

CANDYAPPLEBLACK

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Story by
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“In the heart of a heartless city,
somewhere between Heaven and Hell,
an exiled angel trafficks in the darkest
trade ...
...and waits.”

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Streetlights glisten off a wet, desolate stretch of dirty asphalt. Empty buildings reflected in oily puddles appear distorted and ominous. The eerie stillness is broken by the faint CLINKING of spurs on pavement ECHOING in the distance.

A MAN'S BOOT and spur splash through a puddle, his image distorted in the rippling water, his face a blur. His long cattleman's coat hangs off him like a cape, the laces that run up the backs of his black leather gloves dangle, untied.

He NEVER takes these gloves off.

SOUNDS of urban TROUBLE build and fill the night. Lights from emergency vehicles reflect off the shiny street. Rain falls, adding to the chaos.

From behind, we see THE MAN stop in front of a high-rise and look up. The structure appears peaceful enough, except for small fires burning in every other window on the 19th floor.

The man is CAYCE and all HELL is breaking loose around him. Though we haven't seen his face yet, he is strangely the calm inside this storm, fearfully glancing over his shoulder.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CITY STREET - NIGHT

Nearby, a well-preserved but rumpled 60-ish man, WELLS, leans into a phone booth. He speaks into the receiver in a quiet but firm voice.

WELLS

He's close but not asleep, so it
might take a while. No. I can
handle it.

Wells hangs up and looks up and down the empty street.

EXT. ANOTHER CITY STREET - NIGHT

Dozens of cops, TV news reporters, emergency crews, and a SWAT team, swarm around the base of the Keel building, as an unmarked car screeches onto the scene. A grizzled, Latino, FBI agent, XAVIER DE LOS SANTOS, steps out, immediately recognizing his old friend, SWAT commander DAN ENGELMAN, who is talking to a group of heavily armored police officers.

DE LOS SANTOS

Yo, Engelman! Where's the party?

ENGELMAN

De Los Santos. A little past your
bedtime, isn't it?

The two men talk as they hustle toward the makeshift police base camp.

DE LOS SANTOS
You know me - I can smell a
kamikaze pilot a mile away. What's
the story?

ENGELMAN
Remember that firebug that went
AWOL from County last week?

EXT. KEEL BUILDING FOYER - NIGHT

Engelman and De Los Santos stop and gaze up at a row of high windows where a dozen small fires are burning.

The faceless, silhouetted image of a man stands in front of one of these fires.

ENGELMAN
... looks like we found him.

Engelman looks around cautiously, pulls De Los Santos aside, and speaks in hushed tones as they continue walking.

ENGELMAN (cont'd)
This feels wrong as Hell.

De Los Santos looks around, answering in the same guarded tone.

DE LOS SANTOS
He doesn't want anything, does he.

ENGELMAN
Just another nutcase waiting to go
down to the river.

The two men stop again and stand silent for a moment, staring ominously up at the fires.

As De Los Santos and Engelman walk off toward the police encampment, a young T.V. newscaster, LETICIA KENDALL, is setting up to go live at the scene of this standoff amidst a dozen other reporters from rival stations doing the same.

On a small VIDEO MONITOR next to the cameraman, we see another female REPORTER being broadcast at that moment from Kendall's TV station about to get bumped.

THE FEMALE REPORTER'S IMAGE ON THE CAMERA'S MONITOR IS
SUDDENLY REPLACED BY KENDALL'S.

LETICIA KENDALL

(to her cameraman)

Okay? Hit me.

(to the camera)

This is Leticia Kendall, live
downtown with Channel 13 News,
where an escaped arsonist is
holding 10 elementary school
children hostage on the 19th floor
of The Keel Building which you see
directly behind me. Sources report
that this high-rise, which is still
under construction, has been wired
to explode at midnight.

INT. KEEL BUILDING 19TH FLOOR - NIGHT

HARLAN LAWRENCE, a wiry, 30-ish man with burn scars on his
neck and hands, is busy feeding small trash can fires in
front of the windows throughout the unfinished floor.

LETICIA KENDALL(V.O.)

Harlan Lawrence, or Harley Davidson
as he is better known to Federal
law enforcement, had his first
brush with the law at age 12, when
he was convicted of six counts of
arson in connection with a string
of grisly, pyrotechnic murders he
orchestrated while living in a West
Virginia orphanage

Fire illuminates Harlan's face, his desperation and sadness
distorted by the glow. He hoists one of the burning trash
cans.

HARLAN

(to himself)

Come and get me.

EXT. KEEL BUILDING FOYER - NIGHT

Leticia Kendall continues her live, on-camera report.

LETICIA KENDALL

One week ago, Lawrence escaped from the maximum security prison where he had been serving three, consecutive life terms.

Leticia looks up, startled, as a burning trash can CRASHES out of a window on the 19th floor, raining shattered glass and glowing embers on the bystanders watching from below.

Paramedics scramble to assist the injured, while a flurry of SWAT officers take up strategic positions in the foyer.

INT. KEEL BUILDING 19TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Despite the heat emanating from the many fires in the room, Harlan shivers as if he's freezing.

LETICIA KENDALL(V.O.)

While authorities originally expected Lawrence to flee the country after his escape, he instead resurfaced this afternoon and commandeered a school bus, making off with 10 hostages

The CHILD HOSTAGES huddle terrified in a corner, eyes blinded by smoke, coughing and crying.

INT. SUSANNE'S LOFT APARTMENT - NIGHT

SUSANNE VALENTINE, a gaunt, 20-ish, insomniac, lays on her unmade bed, her large, darkened, industrial loft's huge windows overlooking the city. She is alone, exhausted, her eyes wide open. The shadows of the rain dancing on the windows fall across her face like ghosts of long gone tears.

Scattered around her are a mess of photos and papers with red proofreading marks on them. She absent-mindedly clicks a switchblade knife open and closed - over and over again.

She jerks her head when she hears POUNDING on a door down the hallway in her building.

FLASHBACK

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE SUSANNE'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM DOOR - NIGHT

A child's FIST pounds on a door in a shadowy hallway. The KNOCKING is strangely MUTED, as if coming from far away.

IN REAL-TIME a phone RINGS loudly, shattering the silence.

END FLASHBACK

INT. SUSANNE'S LOFT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Startled by the sound of the phone, Susanne accidentally closes the switchblade on her own hand.

She winces, and presses the speaker button with her other hand.

She drops the knife on her bed and answers the phone while sucking on her fresh wound.

SUSANNE

Valentine.

STEFFORINI(V.O.)

How'd I know you'd be up?

SUSANNE

Cause you're psychic, Stefforini.
You know, psychic/psycho?

STEFFORINI(V.O.)

Look out your window.

Susanne stops sucking on her hand and grudgingly rolls over to look out the window.

SUSANNE

Okay. What am I looking for?

STEFFORINI(V.O.)

'Pyro Takes Tykes On A One Way Trip
To Hell.' How's that for a
headline?

Susanne puts on her glasses and clicks on a tiny bedside lamp.

The Keel building with its 19th floor fires only a few blocks from her room is framed like a painting in her window.

Susanne sighs, clicks off the light, blandly rolls away from the window, and resumes sucking on her wounded hand.

SUSANNE

Urban Terrorists. Lovely. Rubbing
the world's face in this shit must
really give you the warm fuzzies.

STEFFORINI(V.O.)

Susanne, I know your angel thing
takes priority over everything, but
if you don't start taking some
pictures for money, you'll be using
your car for a darkroom by
Christmas.

Susanne hangs up, hesitates, glances at the window again, and
after a long moment, grudgingly grabs her camera pack.

She throws the switchblade inside the pack, grabs her coat,
walks past the window, and out her front door.

The IMAGE of the burning building in her window TRANSFORMS
into LIVE ACTION as we rejoin Leticia Kendall.

EXT. KEEL BUILDING FOYER - NIGHT

The building is now surrounded by even more emergency
vehicles and onlookers, as Leticia tries to hold her ground
in the midst of the flurry of activity.

LETICIA KENDALL

In an unusual twist, Lawrence has
yet to make any demands whatsoever,
which has Federal law enforcement
worried, since this typically
signifies a bona fide death wish on
the part of a suspect.

News crews yammer-on nearby, while the mysterious Cayce walks
calmly among the crowd. He goes strangely unnoticed by
everyone around him, approaching the building without any
trouble, as if he were a ghost roaming among the living.

Just before entering, he looks cautiously over his shoulder.

INT. KEEL BUILDING 19TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Harlan paces nervously around the unfinished suites,
occasionally glancing out a window at those gathering below
to watch what will be his fiery swan song.

As the child hostages WHIMPER, Cayce's soothing, disembodied
VOICE comes to Harlan.

CAYCE(OS)

There's a lot of trouble down
there.

From the corner of the room, just out of reach of the
flickering firelight, MOVEMENT.

Harlan is startled and aims his gun at the shadows, desperately searching for the voice's owner in the darkness.

HARLAN

Come on out here where I can see you! Now!

Cayce slowly emerges from the shadows. In the firelight, we finally see his face. He's early 30's, long black hair in a pony tail. His cattleman's coat, boots and spurs, makes him look like a cross between a cowboy, an Indian, and a modern-day Goth.

CAYCE

Killing them ...

Cayce looks toward the children.

CAYCE (cont'd)

... won't change anything

EXT. KEEL BUILDING FOYER - NIGHT

Leticia is interviewing De Los Santos on camera.

DE LOS SANTOS

Our options are somewhat limited at this point. The kids are our number one priority, but we can't wait forever.

INT. KEEL BUILDING 19TH FLOOR - NIGHT

In the center of the room, Cayce slowly moves around the trash can flames. Bewildered, Harlan follows him, keeping his distance, and keeping his gun trained on Cayce, not knowing what to make of this stranger who has mysteriously appeared.

Cayce's presence momentarily calms Harlan's rage and fear.

HARLAN

I ain't gonna hurt the kids. I just needed a way to get the Press down here. The only one checkin' out tonight is me.

The sadness in Harlan's eyes is replaced by anger.

HARLAN (cont'd)

What are you, some kind of case worker, or just a fucking cop?

Something in one of the burning trashcans makes a loud POP, sending embers flying. Harlan is startled and momentarily shifts his attention to it, losing himself in a memory.

In that moment, Cayce silently MOTIONS to the children to leave, and the kids fearfully slip away.

Cayce joins Harley at the window, both men gazing down at the people below on the street, but Harley doesn't realize that they are now alone.

CAYCE

I work for myself. I know what it is to be abandoned and betrayed.

HARLAN

You don't know me from shit.

CAYCE

I know you used to light fires when you were a kid, but when the refinery burned down they couldn't very well blame the cheap fuses that really caused it, could they?

HARLAN

I told 'em the truth but all it got me was a triple life sentence.

EXT. KEEL BUILDING FOYER - NIGHT

The SWAT team is in position outside the lobby, ready to move.

DE LOS SANTOS

(into walkie talkie)

Okay, showtime.

De Los Santos and his team enter the building just as Susanne drives up to the crime scene in her beat up VW Bug.

Susanne's car is stopped by security. Through her open window, she hands her press I.D. to the officer who looks at it, frowns, and hands it back.

POLICE OFFICER

Sorry Valentine. Elvis couldn't make it tonight. Just park it over there and...

Anxious and angry, Susanne screeches backwards, almost hitting a couple of pedestrians behind her.

INT. KEEL BUILDING 19TH FLOOR STAIRWELL - NIGHT

The soft ECHOES of the SWAT team's SHUFFLING BOOTS 10 floors below, drift up through the stairwell.

INT. KEEL BUILDING 19TH FLOOR - NIGHT

HARLAN
(to himself)
They're coming.

Cayce stares intently into the fire, unafraid, warming his black-gloved hands IN the flames.

CAYCE
Tabula Rasa.

HARLAN
In English.

CAYCE
It means clean slate, Harley.
Sometimes God takes pity on us and
reaches down to wipe our souls
clean.

HARLAN
I got no time for sermons,
Freakshow.

Cayce trains his full, fearless attention on Harlan who cocks his pistol back at him loudly.

CAYCE
Deep down inside, you and I are
exactly the same Harley. Like
brothers. Tonight, if we go down,
we'll go down together.

Several smoking tear gas GRENADES ROLL ACROSS THE FLOOR.

HARLAN
You're not going to try and stop
me? What the fuck's wrong with you?

Cayce reaches into the deep pocket of his long coat and produces a shiny, black, CANDY APPLE. He offers it to Harlan, whose face softens, and the pair suddenly look like a priest and confessor.

From out of nowhere, PIEWHACKIT, a striking white rat with a small black patch on the end of his tail, scoots around Cayce's collar to perch on his shoulder. Harlan is taken aback and points his gun at the defenseless creature.

HARLAN (cont'd)
I don't like rats.

Cayce notices Piewhackit and raises an empty hand, trying to ease Harlan's fear.

CAYCE
Don't worry, he can keep a secret.
He's one of us.

Harlan seems afraid and confused, but Cayce calms him.

Harlan slowly lowers his weapon. Cayce lovingly lifts Piewhackit to his own face, whispering something into his ear.

Cayce gently places Piewhackit back on his shoulder, and he scurries behind Cayce's collar.

HARLAN
Do I know you?

Cayce smiles sadly with genuine compassion.

CAYCE
All our lives.

As Harlan cautiously touches the apple, Cayce places his hand on Harlan's with a knowing look, like some arcane deal with The Devil.

With a troubled look, Cayce gently runs his black-gloved finger along one of the many scars on Harlan's hand.

EXT. KEEL BUILDING FOYER - NIGHT

De Los Santos anxiously rubs his watch which reads 11:59.

INT. KEEL BUILDING 19TH FLOOR - NIGHT

The half-eaten APPLE falls to the floor, and is lost in the tear gas smoke. It rolls past the TIMER on the bomb which clicks to 0:0:0.

EXT. KEEL BUILDING FOYER - NIGHT

The top/19th floor of the building EXPLODES in a dazzling pyrotechnic display, triggering a chain reaction of explosions throughout the rest of the structure.

Fire and black smoke swirl into the sky like a tornado, as the ground crews scatter, broken glass and debris raining down all around.

While everyone else reels from the shock of the explosions, Susanne takes advantage of the chaos. She jumps out of her car and pushes her way through the barricades, snapping photos as she hurries toward the building.

The 10 kids come running out of the building, safe and sound, a handful of SWAT officers not far behind them.

Leticia Kendall chases after them, trying to get an exclusive before they can be spirited away by waiting emergency crews.

Susanne spots a LITTLE GIRL with black soot all over her face, holding a headless Barbie, at the edge of the group. She snaps a few photos and walks up to the girl before she can be loaded onto a waiting ambulance.

SUSANNE

What happened? How did you get away?

LITTLE GIRL

An angel came. He saved us.

A strange look falls across Susanne's face, as if she almost believes the little girl.

The building EXPLODES again, burning like a FURNACE.

A SHADOWY FIGURE coalesces within its massive wall of flame. He casually walks out of the fire, completely unharmed, as the structure collapses around him and the ground crews scatter.

As the figure comes closer, the smoke gives way to reveal Cayce, nonchalantly smoking a cigarette.

No one notices him walking away from the scene except the little girl talking to Susanne. She glances over Susanne's shoulder at Cayce who smiles back at her and puts one finger to his lips. She smiles back.

Susanne looks over her shoulder to see who the girl is looking at and spies Cayce walking down the street away from them. Sensing something odd about him, Susanne snaps a photo.

Cayce walks away from the fiery aftermath, strolling back down the same, filthy, rain-soaked street he came up.

He throws his smoke into a puddle, its cherry sizzling out in the water, his image reflected there rippling.

EXT. CITY STREET NEAR KEEL BUILDING - NIGHT

Wells walks to the burning building from a different street, stops, and carefully, worriedly scans the emergency crews.

Strangely, no one seems to notice him, just as they didn't notice Cayce.

INT. IMMACULATE SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

The subway is empty and silent.

The black and white patterned-tiles on the subway walls are graffiti-free

Three men, WHITE SUIT REPRESENTATIVES, stand silently in the underground subway station ... WAITING. Their faces are shadowed, but they are dressed like businessmen in all-white suits.

A subway car comes SCREAMING into the terminal. It stops, its only occupants three faceless figures, BLACK SUIT REPRESENTATIVES. Dressed in black business suits and sunglasses, they exit the car. One is obviously the LEADER and the other two his HENCHMEN. They seem out of place and slightly nervous in this setting, and briskly walk directly over to the other three waiting men.

BLACK SUIT LEADER

You've waited far too long to take care of this. The balance has been compromised.

WHITE SUIT LEADER

Your concern is understandable. We've sent out best man.

BLACK SUIT LEADER

So have we.

EXT. SKID ROW/ABANDONED CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

A WINO and his MUTT sleep on the porch of a dilapidated toolshed, near the foreboding, dark mouth of a half-finished access tunnel.

The mutt jerks awake, MOANING, sensing something, while his drunk master sleeps it off.

The DEEP RUMBLING IDLE of a vintage American muscle car RISES from within the blackness of the access tunnel.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

A BLACK, FINGERLESS (no leather around the fingers), LEATHER-GLOVED HAND grabs a CD that has a flame logo on it. He pushes the CD into the car deck.

BIG LOU'S (LUCIFER'S) OMINOUS VOICE comes out of the car speakers.

BIG LOU(V.O.)

Someone has been stealing from us,
diverting what rightfully belongs
to The Family, and keeping it all
for themselves. It's not in my
nature to allow that.

EXT. SKID ROW/ABANDONED CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

The mutt hears the OMINOUS VOICE, and whines softly.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

BIG LOU(V.O.)

Retrieve what was promised to us
and show me that you are finally
ready to take your place at my
side. Fail me...

EXT. SKID ROW/ABANDONED CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

The mutt fearfully licks the wino's groggy face, waking him up, just as the BADASS, BLACK '69 CAMARO with blacked-out windows, slowly emerges from the dark tunnel.

BIG LOU(V.O.)

... and your torture will be
legendary, even in Hell.

