PLAGUED

Written by

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DARKNESS

SUPERIMPOSE:

"There is no great genius without a mixture of madness." Aristotle

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Dense woodland. Muddy paths. A desolate cabin. A low bridge hangs over a moonlit creak.

SUPERIMPOSE: THE NEW FOREST, ENGLAND, 1985

A delirious TEENAGE GIRL runs for her life down a moonlit path. She SCREAMS for help.

Mud caked boots trudge menacingly behind her.

She trips over a tree root, falls to the ground.

She looks up in horror as a MASKED MANIAC wields an axe - and they both pause.

TV host DUNCAN JAMES (63) steps in front of the actors.

Duncan smiles towards us, welcoming us to his show.

DUNCAN

Horrific, isn't it? Well, imagine this. Imagine this stage play we've reenacted with our talented cast of actors weren't just playing a game. They were in fact reenacting a scene from a violent series of murders that happened here in this very location just nine months ago. We'll be covering this story on tonight's episode of " Unexplained: Explained?"

He points towards us as if leaving the viewer to decide, his signature move.

A 1980s style credit sequence introduces the show "Unexplained: Explained?".

Duncan stands with a microphone. Obvious smoke machine provided fog fills the background as he walks towards us.

DUNCAN Three bodies. No leads. A killer remains on the loose.

INSERT

Black and white photographs of three adult victims. Two females and a male. Faces and bodies covered in blood.

BACK TO SCENE

Duncan stops. He sighs. Looks back up at us.

DUNCAN

The New Forest murders may forever be unsolved. Was it the work of a solitary maniac perhaps inspired by too much violence in the movies? Maybe it was the work of aliens? Consider the possibility Satanists may have played a part.

Duncan takes a book from a stage hand. He shows the cover. "The New Forest Massacre by Z.Z.Zagam".

DUNCAN

With the success of little known author Z.Z Zagam's new book, we'll be taking a closer look at one of the biggest unsolved murder mysterious of recent times.

Duncan points to the camera with a well-recited glare and smile. He's done this a million times before.

DUNCAN

That's what we'll be discussing on tonight's show and we'll leave you to be the judge.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Duncan's face appears as a grainy picture on a mute television set in a dark room.

Frenzied writing.

Balls of screwed up paper lay scattered across the floor.

Incoherent muttering. Desperate.

Newspaper clippings about the "New Forest Massacre" cover the decrepit walls.

An unseen figure scrunches up another failed attempt. Throws the paper ball at the TV screen.

The figure rises from a tatty armchair. Looks down at Duncan on the television.

Hits the off button.

Darkness engulfs the room.

DISTORTED VOICE (twisted, demonic) You will know my name.

OVER BLACK

SUPERIMPOSE: PRESENT DAY

FADE IN:

EXT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

ROB MCKAY's (50) smug reflection smiles back at him from a display window. Rob is clean, handsome, confident.

Inside the display window a shelf is draped with promotional material for a bestselling horror book titled "THE MAD HACKER". Banners proudly promote "ROB MCKAY - NUMBER ONE HORROR AUTHOR" at the forefront.

CLOSE UP ON BOOK:

The animated cover features a young lady cowering in a dark room, hiding from a dark figure who holds a blood drenched hacksaw in his hands.

BACK TO SCENE:

Rob smirks, self-satisfied.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Rob walks a busy sidewalk, alongside a never ending succession of tall gray buildings and skyscrapers.

Hectic traffic adds noise to the enclosure. A bustling vibrant street, yet a strong sense of claustrophobia.

INT. POST/SORTING OFFICE - RECEPTION - NIGHT

Soft music plays in an otherwise quiet and empty reception.

A clerk, WALTER (50s), reads a newspaper behind his desk.

Rob enters inside with a briefcase. He acknowledges Walter with a subtle nod.

INT. POST/SORTING OFFICE - STORAGE AREA - NIGHT

Wall to wall full of postal lockers.

Rob slides a metallic tray from his designated mailbox.

INT. POST/SORTING OFFICE - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

Rob removes a large bundle of A4 sized envelopes/jiffy bags that are addressed to "SWAN PUBLISHING LTD" from the mailbox container.

Rob checks over some of the varying qualities of handwriting on the envelopes. He arches his eyebrows in interest at those of a good quality and scoffs at the lesser ones.

He packs them all into his briefcase.

INT. POST/SORTING OFFICE - RECEPTION - NIGHT

Rob marches through the reception. He doesn't even glance at the clerk.

ROB (pompous) I'm finished, Walter.

Walter looks up from his paper to reply - but only the sight of the revolving door spinning greets him.

Walter chortles to himself.

WALTER Yeah, 'night asshole.

Walter brings his attention back to his paper. He removes a cup of coffee from an advertizement page, sips it and places it down on his desk.

CLOSE UP ON ADVERTIZEMENT PAGE:

Rob McKay's "THE MAD HACKER" hogs the limelight.

Alongside other much smaller ads, a coffee stained ring circles one for "SWAN LITERACY AGENCY - SWAN PUBLISHING LTD."

The underneath reads:

"Fancy yourself as a writer? Can't get your foot in the door? Now seeking submissions from amateur authors worldwide! Unsolicited material welcome! Send to : CANE ABLE, SWAN PUBLISHING LTD. London, PO BOX". EXT. MCKAY HOUSE - NIGHT

A large house only the rich could afford to own.

An expensive luxury car parks in a driveway.

INT. MCKAY HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The front door opens. Rob enters inside.

He picks up several envelopes that have been posted through his letterbox from the floor.

INT. MCKAY HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Spacious. Classy. Luxury furniture. A large cosy old fashioned fireplace. A room designated to someone who likes a bit of old and a bit of new but who is clearly not afraid of expense.

Rob flicks on an ancient answer machine as he puts down his briefcase and removes his coat.

TONY (V.O.) (from answer machine) Hey Rob, it's Tony. Just a reminder that we've got that meeting with Janet early tomorrow morning so don't get too wasted tonight, buddy. The last thing you wanna do is piss off your publisher!

A poor attempt at a fake laugh by Tony is given a mock laugh in return by Rob.

TONY (V.O.) Oh, and one other thing. Rob - as your agent, I think it's in your best interests to get with the times a little and invest in a Iphone or an I-pad, something where I don't have to keep leaving messages -

Rob flicks to the next message.

CRYSTAL (V.O.) Hey Dad. Thanks a bunch for standing me up today at lunch...

Rob scrunches his face in genuine regret.

ROB Damn it. I completely forgot. CRYSTAL (V.O.) You know you keep going on about trying to be a good Dad and all but...

Rob picks up the briefcase and empties the mail all over his settee.

ROB Daddy's been busy, baby.

CRYSTAL (V.O.) ...so I don't know where we go from here. I'm just pissed off with you Dad. Again. Bye.

Rob sorts his mail out into tidy piles on the settee as the answer machine declares "NO MORE MESSAGES".

ROB I'll call you later sweetheart. I'll make it up to you.

LATER

Rob wearily places a half glass of whiskey on a table. He leans back into his settee with a sigh as he opens a letter.

Rob frowns as he reads the letter.

He screws it up and tosses it on the floor - into a pile where others lay uncurling from the heat of the nearby lit fireplace. A slew of unpaid bills. Final demands.

Rob opens the final letter.

He reads it with concern. His concern changes into a smile.

He laughs before re-reading it again, slurring slightly.

ROB Dear Mr. Rob McKay. I would like to blah,blah,blah... I find it staggering the amount of coincidences between my manuscript and your book "HELL HATH NO FURY"... blah,blah,blah... I find this to be none other than plagiarism...

Rob screws up the letter. He throws it into the fireplace.

He chortles as he leans forward to watch it burn. He swigs down the last of his whiskey.

ROB Prove it, asshole.

MOMENTS LATER

Rob rips open the pile of packages on his settee. They are all manuscripts.

MONTAGE

1> Rob skim reads through the manuscripts. He picks one up. Reads for a few seconds. Tosses it on the floor. He picks another from the pile.

2> An interested Rob reads through a manuscript. He screws up his face.

ROB Nah. I can't work with that.

He throws it to the floor.

3> Rob sips on his drink. He mockingly laughs before he throws another manuscript on his discarded pile.

4> Rob picks up a manuscript, looks at the cover and tosses it aside without even reading it.

END MONTAGE

EXT. ZEBRA PUBLISHING SKYSCRAPER - DAY

The skyscraper looms over the city street, casting a shadow over those that pass before it.

INT. ZEBRA PUBLISHING - RECEPTION - DAY

A large placard declares the office as "ZEBRA PUBLISHING".

Rob's latest book "THE MAD HACKER" is proudly shown off in display units.

A RECEPTIONIST (60) sits at a desk. Her sharp prying eyes watch Rob, who sits on a nearby couch with agent TONY BRASCO (44).

A name plate on a closed door: "JANET LEE - PUBLISHER".

TONY Janet will probably agree with whatever you say but I'd like you to be a little more pragmatic.

Rob dismisses Tony's advice with a cocky wave of his hand.

ROB Janet Lee will go with anything I give her, end of. You're supposed to be my agent, Tony, not hers.

TONY You're number one, so of course but

ROB I received a letter last night. A nice little piece about me ripping off some poor bugger. Stupid imbecile gave me the biggest laugh I'd had in ages.

Tony looks up at the peering eyes of the Receptionist. She's drying her newly painted fingernails with annoying gasp like breaths from her mouth.

TONY Let's talk about that in the meeting.

INT. ZEBRA PUBLISHING - OFFICE - DAY

Tony and Rob sit opposite a desk from publisher JANET LEE (60s). The London skyline can be seen from large windows.

There is a relaxed atmosphere.

JANET

The book is selling by the truckload. We're gonna need other distributors at this rate.

TONY

How's the Asian connection coming along, Janet? They just buy shit in the masses out there.

JANET

It's almost a done deal. We've got "THE MAD HACKER" in fifteen different languages and movie rights already in the can.

ROB

That's great.

JANET

It's more than great, Rob. Your old books have had increased sales so much we're going to need a new print. You've really reinvigorated yourself. You're hot stuff. Rob is calm. ROB It was bound to happen. Once you catch a goose ... you wait for the golden egg. Janet and Tony laugh. JANET Down to business. We want a new release next year. Rob shrugs, nonchalant about the whole thing. Tony fiddles with his thumbs, nervous. ROB Well, I'll try my best. But really, it depends what travels on the back of the Swan... Rob gets up and strolls about the office. Tony looks at Janet. Both share concern. TONY Rob, it would be best if you just -Janet cuts in. She's not in the mood for games. JANET You need to get back to writing solid material, Rob. Original material. Your own. TONY Janet's right. You could face a lawsuit, this company, me... we've got to kill it off before it becomes too much. Rob, cock-a-hoop, sits himself up on the window sill. He points at himself, Tony and Janet. ROB No one can link Swan to me, you or you.

Janet and Tony look at each other, not convinced.

ROB In any case, it's a learning process for these amateurs. It teaches them that they will get nowhere in this game by just sitting at home writing and sending off material in the hope of a quick buck/quid in return. (MORE) ROB (cont'd) (beat) It's my job to do that.

JANET C'mon, Rob. You're better than that.

ROB

Perhaps. But originality is dead. It no longer exists and even if it did, people wouldn't want it. All they want is something they're used to. They don't like change. They just want more of the same.

Janet and Tony sigh to each other.

ROB

It's not as if what I do isn't work. It can take weeks, months to find, then mix and match the best stories, edit them into one and give it the Rob McKay gleam. I've become a household name because of this procedure, and in case you forgot, no one gave a shit about my older stuff.

JANET

That's not exactly what we're trying to build upon, Rob. We've got you to the top. Now we need to build from here. Legitimately.

ROB

I think you need to appreciate my dedication to the cause. My method has helped Zebra publishing from the back of a shitty back alley charity shop to where it is today.

JANET

Your older books *are* getting recognition, Rob. They're finally getting the credit they're due.

TONY

You're just going through a phase, a writers block.

Rob laughs.

ROB

Writer's block is just an excuse, and in any case, I improve the stories that are sent to me ten fold. It's what I term a *rip off* into a *write on*. INT. MCKAY HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Rob sits on his settee. He's reading through another bunch of manuscripts.

He picks up another envelope, rips it open and slides out a manuscript.

He glances at the front and back cover and casually tosses it behind the settee.

ROB If you can't even be arsed to write a covering letter... I can't be arsed to look at it. First sign of it being a piece of a crap anyway.

MONTAGE

1> Rob fills his glass with vodka. Checks the clock above the fireplace. 7:45PM. Rob reads through another manuscript.

ROB

Lame.

2> Rob refills his glass. Tosses another manuscript on the ever increasing pile on the floor.

ROB

Beyond lame.

3> Rob checks the clock. 10:00PM. Rob refills his glass. Rubs his weary eyes before skimming through another submission.

ROB

Shit.

4> Rob empties the vodka bottle into his glass. Looks up at the clock. 11:45PM. Rob leans back with the final manuscript and reads through it in a zombiefied manner.

ROB Beyond shit.

END MONTAGE

BACK TO SCENE

Having exhausted the lot, a bleary eyed Rob sits back exhausted. He scrubs his face with his hands.

EXT. MCKAY HOUSE - BACK GARDEN - NIGHT

Rob sways as he puts four large bin bags out in his garden, alongside another large batch of eight.

He looks up at the sky, closes his eyes, and breathes in fresh air in a bid to reinvigorate himself.

He opens his drunken red eyes. He searches the star speckled sky and full moon for inspiration.

INT. MCKAY HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Rob drunkenly staggers into the room. He notices the manuscript behind the settee.

He chortles to himself. Picks up the manuscript.

ROB What the hell... I could do with a laugh.

Rob collapses on the settee with the manuscript in hand. He looks about to pass out - but opens his eyes.

LATER

A wide awake, reinvigorated Rob reads the manuscript. He flicks through it, captivated by its pages.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

A LOUD knock.

HELEN MCKAY, (40s, attractive, fashion conscious) storms toward the front door. She opens it as if she's about to tear it from it's hinges.

Rob stands - from a fair distance - at the doorstep.

Helen gives him a cold stare. Folds her arms. Rob rolls his eyes.

HELEN CRYSTAL! Your Dad's here.

Helen gives Rob a bitter look of hatred, turns her back and marches down the hallway.

An enthusiastic CRYSTAL MCKAY, 18, almost bounces down the staircase.

She greets Rob at the door with a vibrant beaming smile and a loving hug.

INT. ROB'S CAR - DAY

Rob drives down a quiet main road. Crystal sits in the passenger seat.

ROB So where would you like to have lunch, kiddo?

CRYSTAL Anywhere, Dad. What would you recommend?

Rob does a fine job of mimicking an eccentric Italian chef.

ROB How about Grossetos? We can enjoy the delights of a smoked beef carpicaccio, a tagliatelle with Bolognese sauce or beef ribs braised in Barbera wine.

Crystal giggles at her crazy father's impression. She umms and ahhs before coming to a conclusion.

CRYSTAL How about McDonalds?

