

Perish

by

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EXT. FOREST - DAY - AERIAL VIEW (CONTINUOUS)

Miles of uninterrupted woods. A small clearing appears.

In the clearing stands a small cabin, a square sty holds two pigs, a cow stands in a pen set against the forest.

SUPER: "SOLITUDE"

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

A WOMAN (29) with chestnut brown hair, stomps from the cabin clenching an axe. She marches past a prepped log on a stump and SCREAMS as she sinks her axe into a tree with a THUNK.

(O.S.)

SNAP!

The Woman's head whips to the sound of a sprung game trap. She pulls her axe from the tree and moves into the forest.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The Woman stands over a dead deer caught in a trap.

SNORTS, HOWLS and CLOMPS of heavy hooves are heard ahead.

She follows the chain on the trap through a maze of trees.

EXT. GAME TRAP TREE - DAY

A NAKED MAN clenches a stone dagger. A sprung game trap draws blood from his calf. A chain on the trap is attached to an iron strap, riveted around a massive Oak's trunk.

An enormous BEAST hides behind the ancient Oak. One ringed horn rises from its black bull head. A game trap is sprung around the Beast's wood-like, black hoof.

The Woman chops the chain to the Naked Man's calf.

With one quick swing, the Beast knocks the Woman unconscious.

Seeing the opportunity, the Naked Man rushes the Beast, slashes at it's exposed hand, and severs its ringed finger.

The Beast lets out a HOLLER that split the surrounding trees, and spring the remaining game traps.

The ground RUMBLES.

A dozen bloody hands emerge from the earth and grab at the Beast's calves.

The Beast claws at the Oak's truck but is pulled down into the hole as the earth closes.

The Woman wakes as the Naked Man collapses.

She watches in awe as he transforms to the shape of a burgundy Succubus, with red, flesh wings and talon feet. Two ibex horns twist from the Succubus' head, and a hissing asp slithers at the base of its back.

In its fangs sits a clawed finger, with a red garnet ring.

The injured Succubus crawls into the Woman's arms.

The Woman looks on the injured Succubus with pity and carries the injured creature home.

INT. ONE ROOM CABIN - NIGHT

The Woman lays the Succubus in her bed. As she stands, the Succubus transforms back into the Naked Man.

A deep wound high on his thigh bleeds freely.

The Woman gathers a sewing kit and tends to the wound.

Her head covers the Man's crotch, as she stitches the wound.

SUPER: "LIBERTY"

The Woman rides the Naked Man to climax, then climbs off his unconscious body.

As the Woman lowers her skirt, she GASPS, as the Naked Man transforms back into the Succubus.

SUPER: "MANHATTAN, NEW YORK 1984"

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

The shades are drawn to keep out the mid-morning light.

GOOD MORNING MANHATTAN! is heard from the TV, over a the sound of a SHOWER.

Steam pours from an open bathroom door.

On the coffee table an ashtray holds snubbed out joints and cigarette butts next to an empty bottle labeled "GIN".

A bulletin board covers the living room wall. Newspaper clippings connect with blue painters string on push pins.

The newspaper headlines read,

"HIGHWAYMAN PILLAGES 3 GIRLS, AGE 9, IS ANYONE SAFE?"

"ALBERT T. DUNCAN, 42, LAWYER TO ELITE, MISSING."

"OFFICER REGINALD "TUBBY" PERISH, WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN."

"CITY HALL'S 2ND BLOODY DELIVERY. GRUESOME EVIDENCE OR BLOODY REMIANS?"

A magazine photo hangs in the corner of the bulletin board of a WOMAN (42) with chestnut brown hair.

The caption under the photo reads, "MS. LIBERTY BELL, LUMBER HEIRESS."

A red line is drawn down the center of the magazine photo. A red "?" sits over the left side of the woman's face.

INT. TELEVISION - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSED: "GOOD MORNING MANHATTAN"

CRYSTAL BUOY (26) wears a puffy scarf between the lapels of her navy sports coat, sits behind a horseshoe news desk.

CRYSTAL BUOY

And at eight o'clock we will have
our exclusive interview with
Officer Jen Parish, whose quick
reflexes ended the reign of terror
of the Highwayman Killer...

The female Morning Show host's voice becomes serious.

CRYSTAL BUOY

...but where are the children?

The camera changes to FRANK COLLETTE (50) the Morning's Show elder, white-haired Anchor.

FRANK COLLETTE

Thank you, Crystal. That story
and much more Manhattan, when we
return.

The Morning Show goes to commercial.

BELA ABZUG - 1983 AMERICAN EXPRESS AD.

Do you know me? Well, American
Express didn't and they wanted me
to have my husband co-sign for
me...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

JEN PARISH (30) walks from the bathroom, wrapped in a towel, carrying a bottle of Gin. Jen has olive skin and chestnut brown hair that hangs wet to the center of her back. Fresh, bandages cover her forearms.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - DAY

A homeless man sits against the side of a building, yelling.

HOMELESS MAN

Be sober, be vigilant because your
adversary the devil walks about
like a roaring lion seeking whom he
may devour.

Jen wipes her nose with her sleeve. Her boot heels CLICK and CLACK as she crosses in front of the 21st Precinct.

INT. 21ST PRECINCT - DAY

Jen walks past plain clothes OFFICERS who process handcuffed CRIMINALS. The Officers look at Jen, expressionless.

JEN

I know, I know, I'm late!

Jen arrives at a windowed office door. The words...

JENNIFER C. PERISH

DETECTIVE

...are fresh. Black block letters framed in thin gold leaf.

A slow clap starts to rise from behind her.

Jen turns to the entire room on their feet.

PATROL OFFICERS/ CRIMINALS

(applauding)

Woo Hoo!! Way to go kid!

JEN

Thank you! Thank you!

Jen bows, balancing her coffee, her paper under her arm.

INT. DETECTIVE PERISH'S OFFICE - DAY

Jen takes a seat and sips her coffee.

The office door slams open, rattling the glass.

CHIEF MACDANGEL (50) yells with a Scottish brogue. His overweight frame keeps his mustached face smooth and young.

CHIEF MACDANGLE

What the hell is wrong with you?

JEN

I know. I know. I said I was sorry!
It's only fifteen minutes.

CHIEF MACDANGLE

Those morning morons were here from seven to nine, waiting to interview your sorry ass!

JEN

Shit, I'm sorry, Chief! How the hell did I forget?

CHIEF MACDANGLE

If I lose my damn job because you can't get your butt in here on time...!

Jen stares at Chief and waits for the tirade to end.

CHIEF MACDANGLE (CONT.)

...no more cases, hell, no more coffee! Just sit there till things settle down.

Chief leaves and slams the door behind him.

The door re-opens.

CHIEF MACDANGLE

And Perish...

Jen looks up from the paper.

Chief tosses a leather-bound, notebook with a New York City Detective Badge, 21st Precinct strap to the top.

CHIEF MACDANGLE (CONT.)

...good work.

He closes the door behind him softly.

Jen presses her paper flat. The newspaper headline reads, "HIGHWAYMAN NO MORE! HEROIN COP DOLES OUT BLOODY JUSTICE!" She slaps the paper with her palm.

JEN
I'm comin' to find you, Pops.

Jen places the pad in her back pocket and badge on her belt. A RAP, RAP, RAP is heard at her office door.

JEN
Yup!

As the door opens, the sound of TYPING floods the office. A SECRETARY (26) in a grey flannel jacket and skirt stand at her door, wringing her hands.

SECRETARY
Sorry, Jen, we're swamped out here.
Take a statement from an old man?

Jen's eyes narrow as she does not recognize the Secretary.

SECRETARY
I'll sneak him in, no one will see.

Jen throws up her hands.

JEN
(exasperated but smiling)
Who are you?

SECRETARY
Aw shucks, thanks, Jen!

The Secretary beckons an unseen party to Jen's office.

SECRETARY
Mr. Littlehorn, Jen will help you.

MR. LITTLEHORN (80) wears a button-down shirt and suspenders to hold up his size forty waist slacks, as he totters into Detective Perish's office on a black, wooden cane.

Jen jumps up to help Mr. Littlehorn down to the chair.

JEN
Let me help you.

MR. LITTLEHORN

Oh, thank you. Nice to know there are still good people in the world.

Jen crosses her arms and leans against her desk.

JEN

Don't be so sure.

MR. LITTLEHORN

I read the papers Detective. You seem to always get your man.

JEN

Thank you. So, what brings you down here today?

Jen takes the leather notebook from her pocket.

MR. LITTLEHORN

For some time now, forces have been at work to take something most dear from me.

Jen speaks with a smile and holds her pen at the ready.

JEN

Oh? And what would that be?

MR. LITTLEHORN

A religious relic. That is all I am willing to tell you at this time. If word were to get out that this existed, there would be quite a frenzy I'm afraid.

JEN

Not knowing what I am looking for may make it hard to find?

MR. LITTLEHORN

The item is located in a simple wooden box. Very old with one red stone set in the center of the lid. The relic makes no sense without the box. I also have a lead for you.

Jen writes the facts on her pad.

MR. LITTLEHORN

A friend saw the box in a window of a Second-Hand Shop. Here you will procure the information necessary to begin your sojourn.

JEN

Sojourn?

Jen looks up from her notes.

MR. LITTLEHORN

Yes, a journey of discovery.

JEN

I know what it means, I just never heard it in the context of running down some stolen property.

MR. LITTLEHORN

If the people who committed this affront are the people I believe, this investigation will not end with Sodom Pawn and Gold. But perhaps!

Mr. Littlehorn taps his cane on the ground three times which Jen takes as a sign and assists Mr. Littlehorn to his cane.

JEN

Do you have an address on that Pawn shop? What did you say, Sodom? Is that in the city?

MR. LITTLEHORN

I'm surprised you don't know it?

Mr. Littlehorn produces a card from his jacket pocket.

MR. LITTLEHORN

Yes, 6th and Bowery. Here you are.

Jen takes and examines the card.

JEN

Oh, Saddam! I know Saddam! Didn't know he had a card?

Jen hands the card back to Mr. Littlehorn.

JEN

Just write your number of the back and I'll call you later today.

MR. LITTLEHORN

Do you have a pen Detective?

Three gold pens line Mr. Littlehorn's breast pocket.

JEN

Let me see. I should!

Jen opens a drawer on her desk and hands him a pen.

Mr. Littlehorn scrawls a number on the back of the card, then raps his black cane on the floor three times.

JEN

I will call you as soon as I have some information for you, Sir.

The Secretary opens the door to the office as if called.

SECRETARY

Are you going to take this one, Jen? Just need to know what to tell the big guy.

JEN

Don't tell him anything!

SECRETARY

Well, I have to tell him something?

Jen looks at the cover of the paper.

JEN

If he has a problem with it, he can assign another Detective but from the looks of things out there...

Mr. Littlehorn reaches out his hand for Jen to shake.

MR. LITTLEHORN

Thurible Littlehorn. I knew you were the right one.

Jen takes Mr. Littlehorn's cold, small hand in her's.

JEN

You're welcome, Mr. Littlehorn.

Mr. Littlehorn turns before he reaches the door.

MR. LITTLEHORN

Oh, and Detective, I absolutely must have the item in my possession by the 24th.

Jen holds up the paper and smiles. The date over the Head Line reads June 20th.

JEN

Like you said, I always get my man!

The Secretary smiles coyly.

MR. LITTLEHORN

Don't forget the folly of Ahab
Detective. Always leave one to the
sea.

The door to the office closes with a CLICK.

Jen looks back down at her paper

SECRETARY (O.S.)

(deep and slow)

Thanks, Gwen.

Jen looks up from the paper; the room is empty; she shakes her head and looks at the illegible numbers on the card.

INT. BOOKING ROOM - DAY

The room is conspicuously empty. Two Officers type at their desks. No criminals remain to be booked.

JEN

Benny, you want lunch?

Benny (45) thin with dark hair and sharp features, looks up from his pile of work; phone on his shoulder.

BENNY

They don't let us desk jerks go to
lunch *Detective!* You know that!

JEN

I'll bring you something back from
Balducci's.

BENNY

Balducci's? Ooh, la la!

Jen puts her hand on Benny's shoulder.

JEN

Hang in there, Benny.

Jen continues out of the Precinct.

EXT. SADDAM'S PAWN AND GOLD - DAY

Jen parks her car outside Saddam's Gold and Pawn.

SADDAM JEROME BERA (50) a heavy set, Middle Eastern man, in a baby blue tracksuit and half-glasses.

Saddam stands on a ladder and studies a birds nest under a wire gutter protector on his building.

Jen approaches Saddam with her newspaper under her arm.

JEN

Yo, Saddam! I need you, my friend!

Saddam turns annoyed, then quickly smiles.

SADDAM

Jennifer, my friend!

Jen holds up her paper to block out the sun.

JEN

What ya' got there?

Saddam steps down from the ladder.

SADDAM

Wrens! Damn birds get in the eve's and cause all sorts of damage.

JEN

Why don't you call an exterminator?

Saddam 's eyes go wide.

SADDAM

You obviously do not read your Old Testament!

'He who shall hurt the little Wren Shall never be beloved by men?'

Jen gives no indication of recognition.

SADDAM

'A Robin and a Wren are God Almighty's cock and hen?'

Jen continues her blank stare.

SADDAM

Heathen.

JEN

Some stuff that I'm looking for was
fenced through here last Sunday.

Saddam stares down through his half-glasses.

SADDAM

This does not sound like Saddam?
Who gave you this information?

Jen crosses her arms over her chest.

JEN

Someone who knows your government
name, mi' Amigo!

Saddam crosses his arms in defiance.

SADDAM

Jen, I am Saddam Jerome Bera! This
is my store! You see my permits?
We've broken bread, my friend!

JEN

I know, I know! I'm not here to
bust your balls, Jerome.

Jen holds open the door to the Pawn Shop.

JEN

I just need some information.

Saddam narrow's his eyes and enters the store.

INT. PAWN STORE LOBBY - DAY

Jen and Saddam cross the empty Pawn Store lobby,
conspicuously missing items for purchase.

A BUZZER SOUNDS followed by a CLICK and a door next to a
service window opens.

INT. SALES BOOTH - DAY

The door leads to a room the size of a ticket booth. Saddam
holds open a second door which leads to a back office.

INT. SADDAM'S OFFICE - DAY

In the office are a desk, a small refrigerator and a TV which broadcasts a cricket match in Arabic.

Jen sits down across from Saddam at the desk.

On the desk, an enormous pile of cocaine sits on a gold tray. On a Hustler Magazine lie two gold pistols.

Saddam types on a keyboard of odd symbols into a spreadsheet on his computer and sips his tea.

Jen slaps her newspaper on the desk.

JEN

You got anything to drink?

Saddam points to a mini-fridge in the corner behind him.

SADDAM

Help yourself.

A magnum of Rose and a dusty bottle of Bordeaux sit next to a fifth of Bombay Sapphire Gin on the door.

Jen pours herself a glass of Gin.

Saddam looks at the white bandages under her sleeves.

SADDAM

Your arms, you gonna be okay or what?

He takes a spoonful of cocaine stirs it into his tea.

JEN

Or what. I'm having them removed.

Jen sits down and tosses the heel of her boot on the desk.

Saddam uses his wet spoon to open Jen's paper flat on his desk. He lies a 9MM on top of the newspaper.

