

Mag bends his face haltingly towards the floor, reluctantly extending his tongue.

EXT. OUTSIDE STIGMATA - LATER

Mag and BJ each have an arm under Aloysius's shoulders, as if supporting a drunk friend.

Aloysius comes to and tries to disentangle himself.

ALOYSIUS

Let go!

MAG

Not until you-

Mag tries to maintain his hold on Aloysius, with the result that when Aloysius pukes on his way to the ground, most of it goes on Mag.

Aloysius stays down on his hands and knees.

MAG

Fuck! Goddammit!

ALOYSIUS

Ow, my head hurts.

BJ

Aloysius, just tell the man what he wants to know, okay?

Aloysius sets back on his haunches and wipes the spittle from his face.

ALOYSIUS
Why do you even care? Jesus.

BJ
Dude, just fuckin' sing, all
right?

Mag whips off his vomit-covered jacket and whips it down
onto the pavement.

MAG
I am not pleased right now.

ALOYSIUS
Christ. Fine. His name's
Leonard Marvin. He scored me
the tickets through old con-
nections 'cause he knew I was a
fan. I didn't expect him to be
there.

MAG
Why not?

ALOYSIUS
Because he's a fucking shut-in.
I deliver meals to him.

LATER

Mag and BJ lean against BJ's car. Mag tries to light a
cigarette, but his knuckles are swollen and his hand shakes.

BJ grabs the lighter from him and lights Mag's cigarette.

MAG
Thanks.

BJ
I told you: Later, you better
ice that hand.

MAG
Maybe it's not the same guy.

BJ
L.A. is full of freaks.

MAG
I'll go tomorrow. I'll just
do some reconnaissance, check
it out.

BJ

Seems wise.

MAG

Don't know what I'll do if
it is him, anyway.

BJ doesn't believe him.

BJ

Yeah.

Aloysius leans out the window from the back seat.

ALOYSIUS

Are we going?

BJ

You need a ride?

Mag makes to leave.

MAG

No. Go ahead and get him to
the hospital. Hopefully they'll
dope him down and keep him out
of the way for a day.

BJ

I'll work something out. Shut
him up.

BJ gets in the driver's seat and shuts the door.

EXT. OUTSIDE HOLY CROSS CEMETARY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Mag, TAM, CRISPIN, and Lark exit Crispin's Subaru Wagon and
bounce along the sidewalk towards the cemetery gates.

LARK

What if the gate's locked?

MAG

Tam called ahead. The Gargoyle
is waiting.

Tam stops and turns towards the others with outstretched
hands.

TAM

Okay. Same as usual. Twenty
bucks all round. Back in a bit.
Try to look inconspicuous.

They hand her their cash and Tam skips off.

CRISPIN

Tam's always in her best mood
when we visit here.

Mag chuckles.

MAG

What do you expect? She just
made a quick forty bucks.

LARK

What do you mean, Mag? It's
forty to bribe the guard, right?

Tam pushes the iron gate open just enough to admit her lithe
form, then

slips two of the twenties into her pocket as she approaches

INT. GUARD STATION

The GARGOYLE, a private security guard with leering eyes and
pale hue, talks a long draught from his flask and smiles
lasciviously at Tam.

GARGOYLE

Oh, goody.

Tam hands the third twenty over to the guard.

He looks at her blouse and wiggles his eyebrows.

Tam flashes her breasts to the guard.

He smiles and reaches out both clammy hands to caress them.

After a few seconds of enduring his touch, Tam backs away
from the guard and lowers her blouse.

Gargoyle cocks his head towards the cemetery interior,
indicating his approval of their transaction.

He grabs at his crotch as Tam turns away and goes back
towards the gate.

TAM

(under her breath)
Shit-licker.

EXT. INSIDE HOLY CROSS CEMETERY - LATER

They move with nervous excitement across the lawn towards the grotto, occasionally flashing lights down at grave markers.

LARK

Hello, Tin Man.

They reach their destination—Bela Lugosi's plot.

They plop down, Crispin and Lark to the right of the plot, Mag and Tam to the left.

Crispin leans back and sings over his shoulder to Bing Crosby's plot,

CRISPIN

You could be sitting on a star.

Crispin leans forward again and rummages through a satchel on his lap.

TAM

Rent-a-cop said to keep it to one candle.

Crispin draws out two large, ornamental, scented candles.

CRISPIN

Jasmine or boysenberry?

LARK

Boysenberry?

TAM

Oh, fucking Christ.

Lark clutches a book to her chest.

LARK

I brought some Poe poetry.

CRISPIN

Poor, poor Poe.

MAG

Nevermo.

TAM

Oh, we're all just giggles and cream tonight. Fuck the reading.

CRISPIN
 (dubiously aghast)
 Fuck the reading?

TAM
 We'll get to the reading. Later.
 We have something to talk about.

Tam leans in and motions for the others to do the same as though, even alone, someone might hear their conspiratorial plans.

TAM
 It's on. Friday night. Mag set it up. We meet them at Stigmata and go from there.

CRISPIN
 We're really going to do this?

TAM
 Well, we're not going to puss out, are we, Crispin?

CRISPIN
 How do we know Jimmy DeSade is telling the truth?

MAG
 She doesn't know and neither do I.

LARK
 This... it could be bad, couldn't it, Mag?

TAM
 Fuck! What are we doing here? What are we fucking doing—here? What's the fucking point if we don't do this? What are we supposed to be, anyway?

INT. MAG'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mag opens the freezer door and removes an ice-tray.

He cracks the tray with a twist and empties the ice onto plastic wrap spread over a dish-towel. Gingerly, he pulls the ends of the towel up and clenches them in his left hand.

Mag winces as he sets the ice on the knuckles of his right hand.

Mag moves into the main room and sits on a lone wooden chair.

Mag lifts the towel and looks at his hand; a spot of blood peeks out from the cracked and swollen knuckles.

Images flash through his head:

The bloodied mouth of Bathory disengaging from Tam's shoulder,

Crispin and Lark huddling together against a dank wall, the two of them covered in mud and shit.

Mag's eyes tear up.

He shakes the visions from his mind and looks up towards the ceiling.

INT. TAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Mag sits on the bed under the canopy of dangling baby-doll limbs and heads, absently glancing at the prints and posters and magazine collages that adorn the walls.

Tam sits at her vanity, studying her face in the mirror and conscientiously re-applying lip-liner.

TAM

If Crispin and Lark hadn't been there when we found out, then I wouldn't've even suggested they go.

MAG

Yeah?

TAM

Yes. And if they hadn't behaved like such chickenshits at the suggestion, then I wouldn't've pushed it, you know?

MAG

It should be their call.

TAM

Of course it's their call, Totally. Jesus, "totally"? Am I from the fucking Pleistocene era?

MAG

It's their choice.

TAM

Of course it's their choice.
Who are you trying to convince?
I'm just afraid they'll fuck it up.

MAG

So leave them out of it.

Tam spins around on her stool to face Mag.

TAM

Jesus, are you being scared for
them, now?

MAG

DeSade and the Gristle Twins
are bad motherfuckers.

TAM

They don't need your help being
scared. They're doing fine on
their own. So maybe leave off
with the dire?

MAG

This isn't Holy Cross Cemetary
by candlelight. This isn't the
kind of trouble a bribe or a
blow job can get you out of.

TAM

(cold)

I know we're not going out for
fucking trick-or-treats. Mag.
You want me to go it alone, just
say so. The only pussy I need
with me is the one you can't go
without.

MAG

Goddammit, don't-

Tam gets up and slowly advances towards the bed.

TAM

I'll up the ante, babe. You're
so worried-just tell me to go
to hell.

Tam puts her hands on Mag's knees and lowers herself to her
knees.

TAM

One time. Just once. You tell me to go to hell and I'll back off.

MAG

You and I both know better than to think either one of those is an option.

Looking up at Mag's face with false supplication, Tam reaches under the bed and

pulls out a small, wooden case.

TAM

Lover... you act as though obsession lay at the heart of countless tragedies throughout the ages.

Tam opens the case and removes a straight-razor from out of the plush lining.

She strokes the flat of the blade.

Mag looks at her, weighing something in his mind, then removes his shirt,

exposing a lattice-work of fine razor scars on his back.

Tam puts the razor between clenched teeth.

Mag turns to face the wall and grabs the iron railing of the headboard.

Tam reaches into a bureau drawer beside the bed and retrieves two leather wrist restraints.

She gets up on the bed behind Mag and drops the razor onto the mattress.

Tam puts a restraint on each of Mag's wrists and fastens them to the headboard.

MAG

You know you don't need that. You know I'd never let go.

TAM

It's just for spice, dear. It's proper bondage gear. There's a safety release. See how fast you can find it.

Tam runs her fingers lightly over Mag's shoulders and back, her excitement mounting as she searches for the perfect spot.

Mag hisses as

Tam cuts him.

Tam puts her mouth over the open wound and sucks at it greedily.

INT. THRIFT STORE - DAY

Mag ambles down the narrow aisles of a thrift store, sorting through kitchenware and ceramic and plastic cookware. Shelves of blenders, toasters, stacks of plates and bins of silverware sit dully under his gaze. Close to him, a BIG WOMAN talks on her cell phone while judging the offered wares.

BIG WOMAN

The vein in her leg. The vein.
Yes. In her leg. They took
that out and they used it. I
guess you don't need all your
veins. Not all the ones you
got in your legs, anyway.

Mag finds the item he hoped for: a serving plate, with cover, such as might be used by a meals-on-wheels delivery person. He picks it up and examines it while considering another still on the shelf.

The Big Woman leans in towards the shelves next to where Mag stands.

BIG WOMAN

They'll probably take her feet,
soon, anyway.

Mag decides abruptly that he is entirely satisfied with the dish in his hand and walks away from the Big Woman and the kitchenware aisle.

Mag moves down another aisle towards the check-out counter.

He stops suddenly and looks at an item on one of the shelves.

He picks it up: a plastic action figure of a werewolf.