The wino sits up, bewildered, looking around at nothing. Though the Camaro idles menacingly just feet away from him, it is obvious that only the dog can see it.

WINO
 (To mutt)
 What's the matter, girl? Another
 bad dream?

The dog whines, but not necessarily in agreement.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

A BLACK, FINGERLESS (no leather around the fingers), LEATHER-GLOVED HAND grips the steering wheel of the Camaro as it idles past the wino and his mutt. The driver, its sole occupant, ejects the CD from the deck.

From this hand's wrist hangs a CHARM BRACELET containing an odd set of charms: A BLACK HEART, SILVER MONOPOLY TOP HAT, THIMBLE, IRON, A GOLD HORSESHOE, and tiny DICE.

As he tosses the CD from the car window, the flame logo burns, igniting the CD into flames, reducing it to ashes before it hits the ground.

EXT. THE WEEKLY WORLD GUARDIAN OFFICES - NIGHT

The streets are empty in front of the trashy structure. A time-worn sign reading "THE WEEKLY WORLD GUARDIAN" hangs askew from the tattered awning.

INT. NEWSROOM - NIGHT

The cramped newsroom is dark and empty except for a solitary red light seeping from beneath a closed door. On it, the stenciled men's room logo is crudely crossed-out. It now reads 'DARKROOM - PLEASE KNOCK BEFORE ENTERING.'

INT. MEN'S ROOM/DARKROOM - NIGHT

Susanne intensely develops the film she just shot, as melancholy music gently plays in the BG from a boom box sitting in one of the sinks.

Images slowly appear on the photographic paper.

Beneath the red light of the darkroom/bathroom, Susanne clothespins the freshly printed photos to a hanging line.

She smiles, admiring her handiwork as she walks by each of the photos. As she wipes her hands off with a strand of toilet paper, one of the pictures catches her eye.

She steps closer to it. It's the photo she shot of Cayce.

Upon closer examination, his head is actually turned a bit towards the camera, but his face is blurred and he has an odd sort of HALO around him. The rest of the photo fades to black, the halo becoming brighter ...

FLASHBACK: DISSOLVE INTO ...

INT. SUSANNE'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A halo-like light emanates from around the edges of the closed door from the previous FLASHBACK.

The door opens and A WOMAN'S BLOODY HAND lays in a mess of broken glass on the floor.

Standing in the door frame is LITTLE SUSANNE.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. MEN'S ROOM/DARKROOM - NIGHT

Susanne still lost in a daze is framed by the men's room/darkroom door, similar to way the younger version of herself was standing in the flashback.

She snaps out of her daze, still staring at the photograph, and whispers to herself.

SUSANNE

I got you, you son of a bitch!

Astounded, Susanne traces the HALO image with her finger.

She suddenly snatches the photo off of the line, and grabs her camera pack.

Susanne throws open the darkroom door and barrels through.

She runs straight INTO Stefforini, scaring the Hell out of both of them. Steff catches his breath.

SUSANNE (cont'd)

Oh Steff, jeez, sorry. You won't believe it. I think I found him after all these years, and I owe it all to you.

Susanne continues on her manic way out, yelling over her shoulder.

SUSANNE (cont'd)
You're the best, Steff!

Stefforini is confused and yells after her.

STEFFORINI
Found who? Did you get any shots of
the explosion?

Susanne ignores him and disappears down the hall.

The door to the news room slowly swings shut and Stefforini
finds himself alone.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Cayce walks into an empty, greasy spoon, as an FM radio
station plays over cheap SPEAKERS mounted on the walls.

SANDMAN(V.O.)
If anybody wants to talk about the
fireworks downtown earlier this
evening, give us a call on our toll-
free line at 800-555-1211. I'd
especially like to hear from any
eye-witnesses who can fill in the
gaps between the official denial
and the Reader's Digest version.

EXHAUSTED, Cayce slides into a booth next to a window, closes
his eyes and rubs them hard.

He listens intently to the radio as the waitress, DENICE
brings him a menu. She's late-forties, her face etched with
too many years of abuse and loneliness.

DENICE
You alright?

CAYCE
Yeah, I just haven't slept in
awhile. How about black coffee and
toast then, Denice?

Denice glances at her name tag on her uniform, and walks back
towards the counter while Cayce listens to the radio D.J.

SANDMAN(V.O.)
Tonight's letter comes from Jenny
who writes: 'Dear Mr. Sandman,
Nothing ever works right in this
life.

(MORE)

My birthday rolls around every year
and I can't even have cake because
I'm diabetic. So tonight I change
the channel. No more reruns. No
more sanitized happy endings. Mr.
Sandman, send me a dream.

The GARBLED SQUEAL of the station being changed gives way to
music. Denice returns with Cayce's order and sets the food
and coffee on the table.

DENICE

Never understood why people listen
to that idiot.

Piewhackit crawls out of Cayce's coat sleeve and onto the
table, towards the plate of toast.

Denice is horrified and takes a cautious step back as Cayce
tries to calm her.

DENICE (cont'd)

We don't allow no animals in here.

CAYCE

He's an angel, really. Once you get
to know him. Sit with us for a
minute.

Denice hesitates.

CAYCE (cont'd)

Come on.

Cayce breaks the toast into small pieces and Piewhackit
begins to nibble on them.

Denice looks towards the kitchen as the COOK is busy cleaning
up, not paying attention to her.

Denice slowly slides into the booth across from them, never
taking her eyes off of the rat.

Cayce produces a bottle of No-Doz, pours a handful, tosses
them in his mouth, and chases them with hot coffee.

Denice pours him another cup, alternating her concerned,
nervous attention between Cayce and Piewhackit.

DENICE

So how come you don't sleep?

CAYCE

I'm a workaholic.

DENICE
What do you do?

CAYCE
I collect things that other people
don't want.

DENICE
You're a garbage man?

CAYCE
It's not garbage. I mean, you'd be
surprised at the things people
throw away.

DENICE
No, I wouldn't.

Cayce senses her sadness.

She offers him an awkward smile.

CAYCE
So I was wondering if you could do
me a small favor?

She smiles a little bigger now, almost embarrassed.

DENICE
Nothing illegal, I hope?

She offers a flirtatious smile, as if she is expecting him to
ask her out. Cayce leans over the table to get closer.

CAYCE
Do you have any coffee beans? I
like to eat them while I'm working,
you know?

DENICE
That's it? Beans?

She stands up, smiles, smooths her apron, and leans on the
back of the booth so that her face is close to Cayce's ear.

DENICE (cont'd)
I wouldn't drink the coffee here on
a bet, but if beans are what you
want...

CAYCE
Thanks.

DENICE

This is going to sound crazy, but I feel like I know you from somewhere. Where did you go to school?

CAYCE

Up north. I'm not from around here.

She stops halfway to the kitchen, and turns back to Cayce.

DENICE

Are you sure we haven't met before?

CAYCE

Yes.

Denice shrugs it off and continues to the kitchen.

As soon as she's gone, Cayce looks even more exhausted, closes his eyes and reluctantly nods off for a second.

Cayce IMMEDIATELY jerks awake. He opens his eyes and turns to look out the window, into the darkened street

SIX DEMONIC WOLVES sit calmly in the empty street outside, EYES BLAZING at Cayce through the glass, WAITING.

ONE WOLF brazenly appears right outside the window, an inch away from the glass, staring Cayce down. Its lips draw back in a HELLISH GROWL. It jumps through the glass.

Cayce recoils in fear as the GLASS SHATTERS.

Cayce jerks awake AGAIN, knocking his coffee cup to the ground as it shatters as well.

He sits his booth, TERRIFIED. He glances around the room and gratefully realizes it was just a dream.

Denice calls out to Cayce.

DENICE

You alright out there, honey?

He looks back at the window. A CLAW SCRATCH MARK is on the glass right in front of his face.

Cayce places his own hand against the glass where the claw mark is. His nose begins to drip BLACK BLOOD, and now a little runs out of his ears too.

Shaking like a junkie, Cayce yanks his hand back, nervously wiping the blood away with a wad of paper napkins. As Cayce calms down and cleans up, the bleeding stops.

Cayce picks up Piewhackit and lovingly cradles him against his chin before gently placing him back on his shoulder.

Piewhackit crawls inside Cayce's collar and disappears. Cayce slams back the rest of his coffee and another handful of No-Doz.

Denice returns with a small baggie full of whole coffee beans and hands them to Cayce, affectionately touching his hand during the transaction.

DENICE (cont'd)
Where's your friend?

CAYCE
He's kind of shy around girls.

Cayce reaches into his pocket and pulls out a very old, ONE-HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL.

CAYCE (cont'd)
I know it's late, but could you change this for me?

Denice eyes the bill carefully.

CAYCE (cont'd)
Don't worry, it's real.

Denice walks to the kitchen in silence as Cayce looks out the window where a light rain is falling. He looks away from the window, sensing something, his face deathly serious, shivering.

Denice emerges from the kitchen waving the bill like a flag.

DENICE
Looks like you're out of luck, but the coffee's on me and I get off in about...

Denice returns to the table to find Cayce and Piewhackit gone. Disappointed, she looks around the empty room.

EXT. SIDEWALK ACROSS FROM COFFEE SHOP. NIGHT.

Wells stands on the sidewalk across the street from the greasy spoon, watching Denise through the window. He has just missed Cayce AGAIN.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE COFFEE SHOP.

In the distance, Wells turns the corner.

As soon as Wells is out of sight, the Camaro's LIGHTS come on. Its driver has been WATCHING, for some time. Its engine starts up and it ominously cruises past the greasy spoon where Denice is cleaning up, finally turning the corner.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF RADIO STATION - NIGHT

A NEON SIGN above the door to the radio station FLASHES 'KJAD.' Cayce stands beneath it, popping coffee beans into his mouth.

INT. KJAD STUDIO - NIGHT

On the other side of the glass, SANDMAN, a hip, 30-ish D.J., wears headphones while looking through some CDs. He doesn't immediately see Cayce enter.

Cayce picks up a CD of Don Maclean's "American Pie," closes his eyes, and holds it between his hands as if he can hear it simply by touching it.

CAYCE

'I can't remember if I cried when I
read about his widowed bride...'

Music plays softly inside the studio while Sandman still doesn't notice Cayce.

CAYCE (cont'd)

Mr. Sandman. Tell me about Jenny.

Sandman turns around and sees Cayce on the other side of the glass. He clicks on his mic and speaks to Cayce via the speaker.

SANDMAN

How'd you get in here?

CAYCE

I heard you on the radio...

SANDMAN

Well pal, I'm going to have to ask
you to leave.

Cayce gets quiet.

CAYCE

I'm sorry.

Cayce turns to leave, but hesitates for a moment.

CAYCE (cont'd)
Too bad about your dad.

SANDMAN
What?

Cayce turns around, now that he has Sandman's full attention.

CAYCE
What's it been, nine years? Ten?
Time sure does get away from you.
But not the regrets. They stay.
Like old friends.

SANDMAN
I think you better go.

CAYCE
I know you wanted to be there when
he passed away, but hey, you had to
get back to the city. Your career
and all that.

Confused, Sandman painfully takes his headphones off and walks through the studio door, shaken by the stranger's words. Now both men are face-to-face in the studio's ante-chamber.

INT. KJAD STUDIO/ANTE-CHAMBER - NIGHT

SANDMAN
Did you know my dad?

Cayce sits down at an editing console.

CAYCE
It's complicated. He was in a lot
of pain.

Confused, Sandman tries to show Cayce that he's still in control.

SANDMAN
Are you a doctor or something?

CAYCE
Not exactly. I listen to people,
sort of like a D.J.

Cayce picks up a set of headphones, playfully tries them on, and then takes them off.

CAYCE (cont'd)

But I tend to get more involved than I'm allowed to. Your father suffered for a very long time, unnoticed by just about everyone. He told me something, just before he died though, something about you.

SANDMAN

What was that?

CAYCE

I really can't say. Confidentiality. I'm sure you understand.

The D.J.'s cool veneer cracks. Cayce stands up and prepares to leave, but suddenly stops.

CAYCE (cont'd)

Perhaps, if you could help me with Jenny...

Sandman brightens at the prospect, and tries to convince himself that he's doing the right thing.

SANDMAN

Maybe you could talk to her. She's pretty messed-up. I think her dad's a cop.

The D.J. reaches into a desk drawer and hands Cayce a stack of several dog-eared LETTERS. Cayce touches them in the same manner as the CD he touched earlier.

SANDMAN (cont'd)

They all have a return address on them.

CAYCE

Thank you. You have no idea what this means to me. I only hope there's still time.

As Cayce opens the door to leave, Sandman yells after him.

SANDMAN

What about my dad?

CAYCE

He said it was a real shame that you cared more about talking to strangers on the radio than saying goodbye to your old man.

The ante-chamber door swings shut after Cayce.

Through the glass, we see Sandman go back to his console alone, now riddled with guilt. His voice is no longer professional or confident as he speaks into his mic.

SANDMAN

This is KJAD. We'll be back.

Sandman shakily pushes a cart into the console and a pre-recorded commercial starts to roll.

INT. SUSANNE'S LOFT APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Susanne throws open her front door and rushes in, not realizing that she has left her KEYS in the LOCK.

She races into her living room and snatches a shoe box full of newspaper clippings and photos from her bookcase.

She starts rapidly yanking push pins out of other newspaper clippings that she has posted on her bulletin board.

Using her switchblade, she cuts open an old cardboard box.

She throws everything on the floor and starts organizing it.

One clip reads: 'HARD TIMES FOR ANGELS,' its photo showing an unconscious man resting in the arms of a large, angel statue outside of a church. On top of the building in the picture is a fuzzy image with a GLOW around it - just like the HALO in the photo she took earlier.

Another clipping reads: 'KEY WITNESS TAKES OWN LIFE ONE DAY BEFORE RICCI TRIAL.' This photograph shows a disheveled hotel room with a dead body in it. Outside of the window it's dark, but there's a weird light shining through and the fuzzy image of someone looking in.

The next clipping is an OBITUARY for Susanne's mother, ELENA VALENTINE. Susanne seems surprised to find it in this box.

CLOSE on the obit photo.

FLASHBACK:

INT. SUSANNE'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

We PULL BACK from that same photo, and now see that it was/is in a frame on the dresser in Susanne's mother's bedroom.

LITTLE SUSANNE from the previous FLASHBACK stands motionless in the open doorway.

THE BLOODY HAND ON THE FLOOR clutches an empty prescription BOTTLE. SOMEONE moves in the corner of the room, but is hidden in the shadows.

LITTLE SUSANNE

Mama?

END FLASHBACK

INT. SUSANNE'S LOFT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Little Susanne's face dissolves into adult Susanne's face.

Susanne pushes the obit away. Ignoring it as much as possible, she gets back to the other clippings.

She pulls out a yellowed clipping from the '70s. It's faded, held together by old, crispy, scotch tape. The headline reads: 'MORRISON FOUND DEAD AS THOUSANDS MOURN.' The photo is of the busy crime scene with police and reporters scouring the house where Jim Morrison died. In the background is the same BLURRY IMAGE again, like the one from Susanne's photo.

Her floor is now covered by photos and news clippings.

Susanne frantically looks at each photo with her loupe and checks them thoroughly, obsessed with her little project.

She grabs the photo she took earlier from her bag and holds it up to the other clippings, comparing them. It's a match.

SUSANNE

(to herself)

I knew you'd come back.

Susanne holds up the BLURRY photo of Cayce.

EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE/SIDEWALK - NIGHT

BLURRY and silhouetted, Cayce stands on a street corner.

THUNDER echoes and rain gently falls as Cayce looks down at one of Jenny's letters. Raindrops hit the page, smearing the INK as it DRIPS down the paper, making the words illegible.

Cayce lets go of the letter and it falls to the ground.

Cayce stares up at Jenny's middle-class, suburban two-story house. The windows are dark except for one on the second floor, in which a solitary light flickers behind the fogged glass like a beacon.

INT. JENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jenny's bedroom is hauntingly lit by a dozen candles. Through an open window, the gentle breeze makes the flames quiver.

Cayce materializes there, as if delivered by the wind. He's surprised to find it empty.

He scans the room, casually running his fingers along the black netting draped like a shroud around the four-poster bed.

Cayce spies a large chocolate CAKE in an OPEN PINK BOX on the floor and squats down next to it, LISTENING.

From that low vantage point, he spots a small photo sticking out from under the bed.

With his gloved finger, Cayce slides the photo out from under the bed. It's of JENNY'S MOTHER and her step-father RICK in his police uniform. When he leans in close enough to it, he realizes that Rick's face in the photo has been carefully scratched out.

METALLIC CREAKING BACK AND FORTH echoes from outside.

EXT. JENNY'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

It's lightly drizzling as JENNY, a beautiful 16-year-old Goth with dyed-black hair, rocks gently back and forth in a swing set that was obviously made for little kids.

In her soaked Levi jacket and torn jeans, Jenny shivers from the cold and pulls long and slow on her non-filter cigarette. She stares thoughtfully down at her own bare feet dipping into the puddle beneath her.

Jenny seems to be talking to herself, lost in her own little world, but she senses Cayce's presence without even looking.

JENNY

You lookin' for Rick?

Cayce emerges from the shadow of a nearby tree and slowly approaches Jenny, a quizzical look on his face.

CAYCE

Your dad?

Jenny keeps staring at the puddle.

JENNY

He thinks he is. If you want to talk to him, you'll have to come back on Monday.

Cayce looks even more confused.

CAYCE

I'm not here to see Rick.

Jenny looks Cayce straight in the eye. She is worn down to the point of fearlessness.

JENNY

Then are you a burglar? Or a rapist? Should I be afraid?

Cayce doesn't answer. He seems strangely uncomfortable - as if HE is a little bit afraid of HER and her sarcasm.

CAYCE

Do you usually swing in the rain?

Jenny throws her cigarette in the puddle.

JENNY

Every chance I get.

She stops rocking.

JENNY (cont'd)

Well, if you really didn't come to see my dad, you must be here for my party.

Before Cayce can answer, Jenny stands up.

JENNY (cont'd)

Don't be scared. I've been waiting for you.

