

S SHAD UL WS II

SOULSHADOWS II:
MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

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Tanis By
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FADE IN:

INT. THE ALCOVE

Tanis, on her knees, tends to a small garden in a far corner of the alcove.

If you would call it a garden. Everything rising from this patch of ruined earth is bent and brown and dead.

But nevertheless, Tanis digs purposefully with her trowel, tossing the wilted foliage aside.

TANIS

Even the best garden gonna be havin' some weeds...

THUNK -- her trowel hits something. She turns with a smile.

TANIS

...but Tanis garden be havin' more than that.

She reaches into the hole -- and plucks out a human skull.

Her smile dissolves to scorn.

TANIS

That ain't what Tanis be lookin' for.

She tosses the skull over her shoulder.

BEHIND TANIS

With a dry rattle, the discarded skull lands atop a small pile that contains several more cast-off skulls.

BACK AT THE GARDEN

Tanis has returned to her digging.

Now a CLINK against her trowel -- this tone completely different -- almost musical.

Tanis smiles -- and from the hole she now pulls a green, glass bottle caked with dirt.

TANIS

Now this be somethin' Tanis can be usin'.

Tanis clears some of the dirt -- to reveal a menacing face on the side of the bottle, eyes closed, as if in slumber.

TANIS

Could it be lost pirate rum for Tanis? Maybe the wine of the pharaohs? No...this bottle be holdin' somethin' darker.

She holds the bottle towards us.

ON THE BOTTLE

Light flashes inside the bottle.

TANIS (O.S.)

Look hard...look as hard as you be able.

The eyes of the malevolent face snap open -- glassy, but soulless and black as pitch.

TANIS (O.S.)

It ain't light you be seein', but darkness of the darkest sort...

Peering deep into the bottle, the flashes are revealed as lightning bolts. A storm rages inside this bottle!

Moving deeper into the bottle reveals a house -- buffeted by the storm -- somehow trapped inside the most violent snow-globe ever conceived.

TANIS (V.O.)

...and this tale be called...
"Message in a Bottle."

SUPER: MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

And moving ever deeper into the recesses of the bottle, the green glass finally disappears...

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT

A thunderstorm rages in the middle of the night. A MAN in his mid 40s comes running out of the house carrying a green glass bottle filled with various items.

The shutters on the outside of the windows bang and a sinister laughing comes from somewhere nearby.

The man gets down on his hands and knees just outside of the window, in a garden filled with tomatoes and squash.

He RIPS the tomatoes out of the ground, making room as he digs a deep hole into the soil.

A woman in her late 30's, appears in the doorway. She looks afraid.

WOMAN

What's going on?

MAN

Get back inside Mary!

MARY

It's her isn't it? You've been seeing her again!

MAN

I said get back inside!

MARY

You told me it was over between you two! You said you would never see her again.

MAN

Well I lied. I Lied Mary. Is that what you want to here? Huh? Is that what you want me to say?

MARY

No! I don't want you to say anything, I want you to fix this and go back to being my husband.

He is satisfied with the depth of the hole.

MAN

I'll fix this alright. I'll fix it.

The man takes the bottle and buries into the ground, covering it with dirt.

He sees a rock nearby and plants it firmly onto the spot, pushing it in to make sure it's snug.

The laughter stops. The wind subsides and the clouds that rumble above them seem to move away.

The man looks at his wife. They say nothing.

He stands up and walks to enter the house. Just as he passes her, he stops and turns to her.

MAN

No one touches that garden.

Mary looks at him, shocked.

MAN
I'm sorry.

He enters the house.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: 50 YEARS LATER

A small, sunlit room on the upper floor is neat, and dust free. An open, half empty box lays on the floor. Ready to be packed.

Even the smallest of objects seem deliberate in their placement.

IRIS (late 20s) sits on a made bed.

With a sad look on her face she sorts through old photographs.

She finds a photo of her grandparents. She smiles and looks closer.

In the photo, MARY smiles widely while the man on her arm holds her proudly.

A knock on the door.

Iris turns to see her fiance, PAUL, leaning on the door frame with a sympathetic smile on his face.