INT. PAGAN BOOK STORE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Crispin puts a book back on the shelf. He and Lark look appreciatively at the wares of the newly-opened bookstore. Books fill shelves to overflowing and even more sit in opened boxes in spots on the floor. Various pagan, magic and fantasy-related paraphernalia adorn curios and tiered tables. A long, glass display case holds up an old cash register close to the door. Hand-made signs boast of the grand opening. Several other people wander about and flip through books.

LARK

Can I tell you? So in love
right now.

CRISPIN

Oh, I know. I'm glad you talked
me in to checking this place out.

The OWNER (dumpy, middle-aged, lesbian owl with surprising energy) plops down another box of books on a stack of boxes of books with a great exhalation. She smiles at Crispin and Lark.

OWNER

Can I help you find anything?
And, really, that's a question
I'm not even sure I should be
asking at this point. Ha!

LARK

We we're just saying how much
we really like your store. It's
my new favorite place.

OWNER

Oh Goddess bless you, sweetheart.
Come back frequently, but mark
your calendars now for my tenth
anniversary-slash-I-finally-have-
it-organized celebration. Ha!

LARK

You know, I was kind of hoping
(MORE)

LARK (CONT'D)

to find one of the Marvin Kaye
collections with the Edward
Gorey covers?

OWNER

Oh! I love those! Gorey's
just so fun, don't you think?
(MORE)

OWNER (CONT'D)

I know I have a couple. I know I
saw them...

The owner wanders off.

Lark and Crispin smile after her, delighted with her.

They move over to the large display case and examine the
contents.

A strange seriousness draws over their faces simultaneously.

LARK

What do you think?

CRISPIN

Hmnh?

LARK

Coy boy. You know—about the
cape.

CRISPIN

I don't know. Mag doesn't want
it. That cautions me.

LARK

Yeah. But—he'll be there, you
know? For Tam. For us.

CRISPIN

It would be cool.

Lark follows Crispin's eyeline and smiles. She sees that
he's looking intently at a single, silver bullet.

LARK

You must have it, musn't you?

CRISPIN

I think it's real.

LARK

It's priced like it's real.
A real silver bullet.

CRISPIN

Yeah. Yeah, I think I must own
a silver bullet. What with all
the werewolves, and all.

LARK

They're positively ruining
the valley.

CRISPIN

I hear they like beef chow mein
and pina coladas.

LARK

Oh, then they're bringing
culture to the valley.

CRISPIN

Goth snob.

The Owner comes back with a book in her hand.

OWNER

I have "Masterpieces of Terror
and the Supernatural". You
probably have that one, huh?

LARK

Yes. We're well-acquainted,
unfortunately.

OWNER

Ha! You're a joy.
(to Crispin)
Something caught your eye? Hold
on. Where did I put those keys
for the display case?

She goes off back into the stacks again.

Lark turns and her gaze goes outside. A look of grave
concern crosses her face.

LARK

Is that Danny Mosquera?

Crispin follows her gaze. He sees

Danny Mosquera standing on the sidewalk outside the store.
Danny's full right arm and shoulder is in a cast with
supports keeping it perpendicular to his body.

CRISPIN

Yeah. Jesus, I think it is.

LARK

What do you think happened to him?

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

Mag sits and thinks intently. He holds a covered tray on
his lap. His hand trembles as he runs it over the cover.

Mag winces as flashes of that awful night run through his thoughts: Malform drooling through a disgusting smile, swinging the hammer, grabbing his hair from behind and pulling Mag's head back and licking his ear.

Mag looks out the window at the rushing dark and the quick flashes of the passing lights imitating the strobe of

INT. STIGMATA - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Mag, Lark, and Crispin huddle closely at a table.

Crispin taps the beat and nods his head, too obviously trying to display his interest in the music and not his anxiety at impending events.

Lark hugs herself and tries to maintain a wavering smile.

Mag is dour.

Tam is by the bar talking to two artsy-model looking MEN.

CRISPIN

I almost wish it was just a normal night out. It's a good mix. The music.

MAG

What?

Crispin leans towards Mag in a spastic motion.

Lark jumps at the unexpected movement.

CRISPIN

The mus-
(to Lark)
Sorry.

Mag takes a pill bottle out and shakes a few into his hand. He pops the pills and chases them down with whiskey.

LARK

What are those?

MAG

Preparation.

LARK

Who's that Tam's talking to?

MAG

I don't know.

CRISPIN

They look familiar. Did I see them in a magazine maybe?

MAG

Maybe.

Crispin look sat his watch.

CRISPIN

They said midnight, right?

MAG

That's what they said.

CRISPIN

It's five after now. Maybe they're not going to show.

DeSade appears at the entrance to the club, flowing into the room with dramatic and purposeful malevolence.

Crispin drops his glass;

it SHATTERS on the floor.

DeSade slices through the crowd with an unbroken stride. He approaches the others at their table and sneers down at them.

DeSADE

This place sucks. Who wants to go to a private party?

MAG

Did you bring it?

DeSADE

We bring you to the party. That's how it's done.

DeSade looks over at Tam.

DeSADE

Is that your queen bee I see chatting up the PYT's, Magwitch? See if you can't pull her away, will you? Oh, nevermind. Apparently the sight of yours truly is enough to bring her running.

Tam excuses herself from the model-boys, hurrying over to the table.

TAM

Well?

DeSADE

The bloody eagerness of youth.
Brings a fucking tear to my eye.

TAM

Are we doing this?

DeSADE

Don't push, Tammy-Tam-Tam. The
pleasure is all yours.

DeSade waves his hand limply, disdainfully indicating the others at the table.

MAG

Gather your belongings.

DeSade turns and walks towards the entrance, not bothering to see if he is followed.

Tam throws back her drink and slams the empty glass down on the table.

TAM

(to the others)

Let's go.

EXT. CITY STREETS OUTSIDE STIGMATA - LATER

The four friends and DeSade walk out into the night.

Lark and Crispin stay as close to each other as can be. Mag and Tam are far apart.

As they walk down the middle of the street,

the headlights of the big, black Buick flare to life behind them.

The four friends scatter to the sides.

DeSade stops.

The Buick ROARS up behind him and SCREECHES to a halt just before impact.

DeSade goes around the passenger's side and opens the rear door.

DeSADE

Get in.

The four friends pile in the back seat, Tam, then Mag, then Crispin and Lark.

As DeSade slams the door, Mag gags and clutches at his nose.

DeSade settles into the front seat with Manny driving and Not Manny between them.

MAG

Of, fuck! What is that—

Tam discovers she's pushed up next to a dead, maggot-ridden dog.

TAM

(screams)

Aaaah!

DeSADE

Don't mind Fido. Manny here ran over the poor thing the other day and shit—I always wanted a puppy.

Tam spastically flings the dog to the floor of the car, drawing her feet away as best she can.

Crispin and Lark vomit simultaneously.

DeSADE

Oh, fucking velvet, my sweet-hearts. Gorgeous work in perfect unison. Let's take this show on the road, Manny!

MANNY

You're the whatever.

Manny SQUEALS the tires, speeding the car down the street and careening indiscriminately.

MAG

You stupid, sick fuck.

DeSADE

Do you know how I know I'm an artist, Not-Manny?

NOT-MANNY

How's that, Jimmy?

DeSade reaches over the seat and punches Mag in the face.

DeSADE
I can't take criticism.

TAM
(shaken)
Oh god, oh god, oh god.

Mag wipes blood from his nose and flips the excess back at DeSade.

DeSADE
How do I love thee? Let me
toss off the ways—that fucking
funeral drag you goth-geeks
prance about in, those painted
eyes, that cultured nihilistic
attitude, that cunt smell of
mystery. You sad bugger's think
you're the reaper's best bitches,
don't you?

TAM
(defiantly
re-composed)
Fuck you. Yeah.

DeSADE
Let's do, boys and things!
Let's fuck with death!

Lark looks out at the streets with concern.

LARK
(to Mag)
Where are we going?

MAG
Shhh!

TAM
You better have it.
(MORE)
TAM (CONT'D)
I paid you your goddamn money
and you better deliver.

DeSADE
Nothing but the real thing will
do it for you, will it, little
girl? Oh, Tam—it will be so
real that it will hurt.

TAM

We made a deal.

MAG

Jesus, Tam.

DeSADE

Don't you worry, Tammy. I got it all right. Finders-keepers, right? The dear, departed Mr. Lugosi didn't seem to object at all. He probably would've thanked me if he could. I mean—Nineteen-fifty-six. That's a long time to hold your breath, Tammy-dear. I must admit, I thought death would be a little kinder to a vampire. Oh, Tammy, you should've seen the shriveled old fuck. Lying there, so bloody peaceful in his penguin suit, the dirt dribbling down on his face. And that cape, that cape still draped around his shoulders just where they left it when they shut the lid on him.

EXT. MALFORM'S HOUSE - DAY

Mag holds the covered tray and stares at the door of a non-descript bungalow.

He shrugs his shoulders, taking in a quick, deep breath, releases it, and RINGS the doorbell.

MALFORM

Who is it?

MAG

Meals on wheels.

The door opens slightly and MALFORM looks out; suspicion plays across his mangled face.

MALFORM

You're early. Where's Aloysius?

MAG

Didn't come in. He said he had a headache.

Malform shoots a quick glance at Mag's bruised knuckles.

Mag catches the glance and tries to inconspicuously turn his knuckles from view.

Malform slowly backs away and lets the door swing open.

He remains facing Mag as he directs him towards a table.

MALFORM

You can put it there on the table.

Mag turns his back to Malform, blocking his view as he sets down the tray.

Malform surreptitiously picks up a large knife from a counter.

MALFORM

What's on the menu today?

Mag begins to lift the cover.

Malform creeps up behind him.

MAG

Uh-

Malform slams the cover back down with one hand while bringing the knife up to Mag's throat with the other.

MALFORM

What's on the menu today?
Looks like leftovers to me.
Do you think I'd forget such an exquisite morsel as yourself?

MAG

I will fucking kill you.

MALFORM

I think you're misreading the situation... meat.

Malform bites a chunk out of Mag's ear.

Mag CRIES out in pain, then

throws his head back in a reverse head-butt,

twisting free as Malform recoils from the impact.