Rob nods in agreement.

ROB Big mac and fries over a golden flaxseed pappardelle with mushrooms anytime.

Crystal's grin extends.

ROB

Besides -

He gives her a smile in return and pats her knee.

ROB It's not the food, it's the company that makes it enjoyable.

Crystal smiles warmly. She clearly looks up to her Dad with pride and admiration.

MOMENTS LATER

An excited Rob can't stop gassing about his new idea.

ROB ...In the middle of the night, so I thought to myself I'm onto a winner with this one. (MORE) ROB (cont'd) It's violent, yet it's emotional. It's something I think people will relate to as long as I can up my game...

Crystal listens but Rob is oblivious to her. It's as if he's just talking to himself.

ROB I have my way of working, but *this* just *works*. It's just like something came out of the blue and hit me.

Sensing a pause for Rob to regain breath, Crystal tries to reintroduce herself back into the conversation.

CRYSTAL It sounds amazing -

ROB

That *something* was pure dynamite. Creative genius mixed with a gel of external and internal emotions. I could see exactly the way to move this thing forward...

MOMENTS LATER

Rob swipes sweat from his brow. He's exhausted.

He looks over at Crystal.

ROB So? What do you think?

CRYSTAL Dad. It sounds really cool...

Rob ANGRILY hits the steering wheel - releases a sigh of euphoria.

ROB I fuckin' knew it. I knew I was onto a winner. Let me tell you about this bit...

MOMENTS LATER

Rob turns to Crystal, eager for his enthusiasm to be justified by a positive reply.

ROB Again... What do you think?

Crystal is clearly fed up. Beyond fed up.

CRYSTAL

You wanna know what I think?

Rob nods. Obliviously shrugs his shoulders in an "of course" manner.

CRYSTAL

I think you haven't even asked how I am or how I've been seen we last saw each other.

Rob instantly realizes his mistake. His face is etched with regret.

ROB

Honey, I'm sorry...

CRYSTAL

(snappy) I have a boyfriend. His name is Jack and we've been dating for several weeks now.

Rob frowns at the mere suggestion of boyfriend.

ROB Boyfriend? What... does your mother know?

CRYSTAL I'm eighteen, Dad. Of course she knows. I fuckin' live with her. She *listens* to me. She's met him loads of times.

Rob bites his tongue. Fumes.

ROB (stern) Lose the language.

CRYSTAL Oh whatever, Dad.

Crystal miserably gazes out the window. Rob keeps his eyes on the road. A long awkward uncomfortable silence.

A melodic ring tone breaks the silence. A relieved Rob answers his mobile.

ROB Hey Tony, what's up?... Huh? I booked a meeting with you and Janet last night?

Crystal looks over at a confused Rob.

ROB Uh huh... right... I see... gimmie half hour.

Rob ends the call. He looks at Crystal with guilty/apologetic eyes.

ROB That was my agent...

CRYSTAL I heard. I get the hint. (beat) You know what? Stop here. I can meet up with some friends in town and walk back from here. At least I'll be able to have a two way conversation with them.

Rob pulls in to the kerb.

As Crystal undoes her seat-belt Rob tries but fails to come out with anything to say.

Crystal opens the door and exits the car.

ROB

Crys -

Crystal SLAMS the door shut. She make her way down a busy street and vanishes in the crowd.

ROB I'm sorry.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - DAY

Helen sits watching daytime television.

The front door OPENS and SLAMS shut (O.S.).

Helen massages her head as she mutters to herself.

HELEN

Not again.

Crystal storms into the room in a semi-rage.

CRYSTAL My God, nothing ever changes with that guy! He's the most self obsessed self centered... dickhead I've ever known!

Helen calmly sips a cup of tea.

Crystal stares blankly at her mother.

HELEN I keep telling you. You're wasting your time giving him chances.

The doorbell rings.

CRYSTAL If that's Dad, I'm not in. Tell him I'm still in town.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Helen answers the door.

JACK, 23, stands with a cheeky smile and a wink.

JACK Hey Helen. Got time for a quick -

CRYSTAL (O.S.)

Jack?

Helen gives Jack a look of caution as she beckons him inside.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - DAY

Jack and Helen enter the room. Crystal greets him with a big hug and a kiss. Helen takes her seat back on the sofa.

CRYSTAL Jack - what are you doing here? You're not supposed to pick me up until later.

JACK I was just passing by, you know, I thought it might be rude not to see if you were in.

Helen shifts uncomfortably as she gulps her tea.

CRYSTAL Well I was gonna have lunch with my Dad but he was being a total dick. I thought you had work today?

JACK Tell you what, let's go down town and grab something to eat. Ok, cool.

Crystal looks at Helen.

CRYSTAL Looks like Jack has saved the day again. Be back later, mum.

Helen produces a fragile smile.

Jack and Crystal leave the room.

The front door OPENS and CLOSES (OS).

Helen walks over to a family photo that hangs on the wall.

CLOSE UP ON PHOTO:

A younger Rob, Helen and Crystal smile happily.

BACK TO SCENE:

Helen sneers.

HELEN What a bastard.

INT. ZEBRA PUBLISHING - OFFICE - DAY

A fuming Janet sits at her desk opposite Rob and Tony.

JANET Why are you such a bastard?

An awkward Rob glances sideways to an embarrassed Tony.

JANET

You rave to Tony about this new original story you have and send me an enthusiastic message to set up a meeting with me - only to turn up three hours late!

Rob is lost for words.

JANET Well? Do you have anything to say for yourself?

ROB I do. This story I have discovered, this *magic manuscript*, is amazing.

Rob's enthusiasm returns.

The writing was so good it resembled my own when I was in my prime. The structure, dialogue and writing was like dipping into my past. It was that good.

Janet looks unimpressed. Tony arches his eyebrow questionably towards Rob.

ROB I'm not going to get into story specifics but the tale is so good it's inspired me to start writing original material again. Isn't that what you wanted?

Moment of silence.

JANET I want a full synopsis and story breakdown by the end of the week.

Rob is stunned by the demand.

JANET I also highly recommend you ditch Swan agency immediately.

Rob looks across to a quiet Tony.

ROB

You're going with this?

Tony looks down to the floor like a lost chid.

Rob stands up. He's furious.

ROB

I'm the biggest star you have in this little universe!

An intimidated Janet tries to remain calm.

JANET There are new stars born every day.

ROB Burn me out, your whole galaxy dies.

Rob storms out.

EXT. CINEMA - NIGHT

Jack and Crystal laugh and joke together as they leave the cinema amidst a slew of moviegoers.

Jack and Crystal hold hands as they walk down the quiet alley towards a car park in the distance.

A can RATTLES behind them.

They both turn around startled - nothing there.

They both face each other and laugh like love-sick giddy school kids.

They both move in to kiss but Jack pauses.

JACK Move in with me.

An excited Crystal looks for reassurance.

CRYSTAL

What?

JACK The flat, silly. Move in with me.

CRYSTAL I know what you meant, I just -YES! YES!

The two kiss and hug.

Jack begrudgingly pulls himself away.

JACK Wanna know the real reason I came round yours earlier?

Crystal nods.

JACK

I wanted to ask your mum for permission. I know it's not exactly marriage but I thought it was the right thing to do. I would have asked your Dad but he's kinda impossible to contact.

Crystal blushes at the gesture. Her delight fades from her face. Jack picks up on the change.

JACK Second thoughts?

CRYSTAL No, God, No. I'm just worried about leaving my mum on her own. JACK

I understand. Look, there's no rush. The choice is yours, there's no time limit. The offer is permanent.

The two are about to embrace and kiss once more - a DARK HOODED FIGURE walks right between them.

The figure drops her cowl. The receptionist.

She looks back at a startled Jack and Crystal with daggers for eyes.

JACK Problem, lady?

The receptionist turns and walks off toward the car park.

A confused Jack and Crystal laugh with each other as they watch her stroll away.

JACK Looks like she didn't like the film much either.

CRYSTAL Fuck what she likes.

JACK Nah. I'd rather fuck what I like.

Crystal and Jack kiss passionately up against the back of the alley.

INT. MCKAY HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Rob GROANS as he leans forward from his settee, head down at a table in front of him.

He writes frenetically on a notepad whilst constantly referencing the table based "magic manuscript".

He pauses, looks up and takes a deep breath. He runs his fingers through his tangled hair.

ROB I can't rewrite this. How can you improve on perfection?

Rob gulps down a shot of whiskey.

ROB How can I improve on genius? Rob finishes the glass of whiskey. He lay back against his settee. His weary eyes close. His tight grip on a now empty glass loosens.

EXT. POST/SORTING OFFICE - LOADING BAY/CAR PARK - NIGHT

Walter leaves the office. He walks past a lorry depot which has only a handful of inactive vehicles present.

Walter heads towards one of few cars in the park.

WHISPER

Walter...

Walter spins round. Nothing but the sight of parked lorries.

WHISPER

Walter!!!

Walter turns around again - he drops his car keys to the ground in shock.

A HUGE BULGING MASS OF DARK OOZE flaps one of it's ten TENTACLES tight round Walter's neck. His flesh SIZZLES as the tentacles squeeze tight.

Walter tries to pull the thick tentacle away but his hands BURN on impact.

The CREATURE hoists Walter aloft in the air, and thrusts nine of it's razor sharp tentacles into his torso, tearing through his back.

Blood spills onto the ground before the creature RIPS Walter's body apart.

EXT. BACKSTREETS - NIGHT

Quiet. Empty. Skips. Rubbish bins. A solitary car sits with it's lights out.

A PROSTITUTE, 30, angrily exits the passenger door, one finger salutes the driver, and KICKS the door shut.

She walks sternly up the backstreet, rearranging what clothing she has on.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The Prostitute walks down a dark alley. BRIGHT HEADLIGHTS beam on in front of her.

She brings her arm up to shield her eyes from the dazzling light.

The lights turn off. The door of a BLACK RANGE ROVER opens.

PROSTITUE The fuck are you doing, man? You can't park here, you nuts? Get the fuck out the way, psycho!

Still slightly bedazzled, she squints to make out a facially shadowed old fashioned FUNERAL DIRECTOR approaching her. He wears all black. A top hat. Cane in hand.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR On the contrary, ma'am. You are in my right-of-way.

He releases the top of his cane - revealing a long BLADE.

He slices the Prostitute's throat with one swipe.

EXT. BACKSTREETS - NIGHT

POV: Creeping slowly towards the rear of the car parked by the skips.

INT. PUNTER'S CAR - NIGHT

The PUNTER, 50s, is dressed in a businessman's suit. He has a sly grin on his face as he talks on a mobile phone.

PUNTER Yeah, these meetings can go on for hours, you know? Boring as a flat can of farts... I'm on my way home now, honey. Love ya.

He hangs up his mobile and places in his suit pocket.

He looks up - the front window is SPLINTERED by a HOARD of LOCUSTS!

He yells out in shock as the passenger window is SMASHED - releasing inside the car a host of INSECTS!

The flustered Punter scrambles the non stop barrage of invading critters away from his face - FLIES, LOCUSTS, BEES, WASPS, COCKROACHES, BEETLES.

EXT. BACKSTREETS - NIGHT

The bewildered Punter opens his car door and scrambles to the ground.

He gets to his feet and looks up - from across the backstreet, a dark hooded figure sits atop a BLACK STALLION.

PUNTER You gotta be fuckin' shittin' me...

The hooded figure pulls back it's hood - revealing a blood soaked SKULL for a head!

The horse STAMPEDES towards the Punter. Before he can react, the horseman draws a SCYTHE and SLICES the Punter's head clean off. The head lands on the ground with a loud SPLAT.

INT. ZEBRA PUBLISHING - OFFICE - DAY

Rob SLAMS down a bundle of pages on Janet's desk.

A skeptical Janet looks up at him.

ROB

Read it.

MOMENTS LATER

Janet delicately places the final page down on the bundle. She's blown away.

JANET

This is...

Rob brims with confidence.

ROB Incredible? Brilliant? Fresh?

Janet nods.

JANET

It's some of your best work - no - some of the best work I've ever read... what does Tony think about this?

Rob is apathetic.

ROB

I haven't shown him. I'm thinking of getting rid of him. I didn't appreciate his attitude the other day. I need confidence, but truthful feedback, if I'm gonna get back to my best. I'm questioning the amount I pay him for his services, considering his input the other day was zero.

JANET Who am I to argue? Just do whatever keeps you writing like this! INT. ZEBRA PUBLISHING - RECEPTION - DAY

On top of the world, a smug Rob lingers in the quiet reception. He takes his mobile and dials a number.

The Receptionist watches from her desk.

ROB

Crystal! It's Dad, I... oh yes it comes up on screen... listen, I really wanna make it up to you what happened the other day...

Rob notices the Receptionist blatantly watching him.

ROB ...I know and I'm truly sorry, I was out of line....

Rob turns his back to the Receptionist and walks over to a corner of the room.

ROB How about dinner?... Well, of course, darling, it can be on your terms...

Rob cringes and bites his lower lip as he hears the demands.

ROB I'll tell you what, kiddo. Jack can come along as long as you agree with my terms... we go to eat somewhere with good food.

Rob chuckles with the response.

ROB Alright then. Settled. I'll see you later tonight.

Rob hangs up and replaces his mobile in his pocket. He shakes the concern from his face with an aggressive rub of his hair.

He walks towards the Receptionist on his way out. He notices she is now divulged in reading a book.

Rob sneaks towards the desk. He pokes his face over the top of her book.

ROB

BOO!

The Receptionist drops the book as she jumps back in her seat.

Rob cackles with laughter as he exits the reception, leaving the scowling Receptionist to curse him under her breath.

EXT. RESTARAUNT - NIGHT

An up market/ posh establishment.

INT. RESTARAUNT - NIGHT

Rob, Crystal and Jack sit at a table for three, dressed in their best. They muse over the menu.

A pleasant, softly spoken WAITER arrives.

WAITER Would you like me to take your order?

ROB

I'll take the Wagyu Steak with twelve grammes of Almas Cavier.

The Waiter turns to Crystal and Jack. Both are humourously referring with each other much to Rob's obvious envy.

JACK

I'll go with what I know. The burger and fries option please.

The Waiter looks confused. Jack shows him the menu's option of what resembles burger and fries.

ROB Food can define a person. You can learn a lot from what someone orders. (leans in towards Jack) You don't have to go for the cheapest option, Jack.

Crystal points at the menu to the waiter. She's ordering the same as Jack.

JACK I know what I like, sir. Thank you, but I like to stick within what I can afford. I wouldn't like to enjoy something I couldn't have again. It would eat at me.

CRYSTAL Same for me please.

Rob sits back in his seat. A look of defeat.

The waiter heads off with his order.

Crystal smiles at Jack and then to Rob. She's happy. Her smile lifts Rob's mood.

ROB

That will teach me for being a show off, won't it?

Rob raises his glass to a surprised Jack. Crystal is even more taken aback. Pleasantly.

ROB To Jack. The first person I've met in years who hasn't left me leaving this place without a hole in my pocket.