Cayce cautiously follows Jenny toward the house in silence.

INT. JENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

They walk into Jenny's bedroom, wet and freezing. Cayce starts to close the window, but Jenny stops him.

JENNY

Please! Don't. I like the sound of
the rain.

Jenny stares at Cayce for a moment in the candlelight, as if he should know EVERYTHING, but then she turns away.

Jenny pulls her jacket off as she walks into her bathroom, revealing a cast on her right arm. Cayce sits on the edge of her bed and waits while she changes in the bathroom.

Cayce hears Jenny WINCE. He looks at her reflection in the dresser mirror, watching her painfully dry her hair with a towel.

Embarrassed, Cayce leans over and turns on her CD player.

INT. JENNY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

From the candle-lit bathroom, Jenny hears Gothic music now playing on her bedroom CD player and smiles to herself, humming softly to the haunting tune. She takes a long, burgundy, Gothic gown from its hanger and admires her reflection in the vanity mirror. She holds it in her arms as if dancing with it.

Jenny suddenly CRACKS her cast down hard on the edge of the sink so that it breaks open. She GRUNTS as she takes it off, painfully wiggling her newly freed fingers

Jenny slips the gown over her bare shoulders in the meager light.

INT. JENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cayce glances over at her reflection in the dresser mirror again, and sees Jenny's old and new BRUISES on her back. She winces again and struggles to get the arm of the dress over her damaged arm. Cayce looks sadly away.

Jenny re-enters her bedroom, a vision in her exquisite gown.

Cayce stares at the cake in its box on the floor. He recites a line from memory, without looking at her, as he lights the 16 candles on it. He seems suddenly strange, unearthly, and ominous.

CAYCE

'The puppet theatre stage is so
bright, its tiny footlights shining
white like stars, but my eyes are
dark, for I am just a toy.'

Jenny sits down on her bed and lights a cigarette.

JENNY

You've been reading my diary.

Cayce looks at her thick, rosy lips, her ageless eyes that have seen far too much for their years, and speaks softly to her.

CAYCE

Your letters - to Sandman.

JENNY

He's a good listener. Too bad he couldn't be here tonight, but I don't think that would've worked out very well.

CAYCE

Why not?

JENNY

He'd want to play hero and it's way too late for that.

A sad, mischievous grin creeps onto Jenny's lips as she glances in the mirror at the broken cast on her bathroom vanity.

JENNY (cont'd)

How'd you like to see the skeletons in my closet?

Before he can answer, she stands up and walks over to her closet.

She opens the door and awkwardly drags a large, worn, cardboard BOX out into the middle of the room.

JENNY (cont'd)

I've been waiting to show them to somebody for a long time. Looks like you win the prize.

Jenny lovingly peels the duct tape off the top of the box.

JENNY (cont'd)

Every time Rick busted another piece of me, Doc'd patch me up so nobody'd know I didn't really fall off my bike. Again.

Cayce stands up and walks over to the now open cardboard box.

They look down at its contents for a moment before Cayce pulls an old CAST out of it.

We now see that the box is FULL of old, used CASTS and BRACES. Each cast has beautifully drawn pictures and poetry on them, all done in Jenny's handwriting. Cayce's face is filled with a deep sadness for the abuse Jenny has endured all these years.

JENNY (cont'd)

I tried to tell them, but Rick just has too many goddamn friends.

Cayce sets the cast back in the box and closes the lid.

Jenny sits down on the floor in front of the glowing cake, the skirt of her gown spread out around her like a pool of blood. She picks up a knife as if to stab the cake in effigy.

JENNY (cont'd)

I prayed every night for The Angel Of Death to come and take me, so it'd finally be over. You sure took your sweet time getting here.

CAYCE

That's who you think I am?

Jenny doesn't hear him, as she stares at the flickering candles.

JENNY

All I ever wanted was a real birthday cake, but God, or fate, or whoever makes the rules, won't even let me have that.

She starts to cut the cake.

JENNY (cont'd)

Mom took Rick out of town this weekend just so he'd leave me alone tonight. What a joke.

Jenny looks up at Cayce with her big round eyes making Cayce feel uneasy, as if she is looking right into his soul.

He sits down on the floor across from her, fascinated, the glowing cake between them.

CAYCE

Aren't you afraid?

JENNY

When Rick broke my rib and Doc said
it might puncture my lung, I was
afraid. I knew it'd hurt. A lot.
Death is my friend.

CAYCE

You know what a diabetic fit is?

Jenny says nothing, but knows exactly what he means.

CAYCE (cont'd)

When that sugar hits your blood,
you won't have to wait for Rick,
you'll do it to yourself with
seizures. It hurts. A lot. And
that's the easy part. Don't you
know that people who kill
themselves go to Hell?

JENNY

Hell would be better than this.

Jenny stares angrily at the cake, defeated tears in her eyes.

CAYCE

It doesn't have to be that way.

Cayce shows Jenny the BLACK APPLE.

CAYCE (cont'd)

I can fix it for you. No pain, no
eternal damnation, just cake.

JENNY

How?

CAYCE

Magic.

He offers the apple to Jenny.

She is both fascinated and frightened, but cautiously takes
it from him. Cayce seems like the benevolent angel now.

CAYCE (cont'd)

Go on. Make a wish.

A strange WIND fills Jenny's bedroom, blowing out every
candle but ONE of the 16 on the birthday cake.

Jenny takes a bite of the apple, and an ominous DARK LIGHT
surrounds her, drawing her own DARK LIFE FORCE into it.

The wind's crescendo suddenly stops. Jenny's HAND falls to the ground next to the cake, the half eaten apple still clutched in her fingers.

Cayce, exhausted, kneels reverently before the cake.

He leans across it and gently pries the apple from Jenny's stiff FINGERS. As Cayce holds it up, the BITE MARKS slowly HEAL and the apple returns to normal. It's now, once again, a perfect, shiny, black, candy apple.

Cayce holds the apple and his hand ABSORBS it.

The ritual has drained Cayce. He leans back against the wall, takes several deep breaths, and fights to keep his eyes open.

He becomes transfixed by the remaining glowing candle on the Birthday cake.

His eyes close.

DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - DAY

CLOSE on Cayce's EYES snapping open.

PULL BACK from his eyes to see Cayce's full body standing on a SURREAL mountain top, surrounded by SIX, BURNING CRUCIFIXES

He surveys the land below him which is COMPLETELY ENGULFED IN FLAMES. No structure, no plant, no creature is spared.

The surface of the Earth transforms into a carbon copy of the surface of the sun, as the ocean of flames race toward Cayce.

Just as the flames reach Cayce, he opens his mouth to scream.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. JENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

PULL OUT of an EXTREME CLOSE-UP of the flame of the candle on the cake. It makes a tiny spark.

Cayce jerks awake, terrified and sweating.

CAYCE
(whispers to himself)
Nooo!

Cayce is on the floor, up against the wall directly opposite the candle. The luminescence of the candle reflected in his iris.

He looks UNEARTHLY and INHUMAN, wildly scanning the room for something that isn't there.

Slowly, his breathing returns to normal. He leans in close to the tiny FLAME of the birthday cake candle and whispers to himself.

CAYCE (cont'd)
Happy Birthday, Jenny.

Cayce blows the final candle out and everything goes BLACK.

EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE/SIDEWALK - NIGHT

From a distance, we see a MAN stand exactly where Cayce stood earlier. He looks up at Jenny's window which is now dark, just as Cayce did, and scans the rest of the street.

The streetlight now shows his face. It's Wells, and he has just missed Cayce AGAIN.

INT. SUSANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Susanne lies on her bed, too wired to sleep, as a beautiful violin MELODY wafts through her walls from a neighboring apartment. The music soothes her, though she still can't fall asleep.

INT. EMPTY LOFT APT./NEXT DOOR TO SUSANNE'S - NIGHT

In silhouette, VICTOR, a macabre, shirtless, graceful old man with long silvery hair, lovingly plays a haunting tune on his violin in the shadowy, unlit room.

INT. SUSANNE'S LOFT APARTMENT - NIGHT

As the MUSIC plays, A SMALL PACKAGE slides under Susanne's door.

The subtle SLIDING NOISE draws Susanne's attention. She walks over and picks it up.

She turns it over in her hands. No return address, only HER NAME ON THE FRONT.

She opens the padded envelope, pulls out A SMALL, ANCIENT BOOK and A HANDWRITTEN NOTE which reads:

'KNOWLEDGE IS POWER, M-'

Susanne CLICKS on her tiny bedside lamp and scans the delicate book's cover which reads: 'THE LAW OF ANGELS AND MAN.'

She tries to make out the author's name, but it's been worn away by time.

Susanne intensely reads through the pages until she reaches the end. She puts the book down and hits a speed dial button on her speaker phone. A phone rings through the speaker. Stefforini's groggy voice answers.

STEFFORINI(V.O.)

Yeah.

SUSANNE

Did you send me something?

STEFFORINI(V.O.)

Who is this?

SUSANNE

Quit fucking around, Steff.
Somebody slipped a weird little
book under my door tonight.

STEFFORINI(V.O.)

I didn't send you anything Susanne.
What time is it anyway?

SUSANNE

It's old as dirt and put together
like a DMV manual, sort of an angel
rule book. It says that they were
never human. That they were made by
God to take care of us...

STEFFORINI(V.O.)

Valentine...

SUSANNE

There's even a part about the souls
of those who take their own lives
being promised to Lucifer as part
of some deal.

STEFFORINI(V.O.)

Valentine! Tomorrow!

CLICK. DIAL TONE.

Susanne hits the speaker phone button and stares at the glow-in-the-dark plastic stars that are stuck to her ceiling.

DISSOLVES INTO THE REAL NIGHT SKY

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Cayce looks at THE SAME SKY.

From the sidewalk, Cayce looks at a large CLOCK above a closed movie theatre that reads 4:00 A.M.

He walks down the empty street, and disappears down into a subway stairway entrance.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Cayce stands motionless, eyes closed, the gentle WIND from a train caressing his face. The empty, decrepit subway station is slathered with graffiti and garbage, and ECHOES faintly with the MEMORIES of people rushing on their way.

It's a real-world version of the same subway station that the WHITE AND BLACK REPRESENTATIVES stood in earlier.

Cayce starts to sweat. The SOUNDS of the absent people become louder and DISTORTED, as he becomes DISORIENTED. Cayce pops a coffee bean and rubs his face. The NOISE of the subway strangely FADES AWAY.

It's DEAD silent, except for a faint FLUTTERING of birds' wings. Cayce turns around and opens his eyes to find the subway still EMPTY, but the graffiti, garbage, and all poster ads gone.

Bathed in a soft white light, the now-immaculate station has an ethereal feel to it, as Cayce cautiously walks to the escalator.

COMING DOWN THE ESCALATOR is Wells, whose face is hard to see because of the white light shining from behind him. Next to him is a younger, wide-eyed CAYCE, who is escorting him.

Cayce is having a FLASHBACK.

WELLS

Come on Cayce, Do your time, play
the game, and you'll be back in no
time.

CAYCE

How long?

Wells lays a friendly hand on Cayce's shoulder as the two men continue down the empty escalators.

WELLS

You'll know.

As they come off the escalator, they brush past the present day Cayce.

Cayce and Wells arrive at the final, vacant subway platform.

CAYCE

I guess this is it.

WELLS

Not quite. Close your eyes and open your hands.

Cayce jadedly closes his eyes and extends his hands.

CAYCE

You know I hate surprises.

WELLS

Have a little faith. The unknown isn't always so bad.

Wells takes his friend's hands and begins rubbing them together. As Wells takes his hands away, Cayce continues and then stops. He opens his eyes and hands, magically revealing the white rat who we recognize as Piewhackit.

WELLS (cont'd)

I couldn't very well send you down there totally alone.

Cayce is moved at the gesture.

CAYCE

This is a first. I've never seen you break the rules, Wells.

Cayce holds Piewhackit up to his face and smiles. The rat smells Cayce's nose and an epic friendship is born.

WELLS

I like to think of it as bending.

Cayce strokes Piewhackit lovingly and buries his nose in the tiny animal's white fur. A WIND begins to grow on the platform, signaling the approaching train.

When it pulls into the station and stops, there is not a soul on board, as if it has come just for him.

Piewhackit leans in and whispers into Cayce's ear.

WELLS (cont'd)
 What'd he say?

CAYCE
 He says his name is Piewhackit.

Cayce and Piewhackit step up to the doors of the train alone.

As they slide open, Cayce looks back at his only friend.

Pie stands upright, reaching to Cayce's ear as if to whisper something else.

END FLASHBACK

Piewhackit sits down on Cayce's shoulder as he looks around.

The NOISE has resumed and now the place is filling with REAL LIVE COMMUTERS. Cayce looks around for Wells but only sees the CLOCK mounted on the wall which reads 5:30 a.m. He looks at Piewhackit, realizing what he was telling him.

CAYCE (cont'd)
 It is time, isn't it little man?

Cayce walks past the people on the platform who do not notice or even touch him. He eventually disappears into the crowd.

INT. NEWSROOM/STEFFORINI'S OFFICE - DAY

A bleary-eyed Stefforini cursorily flips through the photographs that Susanne has carefully compiled.

Each one has a mysteriously blurry image of someone or some THING in the BACKGROUND.

Susanne sits in a chair, nervously flipping through her newly acquired little angel rule book while anxiously awaiting Stefforini's verdict. He's not impressed.

STEFFORINI
 Pretty. They belong in a gallery.

SUSANNE
 Come on Steff. Some of these I took myself. They're real! I can personally vouch for their authenticity

Susanne snatches the photos back and flips through them herself.

STEFFORINI

You think that's what our readers want? Authenticity?

Stefforini takes a drink from his mug and grimaces.

SUSANNE

The reason I got into photography in the first place was because nobody believed me when I told them what I saw.

STEFFORINI

So you thought you'd show them instead, but nobody cared. Come here. Look at this.

Stefforini tries to be kind and let her down easy. He walks over to a stack of legit newspapers and drops one in her lap.

STEFFORINI (cont'd)

'Juvenile Gang Members Murder 21 In Tri-State Killing Spree.' 'Kiddie Porn King Marries Parole Officer.' There's your authenticity. Nobody cares about angels anymore.

Exhausted, Susanne slips the pictures back into their satchel.

SUSANNE

I guess they don't give a damn about us anymore either.

STEFFORINI

For someone who doesn't even believe in God, you've sure got a hard-on for angels.

Stefforini goes to take another sip of coffee but tosses it into the trash in disgust.

STEFFORINI (cont'd)

We're here to turn a buck, Susanne. Now, if you're interested in *that* part of the business...

Stefforini softens.

STEFFORINI (cont'd)

...then we might have something to talk about.

He hands her a press badge, but she doesn't take it.

SUSANNE

I suppose this is the part where I thank you for looking out for my best interests. Again.

STEFFORINI

Susanne, you have a genuine talent. The stuff you shot last night was brilliant. If you wouldn't mind rejoining the working class for a couple of hours, I have a gig you might be interested in.

Stefforini offers the badge to Susanne again, and this time, she takes it.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The little girl from the fire with the headless Barbie sits on a park bench feeding pigeons, talking to what appears to be an invisible friend.

LITTLE GIRL

Tell me that story about the Violin Man again.

Cayce now sits beside her on the bench.

CAYCE

Once there was a famous violinist named Victor who could make people cry just by playing a song.

FLASHBACK

INT. THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP on a much younger Victor, the old man who played in the apartment next to Susanne's. He stands on a magnificent European stage. Wearing an elegant tux, illuminated only by a simple spotlight, he plays his violin with all his heart and soul.

CAYCE(V.O.)

He was at the top of his form, the critics' favorite.

His FINGERS deftly caress the strings with graceful ease.

CAYCE(V.O.) (cont'd)
And the audiences loved him.

INT. VICTOR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

As Cayce continues the story, various newspaper clippings in dusty frames on the walls show Victor through the years, winning awards, audiences with royalty, accolades, and inevitably Victor growing OLDER.

CAYCE(V.O.)
He thought it would last forever,
until old age claimed its greatest
prize.

The final newspaper clipping shows a bent and aging Victor at age 60, retiring from the concert circuit. Its headline reads: A FOND FAREWELL TO THE STAGE.

TIME DISSOLVE TO

INT. VICTOR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's the same apartment but the furnishings look older, cheaper now, worn out, and faded.

With a pained stoop, Victor walks to the fireplace mantle.

CAYCE(V.O.)
Victor was too proud to let the
world know that his hands couldn't
even hold a bow anymore.

Victor reverently sets his antique violin down in its stand on the fireplace mantle, a shrine to his glory days.

CAYCE(V.O.) (cont'd)
So the years passed, and he led a
solitary life, without any music in
it at all.

Victor hears something at his front door.

He ominously opens it, revealing a silhouetted MAN outside hidden in shadows.

CAYCE(V.O.) (cont'd)
Then one night, he met a strange
man who had a terrible sickness
too...

Without a word, Victor lets the man into his tiny, darkened apartment.

CAYCE (cont'd)
...it was called compassion and it
caused him more trouble than you'll
ever know.

The silhouetted man sits in a chair, his hand outstretched, offering Victor a shiny, BLACK APPLE. Victor reaches for it with his shaking hand.

CAYCE (cont'd)
He offered Victor a wish - the
thing he wanted most in the whole
world.

Victor sets the apple down beside him on the end table with his now-steady hand, a bite now taken out of it.

He picks up his violin with a steady grip, and begins to play a simple tune with the same passion and precision he wielded as a younger man.

At the end of the piece, sadness wells in his eyes.

Moonlight reveals the man sitting in the chair listening to Victor to be Cayce. He too is moved by the music and one TEAR hangs off of his chin.

As Cayce lays a comforting hand on Victor's shoulder, the ominous DARK LIGHT OF SOUL TRANSFER glows in Cayce's face.

CAYCE(V.O.) (cont'd)
When the song was over, the
stranger asked Victor if his life's
burden was now much lighter...

Victor's front door closes, stealing all but the last traces of light from the violin on the mantelpiece, which now has no strings.