PAUL
How are you holding up?

IRIS
Well.

PAUL
Good.

He enters and sits down next to her on the bed.

They look at the pictures together.

Iris shows him the one in her hand. Paul laughs.

PAUL
Just think, that will be us in four months.

Iris smile. Paul give the photo back.

PAUL

I know this is a bad time to ask,
but...are we still having that
party on Saturday?

IRIS

Yes, why wouldn't we?

PAUL

I just thought, since it's so soon,
maybe you would want it to be me
and you for a while.

IRIS

No, don't be silly. We've already
made plans.

PAUL

I know, but...we can cancel them if
you want to. If you don't feel up
to it.

Iris smiles.

IRIS

I appreciate it Paul, but we don't
have to cancel just because my
grandmother died. In fact, you know
what we will do?

PAUL

What?

IRIS

We'll dedicate it to her. Celebrate
her life.

Paul smiles.

PAUL

That's my girl.

He kisses her on the forehead.

The doorbell rings.

PAUL

I'll get it.

Iris returns to her photos.

DOWNSTAIRS

Paul descends the stairs, holding onto the rail. The rail wobbles and shakes beneath his hands.

PAUL
Coming!

A section of the railing pops out into Paul's hand.

PAUL
Shit.

He holds it up, the wood has rotted.

He reaches the doorway and opens it to see BELLE, Iris's good friend.

BELLE
Hey Paul is Iris...what happened to the railing?

PAUL
I don't know it just popped off, but come in. She's upstairs. Be careful though.

Belle enters and heads up the stairway, slowly and carefully.

Paul enters the kitchen and picks up the phone. He stares oddly at the rotted wood in his hands.

UPSTAIRS

Belle knocks on the door. Iris turns to see her and smiles. She stands and they hug.

BELLE
How are you holding up babe?

IRIS
I'm good. Paul's been riding my back about this whole thing like I was a sick puppy though.

BELLE
Well at least he's still riding you, right?

Iris smiles and nudges Belle.

Belle looks at the photos in her hand.

BELLE
Cute couple.

IRIS
Yeah.

BELLE
Anyway, I came to give you this.

Belle reaches into her purse and pulls out a folded up packet of papers.

IRIS
Oh! Right, thank you so much. I'm sorry to ask such a favor of you.

BELLE
Not a problem, I do it all day for strangers, why not for a friend?

Iris smiles.

IRIS
Thanks so much, this is really going to help me out.

BELLE
No problem. I also included some stuff in there about 17th century lifestyles and superstitions. Should make writing the paper a bit easier.

IRIS
Cool.

BELLE
Some of that stuff hasn't even been accessed since like...the nineteen fifties, so I'd say you lucked out on this one. No one is going to have this type of information.

IRIS
Good.

Iris sets the paper to the side.

BELLE
So are you guys still having that get together on Saturday?

IRIS
To my knowledge, yes.

BELLE
Great, cause I bought some star
spangled fireworks that need the
wide open prairie that is your
backyard.

IRIS
Awesome, you and fire. I'll keep
911 on speed dial.

Belle laughs.

BELLE
Anyway, I'll let you get back to
it. I have some more errands to
run. I'll see you on Saturday.

They hug once more and kiss on the cheek.

IRIS
Alright, Later.

BELLE
Later hun.

Belle leaves the room, her footsteps can be heard descending
the steps.

MUMBLING.

A DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES.

FOOTSTEPS RUNNING UP THE STEPS.

Paul enters the doorway.

PAUL
Hey.

Iris turns to see him holding the railing in his hands. A
shocked look on her face.

PAUL
We might have a problem.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

IRIS enters wearing a black dress. She holds a stack of mail
in her hands.

PAUL enters behind her carrying an urn.

He closes the door with his foot and sets the urn on a table nearby.

PAUL
That was a nice ceremony.

Iris turns to him, a forced smile.

IRIS
It was, wasn't it?

She slides her shoes off near the steps and sorts through the mail.

PAUL
Where do you want me to put her?

Iris turns to him.

IRIS
Right there is fine. Mom is supposed to come and get it later today anyway.