Rob laughs in good spirits. Crystal and Jack join in the laughter, influenced by Rob's infectious cackle.

LATER

Empty plates. Half empty glasses are refilled.

The three are all in good spirits.

Crystal and Jack laugh at another gag from Rob, who half-heartily chortles.

ROB So, how serious are you two?

Crystal and Jack smile at each other. Crystal gently elbows him playfully but tauntingly.

CRYSTAL Go on, now's your big chance.

Rob takes interest in Jack's sudden intimidation.

JACK

Ummm...

ROB

Come on Jack. You declined my offer of a big money meal. That take balls since some people might regard that as an insult. So come on, what else are you gonna lay on me?

CRYSTAL We're moving in together!

Crystal and Jack shift closer together as they smile at each other in blissful happiness. It's too much for Rob to take.

Rob's dead silence quickly catches on. Jack and Crystal compose themselves.

A long awkward silence. Rob is peeved.

ROB

Why'd you wanna move out? What's wrong where you live?

CRYSTAL There's nothing wrong with where I live Dad -

ROB

Your mother, right? She doesn't look after you, that it? She doesn't provide enough for you, not there for you -

CRYSTAL Dad! What are you talking about!? You're not in a position to say that!

ROB I might not live there anymore but guess who still pays the bills? Not her. Has she ever paid for anything in her life, ever done an honest days work...

Jack cuts in.

JACK

Mr. McKay. I just want what's best for Crystal. I want her to be happy. I'd like both of us to be happy together. If me being here is upsetting you, I'm sorry. If you'd like me to leave, I understand.

Rob looks deep in Jack's eyes. He looks sincere. He grabs his hand and clamps it down on the table.

He looks at an upset Crystal. Rob grabs her hand from the table and holds it. She tries to pull away - but Rob pins it down. Crystal and Jack look unsettled.

ROB

You're right.

Rob releases both hands.

ROB You're both absolutely right. I apologize.

The Waiter returns to the table.

WAITER Would you like any more to drink? Jack, holding Crystal's hand in a gentle but reassuring way, looks at Rob.

JACK I think we'll go with the boss on this one.

Rob smiles.

ROB A bottle of 1787 Chateau Lafite.

He looks at Jack and Crystal.

ROB

We're celebrating.

The waiter compliments Rob on his choice. He heads enthusiastically on his way.

CRYSTAL Dad - what was that you just ordered?

ROB To use a term your generation might use - it will get you shit faced.

INT. MCKAY HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Rob seethes as he slams the front door shut.

He flicks on the television. Heads into the bathroom, imitating Crystal's earlier retorts.

ROB (O.S.) (muttering) You can't blame mum for anything, she's not the one who left home.

(OS) The sound of a shower.

ON TV SCREEN:

EXT. BACKSTREETS - NIGHT

A NEWS REPORTER is live at a closed off murder scene.

REPORTER

We are receiving information that three bodies have been discovered in close proximity with each other. There's an obvious link but police are yet to issue a statement. BACK TO SCENE:

Rob emerges from the bathroom just as the news report finishes.

He sits down on the settee, relaxed but exhausted. He gazes at the television.

T.V. ANNOUNCER (O.S.) Now we have a re-imagining of a remake classic that was a remake of a classic from the nineties...

Rob turns off the television with his remote control.

He picks up his book-marked "Magic Manuscript" and begins reading where he left off.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Jack and Crystal stand before a shocked Helen. She tries to put on a happy face.

HELEN Well, I guess congratulations are in order.

Crystal looks at Jack.

CRYSTAL It's not as if we're getting married or anything...

She notices Helen looking rather fragile.

CRYSTAL Jack's place isn't far from here. I'll come see you, and call you every day.

Jack senses it might be best to leave mother and daughter alone.

JACK I better shoot. I'll give you a call tomorrow?

Crystal nods, appreciating Jack's gesture. He bids farewell to Helen and makes an awkward but relieved exit.

DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

A moonlit river glistens beneath a low rickety woodland bridge.

P.O.V. moves along a murky winding woodland path.

P.O.V. moves towards a log wood cabin.

The cabin door CREAKS open.

P.O.V. enters inside the dark entrance.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. MCKAY HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - DAY

RING! RING!

Rob wakes up on his settee to the sound of his home phone. He groggily gets up. He answers the phone, rubs his hung-over head.

ROB

Yeah.

HELEN (V.O.)

(on phone) I wanna know what you put into her head last night you bastard!

ROB

What!?

HELEN (V.O.) She's moving in

Crystal! She's moving in with Jack. Don't try and tell me you didn't know because I know you too well! You somehow persuaded her to do it just to get at me! You son of a -

Rob places the phone at arms length. He relaxes back on his settee. Takes a breather. Watches the clock above the fireplace. Gives it twenty seconds. Returns the phone to his ear.

HELEN (V.O.) ...fuckin' asshole!

Rob replies in a relaxed tone.

ROB

Helen. Listen. I can understand you being upset. I am too. Let's meet up and talk this over like adults.

A stunned silence.

HELEN (V.O.) What...? ROB Dinner tonight. Eight sharp. Lei Changs.

HELEN (V.O.) (stuttering) What... I... what are you...?

ROB It used to be our favorite.

A long silence on the other end of the phone.

HELEN (V.O.) (soft) OK... sure... eight it is.

ROB I'll see you then. Bye honey.

Rob hangs up. He blinks in disbelief at how he just handled the call.

ROB

Bye honey?

Rob bursts out in laughter.

He looks down at the book-marked "magic manuscript" on the floor. His sly smile stretches from ear to ear.

ROB

Got a zapp to you, don't ya?

EXT. CROOKED CHIMNEY PUB - NIGHT

A pub sits on the corner of a quiet street.

INT. CROOKED CHIMNEY - NIGHT

Tony sits at an empty table with half a pint of beer. He looks around. Only a handful of customers.

A BARMAN wipes glasses with a cloth.

Tony impatiently looks at his watch. He takes another swig of his beer.

A phone rings from behind the bar. BARMAN answers.

Tony checks his watch again. He downs the rest of his pint and stands up, ready to leave.

BARMAN

Hey, you Tony?

Tony is surprised by the question. He nods.

BARMAN Figured. Ain't seen you in here before, an' I know the regulars.

A quizzical Tony gestures confusingly to the Barman.

TONY

Wonderful. Can I help you?

BARMAN

Phone call.

Barman leaves the phone handle on the bar.

Tony takes the call as the Barman watches on, wiping a glass.

BARMAN Make it snappy, huh? There's a reason we got mobiles these days.

Tony waves him aside.

TONY This is Tony... Rob? This you? Where the hell are you, I've been waiting... huh?... Bad line mate... why didn't you just ring my mobile?... You're breaking up...

Tony sighs as the call ends. He passes the phone back to the Barman... but he's not there.

Tony spins around. No one is in the pub, it's empty.

Tony heads for the door.

He tries to open it. Locked.

TONY

What the...?

Tony turns back towards the bar. His eyes almost pop from their sockets in shock.

The bar has been transformed into a CAVE. Beyond the cave lay a distant dark FOREST. Where there was once Tony's table, now sits three WITCHES beside a bubbling cauldron.

> TONY This can't be happening...

Tony's mutters catch the Witches attention. They look up at him, exposing their foul disgusting facial features.

WITCH #1 Bubble and squeak, no more will you speak!

Tony's lips are quickly SOWN together by strands of his upper and lower lip skin.

A horrified Tony tries to scream but can only muffle. He grabs at his lips with his fingers, tries to pry open the strands of skin.

WITCH #2 Finger and thumbs, you shall have none!

Tony's hands ROT in seconds. They turn wrinkled, bloody and bruised, before dropping from his wrists in a pile of DUST.

Tony sinks to his knees in eye-wide horror.

The BARMAN - now transformed into a GHOUL - emerges from the forest into the cavern.

He holds a PICKAXE in one hand and has a cloth sack hung over his shoulder.

He smiles toward the Witches in satisfaction at Tony's plight. He throws the sack from his shoulder onto the ground - releasing piles upon piles of pound notes and gold coins.

GHOUL This man likes money so much he has it coursing through his veins. Show me his soul and share with us his pain!

The Witches cackle with delight at the request.

WITCH #3 If what you speak is true, his innards must be lovely, we'll shed his skin to see his sin and share in all the money!

Tony arches his back in agony. His clothes remove themselves and drop to the dirty maggot infested ground. His skin turns red as if being roasted.

The Witches and Ghoul watch on with morbid delight and glee.

Tony's scalded skin droops from his body, sliding from his torso on to the ground revealing his overworked inner organs.

Tony's organs hang loosely from his skeletal frame as the Witches and Ghoul look disappointed in the outcome.

WITCH #1

There is no money found inside, lose the body, pick at his mind...

The Ghoul nods. He holds his pickaxe over his head - and SLAMS it down on Tony's bloody skeletal head.

INT. LEI CHANG RESTARAUNT - NIGHT

Helen sits alone at a candlelit table for two.

She taps her fingers on the table impatiently, causing a WAITER to waltz over to her table.

WAITER Would you like to order now, Mrs. McKay?

HELEN I'm still waiting for someone. You might know him. He's a real dick.

The Waiter looks awkward.

HELEN Sorry. Nothing to do with you, honey. I meant your boss.

The Waiter smiles politely. He darts off towards the kitchen just as Rob passes him.

Rob sits down at Helen's table.

ROB Sorry I'm late. Business.

Helen keeps her head down as she pointlessly but nonchalantly rearranges her cutlery to guise her anger.

ROB You been waiting long?

Helen looks up at Rob with a beaming fake smile.

HELEN Just got here myself.

LATER

Rob and Helen are getting on over their meal. Rob finishes a joke to which Helen laughs loudly.

ROB You always did like that one. The amount of embarrassment it caused me... wow.
HELEN You never took yourself so seriously back then. You were funny. You were a laugh. Rob chortles. He drinks some of his wine. ROB If I knew I was that funny I'd have taken to the comedy circuit instead. Helen sips her wine. Giggles. Rob and Helen look at each other over the candlelit table. Loving eyes. Attraction still there. LATER Rob and Helen, both sozzled, eat their meal. ROB It's surprising how we never really made it together. Or, made it last. HELEN Well, we were living in the slow lane then got elevated into the fast lane. ROB Yeah. Things change quick. Helen's mood changes. HELEN Not what I meant.

Rob stops feasting and looks up at Helen sarcastically.

ROB Well, what do you mean? If you don't say it, I can't know it, can I?

Helen looks over the candlelit table at Rob with a sneer.

LATER

A taste-bud enticing dessert wobbles on the table.

Helen and Rob fume at each other over the ever diminishing candlelight.

HELEN You cheated on me! ROB

Fuck off I did!

HELEN

You wanna know why our marriage broke down? You're mean, arrogant and have a fuckin' ego the size of Mars.

Rob guzzles his wine. Helen downs hers.

HELEN

You became a different person once you tasted success. You got lost in all the crap you were writing. It was like you actually believed real people act like that. People should act like they do in your books. If they didn't, you'd call them weird.

ROB

Fuck you.

HELEN

See. Perfect example. Your a cold fish, Rob. You went through the divorce the same way, a cold -

ROB

Fuckin' bickering, nagging, snide remarks, cheap shots, never being happy, never content - you played your part in the divorce, Helen.

Rob downs his drink, refills it with the remainder of the bottle.

ROB

I was a puppet on a string. You made me lose my creativity, trying to please your every whim and sacrificing everything I had.

HELEN

Don't be so over dramatic, Rob...

ROB

I ended up becoming the puppet on strings instead of the puppet master. But now, at long last, with you out my system, I'm writing again. I'm better than ever and my inspiration is you being outta my fuckin' life.

Silence falls.

Helen packs her gatherings in her purse. She stands up to leave. Rob grabs her wrist, pins it to the table.

ROB What are you doing?

HELEN

Leaving.

ROB We haven't even talked about Crystal yet!

Helen stands up, breaking Rob's control of her wrist, and causing the table to fall over and spill the contents.

The entire population of the restaraunt look over.

Helen storms out of the restaraunt as the MANAGER rushes over to the scene of the crime.

MANAGER Sir, I'm gonna have to ask you to leave.

Rob, still seated, looks up at the Manager.

ROB You don't even know who I am, do you? You can't throw me out. I own this fuckin' place!

Rob stands from his seat and realizes that the entire restaraunt is watching him. He pats the shoulder of the Manager.

ROB

Send me the bill.

Rob hangs his head in shame as he exits the restaraunt.

EXT. LEI CHANG RESTARAUNT - TAXI RANK - NIGHT

The last remaining taxi leaves the rank. Helen curses. Rob calls out for her as he emerges from the restaraunt.

Helen storms down the sidewalk. Rob follows.

ROB

Helen, come on, this is stupid.

HELEN I'm not interested in anything you have to say Rob, leave me alone!

ROB At least let me drive you home. Helen stands at a bus stop. Rob catches up with her.

ROB You cant take a bus, c'mon this is ridiculous!

A bus pulls in to the stop. Helen climbs aboard.

HELEN You need to get back to reality Rob. You need to jump on the same bus as everybody else.

The bus pulls away, drives down the road leaving Rob on his lonesome.

ROB Hah bloody hah.

EXT. CROOKED CHIMNEY PUB - NIGHT

Smoke smoulders from the remains of the torched pub. Emergency service vehicles surround the crime scene. A fireman douses the remnants of the pub with a hose.

Detective Chief Inspector JOHN WESTLEY (50, a seasoned pro, eyes bloodshot and weary from experience and working late nights) surveys the area.

Detective sergeant LEE BOORMAN (33, fresh faced, full of enthusiasm) assists.

They approach a cordoned off area, where a rookie OFFICER greets them.

WESTLEY I'm DCI John Westley. This is DS Boorman. What we got.

OFFICER Not a lot Chief Inspector. Not a lot left at all.

The Officer crouches down and removes a dark cover. It reveals Tony's charred remains.

Boorman shines a torch over the gruesome sight.

BOORMAN This is the only body?

OFFICER If you wanna call it that.

WESTLEY Stick to yes or no answers, son. OFFICER Umm... yes sir, this is the only body we've found.

WESTLEY Forensics are on their way. Make sure the area is locked tight. We'll take it from here.

The nervous Officer nods and heads away.

EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Establishing shot. Nice area, secluded, middle class.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jack CHOPS vegetables like a professional chef as he prepares a meal.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Crystal admires the room as she explores with a glass of wine. She curiously looks over his bookshelf which has a large varied collection.

She's pleasantly surprised that so many of the books are written by "ROB MCKAY".

CRYSTAL I never realized you were such a big fan of my Dad.

JACK (O.S.)

Oh?

CRYSTAL Your collection. You must have every novel he ever had published.

JACK (O.S.) (laughs) I was doing intense research before we met the other night.

CRYSTAL Figures. I thought I'd never noticed them before.

She swipes a thin layer of dust from the top of the books with her finger.

Jack enters with a tray. Dinner for two. Wine.