CAYCE (cont'd)
...without the added weight of a
soul.

Victor's bloody fingers are now wrapped with the violin's strings, which he has used to slit his own wrists.

The room goes BLACK.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. PARK - DAY

The little girl has a distant look in her eyes as she speaks.

LITTLE GIRL
You tell stories a lot better than
my mommy, but they're always so
sad.

Cayce gently brushes her long bangs out of her eyes.

CAYCE
Because those are the only ones I
know. Besides, everybody's story is
important.

Cayce smiles and gets the little girl to smile as well.

CAYCE (cont'd)
That's why you should always pay
attention, or you just might miss a
good one.

Cayce senses something and looks up to see Susanne feeding
the meter in the parking lot in the distance.

Susanne heads for the park, Cayce gets up and walks toward
her, and the little girl's mother comes over to collect her.

MOTHER
So what did the birdies talk about
today?

LITTLE GIRL
Compassion.

Mom looks at her daughter, perplexed, and carts her off.

EXT. WILO'S PALATIAL ESTATE - DAY

Several stretch limos are lined up outside an expansive,
palatial mansion, with two men guarding each car. A hilly
vineyard peeks through the BG.

INT. WILO'S PALATIAL MANSION/WINERY - DAY

A meeting of well-dressed MOBSTERS is commencing, deep in the
bowels of the winery.

Sitting at the head of a large oak table is WILLIAM 'WILO' GARDENIA, pushing 60, calm, poised and elegant, covering a history of rough edges. He's obviously THE BOSS.

A WAITER opens a bottle of wine and pours just a bit into Wilo's glass. The room goes silent.

Wilo tastes it, and offers a grudging half-smile. The waiter then fills the glass, and the glasses of the other men, except for JULES GARDENIA, Wilo's quiet, sturdy, 30-ish son.

Wilo looks straight at Jules and raises his glass.

WILO
Mi familia! Salute!

The men, except Jules, all toast, and the tone of the meeting becomes more jovial, except for Jules who remains silent.

INT. WILO'S PALATIAL MANSION/WINERY/PASSAGE - NIGHT

As the other mobsters talk and drink, Wilo leads Jules away from the group gently by the arm, deeper into the catacombs beneath the winery. He speaks philosophically as they go.

WILO
You know your grandfather was a grape picker at this vineyard when he got to this country.

Wilo reaches into his pocket and pulls out something carefully wrapped in a red and white checkered napkin.

WILO (cont'd)
He brought this over on the boat with him. This is your legacy, Julie.

Wilo unwraps a small, antique, .22 PISTOL, and offers the gun to Jules who simply stares at it.

WILO (cont'd)
It's a charmed gun. It's going to bring the organization back together - a symbol of our solidarity.

Jules still refuses to take the gun.

JULES
And how's it going to do that, Pop?

Wilo smiles and aims the gun at an imaginary target down the tunnel as he speaks.

WILO

You're going to take this gun and whack Christophe Delucca.

It takes everything he's got for Jules to remain calm.

JULES

Why the fuck would I do that?

Wilo suddenly PUNCHES Jules in the stomach HARD, and then acts as if nothing happened as Jules doubles over, winded.

WILO

Contrary to what he thinks, he ain't family.

Wilo starts to lose his composure.

WILO (cont'd)

That fucking wop slaps a band aid on your knee, gives you a beer and a Baby Ruth, and all of the sudden he thinks he's your old man.

Wilo lifts Jules' head up by his chin. Even though Jules is bigger, younger, and stronger than Wilo, he still cowers before his father.

WILO (cont'd)

That was his first mistake, and his last. He'll never be your father.

JULES

You expect me to...

Wilo effortlessly aims the gun at Jules' head without even looking at him.

WILO

Like you never capped anybody before. Yes-I-do-expect-you-to. Because if you don't, it'll be worse for that tired bag of shit than anything you could ever imagine.

Wilo shoves the gun into Jules' pocket and takes a deep breath. He angrily wipes his moist forehead, and starts walking back down the passageway alone.

WILLO (cont'd)
 (back over his shoulder)
 Tonight, Julie.

Wiloo continues down the hall into the darkness as Jules painfully stands up, recovering from his father's punch, wearily resigning himself to his fate.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Cayce weaves easily in and out of the diverse, rowdy crowd making their way toward a political rally in the distance at the park. No one notices him, like a ghost among the living.

CLOSE-UP on his SPURS and BOOTS as the grass he walks in CHANGES to dirt, and then to sand, and his boots DISSOLVE into SANDALS.

FLASHBACK

EXT. THE HOLY LAND/GREAT PLAIN/YEAR ZERO, A.D. - AFTERNOON

A younger Cayce walks through the desert, among a different, diverse, rowdy crowd, all dressed like him in the simple ancient garb of the day.

Cayce looks up and in the distance on a rocky hilltop sees SIX WOODEN CRUCIFIXES with bodies nailed to them.

Dozens of people dressed in bible-era garb weep and kneel before one of the crosses.

EXT. THE HOLY LAND/ROCKY HILLTOP/YEAR ZERO, A.D. - AFTERNOON

SIX WOLVES, just like the ones from Cayce's cafe window nightmare, howl eerily at the sky nearby.

EXT. NEAR CRUCIFIX/THE HOLY LAND/YEAR ZERO A.D. - AFTERNOON

Cayce stands among the devastated people near one of the crosses, curiously, compassionately, trying to feel their shared grief.

Nearby, the other crosses stand silent, dead BODIES nailed to them in various states of decay.

Cayce looks at the BAYING wolves, trying to understand.

POV DOWN FROM THE CROSS, FROM OVER CHRIST'S SHOULDER

The emaciated man nailed to this cross is nearly dead, his head limply laying on his chest. Although we still do not see his face, from the crown of thorns he wears, we know it is CHRIST. He weakly lifts his head and seems to be looking directly at Cayce.

POV FROM BEHIND CAYCE

A soft whisper echoes in Cayce's mind, but no one's lips move.

THE VOICE(V.O.)
No great love...

Cayce looks up at the man on the cross whose face we still do not see.

THE VOICE (cont'd)
...without great sacrifice.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. PARK/RALLY - AFTERNOON

Cayce opens his eyes, and now looks at the rally stage. He stands among a large crowd that has gathered to hear a slick politician, JENSON CAYHILL, sell his own brand of snake oil.

JENSON CAYHILL
Yes, it is a time for new values
and new leadership, and I promise
you that I am here to get the job
done. There is no great love ...
without great sacrifice.

Cayce shakes his head sadly at Cayhill's empty promises.

EXT. PARK/RALLY - AFTERNOON

Susanne weaves through the VOLATILE, diverse, rally crowd, as Cayhill stands at the podium, his speech continuing to echo unintelligibly through the trees.

An unusually large POLICE CONTINGENT guards the candidate, as the sizeable crowd simultaneously CHEERS and BOOS.

Susanne listlessly takes a few cursory photos of the candidate and turns around, bumping into someone, dropping her camera bag.

SUSANNE

Geez, I'm sorry.

As she squats down to pick up her bag, she looks up to see who she bumped into, but the afternoon sun momentarily blinds her, shining in her eyes over his shoulder.

CAYCE(OS)

Valentine, Susanne, with an 'S', no middle name.

SUSANNE

How'd you know that?

He steps aside so that he blocks the setting sun, and helps her up. It's Cayce.

He lifts her press badge which is clipped to her camera bag.

CAYCE

Magic.

Susanne is wary of him as well as the unruly crowd.

SUSANNE

What are you, a rodeo cowboy or something?

CAYCE

No.

SUSANNE

Then what are those for?

She points to his spurs.

CAYCE

Ahhh. Always liked the sound. Keeps me company.

A fight breaks out nearby, and Susanne and Cayce hurriedly move away from the crowd together. Susanne takes a few shots of the brawlers as they go.

SUSANNE

(sarcastically)

They say he's going to change the face of politics.

Cayce looks back at the melee, but doesn't notice the GLOWING EYES of a pack of wolves peering through the trees in the distance, as if their presence was the cause of this violence. Cayce spots them, but they don't see him.

CAYCE

Looks like he'd better do it pretty quick.

EXT. PARK/PARKING LOT - EVENING

Susanne and Cayce reach the edge of the parking lot. Although a little frightened by Cayce, she is also strangely attracted to him.

SUSANNE

I didn't get your name.

Before he can answer, Cayce's calm expression changes as if he SENSES something. He wraps his arms around himself, steeling himself against the VIBRATIONS he's experiencing.

His nose starts to drip BLACK BLOOD.

As Cayce shakily wipes the BLACK BLOOD from beneath his nose with his gloved hand, the FLESH of his neck and face RIPPLES.

SUSANNE (cont'd)

(wrinkling her nose)

Nice.

A tow truck's winch GRINDS into action nearby, catching Susanne's attention as it lifts her car which is about to be towed away.

SUSANNE (cont'd)

Shit! I don't believe this. You look pretty bad, maybe...

When she turns back to face him, Cayce is gone and the park and parking lot are now strangely empty.

SUSANNE (To herself)(cont'd)

What the?

EXT. PARK/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

It's suddenly gotten VERY dark, almost instantly. She runs over to the tow truck driver and tries to stop him.

SUSANNE

Hey! I paid for two hours!

The tow driver looks at her as if she's crazy.

TOW DRIVER

Look lady, it's six-thirty. The park closed half an hour ago.

The tow truck drives away with Susanne's VW scraping along behind it. She stands alone, VULNERABLE, in the empty lot. In the distance, the park is also now empty, dark, and creepy.

A few blocks away, the '69 Camaro speeds down the street like a bat out of Hell toward the park. It slows a bit as it passes the tow truck driving away.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

THE HAND WITH THE BLACK FINGERLESS LEATHER GLOVE AND CHARM BRACELET grip the steering wheel. They belong to the Camaro's driver, a shadowy figure who nods to the tow driver as if they know each other.

EXT. PARK/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Camaro with its pure black tinted windows pulls up right next to Susanne. Through the open driver's window Susanne sees the driver, MARLOWE, a sinewy twenty-something with sallow cheeks and a wannabe goatee.

MARLOWE

Where you headed?

Before she can answer, strange SCREAMING and DEMONIC LAUGHTER ECHO through the dark park in the distance.

MARLOWE (cont'd)

This ain't the best place to be hanging out after dark.

Susanne sees a gang of crazed teenagers in the distance, wielding baseball bats chasing a smaller child.

She glances toward her half-open camera bag and spots her SWITCHBLADE.

She looks back at Marlowe who actually seems kind of sweet and harmless compared to her being stranded here.

MARLOWE (cont'd)

Out there, in here, you're only as safe as you wanna be.

Susanne cautiously walks around the back of the car.

The passenger door unlocks like a Fort Knox vault.

Susanne gets in, slamming the door shut behind her.

Unseen by Susanne, Marlowe then glances around the street and smiles slyly to himself.

The Camaro speeds off, revealing a license plate: 'JON 1135.'

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

As they cruise down strangely empty streets, Marlowe shyly extends his hand toward Susanne.

MARLOWE

Marlowe.

Susanne notices his odd CHARM BRACELET, and opts not to shake his hand. He awkwardly withdraws it.

SUSANNE

Susanne. Nice car.

MARLOWE

It's my old man's. Got to get it home before midnight or I turn into a pumpkin. So where are we going?

EXT. ANOTHER CITY STREET - NIGHT

Marlowe speeds faster down the street.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

Susanne notices the SPEEDOMETER rise past 60 MPH.

SUSANNE

Downtown. I think. I don't know, exactly.

MARLOWE

Walking these streets after dark and you don't know where you're going?

Marlowe holds back a smile.

SUSANNE

I can take care of myself.

MARLOWE

With that little can opener in your bag? You disappoint me. You didn't read my book, Susanne. Only an angel can kill another angel.

Realizing that Marlowe was the one who left her the angel book, Susanne eyes him suspiciously.

MARLOWE (cont'd)

See there's my boss, then there's his boss, and your pal's pulling a yojimbo, playing both sides against the middle. Know what I mean?

SUSANNE

Actually I don't.

MARLOWE

Your friend from the park. The magic man who knows everybody's name.

Susanne is now scared SHITLESS.

SUSANNE

You can drop me off anywhere.

Marlowe's sweetness and cocky innocence are GONE. He suddenly looks serious as a fucking heart attack. Susanne is filled with dread and tries desperately to open her door. It doesn't budge, as the Camaro rockets through town.

MARLOWE

This is a special car. Two accelerators. No brakes.

The SPEEDOMETER wavers past 75 MPH.

SUSANNE

Then how do you stop it?

MARLOWE

We don't.

EXT. ANOTHER CITY STREET - NIGHT

The car races through the empty city streets.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

Marlowe grins at the road and takes a corner HARD, as Susanne grabs onto her seat for dear life.

SUSANNE

Look, just slow down and I promise,
whoever he is, I'll never talk to
him again.

EXT. FREEWAY OFFRAMP - NIGHT.

The Camaro jumps ON the freeway via the OFFRAMP.

MARLOWE(O.S.)

Contrary to what you may have
heard, my father's an extremely
reasonable guy, but people look to
him to set a standard.

HORNS blare, traffic swerves, Marlowe stays his course,
unwavering, fearless, reckless.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

MARLOWE

These deals were made long before
you were even born, but your
boyfriend's been taking liberties.

EXT. FREEWAY - NIGHT

Marlowe just barely avoids a SEMI that passes by in the other
direction, HONKING its HORN.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

SUSANNE

Jesus Christ!

MARLOWE

Don't get sucked into his shit.
Like dad always says - make sure
when you pull the trigger, you're
on the right end of the gun.

Marlowe purposely swerves the Camaro HARD.

SUSANNE

I don't know about any deals. Let me out!

MARLOWE

Alright, little girl. Stop the boat. Let's see if you float.

Marlowe SLAMS on the brakes.

EXT. FREEWAY - NIGHT

The Camaro SCREECHES down the highway, laying a WICKED STRETCH OF RUBBER.

It SKIDS right past a sign that reads: ROAD CLOSED.

SUSANNE

(yelling)

I thought you said you didn't have any brakes?

Marlowe laughs back at a terrified Susanne.

MARLOWE

Do I look like the kind of guy who gives a shit about details?

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

Susanne braces herself for what she is sure will be the imminent impact.

EXT. FREEWAY OVERPASS - NIGHT

The Camaro SKIDS to a furious STOP, finally coming to rest at the EDGE of the strangely deserted, unfinished highway.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

MARLOWE

All his little babies he carries around inside are feeding on him, and after a thousand years, there can't be much of him left. He will sleep, eventually, and when he does, we'll find him.

(MORE)

MARLOWE(cont'd)

And when we find him, my father
will claim everything he's entitled
to, including his pound of flesh.

Marlowe loses his patience with her.

MARLOWE (cont'd)

Why do you even care? By Law the
only humans who can even see him
are little kids and the damned.
Which category do you suppose you
fall into?

He grabs her wrist, the exposed parts of his fingers singing
her flesh when they touch. Susanne throws all her weight
against her door and turns the handle.

Marlowe lets go of her and she flies out the door.

EXT. FREEWAY OVERPASS - NIGHT

Susanne's door opens, she falls out and her sweater gets
snagged on the door handle. A piece of it tears off as she
spills onto the wet pavement.

As she scrambles away from the car, Marlowe casually gets out
and turns away from her.

She looks at the small burns on her arm from his fingertips.

MARLOWE

Sorry. I forgot. I can look, but I
can't touch.

He grabs the piece of her sweater off his door handle and
smells it. He whispers to her in a QUIET, DISTORTED, EVIL
VOICE.

MARLOWE (cont'd)

You and I want the same thing.

Susanne scampers on the ground trying to regain her balance.
Marlowe is suddenly a few yards closer.

MARLOWE (cont'd)

We both want him dead.

Susanne scrambles away, angry and confused.

She steals a glance back over her shoulder, and stops,
winded.

The car and Marlowe are gone. All that's left are the skid marks that lead to the edge of the unfinished overpass.

When she turns around again, she realizes that she is back at the edge of the same unfinished overpass, alone.

EXT. SKID ROW MISSION/FRONT STEPS - NIGHT

Cayce stands at the foot of the cement steps leading up to the front of the dilapidated church. He stares wistfully at the handful of homeless people sleeping there, and then up at the closed doors.

INT. SKID ROW MISSION/CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Cayce's spurs JINGLE, as he walks down the center aisle of the cavernous, run-down, Gothic place. Pews are tipped over or broken, the room seems empty.

INT. SKID ROW MISSION/CONFESSIONAL - NIGHT

Cayce sits down in the darkened confessional, as the little window slides open. The PRIEST'S face appears there, obscured by the worn, latticed grate. The chamber is crudely carved with gang graffiti and other blasphemous slogans and symbols.

CAYCE

Forgive me father.

PRIEST

How long has it been since your last confession, my son?

CAYCE

I can't recall exactly. I was a lot... younger then.

PRIEST

And you have doubts now?

CAYCE

Just as the world does. Just as you do, Padre.

PRIEST

Our faith is constantly being tested.

CAYCE

It must be painful for a man of
conscience to have to sell
something he knows in his heart is
a lie.

PRIEST

I'm not sure I know what you mean.

A profound moment of silence passes between them. The priest knows exactly what Cayce means, and it saddens Cayce to have to say it.

INT. SKID ROW MISSION/RECTORY GARAGE - NIGHT

CAYCE (O.S.)

Behind this church, in the rectory
garage.

Through the shadows, we see the ancient Volvo's TAIL PIPE with a GARDEN HOSE running out of it. We follow the HOSE running around the TAIL LIGHT, the side of the car, and up into the passenger WINDOW that is cracked open just enough to allow the HOSE in. The rest of the narrow open space around the hose there has been blocked with a towel to seal it.

INT. SKID ROW MISSION/CONFESSIOANAL - NIGHT

The priest rubs his eyes hard.

CAYCE

The innocent suffer and die while
the church offers hollow promises
and fairy tales.

PRIEST

I've tried. I've given all I
have...