PAUL
What about speedy? Remember I'm supposed to be bringing him back today.

IRIS
Oh, well just set it on the shelf in the closet.

PAUL
There's a shelf in the closet?

IRIS
Yeah, right? I'm sure there is.

Paul goes over to the coat closet and looks inside.

PAUL
Huh. Okay

Iris smiles and shakes her head.

She continues to sift through the mail until she gets to a brown envelope addressed to: MARY H. DANIELS.

Iris eyes the package for a second before she rips it open. It's a magazine titled: "The Daily Gardener."

She sets all the other mail to the side and opens it.

Meanwhile, Paul sets the urn on the stop shelf in the closet.

It's a tight fit, he pushes harder and gets the urn all the way onto the shelf inadvertently knocking over a box teetered on the corner.

He picks it up, it's heavy. He opens the box and sees a small stack of magazines. He brings the box out into the light to read it.

PAUL
The Daily Gardener?

Iris looks up at Paul just as he looks up at her.

IRIS
Where did you find that?

Paul brings the box to her.

PAUL
On the top shelf. Looks like someone had a secret green thumb.

IRIS
Why would she hide these?

PAUL
I don't know.

IRIS
I mean, if she was so into gardening, we have a garden out back that hasn't been touched in years.

PAUL
Maybe it was one of those things she wanted to do but couldn't on her own.

IRIS
She could have asked for help.

PAUL
This is your grandmother we are talking about here, right?

IRIS

Still...

Iris goes back to checking the mail. Paul gets a look in his eyes, he has an idea. He heads upstairs.

Iris sets the new magazine on top of the older magazines in the box.

She enters the kitchen and pours a glass of water. She stands there, looking out of the window. Lost in thought.

Paul comes down the stairs, dressed casually with his keys in his hand. Iris see him.

IRIS

Where are you going?

PAUL

I'm going to go to the home improvement store and see if I can get something to replace the banisters.

IRIS

Oh. Ok.

PAUL

Will you be okay without me?

Iris gives him a mean look.

IRIS

Yes, Paul. I will.

PAUL

Just asking.

Paul leaves. Iris heads upstairs.

UPSTAIRS

Iris enters the room in the corner of the upper floor. The box of photos still lay on the bed.

She sits, silently then looks over. Her attention moves from the photos to the packet laying nearby. She grabs the packet and opens it.

It reads: "COMMON PRACTICES: WITCH BOTTLES."

She scans the page for a few seconds before setting it down on a nearby night table.

She sighs before going back to packing objects into boxes.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

In the Bedroom, Iris sits beneath the covers reading a magazine.

Paul enters, from the bathroom, a toothbrush stuck in his mouth.

PAUL
Wha yu ree?

IRIS
Excuse me?

Paul returns to the bathroom, spits and comes back.

PAUL
I said, what are you reading?

IRIS
The Daily Gardener, I still can't believe she would hide something like this if it were so important to her.

PAUL
It's not that big of a deal, at least you didn't find any playgirl magazines, right?

Paul smiles, Iris doesn't.

IRIS
This is serious Paul. Like, I thought we were really close? Why would she hide something like this, I just...I just don't get it.

PAUL
Maybe in her old age, she didn't have the strength for it.

Iris shakes her head in disbelief. She sets the magazine on the night table.

Paul goes back into the bathroom, rinses, spits and then turns off the light.

IRIS
What happened to Speedy?

PAUL

Lana wants me to get him tomorrow afternoon, something about the kids not being able to say a proper goodbye.

IRIS

Oh.

He gets into bed and snuggles up next to her. She pulls his arms tighter around her.

PAUL

You know, since I'm fixing up the backyard anyway...maybe you should start your own garden?

IRIS

Me? Hah, yeah right.

PAUL

No I'm serious. Think of it as a tribute to her. Create something for her she couldn't create for herself.

Iris thinks about it then nods her head. They talk softly.

IRIS

Yeah.

PAUL

Yeah?

IRIS

It might be nice.

PAUL

Great. I'll pick up some stuff tomorrow morning. What do you want?

IRIS

I don't know....how about sunflowers?