Crystal smiles.

JACK

I've just started reading them. Trying to find a way round your old man by understanding him through what he writes.

Crystal muses.

CRYSTAL Lots of luck with that one.

INT. MCKAY HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

An anxious Rob guzzles down a large glass of whiskey. He slowly leans back in his settee with a sigh.

Rob stares contemplatively at the blank television screen. He reaches for the "magic manuscript" by his side.

EXT. HELEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

All lights are out.

POV

Checks the street. Quiet. A distant bark of a dog.

Walks slowly toward the front door.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Helen relaxes in a hot bath. She places a wet flannel over her eyes.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

POV

Gloved hands gently close the front door. Checks the dark livingroom. Empty. Heads quietly up the staircase.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

The bathroom door opens. Helen, wrapped in a bath towel, walks into her bedroom.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Helen lay in a double bed reading a magazine. She sighs and gives up the read. She places the magazine on the floor and turns off her bedside lamp.

A CREAK.

Helen stirs in her bed. Opens her eyes.

ANOTHER CREAK.

Helen sits up in bed. She flicks on the bedside lamp. Unnerved, she looks around the room.

Large wardrobes to her left and centre. Net covered french windows to her right.

Moments pass.

Helen sighs and turns off the lamp. Tries to get comfortable in the bed.

CREAK...

Helen sits up, switches on the lamp. She listens in fear, trying to locate the continuous creaking sound.

She stares at the wardrobe in front of her. Not there. Turns her head to the wardrobe on the left. Not from there either.

She turns her head to the windows. Is it coming from beyond them, out on the balcony? No.

She realizes where it's coming from.

Slowly, with dread, Helen looks downwards... it's coming from underneath the bed.

A GLOVED HAND GRABS Helen's throat from underneath the bed, pinning her down. A blood stained MACHETE SPLATTERS through her torso and through the bedsheets.

INT. ZEBRA PUBLISHING - OFFICE - DAY

A jovial Rob flamboyantly bursts into the office. Desk bound Janet looks shocked and surprised by his entry.

ROB This little project has taken a new development and I'm pleased to say I'm now taking complete control over the story.

An astonished Janet watches Rob as he majestically prances around the office.

You wanted me to be original, well I'm full steam ahead Captain and I'm not stopping for no one. OK, I might still be taking <u>some</u> inspiration from the magical manuscript but I'm now writing shit that God himself wished he came out with when he wrote the Bible.

Janet looks dumbfounded at Rob.

ROB In fact, I might even call *this* the Bible. *The new Bible*, not a remake or sequel - this could be the real deal.

Rob stares at Janet. He realizes how sullen she looks.

ROB

What? Not melodramatic enough for you? Don't tell me I'm losing my eccentric touch for pitching -

JANET Rob. Helen was murdered last night. Her body was discovered by police after a neighbor reported screaming.

Rob's face goes pale. He sinks down on a chair, barely able to keep balance.

HELEN

The police have been trying to get in contact but nobody could find you. They even called me to see if I knew where you were. I was calling you all night, no answer. Your mobile was off. Where were you? Where have you been all night?

Rob looks lost, genuinely taken aback by the abrupt news.

ROB

At home...

JANET I'm afraid that's not all the bad news, Rob. Tony - he died in a fire accident.

It's a double whammy for Rob.

ROB A fire accident? JANET

A pub called the Crooked Chimney. The place was closing down so maybe it's an insurance scam but bottom line, he got caught inside.

Rob takes a breather. Janet remains unmoved. Rob twigs the vibe.

ROB Now just hang on a minute...

JANET You're bound to be asked questions by the police, Rob. If this gets out to the media, they're gonna have a field day. (beat) You just need to tell the truth.

ROB (stern) I told you. I was at home.

JANET All things considered, you're taking the news rather well.

ROB Well hold your horses Perry Mason. I'm more worried about how Crystal is gonna take the news.

Rob stands up and looks out at the city from the window view. He stressfully squeezes the bridge of his nose.

ROB Too much of a coincidence, right?

He turns to Janet. She nods in agreement.

ROB

Well it's obvious. Someone's out to frame me.

JANET

Tell that to John Westley. He's the detective that's asking about you.

EXT. METROPOLITAN POLICE STATION - DAY

Establishing shot.

INT. POLICE STATION - OFFICE - DAY

A city wall map has five circles marked in close proximity. Pictures of dead bodies are posted next to facial photos. Helen, Tony, the Prostitute, the Punter and Walter.

Boorman examines the wall map. Westley trawls through paperwork at his desk.

BOORMAN

We know from the coroner's report Tony wasn't just a victim of arson but he was practically cut apart beforehand. That makes it five murders over a ten mile radius in the space of a week. Have you ever experienced anything like this before?

WESTLEY

No.

BOORMAN

I get the link between Tony and Helen McKay. Rob McKay's definitely our man?

WESTLEY

There's no link between him and the previous three victims. So *definitely* not.

BOORMAN

Let's say he's got a grievance with his ex wife. Problems with his agent. Makes him an obvious suspect, right?

WESTLEY Perhaps too obvious.

Boorman sniggers.

BOORMAN OK... How thorough do we check this McKay guy out?

Westley looks up at Boorman.

WESTLEY

Thoroughly.

INT. MCKAY HOUSE - DEN - DAY

Slim rays of light seep inside through half closed window blinds.

Rob sits at his desk. He frantically looks over his writing on his laptop. His eyes dart from the laptop screen to the "magic manuscript" he has at his side.

Rob looks deeply concerned.

CLOSE UP ON LAPTOP SCREEN:

Several sentences of Rob's story stand out:

"The Demons skinned their victim so he no longer resembled a human - only of a burnt skeleton."

"The Demon's mused that this man of greed would now no longer possess any material possessions - including his own skin. Skin for Sin they chanted in devilish unison"

"The machete slid through the bed like knife through butter much to the masked maniac's delight."

"He looked over her dead body with satisfaction. The machete stay rooted, imbedded inside her. It was a justification. This whore had met her end by the only way she had made her money. Gettin' fucked in bed."

BACK TO SCENE

Rob searches an internet news search site with the key words of "HELEN MCKAY" and "TONY BRASCO". The last word he types in is "DEATHS".

The results spring up.

CLOSE UP ON LAPTOP SCREEN

Selected news reports:

DailyNews.com

"Coroner's reports indicate Tony Brasco was not simply an unlucky victim of arson. We can exclusively reveal his body was skinned during his torturous murder..."

RealNews.com

"We can exclusively reveal that Helen McKay was found in her own bed with a machete imbedded inside her - thrust repeatedly with such ferocity it severed her spinal cord..."

BACK TO SCENE

Rob clambers off his seat. He storms up and down the room clasping his forehead. He squeezes the bridge of his nose. He mutters to himself contemplatively.

ROB Am I a prophet? Is this what I really am? I can forsee the future?

Rob snatches a bottle of Vodka from the side of his desk. Fills a glass with it. Downs it. Refills. Sips it.

Rob sits at his desk. He releases a relaxed sigh.

He grabs the magic manuscript.

Rob types on his laptop.

DREAM SEQUENCE

Rob wakes at his desk. He lifts his weary head.

The magic manuscript lay open across his laptop screen, words written in blood cover it's pages: READ ME

Startled, Rob tries to move from his chair - he SCREAMS in pain.

His arms are tied to his chair by barb wire.

Rob, terrified, looks back to the magic manuscript.

A page turns by itself.

Blood drips from the top of the new leaf as a message formed of bone submerges from within: WRITE ME

Rob struggles to free himself. His arms hit the barb wire. He SCREAMS. Blood pours from his punctured arms down to his hands.

He looks back to the magic manuscript, fear in his eyes.

The page turns.

A simple typeface message inked in blood across beautiful clean white pages: LET THEM KNOW ABOUT ME.

ROB No... (screams deliriously) NO!

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Rob opens his eyes. He finds himself hiding under a stairwell.

He peeks out at a dark deserted hallway.

The only light protrudes from a small window of a distant exit door.

Rob looks at the walls. They are bathed in dim light. Illuminated cover and poster art from his books.

WHAT LURKS BENEATH features a monstrous creature formed of black ooze. HORROR HEARSE features a Jack The Ripper type character driving a hearse. SKULL OF DEATH features a red skulled being wielding a scythe whilst atop a horse. TRIO OF TERROR features three witches surrounding a cauldron. MACHETE MANIAC features a masked man with a blood soaked machete.

Something throbs within the posters. They pulsate, shift in shape. As if the creatures inside the images are about to burst free.

Rob shakes with fear.

Thunderous footsteps. Something's coming down the stairs.

Rob moves from under the stairwell. He runs for the door.

Every step Rob takes is in slow motion, as if he's treading through quick sand.

Rob keeps his eyes on the door window. It seems an age away as thunderous footsteps descend the staircase.

Rob reaches the door. He tries the handle. It wont open. Locked.

Rob looks back in panic.

Shapes move in the darkness. Whispers taunt and mock him. Cackling laughter.

WHISPER (O.S.) Rob... We've come to see you, Rob.

Tentacles SNAP against the walls of the hallway.

The sound of something SLIMY approaching. Something gigantic.

Thunderous footsteps become a racing heartbeat.

A DARK FIGURE walks slowly down the stairwell, knife gleaming in a nonsensical mystical moonlight.

WHISPER (O.S.) (repeatedly, chant-like) Read it. Write it. Spread our word.

Rob, back against the door, falls to his knees in horror as several dark figures slowly approach him.

Rob covers his face with his arms. He closes his eyes tight as they close in.

The whisperish taunts subside.

Silence.

Rob opens his eyes.

He looks up at five deformed vengeful figures. Helen, Tony, the Prostitute, the Punter and Walter.

Rob SCREAMS.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Rob opens his eyes at a blazing sun.

Rob is draped in dirty rags, bound hand and foot by wooden restraints.

He is lead by 17th century guards through a blood baying mob of people throwing rotten fruits at him.

Rob looks at an impending dark tower ahead of him. The sight terrifies him.

He snatches a view of a newspaper billboard.

The headline reads "ROB MCKAY - GUILTY OF PLAGIARISM. DEATH TO CHEATING SCUM!"

EXT. GRAVEYARD/COURT HOUSE - DAY

The court house takes place in the middle of a graveyard. A jury sits on a wooden bench. A Judge sits on top of a mausoleum. Media and others sit ghoulishly on gravestones.

The Judge is JANET.

JUDGE JANET

Guilty.

Janet laughs as she throws blood stained money from her hands to the bog pit of a ground.

Rob screams in muted silence at the verdict as he is lead away by ZOMBIE GUARDS.

A hanging gallows looms in the distance.

Rob's silent screams for mercy are worsened when he sees Crystal crying in attendance of the cheering crowd.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. MCKAY HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Rob snaps awake in a cold sweat. He's sat on his settee, with half a glass of booze in one hand and the manuscript in his other.

Rob takes a few deep breaths. He looks haunted by his dream. Shaken, scared. Confused.

Anger takes over. Rob grabs his phone. He dials a number.

The phone rings on the other end for what seems ages. Rob seethes, anger boiling by the second.

JANET (V.O.) (on phone, half asleep) Hello?

ROB I know what you're up to.

JANET (V.O.) Rob? Do you know what time it is?

ROB

Oh I know *exactly* what time it is. Time I stopped you treating me like a fool, like some Jester trying to please his bitch of a boss Queen!

JANET (V.O.) What.. what the hell's got into you?

ROB

I think you're responsible for these murders. I think Zebra publishing is trying to create a media frenzy surrounding my possible arrest that would create so much hype my book would fly off the shelves. Oh yeah... I bet you'd love the free publicity, Janet.

Rob downs the rest of his drink.

ROB

Just remember this. You're implicated with Swan just as much as me so if I go down, so does everybody else.

Rob hangs up.

EXT. JANET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A beautiful house surrounded set in a plush, quiet secluded area. Driveway protected by a locked gate.

A mist lingers in the air.

INT. JANET'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Janet adjusts back to bed with her muscular trophy husband GREG, 40.

GREG (half asleep) What did he want this time?

JANET Oh nevermind, Greg. Rob's drunk as a skunk. As usual. I'll deal with him in the morning.

GREG If he calls one more time he won't see the morning.

EXT. JANET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The mist creeps through the security gates, past the driveway and under the front door.

INT. JANET'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The mist creeps under the bedroom door and softly mingles into the room.

Janet rubs herself to keep warm under the covers.

JANET

Freezing...

Greg murmurs in his sleep.

Janet clambers out of bed and puts on her dressing-gown. Greg stirs with a resigned sigh. He sits up, rubs his cold arms.

GREG What are you doing?

JANET Turning the heating on.

She mutters as she heads to the door.

JANET About the only thing I seem to be able to turn on around here.

EXT. JANET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bright headlights from a silent black range rover beam through the gates.

The ray penetrates the thick mist and highlights a tall man draped in black wearing a conical Asian style hat standing at the front door.

INT. JANET'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Loud KNOCKS at the front door.

The light switches on.

Greg storms down the staircase.

JANET (O.S.) Tell him I'll meet him in the study.

GREG I'll tell him to fuck right off. How'd he get through the gate?

Greg unlocks and opens the front door.

A tall slim Chinese man, WOLLY BONG, stands at the step. Long slim Fu Manchu moustache. Pale face. Dazzling eyes.

Greg is taken by surprise.

GREG Little late to be delivering menus ain't it?

WOLLY BONG (broken English) I here to deliver message. Not menu.

A tired, fed up Greg gestures with open arms.

GREG

Shoot.

Wolly Bong withdraws a samurai sword in lightening speed. He stabs it through Greg's stomach.

INT. JANET'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Janet, tired and dressed in nightgown, yawns as she walks into the study with a coffee and a rustle of her hair.

She sits down at a table.

She looks up. Wolly Bong sits opposite her.

Janet spills her coffee over herself in shock - SCREAMS as she stands in surprise.

JANET Who the bloody hell are you?

WOLLY BONG A maker of deals. A collector of souls.

Janet wipes herself down. She looks unsure about his presence but isn't afraid. She thinks it's all part of a joke.

> JANET What? Where's Rob? Did he put you up to this? Is that what this is? Another stunt? Where's Greg?

> WOLLY BONG A deal must be honoured. You have defiled the deal.

JANET What are you going on about? Speak English!

Wolly Bong stands up, releases his sword.

Janet turns to run.

Wolly Bong SLICES her back with supernatural quick swordsmanship.

Janet pauses at the frame of the door in open mouthed horror.

Her sliced body parts crumple to the floor in hundreds of CHUNKS.

Wolly Bong places the chunks in a bag. Words on the bag read "LEFTOVERS".

He plops her head in a separate bag with the words "TAKE AWAY".

DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

A moonlit river glistens beneath a low rickety woodland bridge. An unnatural glowing mist swirls from below. An eerie repetitive SCRAPING sound in the distance.

P.O.V. moves along a mist covered murky winding woodland path. The SCRAPING sound louder, closer.

P.O.V. moves towards a log wood cabin shrouded in a luminous mist. The SCRAPING sound comes from within.