CAYCE

It hurts. I know. Believe me. I
know.

PRIEST

I don't think I can keep doing
this.

The priest pulls himself together just a bit.

PRIEST (cont'd)

What about you?

Cayce says nothing, but lowers his face, and closes his eyes.

PRIEST (cont'd)
Is there nothing you want to
confess? Nothing weighing on your
soul?

CAYCE
Everything weighs on my soul,
father.

PRIEST
Tell me, my son, what brought you
here tonight?

CAYCE
You did, father.

PRIEST
Only me?

CAYCE
What brings me here started a long
time ago. Before this dark age,
there were even worse ones.

Cayce loses himself in his most painful memory. He looks back through the window in the confessional booth, but inside is now the view of a forest. PUSH IN, past the booth and into the forest ...

FLASHBACK

EXT. FOREST'S EDGE/1000 A.D. - DUSK

PAN DOWN from the trees to TWO FIGURES in long dark cloaks with hoods, reaching the edge of a thick forest on a rise.

Catching their breath, the bigger man pushes his own hood back, and we now see both men's faces clearly. The smaller one is a younger version (20's) of Cayce, and the bigger one a younger version (50's) of Wells.

They solemnly gaze across a field through the rain, toward the multiple columns of smoke rising from various places in the village, 50 yards away.

Young Cayce takes a step to start down the hill and across the field, but is stopped by Young Wells.

YOUNG WELLS

Stay close. Watch, learn, and above
all...

YOUNG CAYCE

Above all do not interfere in the
ways of man. I know.

They continue down the hill toward the village.

EXT. - MEDIEVAL VILLAGE/1000 A.D. - DUSK

A MEDIEVAL TORCH is held high by a Crusader-era KNIGHT on horseback, the RED CROSS on his blood-stained white tunic glistens in the torchlight.

In the pouring rain, against a grim, grey sky, dozens of torch-wielding, Crusader-era knights on horseback swing huge battle axes and swords. Some carry holy Christic banners, while others violently cut down scores of peasants and holy men. Even children are crushed beneath their HOOVES as one BLACK KNIGHT, his face mostly covered by his bloodied helmet, raises his gaze to the MONASTERY on a nearby hilltop.

INT. MONASTERY/1000 A.D. - DUSK

The dozen Gnostic occupants of the monastery, men, women, and children, all dressed in coarse robes, scramble to prepare what appears to be their final mass.

Three of them gently bless an ominous bowl of HERBS on an altar. A pinch of the blessed herbs is dropped into each of a dozen coarsely carved wooden cups, along with a little wine.

EXT. - MEDIEVAL VILLAGE/1000 A.D. - DUSK

The brutality in the streets is almost surreal. The trampling, the fire, the mud, the blood.

Young Wells makes his way easily through the melee, seemingly invisible to everyone but Young Cayce.

Young Cayce is obviously taken aback by the grisly scene, a horror he has only ever known in books.

A FILTHY LITTLE GIRL weeps at her dead mother's side, one lifeless body among dozens, knee-deep in the muddy street.

The little girl looks up and catches Young Cayce's eye. He stops, caught in her gaze. SHE CAN SEE HIM.

She reaches out to him, weeping, shaking, her tiny innocent face frozen into a haunting visage of ultimate loss.

Young Cayce doesn't wear gloves like he does in the present. He starts to reach back to her, but just before he can touch the little girl's hand, he is grabbed by Young Wells.

Young Wells shoots Young Cayce an angry look.

YOUNG WELLS

It has already been written! You cannot do this!

Young Cayce reluctantly continues on with Young Wells, stealing one last glance at the little girl just as she is savagely cut down by a Christic knight's blade.

Young Cayce falls to his knees, clutching at his heart, as if he can actually FEEL her wound, overwhelmed by the suffering and pain all around him.

END FLASHBACK

INT. SKID ROW MISSION/RECTORY GARAGE - NIGHT

Cayce rubs his heart through his shirt, reliving the painful memory of that day long ago. He leans into the open driver's window as the priest turns the KEY in the IGNITION.

Cayce hands him the BLACK APPLE.

CAYCE

Ah, to be forgiven, that'd be a fine thing.

The engine STARTS, the TAILPIPE coughs up clouds of carbon monoxide.

EXT. SKID ROW MISSION/RECTORY GARAGE - NIGHT

The STRANGE, OMINOUS DARK LIGHT OF SOUL TRANSFER seeps out from beneath the rectory's garage door, and its windows.

EXT. CHRISTOPHE'S BACK YARD - NIGHT

In the distance, a window quietly BREAKS.

A shadowy FIGURE reaches in through the broken back door window of a quiet, modest home.

INT. CHRISTOPHE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The intruder is Jules and he emerges from the shadows, peering into the dark living room, where he sees no one.

INT. CHRISTOPHE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Once in the living room, he notices someone sitting in an easy chair in front of the empty fireplace, and stops. It's CHRISTOPHE DELUCCA, an old Paisan in his late '70s. Gaunt and war-torn, he doesn't immediately acknowledge Jules' presence.

Jules continues quietly into the room, and sits down on the sofa across from Christophe. A car drives by outside, its HEADLIGHTS harshly illuminating the room for a moment as it passes.

Finally, Christophe nonchalantly breaks the silence without shifting his blank stare from the cold dark fireplace.

CHRISTOPHE

You're lucky the Cenzinis next door didn't hear you. You know they got a kid whose a cop now? Who the Hell taught you how to break and enter anyway?

JULES

You did.

Christophe suppresses a smile.

CHRISTOPHE

Don't be a wiseguy.

Jules offers a sad smile.

JULES

I was kinda hoping you would hear me. Maybe give you some time...

CHRISTOPHE

Seems like time's the one thing I don't got tonight, Julie.

Christophe pulls a pack of smokes out of his bowling shirt pocket and lights one, never meeting Jules' gaze.

CHRISTOPHE (cont'd)

I been expecting this, but I got to admit, I didn't think he'd send you.

JULES

You could go somewhere - disappear.

Christophe finally meets Jules' gaze. Beneath the younger man's expression is a terrible sorrow.

CHRISTOPHE

Look at me Julie. Where am I going to go?

Christophe looks back at the dark fireplace.

CHRISTOPHE (cont'd)

I been in this place, Christ, 45 years now? Twenty without my Cheryl. One more night won't make too much difference. What do you think?

Jules kneels down in front of Christophe.

JULES

I think this ain't real. I think it's just a bad dream.

The Old man's eyes are filled with sadness for Jules, but no fear of his own fate.

CHRISTOPHE

Look at me, Julie.

Jules reluctantly looks into his friend's eyes.

CHRISTOPHE (cont'd)

This ain't about you. It's about me and your pop. Always has been.

Christophe tosses his smoke into the empty fireplace.

CHRISTOPHE (cont'd)

I just want you to know, if I could have made a son, I would have made you.

Christophe notices the gun Jules holds in his hand.

CHRISTOPHE (cont'd)

Your old man's a real prince, Julie. Taking me out with my own piece. I wonder where I went so wrong with him.

Jules tries to contain his tears as he lets loose TWO, SHORT, SHARP POPS from the silencer.

Christophe's body slumps over onto Jules who is still kneeling before him. Jules chokingly whispers into the dead man's ear.

JULES
I'm sorry, grandpa.

He grimly unscrews the silencer from the gun and leans Christophe back in his chair.

After staring at the old man for a moment, Jules gently closes his grandfather's blankly staring eyes.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Jules slides onto a stool at the end of the dimly-lit bar. A few other people sit in booths, while the jukebox murmurs in the BG.

While the BARTENDER chats up another CUSTOMER, a SHOT-GLASS full of bourbon slides Jules' way from the SHADOWS at the other end of the bar.

CAYCE (O.S.)
You look like a bourbon man.

Jules swallows the shot in one gulp, lost in his own misery, not looking at Cayce.

JULES
I'm an idiot who needs a real big eraser to fix the queen mother of all fuck-ups.

Cayce slides another shot to Jules, but Cayce is not drinking. They are just two bleak guys, now sitting only one seat away from each other at the bar.

CAYCE
You seem like the kind of guy who doesn't make mistakes.

JULES
We gotta be real quiet now, okay chief. I just need to think.

Jules slugs down the booze and grimaces.

JULES (To himself)(cont'd)
Just think.

CAYCE
You're one of Wilo's boys, aren't
you?

Jules stares at his shot glass, subtly reaching for the gun
in his pocket.

JULES
That's right. What's it to you?

CAYCE
Take it easy - Jules, was it? Just
seems like there's a lot of sides
to choose from these days. Can get
kind of confusing. I was wondering
if you might be up for a change of
scenery.

Jules continues to stare intensely at his empty shot glass.

JULES
I already booked my vacation.

CAYCE(OS)
Sounds kind of like a permanent
solution to a temporary problem.

Cayce mysteriously materializes in the seat next to Jules,
who blinks a couple of times as the booze takes effect.

CAYCE (cont'd)
I need a good man on my side.

JULES
Then you definitely got the wrong
guy.

CAYCE
Someone who knows his way around a
gun. More bodyguard than assassin.

Jules finally looks at Cayce.

JULES
Look pal, I shook hands with The
Devil a hundred times. It never
bothered me. I just don't feel like
dancing with him tonight.

Jules slides off his stool and turns to leave, but Cayce lays his hand on his shoulder and stops him.

CAYCE

Damned if you do, damned if you don't. You think you've lost everything? Fair enough. In that case...

Cayce places the black APPLE on the bar.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

From the sidewalk in front of the bar, one GUNSHOT is audible. In a flash, several people scurry out, one guy still carrying his full beer mug as he runs.

The ominous DARK LIGHT OF SOUL TRANSFER shines out from around the bar's front door.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Susanne is the only passenger on the bus. She alternates her attention between warily eyeing the driver, who warily eyes her back in his rear view mirror, and scanning the desolate streets whizzing by outside her window.

Lightening flashes in the distance, glinting in her window.

FLASHBACK

INT. SUSANNE'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

PULL BACK from a window where LIGHTNING just flashed. It's the same bedroom from Susanne's previous childhood flashback.

NANA, Susanne's elderly grandmother, bursts into the room, her coat and purse still on her arm. She drops them on the floor.

In the chaos of the moment, Little Susanne is almost knocked down. She looks around the room for the figure she saw before, but whoever it was is now gone.

Nana kneels and cries as she cradles the WOMAN, Susanne's mother, lying dead on the floor.

Little Susanne back pedals until she reaches the wall next to the window, and turns to look outside.

EXT. OUTSIDE SUSANNE'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM WINDOW - NIGHT

We see Little Susanne's face through the window, but we also see what she is seeing as it's reflected on the glass in front of her face. Susanne stands at the window, and as lightning FLASHES, she sees a lone FIGURE walking away down the road in the rain. It's Cayce.

Little Susanne turns back to Nana who is blinded by her grief. When she turns back to the window, Cayce is gone.

The SOUND of the bus stopping in REAL TIME, jars Susanne from her memory.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BUS - NIGHT

The bedroom window is now the bus window.

Susanne comes out of her daze and notices the driver staring back at her in his rear view mirror.

BUS DRIVER

Last stop.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Marlowe's Camaro sits quietly in a desolate gas station parking lot, as he walks over to a nearby phone booth.

INT. GAS STATION/PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

The overhead light flickers on as Marlowe lays his hand on the phone box. A LONG SEQUENCE OF NUMBERS CHIRP OUT OF THE RECEIVER, even though Marlowe has not dialed, or put any money into the slot.

Taking his hand off the phone box, he lights up as he talks.

MARLOWE

Hey Mary, let me talk to dad.

In the distance, behind Marlowe's back as he talks on the phone, TWO TEENAGED CAR THIEVES slim-jim his car door.

Marlowe turns around to see the thieves in his dad's car, but is strangely calm about it as he speaks into the receiver.

MARLOWE (cont'd)
 Lou! No, everything's great.

Marlowe pulls his car alarm remote out of his pocket.

MARLOWE (cont'd)
 Not yet, but it won't be long. I've
 got a plan.

Marlowe CLICKS the alarm remote and the little RED LIGHT
 flashes silently on it.

EXT. GAS STATION/PARKING LOT/OUTSIDE CAMARO'S DOOR - NIGHT

THROUGH THE CAR WINDOW, we see the DOOR LOCKS CLAMP DOWN,
 trapping the thieves inside who are trying to hot wire it.
 They quickly realize they're trapped, and bewilderment
 quickly turns to panic.

INT. GAS STATION/PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Marlowe coolly turns away, now fully involved with his call.

MARLOWE
 I said I got a plan, okay!

EXT. GAS STATION PARKING LOT/OUTSIDE CAMARO'S DOOR - NIGHT

The thieves desperately try to escape from the Camaro, but
 can't.

Only inside the car, INCINERATOR-LIKE FLAMES consume them.

They SCREAM and HOWL as they BURN TO DEATH inside the car,
 while its exterior remains totally undamaged and normal.

Nearby in the BG, Marlowe continues his call, growing
 angrier.

INT. GAS STATION/PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

MARLOWE
 Enough with the goddamn car Lou,
 your motherfucking car is fine! I'm
 trying to tell you...

Marlowe's frustration reaches a fever pitch, and in a RAGE,
 he starts BANGING the receiver down HARD on the phone box,
 cracking it ...

MARLOWE (cont'd)
 You're not ...

... until he breaks it into pieces that go flying...

MARLOWE (cont'd)
... fucking ...

...until only random wires hold it together.

MARLOWE (cont'd)
... listening.

EXT. GAS STATION/OUTSIDE PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

The wreckage of the pay phone dangles from the wall of the phone booth, as Marlowe straightens himself up and clicks the alarm remote.

EXT. GAS STATION PARKING LOT/OUTSIDE CAMARO'S DOOR - NIGHT

The Camaro's DOOR LOCKS pop up.

Marlowe returns to the Camaro where the fire has now miraculously disappeared. The interior looks totally undamaged.

He opens the car door and the STEAMING SKELETON of one of the thieves falls halfway out.

Angrily mumbling to himself, Marlowe carelessly kicks it all the way out and onto the asphalt.

Marlowe stomps over to the passenger door, opens it, and kicks the other steaming thief's carcass to the ground.

Still pissed-off at his father, and utterly uninterested in the two dead bodies, Marlowe starts the car, guns the engine, and squeals away from the gas station.

The Camaro's back WHEEL crunches over one of the incinerated BODIES as the hapless, greasy, STATION ATTENDANT walks out of the service bay and finds the horrific mess.

EXT. ANOTHER CITY STREET - NIGHT

Susanne walks across the desolate street.

As she walks along a brick wall, a MYSTERIOUS FIGURE follows her. She senses him, his SHADOW creeping alongside her, getting closer and closer.

She stops and wheels around, but no one is there. When she turns back around, she BUMPS right into Cayce. Startled at first, she relaxes only slightly when she recognizes him.

CAYCE

Sorry if I scared you.

SUSANNE

After everything that's happened tonight, you kind of pale in comparison.

CAYCE

What happened tonight?

SUSANNE

You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

CAYCE

Where you heading?

SUSANNE

Home. Probably. Doesn't really matter, I can't sleep anyway.

CAYCE

Me neither. Mind if I walk with you?

SUSANNE

I don't usually walk with strangers.

CAYCE

Well I guess that makes us even. I don't usually talk to strangers, but technically, we're not really strangers now, are we?

SUSANNE

One conversation in the park doesn't exactly make us pen pals.

CAYCE

You still don't know who I am?

Susanne searches for an answer somewhere in his gentle eyes, but her fears make her nervously walk away from him.

SUSANNE

I think I'll go the rest of the way alone.

Cayce doesn't follow her, so Susanne manages to get a few yards ahead of him, and starts to quickly turn the corner.

Relieved that she lost him, she comes around the corner and runs RIGHT INTO HIM - AGAIN. She backs up, but Cayce gently grabs her by the shoulders.

CAYCE

You have nothing to fear from me,
Susanne.

She relaxes, momentarily drawn into his otherworldly gaze, and then looks behind her just to make sure there aren't two Cayces. She looks back at him, suspicious.

SUSANNE

How did you do that?

CAYCE

Magic.

Susanne finally shows a hint of reluctant recognition of Cayce's true identity.

SUSANNE

This is impossible.

She backs away from him, and then runs across the street as fast as she can. Cayce does not follow her.

EXT. SANTA MIRA CEMETERY/GATE - NIGHT

Susanne comes to a high, gated, iron bar fence. She stops and leans up against it, out of breath.

She looks up at the sign, and realizes she's stopped right in front of SANTA MIRA CEMETERY.

FLASHBACK

EXT. SANTA MIRA CEMETERY - DAY

Through the same iron gate, we see Little Susanne and her Nana standing silent in front of a casket in the cemetery.

Nana's face deathly serious, little Susanne's stone cold, they watch alone as the casket is lowered into the grave.

Across the street, outside the cemetery gate, Cayce, thinly hidden by the shadow of a tree, stares directly at Little Susanne.

Her anger now very visible, she notices this strange ghostly figure staring at her.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. SANTA MIRA CEMETERY - NIGHT

Susanne now sees Cayce across the street, standing in exactly the same spot that he was in her flashback. Beneath a street lamp, in the misty night, an ethereal glow surrounding him like a halo.

She quickly rifles through her camera bag and eyes two 4x6 PHOTOS. They are smaller prints of the shots showing the angel and the same halo/blur effect. Susanne looks up again at Cayce.

Susanne grabs the SWITCHBLADE out of her bag and starts across the deserted street towards Cayce.

He calmly waits as she clicks it open and lunges toward him with her knife.

She STABS him in the chest and BLACK BLOOD streams out. Cayce grabs her hand before she can strike again and knocks the knife to the wet pavement.

Susanne backs off and Cayce staggers and winces. He clutches at his chest, trying to contain the black blood streaming from the wound.

With great effort, he MAGICALLY heals it.

Susanne is surprised, but not afraid.

She lunges at him, smashing her fists against his chest, but Cayce barely defends himself. The pounding becomes weaker and weaker until Susanne's anger turns to tears.