PAUL

Sunflowers? You would.

IRIS

Do you have a thing against sunflowers?

PAUL
No not at all, they're lovely. What
else?

A long pause. Their eyes both closed.

IRIS
Tomatoes?

PAUL
Mmm, tomatoes.

They drift off to sleep.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A Bright, sunny and clean kitchen. A breeze rolls in from an open window, blowing yellow curtains aside.

An empty vase sits on the counter and a happy whistling noise is coming from somewhere close by.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

IRIS, kneels in soil. She whistles happily as she plants sunflowers into a garden just beneath the window.

Footsteps. Paul pokes his head out of the doorway. She looks up at him and smiles.

IRIS
Hey, what's up?

PAUL
Look who I have.

Paul opens the door completely and a dalmation puppy springs out of the door and into the yard.

It turns, sees Iris and runs up to her, tail wagging, and hops on her. She laughs.

IRIS
Oh! Hey Buddy, you glad to be home?

He licks her face.

PAUL
Did your mom come to pick up the
urn?

IRIS
Yeah, she said she'd come back
tomorrow and we can go put her in
her plot at the cemetery.

PAUL
Sounds good.

Speedy jumps up and down, begging for Iris's attention.

Paul comes in and scoops him up.

PAUL
Come on, let's leave mommy to her
garden huh? She has a lot of work
to do.

He puts the dog down and pulls a red ball from out of his
pocket.

He tosses it and the dog chases it.

She looks up at the sun and smiles before picking up her
trowel and digging another hole.

CLINK.

She hits something.

CLINK. CLINK.

She sets the shovel down and digs with her fingers. Slowly,
she uncovers a rock.

She shrugs and peels the rock out of the ground then lays the
rock to the side.

She parts the dirt in preparation for another sunflower when
something catches her eye.

She reaches down and dislodges a green object from the
ground. She pulls it up and holds it up to the sunlight.

It's a green glass bottle. Caked in dirt, it's impossible to
see what is inside.

IRIS
Weird...

She twists the glass in the sunlight.

IRIS
Hey Paul!

Paul runs over to her.

IRIS
Look at this.

PAUL
What is that?

IRIS
I don't know, a bottle.

PAUL
Just throw it away.

IRIS
No, I think there's something
inside of it. I can't tell though.
It's dirty.

Paul takes the bottle.

PAUL
Well let's find out.

He enters the house. Iris stands up and follows.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Paul sets the bottle in the sink and washes it off.

IRIS
What do you think it was doing
there?

PAUL
Don't know. Maybe it fell out the
window here and someone just forgot
about it.

Paul stares down at the bottle as layers and layers of dirt
gently wash off.

His face changes slowly as a menacing face appears on the
side of the bottle. It's eyes are closed as if in slumber.

Iris notices his facial expression and looks into the sink.

IRIS
What the hell is that?

PAUL
Could be one of those special
Halloween bottles...you know the
ones soda companies make around the
holidays?

IRIS
But what's inside it?

Paul tries the top. It's sealed tightly.

He holds it up to the light again. The insides slowly become visible.

A piece of paper, a strand of hair and a golden residue at the bottom with a toe nail clipping stuck inside.

PAUL
We're going to need some heavy duty
stuff to open that up.

IRIS
Is that...hair?

PAUL
It must be a time capsule or
something, but why would anyone put
hair inside a -

IRIS
Oh! It's a witch bottle.

PAUL
A what?

IRIS
Yeah, yeah. It's a witch bottle.
Bell gave me this packet...for my
thesis, it had a section in it
about witch bottles. I'll go get
it.

Iris exits the kitchen.

PAUL
What about your plants?

IRIS (O.S.)
I'll get to them later.

PAUL
You better finish them before it
gets too dark.

IRIS (O.S.)
I know, I know.

Paul sets the bottle down on the counter and looks outside.

In the distance, seemingly appearing out of nowhere, thick and dark clouds head their way.

Paul heads outside as he is summoned by the tiny barks of a playful puppy.

A breeze rolls in through the open door and the eyes on the face of the bottle slowly open.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Iris sits reading the packet.