Jen drops her heel and takes the gun off the headline.

Saddam taps his wet spoon on the paper.

SADDAM

Accolades my friend?
Congratulations in order?

Jen places the pistol in her shoulder holster. Perfect fit.

SADDAM

Yo Mora!

MORA BERA (40) a stout Middle Eastern woman enters the room from a door behind Saddam. Her face is sweaty and smudged.

From the room behind Mora, red lights flicker and sound of HYSTERICAL LAUGHTER is heard as the door closes behind her.

MORA

Hey, Jen, what gives? I thought you were taking some time off?

Jen returns to her seat.

JEN

Duty calls.

SADDAM

Baby, could you bring me the receipts from last Sunday?

Mora wipes her face with the oily rag and stares at Jen.

MORA

Huh? Yeah baby, one sec.

Mora goes back into the hellish room and closes the door.

JEN

What the hell goes on back there?

SADDAM

I don't ask and don't give me any, *'who wears the pants'* shit neither.

Women need their space for womanly things, I need no nothing about the shame she brings on this house.

Jen cracks a pistachio from a bowl on the desk.

JEN

Shame she brings?

SADDAM

What I do, I do in the name of business. Does this look fun to you?

Mora returns with a box and places it on Saddam's desk.

MORA
Okay, what are we looking for?

SADDAM
Tell her, Jen.

JEN
Looks like you sold a hot box.

MORA
Wouldn't be the first time. What
did it look like?

Saddam looks up at Mora with disapproval.

JEN
Let see. Old, wood, red stone inlay
in the top.

Mora places her hand on Saddam's shoulder, he stops typing.

SADDAM
No. We never had anything like
that, Man.

Mora looks to Saddam then looks at Jen in conflict.

JEN
Okay?

Jen stirs her Gin with her finger; sticks her wet finger
into the pile of cocaine, then puts her finger in her mouth.

Mora shrugs at Saddam and hands him a paper from the box.

MORA
You should really take some time,
Jen? You know?

JEN
I know, Mora.

Mora smiles timidly and takes the file box from the room.

SADDAM
Yeah, that's what I thought. This
is no good, Man.

Saddam throws the piece of paper across the desk.

JEN
What is it?

Jen throws the paper back at Saddam.

JEN

I can't read this shit! Decipher it for me.

Saddam folds the piece of paper on his desk.

SADDAM

First the Wrens now I would imagine you to be the specter of death!

JEN

What are you talking about?

SADDAM

That damn box!

Saddam leans forward on his elbows and lowers his voice.

SADDAM

I was a boy when that box was first fenced through this store.

Saddam takes a deep breath and a sip of his tea.

SADDAM (CONT.)

Soon the Wrens nested in the eaves. Being a superstitious man, my father carefully removed the nest.

Saddam spins another lump of cocaine in his tea.

SADDAM (CONT.)

A week later his mother died. She was ninety-six-years young. Had not seen a doctor a day of her life!

Saddam attempts in vain to make a crucifix across his chest.

SADDAM (CONT.)

My father reached out to the prior owner, a Ms. Zoar. She told him to eat the eggs inside the nest. That this would rid him of the curse.

My father ate the eggs but my sister stole a bite.

She was hit by a car four years later right in front of this store!

JEN

It's a pretty busy street?

SADDAM

In a fit of grief, he burnt the
nest! Incinerated it in the trash!

The next day he choked on a chicken
bone and died.

Jen narrows her brow to Saddam's list of coincidence.

JEN

Why did you take the thing back?

Saddam opens his hands over his desk, laughs till he chokes.

SADDAM

This big pile of cocaine you so
rudely stuck your dirty, Gin-finger
into, and these gorgeous gold guns!
Some real James Bond shit!

Jen stirs her Gin and puts her finger back into the cocaine.

SADDAM

Screw you, Man.

JEN

I thought this was my side?

Saddam takes the tray off the desk.

SADDAM

Funny.

Jen takes out her wallet and hands Saddam several bills.

JEN

Make me a to go bag will ya'?

SADDAM

Sure.

Saddam takes a small bag from his desk.

SADDAM

I would swear it was the same man
who brought me that box last week.

Jen taps her pen against the open notebook.

JEN

What did you say this guy look
like? Anything makes him stand out.

SADDAM
Black fella... had to be
nine-feet-tall.

JEN
Nine-feet you say?

SADDAM
Yeah, I figured him a ballplayer.

JEN
So, nine-foot-tall ball player?

JEN
We have an address?

SADDAM
No. But Ms. Zoar new an awful lot
about that box. Told my father it
help a Pyrope Garnet, called the
'Seed of Fire'.

Saddam shivers at the thought.

JEN
Sure that's not a country song?

Saddam shrugs his shoulders.

JEN
Any idea where I could find this
Ms. Zoar?

SADDAM
Old age home on 12th and Houston.

Saddam throws the ample bag of cocaine at Jen's chest.

SADDAM
I wish you good luck and the
knowledge not to need it.

Jen pockets the bag and slams back the rest of the Gin.

JEN
Good luck with your bird. I'd avoid
Buffalo wings if I were you.

SADDAM
Funny.

Saddam presses the button which BUZZES the office door open.

EXT. SADDAM'S PAWN AND GOLD - DAY

Jen leans her boot heel on her car's bumper and pours cocaine between her thumb and forefinger; inhales. Jen laughs, dusts off her hands and gets behind the wheel.

INT. WINDOWLESS BAR - DAY

JUTE BOX MUSIC plays over the sound of CRASHING POOL BALLS.

A STOUT BARTENDER wipes down the bar in circles.

Jen sits at a horseshoe bar, sipping a glass of gin and writing on her leather-bound Detective's notebook.

STOUT BARTENDER

You want to cash out? My shift is over in about ten minutes.

JEN

What's the damage?

STOUT BARTENDER

Twenty-Six seventy, American.

JEN

That doesn't sound right?

STOUT BARTENDER

Lady at the end wanted to get the Greatest American Hero her last three.

JEN

Is that right?

Jen leans back to try to get a look.

STOUT BARTENDER

Yeah. But you still owe me twenty-six seventy for the first four.

JEN

I gotcha.

STOUT BARTENDER

Plus tip.

She looks at the Bartender with one eye and gets her cash.

JEN

I know, I know, thirty-five dollars
thank you for your service to your
country. Now, if you could point
out this fine woman.

STOUT BARTENDER

Very end of the bar, Ms. Marvel.

Jen slides off her stool walks toward the end of the bar.

Abel (80) an elderly man in business casual attire sits next
to the empty seat at the end of the bar.

JEN

Hey, buddy, was anyone sitting
here?

ABEL

Just you, if you'd like.

Jen points back over her shoulder.

JEN

No, the Bartender told me... never
mind.

Jen reaches her hand out to Abel.

JEN

Detective Jennifer Perish.

Abel takes her hand from over the top.

ABEL

Abel, nice to meet you, Detective.
You mind if I call you Jen?

JEN

Not at all. How is this fine day
finding you?

ABEL

Pleasantly stoned and yourself?

JEN

Well, Abel, I told a sweet old
man, not much unlike yourself,
that I would find something taken
from him.

Abel taps his cane on the floor twice and smiles.

ABEL

I've been around these parts for quite a long time, may I be of any assistance? Who was this old man?

JEN

Sorry, sworn to secrecy.

ABEL

Per usual, of course.

Jen perks up.

JEN

Actually Abel, you may just be of some help. Do you know anything about a retirement home on Houston and 12th now would you?

Abel's eyes shoot open.

ABEL

Would I!

Jen turns and watches Abel make for the front door.

EXT. MANHATTAN SIDEWALK - DAY

Jen follows Abel slowly down the quiet street.

Jen can see Abel's left hand is scarred from burns.

ABEL

I've lived here since I lost my wife in the fire.

JEN

I'm sorry Abel, that's horrible.

ABEL

Yes, it was. Before this iteration, it was called just Masada Estates. When they rebuilt it they changed it to Moasada Estates. I guess because they added mo' rooms.

Abel pushes open the door to the facility.

ABEL (CONT.)

It's nicer now than before. But you know what they say.

INT. MOASADA ESTATES. LOBBY - DAY

Abel walks into the nursing home with Jen at his side.

NURSE PATTY HASKEL (60) has light brown skin and hair spray held black curls, holds a clipboard and smiles kindly.

NURSE PATTY

Where did you find this one? Down
at the bar again?

Nurse Patty looks at both Jen and Abel.

ABEL

Jen, meet the new boss, same as the
old boss.

Jen reaches out to shake the Nurse's hand.

JEN

Hi, Detective Jennifer Perish. Nice
to meet you.

Nurse Patty takes Jen's hand between her warm palms.

NURSE PATTY

Detective! Look at you! Nurse Patty
Haskel. Just call me Nurse Patty,
everybody does.

Jen smiles and places her hand on Abel's shoulder.

JEN

Abel is assisting me in an
investigation.

NURSE PATTY

Oh? Nothing to do with the
facility?

JEN

If it does, it's ancient history.
No more than curiosity on my part.
I'll make sure to run it by you if
anything comes up.

NURSE PATTY

I trust you will. Don't believe a
word this one tells you, he likes
to keep secrets.

I thought his name was Cain for the
first three months I was

(MORE)

NURSE PATTY (cont'd)
 here. Until one day says he can't
 stand it no more and tells me it's
 Abel.

Got all hot under the collar didn't
 you, you little sneak?

Abel smiles but says nothing.

NURSE PATTY (CONT.)
 Just started calling the man with a
 cane, Cain, I guess?

JEN
 There is one thing?

Jen removes the leather notebook from her pocket.

JEN (CONT.)
 Bella Zoar. I was told she is a
 resident here. Is she someone it
 would be possible to speak with?

NURSE PATTY
 Ms. Zoar? Oh, honey that would be
 up to Ms. Zoar! She is capable if
 that's what you're asking. Just be
 careful what you say around her.

Only one to walk through the fire
 unscathed. Ever since then she
 granted herself a bit of divinity.

You'll see.

The nurse leans into Abel lightly.

NURSE PATTY
 Won't she see?

ABEL
 Oh, she'll bear witness alright.
 Come on now Jen, I'll show you the
 closet I call a home.

NURSE PATTY
 You two go on now and enjoy
 yourselves.

Nurse Patty smiles and returns to her clipboard.

NURSE PATTY

It was nice to see you again, Gwen.

Jen turns quickly to Nurse Patty but she has walked away.

Jen follows Abel through the RESIDENTS of the nursing home.

Jen notes everyone in the room has skin damage from a fire.

JEN

When was the fire Abel?

ABEL

Eons ago now. Amazing we still have as many survivors as we do left.

Let's see now. September 1981.

JEN

And Ms. Zoar? She was the only one who made it through without being burnt?

ABEL

If you believe the story she tells, it was divine intervention.

Abel and Jen arrive at a blond wood door.

ABEL

This is us.

INT. ABEL'S ROOM - DAY

Abel's room is sparse; single bed, wooden desk and wardrobe.

JEN

Apparently not the "-mo" in Moasada Estates.

Abel moves onto the bed. Jen takes a seat in desk's chair.

ABEL

I chose this. Small spaces feel humble to me.

JEN

So, tell me about the fire, if that's something you're comfortable with talking about.

Jen leans forward on her knees.

ABEL

I am now.

Abel takes a breath and looks down to his cane.

ABEL

What caused the fire was dust in the air ducts. Damn things had never been serviced. Amazing we hadn't all contracted Legionnaires' disease. Decades of filth weighed over our heads, just waiting for a spark.

Abel shifts in his cane as he tells his story.

INT. ABEL'S ROOM - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Abel and Awan turn down the covers on their single beds.

ABEL (V.O.)

They turned on the air conditioning at night to help us sleep. That spread the fire fast and pushed the smoke right out the top of the building. We had no warning. It rained fire as we slept.

Ms. Zoar stands at door to the chapel.

ABEL (V.O.)

Bella was in the Chapel when it happened.

JEN (V.O.)

Chapel didn't burn?

Ms. Zoar holds the handle to the door and looks to the air.

ABEL (V.O.)

The chapel was here before the Estate was built. Never had air conditioning.

A ribbon on an air duct reacts to the forced air.

ABEL (V.O.)

We lost three other not including my beloved Awan. One from each ward.

As Abel and Awan sleep, flaming ash falls from the vent and stick to the blankets, which bubble and melt.

ABEL (V.O.)

The blankets were made of polyester. When the fire landed on the blankets they melted, shrink wrapped us to our beds.

Abel wakes under his melting blanket. He struggles then stops and cries at the sight of Awan, off camera.

ABEL (V.O.)

I watch my beloved disappear before my eyes. Everything burned. Our wedding pictures, our mementos, gone. Not a trace is left of her. Only my memories, now.

The sprinkler heads rain water down on the room.

ABEL (V.O.)

The sprinklers turned the blankets into a hard plastic shell. The fire fighters had to cut us out with their axes.

Fire fighters CRASH into Abel's smoke filled room and hack at the blankets with their axes.

BACK TO SCENE:

JEN

And what time would this have been?
Why was Bella in the Chapel?

ABEL

Says she was summoned. Heard a voice. That's what she says anyway. You can come to your own conclusions about Ms. Zoar.

JEN

Do you think we could meet her?

ABEL

Of course.

Abel stands up from the bed.

ABEL

She's holding Mass at the chapel.

Jen rises as well.

JEN
Is she ordained?

ABEL
In her brain, her divinity is level
with the Pope.

Abel stops for a moment to think.

ABEL (CONT.)
Or at least the Cardinal?

Abel toddles to the door with Jen in slow tow.

INT. DOORS TO CHAPEL - DAY

Jen and Abel stand before the door to the Chapel. An amplified voice can be heard from the other side.

Abel raises his eyebrows and pulls the door open for Jen.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Four PARISHIONERS sit among the pews.

MR. ZOAR (72) reads from a book on a pedestal. Her grey hair has black veins which reach down past her shoulders.

Abel leans into Jen's shoulder whispers.

ABEL
Only leaves for meals, sleep and
the 700 Club.

700 Club is a real pain in the ass.
No one else watches it. Clears out
the common room from 3:00 to 3:30
every day.

But she's a bit of an anomaly down
here. Keeps these folks busy during
their time at least. I get a kick
out of her.

Some people think it's never too
late regardless of your
surroundings.

MS. ZOAR
"And if anyone will not receive you
or listen to your words, shake off
the dust from your feet as you
leave that house or town. Truly, I

(MORE)

MS. ZOAR (cont'd)
 say to you, it shall be more
 tolerable on the day of judgment
 for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah
 than for that town."

JEN
 Why all the mentions to Sodom and
 Gomorrah?

ABEL
 Raining fire on the fat and
 spoiled, get the imagery?

JEN
 It's not lost me but you folks live
 in a nursing home. How are you the
 fat and spoiled?

ABEL
 We weren't always old, Jen.
 Shh. Here she comes.

JEN
 Was that it? Not quite a sermon.

ABEL
 No, these are her meditations. She
 holds them between sermons.

Ms. Zoar nods to her Parishioners before she arrives at Jen
 and Abel.

MS. ZOAR
 Peace, peace, peace.

She arrives to Jen and Abel.

ABEL
 How do Bella?

MS. ZOAR
 Well, Abel, thank you for asking.