The cabin door bursts open.

Inside, a man dressed in black stands with his back turned. He turns around quick as a flash.

Outstretched hands covered in blood. An inhuman demonic face. The man SCREAMS.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. MCKAY HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Rob wakes with a start on his settee.

He blows a sigh of relief.

He takes the "magic manuscript" from his lap.

He studies it for a moment, somewhat with caution, before he sets it aside.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

A dreary rain sodden day. A large gathering of people. A hearse slowly drives past. It has a flower decoration of "HELEN MCKAY - BEST MUM IN THE WORLD".

Rob shakes hands and accept commiserations from one side of the area.

Crystal, comforted by Jack, does the same from the other.

Rob tries to make it over to Crystal who seems purposely trying to avoid him. Whenever they make eye contact, she looks angry and moves further away.

Jack discreetly mouths the words "maybe later". Rob nods.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Helen's burial takes place.

Crystal stands in between Jack and Rob. A large congregation are present to pay their respects.

Crystal sobs mournfully as the coffin is lowered into the Earth. She grips Jack's hand tight.

Rob seeks Crystal's hand to hold. They hold together loosely.

CRYSTAL (whispers to Rob) You weren't there to protect her...

Rob looks hurt by her barely audible words.

CRYSTAL If you were there, this wouldn't have happened.

Crystal's hand breaks from Rob's.

Rob looks up - takes a deep breath - Westley stands opposite him in the crowd staring directly at him.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Westley discreetly watches the congregation leave in their droves from a distance.

His interest perks when he spots Rob, Crystal and Jack.

Crystal gives Rob a small hug. Seems more out of necessity than emotion.

She gets into Jack's car. Jack's car drives away.

Rob is left on his own. He kicks out despondently at the ground.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Rob, sullen, walks through the quiet grounds.

WESTLEY (O.S.) Robert McKay?

Rob turns around. Westley jogs towards him. Rob eyes him curiously.

Westley offers his hand to shake.

WESTLEY Detective John Westley. Been meaning to meet up with you.

Rob ignores the gesture.

Rob nods gratefully.

He turns and continues on his way.

WESTLEY Don't mind if I walk with you, do you?

ROB

Free country.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Rob and Westley walk down a dried mud pathway covered by overhanging trees in the midst of conversation.

WESTLEY

You're a hard man to get in contact with Mr. McKay. I stopped by your house several times. No one ever seems home.

ROB

I'm a busy man, Detective. Books don't write themselves.

WESTLEY

Oh sure, I understand. Just whenever I've called, I couldn't help but notice that beautiful car you have sitting in the drive way.

ROB

If I'm not home Detective, I'm probably at the office.

WESTLEY

You get to your office without driving?

Rob grows irritated.

ROB

If I'm not at home and I'm not at the office, please consider I might be out doing whatever I feel like doing. That's not a crime is it?

Westley smirks.

WESTLEY

No, no, not at all. I'm just interested in where you might be and what is it you might do. ROB

I didn't drive here today. Sometimes I like to take a long leisurely walk. It gives me an opportunity to think to myself.

WESTLEY Think about how you gonna get away with it?

Rob stops in his tracks.

ROB

I'm sorry?

Westley pats him playfully on his arm. Continues walking. Gestures him to follow.

WESTLEY Paying for the funeral. Must cost a few for something that lavish.

Disgruntled, Rob continues walking with Westley.

ROB

It's all paid for in her name, Detective. I would've thought you'd have discovered such a simple thing as that out.

WESTLEY

Oh see, we've only just met. Barely know each other. I can't divulge you in what I know.

ROB

Well, now we know each other. What is it that you know?

WESTLEY

Your daughter stands to take everything your ex wife owned. That's the house and the money she received from your divorce settlement. Kind of a generous amount, weren't it?

ROB

I have no idea what is in Helen's will and I have no idea how much money she had left.

WESTLEY So it all goes to your daughter. Sorry for the spoiler.

ROB

So what? Good!

Rob stops again. He looks incensed.

ROB What exactly are you insinuating here, Westley? That my daughter is involved in killing my ex wife? Her own mother?

Westley smiles.

WESTLEY

I can't reveal details of an ongoing investigation, Rob. But there's one thing this job has taught me over the years. Always expect the unexpected.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Westley and Rob emerge from a muddy path into a quiet residential street.

Westley nods at a nearby clamped car.

WESTLEY That's the type of shit that would fuck up your day. Poor bastards not even half hour late and he's gotta practically buy his own car back.

ROB Government taxes, I'm afraid. Biggest thieves on the block.

WESTLEY Rules are rules, right? No one's above the law.

Westley smiles at Rob. Rob seethes.

ROB

Been great to know you, Westley. Bye now.

Rob heads down the path. Westley calls out to him.

WESTLEY I'll be in touch.

MOMENT LATER

Westley walks over to a nearby car.

Boorman peers out of the drivers window with a grin.

BOORMAN So, are we invited to the wake or what?

INT. BOORMAN'S CAR - DAY

Boorman drives. Westley sits in the passenger seat.

WESTLEY So, what did you find out? You follow up on that lead before you went to McDonalds?

BOORMAN

How the --

WESTLEY This car stinks like Grimace, Ronald and the fuckin' turd Burglar just had a piss party in here. Now what did you find out?

BOORMAN I found a reliable source. A big league agent who might be able to tell us a lil' more about McKay within the industry.

WESTLEY How'd you sweeten that deal?

BOORMAN I brought him a McFlurry.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Westley and Boorman sit opposite a desk from greasy FAT MAX MAXWELL, 40.

Sleazy. Walls loaded with photos and pictures of Max posing with Z-list celebrities. Most are obscene.

Fat Max puffs on a cigar. He chortles.

FAT MAX No agent, and I mean no agent, is gonna go near Rob McKay.

WESTLEY You wanna be a bit more specific, Max?

FAT MAX He's known for treating his agents like shit. I'm surprised Tony took so much crap from the guy. (MORE)

FAT MAX (cont'd) But then, the moolah he must have earned was probably too big and tempting so it makes it worth while, right?

BOORMAN

Big enough to swallow professional pride?

Max chortles as he smokes his cigar.

FAT MAX Whatever pride that was. You don't get in this gig to make friends.

WESTLEY

Let's go back to McKay. The guy makes millions. He sounds like the perfect catch. Why did you say no one would go near him?

FAT MAX

McKay is re-known within the industry for being a blatant plagiarist. I got no evidence to back it up, just word of mouth.

Westley looks at Boorman. Boorman coerces Max.

BOORMAN

You mentioned this to me before. We're gonna need you to go into a little more detail.

FAT MAX

I've read submissions from wannabe writers. Amateurs. They're remarkably similar to what McKay has then gone on to put out over the years. I've had letters of complaint about how McKay ripped off this story and that story.

WESTLEY

No offense Max but this doesn't look much like a complaint committee. Why would they complain to you?

FAT MAX

'Cos I'm the real deal. I'm famous. Especially on the net. They write to me because they want me to exploit him and give the real writer recognition.

WESTLEY

FAT MAX

Hey, we receive e-mails like this daily. Most are just trying to con their way inside the industry or build up a nonsensical lawsuit. If I published that shit on my blog I'd be sued right up the ass.

Westley stands up. Wanders the office. Checks the picture covered walls.

WESTLEY You're a real man of the people, Max.

Boorman leans across the desk. Eyes Max.

BOORMAN

Tell him about the letter. The one you told me about earlier.

FAT MAX

Of all the complaints, one in particular stood out. It was written so well, seemed legit as it practically pinpointed how Rob McKay had ripped off his story.

WESTLEY

What did you do?

FAT MAX

Nothing! Rob simply wields too much power in the industry. Especially at the moment, his books are selling like hot cakes. You don't shit where you eat, mate. (smokes) And when the whole world is enjoying said cake, you don't piss on the party 'cos you're the one that ends up with shit on your face.

Boorman turns to Westley. Wry smile. Westley blanks him.

WESTLEY Very colorful, Max. Remember the name of the author?

FAT MAX It was fantasy-esque. Clearly made up or something foreign. Can't remember.

WESTLEY Remember the title of the book he was complaining about? FAT MAX

Nope. But I do remember the publisher who received the same manuscript.

EXT. CAFE/BISTRO - DAY

A plush eatery designated to the connoisseur of luxury.

Publishing mogul AMY GRIFFIN, 60's, enjoys a light lunch by herself as she reads a book.

An empty seat opposite her SCRAPES the ground.

Amy looks up from her book, frowns at the rude interruption.

Westley makes himself comfortable on the seat.

WESTLEY Amy Griffin?

Amy nods, still very much surprised by the intrusion.

WESTLEY Sorry to intrude on your lunch Mrs. Griffin but your receptionist told me you might be here.

AMY Remind me to thank her when I get

back. Who are you?

Westley shows Amy his ID badge.

WESTLEY Detective Westley.

Amy daintily pats her mouth clean with a handkerchief.

AMY What is it you want of me,

Detective?

WESTLEY

Max Maxwell told me you read a manuscript that had a remarkable resemblance to the work of Rob McKay. The author also complained of plagiarism. I believe you read both the manuscript and letter of complaint?

AMY That's correct, yes.

WESTLEY

You wouldn't still have both, would you?

AMY

Both were shredded ages ago. I'd say that's the norm for bad material but - yes - there was something good, verging on excellent, about the story.

WESTLEY

Not excellent enough to pursue?

AMY

The covering letter can tell a lot about the person who wrote the story. Unfortunately, his made the author sound... deranged.

WESTLEY

This deranged accompanying letter would have included the rant that Rob McKay stole his idea, right?

AMY Correct. And as I'm sure Max would have told you, Rob's very hot right now.

Amy takes a slow sip of tea, enjoying it's flavor like a wine tasting expert.

AMY I'm sure karma will have it's say once things cool down. As it inevitably does, I'm sure a big can of worms will open up and... it wont be a very nice sight.

WESTLEY

With something so memorable, surely you can remember the name of the author?

Amy laughs gently.

AMY I read so many submissions in a day I never even look at the author's name unless I'm interested in replying.

Westley sighs in disappointment.

AMY

However, in this case, I recall him giving one name for the manuscript, another on his letter of complaint. Thus, more reasons to not take him seriously. I mean, if he didn't know who he was, how could we possibly help him? (beat) He may have had his story together, but his act was another matter.

INT. ZEBRA PUBLISHING - RECEPTION - DAY

Westley stands at the Receptionist's desk.

WESTLEY Janet's unavailable?

The Receptionist nods, baffled.

RECEPTIONIST She's not in. She hasn't even called in sick.

Westley bites his lip in concern.

RECEPTIONIST This is about the murders isn't it?

Westley looks at her. She's overflowing with enthusiasm.

RECEPTIONIST Is it true? The rumors about Rob being involved?

WESTLEY I'm interested in knowing what kind of rumors you've been hearing and who you heard them from.

RECEPTIONIST I've overheard Rob talk inside that office. He was practically screaming about how he was so pleased to find a new "magic book" and it would be easy to rip off.

Westley encourages her.

WESTLEY A "magic book" huh? You seem kinda keen to tell all...

He looks at her name plate on the desk.

WESTLEY

...Miss. Carruthers. So you heard him say he's gonna rip off a book. What makes you think that equals murder?

The Receptionist smiles and blushes by the interest shown. She's flattered by Westley's attention.

RECEPTIONIST Three reasons, Mr. Westley. One, the internet. The gossip on there is rife McKay is responsible.

Westley's enthusiasm goes down a notch.

RECEPTIONIST

Two, I work here. I didn't hear him say he killed anyone but I overheard his manager died, his wife died and now Janet...

WESTLEY So you overheard McKay talk about ripping someone off. That's all.

She's not listening. She's trying to win an Oscar.

RECEPTIONIST

Thirdly, might I add, I'm a struggling writer myself. I've been holding this in too long, Detective Westley. I feel I have the initiative to not only put one and one together and make two but I have the skill and cunning to deduce a bad apple from a ripe fruit. As an honest human being, the sooner Rob McKay get's what's coming to him, the better.

Westley gives her a wry smile, adjusts his hat and heads on his way.

WESTLEY Thanks for the show, Miss Carruthers. I'll be in touch if I need to be.

INT. POLICE STATION - OFFICE - NIGHT

Westley holds the open cover of a book in his hands. "ROB MCKAY'S CHINESE MIST KILLATHON".

His desk phone rings. Westley stirs. Hesitates to put down the book. He comes to his senses. Answers the phone.

WESTLEY Detective Westley.

MANIACAL MALE VOICE (V.O.) (on phone) You like reading Rob McKay?

Westley pauses, taken aback.

MANIACAL MALE VOICE (V.O.) Swans swim in an ink of blood.

WESTLEY Whoa, whoa, whoa. What did you say?

Westley writes down the exact words the caller has spoken on a pad.

MANIACAL MALE VOICE (V.O.) Call me a friend. Call me an enemy. No difference to me. You will find Rob McKay feeding not only bullshit to the masses in his books but to the innocent people of the world in the advertizement pages run by media pigs.

Westley grabs a newspaper from the desk. Phone locked between his shoulder and ear, he flicks to the advertizement pages.

> WESTLEY OK, hold on, hold on, hold on. I'm looking through them now.

Westley looks at the advertizement pages.

Swan Publishing sticks out like a sore thumb.

WESTLEY Swan publishing?

MANIACAL MALE VOICE (V.O.)

(laughing) Same paper your donuts came wrapped up in, Detective Westley?

WESTLEY

So sweet I can taste the sugar. You wanna tell me something or is this just gonna cost me sending someone busy to come and arrest you for wasting police time.

MANIACAL MALE VOICE (V.O.) I just gave you all you needed to know. Tell the world about him.

WESTLEY

Who is this?

The phone-line goes dead.

Boorman enters the office with a couple of coffees. He places them on the desk.

BOORMAN Janet Lee ain't home. Not answering calls, not answering her door.

Westley hangs up the phone. He looks up at Boorman.

WESTLEY Notify all officers on duty within the proximity to search locations where she was last seen. Alleys, car parks, playing fields. Expect grim results.

BOORMAN

You got it.

Boorman heads to the door. He looks back.

BOORMAN Since McKay is the only one alive from this "connection", maybe we should send a unit over to keep tabs on him?

Westley looks up from his notepad.

WESTLEY I wanna make a quick detour and then we're on our way.

EXT. HELEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Light radiates from a downstairs window.

Boorman's car pulls up outside.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Boorman and Westley sit on the settee opposite an upset Crystal.

CRYSTAL I was meant to be moving in with Jack. But I just can't leave this

house right now.

Boorman nods, sympathetic. Westley stone faced.

WESTLEY

Jack?

Crystal nods.

CRYSTAL

My boyfriend.

BOORMAN I'm sure he understands.

Crystal sobs into a tissue.

WESTLEY I guess you wont be moving in with him now you have this house.

Crystal frowns.

CRYSTAL I haven't... I haven't even begun to think about things like that.