She is in the zone when Paul enters, Mr. Gonzalez in his hands, and sits next to her.

PAUL
So I got all your sunflowers and
tomatoes planted.

Iris confused then a look of recognition.

IRIS
Oh! I'm sorry, I totally forgot
about the sunflowers.

PAUL
It's fine, at least now the
tomatoes have a higher chance of
survival.

Iris smiles and playfully hits him.

He sits down next to her.

Speedy jumps up onto the couch and curls up in his lap.

PAUL
So what did you find?

IRIS
Oh.

Iris flips back a few pages.

IRIS

Uhm...It was common practice for homeowners to bury 'witch bottles' within the walls of their house. It was thought to protect the house and its members, uhm... by preventing the entrance of curses and evil spirits at night. Witch bottles were supposed to remain hidden and unbroken for the duration of the victims bloodline for fear of unseen consequences as the belief was that curses get stronger with age.

Iris looks at Paul. He doesn't seem interested.

IRIS

Well?

PAUL

Well what? what do you want me to say to that.

IRIS

It has to be a witch bottle, why else would it be buried in the garden.

PAUL

I'm still thinking the time capsule idea is our best bet.

IRIS

I don't know Paul.

Paul rolls his eyes.

IRIS

I saw that.

She hits him.

PAUL

Hey!

IRIS

I'm serious about this Paul, why else would there be hair in the bottle?

Paul sighs, places Speedy Gonzalez on the couch and exits.

He returns a few moments later with a cork screw and the green bottle.

IRIS
What are you doing?

PAUL
I'm going to open it.

IRIS
No! Don't open it. Didn't you hear what I just said? It has to remain hidden and unbroken.

PAUL
Well, we totally just fucked up the hidden part. Might as well open it.

IRIS
I guess...

PAUL
You seriously believe this curse nonsense?

IRIS
I don't know, it just seems too coincidental.

Paul stares at her. A look of disappointment.

PAUL
I'm going to open the bottle, and nothing is going to happen.

Iris doesn't seem convinced. She sighs, giving up.

IRIS
Just, just don't break it.

PAUL
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

He puts the cork screw into the cork. He presses it in hard. Iris looks on with both fear and curiosity.

PAUL
That thing is in there tight.

IRIS
Hey Paul...

PAUL

Yeah.

IRIS

When we first looked at the bottle
and we saw that face...weren't the
eyes closed?

Paul looks at the bottle. The eyes are open and staring
outwards. He contemplates for a second.

PAUL

No, no they must have been opened.

Paul struggles with the corkscrew again. He begins to pull.

IRIS

I'm getting a bad feeling about
this.

PAUL

It's just a bottle Iris.

Paul turns to Iris to say something just as the cork POPS and
a horrible smell escapes. Paul leans in and smells.

PAUL

Oh, it's pure ammonia in there.
Someone definitely pissed in this
bottle.

IRIS

See! Bodily fluids! I told you.

PAUL

Ok, so it could be a witch bottle,
big deal. The most we have to worry
about now, is getting that smell
out of my nostrils.

The lights go out, followed by a tiny whimper from the dog
who seeks out Paul for protection.

IRIS

What was that?

Lighting from outside.

PAUL

Power must have gone out.

Paul stands up and looks out the window. Other houses have
their lights on.

He pulls his cell phone out of his pocket.

PAUL

Huh.

IRIS

What?

PAUL

The circuit breaker must have tripped somehow. Bound to happen I guess, this is a pretty old house.

Paul walks into the kitchen, guided by the light on his cell phone.

Sounds of drawers opening, cutlery shaking with the movement.

Paul comes out with a flashlight, he shines it upward on his face.

PAUL

Muhahahah!

IRIS

Not funny Paul!

PAUL

Just playing with you baby, God. I'mma go see if I can't flip the breaker back on. Make sure all the doors are locked.

Paul opens a door beneath the steps and disappears into the darkness. Iris stands there, her hands shaking.

A flash of lightning lights up the room, her eyes go to the bottle.

It's dark again.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Paul comes down the steps, the beam of his flashlight dancing around the room.

He stops at the edge, and turns his light to the right.