Ms. Zoar turns to Jen and waits for an introduction.

JEN
 Sorry, Ms. Zoar, I am Jennifer
 Perish. It's a pleasure.

Jen holds out her hand.

Ms. Zoar looks down to Jen's hand but does not take it.

MS. ZOAR

I'm sure.

JEN

Ms. Zoar, do you have a moment so we can talk?

MS. ZOAR

We have ten minutes before the 700 Club, so yes. Please, accompany me to the Commons.

The three leave the chapel.

Jen turns around to the Parishioners who remain motionless.

JEN

Meditation? Looks more like Thorazine.

Jen rushes after Ms. Zoar and Abel as they leave the chapel.

INT. COMMON ROOM - DAY

Jen, Abel and Ms. Zoar sit in the common room with the TV on with no volume.

JEN

Ms. Zoar, an acquaintance of mine now owns the store you once owned. He was given it to him by his father. His father was.

MS. ZOAR

His name was Tyrice Bera. Then the store fell to the hands of his ignorant child. Has that boy met his fate yet?

JEN

No, Mam.

Ms. Zoar kisses the crucifix from around her neck.

MS. ZOAR

I feel him disrespecting generations of good, hard-working people from where I sit. Makes me feel unclean.

Ms. Zoar looks at Jen in earnest.

MS. ZOAR
He is a pig of a man your friend,
no?

Jen takes a deep breath and sighs.

JEN
I like his wife? Look, he serves a
purpose in my life.

MS. ZOAR
Do me a favor and burn the place to
the ground for me. I'm too old to
do it myself anymore.

Jen's eyes grow large as Abel shakes his head.

JEN
Ms. Zoar. As the only one who was
unharmed by a devastating fire, you
may want to be careful what you say
around a Detective. Our minds work
a mile a minute.

Ms. Zoar cocks her head and smiles at Jen.

MS. ZOAR
Oh? I highly doubt that. Regardless
that was 30 years ago plus.

Has to be a statute of limitation
on these things.

Jen drops her shoulders and turns to Abel.

JEN
You have to be kidding me?

Abel shrugs his shoulders at Jen.

Jen takes out her notebook, as if to read her rights.

JEN
Ms. Zoar, I am guessing no formal
charges were brought against you
so, if the residents wanted to seek
some retribution through the
legal...

MS. ZOAR
I'm sorry Detective, that will have
to be all. The Club has begun.

Ms. Zoar drops her smile and turns to the TV.

JEN
Well, Ms. Zoar...

Ms. Zoar snaps, SHH without turning from the TV.

Abel giggles and moves to the door of the Common Room.

ABEL
Jen, let's go.

As Abel exits Jen walks slow behind.

INT. JEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The windows are open and the TV is on.

Jen sits in her living room, sweating. She wears jeans and a white tank top. Her cowboy boots sit next to her chair.

CHIEF MACDANGLE (HEARD ON TELEVISION)
That's correct Crystal, we have identified the body as the Highwayman. Our search for survivor's remains our number one priority. We will use all available resources to that end.

Jen inhales a large pile of cocaine from her fist, and dusts off her hands. She tosses the bag of cocaine onto the table.

CRYSTAL (HEARD ON TELEVISION)
I know this is a hard question and you may not be able to answer it but is City Hall still receiving pieces if the abducted?

On the table sits a bottle labeled GIN. Marijuana is laid out on a tray, and a joint burns in the ash tray.

CHIEF MACDANGLE (HEARD ON TELEVISION)
Any other questions you have regarding the ongoing investigation you know I can't answer.

CRYSTAL (HEARD ON TELEVISION)
Yes, but Chief.

CHIEF MACDANGLE (HEARD ON TELEVISION)
(interrupting)
Any other questions you have, you can direct to Detective Perish once she arrives.

CRYSTAL (HEARD ON TELEVISION)
 So, it is official she has been
 made a Detective?

Jen finishes the fan and plugs it in.

CHIEF MACDANGLE(HEARD ON TELEVISION)
 Yes, Crystal, I can confirm that
 Officer Parish, has been promoted
 to the rank of Detective.

CRYSTAL (HEARD ON TELEVISION)
 That is just great, just great!
 Thank you Chief. Tony back to you!

The fan MOANS and CLICK, CLICK, CLICKS as it moves from side
 to side. Jen walks into the kitchen with her glass. The
 CLICK-CLACK of her heels are heard on the kitchen floor.

Jen walks back into the living room.

BLACK MALE ANCHOR (ON TELEVISION)
 It has been four months since the
 Highwayman first plundered our fair
 city of three twelve-year-old
 girls, a near-retirement Patrolman
 and a member of Societies elite.

She walks across the white shag carpet to turn the channel.

EVANGELIST (ON TELEVISION)
 ...the "Seductress" from Qumran
 attributed to the "strange woman"
 of Proverbs; namely, her horns and
 her wings: Instead, the Qumran text
 uses the imagery of Proverbs to
 explicate a much broader,
 supernatural threat - the threat of
 the demoness Lilith.

Jen turns off the TV and plays a Miles Davis album on her
 record player.

Jen sits back down and smokes the joint from the ashtray.
 Her head flows from side to side with her eye's closed.

FEMALE CHILD (V.O.)
 (distant)
 Gwenhywfer? Gwen? Where did you go
 Gwen? Why is it so dark?

Jen raises her eyebrows to the voice.

FEMALE CHILD (V.O.)
 (distant)
 Gwen, why won't you come to us,
 Gwen?

She stops her head and furrows her brow to listen.

The Child's Voice is distorted and louder than the music.

FEMALE CHILD (V.O.)
 Open your DAMN eyes!

Jen jumps in her chair and sends the joint on her lap.

JEN
 Damn it!

Jen shoots the Gin left in her glass; pours another and drinks it down.

She collects the business card with Mr. Littlehorn's number on the back, and picks up the phone.

JEN (INTO PHONE)
 Mr. Littlehorn? Detective Perish.
 How are you?
 (PAUSE)

JEN (INTO PHONE)
 Good, good to hear. Look, I just
 wanted to catch you up on today's
 events.
 (PAUSE)

JEN (INTO PHONE)
 Yes, of course. Not a problem. The
 pawn shop had further information
 which led me to a Ms. Bella Zoar.

Sadly, just turned out to be a
 Christ crazed arsonist. Yes, a home
 on Houston. Moa- something.

My plan is to go back tomorrow and
 see if there is anything else I can
 get out of her.
 (PAUSE)

JEN (INTO PHONE)
 No nothing. I just didn't want you
 to think I wasn't taking you
 seriously, I am.
 (PAUSE)

JEN (INTO PHONE)
 Have a good night to you as well,
 Sir. Speak soon.

Jen puts out the joint and snorts the rest of the cocaine on the table. She fills her drink and walks into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The phone rings next to Jen's bed waking her.

JEN (INTO PHONE)
 Yup.

ABEL (V.O. FROM PHONE)
 Jen, there has been a terrible
 accident, just terrible. We need
 you Jen, please! It's Ms. Zoar. Oh,
 Jen, it's just horrible. Who are
 these monsters I live with?

JEN (INTO PHONE)
 Abel, calm down. What time is it?

ABEL (V.O. FROM PHONE)
 12:15.

JEN (INTO PHONE)
 I'll see you soon.

ABEL (V.O. FROM PHONE)
 Oh, do hurry Jen, please!

Jen walks to the bathroom CLICK, CLACK, CLICK, CLACK and lights a joint in the soap dish. She coughs hard as she turns on the shower.

The mirror reflect a hole in the tile wall behind her at punching level, far to big for a woman's fist.

INT. SHOWER - DAY

Jen closes her eyes and bows her head under the shower.

INT. MOASADA ESTATES. COMMON ROOM - DAY [DREAM SEQUENCE]

Ms. Zoar sits in the common room, watching the 700 Club.

On the TV are Pat Robinson and Liberty. Liberty wears a nun's habit.

PAT ROBINSON

The devil is an old man, Liberty,
and he is chasing his tale in these
new days of sin.

LIBERTY

I can't make head or tails of
children these days and their new
fangled sin. It does seem like he's
having a tough time keeping up.

Liberty laughs, leans in and takes Pat's hand.

Jen places her hand on Ms. Zoar's shoulder. Ms. Zoar turns
to Jen but her face is replaced with a television screen.

INT. TELEVISION SCREEN FACES - DAY [DREAM SEQUENCE]

THREE GIRLS (9), one with blond hair and white skin, one
with olive skin and brown hair and one with brown skin and
black hair, push a merry-go-round.

As the merry-go-round catches speed, the girls leap on.

INT. COMMON ROOM - DAY [DREAM SEQUENCE]

On the Common Room TV, Mr. Littlehorn has replaced Pat
Robinson. He turns to face Jen on the TV.

MR. LITTLEHORN

Find my fucking box Guenevere!

BACK TO SCENE:

Jen jolts out of her daze by Mr. Littlehorn's exclamation.

JEN

Damn it!

Jen breathes heavy under the running water and tries to
collect herself with her eyes wide.

EXT. OUTSIDE SADDAM'S GOLD AND PAWN - DAY

Jen parks in front to Saddam's Pawn Shop. A white stripe
runs down the building under the Wren's nest.

INT. SADDAM'S PAWN SHOP. LOBBY - DAY

Jen walks to the window and leans into the speaker while sliding the empty plastic bag and bills under the window.

JEN

Morning my friend. Fill her up?

Mora approaches the window. She wears the same shirt she had on the day before and holds a manila envelope.

Her eyes grow wide as she realizes it is Jen at her window.

MORA

Jen! He's out. Pretty sure he won't be back this morning.

JEN

Really?

She looks on either side of Mora's short girth.

JEN

Well, do you think you can take care of this?

Jen taps on the empty bag and bills.

MORA

Shouldn't be a problem.

JEN

I hope not. That's pretty much the whole job.

Mora slides a full bag back to Jen with one of the bills.

MORA

Keep half. He didn't pay shit for that. What he don't know can't hurt him.

Mora smiles and wipes her hands on a blood-soaked rag.

MORA

You need anything you come and see me Jenny. Mora got your back.

Jen shrugs her shoulders and retrieves the bag and bills.

JEN

Ok, well, I don't really care which one of you fills the bag.

Jen again looks around Mora's frame for any sign of Saddam.

JEN

Just tell my friend his birds are crapping a racing strip down the side of his store.

Mora backs away from the window without a word.

EXT. PARKING LOT KING'S OAK STREET PUBLIC HOUSE - DAY

As Jen walks down the street, three cars race by. Moments later, a patrol cars drives at normal pace; no lights on.

Jen takes the cocaine out of her pocket, pours a small heap and breathes in deeply.

Seconds later, a police cruisers speed by light flashing.

Jen nods with satisfaction and enters Moasada Estates.

INT. MOASADA ESTATES LOBBY - DAY

The Residents crowd in the lobby, their mouths agape as they stare forward and mull about the lobby.

Jen pushes through the Residents but becomes disorientated. A hand emerges and pulls her free from the crowd.

NURSE PATTY

Oh, no you don't! Not yet. You're not done here yet, sweetie.

JEN

Thank you. I couldn't see a way out!

Nurse Patty brushes Jen off like a school child.

NURSE PATTY

And you won't! Not till everything is accomplished.

Jen pulls away from Nurse Patty like a squirmy child.

JEN

Okay, okay, thank you. Very nice of you. So, what's the situation?

NURSE PATTY

Oh, just old Ms. Zoar raising a fuss.

JEN
 Abe, I made it sound like someone
 had been murdered?

NURSE PATTY
 Murder?

Nurse Patty turns her head and squints at Jen.

Abel appears and takes Jen by the elbow.

ABEL
 Detective Perish, please this way.

Abel uses his cane to move through the Residents.

ABEL
 The Staff are so used to the
 residents passing on, the concept
 of murder is inconceivable.

Abel turns to Jen who follows behind him.

ABEL
 Like lemmings at the cliff.

This way.

The two arrive at the double wooden doors of the chapel.

ABEL
 Brace yourself, Detective.

Abel begins to push them open.

JEN
 Abel, I have been a Detective
 for...

The scene in the church stops Jen's speech.

Ms. Zoar torso sits atop the chapel's podium. Her right arm hangs from a spike next to her head. Her left arm hangs from at an angle which holds a thick tome in her upturn hand.

A four-member FORENSIC TEAM work the murder scene.

Abel walks straight to the body with his hands on his hips.

ABEL
 She was found in here by her
 morning meditation Parishioners.

(MORE)

ABEL (cont'd)
The screaming was terrible. That's
why I called.

Ms. Zoar's eyes are cut out and now just black holes.

ABEL
Just a mess.

Abel turns to the Forensic Team.

ABEL
How long do you think this will
take to clean up?

The Forensic Team look up from their work with dull stares.
Jen does not notice the Team are Ms. Zoar's Parishioners.

Abel takes a step forward and studies Ms. Zoar's face.

ABEL
Is there something in her mouth?

JEN
Pardon?

ABEL
Up there laying on her tongue looks
like a silver pendant of some sort?

Jen rises on the toes of her cowboy boots.

JEN
Abel, I can't see a damn thing! How
the hell can you see what is in her
mouth?

Abel approaches the tallest of the Forensic team.

ABEL
(inaudible to Jen)
Just take the ladder and get it out
of her mouth. Like we practiced,
here we go. Now, go!

The Forensic team member takes a ladder from the corner of
the room and erects it next to Ms. Zoar's body.

ABEL
Good, good, that's right!

As the UNSHAVEN FORENSIC WORKER proceeds up the ladder, Jen
can see dirt under his fingernails.

ABEL
Yes, yes. Go on, it's okay. Go on.

The Unshaven Forensic Worker's eyes widen at the ceiling.

ABEL
(clears his throat)
Never mind all that, about your
business boy.

He scowls down on Abel and reaches into Ms. Zoar's mouth,
climbs down and hands it to Abel.

ABEL
It was catching the light just so.

Jen stares as it spins and sparkles from Abel's fingers.

JEN
It's so pretty.

EXT. PLAYGROUND MERRY-GO-ROUND - DAY

Two Girls push a merry-go-round and leap trying jump on.

INT. MOASADA ESTATES CHAPEL - DAY

Abel flicks his wrist and brings the pendant to his hand.

Jen shakes the daze from her eyes

JEN
Hey, that's evidence.

She turns to the Unshaven Forensic Worker.

JEN
Completely contaminated evidence
but evidence none the less.

The Unshaven Forensic Worker does not react.

Abel holds the pendant in his palm.

Jen can not help but study every detail of the piece.

ABEL
She wore this every day, could
never get it off her. This would
have been of no help.

Abel turns the piece in his palm.

ABEL
 No, this I will keep for
 safekeeping until an heir is
 apparent.

JEN
 So, there are next of kin?

ABEL
 She spoke of three girls but I have
 never seen anyone visits.

JEN
 Triplets?

ABEL
 No, no, that was all part of her
 original sin I'm afraid, what
 originally brought her to the
 chapel.

Jen approaches Ms. Zoar's body.

JEN
 Hide away in a chapel as if someone
 else would live a better life for
 her sacrifice.

A red leather tome sits on Ms. Zoar's bloody palm.

ABEL
 And despise everyone else for not
 making the same sacrifice.

Ms. Zoar's blood blends with the color of the cover.