WESTLEY Really? I know if I just inherited a million pounds, I'd be thinking about it quite a lot.

Crystal can't quite believe what she's hearing.

CRYSTAL My mum was murdered. I couldn't give a shit about the money.

Crystal wipes away her tears. Boorman gestures her to keep calm.

BOORMAN We just need to ask you a few more questions.

WESTLEY How would you describe your parents relationship?

Crystal looks at Westley like he ate her pet hamster.

WESTLEY That bad, huh?

CRYSTAL What did you expect? They were divorced. They hated each other.

WESTLEY Come on now, Crystal. I'm divorced. I loved my wife when I married her. (MORE) Crystal shrugs, confused.

WESTLEY

Why did your parents hold such a grudge with each other?

CRYSTAL

Because of the divorce settlement, dumbass! It nearly made my Dad bankrupt.

BOORMAN Keep calm, Miss McKay.

WESTLEY

Your dad isn't very clever with his money. Did you know the restaraunt he owns is about to go under? Did you know the Inland revenue are about to press charges over unpaid taxes?

CRYSTAL What's that got to do with me? Why are you asking me these stupid questions? You should be out there looking for the guy who killed my mum!

BOORMAN Standard procedure, Miss McKay.

Crystal fumes.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Crystal shows Westley and Boorman to the door.

WESTLEY Before I go. One more thing.

A fed up Crystal struggles to keep her cool.

WESTLEY Swan publishing ring any bells?

CRYSTAL

What?

WESTLEY Your father might be involved in stealing other peoples work and taking the credit for it.

CRYSTAL

Get out.

WESTLEY

He may have set up a company to lure in innocent writers in the aim of stealing their ideas. That's call theft. He'd be looking at a ton of lawsuits. Could be the straw that breaks the camels back.

Crystal ushers a compliant Westley out and slams the door shut.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Boorman's car drives down an empty road.

INT. BOORMAN'S CAR - NIGHT

Boorman drives. Westley uses the two way radio.

WESTLEY I want a patrol car circling Helen McKay's house. Over.

POLICE DISPATCHER (V.O.) (through radio) 10-4. Over.

Westley hangs up the microphone.

He looks at Boorman.

WESTLEY You think I was harsh on her, don't you?

BOORMAN She's only a kid.

WESTLEY We've all got to grow up sometime.

The two way radio CACKLES into life.

Westley picks up the microphone.

WESTLEY (into microphone) Westley.

POLICE DISPATCHER (V.O.) (through radio) We've got a 10-54 at old Oak Grove Alley. Westley and Boorman exchange a knowing look. Not good.

WESTLEY 10-4. We're on our way.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Boorman's car swings round. Speeds off into the distance.

EXT. HELEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jack's car pulls up outside.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Crystal, bleary eyed, hugs Jack.

CRYSTAL Thank you for coming.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Jack hugs Crystal on the settee. Strokes her hair.

CRYSTAL The police came round earlier.

JACK They've caught who did it?

He picks up on her solemn mood.

CRYSTAL No. They asked me loads of questions about my Dad.

Jack stops stroking her hair. He's interested.

JACK What kind of questions?

CRYSTAL They just made me so angry. It was like they were trying to pin something on him. I just hope I didn't say the wrong thing.

Jack continues to stroke her hair.

JACK Look, if it's weighing on your mind why don't you give him a ring?
INT. MCKAY HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT Dimly lit by the laptop screen. Rob lay on the floor naked. His distant eyes gaze at the ceiling. A telephone RINGS from the livingroom. INT. MCKAY HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT Rob, naked, answers the telephone. CRYSTAL (V.O.) (on phone) Hey Dad. Rob's surprised. He smiles. ROB Crystal! How are you holding up? CRYSTAL (V.O.) Struggling ... you? ROB I'm glad you called. CRYSTAL (V.O.) Dad, I wanna apologize for how I behaved the other day. I really didn't mean what I said. ROB Don't worry, baby. I understand. CRYSTAL (V.O.) Listen. The police came round earlier. A detective called Westley... Rob scowls. CRYSTAL (V.O.) He was asking a lot about you, Dad. Rob's worried. He nervously bites his lip. Regains composure. ROB Don't let that Columbo wannabe annoy you. Don't give him the satisfaction. Just remember he's only doing his job, sweetheart.

72.

CRYSTAL (V.O.) I know. But he kept pushing and went on about a thing called Swan publishing...

Rob's face turns pale. He closes his eyes and squeezes the bridge of his nose tight.

CRYSTAL (V.O.) Dad? Still there?

Rob takes a deep breath.

ROB Crystal. I want you to do me a favor. I want you to pack some things and stay in the cabin for a couple of days.

CRYSTAL (V.O.) The cabin? Why?

ROB

It's a safe haven. I'm being set up. The police won't do anything to help so I need to know you're in a safe place. (beat) There's someone with a grudge against me out there and the closest thing to me is you. Do you follow me, Crystal?

CRYSTAL (V.O.) Dad... I'm scared.

ROB

I know, baby. Just do this one thing for me. You'll find the key under the doormat.

CRYSTAL (V.O.)

OK.

Rob sighs, relieved.

CRYSTAL (V.O.) But on my terms.

Rob sighs, frustrated.

ROB

What terms?

CRYSTAL (V.O.) Jack comes with me.

Rob bides his time.

Dad?

Rob shakes his head disapprovingly.

ROB

Agreed.

MOMENT LATER

Rob delicately replaces the phone receiver. He stands in thought, scratches the stubble under his chin.

Rob grabs the "magic manuscript" from the settee.

ROB

Who are you?

Rob turns to the back cover of the manuscript. Blank.

ROB What the hell is your return address?

EXT. MCKAY HOUSE - BACK GARDEN - NIGHT

Rob, clothed, searches frantically through several rubbish bags. He pours the contents over his patio.

Rob searches through a mass of manuscripts, envelopes and jiffy bags.

LATER

Exhausted from his fruitless search, Rob crumples up an envelope and throws it in defeat.

He pleads at a full moon in the sky. Cusses under his breath. A slim beam of moonlight shines over the pile of rubbish. Rob makes a double take.

Rob's enthusiasm for the hunt returns. He grabs a jiffy bag. Unravels and looks at it. He can't believe it.

> ROB Fuck me sideways! I'd recognize that crazy bastard's handwriting anywhere!

Rob turns the jiffy bag over.

BACK OF JIFFY BAG

A note reads: RETURN TO BELOW ADDRESS IF UNDELIVERED

BACK TO SCENE

Rob's jubilation turns to horror.

ROB

Oh God please no. Crystal.

Rob runs urgently inside the house.

EXT. WOODLAND ROAD - NIGHT

Jack's car ROARS down a desolate road.

INT. JACK'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

Jack drives as Crystal relaxes in the passenger seat. Lovebirds share a smile.

CRYSTAL

I appreciate this, Jack.

JACK

You're going through a rough time. I'm gonna be there for you. Your old man's idea was quality. Spend a couple of days up here. Put a smile back on your face.

CRYSTAL

Thank you.

JACK

Don't thank me now. Thank me when we get there. When I said it might be a good idea to beat the rush hour traffic, I didn't expect us to be driving on the most lonely and longest fucking road in existence.

CRYSTAL

It's called the New Forest for a reason, Jack.

JACK

Amazes me people live out here. There's nothing for miles.

CRYSTAL

That's the point. Me and my Dad used to come up here a lot when I was a kid. It's a place to get away from everything. I wanted us to move here. Jack laughs.

CRYSTAL

What?

JACK Remember that photo you showed me? The one where you selotaped yourself to a tree?

Crystal covers her face in embarrassment.

CRYSTAL

Oh, God.

JACK

Explain.

CRYSTAL

Whenever it was time for us to go home, I'd do something stupid to try and make us stay. I was copying a tree hugging protest I saw on the news. Mum and Dad couldn't stop laughing.

Jack cracks up in laughter.

JACK

Crazy Crystal.

Crystal giggles.

CRYSTAL

I kinda miss that though. The innocence of being a kid. Not knowing any better.

JACK

When I was a kid I wanted my Dad to hire a crane so I could pretend to be Superman for the day. Spur of the moment thoughts are not the best.

CRYSTAL

(teasing) Was you asking me to move in with you a spur of the moment thing?

Jack turns to her with a sinister smile.

No, my lady. That wasn't a spur of the moment thing. That was a well calculated and thought out thing.

EXT. STREET - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

Rain pours.

Yellow crime scene tape surrounds an alley.

Blue and red emergency vehicle lights provide an eerie glow.

Boorman's car drives up.

Westley and Boorman exit the car.

They move briskly towards a police OFFICER. It's the same rookie they met before.

WESTLEY You sure it's Janet Lee?

Officer has grown. He's a lot less bothered. Almost nonchalant.

OFFICER Head fits the description.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Westley and Boorman enter the alley.

FORENSIC PHOTOGRAPHERS take pictures, bathing the alley in radiant flashes of blue light.

Janet's head sits on top of a rubbish bin.

Her outstretched arms are glued to the side of the bin.

Her legs lay spread at the bottom of the bin.

Westley talks to a FORENSIC OFFICER (MOS).

WESTLEY Any one touched this?

FORENSIC OFFICER Nothing's been touched, Detective. All we need is the head and we're finished.

Westley nods. He grips Janet's head by her hair. Removes it from the bin lid. Strands of blood and skin stick to the bin lid, extending before they snap apart. He carefully places it in the awaiting Forensic Officer's open bag. Westley gingerly lifts the bin lid. Boorman masks his mouth with his hands from the smell. INSIDE BIN Janet's dismembered torso. Bundles of bloody cash notes. BACK TO SCENE Westley looks at Boorman with urgency. WESTLEY We've gotta find McKay. EXT. MCKAY HOUSE - NIGHT No lights are on inside. Boorman's car drives into McKay's empty driveway. INT. BOORMAN'S CAR - NIGHT Boorman and Westley analyze the house. BOORMAN Looks like he ain't home. WESTLEY He never is. Westley opens the passenger door. EXT. WOODLAND ROAD - NIGHT Rob's car whizzes down the lonely road. INT. ROB'S CAR - NIGHT Rob drives with gritty determination. He checks the time on his wrist watch. Steps the accelerator harder. Rob takes out an ancient model of a mobile phone from his glove box/ dashboard compartment.

He turns it on.

MOBILE PHONE SCREEN

One name on his Contact list. CRYSTAL. He rings it.

BACK TO SCENE

Low battery tone. The phone turns off.

Rob curses.

He angrily throws the phone into the back seat.

INT. MCKAY HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

The front door BURSTS open.

Westley enters. Boorman follows.

MOMENTS LATER

Westley and Boorman search the room.

Westley finds Rob's laptop on his settee.

Westley opens it up. He searches through it as Boorman investigates the rest of the house.

ON LAPTOP SCREEN

Westley looks on latest documents. He clicks on a document leading to his latest book.

The book unravels.

Westley flicks through the pages.

BACK TO SCENE

Boorman returns from checking the house.

BOORMAN Found anything?

WESTLEY This is all the proof I need.

Boorman looks at the laptop screen.

LAPTOP SCREEN

Divided in four columns. One has graphic photos of violence. Two has newspaper reports on the five murder victims. Three has Rob's written account of the killings. Four has Rob's interpretation in story form.

BACK TO SCENE

Boorman views in shock.

BOORMAN How did he get those pictures? They weren't released. His descriptions are vivid. It's like he was actually - -

WESTLEY - - seeing it first hand.

Boorman runs fingers through his hair, eager to take his eyes from the screen.

BOORMAN Why would he do such a thing?

Westley closes the laptop.

WESTLEY An artist is always looking to improve. A murderer is always looking for an excuse.

Boorman notices the "magic manuscript" hanging from the arm of the settee.

Boorman flicks through the pages.

BOORMAN

Bizarre.

Westley itches his fingers.

Boorman passes him the "magic manuscript".

BOORMAN

What do you make of this?

Westley takes a look.

CLOSE UP ON FRONT PAGE

Written By

Z.Z. Zagam

in collaboration with

Satan

BACK TO SCENE

Westley flicks through the pages of the "magic manuscript". They are all <u>blank</u>.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

A two story cabin. Remote woodland surroundings. The perfect retreat. A dried mud road serves as entrance and exit for transport.

Jack's car pulls in at the cabin. His headlights point out a BLACK RANGE ROVER parked nearby.

SOMEONE'S POV IN THE WOODS

Hidden behind a tree, watching Jack and Crystal walk to the cabin.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Crystal kneels below the wooden cabin door. She pulls up a doormat. Takes a key from underneath.

JACK Old fashioned or just lax in security?

CRYSTAL We don't have to worry about breaking and entering around here.

Crystal unlocks the sturdy cabin door. Opens it.

CRYSTAL

Dad used to take us up here when he was writing. I guess he felt it served two purposes. A break for the family. A writer's retreat.

Crystal and Jack enter the dark cabin.

A dark figure watches from the woods.

INT. CABIN - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Crystal and Jack enter inside. Crystal searches the wall for a light switch. An overhead light flicks on.

Spacious yet cosy. Oak furnishings. A spiral staircase leads upstairs. A flamboyant overhead mirror stretches over the ceiling.

Crystal closes the door. An impressed Jack wanders the room. He notices the ceiling.

JACK You didn't mention this place was used for swinger parties.

CRYSTAL Dad's obviously renovated since I was last here. He's not one to do things by halves.

Crystal smiles as she explores the room. It looks as good as new but clearly it reminds her of old memories.

JACK Didn't your Dad write something like this in one of his books? About a cabin in the woods - with a ceiling made of mirrors?

Crystal checks the walk in kitchen area. Everything in it's place, a place for everything. She wipes her hand over the surface. Spotless.

CRYSTAL Don't most of his books end up in the woods at some point? Just before the typical slasher fest?

JACK It's a relief he only writes fiction.

Jack notices Crystal gazing sentimentally at an old family framed photo. He walks over to her and gives her a gentle hug.

CRYSTAL It does feel strange being back here. With everything that's gone on -

SCREECH!

Crystal drops the photo on the floor - it SMASHES.

Startled, Jack and Crystal turn to a large window. A wind blown tree branch from outside rubs against it. Another SCREECH assures them of the culprit.

They smile at each other, relieved.

CRYSTAL

Good start.

Crystal bends down to pick up glass from the smashed photo. Jack intervenes.

JACK Here - let me.

CRYSTAL

Thanks.

She walks over to the window. Thin tree branches TAP at the glass. She looks back at Jack.

CRYSTAL Don't suppose you're any good with a chainsaw?

Jack smiles - his expression drops as a DARK FIGURE darts past the window.

Crystal spins around to the window. The figure has gone. She looks back to Jack questionably as she moves away from the window.

JACK Are we alone out here?

CRYSTAL Yeah... What did you see?

JACK Someone just ran past the window.

Crystal nervously laughs. Jack's dead serious.

CRYSTAL Jack - seriously. Don't be a dick.

JACK Did you spot that range rover parked outside? Is that one of your Dads?

Crystal looks worried.