Mag presses a hand to the wounded ear as he scurries away from Malform.

MAG

Aaaah!

Malform breathes laboriously as he props himself up with the table. In addition to his deformities, he is obviously in ill health.

MALFORM

Oh, but with you, it wasn't the pleasures of the flesh, but the degradation of it. You responded so well, I remember.

MAG

Shut up.

Mag looks around desperately and picks up a poker from the fireplace.

Malform seems unimpressed and advances on Mag, brandishing the knife.

MALFORM

Revenge, yes? Is that it? You're supposed to serve it cold, you little shit. To prepare and to savor.

MAG

I'm not like you.

MALFORM

Really? Because you should probably have yourself tested.

Malform lurches forward.

Mag swings the poker wildly and knocks the knife from Malform's hand.

Malform grabs at the poker and pushes Mag back to the table. The covered tray is just out of reach for Mag.

Malform puts his weight on the poker, bearing down on Mag's windpipe.

Mag tries to keep him off while stretching and reaching for the tray.

MALFORM

You're just no good at this game, are you? The learning curve is very steep. And failure is most unpleasant.

At last Mag's fingers find purchase and in one fluid motion, he yanks the tray closer, knocks off the lid and grabs the sharpened screwdriver hidden underneath.

Mag stabs repeatedly at Malform's neck, shoulders and chest with hysterical violence.

Malform falls to the floor, bleeding profusely, wheezing tortured breaths. Mag stands over him.

MAG
(with righteous,
if inarticulate,
anger)
Prepared!

Mag watches as Malform suffers on the floor, twitching and stretching while he bleeds out. Mag sees and understands what he has done, and the fight drains out of him.

He drops the screwdriver.

Mag sees a wall-mounted telephone and goes to it.

He lifts the receiver and goes to dial just as Malform expires with a death-rattle.

Mag's hand shakes as he hangs up the receiver.

Mag sees his fingerprint in blood on the receiver.

He goes to the kitchen area and fetches dishtowels.

He begins wiping down any surface he might have touched.

He puts his bloody shirt in a trashbag.

Looking for a clean shirt among Malform's things, Mag finds a stache of cash and pills and two kilos of cocaine.

Mag takes the cash and pockets most of the drugs in a jacket.

One kilo of coke he tears open and flings around the room, hoping to simulate a drug buy gone wrong.

He puts the tray and the screwdriver and the dishtowels in the trashbag, zips up the jacket, and hurries out of the bungalow.

INT. MAG'S APARTMENT - DUSK

Mag breaks anything breakable in his spartan apartment.

He drinks, smokes, pukes, and cries.

He looks down with horror at his shaking hands.

MAG

Damned. I'm damned.

INT. ABANDONED INDUSTRIAL UNDERGROUND AREA - NIGHT
(FLASHBACK)

Water drips from the ceiling and trails through stains of sin on the walls and floor. One naked bulb flares from the center of the area while a dangling fluorescent flickers and slowly swings. Detritus litters the floor.

DeSade lounges across a tattered and moldy highback chair.

The Gristle Twins giggle over cigarettes, flanking him.

Lark and Crispin, naked, covered in mud and shit, cling hysterically to each other, huddled against the wall.

They each try to cover the eyes of the other with one hand while pulling the other's hand away from their own eyes.

Tam stands, shaking, concentrating her defiant gaze at DeSade. She is bleeding from many small puncture wounds on her neck and shoulders.

We see the cause: BATHORY smiles, exposing filed-to-point teeth all across.

She licks Tam's blood from her lips.

Mag, down on all fours, tries to crawl towards Tam, tries to pull his pants up, groaning as broken ribs grate against each other.

Behind him the noseless, earless, completely hairless MALFORM snorts with contempt, then

drops a hammer that CLANKS to the ground.

Bathory and Malform are nightmares made flesh, human only by the most generous definition, true afficianados of degradation and pain.

He turns and leaves, Bathory following.

TAM

Are you finished? Are you satisfied? Will you show me the Dracula cape now?

DeSADE

Oh, Tammy. I'd like to very much. No one has ever deserved such a thing as the reward you ask for now. I wish I could show you the cape, sweet, darling Tammy. But I'm afraid that's no longer something I can do.

TAM

I want... to see it.

DeSADE

Yeah, well, you see, I let it go last week to some Lugosi freak from Guadalupe. Crazy fuck laid out 10 G's for the thing, can you believe that shit?

DeSade gets up and paces in front of the throne and the Twins.

Tam glares at him with withering hatred.

DeSADE

Hey, it's just business, Tammy. It's a fast-paced rat-race and you've got to take the offers when they come. No hard feelings?

Something breaks inside Tam and she collapses to her knees, choking back sobs.

The Twins move towards the exit, giggling.

DeSade touches Tam on the forehead lightly.

DeSADE

Sure, I understand. When you guys are done in here, turn out the lights, okay, and close the door behind you? No need to clean up.

DeSade follows the others out.

back to INT. MAG'S APARTMENT - DUSK

Finally, determination steels him, Mag clenches his hands into fists, and the shaking stops.

MAG

Already there.

He searches through the wreck of his anguish and picks up the phone and dials.

MAG

BJ Blue. It's Mag. I'm all right. Listen. I need to get a gun.

INT. BJ'S CAR - NIGHT

BJ drives Mag around downtown L.A. streets at night, with all the desolate menace that implies. Mag is grim and distracted, the events of his encounter with Malform still clearly on his mind. He holds one hand in front of him and notes its steadiness; the hand seems alien to him. On the streets, players and haters scurry from deal to threat and back again to the constant accompaniment of distant sirens.

BJ

Why do you need a gun?

MAG

You said you weren't going to ask me that.

BJ

Yeah, I did. And you believed me. One to lie and one to listen. I wanna help you, Mag, on account of you don't fucking suck like most people do. But I don't wanna get fucked in the process.

MAG

That's why I let you help me but I don't tell you why. Ignorance is innocence.

BJ

Hah! That's Mag for Magnanimous! I ain't worried about my fuckin' day in court.

(MORE)

BJ (CONT'D)

I don't want this coming back through other channels, you know. So you gotta be rock steady in all you do and say.

MAG

I don't need you in on the buy. You can just—

BJ

Yeah, you do need me. Unless I vouch for you, Pedro won't give you shit.

MAG

I just need it for self-protection.

BJ

Pro-active self-protection?

MAG

Your girl Verony is still keeping Aloysius happy?

BJ

And believe me, she is very unhappy with that set-up.

MAG

Just tonight. I head off the problem, stop the reaction before it starts. You have that info on the vampire clubs?

BJ

I'm got someone on it.

MAG

Okay I'm not worried about that, anyway. And Jimmy DeSade has been vacant from L. A. for a couple years. But the Gristle Twins still roll out of that same garage, right?

BJ

Oh, fuck. You are not, are not going after the fucking Gristle Twins.

MAG

BJ, it's taken care of.

BJ

Of, fuck. Right. No worries. No worries at all.

They pull off on a side street and stop along a curb a short distance from a white van with heavily tinted windows.

As they get out of BJ's car,

PEDRO jumps out of the van's driver seat and goes around the back of the van.

PEDRO is Latin/Latino, short, alert, and direct. He dresses like a cholo but maintains a business-like demeanor.

BJ
Pedro. Hey, man.

PEDRO
(to Mag)
Are you a cop?

MAG
No.

PEDRO
(to BJ)
You vouch for him?

BJ
Yeah. Mag, this is Pedro Calzone.

MAG
Calzone?

PEDRO
My parents were spaghetti westerns.
I hear you want a piece. Yes?

MAG
Yeah.

Pedro swings open the back doors of the van.

He pulls aside a colorful afghan to reveal clearly organized, cascading tiers of handguns, knives, and other weaponry.

PEDRO
You got experience, esse?

MAG
Experience?

PEDRO
No. Okay, a revolver, then.
What's your range?

MAG
Three-fifty?

PEDRO
What? You're asking me?

MAG
Three-fifty.

PEDRO

Hey, for three-fifty I'll sell
you something that works.

Pedro picks up a .38 special and hands it to Mag, who turns it over in his hands, feeling the physical and moral weight of the thing.

PEDRO

Police special. Hell, this one
used to belong to a cop. Some
Barney Fife county motherfucker.
I'll throw in bullets, too, so you
can make noises with it. For
entertainment purposes only.

BJ

Mag, that ain't enough for
the Gristle-

Mag shoots BJ a "shut up" look. BJ realizes his error.

BJ

Fuck.

PEDRO

I don't sell guns to people
with intentions. I sell to
serious hobbyists only. You
got intentions, you leave
them out of our transaction.

MAG

I just want to make noises
with it.

PEDRO

See, that's a good hobby, homes.
Who doesn't love a little noise
now and then?

(MORE)

PEDRO (CONT'D)

(meaningfully)

As long as you remember to enjoy
the silence afterwards.

Mag indicates a collection of grenades in the van.

MAG

Say I want a bigger bang. Do
you guarantee your army surplus?

BJ

Jesus shit.

BJ turns and waves his hands nervously, as if shaking off the responsibility.

PEDRO

I guarantee you if it don't go off, you're probably fucked. Anyway, you already blew your wad, homes.

Mag takes the kilo of coke from Malform's out from his coat pocket and offers it to Pedro.

MAG

Do you take trade?

INT. CRISPIN AND LARK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Crispin sits in bed in a bathrobe, under a large comforter, shellshocked.

Lark, in matching robe, enters and joins Mag under the comforter, huddling together.

LARK

I'm just going to throw the clothes away, okay?

CRISPIN

Yeah.

Lark reaches into the pocket of the robe and pulls out Crispin's silver bullet.

LARK

This was in your pocket.

CRISPIN

Oh. Thanks.

He takes the silver bullet from her and leans over to the bedside table.

He opens the drawer and tosses the bullet inside, then moves back together with Lark.

LARK

We should have stayed with Mag.

CRISPIN

He didn't want us to. You heard what he said.

LARK

Still.

(pause)

I don't ever want to leave the apartment. Will you stay with me tomorrow?

CRISPIN

I have to work.