Jen turns away from the body to face Abel.

JEN
 So, where is Miss Led Mary's room?
 Maybe we can at least notify the
 next of kin.

ABEL
 Let us leave this tasteless scene
 and see what there is to see.

Jen and Abel hook arms and leave the room.

As the blood runs off the cover of the book in Ms. Zoar's
 hands, a gold pentagram shows set deep in the book's cover.

INT. MS. ZOAR'S ROOM - DAY

Jen and Abel enter a room identical to Abel's.

ABEL
(scratches his head)
Well, I keep my personals here.

Abel sits on the bed, reaches under and removes a hat box.

ABEL
Yup, here we go.

Abel places the box on the desk and pulls out the chair.

ABEL
Come, come take a seat now. Let's
see what there is to see.

Abel pulls out the chair for Jen. Her body shivers from a chill as she pulls off the lid.

JEN
Whoa! What is that smell, honey?

The box holds a lock of hair, a plastic bubble container and a small piece argyle wool with a brown stain. Half of a Locus and a petrified Wren both lay in boxes of cotton with no lids.

Abel narrows his eyes and waits for Jen's reaction.

JEN
The ribbon tied to the hair here
has the word Trinity stitched into,
probably a girls name.

The ribbon holds the ponytail. Blond on the outside from sun but black as a smudge stick in the center.

Abel points to the plastic container.

ABEL
What's in there? Are those teeth?

Jen turns over the plastic dome, it indeed holds four teeth.

JEN
Baby teeth. There is something
written on the bottom here.

On a piece of tape on the bottom is the name Gwen.

She places the baby teeth on the desk and removes the cloth.

ABEL

What is that coffee?

Jen places her tongue against the ancient stain.

Abel furrows his brow at the odd detection procedure.

JEN

Blood. Looks like a dress, just missing the over-sized Safety Pin.

Abel chuckles before realizing what he's looking at.

JEN

Abel, this does not look good. What the hell was up with this lady?

ABEL

I may be missing your point?

JEN

So, Ms. Zoar had three daughters no one has ever seen.

ABEL

Yes?

JEN

And these look like maybe some keepsakes a mother would have of her children, right?

ABEL

Yes?

JEN

Then where's the rest? The pictures for the fridge? The macaroni necklace, the buttons that fall off expensive Petty coats that never get stitched back on?

Jen points to the Wren and the half-eaten Locus.

JEN (CONT.)

And those?

Abel looks down, crosses his arms and shakes his head.

JEN

This is what it looks like when I go digging through a serial killers hope chest.

Who was this woman Abel?

Abel takes a deep breath and nods his head.

INT. KING'S OAK STREET PUBLIC HOUSE - DAY

Jen and Abe sit at the bar, before short brown cocktails.

ABEL

Our little enclave has had some colorful characters through its doors over the years Gwen.

Jen spins a stemless cherry around the rim of her glass.

JEN

Huh?

ABEL

Did I say Gwen?

JEN

Yeah?

ABEL

Barkeep! Two more please.

Anyway, we have always taken them in. They're lost out there. They're old and tired and yes, they have their insidious quirks but Taranis willing they are done with their past.

The Bar Tender's skin is pitch sable without the luster. The gold ring between his nostrils must weigh an ounce.

Jen looks up from her drink but can't see the man's face. His frame stretch 7 feet and disappears behind the bottled shelves that hang around the horse shoe bar.

JEN

Whoa, there Apis!

Jen is left to stare at his tree truck torso and coal shovel mitts which make his bar rag look like a beach towel.

Abel leans into Jen's ear.

ABEL

That box was first discovered when they moved us after the fire. It was only then that she claimed to

(MORE)

ABEL (cont'd)
have a daughter. But I never
thought there were ever any
daughters.

Jen shakes her head and takes a long pull from her drink.

ABEL
It was the dead bird that got my
curiosity up. Why would someone
keep a dead bird in a box?

Jen takes a pull off her drink and coughs from the mix.

ABEL
'That is the sign of a disturbed
mind, Abe', I told myself, so I
looked into it.

Jen leans on Abel's arm as she takes another drink.

JEN
Go on?

ABEL
What I found was a missing girl.
Hope, Rhode Island 1951. A twelve
year old girl reported missing from
her mother's one-room home. June
24th.

Jen pushes a cherry out of her glass and onto the napkin.

JEN
Apparently, Ms. Zoar did have a lot
of repenting to do.

ABEL
The girl was found.

JEN
What?

ABEL
Four years later to the day.
Traumatized of course but more to
the point of the story, she had
been impregnated three times and
carried three babies to term. All
from different men it would appear.

Abel taps the bottom of the glass on the bar for another.

JEN

What year did you say this was?

ABEL

The child was abducted in 1951 and re-connected with Ms. Zoar four years later to the day, 1955.

Why? When were you born Detective?

Jen tries to skewer her cherry with her straw.

JEN

June. I got to get some air. I'll be right back.

Jen steps back off the stool and stumbles for the door while she searches her pockets or her bag of coke.

EXT. KING'S OAK STREET PUBLIC HOUSE - DAY

Jen stares at the sun as she dumps a heap of cocaine between her thumb and forefinger. She drops her gaze to the pile of coke but only sees a sunspot.

A YOUNG COUPLE (20s) walking arm-in-arm, knock into Jen which sends the coke in the air.

YOUNG COUPLE

Sorry!

The couple laughs and continue down the street, unconcerned.

Jen pours another heap and inhales.

She takes a twenty dollar bill from her pocket, crumples it and throws it long after the couple is gone.

JEN

Screw you!

A car HONKS as she fingers the air and stumbles backward.

The bull of a Bartender emerges from the bar and collects Jen from under her arms and carries her back into the bar.

NOTE: We never see the Bull above his shoulders

INT. KING'S OAK STREET PUBLIC HOUSE - DAY

The Bull of a Bartender carries Jen back into the bar from under her arms. Her legs swing in the air like a child.

ABEL
You okay, kid?

The Bartender drops Jen on her feet and moves to the bar.

JEN
Fantastic. Tell me more.

Abel looks at Jen with concern.

ABEL
That girl's name was Liberty.
Newspapers reports said she had no
recollection of those past four
years.

I remember the story so well. When
she was taken she had full,
beautiful blond hair. The papers
shown a girl delivered back to her
mother with a skinned head. She had
her wisdom teeth removed and a deep
scar on her thigh that looked as if
it had been stitched by a meat
cutter.

Gone through some sort of hell
obviously but her babies were
healthy.

I never told Ms. Zoar I looked that
up on her. Or that I stay in touch
with her daughter.

What would you have done Detective?

Jen stirs her drink dreamlike with her straw.

ABEL
I still correspond with Liberty. We
communicate like civil people once
did, we write letters.

JEN
Civil people and convicts. Do you
know where to find this Liberty? I
may just have a few questions for
her.

ABEL

That would be on the uptown buss.
66th and Amsterdam. Right above
Lincoln Center as the crow flies or
cab drives.

JEN

I'm not sure if I can wait a week
for your next piece of
correspondence to arrive by carrier
pigeon, would you be willing to
reveal your friends address.

ABEL

Funny thing that. They are hand
delivered, every Wednesday by a
large Irishman now, not quite sure
what happened to Albert. I could
put a request in with her personal
courier?

Jen leans into Abel shoulder and pushes him off his stool.

JEN

Make it so!

Jen tries to grab her drink but can't get her shaking hand
around the glass. She struggles but finally grabs it.

The glass explodes in her trembling hand.

JEN

Oops?!

BARTENDER (O.S.)

That's it time to go Dirty Mary,
get her home so she can save the
city tomorrow.

With the aid of Abel's cane the two stumble out the bar.

INT. JEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The keys sounds against the lock and a THUD in the center of
the door which slides to the floor. The door swings open and
Jen falls flat on the floor laughing.

She crawls into the living room and kicks the door closed.

Jen takes a swig from the GIN bottle on the coffee table.

She finds the phone cord, then pulls the phone to her body.

JEN (INTO PHONE)
 Mr. Thithlethron it's me, I did it.
 I mean I made it home. I just
 wanted to call to tell you I made
 it home and I am okay.

Her eyes close as she starts to snore.

Her snores wakes her.

JEN (INTO PHONE)
 And I wanted to.. to, thank you for
 finding my mother. Good night Mr.
 Midget porn.

Jen drops the phone on her chest and passes out.

The phone line remains open... then clicks off.

EXT. CLEARING IN FOREST - DAY - AERIAL VIEW

The patch of land has grown and shows the passage of time.

SUPERIMPOSED: SOLITUDE

Liberty (12) stomps from the cabin, her chestnut hair loose and stone face sour, clenches an axe. She marches past a prepped log on a stump, and SCREAMS as she sinks her axe into a tree with a THUNK.

(O.S.)

SNAP!

The Girl's head snaps at the sound of the sprung game trap. She pulls her axe from the tree and moves into the forest.

SUPERIMPOSED: LIBERTY

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Liberty comes across a fox caught by a trap around its neck.

A loud CRY turns to a WHIMPER.

The Girl crouches behind a tree to see the fragile form of a burgundy Succubus, caught in a game trap.

The WHIMPERING Succubus shivers, its wings flap in spasm, its serpentine tail lay limp behind it's body.

EXT. GAME TRAP TREE - DAY

The Girl reaches and springs the trap with a long stick.

The trap open the injured Succubus crawls to the Girl. The Girl recoils but looks on the hell-spawn with pity.

She gathers the Succubus in her arms, and starts for home.

The ground quakes, shaking the Girl to her knees, as the earth opens up in front of her.

The Succubus grabs the Girl's arms.

SUCCUBUS

Gotcha!

LIBERTY

What? No!

The Girl thrusts the Succubus off her body and the creature disappears into the crevasse.

The Girl stares paralyzed at the crevasse before her feet.

The Succubus reemerges, grabbing the Girl's ankles and pulls her onto her back and into the hole.

The Woman runs into the clearing as the ground closes.

WOMAN

Liberty? Liberty!

She falls to her knees and yells at the ground.

WOMAN

She was finally pulling her weight!
She was finally worth something!

The broken Woman crumbles onto the ground.

INT. 21ST PRECINCT - DAY

Jen opens the door to Chief MacDangle's office.

JEN

(looks at her watch)
Chief! Hey, I'm here, just wanted
you to know.

CHIEF MACDANGLE

Yeah? Where were you yesterday
afternoon? Patrol officer said he
saw you outside King's at 12:30.

Jen rubs the back of her neck.

JEN
Late lunch?

CHIEF MACDANGLE
Liquid lunch.

JEN
Yeah, well, I'm here. Thought I would let you know. Respect what you were sayin'.

CHIEF
I may have only worked with your degenerate ass for the last four years but your step-father I have known damn near my whole life!

I don't know which one of your low life friends you paid off to get that scum bag off the streets and I don't really care but don't expect me to believe this happy horse shit that you're on the straight and narrow now, just because they made you a Detective.

Jen points at Chief with rage.

CHIEF MACDANGLE
Save it for someone who gives a crap, Perish! Just get out of my office... lost cause.

She walks out of the office and toward the door.

BENNY
Hey, Jen! What about that lunch?

Jen turns with her hands on her hips and a furrow brow.

JEN
Yeah, Benny, come on, I got to get out of this shit whole.

She turns and walks fast out of the Precinct.

BENNY
Sweet, free lunch!

Benny grabs his jacket and jogs after her.

INT. BUDDY'S ANYTIME DINER - DAY

The two sit in a booth opposite one another as the food arrives. Benny drinks coffee. Jen sips a Budweiser.

BENNY

Here we go!

Benny launches into his sandwich.

BENNY

All I'm sayin' is Hollywood hates
Cops!

Jen takes a pull from her Budweiser.

JEN

How do you figure?

BENNY

They make us look like animals!

Benny says his mouth full of food.

BENNY

Why else would you call it Fort
Apache the Bronx! Yeah, we're
fighting off the Injuns alright!
Freakin' Barbarians at the Gates,
is more like it!

Jen watches Benny and smiles.

JEN

Any news on the abducted girls?

BENNY

Nothing. You know how that goes.

Jen stares off concerned.

BENNY

We'll find those girls for you,
Jenny.

Benny returns to his food.

BENNY

Gosh, I wish Tubby was here. He
could sniff out a lost kid like no
one I ever known.

Found you didn't he!

Jen looks at her Budweiser and picks at the label.

JEN

Something like that. Hey, did you two ever have any run-ins with a Miss Liberty Belle?

Benny looks at Jen confused with his mouth full.

BENNY

He loved to tell that story must have told me a million times!?

He never told you? Well, I guess it's not the most appropriate story for your daughter? You were also like eleven...

JEN

Step Daughter.

Benny wipes his full mouth before he speaks.

BENNY

We got call on a missing girl. Way before she was a Socialite. This was a shit shack on 33rd. I was new so Tubby had me stay in the car and cover the street.

Benny tries to wipe a sly smile from his mouth. Didn't come back for near an hour. Said she wasn't wearin' a thing when she came to the door!

JEN

No way?

BENNY

There was no missing kid, just some lady lookin' to get her rocks off. He said nothin' happened though. Said there was three kids and an older lady in there. Never did explain where his badge went!

Wasn't his type, he says.

It's fifteen years later and the lady is still a fox. If it was me...screw the kids and the old lady! Am I right!

Benny reaches across the table and hits Jen in her cut forearm and she recoils in pain.

Benny's eye's are focused on his food.

BENNY

That father of yours, always the dog.

Ms. Belle the Ding Dong Lady, that's what he called her.

JEN

Step-father.

Lost in memory, Benny smiles and wipes his lips.

BENNY

Ms. Belle the Ding Dong Lady. Why you gotta ask about Tubby while I'm eating?!

JEN

Sorry, Benny.

Benny gorges himself on the sandwich again.

BENNY

That's alright. Your father is the toughest guy I know. If anyone can make it out in one piece, it's Tubby, that's for sure.

Benny stops and looks up at Jen, his eyes sad.

BENNY

Maybe missing a piece or two but he'll be fine, kiddo! You'll see.

JEN

I know you're right, Benny.

BENNY

Wait a second! You don't think Ms. Bell had anything to do with the Highwayman do ya?

JEN

I don't know Benny but I owe it to Tubby to take a look.

BENNY

Tubby kept tabs on her over the years. I could show you. After I'm done eating. You want dessert?

INT. BENNY'S SQUAD CAR - DAY

The two drive up town a block at a time as the lights change from green to red.

BENNY

Those little girls. We gotta find those little girls.

You know who I haven't seen?

JEN

Who?

BENNY

The parents!

JEN

At the Precinct House? Crystal Buoy is about as fancy as we are gonna get. Unless the hookers start wearing pant suits.

Jen takes a deep breath and lays her head against the rest.

JEN

Were doing all we can, Benny.

BENNY

Are we? I see just as many beat cops sitting at their desks. It's almost like were just telling people were still looking.

JEN

That's not how it works Benny, everyone has to answer to a higher power.

As the block numbers increase with each squeaky stop for crosswalk pedestrians, Jen spots the profile and chestnut brown hair of Ms. Liberty Belle on the steps of a four story brown stone, surrounded by a small entourage.

BENNY

There she be Jenny. There's your white whale!

JEN
 She's no whale, Benny. Do a u-turn
 here, will ya.