The circuit breaker.

PAUL
All right, let's see what's going
on with you.

He approaches the circuit breaker and opens the panel door.

His shines his flashlight on it, going down the row. None of
them have been tripped.

PAUL
That's strange.

A faint laughter comes from somewhere behind him. Innocent,
childlike almost.

He swings his flashlight around and shines it on boxes and
old car parts.

Nothing.

Paul pauses for a moment, waiting to hear anything.

Nothing.

He turns back to the circuit breaker.

He starts flipping switches off and then on again. Down the
row he goes till he gets to the last one.

Laughter again, from somewhere behind him. This time closer.

He swings around. Shining his flashlight.

Nothing.

He stays, in that same position, curious but afraid.

PAUL
Hello? ... Iris?

No answer. He calls to her from below.

PAUL
Iris!

Footsteps from above. Iris stands at the landing to the
basement.

IRIS
You called?

PAUL
Did you hear that?

IRIS
Hear what?

PAUL
The laughing.

IRIS
What laughing?

Paul shines the light around. Nothing still.

He turns to the circuit breaker, flips the last switch. The lights come on.

IRIS
That did it!

Paul closes the panel and heads for the steps.

He takes one last look around before heading up the steps, completely confused.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Iris sits on the couch next to speedy. She is visibly scared. Paul comes up and locks the door behind him.

He walks over to the coffee table and sets the flashlight down next to the bottle.

PAUL
I tell you babe, that was the weirdest thing that ever happened to me.

IRIS
Told you not to open the bottle.

PAUL
Please, it's an old house. Probably just settling. I tell you, first thing in the morning I'm going to call the electrician, and maybe one of those house inspector guys. This place is bound to have termites. Don't know why your grandma never looked into that.

Iris frowns.

IRIS
She was old, Paul. She could barely
remember to take her pills.

Paul eyes the bottle's clear green glass. Perfect except for
the strange contents inside.

He doesn't seem to notice the face on the bottle has
completely disappeared.

The lights shut out again.

PAUL
Are you kidding me?

Laughing from somewhere outside. Paul jumps.

PAUL
That! Do you hear that?

IRIS
Is somebody outside?

Speedy barks and jumps onto the couch, barking towards the
kitchen door.

IRIS
Calm down, Speedy, it's just the
storm.

Paul stands up, eyeing the back door.

A strong wind picks up outside, KICKING in the door to the
kitchen.

IRIS
What's going on?

PAUL
Stay here!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Paul cautiously approaches the door. As he reaches it, Speedy
jumps up off the couch and RUNS straight out the door.

PAUL
Speedy! Get back here you stupid
dog!

Paul runs after him. He gets to the middle of the yard when
Speedy Stops. He scoops him up.

PAUL
What do you think you're-

Paul looks up.

His jaw drops and his eyes widen in horror.

The clouds above his house have darkened, swirling like a major thunderstorm is forming right above him.

Outside of the line of property, however, clear skies with the moon shining bright.

He backs up slowly.

Then turns to run inside. The door slams in his face, leaving him alone outside and leaving Iris alone inside.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The door slams.

Iris turns around, frightened.

She stands up and approaches the door. Paul stands on the other side. She sees the clouds and turns pale.

IRIS
What's going on?

PAUL
Iris, open the door. Open the door
Iris!

She tries to pull the door open.

IRIS
I can't! It's stuck.

PAUL
Go to the front door, I'll meet you
at the front door, okay?

She nods and runs into the living room.

A flash of lightning. She notices the bottle is missing.

CLINK. CLINK. CLINK. CLINK.

She turns her eyes to the open basement door. She grabs the flashlight off the table.

CLINK. CLINK. CLINK.

She walks over to the door.

CLICK. A beam of light points down into the dark basement. At the bottom of the steps, lays the unbroken green glass bottle.

KNOCK KNOCK.

Iris JUMPS. She turns to see Paul standing at the open door.

PAUL

Open up!

She sighs and lowers the flashlight.

She begins to walk over to the door when a thin and frail hand comes out of the darkness and PULLS her down the steps.

PAUL

Iris!