LARK

Call off.

CRISPIN

(non-committal)

uh.

LARK

What does that mean?

Crispin gets up from the bed.

CRISPIN

I have to take another shower.

INT. BJ'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BJ opens the door and leads Mag into his apartment. BJ's space is a step out of time, a haven for the 70's, classic rock, and vinyl records. Shag carpeting covers the floor. Wood paneling is obscured by Led Zeppelin posters and Frank Frazetta prints. BJ's only concessions to the 21st century are a fantastic home entertainment system with seven-speaker surround, and a Mac tucked away in the corner on a small desk. BJ is laughing as they enter.

BJ

Surer'n shit, you're a fuckin' madman, Mag!

(MORE)

BJ (CONT'D)

"Do you take trade? "Cause here's a fuckin' brick of coke for a coupla hand grenades!"

VERONY

Hello?

BJ leans back to shout down the hall.

BJ

Verony, s'that you?

VERONY

Yeah.

BJ
 What's up? You were s'posed
 to be keepin' tabs on A-hole-
 Lysius.

Verony comes into the room wrapped in a bathrobe, drying her hair.

VERONY
 Yeah, you know, thanks for
 nothing. I really enjoy, like,
 being whored out.

BJ
 Babe, you know—

Verony flops down on the couch,
 opens a lunchbox, and takes out a baggie of pot and a bowl
 which she proceeds to pack up.

VERONY
 He got grabby. Like I would
 Ever. Fuck that.

MAG
 It's all right, BJ. We're
 far enough ahead. Thanks,
 Verony. Sorry to put you
 through that.

VERONY
 S'allright. Whatever. I think
 he was being a dick 'cause he
 knew BJ put me up to it.

BJ
 One beatdown's not enough for
 some dogs.

MAG
 Do whatever you want with him
 after tonight. It won't matter
 if I can find the vamp. If I
 can do that—

BJ
 Let me check my e-mails. We'll
 see if my boy came through.

BJ goes to the corner and sits down at the desk.

VERONY

I've showed him like a hundred times how to check his e-mails with his phone, but he can't be bothered to learn how.

BJ toggles the mouse around.

BJ

Ludditus Maximus, c'est moi.

Mag goes over and looks over BJ's shoulder at the computer screen.

BJ

A couple places. Ah. He says this one's like a female empowerment vibe kinda place. There's your start.

MAG

You print that?

BJ

Yeah.

MAG

Can I borrow your car to run this down?

The printer BUZZES to life.

BJ spins around in his chair.

BJ

You don't want company?

MAG

You've stuck your neck out far enough. I appreciate it. Why don't I drop you at Stigmata and catch you up later?

BJ sniffs his armpit.

BJ

Yeah, all right. V?

Verony taps out the ash of the bowl on a plate and sinks back into the sofa, grabbing for the remote.

VERONY

Ugh. I'm in. Maybe some
(MORE)

VERONY (CONT'D)

Upstairs, Downstairs. I left
that fuck Aloysius at Stigmata.

BJ takes the printout from the printer and hands it to Mag.

BJ

Perfect. I'll keep him in
check, get fucked up, and
await your triumphant return.

Mag points to something on the printout.

MAG

What is this? Code? I'm sup-
posed to say that?

BJ

Dude, you're going to a vampire
club. Check your normality at
the door.

BJ leans in to follow his finger.

MAG

Who is that?

BJ

Dracula's daughter. Universal,
'36. Gloria Holden. I'd think
a Drac nut like you would be
more up on his trivia.

EXT. CITY ALLEY - NIGHT

Mag looks back and forth from the print BJ gave him to the
unmarked door in a non-descript rear brick wall up a short
set of concrete stairs.

Finally he decides that this must be the place and goes to
the door, knocking three times.

A speak-easy draw-to in the door SNAPS open. A set of eyes
look out at Mag.

MAG

Marya Zaleska sent me.

The draw-to snaps closed and the door opens, admitting Mag
to a featureless hallway.

The DOORMAN nods his head to the stairwell at the end of the
hall.

Mag goes down the hall,
 down the stairs and
 opens a plain wooden door.

Here he finds the club, all black walls and red fabric flickering in the dance floor strobes. A few patrons dance, many recline on each other, on chaise lounges. Some drink cocktails, others sip at glasses holding what appears to be blood.

Mag makes his way to the bar and sits while suspicious or greedy eyes look him over.

The BARTENDER comes over and leans in towards Mag, not saying anything.

Mag holds his gaze for a second before offering:

MAG
 Bushmill's.

The Bartender moves off and pours Mag's drink.

Mag scans the crowd, looking for the file-tooth vampire. But, as the bartender sets down his whisky, Mag observes to himself:

MAG
 Not here.

BARTENDER
 Eh?

MAG
 Nothing.

ESTHER and LUCILLE, two exotic young beauties draped in satiny dresses, approach Mag languidly, arm in arm.

ESTHER
 We don't recognize you.

LUCILLE
 Is this your first time?

MAG
 I'm new to the club.

ESTHER
 But is this...

LUCILLE
Your first time?

Lucille licks her lips.

Mag lifts his shirt to show the women the scars on his back.

LUCILLE
Those don't look exactly fresh,
sweetie.

MAG
Getting cut got old. So I
dropped out. It's been awhile.

ESTHER
Are you looking for a new
kind of kick?

MAG
I was referred by a friend.
He said you might have a biter
here.

LUCILLE
Who's your friend?

MAG
What?

LUCILLE
Who's your referral?

MAG
Jimmy DeSade.

A knowing look passes between the ladies.

ESTHER
Really. You're a friend of
DeSade's?

As Mag and Eshter talk, Lucille moves around Mag to the other side.

She leans on the bar and orders drinks from the bartender with a distinct hand movement.

The bartender recognizes the signal, reaches under the bar and selects a particular bottle.

He pours one shot from this bottle and two others from well liquor.

MAG

Yeah. Close enough, anyway.
He used to know a redhead with
a filed smile, said maybe I
could find her here.

ESTHER

The whole set? All across?

MAG

Yeah. That's it. You know
where I can find her?

Lucille hands shots to Mag and Esther.

ESTHER

Here's blood in your eye.

They do the shot and set their glasses down.

MAG

So do you—oof—

Mag experiences a delayed wince from the shot.

MAG

What's in that?

ESTHER

Eye of newt.

Mag blinks his eyes rapidly, like he can't focus correctly.
He sucks at his teeth.

MAG

The woman...

LUCILLE

We can maybe arrange a meeting.
You certainly seem like the
type to keep her company.

Mag begins to feel the effects of the mickey. He tries to
shake the cobwebs out of his head.

MAG

Good. That's grood. Grood.
When do we...

ESTHER

Patience, darling. Just give
it a little time.

MAG

I need bathroom. Prease...

Mag's vision blurs completely. He tries to stand up, losing consciousness as he falls forward. The bartender, Esther, Lucille and all in the bar watch dispassionately as Mag sprawls unconscious on the floor.

INT. TAM'S APARTMENT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Tam opens the door to her apartment to Mag, waiting outside.

MAG

You all right?

TAM

Jesus. Fuck. "I can do martyrdom in three words or less".

Tam turns and stomps away from the door.

MAG

What's that supposed to mean?

Tam turns back to face Mag, livid.

TAM

I don't know, how's the standing upright and walking again and not pissing blood anymore going for you, Mag?

Mag closes the door and eases into the room, moving gingerly to avoid aggravating his aches and pains.

MAG

I'm not taking anything on. I'm just acknowledging that you got hurt, too.

TAM

I didn't get hurt. I got bled. That file-tooth bitch took my blood.

MAG

And you should be mad about that.

TAM

Oh fucking belay that "psychiatric hug" shit, Mag.

MAG

No. Sorry.

TAM

Say your "I told you so's"
and leave me alone, all right?

MAG

I could've stopped you.

TAM

Fuck off. You couldn't stop
yourself.

Tam pours a tall vodka into a short glass; she sloppily
pushes it across the table towards Mag.

He makes no motion to stop it as it flies from the table and
CRASHES to the floor.

Tam takes a deep swig straight from the bottle.

MAG

Look, Crispin and Lark want
To go see the old man.

TAM

So let them.

Tam moves into the bedroom, Mag following.

MAG

I think they were hoping—

TAM

They're hoping to go back.
What do you think, Mag? Do
you think we can go back?

Mag looks forlornly at the bed while Tam sits at her vanity.

MAG

No. I don't think we can.

TAM

But you want to pretend maybe
it's possible. How about this:
Maybe playtime is fucking over.

MAG

I want to do it for them.
They're the two most beautiful
and good people—

Tam glares at herself in the mirror, then shifts her baleful gaze to Mag.

TAM

And we, Mag, are not good and beautiful. We're sad creatures and the best in us is pretend. You want to do Crispin and Lark a favor? Leave them the fuck alone. Maybe they'll learn to deal with their problems.

MAG

That's what it's all about, Tam. So we can deal-

Tam bolts up out of her seat, brandishing the straight-razor.

TAM

Not fucking deal like "get over it", deal like "do something", like take up arms against your fucking oppressors!

MAG

Let this go, Tam.

Tam turns her back to Mag, closes the razor and drops it back on the vanity.

TAM

That's exactly what I'm doing. I'm letting "this" go. We're done here.

INT. CLUB OFFICE - NIGHT

The QUEEN sits in a leather executive chair behind a large, walnut desk supporting only a lamp and an ornate drink service. Other than these two furniture items and a leopard-print couch, the room appears to be temporary quarters only—paint peels from crumbling stucco walls, a push-broom leans over a pile of clutter in one corner, orange crates and cardboard boxes are stacked indiscriminately along one wall. Exposed piping in the ceiling drips in a puddle between the desk and couch. The Queen is a dynamic beauty, well-preserved 40's, graceful but cuttngly powerful in her easy movements. She adorns herself with full abandon to Victorian flair.

Esther and Lucille sit on the couch.

KITTY fusses with the drink service while

ANNA sits on a barstool with a laptop on her knees.

Mag is handcuffed to piping along one wall. He stirs to life with a groan and RATTLES his bonds on the pipes.