BENNY
 Righto Captain! Coming about
 starboard!

The car cuts through two lanes of traffic with ease and
 docks on the curb before the building.

EXT. UPTOWN MANHATTAN STREET - DAY

As Jen exits her car, the wind kicks up and forces Liberty's
 entourage to cover their faces, allowing Jen to saunter
 toward Liberty with ease.

JEN
 Excuse me, Ms. Belle? Detective
 Perish. If I could have a moment?

LIBERTY
 Detective? Oh, yes of course. How
 may I be of assistance.

JEN
 An acquaintance of yours, a Miss
 Zoar.

LIBERTY
 (interrupts)
 You mean my mother.

Jen stops unknowing of what to say.

LIBERTY
 Yes, Detective, I have heard of the
 grizzly discovery. Is that why you
 are here? I have already confirmed
 her identity at the nursing home
 this morning.

JEN
 Excuse me?

LIBERTY
 This has all been taken care of so
 if you don't mind.

Liberty turns to the massive man next to her.

LIBERTY (CONT.)

Albert, sorry James, if you would?

James (45) an oversize Irishman in Corduroy jacket, palms Jen by the arm before she can protest.

JAMES

Ma'am, I am afraid I am going to have to ask that you step away from Ms. Belle.

Jen nonchalantly takes the giant man by the wrist.

The Irishman's eyes go wide in pain.

Benny leaps at the Irishman's chest. As the massive man fall back, his face shows relief and he grabs his wrist.

BENNY

Hey! Hands off the Detective Bub or I'll shoot you right here and now!

Jen unlocks her holster and turns quickly to Benny.

JEN

(snarling)

Benny! Put the damn gun down jeez-us what the hell is wrong with you!

Jen pushes the gun down and flips the snap.

BENNY

Not loosing another partner.

JEN

I'm not your...

The Irishman shakes out his hand and looks befuddled at Jen.

JEN

My apologies Ms. Belle. We will be leaving.

Liberty raises a long dark eyebrow to the scene.

LIBERTY

That's fine, Detective.

Jen rustles Benny's hair as they walk away.

JEN

You're crazy you know that!

Jen gives Benny a kiss on the forehead.

LIBERTY

Oh, and Gwen?

Jen turns back.

Liberty still stares at her from the steps.

LIBERTY

Do come and see us once and a while. When you're alone. The girls would love to see you.

INT. KING'S OAK STREET PUBLIC HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Jen walks into the bar and throws her leg over a stool.

JEN

Hey Bull, set us up will ya'.

The Bartender stands headless at the bar. His height keeps his head and enormous shoulder's hidden.

BARTENDER (O.S.)

Name's not Bull.

JEN

Sorry Zeus, Apollo, Mercury, what ever you call yourselves.

The Bull's chest stares at Jen.

JEN

I watch Soul Train, I know things!

BARTENDER (O.S.)

You're a fool.

The Bartender places two rocks glasses filled with brown liqueur on the bar.

JEN

Where is my little friend today?

The Bull removes a dusty champagne flute from the rack.

JEN

Hello? The old man I just bought a drink for who is conspicuously missing? Any ideas?

The Bull's hands polish the flute and places it next to Jen.

SALOME

A multitude of sins is in her
wings.

Jen turns her gaze from the flute to engage her detractor.

JEN

Excuse me?

SALOME BELLE (29) stares at her manicured nails as she speaks. Sitting high and strait, her legs crossed atop the stool next to Jen, Salome looks like a Harlem Renaissance Flapper in her a red sequin dress, form to fit.

Jen laughs at the slight waif.

SALOME

Or do you prefer prodigal one?

Jen wipes her nose and takes a pull from her rock glass.

JEN

I'd prefer Detective Perish.

Jen turns to the Bartender's chest.

JEN

You guys serve champagne in here?

The Bartender turns and walks away.

SALOME

I saw you talkin' to Mama.

Salome elegantly finishes the glass in one long sultry sip.

The Bull refills the flute with a dank, dusty bottle.

SALOME

So, what do you want? Money or a
mommy?

Jen refuses to look at the rare bird as she takes a drink.

JEN

Neither, girl.

SALOME

Careful who you call 'girl', girl.

Jen finally turns her gaze to the Dragon Lady.

Salome's stares up at Jen from her round, ripe eyes. Salome has light brown skin with an ink spot freckled face. Her tight brown hair, cut close to the scalp.

SALOME

So, what am I supposed to call you?

JEN

I don't know. Sis?

Jen pulls her notebook from the back pocket.

SALOME

And now you want your Mommy back.

Jen snickers.

JEN

Never wanted a damn thing from that little princess.

Salome tosses her champagne in Jen's face.

Jen doesn't flinch, just licks her lips, here eyes closed.

Salome snarls.

SALOME

Little Princess?! Nubian Queen
Mother!

Bitch.

Jen wipes the champagne from her eyes.

JEN

Okay, okay she is your mother. I
deserve that.

JEN

(eye's closed)

You do know I carry a gun right?

Jen opens her eyes and the stool next to her is empty, no flute on the bar.

Jen turns to the Bartender.

JEN

Look man, I'm sorry about the Soul
Train comment!

Jen takes a drink but is hit in the teeth with ice cubes.

JEN

But could you tell everyone to just
sit still for a minute?

She dumps the cubes into the cocktail meant for Abel and
pulls it in front of her.

INT. JEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jen stumbles into the apartment and falls on the couch. She
takes a bag of coke from her pocket and dumps it over the
white shag rug and into a heap on a mirror on the table.

She drops to her knees in front of the pile. Her head waves
before she passes out into the pile of cocaine, cracking the
mirror with her forehead.

INT. JEN'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Jen wakes up, half of her face powdered with cocaine. A cut
runs across her forehead. Dried blood and pieces of mirror
are stuck to her face.

She MOANS and turns her face into the pile of coke on the
broken mirror and inhales deep.

Without picking up her head Jen reaches for the bottle of
GIN and tries to take a pull but the bottle is empty.

Jen rises from her cramped position on the floor. She pulls
a card in her jacket and calls the number.

JEN (INTO PHONE)

Littlehorn!

(PAUSE)

JEN (INTO PHONE)

Mr. Littlehorn. It's Gwen.

(PAUSE)

JEN (INTO PHONE)

Yes, Sir.

(PAUSE)

JEN (INTO PHONE)

No, Sir, but I'll find a way in
that house first thing tomorrow. I
still have one more lead. Yes, I'm
sorry. I'll be more direct. There
won't be any further issue.

(PAUSE)

JEN (INTO PHONE)
 And, Sir? Thank you for sending
 Salome, lovely girl.
 (PAUSE)

JEN (INTO PHONE)
 Yes, just lovely, okay. Have a good
 day, Sir.

Jen hangs up and turns on the television and walks into the
 bathroom stripping for the shower, and turning on the steam.

INT. JEN'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

CRYSTAL (ON TELEVISION)
 Well, Tony, we are taking another
 swing at Detective Perish today to
 see if we can get her first hand
 account of her encounter with the
 Highwayman.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

TONY
 I am not sure I want to hear that
 story Crystal!

CRYSTAL
 Anything to help us find those
 children Tony.

TONY
 And don't forget Mr. Duncan and
 Officer Perish, those brave men are
 probably keeping those little girls
 safe.

CRYSTAL
 Bless those men, Tony. Please,
 bless them.

Crystal closes her eyes and bows her head, her palms flat
 together. Crystal opens her eyes and clears her throat.

CRYSTAL
 Today at 9:00am.

Jen runs dripping from the shower with a towel against her
 chest to see the clock in the living room.

The clock reads 7:45.

JEN

Crap!

EXT. SADDAM'S PAWN SHOP - DAY

Jen parks on the curb in front of Saddam's Gold and Pawn, and tries the front door. Locked.

Jen raises her hand to peers through the smokey glass, then walks around the building and tries the side door. Locked

She pulls the near empty bag from her jacket and snorts the remainder off her fist. She walks back around the building rubbing the last bit of coke on her gums.

JEN

Come on!

Jen tries the front door one more time, then kicks the door leaving a surprisingly substantial dent in the steel plate.

She takes a breath to calm down.

JEN

Shit.

She checks her watch which shows 8:15.

EXT. 21ST PRECINCT - DAY

Jen runs up the stairs to the Precinct house, her hair still wet from the shower.

INT. 21ST PRECINCT - DAY

Crystal and the CAMERAMAN (40) stand talking with Chief MacDangle in front of his office, as Jen speed walks to Chief's side.

JEN

Hey, Chief.

Chief half smiles but says nothing.

Crystal grabs Jen hand in a vigorous hand shake.

CRYSTAL

Well, there she is! Detective
Perish, we are all so proud of you
at the Morning Show. You really are
all we talk about!

Crystal looks at the Cameraman; nods her head to agree.

CRYSTAL (CONT.)

Am I right?

The Camera Man nods with a sincere smile.

JEN

Thank you and I apologize for the other day, I didn't mean for my absence to reflect negatively on the Chief, the Precinct or the Mayor's Office.

Crystal raises her eye brows and turns to the Camera Man.

CRYSTAL

We should have saved that for the interview, what do you think?

Camera Man lowers the corner of this mouth and nods.

CRYSTAL

Could you say that again when were rolling? Actually just don't say anything else until we start rolling.

Crystal turns back to the Cameraman.

CRYSTAL

We got a real gem here!

The Camera Man hikes the Camera onto his shoulder, and gives Crystal the thumbs up.

INT. CHIEF MACDANGLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Light on stands flood the office forcing Jen to squint.

Chief sits next to Jen with a newspaper in a clear evidence bag sitting on his lap.

Jen takes off her jacket. Plate size sweat marks show under her shoulder holster and she is quick to put the jacket back on.

Jen takes a deep breath and relaxes then shoots back up straight in the chair and in unsure what to do with her sweaty hands.

Her hair drips heavy with sweat.

Chief can hear her breathe heavy and leans over.

CHIEF MACDANGLE
 (in a whisper)
 I need to talk to you after this.

Jen's white face bobs as she leans to hear Chief.

Chief hits Jen on the side of the thigh.

CHIEF MACDANGLE
 (in a whisper)
 What the hell is wrong with you?
 Pull your shit together. You're
 going paler than a ghost. Hold your
 breath or something, pinch your
 cheeks. Do it now.

Jen bows her head and pinches her cheeks with her thumb and
 forefinger as hard as she can.

CAMERA MAN
 And three, two, one..

CRYSTAL
 Thank you, Tony. I'm here with
 Detective Jennifer Perish, the 21st
 Precincts newest Female Detective.

The Cameraman turns his camera on Jen; her head still down.

Chief elbows Jen and she sits up fast, her cheek bright red.

CRYSTAL
 How are you Detective Perish?

JEN
 Yes.

CRYSTAL
 (enamored)
 That's great! Just great!

JEN
 Yes.

CRYSTAL
 So, the city has been waiting to
 hear your story. How did you figure
 all this out on your own?

JEN
 Well, Tammy...

CHIEF MACDANGLE
(whispering)
Crystal.

JEN
Crystal.

I can't take all the credit, if I didn't have the support of the 21st Precinct and Chief MacDarrel, MacDangle, I wouldn't have been in the fortunate position I found myself that day.

CRYSTAL
You were covering for your father that night, Patrolman Reginald Perish.

JEN
(smiling)
Yes, Yes Crystal, Patrolman Perish was, is my step-father.

Jen turns to Chief for confirmation.

JEN
He has been a patrolman for the past 30 years?

Chief nods his head at Perish before he speaks.

CHIEF MACDANGLE
Yes, that's correct.

Crystal looks unsure of who to pose the question.

CRYSTAL
And he is still missing?

Jen leans into field the question.

JEN
We still have not located any of the abductees, my step-father being one of them.

Crystal reaches out and claps her hand on Jen's knee.

Jen smiles and shifts in her seat.

CRYSTAL

I'm sorry.

Lets talk about that night. Can we talk about that night Detective Perish? The night you brought the Highwayman to justice?

Jen turns to Chief who nods his head.

JEN

I guess that's why we are all here.

INT: PATROL CAR - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Jen and Benny shine a Patrol Car's light down city alleys.

JEN

I was on patrol with Benny, sorry, Officer Bennewitz. We were responding to a call of a possible attempted abduction up town.

A dark figure with a wide brim hat and leather trench coat and biker's boots, carries what looks like a doll.

JEN (CONT.)

Neighbors reported a man carrying a screaming child down the street. The man was described as wearing a leather trench coat and a wide rimmed hat, so he met our description.

BACK TO SCENE:

CRYSTAL

The Highwayman.

JEN

(nodding)

Yes, the Highwayman.

Chief grimaces at the name, adjusts himself on his chair.

JEN

We set out on foot and I caught up with our Perp about thirty minutes later.

Sweat appears on Jen's forehead as she speaks.

EXT. FLOOD LIT ALLEY - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

The Highwayman stands at the end of the alley. He holds a girl by the ankle over an open sewer.

He drops the girl into the pit, and his head spins full around, like an owl. His walking stick flies to his side as he limps around at a frightening pace to face Jen.

BACK TO SCENE:

Jen appears detached, dazed.

JEN
I didn't have my gun.

Jen reaches under her coat, places her hand on her pistol.

CRYSTAL
I'm sorry, you didn't have your side arm?

JEN
No, I don't know where it could have gone.

INT. SADDAM'S PAWN AND GOLD - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Saddam uses his wet spoon to open Jen's paper flat on his desk. He lies a 9MM on the newspaper in front of Jen.

SADDAM
Accolades my friend?
Congratulations in order?

Saddam taps his spoon on the rim of his cup.

Jen places the pistol in her shoulder holster, perfect fit.

BACK TO SCENE:

JEN
He rushed me with a hunting knife.
Caught me right here.

Jen pulls up her sleeves to reveal her forearms. She holds them together to show how she defended herself.

The scars are deep and raw and not completely healed and draw a GASP from Crystal.

Chief's eyes grow wide as he leans to look at Jens arms.

JEN

I held my arms up like this.

He came down with all the weight of his body which drove me to my knees.

He just kept pushing me down harder.

But I was just able to sweep his leg.

It was a reaction more than a thought. I had him on the ground and then, honestly, I'm not quite sure what happened after that.

Jen smiles a shaky smile.

CRYSTAL

I don't think we have to go there? What else do you remember?

JEN

Yes, well, I remember thinking about Tubby.

EXT. FLOOD LIT ALLEY - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Jen's MEMORIES become BLACK AND WHITE IMAGES of the attack.

Jen holds her arms together above her head to the attacker.

The Highwayman bears a hunters knife down against her forearms.

Jen SCREAMS as she drops to one knee under the force of the blade and blood reigns over her face, as she closes her eyes to the blood.

BACK TO SCENE:

Chief shifts in his chair and SIGHS, his arm folded tight.

CRYSTAL

Detective? Detective Perish?

JEN

Yes, sorry.

Jen looks up to the flood lights, takes a DEEP BREATH and wipes the sweat from her forehead with her sleeve.

Crystal turns to the Camera Man who holds up his thumb and nods his head.

JEN

Sorry, I was thinking about Officer Beaufort and...

Again Jen's mind returns to the attacker in the alley.

EXT. FLOOD LIT ALLEY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Jen's leg is pinned under the Highwayman's motionless body.