IN THE BASEMENT

She stumbles down the steps. Bones crack. She hits the landing, her face directly in front of the green bottle.

A sinister laugh.

Blood pools beneath her head.

IN THE FOYER

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP.

Paul throws his weight into the door. Wood cracks near the hinge.

PAUL

Iris!

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. BANG!

The door collapses, bringing Paul with it. He hits the ground hard, then quickly stands up.

The flashlight points directly into the basement, the beam still lit. He picks it up.

He aims the flashlight to find the gruesome sight below.

PAUL

Iris!

He runs down the steps and cradles her head with his hands. He checks her pulse. It is faint, but it is there.

PAUL

Stay with me baby, stay with me.

A sinister laugh. He looks up, into the darkness where it is coming from.

A form appears before him. A woman in her late 20's, engulfed in a flowing white dress with thick red lip stick on.

PAUL

Stay away from me!

WOMAN

Oh Alfred, you sure do know how to charm a lady.

PAUL

Alfred? My name is Paul.

WOMAN

I've waited many years for this moment.

PAUL

I'm Paul. My name is Paul!

WOMAN

You shouldn't have left me. Your wife can never treat you like I can. Mary doesn't understand a man's REAL needs.

Paul recognizes that name.

PAUL

Mary?

He looks away.

WOMAN

You told me all choices had consequences. Well you made the wrong choice all those years go and it's time for your consequence.

She disappears.

PAUL

What? Hey! My name is Paul!

He turns to Iris.

He begins to lift her up.

PAUL

Come on, stay with me Iris.

Creaking. From all around.

CRACK. The sound of wood and glass breaking.

A beam from nearby breaks in half and swings down, crushing Paul beneath it.

BLACK.

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

Fire trucks and police surround the house. Men in suits pick their way through rubble and pieces of furniture.

A crowd stands across the street.

A car pulls up and Iris's mother gets out, holding the urn in her hands.

She sets the urn on the roof of her car.

She approaches a police officer.

IRIS' MOTHER

What, what's going on? What happened?

POLICEMAN

Storm last night, looks like the house had some bad termite rot. Whole thing just completely collapsed.

IRIS' MOTHER

What about the people inside?

He shakes his head, not knowing. He's opens his mouth to speak.

POLICEMAN

I-

A group of firemen pick up a large beam, beneath it they see a hand.

FIREMAN
Hey! Over here!

The rescuers scurry to the position. They dust away bits of wood and carpet and pull out Paul's body.

The policeman turns to Iris' mother.

POLICEMAN
I'm going to have to ask you to stand back ma'am.

Iris's mother begins to cry, letting out a terrifying yell.

A strong gust of wind comes by and knocks the urn off the roof of her car.

It crashes to the ground, breaks open, and spills ashes everywhere.

A laugh is heard in the distance, as if floating on the wind -
- the same wind that scatters the ashes far and wide as they slowly...

DISSOLVE TO:

DIRT

Flecks of dirt, tossed with abandon.

TANIS (O.S.)
You be tryin' to hide the ashes
of sins past, sometimes they be
flyin' back into your face.

WIDER

Tanis continues to dig. She flings the dirt carelessly over her shoulder.

TANIS
Just 'cause something be buried...
that don't mean it dead.

She plunges the trowel into the dirt, and leaves it upright, like a dagger.

She lifts the bottle.

TANIS

Don't mean it won't never be
comin' back with a roar...or
maybe a whisper you never be
hearin', until it be too late.

Tanis tosses the bottle back into its hole.

TANIS

(to the bottle)

But tonight, we bury you...put
you back where you belong.

She pitches trowel-fulls of dirt back into the hole.

IN THE HOLE

As dirt falls on the bottle, it is now Tanis' face etched
onto the glass! The face smiles up at us.

TANIS (O.S.)

We all be havin' our own sins
to bury...ain't no secret. Only
difference that some of us just
be practicin' sin...

ON THE BOTTLE

Another scoop of dirt falls onto the bottle's face.

TANIS (O.S.)

...and some of us be experts.

And Tanis laughs.

Her face, on the bottle, winks.

FADE OUT.