She finally stops, almost leaning into Cayce, looking for comfort.

Cayce looks down at her, and in an uncomfortable and unfamiliar way, cradles Susanne in his arms.

SUSANNE

What are you?

CAYCE

I've been called a lot of things in my time, but you can call me Cayce.

EXT. ABANDONED DRIVE-IN - NIGHT

In the moonlight, Marlowe speaks to someone in the distance, a dilapidated movie screen in the BG.

MARLOWE

All we have to do is follow her,
and she'll lead us straight to him.

Wells steps out of the shadows. He looks away, disgusted, and talks almost to himself.

WELLS

The mere thought of working with
your kind is repugnant to every
fiber of my being, but I need to
know exactly what he's doing while
I can still undo it. He has to
confide in me. Perhaps a disguise.

MARLOWE

I say...

Marlowe uproots one leg of an ancient, rusted swing set, and tips the whole thing over in a CREAKING, CLATTERING mess.

MARLOWE (cont'd)

...we pound him into a fine powder
first, sift through the tiny
pieces, and ask questions later.

Marlowe eyes him dryly for a moment.

WELLS

You know that Cayce has to give us
those souls freely. This is a
delicate business.

Marlowe looks ridiculous and CREEPY as he rocks back and forth on a big, rusty, STEEL DUCK, made for little kids. The duck's huge steel spring's CREAKING echoes in the night.

Wells closes his eyes, and shakes his head.

WELLS (cont'd)

You seem to be all caught up on
your merit badges, Marlowe. What do
you get out of all this?

Marlowe stops rocking, dismounts, and turns away from Wells.

His expression full of hate, his diction strangely well-heeled, Marlowe is suddenly FOCUSED AND EVIL. HIS FATHER'S SON.

MARLOWE

Time marches on, angel. For better or worse, Lucifer has become the celestial equivalent of a toothless wino.

Marlowe looks philosophically up at the sky.

MARLOWE (cont'd)

If I don't get his merchandise back - let's just say he's got a special Hell waiting just for me.

A strange smile creeps onto Marlowe's lips

MARLOWE (cont'd)

But Daddy can't run the funhouse forever.

Marlowe turns back to him and watches Wells pass his hands in front of his GLOWING face, as if performing a magic act.

MARLOWE (cont'd)

Impressive. They teach you that shit in Heaven?

Wells turns around and we see now that his face has changed. He looks like a stranger.

WELLS

Actually, I learned it from your father.

In his new disguise, Wells appears more comfortable with Marlowe.

WELLS (cont'd)

So man with the plan, how do we find *her*?

Marlowe holds up the swath of Susanne's sweater that tore off on his car earlier. SIX WOLVES, hidden in the shadows with glowing eyes growl in the distance.

MARLOWE

With a little help from my friends.

EXT. SANTA MIRA CEMETERY/CURB - NIGHT

Susanne sits on the curb in front of the cemetery with her head in her hand, clutching one of her photographs. Cayce stands nearby, smoking a cigarette. They've been silent for some time. She isn't sure what to say to him.

CAYCE

I'm not what you expected?

SUSANNE

I don't know what I expected.

Susanne stands, turns away from Cayce, and stares through the bars of the cemetery gate.

SUSANNE (cont'd)

So prove you are what you say you are. Tell me what I'm thinking right now.

Cayce hesitates, and then reluctantly closes his eyes for a moment, saddened that he has to perform this parlor trick for her.

CAYCE

You're thinking that you haven't been to your mother's grave since she was buried.

Susanne does her best to hide her surprise, and turns back to face him.

SUSANNE

So does this mean because I can see you, my number's up?

CAYCE

I have a feeling you'll be around long after I'm gone. I'm only here to set the record straight.

SUSANNE

Yeah, I know who you are. When I was a kid I saw you, right after my mom died. I thought you came to take her away and I was right.

CAYCE

But you knew how sick she was.

SUSANNE

The only thing I knew was that I'd never sleep again until I found the goddamn angel who stole my mother from me. 20 years is a Hell'uva long time to stay awake.

CAYCE

I'm sure it is.

Piewhackit crawls out from behind Cayce's collar, whispers in his ear, and looks at Susanne. She laughs through her tears.

SUSANNE

You do magic tricks too?

CAYCE

This is Pie. He's an old war buddy.

Cayce's exhausted smile turns to a frown. He shivers violently, wrapping his arms around himself, SENSING something.

The growling of SIX WOLVES is heard in the distance.

SUSANNE

What's the matter?

Cayce surveys the area. Down the long, desolate street, he sees THREE WOLVES turning a corner, sniffing, searching for something.

CAYCE

We have to get off the street.

SUSANNE

You're an angel. What do you have to be afraid of?

Cayce hesitates, terrified of SOMETHING, as Susanne walks toward the cemetery gate.

ALL SIX WOLVES now sit at the end of the road, lined up, watching, waiting to make their move.

SUSANNE (cont'd)

They probably lock it at night, but I bet I know a way in.

She picks up her switchblade up off the ground, but Cayce is frozen where he stands, still shaking, staring fearfully at the chapel.

CAYCE
I can't go in there.

SUSANNE
Why not?

CAYCE
The Law.

SUSANNE
The cops?

CAYCE
No. The Law. We have rules, too.
I'm not allowed on sacred ground
for very long.

Cayce SENSES something else and scans the cemetery grounds.

CAYCE (cont'd)
... however ...

He quickly leads Susanne around to the other side of the cemetery where the place is dark and in ruins.

CAYCE (cont'd)
... this part of the ground wasn't
properly consecrated.

SUSANNE
And how do you know that?

CAYCE
I can see it.

Susanne looks around.

SUSANNE
Oh yeah? I don't see any markers.

CAYCE
They're everywhere. You just don't
know how to look.

Cayce offers his hand to Susanne to lead her.

They squeeze through a gap in the fence, hand in hand into the derelict part of the cemetery.

Susanne looks around as they come upon a tiny, abandoned CHAPEL, its large wooden door boarded up with planks.

SUSANNE

It's like a ghost town around here.

CAYCE

Best place to hide.

SUSANNE

From what?

Cayce doesn't answer, but gently lifts the entire plank facade in one piece, and sets it on the ground.

He opens the unlocked door for her and they enter.

INT. SANTA MIRA CEMETERY/CHAPEL - NIGHT

Once inside the dim room, Cayce's gloved HAND lets go of Susanne's, and he walks away alone. Even his spurs' CLINKING fades away to nothing.

SUSANNE

This is great. You bring all your dates here?

Out of the blackness, a string of Christmas tree LIGHTS on the floor FLICKER on, revealing an old cot and some dusty records next to an antique Victrola.

Susanne sits down on the cot as Cayce appears from a shadowy doorway, brushing the dirt from his hands and clothes.

CAYCE

Still a little life left in this place. How about some music?

Susanne flips through a stack of dusty, old LPs.

SUSANNE

Do you like music?

Cayce lowers the needle onto the LP, and a SOLO VIOLIN piece wafts softly through the speakers, just like the melody she heard in her apartment before.

We now see that both the Christmas tree lights' and Victrola's power cords are laying on the ground near a wall socket, but are not plugged in.

SUSANNE (cont'd)

I've heard that song through my wall at night. Sometimes I think they play it just for me.

CAYCE

He does.

SUSANNE

What do you mean?

Cayce staggers to the corner of the room and collapses in the shadows, just outside of the glow of the Christmas tree lights.

Susanne's expression changes with a deep realization.

CAYCE

I asked him to. So you could sleep. Personally, I prefer Rock and Roll, but every now and then, Bach does just fine. There isn't much of it where I come from.

SUSANNE

That's not what I heard.

Susanne pulls the ANGEL BOOK out of her camera bag and throws it to Cayce who eyes it with concern.

CAYCE

Well, you heard wrong. Art is a uniquely human medium. Where did you get this?

SUSANNE

A secret admirer. It says that angels were never mortal, that they were made by God to take care of us. And there's also stuff in there about the souls of suicides being promised to Lucifer as part of some deal.

Cayce slips the book into his jacket pocket.

SUSANNE (cont'd)

Hey!

He pulls a No-Doz bottle out of the same pocket, but finding it empty, throws it across the room. Exhausted, he roughly rubs his weary eyes.

CAYCE

There is no music in Heaven,
Susanne.

Cayce lifts the needle off of the LP, and the music stops. He closes his eyes, wraps his arms around himself, and looks as if he's listening for something.

SUSANNE

Are you sick or something?

CAYCE

I can feel when other angels are close.

Susanne kneels in front of him, leans toward him, and lays the back of her hand on his forehead.

SUSANNE

Doesn't look like it feels too good.

CAYCE

And... I'm pretty sure I'm dying.

SUSANNE

How can an angel die?

Cayce tries to get into a more comfortable position, but is so weak that he can't. He lays his hand on his stomach, like an exhausted, pregnant woman would. Susanne sits Indian style on the floor in front of him.

CAYCE

My body is breaking down. I was made as well as God could make me...

SUSANNE

(bitter)

But not to last.

CAYCE

Everything will die one day Susanne, even me.

SUSANNE

Who made that rule?

Cayce has no answer for that.

CAYCE

The ones inside of me must survive. That's the only thing that matters now.

Uneasy moments pass between them.

CAYCE (cont'd)

There's a lot you still don't understand. Heaven has no time to care for the wounded, or the damaged, or anyone who doesn't fit.

SUSANNE

Like my mother.

CAYCE

Over the centuries, they got so tangled up in their rules and their politics, that they lost sight of their true purpose.

SUSANNE

But you didn't?

CAYCE

That's why I'm here now. They don't like my kind.

SUSANNE

I thought Heaven was supposed to be a place where everybody belonged.

Susanne looks at Cayce.

SUSANNE (cont'd)

Why did you take her?

CAYCE

Nobody killed your mother. Not me, not God, and not you. It was her time because she chose it, and they hate that more than anything upstairs - when you take the power over your own life and death out of their hands. The only thing I took from your mother was her pain.

Susanne sits next to Cayce, leaning against the same wall that he is, and stares at the floor.

SUSANNE

I always felt so close to finding you.

CAYCE

I almost let you, a couple times.

Susanne finally looks up at him, concerned.

SUSANNE

What about the other ones who are after you?

CAYCE

Well, it's been almost 1,000 years since I left.

SUSANNE

It took them a thousand years to come looking for you?

CAYCE

Time passes differently up there. A lifetime on Earth goes by in the blink of an eye in Heaven.

Cayce looks very physically uncomfortable, even in pain.

SUSANNE

Look at you. How am I supposed to hate you when you're as fucked-up as I am?

CAYCE

You're not supposed to hate me. It's my job to put people at ease.

Susanne's desire to end a lifetime of isolation, to trust SOMEONE, is stronger than her fear and dwindling anger. She leans against him, and Cayce looks at her as if HE TOO finally NEEDS someone.

Exhausted, she cautiously lays her head in his lap.

His GLOVED HAND slowly strokes her hair, as if he has never done it before. She closes her eyes and curls up next to him, savoring each caress. Susanne yawns and welcomes a deep sleep that has been waiting for her for 20 years.

SUSANNE

Why does this seem so familiar?

CAYCE

It's about time you dreamed a little dream.

Susanne's EYES close as Cayce's voice fades away.

DREAM SEQUENCE/FLASHBACK

INT. LITTLE SUSANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

DISSOLVE TO: Little Susanne's EYES snap open, and she mischievously scoots under her bed covers, as Nana folds her clean clothes.

LITTLE SUSANNE
Isn't mama going to tuck me in?

Nana tries to hide her concern.

NANA
Your mama isn't feeling well,
Susannah. She needs to rest.

Nana tucks Susanne in and kisses her.

LITTLE SUSANNE
Then tell me a bedtime story.

NANA
I don't know any stories.

Nana offers a mischievous grin.

LITTLE SUSANNE
The one about the baby angel!

Nana sits on the bed next to Susanne.

NANA
It's so old. How does it start
again?

LITTLE SUSANNE
You know! Once upon a time...

NANA
Ahhh yes. Once upon a time, there
was a terrible storm in Heaven.

ANOTHER FLASHBACK

EXT. HEAVEN - DAY

A silent, ethereal Heaven is pounded by torrential rains as dozens of ANGELS with huge wings cower beneath muted thunder and flashing lightning.

NANA(V.O.)

After the rain finally stopped, and
the clouds all dried up ...

The rain subsides, the SUN breaks through the clouds, and the
fearful angels slowly venture out of hiding.

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

... the angels found that the storm
had left a little baby behind. But
this baby was very strange.

A handful of angels edge toward a small FIGURE laying
helpless in the arms of a stone angel statue mounted in a
shallow fountain.

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

You see, its heart was too big.

The angels are afraid to get too close to the INFANT in the
arms of the statue, the baby's ENLARGED HEART beating through
its little chest.

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

All the angels thought that his
heart would make him sick just
because it was different, but they
were wrong.

ONE ANGEL, his face in shadow, is brave and curious enough to
go near the infant, and takes the baby in his arms.

We now see that the brave angel is a younger, 40-ish Wells.
Only then do the other angels cautiously approach the baby -
who is Cayce - and Wells.

INT. HEAVEN/CAYCE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Cayce's bedroom is plain and sparsely furnished with a simple
single bed and chair.

NANA(V.O.)

He grew up big and strong, and
smart too ...

A worried young Wells finds two books with Egyptian and Roman
writing on their spines, under Cayce's pillow.

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

... but because of his special
heart, he could feel the human
world's pain.

EXT. HEAVEN/STREET - DAY

On a clean cobblestone street, young (20-ish) Cayce mouths words to a small group of other young angels. He motions to the books he holds, but they will hear none of it.

NANA(V.O.)
The other angels got so tired of
listening to him talk about our
troubles and sorrows ...

INT. HEAVEN/COURT - DAY

A crowd of many angels gathers to watch A TRIBUNAL that has convened in the square.

The Tribunal's somber LEADER stands at a stone podium, and holds CAYCE'S BOOKS. He looks with silent dismay upon Cayce and Wells who stands next to him. Rules have been broken.

NANA(V.O.)
... that they sent him down here to
spend our darkest hours with us.

The Tribunal Leader points for Cayce to leave Heaven, and Cayce walks sadly away from the crowd of angels with Wells.

Wells and Cayce walk together into an escalator - the same escalator in the subway station we've seen before, that leads down to Earth.

NANA(V.O.)(cont'd)
You see, the other angels didn't
send him here to care for us, the
way he wanted to, they just wanted
to prove to him that we weren't
worth the trouble. But living among
us, even like a ghost, proved to
him that he was right to love
humans. He swore he'd never forget
us, and never forgive them.

INT. IMMACULATE SUBWAY STATION - DAY

We've seen this before. Just before walking through the doorway of the empty waiting train, Cayce stops. He looks back, sadness in his eyes, Piwhackit on his shoulder.

END SECOND FLASHBACK

INT. LITTLE SUSANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

NANA

So, every time it rains, it's just
that little baby angel crying for
the ones who were too sad for
Heaven to care about.

Little Susanne's eyes are closed. She's fast asleep, as Nana strokes her hair the same way Cayce did earlier.

Nana's HAND strokes little Susanne's HAIR.

END FIRST FLASHBACK/DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. SANTA MIRA CEMETERY/CHAPEL - NIGHT

Cayce's GLOVED HAND strokes adult Susanne's HAIR.

Susanne is sound asleep, her head in Cayce's lap. He gently lays her head on an old pillow, and puts Piewhackit on the floor.

CAYCE

Make sure she's out of here in an
hour, Pie. I've got a little last
minute business before we go.

Piewhackit scurries over to Susanne, her arm outstretched on the pillow. He sees the small burn marks left by Marlowe. Pie sniffs at them, and then scratches at the burn marks with his paws, making the burns disappear completely. He then climbs onto the pillow next to her cheek.

He sits there on the pillow, a guard watching his post, while Cayce scans the room for a perfect spot to put something.

Cayce carefully sets the black APPLE next to the Victrola and checks the room again. Satisfied, he instructs Pie.

CAYCE (cont'd)

And make sure she doesn't touch
this (motions toward the apple).

EXT. WILO'S PALATIAL ESTATE - NIGHT

A light glows in one upstairs window of Wilo's mansion.

INT. WILO'S PALATIAL ESTATE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The TV is the only source of light in the room, as Wilo sits in his easy chair, draining the last drop of wine from his glass. The TV MURMURS softly as Wilo gets a little buzzed.

Wilo is startled by a NOISE behind him and carefully reaches for his gun on the coffee table.

He turns, his gun aimed at the darkness, but no one's there.

Wilo sets the gun back down and pours the rest of the wine from the nearly empty bottle into his glass.

Another NOISE, but when Wilo looks around again, there's still no one.

When he turns back, Cayce is standing in front of the TV.

CAYCE

Mr. Gardenia.

Wilo smiles wickedly and aims his gun at Cayce. He CLICKS the trigger twice, but nothing happens.

Cayce holds up the clip from Wilo's gun. He starts popping out the bullets from it with his thumb, and they harmlessly drop to the floor.

WILO

Who sent you? Whatever they're paying, I'll double it.

CAYCE

Some things are more important than money. Isn't that right Jules?

Another NOISE comes from the dark recesses of the room.

A shady figure steps into the half-light. It's JULES and he doesn't look well at all. His shape remains indefinable, almost blending into the darkness, and his eyes have an INHUMAN SHINE to them. Even his VOICE is SOFT and UNEARTHLY

JULES

Hi, Pop. I did what you told me to.

Wilo feels the effects of the wine and tries to focus.

WILO

Julie?

Cayce hands the now-unloaded clip back to Wilo and turns up the TV. Wilo is perplexed by his son's macabre physical appearance and Cayce's actions. He alternates his fearful attention between Cayce, Jules, and the TV screen.

NEWSCASTER(V.O.)

Details are still coming in at this hour, but eyewitnesses claim that earlier tonight in a downtown bar, Jules Gardenia suddenly turned his own weapon on himself and fired at point blank range with lethal results. We have on-scene...

Cayce turns the TV down again.

Wilo sets his unloaded gun down slowly, confused and scared.