CRYSTAL I don't know...

Both look alarmed.

A loud KNOCK at the door.

Crystal moves close to Jack. Both look towards the door.

Another loud KNOCK at the door. Impatient.

They both stare at the door, frozen in fear.

Several KNOCKS.

Jack ushers Crystal to stay where she is.

He creeps to the door.

The KNOCKING continues.

Jack slowly places his hand on the door knob.

Tense, Crystal chews on her fingernails.

Jack swings open the door.

A man dressed in black raincoat and hat stands on the porch. He's RICK O'RILEY, 68. A downbeat wrinkled face that's never smiled. The local crazy caretaker.

> O'RILEY About time! I was beginning to think you were both deaf.

Jack gazes at him, stunned.

JACK Oh wow, heaven forbid.

He turns to Crystal. She gives him a quizzical shrug. Jack turns back to Rick.

JACK

I don't wanna sound rude here mate but... Who the fuck are you?

O'RILEY I'm Rick O'Riley, the caretaker. And I wanna know who you two are and why you're here. This is private land.

Crystal walks to the door.

CRYSTAL It's OK, Jack. Mr. Riley, I'm Crystal McKay, Rob's daughter? He told us it would be OK for us to spend a few days up here.

O'Riley nosily peeks inside.

JACK We didn't realize we'd have to go through such stringent security first.

O'Riley backtracks from the porch. Mutters to himself.

O'RILEY I'm gonna have to clear this up with Rob in the morning.

He limps off down the road.

O'RILEY I should be first to know, not the last... fuckin' kids!

Crystal and Jack look at each other, bemused.

JACK

Nice guy.

Crystal chuckles.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Rob's car sits parked on a deserted bridge in deep woodland. It's the middle of nowhere.

Rob stands at the edge. He looks down at the water below. His reflection stares back at him.

Rob breathes uneasily. He struggles for air. He tries to compose himself. Clenches his eyes shut tight.

Rob steadies himself. His panic attack subsides. He reopens his eyes.

ROB I created you. I can destroy you.

Rob looks out at the vast woodland.

ROB I'll find you.

Rob grips the bridge rail. He struggles to breathe as he endures a ferocious anxiety attack.

He falls to his knees. Closes his eyes. Tries to calm himself down.

Rob's breathing eases. Regains a normal pattern.

He opens his eyes. Terrorfied. A SCRAPING sound, as if something constantly digging at the base of his skull.

A glowing mist rises from the river.

Various faces form in the fog. Vicious, demonic, malevolent. Faces of pain, anguish, horror.

The ghostly vapor lingers over Rob.

A distorted voice.

VOICE (0.S.) Finish it.

The mist engulfs Rob.

INT. CABIN - ROB'S ROOM - NIGHT

A door CREAKS opens. Hallway light creeps inside.

Crystal enters. Switches on the light. Jack stands by her side.

CRYSTAL Oh, wrong room. This is my Dads.

Jack enters inside, excited.

JACK

No shit?

Crystal's surprised by Jack's intrusion.

CRYSTAL Yeah, our room's got a double bed.

Jack's awestruck despite it's simplicities. A single bed. A desk. Chair. Lamp. Wardrobe.

JACK Sorry. Just I gotta admit it's kinda interesting to think that your Dad probably wrote most of his stuff in this very room.

Crystal shrugs. She takes a look out of the window. Moonlit woodland.

CRYSTAL Inspiring. I remember he never let me come in - -

Crystal turns around.

CRYSTAL What do you think you're doing?

Jack rummages through the wardrobe.

JACK

Empty.

Crystal storms over to the wardrobe. She's not impressed. She's about to close it – $% \left[\left({{{\mathbf{x}}_{i}} \right)_{i}} \right]$

JACK Hang on a sec, Crys.

Jack points inside the wardrobe.

JACK You see that?

CRYSTAL I see you just going through my Dad's things -

The wardrobe is empty.

CRYSTAL If there were any...

Jack climbs inside the wardrobe.

CRYSTAL What the hell are you doing? Have you caught rabies off that hermit or something?

Jack pushes at the back of the wardrobe. It SWINGS OPEN. Jack looks back at Crystal with as much surprise as her.

INT. CABIN - SECRET ROOM - NIGHT

A bare bulb hangs by a dust covered cord from the ceiling. It's dim light spreads around the small room.

Walls are papered over with pictures and photos of death. Murder. Torture. Rape.

Posters of horror movie and book cover art.

Drawings, scribbles. Newspaper articles on murder, abductions and torture.

A small stained desk. A fold up chair sits by it's side.

Crystal and Jack stand in the cramped space, shocked.

CRYSTAL How did you know?

JACK You won't believe me.

CRYSTAL

Try me.

JACK Remember I said downstairs reminded me of a book your Dad wrote? Crystal nods, confused.

JACK In the same book, he wrote about a bare room which had a secret doorway in the wardrobe.

Crystal stares into Jack's eyes. He's serious. She rubs her arms from a sudden chill.

CRYSTAL OK, this is creeping me out. Look, it's weird, I admit that. But all writers have their quirks, right? My Dad writes horror for a living so it kinda figures...

JACK You think this is research?

CRYSTAL

Why not?

JACK Because if I open this desk drawer...

Jack grips hold of the upper drawer with a shaking hand.

JACK

According to the book I read, there's supposed to be a heart, a blood soaked knife and some teeth.

Crystal and Jack look at each other. He awaits her consent. Crystal gulps. She nods.

Jack pulls the drawer open -

A pen and blank paper.

Crystal relaxes. She giggles with relief. Jack himself, although looking the fool, chuckles.

CRYSTAL I bet this is my Dad's idea of a joke. He never was very funny.

Realization hits Jack.

JACK It wasn't the top drawer. It was the drawer on the bottom.

Crystal sighs, deflated.

CRYSTAL Just open it already. Jack opens the lower drawer.

CRYSTAL

Oh my God.

Crystal turns away in disgust.

Jack stares at the sight in horror.

INSIDE THE DRAWER

A blood stained dagger. Several rotten blood ridden teeth. A fresh human heart.

EXT. WOODLAND ROAD - NIGHT

Boorman's car roars down the quiet road.

INT. BOORMAN'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

Boorman drives. Westley holds a mobile to his ear.

With a shake of his head, Westley gives up. He hangs up the phone. Replaces it in his inside pocket.

WESTLEY Nothing from the daughter.

BOORMAN

You sure about this hunch, Westley? We're not only going out on a limb, we're going out of our jurisdiction.

Westley nods.

WESTLEY

The writing's on the wall. Or in this case, in the book.

BOORMAN

We can't rule out someone framing him. Revenge. Christ, maybe he's in with this Z.Z Zagan guy, whoever the fuck that is.

WESTLEY Oh they're both involved alright.

Just Rob may not realize it.

BOORMAN

You think Rob's got no recollection of what he's doing?

WESTLEY

Anyone can have a split personality. Or multiple personalities. Most of us have one, it's just being aware of it and being able to control it. The problem occurs when the dominant personality slips beneath the surface.

Boorman sneers.

BOORMAN

Oh? Care to explain?

WESTLEY

When I wake up in the morning, I'm tempted to do two things. Stay in bed and go back to sleep. Get up and do my job. I never listen to the passive voice. My dominant personality won't allow it.

BOORMAN

If I listen to my passive voice it will lead me down a slippery road?

WESTLEY

You better believe it.

BOORMAN

Come on Westley. Everybody gets worn down. We all need a rest now and again.

WESTLEY

Sure. Nothing wrong in that. But when things go wrong, you question yourself. You listen to that inner demon you've kept quiet for so long. You give him a chance.

BOORMAN

This leads to a famous millionaire author going on a killing spree?

WESTLEY

Soon to become a very famous broke author.

BOORMAN

Point taken.

WESTLEY

When conflict arrives, the more dominant character - or personality - will take over. Especially when they feel pressured, under stress, attack. A primitive urge to survive will surface. Auto pilot takes over.

BOORMAN You make it sound like we're fighting the Devil.

Westley turns to Boorman. Taps the temple of his head.

WESTLEY We are. Everyday.

INT. CABIN - ROB'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jack holds Crystal in his arms. She cries into his chest.

JACK I'm sorry, Crys, I really am.

Jack smiles as he gently strokes her hair.

JACK I won't let anyone hurt you.

INT. BOORMAN'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

Westley grips the two way radio microphone.

WESTLEY I need a status report on the A.P.W. we put out on the suspect.

POLICE DISPATCHER (V.O.) Suspect remains at large.

Infuriated, Westley hangs up the radio.

INT. CABIN - ROB'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jack gently holds a tearful Crystal by her shoulders.

JACK Crystal, I love you. I want to be with you. But I've gotta tell you something. I've gotta clear my conscience. You're not gonna like it but I owe you this.

A puzzled Crystal looks sheepishly up at Jack.

JACK I'm not who you think I am.

CRYSTAL What... who are you then?

Jack turns away. Nervous laugh. Looks back in her eyes.

JACK A wannabe writer that knew you were the daughter of a famous author. That's what my main attraction to you was in the beginning.

Confused, Crystal frowns at what Jack is saying.

CRYSTAL But when I told you who my Dad was, you were really surprised...

Jack looks down to the floor.

JACK I lied. I thought if we dated, it would give me the chance to meet your Dad. Maybe even get him to read one of my stories. Get me a

break in the industry, you know?

Crystal swallows a lump in her throat. She's hurt. Jack looks back at her. Sincere eyes.

JACK But as time went by, I fell in love with you. Nothing else mattered. That's how I feel now. Nothing else matters but you.

Crystal's mind races. Hurt turns to anger. Anger to fear.

CRYSTAL Why are you telling me this now?

She backs away. He's surprised at her reaction.

JACK You needed to know... you need to know who I really am. You need someone to be able to trust, someone who won't let you down and hurt you like your Dad.

CRYSTAL I don't know you. I don't know you at all, Jack. (beat) You've set up my Dad, haven't you? JACK Wait a second...

CRYSTAL I knew you were too good to be true. I bet you even found out about my inheritance...

Jack walks towards Crystal. She backs away. Jack freezes.

JACK You're wrong. Calm down.

CRYSTAL Keep away, Jack.

Jack walks towards her. He ushers her to calm down.

JACK We need to talk about this.

Crystal turns to the door. Runs.

Taken by surprise, Jack yells out after her.

JACK

Crystal!

INT. CABIN - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Crystal runs past the stairway balustrade.

Jack runs after her.

Crystal darts inside the bathroom. She SLAMS the door shut in Jack's face.

INT. CABIN - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Crystal locks the door. She backs away.

Searches for a weapon. The room is bare.

She opens a cabinet. Empty. Pulls back the shower curtain. Empty shelf.

The door handle twists. A BANG on the door.

Crystal, fearful, backs away as far as she can.

JACK (0.S.) Crystal! Open the door! Come on, you're overreacting. Crystal steps into the bath tub. She unhooks the shower curtain rail. Slides away the curtain. She holds the pole as a weapon towards the door.

CRYSTAL Bad choice of words, Jack.

INT. CABIN - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jack crouches beside the door, head in his hands.

INT. BOORMAN'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

Feedback CACKLES from the police radio.

POLICE DISPATCHER (V.O.) We have information on the pseudonym you gave us.

Westley picks up the radio microphone.

WESTLEY Don't keep us sitting in the dark.

POLICE DISPATCHER (V.O.) Z.Z. Zagam. The author of three books published independently in the mid eighties. His real name is Robert McKay.

Westley and Boorman look at each other. Boorman surprised. Westley's suspicions confirmed.

> BOORMAN He must have used that name before he got his big break.

Westley speaks into the radio microphone.

WESTLEY Give me some details on the books. What was the last one he wrote?

POLICE DISPATCHER (V.O.) "The New Forest Massacre" written in 1985. A fictional take on real life events. Sold over a hundred thousand copies.

BOORMAN Enough to get himself a decent sized book deal.

Westley nods. Speaks into the radio microphone.

WESTLEY

Get in touch with New Forest police. Tell them to get to McKay's cabin at once.

POLICE DISPATCHER (V.O.) What's the nature of the emergency?

WESTLEY A murder's about to take place.

EXT. CABIN - WOODS - NIGHT

Rick anxiously watches the cabin from behind a tree. Binoculars hang from his neck. He licks his lips in anticipation as he masturbates furiously into the carcass of a dead owl.

A SNAP behind him.

Ricks spins around.

Light mist hovers within the dense woodland. An owl hoots in the distance.

Rick, uneasy, backs up against the tree. He squints through the mist.

RICK Who's there? This is private property and this is a private party.

A <u>gloved</u> <u>hand</u> grabs Rick's face from behind. Pulls it hard against the tree. Another <u>gloved</u> <u>hand</u> <u>grips</u> a <u>butcher</u> <u>knife</u>.

The unseen assailant <u>stabs</u> Rick several times in quick succession. A final thrust imbeds the knife through Rick's throat, propping him up against the tree as his body falls limp.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

The unseen assailant CUTS the wires of an electrical supply box with a HACKSAW.

INT. CABIN - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lights go out.

Jack, sitting by the side of the bathroom door, stirs to his senses. He knocks on the bathroom door.

JACK

Crys?

INT. CABIN - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Lights out.

Crystal, tired, sits on the toilet seat. She's relaxed her stance with the shower pole. She sighs.

CRYSTAL I know. Same here.

INT. CABIN - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jack takes some encouragement from her voice. He stands up and faces the door.

JACK Is this place powered by a generator? I'll put in a few quid if you at least let me know where it is.

CRYSTAL (V.O.) I don't know. I haven't been up here in years, have I?

JACK At least you're not blaming me for cutting the power.

INT. CABIN - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Crystal, confused, runs a soothing hand over her conflicted head.

CRYSTAL Maybe I overreacted.

INT. CABIN - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jack places his ear against the bathroom door.

JACK What was that?

INT. CABIN - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Crystal stands. She moves towards the door.

CRYSTAL I just need some time by myself. INT. CABIN - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jack smiles. Relieved.

JACK I understand. Look, I'll be downstairs. Take as long as you want.

Jack hangs his head in shame.

JACK

I'm sorry, Crystal. I really am.

A CREAK from the spiral staircase.

Jack turns around. Looks up in startled horror.

INT. CABIN - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Crystal, unnerved, moves a step closer to the door.

CRYSTAL

Jack?

A BLOOD DRENCHED KNIFE slams through the door.

Crystal SCREAMS as she falls to the back of the room.

Jack YELLS in pain (O.S.).

INT. CABIN - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jack's agonisingly pinned to the door, a knife embedded to the hilt through his shoulder.

He looks up at the MAD HACKER, a masked man in black. He wears a utility belt consisting of various tools.

Mad Hacker brings out a hacksaw from his belt.

Jack squirms, struggles to get free.

JACK Crystal! Help!

Mad Hacker SLOWLY cuts Jack's arm off. Jack SCREAMS. His limb drops to the floor. Jack twitches, about to pass out from pain and shock.

Mad Hacker slowly pulls the knife from Jack's shoulder, twisting it sadistically.