MAG

Fuck... you...

QUEEN

It speaks in obscenities. An unpleasant cliché, to be sure.

Mag looks around the room and considers the situation blearily.

MAG

What do you want?

QUEEN

I want blood, of course. Perhaps I shall take yours. Given your situation, I think you'll agree that's my prerogative. I might, however, choose not to exercise that prerogative and allow you to keep your tomato juice in its little skin-sack. Your course of action is to convince me to do that.

MAG

What do you want?

QUEEN

Oh dear. It is stupid as well as vulgar. Unfortunately, such creatures can be dangers even to the evolved and not simply to themselves.

Mag makes no indication of understanding; he stares at the Queen with hostile confusion.

QUEEN

Ah. I'll speak slowly. You came into my club looking for Ella Bathory and claiming acquaintanceship with Jimmy DeSade. Correct?

MAG

Bathory?

QUEEN
(condescendingly
slow)

The woman with the pointy teeth.

MAG

Where is she?

QUEEN

She is daed, maggot.

MAG

Magwitch.

QUEEN

What?

MAG

My name is Magwitch.

The Queen raises her eyebrows and picks up a glass of blood prepared by Kitty and sips at it with consideration.

QUEEN

Very well. Points for Dickens and not Anne Rice. That earns you exactly one chance for survival. Think carefully before you answer. Are you really a friend of Jimmy DeSade's?

Mag pauses to read the situation. He decides to answer honestly.

MAG

No.

QUEEN

Good answer. Do you know why that is a good answer?

MAG

No.

QUEEN

Because Jimmy DeSade killed Ella Bathory.

MAG

She's dead?

Esther jumps up from the couch, fists clenched.

ESTHER

She was our friend!

QUEEN

She was your friend, Esther.
Everyone else hated the cunt.

The Queen gets up and comes around to the front of the desk.

QUEEN

Nevertheless, she was one of us, and that means something. It was no real surprise that her predilection towards violence and sadism came back on Ella. Still... DeSade was... cruel.

MAG

(dubious)

Cruel?

QUEEN

You don't believe it possible to be cruel to one such as Bathory. I begin to understand why you are here. Whatever hate you have for Bathory is yours to deal with. She is dead. And yes—DeSade was cruel.

INT. "TORTURE CHAMBER" - NIGHT

Inside a windowless and filthy but otherwise non-descript room, Bathory is bound to a guerny. The guerny itself is secured to the floor and wall to keep Bathory from shaking loose and knocking down the IV blood transfusion stuck into her arm.

DeSade gives the bag a little squeeze and smiles wickedly as Bathory sweats and shakes profusely. She hisses and tries to scream through the bile seeping from her mouth.

We can see another individual in the room, a woman, but we don't see that she is, in fact, Tam.

QUEEN (V.O.)

He bound her and hooked her up to a slow drip... a transfusion of cross-typed blood. Pray that you remain ignorant of the effects of an severe hemolytic transfusion reaction.

back to INT. CLUB OFFICE

MAG

I'm sorry, but—I'm not sorry.

ESTHER

Fucker!

Esther begins to move threateningly towards Mag, but stops at the Queen's word.

QUEEN

Esther, please. So then, what Of DeSade? Is his just a name you drop or is he, too, on your "hit-list"?

MAG

No. I don't know. He's too big. Him and the Gristle Twins both.

QUEEN

Are you a coward, then?

MAG

Yeah. Maybe. I don't think I knew where I was going with this or how far I was willing to go.

The Queen smiles wanly.

QUEEN

So, it deceives itself, as well.

MAG

I don't know where he is. No one talks about him much anymore. I guess he split town. For a guy who was kind of a sick fuck celebrity, he disappeared pretty well.

ANNA

Well, really... If he's like a celebrity of sorts, then it should be pretty easy to find him.

MAG

What do you mean?

ANNA

You could just google him.

QUEEN

Go ahead, Anna.

Anna keys in the search and reads the results.

ANNA

Jimmy DeSade. Yeah. There's a few hits. Here's one—a blog from someone named "Darkraven".

QUEEN

Oh, dear.

KITTY

A bit on the nose. Or beak.

ANNA

"Pastelraven" was taken.

QUEEN

Ladies, please.

ANNA

Let me see. He's a name-dropper. Scene-pusher. San Francisco. "Everybody was there at the House of Usher, DJ who-cares, so-and-so and so-and-so and Jimmy DeSade with his lovely companion, Tam."

Suddenly, Mag disentangles himself from the pipes and the handcuffs fall away, open.

Mag lurches towards Anna.

All the women are taken aback at the sudden surge of intensity from Mag and are too stunned to react.

MAG

(to Anna)

What? Fucking what?

Anna turns the laptop around so that Mag can see it.

He snatches it from her lap.

ANNA

(timidly)

"Jimmy DeSade and... his lovely companion, Tam."

Mag reads the screen with angry disbelief.

QUEEN

Ah. It was in love.

EXT. HOLY CROSS CEMETARY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Lark and Crispin wait facing each other over Lugosi's graveside, a lit candle between them. Lark holds a book.

Mag comes up to join them.

LARK

No Tam?

CRISPIN

No Tam. It's Okay.

Mag sits with difficulty beside Lark.

LARK

I thought, you know, Dracula.
For the reading. Or we could
just sit quietly.

Mag begins sobbing.

MAG

I am so fucking sorry.

Lark hugs him and cradles his head.

Crispin leans over and takes the book from her.

He opens it and begins reading.

CRISPIN

(reading from
Bram Stoker's
Dracula)

"Four days and nights of peace.
I am getting so strong again that
I hardly know myself. It is as
if I had passed through some long
nightmare, and had just awakened
to see the beautiful sunshine
and feel the fresh air of the
morning around me. I have a
dim half-remembrance of long,
anxious times of waiting and
fearing; darkness in which there
was not even the pain of hope to
make present distress more poignant:
and then long spells of
oblivion, and the rising back to
life as a diver coming up through
a great press of water..."

EXT. CITY ALLEY - NIGHT

Mag comes out of the Vampire club, bleary-eyed from Tam's betrayal.

MAG

Tam. With fucking DeSade?
How could you?

Dazed, he walks slowly down the middle of the street.

The Gristle wins' Buick turns onto the road, lights out.

It idles up behind him. Mag is unaware of its presence until it gets near enough that he can hear the muffled screams of BJ, who is stripped to his tighty-whiteys and tied spread-eagle to the hood of the Buick, face-down, head-forward.

Mag turns and sees the Buick and takes off running as its headlights flare to life and

Manny slams the accelerator down.

Mag runs to BJ's car; he fumbles the keys as he takes them out of his pocket and accidentally throws them underneath BJ's car.

Mag jumps over the hood, Duke-boy style as the Buick side-swipes BJ's driver-side (street-side).

The Buick turns around as

Mag scrambles under BJ's car to retrieve the keys.

The Buick straightens and comes forward towards the rear of BJ's car.

Mag stretches and grabs BJ's car keys. He tries to get out from under BJ's car just as the Twins CRASH into it from behind.

BJ's car shifts forward catching Mag's coat under the rear wheel.

Not Manny gets out of the Buick from the passenger's side and comes after Mag, brandishing a blade-arm from a paper cutter.

NOT MANNY

Hyaaah!

Mag shimmies out of his coat, but Not Manny is there; he strikes twice, knocking Mag to the sidewalk and causing him to drop the keys.

Not Manny picks up the keys.

NOT MANNY

Don't you hate it when you lose
your... life?

Mag grabs a loose brick and launches at Not Manny, hitting him in the head with the brick in his hand.

Not Manny pushes Mag away, temporarily blind from blood in his eyes.

Mag crosses in front of BJ's car and gets hit by the Buick just as it comes alongside BJ's car.

Mag bounces up on the hood of the Buick, grabbing on to BJ.

Mag, dazed, tries to free BJ but can't find a grip as the Buick hits a hard 180-degree turn.

The Buick accelerates, then stops abruptly, sending Mag flying down on to the street.

Not Manny goes to the Buick's driver's window, dangling BJ's keys playfully.

NOT MANNY

Wanna play some chicken?

MANNY

Buckle up for safety.

Not Manny hits Mag as Mag tries to stand up, then

drags the half-stumbling Mag over to BJ's car as

the Buick moves down the street, then turns around again to face toward them.

Not Manny throws Mag in the driver's seat, then pushes him over to the passenger's side and gets behind the wheel.

Not Manny starts up BJ's car and whips it around into the street so that he faces off directly with the Buick.

The cars begin to move forward.

Mag, slowly regaining his senses, slumps forward as though unconscious, discretely opening the glovebox and pulling out a pistol.

Not Manny notices Mag slumped forward and pulls him upright.

NOT MANNY

Come on now, you're gonna wanna
see this!

Mag suddenly looks sharply at Not Manny; Not Manny sees the gun with alarm.

As the Buick continues to accelerate, two FLASHES and BANGS report from inside BJ's car.

BJ's car slows, swerves, and SMACKS into a utility pole.

The Buick SMASHES into BJ's passenger side.

Unseen by Manny, Mag crawls over Not Manny and exits the driver's side door.

The Buick reverses and pulls away a short distance.

Manny gets out and goes to inspect BJ's car.

Manny looks inside and sees the slumped form of Not Manny.

Behind him, Mag runs into the open door of the Buick.

Manny grabs Not Manny and shakes him, letting loose the hand-grenade cradled under Not Manny's arm.

Mag reverses fast in the Buick.

MANNY

Oh shi-

BJ's car EXPLODES, catching Manny in the blast.

Mag speeds the Buick through an industrial complex, then pulls back behind a warehouse and stops.

He jumps out of the car and races around to the front where BJ is furtively pulling at his bonds and trying to dislodge the gag from his mouth through muffled screams. BJ is bleeding from several small glass cuts, but appears otherwise unharmed.

Mag pulls the gag down from BJ's mouth.

BJ

Get me out of this thing, god-
dammit! Fuck!

MAG

Hold on. I got you. I got you.