Unable to escape she slowly moves the Highwayman's hat from his face. But there is nothing, just a black hole where a face should be.

As she pulls at her leg, the four hundred pound man starts to stir which sends her into a panic.

Jen pats herself down and comes up with a ball point pen.

Without restrain, she uses the pen like a prison shiv and stabs the monster in the femoral artery.

The wounds send a shower of blood pressure over Jen's face and chest.

Unwilling to stop the pressure keeps up

Jen smiles in the steaming plasmic blast.

BACK TO SCENE:

CRYSTAL

I think that is about all we are gong to hear from Detective...

JEN

No, Crystal!

Jen holds her hand out to Crystal to she's okay to continue.

EXT. FLOOD LIT ALLEY - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

The head of her attacker falls back limp. The face of Reginald Beaufort shows under the wide brim hat.

JEN (V.O.)

I'm sorry. I was thinking about Tubby and how he has always been right around the corner for me.

Jen stares at Tubby's limp body with contempt as blood runs down her face.

JEN (V.O.)

I just knew something had happened to him. I just knew he wasn't coming around the corner for me this time.

BACK TO SCENE:

Jen breaks out her daze.

JEN

Haven't seen him since.

Chief wipes his brow with a handkerchief and squints at the lights, his arm crossed tight.

CRYSTAL

And Chief, any further leads?

He bring the paper in the evidence bag up from his lap and opens it for the camera.

CHIEF

This newspaper was left on our Precinct steps this morning.

Scrawled on the front page is what is believed to be a note from Mr. Albert Thomas Duncan.

I have been authorized by the mayors office to read it for the public.

The note reads:

Tubby X

3 Girls?

Loc. Jordan

Jen's eyes grow wide at the sight of the newspaper through the transparent evidence bag.

CHIEF MACDANGLE

We had the blood on this newspaper tested and it did come back positive as Albert Thomas Duncan's DNA.

Chief holds the paper up for the camera.

The paper shows Jen's face on the cover. A dried tea stain in the right hand corner and two black smudge full finger prints.

CRYSTAL

Chief, are we to assume...

CHIEF MACDANGLE

(interrupting)

We are not assuming anything. The only thing we are concentrating on is who or what Jordan is.

Chief wipes his brow again with the handkerchief.

CHIEF MACDANGLE

If anyone has any theories on where Jordan could be in the city, we will be following all leads provided by the public at this time.

CRYSTAL

Chief, aren't you afraid this will appear as the Mayor's office failure to have the Police track down the missing?

CHIEF MACDANGLE

Crystal, I'm sorry but I don't speak for the mayor's office. Finding the author of this note and the location of "Jordan" is our top priority.

CRYSTAL

Chief. Detective Parish. I thank you.

Tony.

CAMERA MAN

And we are out.

Crystal drops her microphone on her lap.

Well, that got intense quick.

Jen stands up quickly and wipes her sweaty hands against the butt of her pants.

JEN

I am sorry about that. That was the first time I have told that story out loud.

Crystal wraps the cord from her microphone around her elbow.

CRYSTAL

Are you kidding me? We could go into business together. I could make a career off your trauma.

Crystal shrugs her shoulder's at Jen with a half smile.

CRYSTAL

Sorry.

Jen's eye brows raise and she becomes visibly interested.

JEN

Never thought I was that interesting.

CRYSTAL

Are you kidding me?

Do you know how many woman made Detective in Manhattan this year?

Jen shrugs.

JEN

No idea?

JEN

Five. Of those five only one is the daughter of Miss Liberty Belle.

Jen smiles and folds her arms under her chest.

JEN

Now how did you find that out?

Crystal stops wrapping the cord.

CRYSTAL

I'm an Investigative Journalist?

Thought you might be able to get me an interview.

Jen flutters her jacket in an attempt to dry her shirt.

CRYSTAL (CONT.)

No one gets anywhere near that woman unless you are paying fifteen hundred a plate or You're 12 and terminal.

Jen smirks and nods.

CRYSTAL

Her daughter Baylor on the other
hand is running for State Senate.

Baylor needs to be made available
to her constituents.

Crystal takes another look at Jen and smiles.

CRYSTAL

Borrow your pad and pen, Detective?

Jen hesitates before handing them over.

JEN

Yeah, sorry, of course.

Crystal scribbles and looks up at Jen again and smiles.

Jen drops her brow and cocks her head.

CRYSTAL

I don't mean to assume Detective
but my number, just in case?

Jen takes the note confused.

JEN

Oh, thank you!

I'm sorry, I'm slow and flattered.

Jen smiles to Crystal and blushes.

Beside the number an address was clearly written.

CRYSTAL

Maybe not tonight though. You look
like you could use some rest.

Jen motions to explain but stops and folds the small paper
and places it in her pocket.

She notices Chief is in a rush from the scene.

JEN

Chief, anything for me?

CHIEF

Take the day Perish. Just glad this
damn interview is over.

Chief loosens his tie as his phones rings.

Benny walks by the Chief's office door.

CHIEF

Benny! Get your butt in here!

JEN

Chief, let me do something?

CHIEF MACDANGLE

You want to do this now? We'll do this now.

The newspaper?

Jen narrows her brow and shakes her head.

CHIEF MACDANGLE

The newspaper we discovered on the steps of the Precinct house this morning?

Jen knocks herself in the side of the head with her palm.

JEN

Shit, yes sorry.

CHIEF MACDANGLE

Need I say anymore.

Chief turns away from Jen.

Jen grabs Chief by the arm.

Chief looks down at Jen's hand on his arm as he pulls it away from her grasp.

JEN

Come on?

CHIEF MACDANGLE

You're a pain in my ass.

The newspaper?

JEN

Yes, yes.

Benny leans on the office's door frame as Crystal and the Camera Man leave.

BENNY
Yeah, Chief?

Chief waits for Crystal to exit the room then holds up the evidence bag with the newspaper.

CHIEF MACDANGLE
I need to know if either of you
have seen anything like this?

Benny leans in and squint at the oversize symbols looking for something in the letters.

BENNY
Looks like code. Dealer markings.
Usually see them on underpasses and
in the Park, not on a newspapers?

Is that blood?

Chief turns the paper to Jen.

CHIEF MACDANGLE
Perish, you got anything?

Jen stares and without hesitation points to the three symbols on the left hand side of the equation.

JEN
This right here. These three going
down. This says Cop in Location 3.

Chief and Benny lean into the symbols.

CHIEF MACDANGLE
Oh? What else you got Dr. Quinn?

Jen turns her head to the side stone faced.

JEN
Couldn't tell you about the right
side but that stuff on the left is
pretty common.

All you have to know is where the
dealer location is and you can
pretty much figure out what
location 3 would be. Just vantage
points.

CHIEF MACDANGLE
I have never agreed with your
practices but I can't argue with
the results.

Jen takes the evidence bag from Chief's hands.

JEN

If I had to guess, I would say the paper is pointing to your location, you'll find who ever wrote this note in shouting distance of the Post.

Jen points to the paper's Title Line.

CHIEF MACDANGLE

Good work, Jen.

Benny, grab some guys put them in a car, get down to the Post and see what you can see.

BENNY

On it, Chief.

Benny smiles wide and slaps his hips, jogs out of the room.

BENNY (O.S.)

Okay, boys lets saddle up! We got a lead on those little girls lost!

The high ceiling room erupt in a chorus of chairs pushing against the wide wood panel floor.

EXT. SADDAM'S GOLD AND PAWN - DAY

Jen parks outside Saddam's Gold and Pawn.

Jen tries to open the door to the store but her sweaty hands spins on the knob.

JEN

Shit!

She pulls her sleeve over her hand to turn the knob.

INT. SADDAM'S PAWN AND GOLD. LOBBY - DAY

Mora struggles to roll a large Fern into the corner of the lobby. She wears the same dirty t-shirt she wore before.

Jen enters the lobby head first.

JEN

Hey, where the hell is Saddam!

Mora drops the plant and holds up her palms, backs away.

MORA
Slow down, slow down!

JEN
Where the hell were he this
morning? We got a deal!

MORA
We had to take care of something!

Mora keeps her palms held up.

MORA
What do you need?

Mora presses her palms against Jen's chest.

MORA
I knew if I left for just one
minute you would be at my door.

See, I know you Gwen!

Mora points her finger into Jen's chest.

MORA (CONT.)
I knew you would be coming! I knew
you were out!

Mora's hands shake like a drunk as she takes a key chain
from her pocket.

INT. SALES BOOTH - DAY

MORA
One sec. Jen, just one sec. See I
know you!

Mora turns to Jen and taps at her eyebrow hard.

MORA
I think about you, Gweny. You're in
my thoughts! Just want to make sure
you got everything you need.

Here we go!

Mora opens the door and shuffles into the office.

Jen follows behind with her hand on her holstered sidearm.

INT. SADDAM'S OFFICE - DAY

On the television is a Middle Eastern Talk Show. Five women wearing burkas, speak in Arabic around a semi circle table.

The fridge replaced with a wine rack and small chilling box which holds two bottles.

The clean desk has a leather desk set and gold name plate, MORA BERA. A hotplate keeps a pot of tea simmering.

Jen sits in her regular seat.

JEN

Love what he's done with the place.

Mora sprays an atomizer which expels lavender mist.

MORA

Everything but the smell, but what can you do?

Mora places a cup of tea in front of Jen.

MORA

Sip. Packs a punch.

Mora produces a silver tray with a stainless steel straw which rolls against a heaped coke pile.

MORA

Taste! It has been a while.

Jen studies to the steel straw before clearing the tray.

MORA

It's new from further up the coast.

She leans her head over the back and inhales deeply.

Mora stares at Jen's exposed throat and clenches her teeth.

Jen brings her head down as Mora's face twists into a smile.

Jen can see Mora shaking nervously as she fills the bag.

Jen noticeably relaxes in her chair.

JEN

Look, sorry about all that. Just, never been met with a locked door before.

Mora stands and removes her dirty shirt to puts on a pink valor track suit jacket which hangs behind her chair.

She sits and pours Jen a small amount of tea then leans back in the over sized leather chair.

MORA

Do not trouble yourself, Jeniffer.
We are business women and this is a
new day.

The women sip their tea in silence with the sound of the Middle Eastern Female Talk Show on the flat screen.

EXT. CLEARING IN FOREST- DAY - AERIAL VIEW

EXT. GROUND VIEW - DAY

The Woman in a denim dress and a white cotton shirt chops a tree of unimaginable height next to an enormous pile of perfectly chopped wood.

The ground begins to rumble under her feet and she is shaken to the ground.

SNAP (O.S.)

The woman rises and runs to the sprung game trap.

She comes across a wolf sprung by the throat. She raises her eyes from the prize and continues to the oak tree clearing.

The woman creeps up slow and quiet.

In the clearing sits a young girl with a shaven head who tends to something in her lap. The woman continues to creep, her axe ready to attack.

As she reaches the girl's back she raise the axe over her head.

The young girl looks up. It is her daughter returned, who squints from the light off the axe.

The woman does not drop the axe but brings it further back.

It's not until she sees the three babies in the girl's arms that she lowers the axe and tends to the child.

She runs her hands over the girl's black smudged skin. Thick scars run over her legs and arms, the soft puffy skin on her face having been spared.

The babies however are untouched and clean. Three perfect little girls.

EXT. HOME OF MISS LIBERTY BELLE - DAY

Jen climbs the steps to the multi-level brown stone and notices a plaque in the side of the building covered by ivy.

Jen yanks the ivy off the wall to read the tarnished bronze plaque. The plaque reads:

Her house sinks down to death,

And her course leads to the shades.

All who go to her cannot return

And find again the paths of life.

- Proverbs 2:18-19

INT. GARDEN DECK - DAY

Although a residence, the first floor Garden Bar and Library are operated as a Private Club.

BAYLOR DUNCAN (29) is blond to the root and larger than most. Six-foot-five and built like a block.

BAYLOR

Mother was sick of planning parties
so she made the first floor a
function hall.

JEN

I have had my fair share of
spaghetti dinners in function
halls. This is no function hall.

Baylor removes a menthol 100 size cigarette from her purse.

BAYLOR

Cigarette?

JEN

I quit.

Baylor laughs as she ignites her lighter.

BAYLOR

Tss, yeah, cigarettes.

Baylor takes a drag and fills the top third of the room with a thin layer of smoke.

BAYLOR

Listen honey, there is more than
enough room for you in this house,
especially now.

She looks her up and down.

BAYLOR

We could use you around here
Detective. Least I know I could.

Baylor smiles and clicks cubes in her crystal rocks glass
and a White Coat is quick to bring Baylor a new drink.

BAYLOR

And that my dear is as much of an
invitation as you are going to get!

What I don't understand I why you
showed up here with that, cop?

JEN

I needed to see if she knew who I
was. If she would remember me.

BAYLOR

That WOMAN MAY BE A PLATINUM BLOND
but she's not dumb. She has more
invested in you and me and that
crazy ass Salome than you will ever
come to understand.

JEN

Baylor, I have not seen that woman
since I was twelve! She never did a
damn thing for me. All this.

Jen slaps her badge on the table to the shock of the
surrounding Club Members.

JEN (CONT.)

I earned on my own!

BAYLOR

Okay Little Jenny, okay, simmer
down. Always did have a temper on
you I never understood.

Baylor exhales her cigarette and places her palm over Jen's
hand and badge.

BAYLOR (CONT.)

No need to get yourself riled. Not a person in this room who doesn't know and respect who you are Gwen.

JEN

I ran into our better third.

BAYLOR

She harmless. She just misses having you as a sister. She use wander the streets like a stray dog looking for you. She would creep into our neighbor's houses to see if you moved in with them.

JEN

She had you?

BAYLOR

You know how children are. Built you into something, you weren't.

She shakes her head, snickers and sits forward.

BAYLOR

(hushed)

I've always wondered. What it was like. To be somewhere else, with someone else. Have a Father.

Jen shifts in her seat.

BAYLOR

You disappeared from the house at 3:00am on July 24th, 1965. We were twelve. The night you asked Mother who are Father was.

And now here you sit.

Jen stares at the table expressionless.

JEN

She threw me out.

BAYLOR

Gave you the bus fare if I recall. Ah, childhood trauma. If only it were all so easy today.

Stop your sobbing you never spent one night on the street!

One of us had to go with that man.
Once Momma saw he liked the little
ones.

And look at you now!

No. I think that woman made sure
you had everything you ever wanted
in life.

Remember that, Konija.

Someday you maybe asked to return
the favor.

Jen leans over the table.

JEN
(hushed)
And that is I have always feared.

Jen looks about to make sure no one is eaves dropping.

JEN
(hushed)
You've never wondered?

Baylor leans into entertain Jen's query.

BAYLOR
What?

JEN
Who he is?

Baylor stares in Jen's eyes and squints.

BAYLOR
Don't tell me you're starting to
believe your own bullshit?

Holy Crap you are. Jen get a grip
on reality, will you?

Jen relaxes back in her seat and looks around the porch.

JEN
Where's the bathroom in this joint?

BAYLOR
Please. Around the bar.

Jen stand and covers her sidearm with her sport coat.

BAYLOR (CONT.)

You'll find it next to the couch,
hopefully.

Jen smiles at her sister and approaches the Bartender.