He aims the blade above Jack's head.

He's about to deliver the final blow -

Bathroom door BURSTS open.

Crystal stands enraged.

Crystal hits the Mad Hacker with the shower pole so hard the beam SHATTERS.

Mad Hacker tumbles backwards.

Crystal runs down the spiral staircase.

Mad Hacker grabs her foot from inbetween the bars of the balustrade.

INT. CABIN - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Crystal tumbles down the staircase.

She lands at the bottom. She moans in pain.

She clambers to her feet.

INT. CABIN - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mad Hacker looks down from the balustrade.

He picks up his hacksaw.

Looks down at Jack. He's as good as dead.

Mad Hacker heads for the staircase.

INT. CABIN - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Crystal limps to the front door.

She tries to open it. Locked. Crystal searches the floor in despair. Where's the key?

FOOTSTEPS slowly, thunderously, teasingly descend the staircase.

Crystal gives up on the door. She limps across the room in breathless panic.

She tries to open a set of patio doors. Locked.

She picks up a table stool from the kitchen. Throws the stool at the window. It doesn't even shatter, let alone break the glass.

FOOTSTEPS reach the bottom of the staircase.

KITCHEN

Crystal opens the kitchen base cupboards. One by one they are filled with either items or pipes. No space to hide.

She throws various cleaning products from a cupboard. Squeezes herself inside the uncomfortable small space.

INT. CUPBOARD - NIGHT

Darkness.

Crystal tries to calm her frenetic breaths.

Distant FOOTSTEPS pace the livingroom.

MAD HACKER (O.S.) Crystal... come out come out wherever you are...

Crystal gulps. Fear mingled with confusion.

CRYSTAL (softly to herself) Dad?

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Blue and red lights illuminate the cabin amidst a furor of activity.

A spotlight beams down from above.

POLICE barricade the cabin.

A police helicopter hovers overhead.

Several police cars and ambulances sit nearby as ARMED POLICE gather their positions.

A NEGOTIATOR (50's) aims his loud speaker at the cabin.

NEGOTIATOR Robert McKay. This is the police. You are surrounded. Give yourself up.

Boorman and Westley storm towards the Negotiator. They are stopped by a police officer. They show him ID. He lets them through.

They rush over to the Negotiator. He turns towards them.

WESTLEY Damnit, I told you to secure the area not feed meat to the lions! Boorman shows the shell shocked Negotiator his ID.

INT. CABIN - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Mad Hacker stands in the centre of the room. Siren lights flash inside through the windows.

Confused, he turns and finds his reflection in a full length mirror. He stares at it.

MAD HACKER Rob McKay? I'm not Rob McKay...

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

The New Forest Police CHIEF (55) talks heatedly with Westley, Boorman and the Negotiator as the police chopper soars overhead.

> CHIEF I'm the Chief around here so I'm held responsible for what goes on in that shack. What you're asking me to do is sign a death warrant.

BOORMAN You may have already done that.

CHIEF

I'm not about to let you just waltz inside there. When the shit hits the fan I'm the one that has to pick up the bloody pieces.

WESTLEY There's two innocent youngsters in there. All I'm asking is you give me ten minutes.

The Chief looks at the Negotiator. He shrugs his shoulders. Looks back at Westley.

CHIEF You can handle this guy?

WESTLEY I know how he works.

CHIEF Alright. But take this.

He discreetly gives Westley a handgun. Westley slides it in his pocket.

CHIEF Ten minutes. Then we move in. Westley nods.

Westley and Boorman head towards the cabin.

INT. CABIN - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Mad Hacker's hacksaw blade gleams from the police lights. He slowly turns, trudges into the kitchen area.

INT. CUPBOARD - NIGHT

Crystal shakes with fear. FOOTSTEPS ever closer.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mad Hacker stands in the middle of the area, bewildered.

A cupboard door wobbles.

Mad Hacker walks to the cupboard. He stands over it.

MAD HACKER Fi Fie Fo Fum. Looks like I found a little one.

He reaches down to open the cupboard -

JACK (O.S.)

NO!

Jack launches himself onto the Mad Hacker, sending him down to the floor.

The cupboard bursts open.

Crystal emerges - horrified at the two dark shapes fighting on the floor.

Police lights shine through the windows.

Crystal frantically searches for a weapon.

JACK Run! Crystal, run!

Mad Hacker straddles the one armed Jack. He aims his hacksaw in the air $\ensuremath{\mathsf{-}}$

Crystal grabs hold of his neck. Tries to pull him away.

Mad Hacker ELBOWS Crystal away with such force she falls against a wall. She hits her head <u>hard</u> and drops to the floor.

Mad Hacker pins Jack to the floor.

MAD HACKER Zombies. Only one way to get rid of 'em.

Jack kicks wildly with his feet.

Mad Hacker uses his hacksaw to SLICE through Jack's neck.

Jacks' legs drop. His arm falls flat.

Mad Hacker lifts Jacks' decapitated head by his hair. Stands and drops it in a wicker waste basket.

MAD HACKER All's well that ends well.

He turns towards Crystal. She lay unconscious on the floor. He stands over her. Kicks her legs apart.

> MAD HACKER Easy prey or easy lay? Easy prey... easy lay...

BANG! BANG!

Mad Hacker turns to the front door.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

A police officer uses a small battering ram on the front door. He hits it three times - the door bursts open.

Westley waves the officer back.

Westley and Boorman enter inside with flashlights.

INT. CABIN - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Westley and Boorman shine their lights over the room.

WESTLEY Rob! It's Westley. Games over, mate. Come out with your hands up.

Westley and Boorman cautiously venture deeper into the room. Nothing seems out of the ordinary.

WESTLEY I know you can hear me, Rob. I know - whoever you are right now - that you can understand me. I can get you help. EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

From a distance, Chief stands anxiously next to a SNIPER who trains his gun at the open cabin door.

NIGHT VISION SNIPER SCOPE:

Through the open door, Boorman and Westley enter further inside the room.

CHIEF (O.S.) You catch any sign of that wacko, I want you to lay him down. Got it?

The cabin door slowly CLOSES.

BACK TO SCENE

SNIPER

Chief...

Chief stands up abruptly.

CHIEF Shit. Try the window!

INT. CABIN - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

The cabin door CLICKS shut.

Westley and Boorman spin round.

Mad Hacker stands behind them, a knife in each hand.

He STABS Boorman in his stomach with a BUTCHER KNIFE. STABS Westley in his stomach with a CARVING KNIFE.

Westley and Boorman double over. They slowly slide from the blades to the floor, clutching their wounds.

MAD HACKER Two down. One to go.

He heads for Crystal.

Westley, blood dripping from his mouth, looks at Boorman. He's dead.

Westley painfully manages to roll on to his front.

Mad Hacker looks back. Westley struggles to his knees.

MAD HACKER I wouldn't worry about getting too comfortable down there, Westley. You're not going anywhere soon.

Westley points his gun toward the Mad Hacker.

WESTLEY I bet your agent said the same thing when you were Z Z Zagam.

Confusion and anger swell in the Mad Hacker's eyes.

Westley pulls the trigger.

BANG!

Mad Hacker clutches his throat. Blood gushes inbetween his fingers, drips down his chest on to the floor.

He gasps for air. Sways side to side.

He removes his mask, desperate for breath.

Rob - revealed - stumbles against the wall. He stares into a mirror.

ROB'S HALLUCINATION

Blood drips from the ceiling, dribbling down the cabin walls until they are coated in dark red liquid.

The walls vibrate. They morph into the bloody insides of a pulsating rib cage.

Rob, terrified, stares at himself in the mirror. Blood seeps from his throat.

A luminous fog emerges from in between the wall ribs. The fog covers the room.

Rob coughs up blood. He clasps at the mirror.

The Mad Hacker stands against the wall.

Tentacles swish from in between the wall ribs.

Rob coughs up blood over the mirror. He's pale, weak.

The Witch and Ghoul stand next to Mad Hacker. They watch Rob morbidly as the tentacles continue to swish around the foggy room.

Rob collapses to his knees.

A vehicle SCREECHES to a sudden halt in front of him.

Rob guards his eyes from DAZZLING headlights of a hearse.

The hearse driver steps out. He gives Rob a disapproving look. He joins the others alongside the rib cage wall.

Rob crawls to the hearse. He tries to gain leverage on it - but falls through thick fog onto the floor.

He looks up at the open French patio windows.

A skeletal horseman rides through the windows. Dismounts. Stands with the others.

Wolly Bong enters inside. He too, gives Rob a shake of his head. Stands in a line with the rest.

The group stare at Rob. They chant at him.

GROUP You can't let us down. You can't give up. You can't let us down. You can't give up.

Rob gets to his knees.

The encouragement becomes LOUDER.

Rob leans against the kitchen counter as he slides towards unconscious Crystal.

He grips a blood soaked knife in his hand.

Westley struggles to rise from the floor. Falls back down.

Rob continues towards Crystal.

GROUP Do it for us. Do it for us.

Westley clenches the gun in his hand. Aims it more in hope than anything. Squeezes the trigger.

BANG!

Bullet ZINGS against the kitchen counter.

Rob continues on. He stops. Chokes up a huge amount of blood onto the floor. Squeals in pain. Breathes harshly.

He falls to his knees.

He touches the soles of Crystal's shoes. Looks over to the group for guidance.

GROUP Do it! Do it! Do it! Westley musters the last of his strength. He sits up. Points his gun. Pulls the trigger.

BANG!

Westley drops to the ground, eyes closed.

Rob arches his back in pain.

He drops to the floor.

His face hits the smashed photo family picture of him, Crystal and Helen.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

EXT. POST/SORTING OFFICE - LOADING BAY/CAR PARK - NIGHT Walter heads across the car park. He passes a black range rover.

ROB (O.S.)

Walter...

Walter turns around, surprised.

WALTER

Mr. McKay? What are you doing here?

Rob stands with a distant menacing expression.

Quick as a flash, Rob SLASHES Walter's neck with a knife.

MOMENT LATER

Rob hacks at Walter's body with the knife in a blood splattered frenzy.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The Prostitute walks down a dark alley.

Bright headlights from the black range rover BEAM on in front of her.

The Prostitute smiles. Poses for her potential customer.

INT. ROB'S CAR - NIGHT

Rob sits in the passenger seat. He looks down at the Prostitute giving him head.

MOMENT LATER

Rob sits back, sighs with relief.

He raises a bloody knife in one hand and lifts the decapitated Prostitute's head in the other.

EXT. BACKSTREETS - NIGHT

Rob walks casually towards the Punter's car.

He takes a slab of concrete from a dumpster in his stride.

He throws it at the Punter's car, smashing the front window.

The car driver's side door opens.

The shocked Punter falls to the ground, blood pouring from several facial cuts.

He spits several teeth from his bloody mouth.

He looks up in horror. Tries to shield himself with his arms. Rob runs towards him, utterly crazed, knife poised to strike.

EXT. CROOKED CHIMNEY PUB - NIGHT

Rob and Tony walk inside the derelict pub.

TONY (V.O.) Of all the places you own... this just might be the mother of all your bad investments. What a dump.

ROB (V.O.) I had to close it a week ago. Business was non existent.

INT. CROOKED CHIMNEY PUB - NIGHT

Rob and Tony sit together at a single table. The rest of the bar is empty. No furniture, nothing.

TONY Why'd you wanna meet here?

Rob gets up. Moves to the door. Locks it discreetly. A baseball bat lay propped against the wall.

ROB

To show you something.

Tony, his back to Rob, notices two cans of gasoline nearby. He laughs nervously.

TONY You bring me to a bar... and all we've got to drink is petrol?

Rob takes the baseball bat. He turns to Tony menacingly.

ROB It's gonna be a hot time in the old town tonight.

TONY You really do act crazy sometimes Rob, you know that?

ROB I prefer the term... creative.

Rob runs towards Tony with a crazed YELL. Slams the baseball bat over his head with a loud SPLAT.

MOMENTS LATER

The pub drips with gasoline.

Rob pours the last of the petrol over Tony's dead body.

Rob makes an exit through a back door. He lights a match and flicks it inside.

EXT. HELEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rob carefully unlocks the front door with a key in his gloved hand.

INT. HELEN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rob creeps inside the empty bedroom.

He kneels by the bed, ready to slide underneath - it's blocked by drawers.

Rob cusses quietly.

He tries to open the wardrobe door - the bathroom door is heard opening. Rob looks up in panic.

LATER

Helen lay in bed. She turns the light off. Rob POUNCES from behind the other side of the bed. Rob jumps onto the bed. Helen SCREAMS. Rob Stabs Helen repeatedly through the bed sheets with a knife.

INT. JANET'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Greg opens the front door.

Rob stands at the porch, disorientated.

GREG You know what time it is?

ROB I need to see Janet. I just need a couple of words.

GREG I'll give you a couple of words...

Greg pumps his fists together. Ready to kick Rob's ass.

Rob pulls a knife from his jacket.

INT. JANET'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Rob sits at a glass table. He's covered in blood.

Janet enters the room with a tray of tea. Clearly, she hasn't seen him yet.

JANET Honestly, Rob. This type of behavior has got to stop.

She sits the tray on the table. Sits down opposite Rob. Looks up at him. Her jaw drops. Rob smiles.

MOMENTS LATER

Janet lay on the floor covered in blood. Knife wounds cover her nightdress laced body. She weeps for mercy.

Rob lifts the glass table over Janet's head. He gazes down on her with lifeless eyes.

Janet, badly injured, struggles to protect herself.

An emotionless Rob thrusts the table down with a decibel breaking SMASH.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CABIN - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Rob lifts himself up from the floor. With his face covered in blood, he looks every bit the monster.

He crawls toward Crystal. He's got one thing left to do.

Crystal murmurs as she regains consciousness.

Rob musters all the strength he has left. He straddles his daughter.

Crystal SCREAMS as she fully awakes.

Crystal tries to fight him off. Rob painstakingly pins her fighting arms down above her head with one hand.

CRYSTAL

Dad! No! Please!

Crystal cries floods of tears.

Rob looks down at her as his blood drips from his throat onto her disgusted and terrified face.

ROB

(barely audible) I did it for you, Crystal. I love you, my baby. I always have. Always will.

Rob shows Crystal his knife with a trembling hand. Crystal cries deliriously as she tries unsuccessfully to kick him off her.

CRYSTAL Dad! Please don't do this to me!

ROB I could never prove it to you. I could never write it in words. Could never show it in person.

Rob raises his knife.

ROB

You are my greatest creation.

Rob turns to the wall of the room. His hallucinations have vanished. The walls are normal.

He looks back down at terrified Crystal. A tear drops from his eye into hers.

ROB Now you'll know how much I love you. And you'll never forget it. Rob thrusts the knife downwards - deep into his chest.

Rob, dead, collapses onto Crystal, face to face.

Armed police BURST inside.

Crystal SCREAMS.

Rob's sadistic but smug and satisfied smile reflects in Crystal's forever-to-be-traumatized eyes.

FADE TO BLACK

END