Mag gets BJ loose from his bonds but can't prevent him from sliding forward and off of the hood,

collapsing in a heap on the asphalt.

Mag goes to help BJ up, but BJ shakes Mag off and

hits him in the jaw.

Mag goes down.

BJ kicks at the smashed grill of the Buick with a bare foot.

BJ

You gonna fuckin' drive me to
the valley on the hood of this
fucking car?

Mag rubs his jaw.

MAG

I'm sorry—

BJ leans in, flexing, like he want to pummel Mag. Mag puts a hand up between them in submissive defense.

BJ

Jesus! Fuck!

MAG

Look. We had to get out of
there. The police—

BJ turns and rants, shaking a fist at the sky and throwing a bottle at a dumpster.

BJ

Fuck the po-lice! Fuck fuckin'
L.A. Goths and fuck you, Mag!

MAG

I never meant to get you
involved like this.

BJ

Oh! Yeah! Like what? Asking
me for help? Yeah. I'm involved.

BJ reconsiders, shakes his head and waves his hands in front of him.

BJ

No. No. I'm out. You're right. I am so far out and away and gone from this psycho shit. I just want to blaze, and fuck, and sleep. Tonight and every night.

MAG

I'll drive you home.

Mag stands up.

BJ

Helllll, no. I ain't goin' anywhere in that hot ride.

MAG

What? You'll walk?

BJ

Yeah, I'll fuckin' walk.

BJ considers his apparel.

BJ

Gimme your goddamn cell. I'll get Verony to get me. And give me a fucking cigarette, for fuck's sake.

Mag produces a cell phone and a crumpled pack of cigarettes from his coat and offers them to BJ.

BJ

I just body-surfed a demolition derby. I deserve one.

EXT. LOS ANGELES ALLEY - NIGHT

Mag parks the Gristle Twin's Buick in an alley a block away from his apartment.

As he turns off the ignition, Mag looks in the rear view mirror and sees the skull of the dog from long ago perched across the back bench seat.

He reaches back in the back seat and grabs the skull.

Mag gets out and shuffles wearily towards his apartment.

A COP CAR, SIRENS blaring and lights flashing, whizzes past Mag.

Mag snorts a short chuckle of contempt as the cruiser speeds away, "if you only knew".

Mag tosses the dog skull into a dumpster.

INT. MAG'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mag takes off his coat and shirt and inspects his injuries, testing the hurt in his muscles and bones.

He splashes himself with water;

trails of blood run down the sink.

He looks at a picture of himself with Tam tucked into the frame of the mirror of the medicine cabinet.

Wet and bloodied hands pluck the picture from the mirror and carry the photo in front of Mag as he moves back into the main room.

Mag lays down in bed, staring wide open eyes at the ceiling.

He crumples the photo dejectedly and throws it away from the mattress.

Mag keeps position, his eyes still open.

The light in the room changes as daylight creeps in.

Mag stretches out to grab the discarded photo, then lays back down flat.

He finally closes his eyes as morning fully blooms.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DUSK (RECENT FLASHBACK)

Crispin enters through the door into his modest and generic, pre-fab house.

He set his keys down on a stand right inside the door and unslings a leather satchel, leaving it propped against the stand.

He leans back out and retrieves the mail, sifting through it idly as he shuts the door behind him, sighing heavily.

Crispin microwaves a Lean Cuisine dinner entrée, then

sits at a small kitchen table with a his food and a can of soda, absently watching "Entertainment Tonight" on a TV set on a counter.

LATER - NIGHT

Crispin pays his bills, stuffing checks into return envelopes and stamping them, washing the taste of the adhesive away with a Budweiser.

Crispin slides open the back door, looking out onto a small patio.

A scraggly orange tabby CAT mews softly and hurries up to an empty food bowl.

Crispin fills up a water bowl from a hose.

He measures out a cup of food into the cat's bowl. Crispin pauses, measures out another cup, then a third. Finally, he sets the open bag down next to the bowl.

Back inside, in his bedroom, Crispin opens a dresser drawer and plucks out his silver bullet.

He looks at it, captivated by the reflection of the light.

Crispin takes off his shirt and lays it on the bed.

In the living room, Crispin pulls thin, flimsy curtains shut over a large picture window.

He goes to an entertainment center and picks out a vinyl record, David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust.

He puts the album on the turntable, then lowers the stylus down at the beginning of the side.

The drums to "FIVE YEARS" fade in.

Crispin pulls a revolver from his pocket and loads the single silver bullet into an empty chamber.

He puts the gun to his temple.

His eyes focus on an old picture of him with Lark, happy.

EXT. OUTSIDE CRISPIN'S HOUSE

A SAMARITAN (average suburban guy) walks his DOG on the sidewalk in front of Crispin's house.

SAMARITAN

(to the dog)

Hokey-Dokey, Amos. Whenever
you're ready.

The Samaritan flinches at the FLASH and BANG of a gunshot from inside Crispin's house.

The dog WHINES and YELPS excitedly.

SAMARITAN
 Omigod. Omigod. Okay, okay,
 Amos. Okay. Okay, buddy.
 You stay here.

The Samaritan ties Amos to a hydrant.

A WOMAN at the house next door peers out from behind a half-open screen door cautiously.

WOMAN
 Did you hear something? What
 was that?

The Samaritan creeps towards Crispin's front door.

SAMRAITAN
 I don't know. I think...

INT. CRISPIN'S LIVING ROOM

Crispin staggers to his feet, clutching at his head, which is bleeding profusely. His eyes are wide with terror and immediate regret for his actions. His breath seethes through clenched teeth and lips spilling over with blood.

EXT.

The Samaritan sees Cripin through the curtains and runs up to his door.

SAMARITAN
 Oh Jesus! Call 911! Call
 911! He's been shot! God!

The Samaritan tries the door and finds it to be locked.

Without hesitating, he kicks at the door with frantic power; the lock immediately gives way and the door CRASHES open.

INT.

The Samaritan runs into Crispin's house and catches Crispin as he collapses.

Crispin tries to look at the Samaritan, but seems to have difficulty moving his eyes to the side as the terror of his impending death holds his gaze forward.

CRISPIN

Take it back! Please! Aah!

The Samaritan looks with anguish at the decidedly mortal wound and resigns himself to Crispin's death; he tries to comfort Crispin and hold him close during his final moments.

SAMARITAN

Oh Jesus. Oh fuck.

CRISPIN

Take it back! I - I wish-
Oh God it hurts.

SAMARITAN

I know. I know.

CRISPIN

Please. Take it back. Take
it back. Take it...

Crispin dies.

SAMARITAN

I know. I know. That's it.
It's over.

EXT. LOS ANGELES ALLEY - DAY

Mag walks down the alley towards the Buick.

Three THUG-lifers are leaning against the car, laughing with each other and smoking, stealing sips from Mad-Dog bottles hidden in paper bags.

The thugs see Mag approaching and fall silent, directing their attention and derisive, venomous smiles in his direction.

Mag stops and nods at the car.

MAG

Excuse me.

THUG1

Oh, is this your car?

MAG

It is now.

THUG 1

"It is now". Hooo - you
like that?

THUG 2

See, I think maybe it's ours
now, so why don't you give up
the keys?

THUG 3

Come on now.

The three begin to approach Mag with bad intent, flexing and twitching meaningfully. Mag stands his ground.

THUG 1

Yeah, come on. What's a
little bitch like you doing
in a preacher's ride?

THUG 2

Ha! Hallelujah hooptie!

MAG

People worry about losing their
grip on reality, but the truth is-

THUG 1

Oh, now you "loco"?

MAG

The truth is you never have more
than a tenuous hold on fantasy-

THUG 3

--the fuck?

MAG

--and the least intrusion or
"reality check" can shatter your
best illusions.

THUG 3

What the fuck you talkin' about?
What the fuck you 'sposed to
be anyway? Some damn creature-
of-the-night wannabe?

Mag frowns; he's had enough of this little drama.

MAG

No. You're not listening. I'm
what I never wanted to be: The
real thing.

Mag pulls out the pistol and points it at the thugs.

They flinch and back away, but gesture threateningly as they go.

THUG 1

A'ight, bitch. We see how it is.

THUG 2

We'll be back for you, then you gonna be a dead motherfucker.

THUG 3

Enjoy your last day on earth.

Mag watches them go, then pockets the gun. He chuckles at the suggestion he was left with.

MAG

(to himself)

Good advice.

Mag gets in the buick, and starts up the engine.

INT. DeSADE'S LOFT (SAN FRANCISCO) - DAY

DeSade sprawls across a worn leather recliner, watching the news on one of several televisions, some on, some off, some stacked atop others still in the box. Islands of various stolen merchandise litter the loft amongst mismatched furniture. Drug paraphernalia is omnipresent. Patchy sunlight fights through blacked-out windows.

Tam walks out of the bathroom and rifles angrily through a bureau drawer.

DeSADE

Are you pretty yet?

TAM

Fuck off.

Tam marches back in to the bathroom.

On the TV that DeSade watches we see a local news studio with female ANCHOR sitting at the news desk, reporting

TV REPORTER

Police suspect a hand grenade caused the explosion this morning in Los Angeles that killed Francis Milne and Manuel Guillome, known to authorities as the Gristle Twins despite being no relation

(MORE)

TV REPORTER (CONT'D)

nor bearing any close physical
resemblance to each other. The
LAPD reports no suspects as
identifiable at this time,
though detectives are pursuing
leads related to organized crime.

TAM (OC)

What are you watching?

DeSADE

Animal planet. You learn the
damnedest things.

EXT. CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY - DAY

Mag makes the drive from Los Angeles to San Francisco.

EXT. REST STOP/ PUBLIC BEACH - SUNSET

Mag leans against the Buick, looking out at the setting sun
and a small group of people frolicking on the beach and in
the mild surf.

MAG

Too late.

Mag flicks the cigarette away and goes back to the driver's
seat.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO CITY STREET - NIGHT

Outside House of Usher, Mag leans against the Buick,
watching Goths and freaks go into the club.

He tucks the gun into his belt in back and settles his coat
overtop of it, then

flicks a cigarette towards the gutter and moves towards the
club entrance.