JULES

Let's go for a walk.

EXT. SANTA MIRA CEMETERY/GATE - NIGHT

The cemetery's haunting silence is broken by the approaching ENGINE of Marlowe's Camaro.

Marlowe drives to the gate and steps out. The disembodied BACKWARD CRIES AND LAUGHTER of infants swirling around him.

INT. SANTA MIRA CEMETERY/CHAPEL - NIGHT

While Susanne lays sleeping on the floor, the SHADOWY SHAPES OF THE SIX WOLVES pass outside the chapel doors.

Piewhackit senses something and starts to GROWL. He is unaware of the supreme evil that lurks outside, but it doesn't matter. He will protect Susanne at any cost.

INT. WILO'S VINEYARD CATACOMBS - NIGHT

Jules leads Wilo down a long, dirt hallway, lit only by a few, dim, bare bulbs, some burned out. Cayce walks slowly behind, his spurs ECHOING down the passageway.

INT. WILO'S VINEYARD/CATACOMBS/WINE TASTING ROOM - NIGHT

Jules slams Wilo down into a well-worn, wooden chair.

JULES

I like a man who stays put.

WILO

You'll never get away with this.

Jules seems like a totally different person - confident, powerful, evil, a fitting heir to his family's brutal legacy. He stands behind his father and whispers in his ear.

JULES
I already have.

Jules grabs his father's hands roughly and ties them together with duct tape, behind his back, around the wooden chair.

Cayce watches in silence from the edge of the room.

WILO
All of this because of the old man?

Jules pays little attention to Wilo's words, as he carefully pulls the perfect bottle of wine from a slot in the rack.

JULES
Ever since I was a kid, I figured - hey, it's a mean fucking world. My pop just got mean from living in it.

He draws a CORKSCREW from his jacket pocket and sets it and the BOTTLE ominously down on the table in front of Wilo.

JULES (cont'd)
But I was wrong. The world's a mean place because of trash like you.

Jules slowly turns the bottle so that Wilo can see the label, and Wilo tries to act unafraid.

WILO
You're talking like a little girl, Julie. You took out your share of nobodies. Seems like your memory ain't so good tonight.

JULES
No, Pop. My memory's crystal clear. I remember everything, but I never really understood 'til tonight. My new boss here helped me with that part.

Wilo loses his cool and tries Cayce.

WILO
What the Hell is this gonna prove?

Cayce has been standing silent in the shadow of the doorway, but now comes forward into the bare bulb's light.

CAYCE

Jules really did die tonight, but he did have one last request - something he was never able to accomplish while he was alive. He wanted your respect. And if you asked me, I'd say that he's going to have it ...

Cayce turns to Jules.

CAYCE(cont'd)

... until dawn.

WILO

You hear that, Julie? That's The Devil talking!

CAYCE

Lucifer only understands greed. I offer hope. Not the hollow kind they peddle in Heaven. Real hope. It may be too late for you, Willy, but I do believe I got to your son just in time.

Cayce walks toward the door, but stops when he gets there.

CAYCE (cont'd)

Oh, I almost forgot.

Cayce tosses a worn, leather JOURNAL onto the table in front of Wilo.

CAYCE (cont'd)

I always keep my word. It's important, don't you think?

Cayce leaves the room while Wilo's eyes are riveted to the journal, and he starts to tremble.

Jules picks the journal up and thumbs through it, frowning.

WILO

Where did you get that?

Jules loses himself in the journal for a moment.

JULES

Grandpa said you were a prince,
Pop, but I had no idea you were
such a sick mother...

WILO

(enraged and crazed)
Who the Hell is that son of a
bitch?!

In one graceful movement, Jules snatches the bottle off of the table, smashes it in half, and drives the JAGGED EDGE INTO WILO'S KNEE.

Wil0 howls in pain, feverishly struggling in his bonds, as Jules whispers in his ear.

JULES

He's an angel, Pop. Can't you tell?

Jules TWISTS the broken bottle deeper into Wil0's knee and Wil0 SCREAMS louder.

Jules yanks many bottles of wine off the racks.

JULES (cont'd)

What kind of man would keep such
detailed records of how he
tortured, mutilated, and disfigured
his victims?

The racks fall to the ground, smashing on the floor until it's covered with the viscous, red fluid.

JULES (cont'd)

Howz'about we go through your
little black book here, and relive
some of the highlights?

WILO

Julie, are you out of your fucking
mind? Stop this crazy shit, just
stop now, and we'll forget it ever
happened.

Jules scans the wine-covered floor and picks up a JAGGED PIECE OF BROKEN GLASS from it.

JULES

Remember when I was ten? You showed me how to cut a man's hamstring so his leg'd roll up like a window shade. Remember that? You showed me.

INT. WILO'S VINEYARD/CATACOMBS/PASSAGEWAYS - NIGHT

The hideous, muted sounds of Wilo's tortured SCREAMS softly float through the murky recesses of the catacomb passageways.

INT. SANTA MIRA CEMETERY/CHAPEL - NIGHT

HISSES, SCRAPING, SQUEALING, WARPED VERSIONS OF CHILDREN'S BACKWARD CRIES AND LAUGHTER, fill the chapel. Pie nudges Susanne's ear, trying to wake her, but she doesn't move.

In the shadows, some "THINGS" are getting CLOSER and CLOSER to Susanne as she dreams.

PIEWHACKIT CASTS HIS SHADOW INTO A HUGE MONSTROUS SHAPE to try and scare off the unseen THINGS that are coming.

DREAM SEQUENCE/ORIGINAL FLASHBACK

INT. SUSANNE'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cayce leans over Susanne's mother's prone body on the floor, carefully brushing a lock of hair out of her eyes. He lays his ear against her head, as if listening to her thoughts.

He takes her limp hand as she draws her last breath and tries to whisper something to him. He looks into her eyes as they close and whispers to her.

CAYCE

I promise.

The bedroom door opens and Cayce moves, undetected, to the dark corner of the room, the SILHOUETTE of little Susanne framed in the doorway.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE/FLASHBACK

INT. SANTA MIRA CEMETERY CHAPEL - NIGHT

Piewhackit DRAWS HIS HUGE SHADOW BACK and nuzzles Susanne's earlobe again.

She jerks awake, confused, to find DEMONIC EYES from the six wolves GLOWING IN THE DARK, coming toward her and Pie.

Piewhackit scurries in the other direction, Susanne right behind him.

She throws one last glance back as the creepy NOISES and the GLOWING EYES get louder all around them.

Pie scampers through an access tunnel and Susanne follows.

The shadow of A MAN right behind them.

INT. SANTA MIRA CEMETERY CHAPEL/PASSAGE - NIGHT

Susanne catches her breath next to a sign that reads:
CREMATORIUM.

When she turns around, Marlowe is standing in her way, the glowing eyes of the wolves following him as if he is their master. Their GROWLS echo through the passage.

Three of the wolves LUNGE at Susanne. Two of them latch onto each of her pant legs with their teeth, keeping her in place. The third wolf sits patiently in front of her, as a warning not to move.

Now Marlowe holds Pie who struggles to squirm out of his hands.

SUSANNE

What do you want?

Marlowe insidiously strokes Piewhackit's ears.

MARLOWE

Some things that belong to my father. Your boyfriend knows where they are. Maybe we could talk to him about it.

SUSANNE

I don't know where he is.

MARLOWE

That would be terribly unfortunate.

Marlowe mockingly holds Piewhackit up to his ear, and replies to him, as if the rat is speaking to him, but he's not.

MARLOWE (cont'd)

What's that? Maybe you're right. I do like her better.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF SANTA MIRA CEMETERY - NIGHT

Marlowe shoves Susanne roughly into the Camaro's back seat.

The newly disguised Wells puts out his hand, palm up, and Marlowe reluctantly hands over the car keys.

Marlowe starts to get into the back seat, but Wells stops him.

MARLOWE

What?

Wells silently motions with his hand for Marlowe to hand something else over too.

Marlowe reluctantly reaches into his jacket pocket, and pulls Piewhackit out. He hands Pie to Wells, and climbs into the Camaro's back seat.

Wells momentarily closes his eyes, and although we don't see it, its clear that he has just taken Pie's life.

Wells opens his eyes, quickly slips the now-dead Pie into his coat pocket, and gets into the Camaro's driver's seat.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

Wells sits behind the wheel, trying to remember how to drive. As he turns the KEY, and steps on the gas, a grinning Marlowe cozies up to a still-defiant Susanne in the back seat.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF SANTA MIRA CEMETERY - NIGHT

The TIRES SQUEAL, as the Camaro peels out.

WELLS(OS)

No monkey business back there.

MARLOWE(OS)

You just watch the tread, man! And drop us down by the river.

INT. SANTA MIRA CEMETERY/CHAPEL - NIGHT

In silhouette, Cayce stands in the chapel doorway, letting in a little moonlight.

The Christmas tree lights are out, but when Cayce comes closer to them they automatically come back on, revealing his worried expression, and no Susanne or Piewhackit.

He scans the walls and the floors finding CLAW MARKS everywhere. The whole room looks like a herd of wild animals tore through it.

He also looks at the spot where he left the apple next to the Victrola - it's gone as well. Cayce bolts out of the Chapel.

EXT. SANTA MIRA CEMETERY/GATE - NIGHT

Cayce runs out of the chapel and into the street, but his spurs get in the way. Annoyed and hopping on one foot, he stops to unhook one of them.

FROM OUT OF NOWHERE, Marlowe's Camaro screams around the corner, and knocks Cayce violently to the pavement.

His SPUR skitters across the road as Cayce is dragged under the front of the car. The car SKIDS to a stop.

Cayce rolls on the ground holding his BLACK-BLOODY torso. TINY WHITE LIGHTS WITHIN THE DARK LIGHT begin to drift away, escaping from inside his body.

Cayce fears losing these souls/lights he carries, as much as he is in terrible pain. He whispers to the souls leaving him.

CAYCE

No! All of you - stay with me! Just a little longer.

Cayce reaches out and gently cups the tiny lights, drawing them all back into his body.

The DRIVER/WELLS, still in disguise, hurries to help Cayce. He squats down as Cayce inches on his belly toward his spur in the street.

DRIVER/WELLS(OS)

I didn't see you man. Are you okay?
Do you need a doctor?

The driver/Wells watches Cayce jam the spur into his pocket.

Cayce tries to pull himself together, blinking hard, as he looks up at the concerned, unfamiliar face of the driver.

Cayce shivers violently in his presence, sensing only that the stranger is an angel.

CAYCE

No, but can you give me a ride? I need to get down to the river.

The driver/Wells seems genuinely concerned.

CAYCE (cont'd)

I'll be okay, really.

Their eyes meet, an unspoken understanding between them.

DRIVER/WELLS

Can you stand?

The driver/Wells carefully helps Cayce up and into the Camaro. Then he gets in as well, and it speeds away.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

Cayce closes his eyes and winces, trying to find a comfortable position in his seat.

CAYCE

Just take Main all the way to the water.

DRIVER/WELLS

It's none of my business, but what were you doing out at the cemetery in the middle of the night?

Exhausted, Cayce feels somehow at ease around this stranger. In his moment of weakness he talks about himself.

CAYCE

Can't sleep.

DRIVER/WELLS

Insomnia?

CAYCE

Bad things happen when I sleep. My kids take advantage.

DRIVER/WELLS

You could get a sitter.

CAYCE

I don't really trust them with strangers. Besides, my job here is almost done anyway.

Cayce winces, trying to hide his magical healing of his injuries. Most of the BLACK BLOODY WOUND on his leg has healed, but the driver/Wells sees what Cayce is doing out of the corner of his eye as he drives.

DRIVER/WELLS

You in some kind of trouble?

CAYCE

Broke a few very old rules. Now it seems like everybody wants to teach me a lesson, but I've always had a problem with that kind of thing.

DRIVER/WELLS

The kind of guy who'll never learn, huh?

The words sound strangely familiar to Cayce. He eyes the driver/Wells suspiciously, and notices a SMALL, PINK TAIL with a black tip, sticking out of his coat pocket. Its unmistakably Piehackit and Cayce knows instinctively that Pie is dead, MURDERED by the driver, whoever he is.

Cayce thinks fast and fakes a grimace.

CAYCE

You better pull over.

The driver/Wells pulls off the road and Cayce opens his door even before the car fully stops.

EXT. STREET/NEAR CAMARO - NIGHT

Cayce falls to his knees, retching as if he's going to vomit.

The driver/Wells hurries around the car to Cayce and leans down over him, sympathetically resting his hand on Cayce's shoulder.

DRIVER/WELLS

I've got to get you home.

Still leaning down, the driver/Wells surveys the immediate vicinity, as Cayce subtly REACHES for the door.

DRIVER/WELLS (cont'd)

Maybe there's a ...

Cayce viciously SLAMS the car DOOR against the driver's/Wells' HEAD, sending him to the pavement in a heap.

Cayce stands, still obviously sore, but stronger and angry. Although he tries, the driver/Wells is too dazed to get up.

DRIVER/WELLS (cont'd)
I came to tell you that you don't
have to do this anymore. You're
forgiven.

EXT. STREET/BEHIND CAMARO - NIGHT

Cayce pops the trunk open and rummages around until he finds a set of jumper cables.

EXT. STREET/NEAR CAMARO DOOR - NIGHT

The driver/Wells still lays in the road from the blow, as Cayce starts angrily hog-tying him with the jumper cables.

CAYCE
I'm Forgiven?

Cayce stands upright, and admires his handiwork through his bitterness. The driver/Wells sees something in Cayce that he's never seen before.

CAYCE (cont'd)
You even let Lucifer take the
innocent! Why?

Wells offers no answer.

CAYCE (cont'd)
This sorrow is mine. Your kind gave
it to me and I accepted it, I even
embraced it. These humans - their
pain is my pain.

Shaken and angered, Cayce spots Piewhackit's tail again and slowly draws Pie's dead body from the driver/Wells' pocket.

CAYCE (cont'd)
(to himself)
He never hurt anyone.

The Driver/Wells groans in his bonds.

DRIVER/WELLS
He helped you break The Law.

Cayce lovingly wraps Pie in a white handkerchief.

CAYCE
 (to himself)
 Some things are more important than
 The Law.

DRIVER/WELLS
 That's where you're wrong, Cayce.

Cayce gently slides the handkerchief with Piewhackit inside,
 into his deep coat pocket.

CAYCE
 The wicked will be punished.

DRIVER/WELLS
 And who decides who's wicked,
 Cayce? You?

Cayce is momentarily conflicted, but regains his angry focus.

CAYCE
 (with quiet conviction)
 The wicked will be punished.

DRIVER/WELLS
 You're confused, Cayce. Let me take
 you back where you belong. You can
 be healed.

CAYCE
 The only ones who need your help
 are the hypocrites who sent you
 here.

Cayce leans down and whispers in the driver/Wells' ear.

CAYCE (cont'd)
 My children will survive.

Cayce gets into the Camaro on the driver's side, much
 stronger now, almost recovered from his injuries.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

Cayce sees the alarm COMMANDER on the keychain and breaks it
 off.

EXT. STREET/OUTSIDE CAMARO DOOR - NIGHT

CAYCE(OS)
 We won't be needing this anymore.

Cayce swings his leg out of the car and his BOOT HEEL crushes the alarm commander as it SPLINTERS into pieces.

FLASHBACK

INT. MONASTERY/1000 A.D. - DUSK

CLOSE ON: thick wooden doors as they SPLINTER and rip off of their iron hinges.

Christic knights on horses CLATTER through the now-open doorway, swords drawn.

A WOODEN CUP, cradled in a Gnostic's limp HAND.

The gang of rabid knights suddenly quiets down.

The floor of the monastery is littered with dead Gnostics, men and women of all ages, many still in each other's arms. They have poisoned themselves rather than be butchered or tortured by the Crusaders.

The Black Knight sniffs one of the cups.

BLACK KNIGHT

Heretics.

The Black Knight spits on one of the dead bodies.

He turns to leave, and walks right past Young Cayce and Young Wells, whom he cannot see.

The rest of the knights file out of the monastery behind him in silence.

Young Wells begins silently counting bodies, noting the names and numbers in his little journal. Cayce kneels down, profound sadness in his eyes, scrutinizing the face of one of dead male Gnostics.

Cayce brings his shaking hand close to the dead man's face, but stops short of actually touching it.

Wells notices this, hands Cayce the journal, and motions for him to continue the count.

Cayce takes the journal and charcoal pencil, as STRANGE DEMONIC SHADOWS appear all around the room in the BG.

YOUNG CAYCE

Why?

Cayce continues writing.

YOUNG WELLS
Because it is The Law.

YOUNG CAYCE
(stops writing)
But why do they have to suffer like
this? What is the purpose?

YOUNG WELLS
They took their own lives. They
belong to Lucifer now. That is The
Law.

In the BG more and more DEMONIC SHADOWS are coalescing,
melting/melding into each other.

YOUNG WELLS (cont'd)
Besides, they're not your concern.

Young Wells gently takes the journal back from Young Cayce
who is lost in thought, and walks out the door.

After a few moments, Young Cayce follows him out, but when he
reaches the demolished doorway he takes one last sad look
back. He is surprised to see SIX WOLVES standing defiantly,
ominously, among the Gnostic dead. The wolves stare him down,
because like the little girl in the street from before, THEY
CAN SEE HIM. They howl.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

The howling of the wolves, transforms into the REVVING of the
Camaro's powerful engine. The car door is still open.

DRIVER/WELLS
They're not your concern Cayce.

Cayce looks at the Driver/Wells, still unaware of his true
identity but shrugs at the familiar sentiment.

CAYCE
You're just like the rest of them,
up there.

Cayce turns away.

CAYCE (cont'd)
(to himself)
Fuck The Law.

Cayce looks around at the console of the car, getting a feel for Marlowe's souped up vehicle as the driver/Wells tries talking him out of it.

DRIVER/WELLS

You can't stay here. Eventually they'll come for you.

CAYCE

Let them come. I won't be alone. Besides, I imagine they'll have bigger fish to fry by that time.