INT. CLUB BAR - DAY

Behind the horseshoe bar hangs an oil painting of a naked, ivory-skinned woman with long red hair. The painting depicts her standing with a boa constrictor wrapped about her body.

In front of the painting, the Bartender stands staring past Jen and out a picture window.

Jen recognizes the Bartender. *But from where? Was he one of the Forensic Team or was he one of Ms. Zoar's Parishioner?*

JEN

(to the Bartender)

Bathroom?

The Bartender points to a smokey glass RESTROOM door.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jen enters a wooden stall and unzips her pants.

Elbows on the knees she rests her cheeks in her hands.

JEN

Are you ready for this family crap,
Detective?

Jen pours a pile of coke on her hand and breathes in deep.

The room goes DARK.

JEN

Nice, lights must be on a timer.

In the dark, Jen is heard taking another hit of coke.

FEMALE CHILD (V.O.)

Gwenhywfer? Gwen? It's so dark,
Gwen.

Jen starts to shiver, sitting on the toilet.

FEMALE CHILD (V.O.)

It's so dark Gwen. Why can't we see
you?

Jen falls off the toilet and shakes on the floor.

FEMALE CHILD (V.O.)
(guttural)

Open your DAMN eyes Jennifer!

Jen covers her ears, jammed against the stall door.

JEN

Stop!

The shivering stops almost as quickly as it started. Her legs relax and she is able to stand.

Jen stands and the lights reignite. She pulls her jeans up over her thighs. A large dark stain runs down the right leg.

JEN

Shit.

Jen buckles her belt and exits the stall.

Nurse Patty stands at the mirror and does her make up.

Jen does not recognize the woman as Nurse Patty.

Nurse Patty wears a matching skirt and jacket and a hat pinned to her hair. Her high heels match her outfit.

NURSE PATTY
(disapproving)

Hmm, Detective.

Jen nods and pulls cloth towels from a roll dispenser.

JEN

That's quite the get up.

NURSE PATTY

Could you just imagine the children?

The woman turns to the wood stalls.

NURSE PATTY

Oh, children?

THREE LITTLE GIRLS (9) emerge from three stalls wearing variations on Nurse Patty's outfit, move to her side.

One of the girls has brown hair and olive skin, one had blond hair and fair skin and the third has brown skin and black hair.

At the sight of the three Girls, Jen's knees give out and she crumbles to the floor.

The Woman covers her mouth with her kid-gloved hand.

MADE-UP WOMAN

Look girls! She pissed herself!

The Girls turn toward Jen. Above their mouths, their faces have become curved glass television screens.

INT. TELEVISION SCREEN FACES ON GIRLS - DAY

Two little GIRLS(9) one with blond hair and one brown skin run smiling from a bulkhead.

A third GIRL (9) with brown hair and olive skin, walks slowly from the bulkhead. She holds her shaking, right arm, wrapped in left hand.

The first two Girls stop at a bird bath to rinse their hands, before moving on to push a merry-go-round.

The brown haired girl approaches the bird bath. She takes several deep breaths; her shaking arm settles.

As she washes her hands in the bird bath, the two Girls motion for the olive-skinned Girl to help push the merry-go-round.

The olive-skinned Girl, smiles and runs to assist.

All three girls push the merry-go-round.

The bird bath stretches across the foreground, showing the bird bath water thick with blood.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jen closes her eyes and puts her hands back over her ears.

JEN

(crying)

Stop! Stop! Just stop!

Jen opens her eyes but the room is empty.

The Bartender opens the door a crack and speaks with out looking in.

BARTENDER

Miss? Do you need assistance Miss?

Should I collect a Madame, Miss?

Jen stands up and brushes herself off.

JEN
No. I'm fine, thank you.

The Bartender peaks in to see the stain on Jen's leg.
He pushes open the door and his frame fills the doorway.

BARTENDER
Tisk, tisk, tisk. Look at yourself.
You're a mess.

The Bartender throws the rag from his shoulder at Jen.

BARTENDER
No one wants your damn piss on
their face cloth.

BARTENDER
Clean yourself up. You're
representing this family now. Try
to have some freakin couth...

The Bartender looks to Jens badge on her belt.

BARTENDER(CONT.)
...Pig.

Jen's face goes red, her fists clench and start to shake.

JEN
Hey! I know you! Don't think I
don't know who you are!

The Bartender steps back from the door frame slowly shaking
his head in disapproval as the door swings closed.

BARTENDER (O.S.)
You don't know shit.

Jen throws down the rag, un-holsters her gun and rushes the
door. She throws open the door and raises her pistol.

The **B**artender stands motionless staring out the bay window.

Jen's eyes dart about the Club Bar. The HUSHED CONVERSATIONS
and CLICKING GLASSES of the luncheon porch and quickly
holsters her gun and backs back into the bathroom.

EXT. JEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A black Lincoln pulls up to Jen's building. Jen emerges from the backseat and walks for her door, looking for her key.

A dark figure waits next to the broad steps to her door.

SALOME

You're like a dog with a bone.

Startled, Jen reaches for her holstered sidearm.

JEN

What the hell, Kid? Get up here and help me find my keys.

Salome slinks up the stairs in a blue sequin dress and heels. She grabs the keys from Jen's hand.

SALOME

What do they look like?

JEN

Its the fat one.

SALOME

You're the fat one!

JEN

Nice, just let me in will ya?

Salome finds the key and opens the door for Jen.

INT. JEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The table is littered with Kleenex. A tray holds a small mound of cocaine and a rolled up twenty dollar bill. A half bottle of Bombay gin stands next to an empty bottle.

She turns on the television and tosses her coat and shoulder holster on the couch.

JEN

Glasses in the kitchen. Make yourself comfortable.

Salome disappears into the kitchen, then returns with a glass. She pours Gin into the glass and lights a joint from the ashtray.

Salome walks to Jen's bulletin board.

SALOME

Funny, I have this same picture of her in my bedroom. I can't believe she still passes this photo off. Gotta be 23 years old.

SALOME'S POV: Liberty appears as a woman with brown skin and short cut hair.

SALOME

Why did you leave, Jenny? Where did you go?

Salome's voice is familure to FEMALE CHILD (V.O.)

Jen coughs on her liquor and pours herself another.

JEN

I thought I needed to find our father.

Salome says nothing but stares at her glass.

SALOME

So, are you moving out of this shit hole and coming home?

JEN

I don't know. Lots of ghosts in that old house.

SALOME

Just be happy you haven't had to live with them for the last thirteen years.

It's not a family home it's a family tomb. Fit with daily visitors and luncheon for the mourners.

JEN

I'm sorry I wasn't there for you. I know you're the baby Salome but you've always felt like the oldest.

SALOME

Sounds like you got the raw end of the deal, so no hard feelings.

You got more than enough time to make up for any short comings you may have had with me.

Momma ain't raisin' no more babies.

JEN

What about you?

SALOME

I never had that kinda role model.
I would lead them astray.

JEN

and Baylor?

SALOME

Um, she's not the best with
children.

JEN

Can't be that bad she has a teenage
son?

SALOME

Yeah, well, you'll see. Just trust
me they would be better off with
you.

JEN

You don't really know me.

SALOME

I'll try if you will?

Jen and Salome smile in each others eyes and bring their
heads together, clink glasses and take a drink.

Jen goes to her bathroom to collect Salome a blanket to
sleep on the couch but Salome is not there.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Salome lay snuggled and smiling under the white wool blanket
of Jen's bed.

INT. 21ST PRECINCT - DAY

Jen walks through the empty Precinct. She sees Chief packing
up his office and makes her way to his office door.

JEN

What gives? I finally get you
fired?

CHIEF MACDANGLE
Promoted! Desk job at the Mayor's
office. Or forced retirement
depending on how you look at it.

Jen crosses her arms and leans against the door frame.

JEN
Congratulations.

Chief pulls the photos from the walls and wraps them in news
paper before dropping them in a box.

CHIEF MACDANGLE
Funny thing? It was all the
television interviews was what did
it. Mayor's staff felt I instill
confidence in the people.

JEN
(nodding)
I can see that.

CHIEF MACDANGLE
Are you going to be okay? You know,
here all alone?

JEN
I still have Benny.

CHIEF MACDANGLE
I always told myself I was
protecting you. Feels like my duty
is done now that Tubby's gone.

Who the hell am I kidding. It was
your strength that drew him to you
and your strength that kept him at
bay. I'm pretty sure you were the
only person he was truly afraid of.

JEN
It was a struggle at first but
after a couple of rounds... we came
to see each other eye to eye

CHIEF MACDANGLE
Look Jen, I should have stopped him
the first day he snatched you. I
knew he had an issue.

JEN

Chief, it was a long time ago. I can't be bothered by that stuff anymore.

Jen wipes her nose and smiles up at Chief.

Chief picks-up his box and walks to Jen at his office door.

Jen tries to shake Chief's hand but his hands are full.

CHIEF MACDANGLE

It's been real, Detective.

Jen hugs Chief over the box, and kisses him on the cheek.

CHIEF MACDANGLE

A kiss? I didn't know you did that?

JEN

Funny.

Chief takes in the details of the Precinct, walking for the double doors. He turns to face Jen with tear-filled eyes.

CHIEF MACDANGLE

Oh, hey, you were right.

JEN

How do you mean?

CHIEF MACDANGLE

Found a body over by the Post.

JEN

Let me guess, Albert Duncan.

CHIEF MACDANGLE

No, Middle Eastern guy. Big fella.

Chief squints at the sun before mindlessly meandering into the street.

JEN

(to herself)

Saddam?

A city bus traveling seventy miles an hour, speeds past the double doors of the Precinct in front of Chief.

Neither Jen nor Chief react.

The phone in Jen's office rings. Jen fumbles with her keys to open the office door.

The phone continues to ring.

INT. DETECTIVE JENNIFER PERISH'S OFFICE

The door flies open. Jen lunges for the phone.

JEN (INTO PHONE)

Hello?

SALOME (V.O.) (FROM PHONE)

Hey, you gotta come home.

JEN (INTO PHONE)

Why what's up?

SALOME (V.O.) (OVER THE PHONE)

Momma been stabbed.

INT. JEN'S CAR. CONTINUOUS - DAY

As Jen drives, two D.J.'s argue on the RADIO.

RADIO D.J. #1 (V.O.)

We could all keep arguing about the color of her hair but when I see Liberty Belle, I know who then hell I am looking at.

RADIO D.J. #2 (V.O.)

And I do as too!

RADIO D.J. #1 (V.O.)

Then why are we having this conversation?!

RADIO D.J. #2 (V.O.)

Because I am saying her hair was black last night and you are saying it was platinum blond!

EXT. HOUSE OF LIBERTY BELLE. WIND DRIVEN RAIN - NIGHT

Jen arrives at the Brown Stone, her jacket lapel up to the storm. The ivy has grown back over the plaque on the house.

Again, she yanks down the ivy as the wind picks up. The words on the bronze plaque have changed to read:

Her gates are gates of death, and
from the entrance of the house

She sets out towards Sheol.

None of those who enter there will
ever return,

And all who possess her will
descend to the Pit.

- 4Q184

James, the Irish doorman, opens the front door.

JAMES
(intimidated)
Hello, Miss Perish. The Ma'am is
expecting you.

James steps out of her way as she walks into foyer. The
foyer sits at the bottom of a grand dark wood stairway.

INT. ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

JAMES
If you would, the Ma'am would have
you take off your shoes, the floors
were just done this mornin'. Hate
to have your boots scuff um' up.

Baylor descends the grand Oak stairway.

BAYLOR
Especially those shit kickers.
Tanaris knows what she'd drag in
here with those damn things!

Jen scowls at Baylor as she remove her boots.

BAYLOR
Oh, don't give me that look.
There's not a thing Jimmy hasn't
seen in this house.

James listens to his ear piece and responds into his cuff.

JAMES
(hushed)
Ya, she's here.

Baylor holds out her arm for Jen to balance herself.

As Jen removes the boots, sending her shoulders forward
slightly and losing three inches of height.

BAYLOR
Thanks for coming. She's upstairs.

The CLICK, CLACK of boot heels persist as Jen walks to the
bottom of the steps.

Jen self consciously turns and looks back at James.

James stares at Jen's feet, expression unchanged.

The carpeted steps mute the sound of her feet.

Jen and Baylor continue up the stairs in polite silence.

INT. 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Several open doors are visible ahead. The first room they pass is Salome's.

SALOME'S ROOM

Salome sculpts a clay bust of a man wearing a laurel. She remains focused on her work as they pass.

Baylor stops and lean on the next door frame.

CETHLENN'S ROOM

In the room a BOY (18) with braces and bright red curly hair, lays on his bed, looking up at his phone.

BAYLOR

Cethlenn, did you check on your
grandmother, like I asked?

The boy's eye remain on his phone as he speaks.

CETHLENN

No! Get out of my room... bitch.

Baylor slowly closes the door to a CLICK and smiles at Jen.

BAYLOR

I do adore children.

Baylor takes a step to a door across the hallway.

BAYLOR

This will be your room, if you'll
stay.

Baylor opens the door to the room wide or both to enter.

JEN'S BEDROOM

Jen runs her hand over the bed spread as she makes her way to the private bathroom off the bedroom.

BAYLOR

I have no idea how that miscreant
could have gotten in!

BATHROOM

REFLECTION IN MIRROR: Baylor sits on the bed.

BAYLOR

We were all sleeping when it
happened.

Jen turns on the water and looks at Baylor in the mirror.

BAYLOR

The only thing we can figure is
Nana Zoar had a key.

Jen secretly removes the bag of coke from her pocket.

BAYLOR

James sleeps at the end of th hall.

Jen pours some coke on her fits and breaths in deep, looks
up to the mirror

REFLECTION IN MIRROR: Baylor has one large eye in the center
of her face covered by an ornate oversize eye patch.

Jen splashes her face, before looking up again.

REFLECTION IN MIRROR: The image remains.

BAYLOR

That mental patent only got one
good stab in before Jimmy was
through the door and ...

Jen spins, wide eyed at Baylor.

Baylor's eye patch sits over her left eye, per usual.

JEN'S BEDROOM.

BAYLOR
(puzzled)
What?

Jen shakes her head.

JEN
Nothing... mirror's just crooked.

Baylor stands and lights a cigarette from her purse.

BAYLOR
I would feel more comfortable with
more Belle blood in the house.

Baylor lights a cigarette, and waves at the smoke.

BAYLOR
So stuffy in here. Come on, let's
go see Mama.

2ND FLOOR HALLWAY

Baylor and Jen arrive at the door at the end of the hall.
Baylor knocks and pushes the door open at the same time.

Jen takes a shallow step into the room.

LIBERTY'S BED ROOM.

Liberty lay in bed, a blood stained patch over her chest.
She cringes in pain as she tries to sit up.

Baylor closes the door, pushing Jen into the spacious
bedroom. Jen folds her hand in front of her belt.

LIBERTY
Hello Gwenhwyfar.

JEN
Hello mother.

LIBERTY
When I invited you back home it was
not to take care of an old injured
woman.

JEN
Oh, I was aware of your intentions.

Liberty grimaces in pain, and attempts to adjust her pillow.

LIBERTY

Yes, we all have someone to answer
to now, don't we.

No longer able to watch, Jen assists.

JEN

Oh, just let me help you.

Liberty sits forward so Jen can adjust the pillow.