INT. HOUSE OF USHER - NIGHT

The club is crowded and active. Mag moves like a moody
ghost through the throng.

Unable to survey the scene properly, Mag ascends to a
balcony and looks down.

He sees Tam on the dancefloor.

After a few seconds, Tam stops dancing and appears
distracted. Suddenly, she looks up into the balcony,

directly at Mag, as if sensing his presence. She is not overjoyed to see him.

She leaves the dancefloor in a huff.

Mag hurries down from the balcony and pushes through the crowd after her.

He catches up with her as she dips into a hallway off from the main room, where the restrooms are.

Mag touches her arm and she wheels around with a hostile look.

TAM

What the fuck are you doing here?

MAG

I came to see you.

TAM

So? You tracked me down.
Congratulations. You see me?
I'm here. So what?

MAG

Tam--

TAM

I swear to fucking Christ, if
you use the "L" word at any
point in this conversation--

MAG

I know about you and DeSade.

TAM

You don't know shit, Mag.

MAG

I get it. You got hurt.

A GOTH CHIC comes out from the restroom and nervously passes the quarreling couple. Tam frowns in annoyance.

TAM

Oh, fuck off with this.

An alarm CLANGS, unheard over the music, as Tam slams open a security door and steps out to

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO ALLEY

Mag follows her out. Tam keeps walking as Mag pursues.

MAG

You were violated. Somebody bled you. And you're supposed to be the cutter. You don't get cut. You needed to put the bitch with the shark teeth down. And you thought I was no good to you. So you went to the one person you knew could put things right. You went to DeSade and made whatever deal you had to—

Tam stops and turns back to Mag, glaring at him.

TAM

Fuck you, Mag.

MAG

You made the deal so DeSade would put her in the ground.

TAM

I left because it was time to put away childish things.

MAG

And what did you take up in their place.

TAM

I don't need to justify myself. I don't owe you anything.

MAG

I'm not here to collect. Not from you, anyway.

TAM

What the hell are you talking about?

MAG

Crispin's dead. He killed himself.

Tam pauses. She is shaken by the news but tries not to show it.

TAM

(defensively)

So what?

MAG

No. Not this time, Tam.

Tam weakens a little.

TAM

You blame me.

MAG

No, I blame Crispin. Suicide's a shitty thing to do to those you leave behind regardless of the reasons that pushed you to it—especially if you share one soul like he did with Lark.

Tam's anger is dispersed. She drums her fingers nervously on her arms and smiles just a little at the corners.

TAM

Hmnh. You're such a damn softie.

MAG

I've missed you, Tam.

TAM

Goddammit.

Tam rolls her eyes in surrender and rushes forward to kiss Mag.

They lose themselves in their passion and the world falls away.

They grope at each other with hunger and unhesitatingly begin to have sex against the wall.

Mag's gun bounces to the ground, unheeded.

In the midst of the ecstasy, Tam's eyes go wide with horror.

She begins to hit Mag on the shoulders and strives to push him away.

TAM

No! No! Get off of me!

MAG

Tam? What the hell?

We see what made Tam freak out—DeSade and MUSCLE stride up the alley towards Mag and Tam.

DeSADE

She's trying to act like she's
not enjoying it, loverboy.

MAG

Oh, shi-

Mag withdraws from Tam and tries to reach down for his pants.

He sees the gun lying on the street.

DeSADE

Belive you me, I know the
performance by heart.

Mag stretches out to get the gun but DeSade grabs at the jeans still around Mag's ankles and drags him back away from the gun.

Mag grabs beneath him to protect his naked member.

Tam kicks and punches at Muscle, but he easily restrains her.

DeSade pins Mag face down on the street.

DeSADE

Ah! Ah! Ah! Bad goth!

DeSade spanks Mag's bare butt.

DeSADE

(looking at
Mag's ass)

Now I remember you. I'm no good
With names, but I never forget
a face. Why, I haven't seen you
since that night with the Gristle
Twins. How are the Twins, anyway?
All of a sudden, I'm in the mood
to play doctor.

DeSade takes a small parcel out from his jacket.

He unrolls this swath of cloth to reveal a syringe already loaded with fluid.

Mag squirms as DeSade sticks the syringe in his rear and depresses the plunger.

DeSADE

Now, stop squirming or the
needle will break off in
your bum.

DeSade twists the syringe sideways with great force.

DeSADE

Oops! You know, I'm really
doing you a favor-- this
stuff'll send you - hey!

With a sudden effort, Mag throws DeSade off from him.

Mag scrambles to his feet, pulling up his pants as he begins
to run away.

DeSADE

Y'know, I could've just given
you an air bubble!

DeSade turns to Muscle.

DeSADE

Go get him.

Muscle releases the squirming Tam into DeSade's grasp and
moves off after Mag.

DeSADE

Leave the bitch with me.

Mag runs, stumbling, gradually succumbing to the effects of
the injection.

He jumps and catches at a fire escape, but fails to pull
himself up. He falls off, losing consciousness on his way
to bouncing on the asphalt.

EXT. L. A. CEMETARY - DAY (RECENT FLASHBACK)

Lark and Mag are speaking as in the beginning, on the bench,
after Crispin's funeral.

LARK

Have you spoken with Tam?

MAG

No. Not since she left.

LARK

Do you want to?

Mag frowns, but doesn't answer.

LARK

Maybe you shouldn't wait too
long.

MAG

I don't know if I ever loved her.

LARK

Well, it was a fair simulation,
anyway.

Lark pauses, looking off in contemplation, away from Mag,
then turns back to him.

LARK

There's a theory I've heard:
In this world, you get what you
want. I don't subscribe to it,
but it's a good thought experiment.
I've run it a couple of times.
It can help to clarify things.

MAG

Do you think we wanted to lose
our innocence that night?

Lark smiles sweetly.

LARK

Mag, darling—we were never
innocent.

EXT. L. A. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Mag explodes out from the trunk of the Buick,
sprawling dazedly out onto the street outside Holy Cross
emetary.

DeSade holds him at bay with a shovel while Muscle stands
with a weighty hand on Tam's shoulder.

DeSADE

Oho! None of that, now. Play
nice or play dead.

MAG

Where—

DeSADE

Back where it all began, Fagbitch!
Holy Cross Cemetary, Los Angeles,
California, U. S. of fuckin' A.
I know—all those hours in the
car, your back must be pretty
stiff, eh? That's what it's all
about though, in'it? Pretty
stiffs. Come on, then.

DeSade yanks Mag to his feet. They move on to the

GUARDHOUSE

where Tam goes on ahead with seductive step while the others remain hidden.

The Gargoyle (reformed, dry, and not leacherous) puts a newspaper aside, stands and leans halfway out from the guardhouse as Tam approaches.

GARGOYLE

Just hold it right there, miss.
Cemetery's closed.

TAM

Are you sure we can't work
something out?

Tam smiles naughtily and leans her chest forward.

TAM

I've never met a guard
who didn't want... relieved.

GARGOYLE

Not going to happen. I ain't
losing this job for-

Tam's manner changes abruptly to anxious seriousness.

TAM

Shut up and listen, Goddammit.
I need you to call the cops.
There are some bad motherfuckers
Behind me who are going to-

Muscle appears suddenly and headbutts the gargoyle who collapses in a heap.

Muscle puts a hand to his forehead.

MUSCLE

Ow! Bastard got like a metal
Plate in his head.

DeSade guides Mag forward with a pistol while he leans the shovel back over his shoulder.

DeSADE

(to Tam)

I feel the trust has gone out
of our relationship.

DeSade leans the shovel against the guardhouse.

DeSADE

(to Muscle)

Quit your bitching and get him
in the chair. Did you ever hear
of pistol-whipping, for fuck's
sake?

Muscle picks up the gargoyle and props him in the chair.

He stretches out a length of duck tape and sets to binding
the guard.

They move to

THE LUGOSI PLOT

DeSADE

Here we are at last. I hope
you're not disappointed when
you meet your hero.

DeSade tosses the shovel over to Mag while keeping the gun
trained on him.

Muscle is also now armed with a handgun, the other hand
holds Tam's arm.

Mag makes no effort to catch the shovel, but lets it bounce
off his arm down to the ground.

MAG

If you think I'm going to dig
my own grave, you're crazier
than you pretend to be.

DeSADE

Today's laborforce—so demanding,
So lacking in motivation.

DeSade puts the gun barrel up to Tam's temple.

DeSADE

A bargain, then: You dig,
and I don't shoot dear Tammie.

MAG

That's a shit deal.

DeSade and Tam both express some surprise.

DeSADE

Oh, my. Your beau is not a
sentimentalist, Tam.

MAG

It's not that. It's because
if I dig it up, you'll have to
shoot her once she sees what's
in the box.

EXT. HOLY CROSS CEMETARY - NIGHT (RECENT FLSHBACK)

Mag stands over the Lugosi plot, wearing the clothes from
Crispin's funeral.

MAG

What do you want me to say:
"Sorry I haven't been around
lately"? I fucking stand right
over you without a care, but
I wouldn't get within a hundred
feet of where they planted
Crispin. And fucking yes, I
would like that explained to me.

Gargoyle drives a golf cart through the cemetery, on the
path beside the grotto.

He spots Mag and stops abruptly

The guard flashes a light in Mag's direction and catches him
in its beam.

GARGOYLE

Hey!

MAG

Brilliant.

Gargoyle dismounts from the golf cart and moves forward,
keeping his flashlight trained on Mag.

He sets his other hand on his belt where a canister of mace
is holstered.

GARGOYLE

Hey. The cemetery's closed.
You need to-

Gargoyle recognizes the location and situation.

GARGOYLE

Oh, fucking hell. Lugosi again.

MAG

Look, sod off you fuck.

GARGOYLE

"Sod off"? Aye, tea and crumpets your majesty. Are we starting this up again? You drama-club— Wait. You're one of those that used to come around with Tam. I remember you. Like that other one who came back. I told him and I'll fucking tell you, we're not doing that shit—

MAG

What other one?

GARGOYLE

What?

Mag realizes the guard might be referring to Crispin. He gets excited and steps over Bela's plot, towards the guard.

MAG

What. Other. One? What do you mean by that?

Gargoyle reads Mag's animation as potential hostility. He pulls the mace from his belt and holds it in front of him as he backs away two steps.

GARGOYLE

Get out, okay? No more bribes, not anymore. You're not worth my retirement, not for an extra bottle. I'm off that. I found God.

MAG

In a cemetery? You weren't looking hard, were you? So how 'bout you fucking leave and let leave: Leave me aone, and I'll leave when I'm ready.

The guard's anxiety turns to exasperation; he no longer views Mag as a threat and holsters the mace.

GARGOYLE

Oh well that's-- maybe I'll just call the cops, then, god-dammit. Fuck you and your weird friends, and fuck Tam, and fuck your stories about graverobbing, because it never fucking happened!

MAG

What?

GARGOYLE

Oh, I know—that bullshit about that. The cape. The great cape robbery. No. That story your friend was spilling—I was here then, too, you know—the riots—it didn't happen. It never happened. I was here. For all the shit we put up with... No one has ever dug someone up. That dirt ain't moved since it was put there. And fuck you for what you know, anyway, 'cause the cape Lugosi's buried in ain't even the one from the movie!

back to PRESENT

DeSade shrugs at Mag's story.

DeSADE

The fact that I never actually dug up Dracula's grave is irrelevant—

Tam explodes with anger, shrugging off the startled Muscle.

TAM

You son of a bitch! Fucking bastard!

Mag snatches up the shovel and hits Muscle full in the face with it.

BANG! Muscle fires blindly,

hitting DeSade in the shoulder.

DeSADE

Ow! Fuck!

Angered, DeSade SHOTS Muscle several times.

Muscle returns fire as he falls dead, BANG!--

hitting Tam.

MAG

Tam!

Mag hits DeSade's arm with the shovel, knocking the gun loose, then

WHACKS DeSade in the face with the shovel handle.

DeSade falls to the ground.

Mag tosses the shovel aside and grabs the gun. He pistol-whips DeSade.

MAG

How's that for pistol-whipping,
Jimmy?

Mag hurries over to Tam.

He kneels beside her and cradles her head in his lap.

TAM

I was so right to never want
to see you again. Gunshots'll
bring the cops.

MAG

I know. I have to go.

TAM

You're not leaving me here!

MAG

I have to. You need to get to
a hospital. The cops will get
the EMT's for you.

TAM

I don't care.

MAG

I do. Huh. I guess I do care.

TAM

What about Jimmy?

MAG

He and I will be leaving together.

TAM

I don't want to be alone.

MAG

It'll only be a couple minutes.

TAM

It will be forever.

MAG

It always is.

They kiss.

He lays her down, her head on Bela's marker.

Mag yanks DeSade to his feet and jabs the pistol in his back, pushing him forward.

MAG

Move fast or die right here.

They go back to

EXT. BY THE BUICK

DeSADE

It occurs to me that we may have gotten off on the wrong foot.

MAG

If you want to beg for your life, at least drop the fake accent.

DeSADE

(sans accent)

How's this? Fuck. You.

Mag wags the gun at the trunk of the car.

MAG

Open the trunk and get in.

DeSADE

The trunk? Uh, fuck you, no.

MAG

Fine. You're baggage I don't need anymore, anyway.

Mag pushes DeSade to his knees,

levels the gun at DeSade's head and pulls the trigger.

Both are momentarily frozen with surprise when the gun does not go off, but only CLICKS impotently.

DeSade launches himself at Mag.

They tussle, slamming each other against the car and the cemetery fence until

Mag is able to get the better of DeSade and

sends him CRASHing through the rear driver-side window, stunning DeSade.

Mag strains to catch his breath but jumps at the sound of distant police SIRENS.

He scrambles up and, with a desperate effort, manages to get DeSade into the trunk of the car.

Mag jumps into the driver's seat and starts up the Buick.

He pulls away from the curb with a squeal of the tires just as the cops come around the corner.

As Mag pulls out into the street, DeSade bursts out from the trunk. Obviously stunned, he walks nonchalantly down from the moving vehicle, miraculously retaining his balance.

DeSade holds the other grenade in one hand, his arms stretched out in crucifix pose, facing the pursuing COPS.

Two cop cars break to a screeching halt; four cops emerge from the vehicles and train their sidearms on DeSade.

DeSADE

Look what I found!

Mag watches DeSade in the rearview mirror, not seeing the oncoming CAR that HONKS and SCREECHES into a collision with the Buick. Mag's driver's side and the DRIVER's passenger's side bumpers become entangled as a result of the collision.

DeSade pulls the pin on the grenade.

DeSADE

This... explodes! Hahaha!

COP1

He's got something in his hand!

COP2

It's a fucking grenade! Drop it!

COP3

Drop it now!

COP2

Take him down!

The driver jumps out of the car.

Mag tries to drive away, dragging the other car along, with very limited success.

The cops SHOOT at DeSade, hitting him in the chest. DeSade falls to the pavement. The grenade falls in from of him.

DRIVER

What the fuck are you do-
 (reacting to
 the gunfire)
 Oh shit!

The driver runs away from the melee. The cops run forward, two flanking DeSade, the other two obviously plan on passing DeSade and going on to pursue Mag.

COP1

(into radio)
 Officer initiated fire. Sus-
 pect requires emergency medical
 attention. Second suspect exiting
 vehicle on foot, West Slausen
 avenue...

Mag gives up trying to drive away and jumps out of the car, running away.

DeSade struggles and lifts himself up, looking at the grenade in front of him.

DeSADE

I want to see...

The FLASH grenade goes off, blinding DeSade and all cops.

DeSADE

Aaaahh!

COP4

Flash grenade! Fuck!

COP2

Who's got eyes?

COP3

I can't fucking see! Where did
 he go?

COP1

(into radio)
 Officers in distress, explosive
 detonated, flash grenade...

across Slausen avenue, opposite the cemetery gates, Mag
 shimmies up a chain-link fence surrounding a construction
 site,

flips over,

and hits the ground running, breathlessly.

Mag scrambles up a heap of dirt, then his legs give out at the top;

he tumbles down to the base of the dirt heap.

As Mag struggles to raise himself,

the tires of a NEW, ASIAN IMPORT SEDAN skid to a stop nearby kicking up dust.

The passenger side door, facing Mag, swings open.

From the driver's seat BJ yells at Mag,

BJ
Get in, you weird-ass mother-
fucker!

Mag staggers upright and lurches into the car.

BJ peels out in a second cloud of dust and dirt, and speeds away from the scene, just as

a POLICE HELICOPTER approaches from over the cemetery.

BJ looks back into the rearview mirror every other second as he slows to blend in with traffic.

Mag leans back in the passenger's seat;

his eyes close.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Tam lays in a hospital bed, hooked up to an IV, looking unglamorous and bored as she flips absently through daytime TV with the remote. Mag enters the room, a changed man—his hair is dyed red, he wears glasses and clothing appropriate to a golf outing at the country club, including a sweater tied around his shoulders. He is carrying a dozen long-stem roses.

TAM
(mock confusion)
Do I know you?

MAG
Tam, it's—

TAM
Oh, I fucking know who it is, but,
seriously—do I know you?

Mag smirks, looking down at his terrible disguise.

MAG

I was worried the cops were watching your room.

As Tam speaks, Mag crosses the room and lays the flowers down.

TAM

The cops? Yeah, they were here. Some prick detective-lieutenant-something grilled me. I don't think he liked my attitude.

Mag sits on the bed.

MAG

I'll bet.

TAM

It went on for awhile. I thought about faking a swoon just to get the bitch off my clit for two seconds when word came down that Jimmy DeSade went and did the only decent thing he's ever done in his life.

MAG

(surprised)

He confessed?

TAM

Fuck no. He died. Corpses are easy pincushions. They would've put the OJ murders on him if they could. Case closed, no loose ends.

MAG

Really?

TAM

Are they looking for someone fitting your former description? Yeah. Are they looking hard? Hell, no.

Mag tugs at the collar of his shirt.

MAG

So I can lose the Archie?

TAM

Like they can tell one goth from another. Seriously, Mag-- the sweater? Are you auditioning to play "Blaine" in a "Pretty in Pink" revival?

MAG

Tell me you don't love me like this?

TAM

(laughs)

I can't even look at you like that!

Tam becomes uncharacteristically shy.

TAM

As to whether I love you...

MAG

(awkwardly)

Yeah. Hey. Maybe we'll go dancing sometime.

TAM

Fuck. I'm not programmed for this. Is this a happy ending?

MAG

Well, yeah, if you ignore the morality of our actions...

Tam shrugs.

TAM

I always do. You know what's crazy? This is my first blood transfusion. Can you believe it? I never knew my blood type before. You will not fucking believe what it is: B Positive.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAY

BJ leans against his new, Asian import as Mag approaches.

BJ

All good? No fuzz?

MAG

No. DeSade's dead and took the rap for the whole mess to hell with him.

(MORE)

MAG (CONT'D)

One thing I don't get, though:
Aloysius didn't finger me for
anything.

BJ

Didn't figure him for the quiet
type, huh? Well, if you want to
ask him why not, we can go back
in and visit him., but I'm guessing
he's equating conversation with
pain at this point. He gave you
up to the Gristle Twins and they
return the favor with a no-expenses-
paid hospital stay. I'm thinking
he probably doesn't feel like he
owes them anything.

MAG

There's something to be said
for cultivating your friendships.

BJ

(rolls his eyes)

We're still friends because I
can pretend you don't say cheese-
ball shit like that.

Mag goes around to the passenger's side door and opens it.
BJ opens the driver's side.

MAG

I like the rental, by the way.

BJ

Sooo fuck you. Am I ever gonna
get the story behind all this
shit, anyway?

They get in the car and drive away.

MAG

Christ. Where do I start?
Nobody knows when a story begins.
Not when you're in it. When it's
over, you can pick a point and
say, "It all began when...", but
you'll probably choose wrong.
So you end up with all these bits
and pieces you forgot at the
beginning that you have to fill
in along the way.

END