Cayce's words scare the driver/Wells.

DRIVER/WELLS

What's that supposed to mean?

CAYCE

It means that the power of many will become The Power of One. You can keep Heaven and Hell. Tonight I claim this place for me and my kind as sanctuary.

Cayce slams his door shut and guns the engine one more time.

CAYCE (cont'd)

(yelling out the window)

Tell your boss I'm not ready to cash out just yet.

The Camaro SCREECHES OFF, the driver/Wells still bound by the roadside.

EXT. RIVER FRONTAGE ROAD - NIGHT

Cayce kills the Camaro's HEADLIGHTS just before it reaches the river. As it passes a broken-down, pock-marked sign that reads STYCHS RIVER, Cayce also kills the engine, hiding his approach.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - NIGHT

Blackened, ominous, barren trees line the water's edge, like a macabre, petrified forest. THUNDER ROLLS DEEPLY across the river as Cayce stands beside the now-silent Camaro, parked near a dense grove of these dead trees.

He closes the door and scans a dark clearing in the distance, as a light rain begins to fall.

The river CHURNS nearby as he gets closer to it, the only spur he's wearing CLINKING on the rocks.

Cayce comes upon the dark clearing and stops suddenly. He roughly rubs his arms, shivering.

Marlowe stands at the water's edge nearby, holding a gun to Susanne's head.

The six wolves sit patiently, menacingly, around them.

Clouds obscure the full moon, making it so dark that they are nearly invisible.

There is no trace of Marlowe's previous boyishness. He is pure unadulterated EVIL - his father's son.

MARLOWE
(to Susanne)
Look at him, fucking cowboy.

Marlowe turns to Cayce.

MARLOWE (cont'd)
It was all black and white back
then, eh amigo?

CAYCE
What's with the artillery, Marlowe?

Cayce turns and tries to hide his chills.

MARLOWE
Mhm... the sweet smell of self-
righteousness smothered in doubt!

Marlowe whispers to Susanne.

MARLOWE (cont'd)
(to Susanne)
He has you to thank for that,
little girl.

Marlowe turns to Cayce again.

MARLOWE (cont'd)
Now it's time to take care of
business.

Marlowe steps out of the wolf circle and holds up the BLACK APPLE that Cayce left at the chapel.

MARLOWE (cont'd)
 Did you really think you could fuck
 with the order of the universe and
 not pay the price?

The circle of wolves, still around Susanne, starts to growl.

MARLOWE (cont'd)
 Well angel baby, look who's got
 your thunder now.

Marlowe brings the apple to his lips, and Cayce moves forward
 to try and stop him.

CAYCE
 That wasn't made for you.

MARLOWE
 It wasn't made for The Patron Saint
 of Suicide either.

Marlowe leers at Cayce one last time.

MARLOWE (cont'd)
 Hey, John Wayne, here's a newsflash
 for ya - No matter how much you
give them, you'll never be one of
 them.

Marlowe looks down at the apple whose BLACK, SPIKY VINES are
 already LATCHING onto his hand - GROWING INTO it.

His FINGERS now part of it, Marlowe tries to shake the apple
 away. Even though he can't, he isn't afraid of it.

MARLOWE (cont'd)
 Bite the hand that feeds. Nice
 touch.

Marlowe flashes an evil smile, sure that he has now won. He
 re-enters the wolf circle so that he's next to Susanne.

MARLOWE (cont'd)
 (to both of them)
 Meet the new boss.

Marlowe takes a big bite out of the apple and swallows it.
 His wicked smile twists and drains from his face.

The wolves start to whimper and pace, confused and afraid.

Marlowe drops to his knees, and Cayce and Marlowe meet eye-to-
 eye.

Cayce smiles a menacing smile.

CAYCE

You really think you found it by accident? I left it for you, like cookies for Santa. You're mine.

The APPLE rolls from Marlowe's HAND, no longer a part of it.

Marlowe grabs at his own RIPPLING throat, his voice an INSANE, MONSTROUS GROWL. Something has gone horribly wrong.

Susanne sees an opening in the wolf circle, and cautiously backs out of it. Marlowe drops his gun.

MARLOWE

(to the sky)

Father! Protect me!

The wolves suddenly turn on Marlowe and swarm in a frenzy all over him. They viciously rip at his clothes and face as he struggles and screams.

The DARK LIGHT of Marlowe's soul LEAVES his body and is SUCKED into the apple.

Marlowe's BODY instantly transforms into a HUSK MADE OF ASH that cracks like charcoal in the wolves' jaws.

The wolves are terrified and scatter in every direction.

The dead forest goes quiet, except for the river MURMURING.

Susanne cautiously walks past Marlowe's remains and grabs her bag.

She walks over to Cayce and kneels down. Susanne looks up at Cayce's unearthly, pale face. Genuinely concerned, she touches it.

CAYCE

I thought he'd already gotten to you. I thought...

SUSANNE

I'm okay. But what about you?

CAYCE

It's almost over. Tabula Rasa.

Cayce is just about to collapse, but Susanne holds him up and they start to walk away.

DRIVER/WELLS(OS)

Perfect.

Cayce and Susanne are startled as they realize that the driver/Wells has now arrived. He keeps his distance, but is obviously upset by what Cayce has done.

DRIVER/WELLS (cont'd)

Kill the boss' son. They'll love that.

CAYCE

At least it's not your boss. And he's not exactly dead.

The driver/Wells leans down to examine Marlowe's remains. He GRIMACES as if smelling something VERY BAD.

DRIVER/WELLS

(to Susanne)

For eons there's been an uneasy truce between Heaven and Hell. A mathematical balance that we've somehow managed to maintain. But now, apparently his ego is more important than The End Of The World.

Cayce motions to Susanne to let him go. He walks over to Marlowe's remains and picks the apple up off the ground.

As he inspects it, the place where Marlowe bit HEALS, and the apple is once again WHOLE.

Cayce marvels at the apple, and Susanne is now a little afraid of him.

SUSANNE

What did you do to him?

CAYCE

Nothing. His greed did that.

Cayce holds up the apple and manages a weak, proud smile.

CAYCE (cont'd)

See how smooth and perfect - or is it? Look closer.

CLOSE ON the Apple in Cayce's gloved HAND. Its SKIN is not smooth, but a labyrinth of fine, complex, bone, veins, and sinew. BLOOD actually flows through it. It is ALIVE.

CAYCE(O.S.) (cont'd)
 This is the key to the kingdom. It
 lets them embrace the darkness
 inside us all, and then it turns
 their blood candy-apple-black, just
 like mine.

DRIVER/WELLS
 You've done this before.

CAYCE
 Many times.

DRIVER/WELLS
 But what about one like Marlowe?
 What'll it do to him?

CAYCE
 I know where you come from, but I
 still don't know your name, friend.

SUSANNE
 Cayce, let's get out of here.

CAYCE
 (to the river)
 Tonight, my children will be
 reborn... through me.

Cayce turns to Susanne.

CAYCE (cont'd)
Their survival is what matters, and
 they need a lot, since his kind has
 abandoned them.

SUSANNE
 Cayce!

Cayce turns back to the driver/Wells who has calmly focused
 his POWER, summoning a BEAM OF LIGHT down from Heaven onto
 himself.

The driver/Wells trains the HEAVENLY LIGHT that is passing
 through him, onto Cayce who drops the APPLE.

The light takes Cayce in its thrall. He's hypnotized by its
 celestial power.

Susanne screams to Cayce, but the light's power is DEAFENING,
 and drowns out her voice.

DRIVER/WELLS

You've done enough damage here,
Cayce. I'm taking you home.

Susanne tries to pull Cayce from the power of the light that now surrounds him, but BURNS her hand when she touches the beam.

The beam begins to PULSE IN RINGS that rise up to Heaven, slowly at first, but faster with each cycle.

Even though Cayce is in the beam's thrall, he manages to whisper softly through it so that only Susanne can hear him.

CAYCE

I'm so sorry.

Susanne rifles through her bag. She looks at her camera, then at Cayce, then at the driver/Wells. This is her chance to PROVE to the whole world that she was right. She's torn but angrily throws the camera back into the bag. She knows that she's just blown her own big break

A look of profound understanding falls across her face as she addresses the driver/Wells.

SUSANNE

What happens to the souls inside
him once you get back to Heaven?

The driver/Wells tries not to look saddened by the answer, and continues intensely focusing the beam.

WELLS

They'll be returned to their lawful
owner.

SUSANNE

(knowingly)
Returned to who?

Susanne reaches back into her camera bag, draws her switchblade out, and SNAPS it open.

The driver/Wells is too busy focusing the POWER BEAM to notice Susanne coming up behind him. The POWER RINGS are rising quickly now, and almost appear as a solid TUBE OF LIGHT within the glow surrounding Cayce and the driver/Wells.

Susanne steels herself and closes her eyes for a moment.

SUSANNE (cont'd)

My mother is not going to Hell!

She drives her switchblade into the driver/Wells' back with all her might.

The POWER that had been channeling through the driver/Wells, now BLASTS out of the wound in his back and directly into Susanne, SLAMMING her into a tree behind her.

The disruption of power simultaneously releases Cayce from its thrall, and he slowly regains his senses.

Cayce crawls over to the driver/Wells, whose BEING is being stripped away by the remnants of the light and beamed/sucked away to Heaven. It looks as if he's being slowly PEELED.

DRIVER/WELLS

Proud of yourself, little man? Not even your precious mortals will escape this storm.

Cayce looks at Susanne collapsed against the base of a nearby tree. When He looks back at the driver/Wells, the MASK he used to disguise himself with is also stripping away revealing his real face - the face that Cayce finally recognizes.

CAYCE

Wells?

WELLS

Lucifer has been waiting an eternity for this, and you've just handed it to him. I hope it was worth it.

Cayce reaches for Wells, but it's too late. The last of THE BEAM sucks the last of him up and away. The only thing left is Susanne's KNIFE on the ground. Cayce picks it up, clicks it shut, and slips it into his pocket.

Once again, the peaceful river MURMURS.

Cayce gently eases Susanne's broken body away from the tree. She's nearly dead, but he tries to comfort the only person he's ever truly loved.

SUSANNE

I'll never see my mom again, will I.

Cayce hesitates and then gently touches his own chest.

CAYCE

She's in here with me.

Susanne starts to weep like a child, and clutches at Cayce's coat with what little strength she has left.

SUSANNE

Then I want to stay with you too.

CAYCE

I'm afraid that's not possible.
It's one thing to steal from
Lucifer, it's something else
entirely to steal from God.

Cayce's heart is breaking as he fights back his anguish.

SUSANNE

I lived my whole life alone and now
I have to spend eternity by myself
too?

Cayce takes the SPUR out of his pocket. He puts it into Susanne's hand and closes it.

CAYCE

To keep you company. Never let it
out of your sight.

Susanne looks at the spur, confused, nearly gone.

CAYCE (cont'd)

One day I'll come for you. I
promise.

SUSANNE

But...

CAYCE

This is how I'll find you. I'll
hear you when you walk.

Cayce can tell Susanne is fading fast, and squeezes her hand.

CAYCE (cont'd)

I have to tell you something -
about your mother.

Susanne's eyes start to close.

CAYCE (cont'd)

Every human who ever came to me...

Cayce hesitates, unsure if he should continue.

CAYCE (cont'd)
 ... has wanted something for
 themselves at the end - a last
 request. Everyone except your
 mother. She didn't ask for
 anything, except that I look after
 you when she was gone.

SUSANNE
 You're my guardian angel?

A weak smile crosses her lips.

CAYCE
 I don't think I did a very good job
 of it - but I'll make it right.
 I'll come for you.

SUSANNE
 Please. Let me go. Let us all go.

Cayce is wracked with doubt and guilt.

SUSANNE (cont'd)
 I know you think you're helping
 people, but it's all twisted
 around. Nobody wins your way,
 Cayce.

Susanne dies in Cayce's arms. He has now lost EVERYTHING -
 except his cause. His grief, guilt, and newfound doubt are
 bottomless.

Cayce pulls one of his black leather gloves off. He gently,
 cautiously, touches Susanne's face with his bare fingertips,
 and gives her a tender first and last kiss on her forehead.

This is the first time he has ever touched a human being with
 his bare hands.

EXT. HILLTOP - NIGHT

The sky has cleared and the FULL MOON shines down like a
 midnight sun. Cayce leans against the Camaro, morose and
 exhausted.

He stands alone on the hilltop overlooking the city on one
 side, and the ocean on the other.

By the pained look on Cayce's face, it's time.

Cayce finds a suitable alcove in a tangle of rotted tree roots nearby. With epic pain in his eyes, he reaches into his coat pocket.

Kneeling reverently, he gently places the handkerchief with Piewhackit inside, and the apple, in the alcove.

Cayce wearily makes his way to the highest mound on the hill.

He takes off his coat, other glove, and shirt, revealing the LUMP on his chest that houses his oversized heart. His life force nearly gone, the spent angel can barely stand, as he hangs his head to pray, preparing to die.

CAYCE

Father, forgive me for what I am...

With trembling fingers, Cayce pulls Susanne's knife out of his pocket and clicks it open.

CAYCE (cont'd)

...and remind me of what I was.

Bracing himself, Cayce closes his eyes tight, drives the blade into his own belly, and grimacing, cuts upward, all the way to his heart.

Cayce falls to his knees as THOUSANDS OF TINY LIGHTS - the damned souls that he has collected over the last 1,000 years, come BLASTING out of his gaping torso wound in every direction, HOLY NEBULAE WITHIN HIS DARK LIGHT.

Although Cayce seems exhilarated by the release, the birth is so VIOLENT that it is destroying him.

The SOULS/LIGHTS magically swirl around the hilltop.

One by one, the newly-released LIGHTS/SOULS find their places on the hillside and COALESCE INTO VAGUELY HUMAN FORMS.

Cayce's EYES CLOSE for the last time and he collapses. Just as his limp body hits the ground in SLOW MOTION, a SONIC BOOM is audible on the horizon.

At that moment, in the alcove nearby, The BLACK APPLE SPROUTS A DOZEN TENTACLES/ROOTS and BLACK POINTED VINES, DIGGING into the fetid soil, even through the handkerchief and Piewhackit inside.

A latticework of BARBED VINES/ROOTS snake protectively around a MACABRE, BLACK APPLE TREE that quickly grows from the alcove.

After only a few moments, the tree is fully-grown.

As Cayce lays apparently dead, we PULL BACK to reveal Marlowe, Victor, and Harley, standing around his body on the hilltop.

They are all shadows of their former mortal selves - THE LIVING UNDEAD - all dressed in black, all with foreboding, wizened, inhuman looks in their eyes.

The skies RUMBLE WILDLY with intense THUNDER & LIGHTNING. THE ULTIMATE LAW has been broken.

Harley no longer bears his burn scars, and is the first to approach the strange tree.

Marlowe spies it next, but soon the others see it too, and stare in awe.

An eerie, girl's HAND reaches down and lovingly caresses Cayce's face.

Miraculously, Cayce's eyes weakly flutter open.

Confused that he's still alive, Cayce fearfully runs his fingers over his chest, but finds that the LUMP over his heart is gone, as is his gaping, self-inflicted wound.

He reverently places his own hand against the girl's chest, and stares at her with overwhelming, profound understanding, amazement, and relief.

CAYCE (cont'd)

The Power Of One...

We finally see the girl's face, and recognize her as Jenny, now a GHOSTLY, MACABRE, REBORN VERSION OF HER FORMER SELF, her wounds healed, her SPIRIT strong. She puts her own hand over his on her chest.

JENNY

...has become the power of many.

Jenny slowly helps Cayce to his feet,

She places an unlit cigarette in her mouth and is silent for a long moment.

Jules, A DARK, REBORN VERSION OF HIMSELF, lights it.

A wobbly Cayce stands on the hilltop, facing the city, his back to the rocky cliffs descending to the ocean's shore down below. He's flanked by Jules on his right and Marlowe on his left. The humans all look strange, now denizens of the night.

JENNY(OS) (cont'd)
What do you call that?

Jenny steps up to the foreboding, newly grown tree.

MARLOWE(OS)
Tabula Rasa.

Jenny turns, standing tall and calm against the dawning sky. She stares intensely with a knowing look at the chaos below in the city.

Harley and Victor take their places next to her, gazing down at the city. Harley throws Cayce a somber look.

HARLEY
There's a lot of trouble down there.

Cayce sits down on a rock behind them, painful IMAGES of Susanne flashing through his mind.

Jules, Marlowe, Victor, Jenny, and Harley, all stand silently near Cayce on the hill.

Cayce gazes proudly upon his children - ALL OF THEM.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAWN

PULL BACK to reveal Cayce's FULL LEGION OF MANY THOUSANDS. They COVER the hillsides, standing silent at the dawn, WAITING.

LIGHTNING ARCS ACROSS THE SKY, as Cayce stands on the hilltop, and looks down at the ocean.

Jenny is suddenly at Cayce's side, like she's his prom date.

JENNY
When?

Cayce stares at the dawning, still-starry horizon, an ominous, calm look in his eyes.

CAYCE
Soon.

Jules, Marlowe, Victor, Jenny, and Harley, all stand silently near Cayce on the hilltop, holy disciples before the macabre, Gothic tree.

All the humans look like shadows of their former selves, now-somber, dark angels, dressed in black. All with knowing, distant looks in their eyes.

LITTLE SUSANNE (V.O.)
Tell me a bedtime story. The one
about the baby angel.

Big Lou's MONSTROUS, ANGRY RUMBLE shakes the Earth as Cayce listens to it, UNAFRAID.

Cayce stares at the horizon but does not squint at the rising sun as it stretches across his face.

Cayce and his children stand tall at first light. The night has left these creatures awaiting who or whatever is coming for them. And they are ready.

THESE ARE THE CHOSEN ONES.

LITTLE SUSANNE (V.O.) (cont'd)
You know! Once upon a time...

SIRENS, SHOUTS, AND SOUNDS OF URBAN TROUBLE down in the city below grow LOUDER and LOUDER - but are SUDDENLY cut short.

THE END