Jen pauses with the pillow in her grip. She looks at the
back of her mother's head, before adjusting the pillow.

JEN

Should be fine now.

Liberty grimaces, and leans back against the pillows.

LIBERTY

Baylor tells me you insist on being
called Jennifer.

JEN

Tubby legally changed it. My name
has been Jennifer Parish for the
last eighteen years.

LIBERTY

That was not part of the deal I had
with Reginald but being the way
you are he must have felt I didn't
live up to my end of the either.

He did a good job of raising you
though. You made a good cop, now
you'll make a good Detective.

I had him pegged for commissioner,
until you decided to stab that poor
man to death.

These Daddy Issues have to stop!

Your father never wanted anything
to do with us! Your sisters
understand that, I don't know why
you don't.

Liberty again struggles with her pillows with a grimaces.

LIBERTY

We'll just have it changed back.
Simple enough.

(struggling)

Baby, do me a favor and get my
pills. I think the girls left the
in the Drawing Room.

Jen looks around the room, hands up from her sides.

JEN

And where would that be?

LIBERTY

Just off the hallway to the left.
On the box on the desk.

Jen shakes her head with disdain as she leaves the room.

2ND FLOOR HALLWAY

The study lay out side Liberty's room to the left.

As Jen steps into the room CLIP, CLOP, CLIP CLOP is heard.

DRAWING ROOM

The room is dark and silent. We note the silhouette of a
horned animal with its front hooves up on a table.

JEN

Hello?

Jen turns on the light.

An enormous Ibex reaches for a wooden box on a table, not
with a hoof, but with a hair black human hand.

Jen fumbles to unholster her sidearm.

The Ibex NAYS, tongue in the air. It hops down from the
table, and rushes Jen, a fast hobble on its hind legs.

Jen falls backward out of the room but the Ibex catches her
by the throat.

IBEX

(voice of Mr. Littlehorn)

Where is my box, Gwenthwyfar!?

The Ibex hobbles backward with Jen's throat in its grasp.
Two sets of hooves are heard, CLICK-CLICK, CLACK-CLACK.

IBEX

(voice of Mr. Littlehorn)
I thought you were the good one!
Worth your salt! Thought you always
got your man, Gwen!

Jen grabs for her throat and gasps for air.

JEN

What are you?!

The enormous Ibex looks down to Jen's feet [*Jen's feet are not revealed*] and LAUGHS. then leaps off its hind legs and kicks Jen in the gut, doubling her over.

IBEX

(mocking in Jen's voice)
What am I?

The Ibex bucks the table. The box falls to the floor. A bone clawed finger rolls from the box.

Jen's eyes go wide, before she scurries to the relic.

The Ibex, again, kicks Jen with its hind legs, crippling her into a ball.

The Ibex gallops for the finger and grasps it with its teeth.

Seizures shake the giant beast, before its spine splits open with a prolonged, grotesque CRACK.

A bull-headed Beast with one ringed horn, the torso of a man and hoven hind legs of a goat, rises ten feet in the vaulted room. The room shakes as the Beast steps from the bloody remains.

The Beast raises its hand to Jen, revealing a nub among its clawed digits, where the bone finger was once attached.

Jen scurries away, but the Beast is too fast. With one swipe, the Beast tears the back of Jen's jeans to shreds.

Jen SCREAMS in pain.

Under Jen's jeans, a thick brown fur covers her crooked, hoven legs.

The Beats lifts Jen by her throat to its flat, bull nose. Jen turns her face as the Beast breaths her in deeply, then lets out a HOLLER.

Jen uses her hoven feet to kick the beast in the gut.

The Beast drops its head and stare angrily at Jen, before tossing her across the room.

A guttural voice belches from the creature.

BEAST
Impetuous child. I knew you women
would be an issue sooner or later.

Jen pushes her self up against the wall.

BEAST
How could I have thought you were
the strong one?

Jen has lost the ability to speak.

BEAST
(looking down on Jen)
Women... pathetic.

The monster riser its enormous hoof to stomp Jen's head.

Instinctively, Jen sweeps the Beast's leg and brings it down on its back with a room rumbling THUD.

Jen leaps to her feet and dives on the Beast's chest, but the Beast just LAUGHS.

BEAST
This weakness is the human in you.

The Beast picks up Jen and again, tosses her to the opposite side of the room.

BEAST
I would walk your world like this
if it wouldn't bring the whole show
to a screeching halt. Eternal
misery doesn't work to well with
out eternity. It's built into the
balance.

Jen stands as her hand deform into first and shake. A look of confidence replaces the fear on her face.

Jen SCREAMS and rushes the Beast and punches the Beats deep in the stomach. The punch sends the enormous Beast soaring backward into the wall.

JEN
Not all human!

The Beats rises and Jen takes a defensive fighter's stance.

The Beast uses its powerful legs to spring forward and swipes at Jen's chest, then lands on all fours.

The Beast's claws cut through Jen's leather jacket and draw blood from her chest.

The Beast springs again and swipes at Jen's back.

Jen is brought to her knees in excruciating pain.

JEN

Ahh, you bastard!

The Beast lands crouched on all fours and LAUGHS.

BEAST

No child, that would be your moniker. I know full well my maker.

Up on one knee, Jen wraps her arms across her injured chest.

The floor boards are creek weakly as the Beast approaches.

BEAST

I already own you Gwenhwyfar.

The Beast raises its hoven foot over her head.

Jen pulls her fist away from her chest.

BEAST

Just like your Mother and your sister's. You're all mine.

Jen uses her hind legs to spring straight up and deliver an upper-cut to the Beast's bull jaw.

CRACK!

The upper-cut launches the Beast off its feet and slams it on to its back.

Jen lands on all fours and GROWLS, before she springs again and smashes her solid hoofs into the Beast's horned skull.

Dazed, the Beast's MOAN turns into a GROWL. It shakes its enormous skull, then snatches Jen by her calf.

The Beast's claw dig into her calf like a game trap, as blood pours from her leg.

JEN
(screams)
Ahhhh!

Jen kicks at the Beast but its claws dig deeper, expelling a gushing flow of blood from calf muscle.

Jen SCREAMS louder and kick with more ferocity. Again, her hoof connects with the center of the Beasts skull. The dazed Beast loosens its grip on her calf.

As the Beast's head ricochets off the floor, it is met with Jen's repetitive kicks, cracking the Beasts skull open.

Its gurgled MOANS trail off, as Jen's stomping slows.

Out of breath, Jen stands and leaves the room.

Jen's little hoven feet CLIP-CLOP and leave thick blood hoof prints on the blond Oak floor.

Jen looks to her hand still clenched in a fist and shaking. She forces her shaking fist open and stumbles into the hall.

HALLWAY

Jen falls against her bedroom door with a SLAM. She reels off the door holding her shaking fist, looking for an exit.

She stumbles and falls against the frame of Salome's door.

SALOME'S ROOM

We see Salome's sculpture is now a severed head stuck on a spike. The head has been sliced through the eyes and is missing the top of its skull.

Salome holds the bloody cross section in her hand, with the putty knife in the other. She looks at Jen blankly, then returns to her work.

Jen stumbles backward across the hall and against the closed door of Cethlenn's room. From behind the closed door she can hear SNORTS and HOWLS and CLOMPS of heavy hooves.

Jen reaches for the knob but it is hot to the touch. She tears a piece of her shirt so to turn the hot knob.

As the door slowly opens the SNORTS and HOWLS and CLOMPS grows louder. The door continues to open...

...to reveal Baylor standing dominant over Cethlenn, who is bent over the bed in only his underwear.

Baylor's no longer wears an eye patch. One large eye sits above a flat, black, bull nose. She wears black halter top and heels as she brings a whip down upon her son's back with a CRACK!

CETHLENN

Help me!

Jen shakes shock, unable to move.

Baylor looks at Jen with her one giant eye and holds out the whip.

BAYLOR

Ah sister! Have a go?

Baylor whips the boy again. The second CRACK wakes Jen from her stupor and sends her reeling back down the hall as James mounts the top stair.

Using the walls to keep herself up, Jen turns from James and rushes back down the hall toward her Mother's room.

As she passes Cethlenn's room, both Baylor and Cethlenn point and LAUGH as Jen stumbles by.

She turns away and continues past Salome's door.

SALOME

(smiling)

Jen? Come look what I did for you!

Jen turns from Salome, whose face and hands are now covered in blood.

The LAUGHING of little girls is heard behind Liberty's door.

She stumbles and falls against the door, knocking it open.

INT. LIBERTY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Liberty sits her bed, TWO GIRLS (9) one one with blond hair and one with brown hair, suckle Liberty's breast. A third Girl with brown skin and black hair sits on the bed and stares at Jen.

Jen stands and stumbles, CLIP-CLOP, CLIP-CLOP into the room. Her ripped jeans show thick brown hair that covers her legs.

LIBERTY

True power can only be procured through the manipulation of one's deepest desire.

Your desire to find your father
left us particularly vulnerable.

And your father's desire to restore
his power drove him to believe he
could manipulate you.

Your sacrifice allowed Baylor to
rise to power unmolested.

Salome's hands have always been her
father's play things.

Liberty grimaces as she straightens herself in bed.

Jen impulsively moves to adjust Liberty's pillow.

Jen looks down at the two nursing children, but in their
places are a nursing pig and dog.

Jen reels backward, SLAMMING against the wall.

The children returned; they turn to Jen with concern.

LIBERTY

It truly is a new day, Gwenhwyfar,
just watch your television set. All
the pieces are finally in place.

JEN

For what?

LIBERTY

For us to lead, so her lineage may
carry on.

JEN

(exasperated and crying)
Whose lineage? What am I?

LIBERTY

We are the Lilin, decedents of the
demon Lilith.

For 4,000 years Lilith has wandered
the earth, migrating to the world
of the ancient Hittites, Egyptians,
Israelites and Greeks.

In most manifestations of her myth,
Lilith represents chaos, seduction
and ungodliness. Yet, in her every
guise, she has a spell on mankind.

Liberty's chestnut brown hair turns strawberry blond and her skin lily white.

LIBERTY

Weather you believe she was shunned
from Babylonian to the wilderness
for preying on pregnant women and
infants, by the prophet Isaiah.

Liberty's hair become shorts and tight to her head as her skin deepens to a rich brown.

LIBERTY

Or that she was Adam's first wife
who, when Adam insisted she play a
subservient role, grew wings and
flew away from Eden.

Liberty's appearance changes back to the chestnut brown, olive-skinned woman Jen is accustomed.

LIBERTY

You can be sure the muddled
meddling hands of men would bury
her among the centuries.

But you will still find reference
in the unedited text; the Dead Sea
Scrolls, the Burney Relief,
Kramer's translation of the
Gilgamesh fragment...

INSERT: MICHELANGELO'S EXPULSION FORM SISTINE CHAPEL.
Michelangelo portrayed Lilith as a
half-woman, half-serpent, coiled
around the Tree of Knowledge.

INSERT: VAN GOES', ORIGINAL SIN.

LIBERTY (CONT.)

Hugo Van Goes depicts her as having
the body of a reptile and the head
of a fair haired woman.

INSERT: THE PAINTING FROM BEHIND THE BAR IN THE CLUB.

LIBERTY (CONT.)

In 1892 John Collier depicts her as
a woman from the British isles with
fiery red hair, entwined in a Boa
Constrictor.

INSERT: DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI'S PAINTING 'LADY LILITH'.

LIBERTY (CONT.)
 English poet Dante Gabriel
 Rossetti. "Her enchanted hair," he
 wrote, "was the first gold."

INSERT: LES TRES HEURES DU DEICIDE PERRY, STORY OF CREATION.

LIBERTY (CONT.)
 Irish novelist James Joyce cast her
 as the "patron of abortions."

And all before one rib was taken.

Both Salome and Baylor appear at Liberty's door, No longer
 bloody or risque but clean and properly dressed.

Baylor holds the box from the study in her hands.

LIBERTY
 Bring that here, Baylor, love.

Liberty opens the box. Inside sits the clawed bone finger.
 She removes a Pyrope Garnet ring set in the lid of the box.

LIBERTY
 Put out your hand.

My mother had two dying wishes
 before they helped her on.

Liberty holds up the petrified finger, studies it, then
 tosses the finger into the fire place.

LIBERTY
 Rid the earth of the middle eastern
 man who sullied her store. And
 finally dispense of me. Which she
 almost accomplished, if that
 Mongoloid bartender had attacked me
 with anything other than a butter
 knife.

Their will be more of my mother's
 followers. Many more, so watch your
 back. But look who am I telling?!

Liberty places the ring on Jen's index finger.

LIBERTY
 If it can be said he had a
 favorite, it would have to be you.
 You're the only one he's sought out
 over all these years.

We won't let the little one's see
it coming. Peaches and cream till
the age of thirteen, then off they
go to scratchy and seed.

Ah, but childhood trauma, if things
were only so easy today.

Jen turns the ring, which igniting the shimmery red flame
within. Jen drops into the chair before the fireplace.

The girls climb down from the bed and climb on to Jen's lap
and the arm's of the chair.

LIBERTY

How do you feel?

Jen looks at the children, then back down to the ring.

JEN

Settled.

Jen pulls the bag of coke from her jacket pocket, and stares
at the white powder, as do the three Girls.

JEN

Content.

Jen tosses the bag into the fire.

The girls watch as the flames turn green.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY.

Jen pulls the olive-skinned Girl in a wagon through a park.
Nurse Patty and Abel pull the other two Girls next to Jen.

Salome, Baylor and Liberty walk behind with picnic baskets.

Behind them, James carries a large, handled, canvas bag.

Jen sneaks a flask from her jacket, and takes a drink.

The olive-skinned Girl looks up at Jen and smiles. Jen holds
her finger up to her lips. SHHH.

Jen stops at an over-grown path which leads into the woods,
she ducks and pulls the Girl down the hidden path. The
others follow; catching their cloths on burrs and thorns.

In a clearing, stands a massive Oak tree.

While the olive-skinned Girl pulls iron game traps from her wagon the other two Girls pull curved pieces of iron from their wagons, and places them on the ground.

James arrives and sets down his large, handled, canvas bag.

JAMES

Look at ya' ladies, Strong as wee
Oxen!

James rivets the iron pieces to the tree. Nurse Patty sets the game traps, while Abel hooks their chains to the strap.

Liberty removes a worn leather tome from her bag and begins to read, as Salome, Baylor and Jen prepare a picnic lunch.

LIBERTY

Her nobles shall be no more, nor
shall kings be proclaimed there;
all her princes are gone. Her
castles shall be overgrown with
thorns, her fortresses with
thistles and briars. She shall
become an abode for jackals and a
haunt for ostriches. Wildcats shall
meet with desert beasts, satyrs
shall call to one another; There
shall the Lilith repose, and find
for herself a place to rest. There
the hoot owl shall nest and lay
eggs, hatch them out and gather
them in her shadow; There shall the
kites assemble, none shall be
missing its mate. They shall
possess her forever, and dwell
there from generation to
generation.

Liberty closes the book as Salome and Baylor serve plates.

Abel dusts off his hands and joins others on the blanket.

ABEL

Our traps are set for the Solstice!

James places his tools back in his bag; the job complete.

The sharp SNAP of the of an iron game trap stops the group in their tracks.

The ground begins to rumble.

FADE OUT: