

G H O S T R I D E R :
SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE
by
Scott M. Gimple and Seth Hoffman

story by
David S. Goyer

May 14, 2010

G H O S T R I D E R :
SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE

A GOLD COIN, SPINNING on a tabletop. Surrounded in a SMALL AURA OF FLAME, it leaves a thin burnt trail on the wood.

We see the coin's BLURRED FACE as it spins... The blur comes into focus: it's a COYOTE. And then, it BLURS into an EAGLE. As the coin SPINS, it's like a zoetrope... The coyote WALKING. The eagle FLYING. Finally...

Its flame spent, the coin falls COYOTE side up, just before a LEATHER GLOVED HAND slaps down on it. We SMASH TO DARKNESS.

FEMALE VOICE

*"I said to my soul, be still, and
wait without hope. For hope would
be hope for the wrong thing; and
wait without love, for love would
be love of the wrong thing; there
is yet faith. But the faith, and
the hope, and the love are all in
the waiting. And so the darkness
shall be the light, and the
stillness, the dancing."*

The darkness gives way to a FLICKER of LIGHT...

FEMALE VOICE (CONT'D)

That's my favorite poem.

(beat)

This is a story about that darkness
and that light.

That flicker grows, transforming the darkness into...

EXT. ITALIAN VILLA - BACKYARD - DAY

LIGHT, falling down on a gorgeous Italian villa on a hill.

And there, on the patio, typing on a netbook computer, is NADYA, 27. She's beautiful, with dark hair and olive skin -- but, dressed in her clothes from the Gap, you wouldn't notice her in a crowd. Yet... If you caught her eyes, you'd be frozen -- those eyes show power, mischief, intelligence... And the pain of a life lived by her wits. (We'll soon learn the female voice we heard in the last scene belongs to her.)

Down on the vast lawn below, DANNY, 9, plays with a DOGO ARGENTINO -- a large, ferocious-looking dog. Danny's lack of fear lives right alongside his innocence.

Then -- the sound of a MOTORCYCLE in the distance, getting louder. Nadya and Danny look up at each other. And then --

SIX MEN (20s) step out of the SHADOWS... They're dressed in ROBES outfitted with modern, lightweight KEVLAR ARMOR. They're somewhere between Franciscans and Blackwater. They have BOWS on their backs and BROADSWORDS at their sides.

Nadya stands, unafraid of them. Springing like the Secret Service, one rushes to Danny, one to Nadya.

WARRIOR MONK #1
We need to get you two inside.

NADYA
Is it --

WARRIOR MONK #1
We don't know who it is.

Nadya nods, understanding how serious this is. She grabs her netbook as Danny is brought to her.

DANNY
It'll be okay, right?

NADYA
Right.

Danny and Nadya go inside, along with the dog, as the men return to their positions... The MOTORCYCLE grows LOUDER.

EXT. ITALIAN VILLA - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Looking down the hill through BINOCULARS, at the approaching motorcycle, is AUGUSTUS. He, too, is a Warrior Monk. But he's a bit older, carrying with him an air of authority...

Finally, the source of the engine roar arrives: a MOTO GUZZI TOURING MOTORCYCLE with a SIDECAR, and riding it, a BEARDED MAN in SUNGLASSES, wearing a KNIT CAP. This is MOREAU.

Augustus stands at the villa's gate, blocking Moreau's way. He sees Augustus looks angry and offers a friendly smile. Augustus takes out his sword, inspecting it. It's inscribed: "Bear Thy Standard Dread" -- around it, a GOLD DRAGON.

AUGUSTUS
(not looking at Moreau)
Go back, Moreau.

MOREAU
It looks as if someone threw up in your muesli. I am not that man.

AUGUSTUS
You're late.

Moreau smiles.

MOREAU

I am late because it was meant to
be. I believe in God's will.
Don't you?

Augustus looks over to see the occupant of Moreau's sidecar:
a cask labelled, "Pinot de Rufinus."

AUGUSTUS

Alcohol?

MOREAU

I brought enough for everyone.
(then)
Augustus, I am of the Warrior
Order, too. I can help --

AUGUSTUS

You're not one of us. You're the
Summoner Excelsis. A pathetic plan
B in case we fail.

Moreau looks at Augustus, not budging. It's a standoff.

AUGUSTUS (CONT'D)

We are here to protect the boy. I
believe you are an impediment.
(with threat)
Go back to the vineyards. Go --

Augustus stops short, suddenly puzzled. Moreau notices.
BLOOD runs down the corner of Augustus' mouth as he looks
down. A BLOODSTAIN at his side grows. Moreau turns to see
BULLETS silently kicking up dirt around them.

Moreau PULLS Augustus behind a PILLAR by the gate.

AUGUSTUS (CONT'D)

(growing weaker)
They're here.

MOREAU

(calling out)
De pilo pendet!

GUNS ring out. It's a full attack. Augustus squares his jaw,
nearly through the last of a painful death.

AUGUSTUS

Is this God's will?

MOREAU

(without blinking)
Yes.

Augustus' eyes go blank. He's dead. Moreau takes his sword and turns -- a FORCE of a SIX BLACK-CLAD soldiers -- all wearing BACKPACKS -- step out of the brush, FIRING M2 CARBINE RIFLES and ADVANCING TOWARDS THE GATE. Holding Augustus' sword, Moreau reaches into his robe and takes out a LARGE, EVIL-LOOKING HANDGUN and then looks back to the villa. He can see the other Warrior Monks taking positions.

MOREAU swings Augustus' sword in front of himself impossibly fast -- BLURRING IT -- and steps directly in front of the advancing force, right into the LINE OF FIRE. His TWIRLING SWORD DEFLECTS the BULLETS FIRED at him -- with his other hand, he FIRES HIS HANDGUN, taking out THREE MEN with clean HEADSHOTS. No blood, no gore, they just go down.

Moreau raises his gun, calling.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
Quinon proficit deficit!

And then --

The WARRIOR MONKS FIRE ARROWS and race out from their positions, SWINGING THEIR SWORDS to deflect bullets. Their speed and skill is evident --

The arrows they fire RAIN down on the force. The Warrior Monks twirling swords DEFLECT bullets right back into their attackers. They engage in HAND TO HAND COMBAT and dispatch their opponents quickly and cleanly. A few intense, elegantly violent moments and then --

Moreau and the Warrior Monks stand above the force -- all of its members, on the ground, dead. A decisive victory.

And then. A BEEP. Another. Another, more quickly. Moreau realizes what all this truly is. He opens his mouth to warn his compatriots, but before he can get a word out...

All of the BACKPACKS on the members of the fallen force EXPLODE SIMULTANEOUSLY... TEARING APART the Warrior Monks in a THUNDEROUS FIREBALL.

Silence. And then: RAY CARRIGAN (30s), steps out of the same brush the black force emerged from, accompanied by LANDSDALE (40), a stone-faced criminal.

Carrigan is wiry; he has boyish good-looks and an easygoing manner. A pencil-thin scar runs beneath one of his eyes. The way he carries himself, it's clear he's running the show.

Both wear jeans and leather jackets. They carry M2 Carbine rifles and move quickly, stepping over the bodies, heading towards the villa.

Carrigan casually FIRES his gun at the TIRES of a FIAT 500C parked in front.

Landsale gives a whistle and tilts his head towards one of the BLACK FORCE laying dead, intact, along with his backpack.

CARRIGAN
 Hey, you put bombs on the backs of
 mercenaries without them knowing...
 You're gonna get some glitches.
 (then)
 Five out of six ain't bad.

INT. VILLA - HALLWAY - DAY

Carrigan and Landsale are rushing through the place, going empty room to empty room, searching.

CARRIGAN
 The hell are they?

INT. VILLA - KITCHEN - DAY

Carrigan marches through the kitchen, THROWING an ADJACENT DOOR open -- to an EMPTY GARAGE, its GARAGE DOOR raised, leading to a LONG DRIVEWAY obscured from the front by trees.

And there, sitting in the middle of the empty garage, the Dogo Argentino... It GROWLS at Carrigan. He doesn't care.

CARRIGAN
 God dammit.

Landsdale joins him.

CARRIGAN (CONT'D)
 Intel said they only had one car.

Landsdale squares his jaw, pissed. The dog GROWLS louder... Carrigan sighs, takes his gun, and fixes his aim on the dog.

CARRIGAN (CONT'D)
 Yeah, you don't have anything to
 say about that, do you?
 (then)
 Call the men, and let's goddam find
 them. We got a deadline.

Carrigan looks at the GROWLING DOG, pissed. IT SPRINGS -- and we CUT on the SOUND of Carrigan FIRING his gun.

INT. FORT MARABOUT - BARRACKS - DAY

JOHN BLAZE sits in his cot, alone.

He's sharp-eyed and cool, but the weight of living like a dead man for eight years has wiped away any shred of light in his expression. There's a quiet strength inside him that mingles with a sense of profound loss.

His surroundings match his dour countenance. Dusty, neglected... if it looks like the place has been abandoned for sixty five years, that's because it has. Fort Marabout was a World War II base that's been completely forgotten.

That's exactly why Blaze has made a home here.

He sighs, and, without looking, reaches for a REMOTE. He hits a button and Nine Inch Nails' "The Beginning of the End" starts blaring. Blaze gets himself up.

He walks over to a humble setup: a COFFEE MAKER, a HOT PLATE, a BOOMBOX. All plugged into a WIRE that runs out the window.

Blaze grabs an MRE off a stack of hundreds, heads outside.

EXT. FORT MARABOUT - DAY

As Blaze eats his bland breakfast, he walks past his motorcycle, leaning against the barracks.

Continuing on, we get a better look at the Fort... it's a testament to how quickly nature can retake man-made structures. The place is completely overgrown. He brushes some leaves off of a SOLAR PANEL -- it has the WIRE that runs into the barracks. On the side of the building, we see an ancient "Kilroy Was Here" tag.

BLAZE
Mornin', Kilroy.

The only sign of civilization: a well-worn footpath that Blaze follows. It's a route Blaze has travelled every day for the past few years. It cuts a path from the barracks to the only building that isn't completely covered in lush, green growth... the CHAPEL.

INT. FORT MARABOUT - CHAPEL - DAY

Blaze walks inside. It's a simple place of worship. A wooden cross is the only adornment on the walls.

The altar, however, is a sight to behold. Wax from thousands of melted candles combine to form a hauntingly beautiful mess. Different colors run together... the drip patterns are a masterpiece of randomness. It also bespeaks how long, and how dutifully, Blaze has come here to pray.

He takes a candle, places it on the mass of wax. Then, he takes out a match, lights it.

For a split second, there's a glimmer of hope in his eyes. That maybe this time will be different. But the candle's flame begins to FLICKER and DANCE... It grows LARGER and BRIGHTER, ARCING towards Blaze.

Off Blaze, resigned. He BLOWS OUT the candle, plunging us into -- DARKNESS.

That soon gives way to a blurred image... THE VIRGIN MARY.

INT. ROOM - CONVENT INFIRMARY - DAY

Moreau opens his eyes. He's in a bed, in a simple room, facing the picture of Mary on the wall. A twentysomething NUN checks an IV in his arm and then notices he's awake.

NUN
Can you hear me?
(off Moreau's nod)
Do you know who you are?

MOREAU
Do any of us?

The nun hands him a cup of water.

NUN
Here, you must be thirsty.

Moreau takes a sip, spits it out as the nun helps him up.

MOREAU
This is the most watered-down
whiskey I've ever tasted.

Moreau stands, looking at his FOLDED CLOTHES on a dresser. Laying on them is AUGUSTUS' SWORD. He takes it, unemotional.

NUN
I'm to bring you to the Sanctuary.

INT. SANCTUARY - NIGHT

Moreau, now dressed, with Augustus' sword at his side, walks into the ASTOUNDING SANCTUARY -- GILDED COLUMNS go up to a dizzying height, where an ornate, massive DOME rests above. Massive STAINED GLASS WINDOWS line the walls.

All this holy grandeur -- but Moreau's eyes are on SIX PRIESTS OF VARIOUS ETHNICITIES standing before him.

They each wear the same RED ROBES, but seem like very, very different men. Thronging them, a CADRE of NOBLE GUARDSMEN: a cross between the Vatican's Swiss Guard and the Green Berets.

Like the Warrior Monks, they have swords. Unlike them, they carry GUNS.

One of the priests, ALREK, tall and pale, steps forward.

ALREK
Moreau. You're alive. By the
grace of God.

MOREAU
By his will.

ALREK
We found you at the villa, wounded.
(then, grave)
Your order has been destroyed.

MOREAU
And the boy?

ALREK
We concluded that he and the mother
must have escaped.
(then)
We all know what this means. You
will find who we need: Zarathos.

MOREAU
I'm well aware of my role.

ALREK
Moreau, we've had our disagreements-

MOREAU
(dead serious)
Because, Alrek, you both resemble
and act like a penis.

The bluntness stops Alrek in his path. Alrek recovers:

ALREK
We come before you to offer our
help in what you must do.

MOREAU
I don't need your help. I have
God's.

Moreau walks away.

ALREK
(sharp, calling after him)
Did God not send us here as well?
We offer you our Noble Guardsmen,
for security, as well as their
expertise in fortifying Rufinus to
ensure the boy's safety.
(MORE)

ALREK (CONT'D)
 (then)
 Our help *is* God's help.

Moreau stops and SIGHS.

MOREAU
 Where is the closest place I can
 get a good pepperoni pizza?

The priests don't answer.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
 If you're going to help me, you
 have to start being an actual help.
 (then)
 I'll see you in Provence.

Alrek and the priests watch Moreau walk out. Alrek turns around and walks to the altar. He stands before an ANCIENT-LOOKING, WIDE GOLD CROSS, crusted with JEWELS.

Alrek takes it down... If it weren't so dirty, he could see his reflection where the cross' arms meet.

ALREK
 Balaam.

One of the PRIESTS steps forward, a plain man, with DARK HAIR. Alrek hands him the cross.

ALREK (CONT'D)
 I remember when I was a little boy.
 I asked my father, "Why don't they
 polish the Cross of Aridai?" He
 told me, "It will be done when it
 needs to be done." My father was a
 wise, wise man.

Balaam smiles and nods, walking away with the cross.

EXT. LINE OF SHOPS - ANDALUSIA - DUSK

NADYA, calm and casual, peruses the wares at a JEWELRY KIOSK.

As TOURISTS make their way to dinner, the KIOSK PROPRIETOR, a husky woman, watches Nadya suspiciously. Nadya is taking a pair of BEAUTIFUL AMETHYST EARRINGS off of a peg...

DANNY (O.S.)
 AHHH-HA-HA!!!

The Kiosk Proprietor turns towards the voice... Only to see Danny playing with a TOY SWORD, wearing a backpack.

The Kiosk Proprietor quickly turns back to Nadya -- who no longer has the earrings. *And they haven't been returned to their peg.* The Kiosk Proprietor GRABS Nadya by the wrist.

KIOSK PROPRIETOR
THIEF! THIEF!

NADYA
(shocked)
What are you talking about?

KIOSK PROPRIETOR
The earrings! You have them!

NADYA
I *looked* at them. They're right --
(seeing the empty peg)
No! I put them back!

KIOSK PROPRIETOR
Give them to me now or I call the
policia, you Gypsy trollop!

Nadya snaps her wrist away from the Kiosk Proprietor.

NADYA
You call my people Roma... And you
do *not* call me a trollop.
(then, starting to simmer)
If I took your earrings, where did
I put them? In my pockets?

Nadya pulls out her pockets, holding her wallet. She starts angrily UNBUTTONING HER SHIRT. Tourists and a few businessmen can't help but watch her as she opens her shirt.

NADYA (CONT'D)
IN MY SHIRT?

No earrings. Just a bra. Pissed off, she pulls out her pockets and shoves down her jeans.

NADYA (CONT'D)
UNDER MY JEANS? YOU WANT TO CHECK?

As Nadya hops out of her skirt, we see Danny is quickly and efficiently going from BUSINESSMAN to TOURIST, holding up an RFID reader (it looks like a convenience store's ATM pin pad -- with a long wire that runs back to his backpack) next to the pockets and purses of his oblivious quarry...

NADYA (CONT'D)
CALL THE POLICIA! I DON'T HAVE YOUR
STUPID EARRINGS AND I DON'T
APPRECIATE BEING TREATED LIKE A
CRIMINAL!

Grudgingly satisfied, but horrified by her outburst, the Kiosk Operator simply nods. Nadya puts her clothes back on as a couple of men in the impromptu audience APPLAUD. Nadya strides right through, still feeling the eyes on her.

NADYA (CONT'D)
Show's over.

INT. FORT MARABOUT - OUTSIDE THE BARRACKS - NIGHT

Blaze sits at a table. We go CLOSE on it -- thin BURNT lines, twisting over it like SPAGHETTI, cover its surface.

Blaze takes out the GOLD COIN we saw earlier... He looks at the COYOTE side, then the EAGLE. He gives it a SPIN. It spins, surrounded in an AURA OF FLAME, leaving another trail on the table.

Blaze watches the coin. Its flame spent, it falls... COYOTE side up. Blaze looks at it, like a prisoner regarding his cell, takes out a FIFTH of WHISKEY and takes a long pull.

Just then, Blaze sees a SHADOW behind him. Acting purely on instinct he GRABS the handle of an axe (stuck in a tree stump) and KNOCKS BACK a FIGURE STANDING BEHIND HIM.

The Figure, in shadow, tries to deftly SWEEPS Blaze's legs and Blaze goes down. The Figure steps towards him.

THE FIGURE
Wait --

Blaze doesn't. He THROWS UP a handful of DIRT and TACKLES the Figure into BARRACKS wall, knocking down one of the Solar Lanterns. The fallen light REVEALS...

Blaze has the AXE an INCH from the nose of his assailant... MOREAU. His face is covered with the dirt Blaze threw... save for his SUNGLASSES, which he's still wearing, even though it's dark.

BLAZE
Leave. Right now. Before something very bad happens to you.

MOREAU
I can't leave. Or something very bad will happen to me. To us all.
(then)
I'm here for you... John Blaze.

Blaze is taken aback that Moreau knows him by name. Moreau shakes the dirt from his beard, then HOLDS up the FIFTH OF WHISKEY Blaze was drinking.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
 Kentucky bourbon. You have
 excellent taste.

(then)
 I am Moreau, the Summoner Excelsis
 from the Monastic Order of Michael,
 the Warrior Angel. The world has
 need of your singular talents.

BLAZE
 You look like a French trucker.
 You're telling me you're a monk?

Moreau nods.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
 You drink, steal, and fight.

MOREAU
 I also gamble and it's rumored that
 I carouse with women.
 (then)
 Men of God are as varied as
 creation.

Blaze grabs his fifth back, now basically empty.

BLAZE
 Whatever you want with me --

MOREAU
 You're Zarathos. The Ghost
 Rider... The Spirit of Vengeance.

Blaze is stone faced. He doesn't like hearing it. He
 doesn't like someone else knowing it.

BLAZE
 How did you find me?

MOREAU
 Throughout the centuries, just as
 there's always been a Spirit of
 Vengeance, there's always been a
 Summoner Excelsis -- a "holy" man
 who just *knows* where the Spirit is.
 (then)
 Now, come. The church I'm taking
 you to, it's quite a distance.

BLAZE
 You really think I'm just going to
 go with you?

MOREAU
 I can offer you a hot meal, perhaps
 some supplies...
 (MORE)

MOREAU (CONT'D)
 (looking around)
 You're obviously dangerously low on
 alcohol...

BLAZE
 No.

MOREAU
 I know why you're here, in exile.
 The Rider feeds upon evil, killing
 it brutally. You've decided, "I
 avoid people, I avoid evil. And the
 Spirit of Vengeance will never
 manifest itself."

The look on Blaze's face shows that Moreau is dead on.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
 There is another means for you to
 keep the Rider in check.

BLAZE
 I visited priests all over America,
 all over Europe... Do you know how
 far I've gone... What I've done to
 try to get rid of this thing?

MOREAU
 (with a laugh)
 Priests? Priests listen to God.
 God listens to monks.

BLAZE
 You get that off a bumper sticker?

Moreau gestures to his motorcycle: there, on his sidecar, is
 that exact bumper sticker.

MOREAU
 I'll race you to Voghera. To the
 church that looms over the village.
 You win, you can take as many
 supplies as you'd like. Either
 way... I tell you how may control
 the Rider. Really, Blaze...

Moreau gestures to Blaze's impressive, but long dormant bike.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
 Such an impressive vehicle should
 never accrue such a layer of dust.

Blaze can't help but be taken in a bit. He walks up to his
 bike thoughtfully, getting on it, thinking. And then -- Blaze
 STARTS IT UP with a ROAR! Moreau races for his own bike as
 Blaze takes off; Moreau smiles, taking off: this may work...

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Nadya ROUNDS A CORNER, walking towards a Volkswagen Amarok pickup truck -- a decidedly Euro-truck.

Danny sits inside, lit by Nadya's netbook computer. Nadya taps on the window; Danny opens the door, not looking up.

DANNY
Pretty good take.

We see Danny's got quite the setup going: he holds the RFID reader in one hand as he types with the other. Another DRIVE is plugged into the netbook, with a BLANK DEBIT CARD sitting in its slot. Several other BLANK DEBIT CARDS sit on the seat, with NUMBERS scrawled across them in SHARPIE.

NADYA
Do me a favor, Danny. Don't grow
up to be a stupid man, okay?

Nadya reaches into her hair and pulls out the PAIR OF AMETHYST EARRINGS. She starts putting them in her ears.

DANNY
'Kay.

Danny pulls out the BLANK DEBIT CARD in the drive and, looking at the screen, jots down numbers on it with the Sharpie. He holds up the rest of the cards to his mother.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Five Banco di Romas, two Banco Di
Napoli, two Banco Sellas.

NADYA
You know, other kids collect Yu Gi
Oh cards.

DANNY
These are fun, too.

We PAN AWAY from the car... To...

EXT. A NEARBY ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Landsdale, Carrigan's right hand man, stands in the shadow of the alley looking at Nadya and Danny in their truck, texting on his phone. Not. Good.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Moreau and Blaze roar down the open road -- Blaze holding onto a commanding lead.

Then, as they reach a crest in a hill... up ahead, they see a small village. In the center of it, a MAJESTIC CATHEDRAL.

EXT. FRONT OF CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Moreau and Blaze pull in front of the cathedral. Moreau simply puts on the brakes as he comes up the driveway. Blaze, however, executes a perfect stoppie -- a front wheeled wheelie -- to bring his motorcycle to a halt.

INT. SOUP KITCHEN - CHURCH - NIGHT

A large room in the back of the cathedral serves as a soup kitchen. The place is packed with the poor easing their hunger. Blaze looks on, rolling his COIN over his fingers.

MOREAU

This is why I brought you here.

BLAZE

For soup?

Moreau, smiling, shakes his head. He gestures to the diners, the volunteers, the nuns...

MOREAU

Darkness and light. This place is about the light. And somewhere, there's a darkness that equals it. You see, the world has its balance. For every cruel thing you see, there's an equally kind action somewhere else.

BLAZE

You're wrong. Pick up a newspaper. The light's already out.

MOREAU

If that were true, Roark wouldn't be trying so hard to extinguish it forever.

BLAZE

Roark? That name supposed to mean something to me?

MOREAU

When "he" made his deal with you... To turn you into the Rider... For you to collect souls of the evil for hell... He called himself Mephistopheles.

That gets Blaze's attention. Moreau smiles.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
Now you understand why we need you.

Moreau taps the shoulder of a PRIEST in line -- the priest turns and Moreau CUTS IN LINE, taking two bowls of soup.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
Sit. Stracciatella!

Moreau puts a bowl of soup in front of Blaze, handing him a spoon. Blaze looks around. Only now does he see the SIX PRIESTS from before, including Alrek, lurking in the shadows.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
Those priests represent the whole
of the Christian church.
(then)
They're here because they need you
to save the world, Blaze.

Moreau takes a spoonful of soup, moved by its flavor.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
You taste nutmeg in here?

BLAZE
Why aren't *they* talking to me?

MOREAU
They can't dirty themselves by
actually talking to you. I mean...
You're in with the Devil.

Moreau puts down a PICTURE of DANNY.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
Roark sent some of his men after
this boy. He was last seen
yesterday about ten miles from
here. The Ghost Rider, and you,
are the only ones who can save him.

Blaze turns the picture around and slides it back to Moreau.

BLAZE
The Rider doesn't save people. He
doesn't change things. He just...
ends things.

Blaze doesn't say anything, not allowing himself to even entertain the possibility.

MOREAU
A blind man could see you've lost
your faith...

Blaze doesn't look at him.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

If you were to find your it once more, it would influence and temper the Rider... You could control him.

Blaze looks at Moreau, not quite believing what he's hearing.

BLAZE

Seriously? You're telling me to have faith? That's gonna stop the Rider?

MOREAU

The most profound truths are often the most simple ones.

BLAZE

Bringing me here, you've put this entire village in danger.

MOREAU

It's already in danger.

BLAZE

I can't help you. I can't even help myself.

MOREAU

If you were to just *believe*, everything would be different. You're only seeing the evil in this world because --

BLAZE

For eight years, I looked. And that's all I saw. So I'm looking away. You're telling me it's darkness and light?
(then, with finality)
Where's the light?

Blaze looks at Moreau: all but saying to back the fuck off.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

I won our little race. I'll take those provisions now.

MOREAU

Follow the signs to the food bank. Tell the nun there that I said you may take what you need.

Blaze turns, begins walking away.

BLAZE

Don't try and find me again.

MOREAU

This is a mission from God, John.
This is his will. It doesn't end
with you merely saying "no."

Blaze doesn't look back as he exits the church. If he did,
he'd see Moreau, untroubled, move on to Blaze's bowl of soup.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

More stracciatella for me.

EXT. ATM - DARK STREET - ANDALUSIA - LATER

Much later. No one is on the street. She puts one of the
BLANK DEBIT CARDS in the machine, punches in the pin, and
starts drawing out cash.

NADYA

When we finally get somewhere safe,
We're not doing this anymore.

Danny stands nearby, out of the ATM camera's eyeline.

DANNY

But mom... it's *really* fun.

NADYA

It's not -- Okay, maybe it is...
But it's wrong.

Nadya finishes her transaction, walks away. Danny joins her.

DANNY

And when we get someplace safe...
You're gonna get me a dog for my
birthday, right?

Nadya looks at her son, reminded that beyond everything...
He's just a little boy. She kisses his forehead, with love.

NADYA

Little chav, a dog doesn't really
fit into our lifestyle right now.

We see they're nearing their car. Nadya hits a button on the
fob, UNLOCKING it.

DANNY

We have a lifestyle?

NADYA

Sorta. Plus, I already got you a
present, before...

Nadya doesn't want to say it. All the worry floods back.
Danny sees this, and turns the conversation back --

DANNY
That's what's in the box, huh?

Nadya smiles, seeing her son trying to pull her out of her fear. He cocks a mischievous eyebrow and looks at the truck.

Danny races over to the car, opening one of the doors...

NADYA
(laughing)
Do not look in that box! C'mon,
Danny. I want it to be a surprise!

DANNY
Okay, okay...

INT. ESCALADE - NIGHT

A different view of Nadya's truck. FROM A REAR VIEW MIRROR. The truck's lights come on and drive past the mirror. Reveal it's CARRIGAN'S ESCALADE.

LANDSDALE is at the wheel. In back, two more toughs: FUSCO and ODELL. And sitting shotgun is CARRIGAN, manipulating a deck of cards with one hand. Another Escalade can be seen through the windows, idling behind them.

ODELL
This is damn impressive, Sarge.

CARRIGAN
She and the boy are on their own
and she needs money. So how does
she get it? Same way she always
does. And the place she can do
that is the closest tourist trap
from where she took off.

Carrigan nods to Landsdale. He starts the car and pulls out slowly, after Nadya's car. The other Escalade follows. Carrigan notices a couple of drops on the windshield.

CARRIGAN (CONT'D)
God damn it, I love it when it
rains.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Blaze rides on, the city lights visible behind him, a LARGE PACK OF PROVISIONS bungee-corded to his bike. He's desperate to get away from any other living soul.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

FLASH! Motorcycles. Old broken down bikes, spare parts, posters... And the SILHOUETTE of a YOUNG BLAZE with his head hung.

ROARK'S VOICE (O.S.)
You look like you could use a
little help.

The silhouette of Young Blaze looks up. Before him stands a SILHOUETTE of a STURDY MAN wearing a suit.

ROARK'S VOICE (CONT'D)
If I could cure your father, would
you be willing to make a deal?

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

A car is in front of him. Blaze doesn't hesitate... he crosses the double yellow and sails past it.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

FLASH! Young Blaze's hand, SIGNING a CONTRACT. The pen's BLACK INK turns RED on the paper, SMOKE rising from it...

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Going up a road that's been carved into the mountains, Blaze tries to pass a Peugeot... but has to come back behind it to avoid a convoy of semis coming down the mountain.

Semis to his left, a sheer wall of rock to his right... Blaze chooses the right. In a flash, he veers his bike that way, goes up on the wall so he's perpendicular to the ground.

He passes the car, lands back on the road and he zooms on.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

FLASH! The Sturdy Man, in shadow, tosses Young Blaze -- still in silhouette -- something.

ROARK
That's your marker. Do we have an
agreement?

Close on Young Blaze's hand... and what it holds: the GOLD COIN we saw earlier... here, it's shiny and new.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Blaze looks back, the city lights have disappeared. He is all alone. It appears that he's outrun his demons. Until...

Blaze begins to shake... He whispers to himself.

BLAZE

Let me get back... Let me get back.

He squares his jaw, going through a pain he's felt a thousand times before.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

NO!

Then, a FLASH OF ORANGE LIGHT takes up to --

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

Nadya drives through the RAIN as Danny sleeps... She steals a glance at him.

He's angelic. Nadya smiles; it's something we can tell she doesn't let herself do often. She turns back to the road.

WHAM! The truck's RAMMED from behind! Danny LURCHES forward.

NADYA

HOLD ON!

CRASH! They're rammed again. She fights to keep control. Aims for a turn-off up ahead. She hauls the truck into the turn, fights the roll-over, barely makes it --

-- but it's not fast enough. HEADLIGHTS blaze into the cab.

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

WHAM! The Escalade collides with Nadya's door again. Glass shatters. Danny SHOUTS, terrified. Wind and rain rush in --

Nadya loses it, careens right, carves off the shoulder into a muddy culvert, SMASHING over rocks, brush, fence posts --

Finally, one of the Escalades PINS the pickup against a cluster of rocks. The other one hauls up, engine CHUGGING.

IN THE PICKUP

Nadya angrily drags her seatbelt off, snatches a snub-nosed revolver from the glove box. She looks to Danny:

NADYA
Lock the doors. And STAY HERE!

Nadya climbs out into the rain, SLAMS the door.

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

Nadya approaches, blinded by high-beams. She raises the gun --

NADYA
BACK THE HELL OFF!

LANDSDALE comes from left of nowhere, twists the gun from her hand. She spins, SEES Carrigan approaching -- and recognizes him instantly. She's shocked; he doesn't break stride.

CARRIGAN
Nadya. Been a while. I see you're
still a colossal pain in the ass.

NADYA
Ray? What are you doing here?

Carrigan doesn't say anything. He just smiles.

NADYA (CONT'D)
Look; there are people after Danny
and me. Whatever you want --

CRACK! Nadya falls to her knees, dimly aware of her son
SCREAMING. Carrigan shoves the Glock beneath her chin.

CARRIGAN
We're the people after you, Nadya.

The blood drains from Nadya's face. The three men from the other Escalade have made a military-style perimeter around the action, holding M4 RIFLES. These are CHUDACOFF and ALBRIGHT -- criminal ex-soldiers. GARGULO, the other one, wouldn't look military without his M4; he's 350 pounds, easy.

AT THE PICKUP CAB

Landsdale and Odell descend on Danny, rifles over their shoulders. He tries to start the engine. But the driver's door is wrenched open and the men are on him --

LANDSDALE
Careful with him!

Danny is dragged kicking and screaming from the cab.

ON NADYA,

Struggling to free herself, desperate to help her child.

NADYA
Ray! You don't understand what's
really going on!

CARRIGAN
I don't. Guy paid me to find you
'cause he knew I could find you.

NADYA
He's not just a guy --

CARRIGAN
-- I DON'T CARE!

Danny fights, raking his fingernails across Odell's face.

ODELL
Dammit!

THWACK! Landsdale slaps Danny. Enraged, Nadya breaks free --

NADYA
YOU SON OF A BITCH!

-- and drives an ELBOW into the base of Landsdale's skull.
He stumbles forward and Carrigan SMASHES Nadya to the ground.

Odell expertly binds Danny's hands with duct tape, then picks
him up and throws him into the Escalade. Trying to stand up
from the mud, Nadya looks up to Carrigan with pleading eyes.

NADYA (CONT'D)
DON'T DO THIS!

Carrigan walks up to her and wraps his meaty hand around her
small throat, raising the butt of his Glock in the air.

CARRIGAN
They way you've lived, Nadya, all
the crap you've pulled... You had
to know it was gonna end like this.

Carrigan's about to deliver the coup-de-grace, when --

-- A GUT WRENCHING HOWL cuts through the night.

ODELL
The hell was that?

The men glance at each other, nervous. A THUNDER-QUAKE
rumbles, so low and gritty it'll rattle your fillings.

Rocks fall from the surrounding incline. The SOUND is
deafening, vibrating the very earth. That's when it happens:

A FLAMING RED-HOT MONSTER-CYCLE

Leaps from atop a wedged outcrop, ridden by SOMETHING that SCREAMS and BURNS. Heat haze, glowing manifolds. The bike catches twenty feet of air, TRAILING FIRE like a comet's tail as it passes right over their disbelieving heads.

What. The. Fuck.

Touchdown. A BLAST WAVE of heat and flame billow outward. The bike hauls a deep carving turn, peeling mud, slides to a dead stop, hissing in the driving rain.

ON THE RIDER

Alive. Evil. Aflame. A man but not a man, its skullish head engulfed in fire. Clinking coils of red-hot chain slip link by link through its skeletal flickering fingers. His jaw bone opens to unleash an INHUMAN HOWL.

The men let rip their weapons. Guns blaze. BULLETS punch through the Rider, coming out his back as RED-HOT SLAG. The demon circles around, powers up onto his rear wheel --

ALBRIGHT

What the hell?! WHAT THE HELL?!

Albright continues to FIRE his carbine -- the Rider THUNDERS past like an Amtrak train, UNLEASHING a BLAST OF FLAME that reduces him to ash in a millisecond.

That's it for the others. They scramble for the Escalades.

WHOOSH! The Ghost Rider lashes out with his chains, lassos Chudacoff. The Rider summons a blast of PURE HELLFIRE that courses down the chains and engulfs Chudacoff.

STREAMS of FLAME SHOOT OFF FROM THE CHAIN in all directions -- one of them BLASTS PAST Nadya like a lightning bolt, SEARING her ARM... She SCREAMS OUT in pain, knocked to the ground.

The men make the trucks, pile in. Landsdale slams his Escalade into drive. The big SUV hauls away.

Carrigan fights to get his Escalade into gear. Danny peeks out from the back, eyes bugging --

DANNY'S POV: The Rider dismounts, stalks towards them. He clenches his hand and the ENGINE seizes up, BELCHING out FLAMES from the hood's seams, and then -- THE ENGINE PUNCHES UP FROM BELOW, smashing a convex dent in the hood.

BACK OUTSIDE

With Carrigan. There's no way he's starting his Escalade.

The Ghost Rider keeps coming, his skeletal claws/fingers white-hot now, throbbing with heat. He slices through Carrigan's Escalade's door like a human-acetylene torch.

Carrigan panics, drags Danny out the passenger door. Gargulo rolls out one of the passenger doors. But Fusco is still trapped inside. Can't get his seatbelt off.

The Ghost Rider bisects the vehicle and HURLS the front away, leaving Fusco cowering in the melted backseat. The Rider looms over him, extending a skeletal claw --

FUSCO
Oh god, please, I ain't nothin' to
do with nothin'. Please, PLEASE!

ON CARRIGAN

Carrying Danny, as he races towards the other Escalade. Landsdale is at the wheel, tamping down his fear; Odell, shotgun, is less successful, manic with terror.

CARRIGAN
The Vampirs, NOW!

Carrigan rips the passenger door open and pulls Odell out as Gargulo huffs over, terrified, holding his carbine.

Carrigan shoves Danny to Odell hard, OPENING a CUT against Danny's CHEEKBONE. Landsdale races out of the driver's side door -- he and Carrigan each tear open a door, flip up the floormats and reveal METAL PANELS in the floor. Quick, panels flung open, and we see what they're going for: Russian-made Vampir-class ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADE LAUNCHERS.

ON DANNY

Held by Odell, watching the horror of the Ghost Rider dragging Fusco from the torn vehicle, of Fusco's terrible SCREAMS. Danny seems at once sickened and excited...

The Ghost Rider has Fusco snatched up, nose-to-nose, forcing the man to look right into --

THE GHOST RIDER'S EYES

Hungry black sockets that suck the fire from the air.

FUSCO shudders. The Rider's eyes begin to GLOW as the Fusco is drained. This is the PENANCE STARE, and Fusco is feeling its power.

Gargulo, Odell, and Danny can't look away. They stand transfixed, Gargulo and Odell much more horrified than Danny -

Then it's over. The Ghost Rider drops Fusco into the mud. He lies there, shuddering, glassy-eyed, his brain overloaded.

We go CLOSE on Danny, practically in a TRANCE, his eyes glued to the Rider. A DROP OF BLOOD from the bleeding cut on the boy's cheek falls... Sails to the ground... HITS...

AND THE RIDER SENSES IT. The Rider turns quickly and LOCKS EYES (or in his case, SOCKETS) with Danny. Amidst all the chaos, the burning, the fear... It's a moment of a strange recognition of power -- from both sides.

CARRIGAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
LIGHTS OUT, ASSHOLE!

The Ghost Rider turns -- only to see Carrigan and Landsdale each FIRING their ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADES directly at him.

The Rider shoots out one of his CHAINS, GRABS one of the RPGS out of the air and PULLS it in the other direction. At the same time, the other RPG sails past the Ghost Rider, hitting:

THE TORN ESCALADE DIRECTLY BEHIND THE GHOST RIDER

A sudden, MAMMOTH EXPLOSION -- igniting both the gas tank and the weapons inside the SUV -- envelops him. The other RPG the Rider's chain is wrapped around SHOOTS to the ground, causing another CONCUSSIVE BLAST.

Carrigan picks himself up, ready for anything. Odell tugs Danny over. Gargulo holds up his gun, terrified. Landsdale races for the Escalade. The wreckage burns out of control.

CARRIGAN (CONT'D)
Roll out. NOW.

Carrigan jumps into the Escalade as Odell stuffs Danny into the back. Gargulo pulls open the other passenger door and bounces in. Landsdale starts the engine and they peel off.

ON NADYA

Dazed, in a muddy gully, clutching her burnt arm. Shaking in pain, she climbs up to the lip, SEES the burning Escalade nearby... She turns, catching the taillights of the other Escalade driving into the night. She WAILS.

CREAK. The burning wreckage moves. Nadya ducks down, watches, uncomprehending. The gnarled, flaming Escalade is hurled aside. Two tons. Tipped over like a packing crate.

Nadya slips down into the gully, gasping with fear. HEAVY FOOTSTEPS and CRACKLING FIRE draw near --

We see the Ghost Rider standing three feet from Nadya, as she crouches in the gully, clutching her arm in even more pain, just out of the Rider's eye line. But she can see him... his feet, at least -- he wears ENGINEER MOTORCYCLE BOOTS. A BULLET HOLE goes through the leather at the center of one of the buckles.

AN AGONIZING BEAT. The Rider walks on. Nadya is terrified, but she has no choice. She stands up and CALLS after him in a quivering voice...

NADYA

I know you can hear me. If you're here... Now... You're supposed to help me. You're supposed to save my son!

Nothing. The Rider keeps walking. Nadya CRIES, clutching her arm... She's spent.

Another moment, and she PASSES OUT. The rain keeps pounding.

EXT. ROAD - NEAR DAWN

A MAN -- who looks like a businessman cutting loose -- drunkenly drives his Skoda Fabia, drinking from a FIFTH of VODKA with a STRAW, eating a HAMBURGER, and trying to light a CIGARETTE with a DISPOSABLE LIGHTER. Golgo Bordello's "Wanderlust King" blasts and a BRAINY SMURF hangs from his rearview. Singing along, the Man keeps trying to light the cigarette...

SUDDENLY: Bright light. Fire. The interior EXPLODING into metal and glass --

And then, we realize what's happened: the car has been cut in half. Half of it is on one side of the road, the other half, with the Man still in the driver's seat, sits on the other side. Down the center of the road? A FLAMING TIRE TRACK that goes off into the distance. The radio still plays. The man inhales, realizing... his cigarette is now LIT.

We follow the burning tire track to...

THE GHOST RIDER, motoring through the abandoned back road.

As he rides, daylight peeks over the horizon. But as the sun hits the Ghost Rider, he begins to CHANGE back into John Blaze. The process takes a few seconds... the Rider's skull and Blaze's face are both visible at the same time.

Blaze eventually wrests control of his body. He immediately winces in pain... it's so bad that he needs to pull over.

Blaze opens up the seat. Inside is a 100-count pill container. He pops a couple into his mouth -- the last two in the container -- and swallows them dry.

He lifts up his shirt and he can see every wound that was inflicted on the Ghost Rider last night.

RAW SKIN. BLOOD. EVEN SOME BITS OF METAL EMBEDDED IN HIS SIDE. Though Ghost Rider does not suffer injuries, Blaze most certainly does. Blaze looks down to see the BRAINY SMURF hanging from one of his handlebars.

He looks down the road in the other direction. A sign (in Italian) reads, "BENZINA, ALBERGO, OSPEDALE 25KM." Blaze turns his bike around and roars back the way he came.

INT. RURAL CLINIC - EXAM ROOM - DAY

Blaze is on an examining table. A homely NURSE tends to him.

BLAZE
(in Italian)
I got into a fight with a man from Zurich. He insisted that Swiss women were Europe's finest.

The Nurse shakes her head at Blaze, she knows he's flirting. This is a charming side of Blaze that we haven't seen...

NURSE
That's a good story.

BLAZE
You think I'm lying? I spent last night defending your honor!

NURSE
(re: wounds)
Not very well.

The Nurse smiles. Blaze's eyes wander over to a medical supply closet in the corner.

He looks back at the Nurse to discover that her expression has changed. She furrows her brow, alarmed.

NURSE (CONT'D)
I've never seen this before. Your wounds. It looks like they've been... cauterized.

The Nurse looks to Blaze. A tense moment. Then...

BLAZE
Your beauty makes my blood run so hot, it burned through my body --
(then)
I rolled my bike. The road cut me. The engine burnt me. But, I have to say... you're still very hot.

The Nurse laughs.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
Hey, I haven't eaten anything since last night --

NURSE
I have stracciatella!

John almost laughs, touches the Nurse's hand and she beams.

BLAZE
 (derisively)
*Swiss women were Europe's finest...
 That fool.*

The Nurse walks out. As soon as she's gone, Intense Blaze is back. He heads to the supply closet and begins to raid it.

He grabs a syringe, fills it from a VIAL of liquid, jams it into his stomach. He takes all the pills they've got, then a handful of bandages, tape, rubbing alcohol... throws them into his jacket and he heads towards the door.

INT. RURAL CLINIC - HALLWAY - DAY

Blaze is about to turn the corner when:

NADYA (O.S.)
I need to go find my son!

NURSE #2
*They found you lying in the middle
 of the road. You need to rest, or --*

Blaze peeks around the corner. Nadya, on a bed in the ER, is being tended to by a NURSE.

NADYA
*I don't care! I NEED to find my
 son. Just let me leave. PLEASE!*

Blaze FLASHES to the night before. An IMPRESSIONISTIC REMEMBRANCE of:

NADYA (O.S.) (FLASHBACK) (CONT'D)
*You're supposed to help me. You're
 supposed to save my son!*

BACK IN THE PRESENT:

NURSE #2
Fine. We can't keep you here.

NADYA
Thank you.

Blaze looks behind him. The door to the break room opens and the Homely Nurse walks out, carrying food. Not wanting to be caught with stolen drugs, his only exit is the front door.

He puts his head down and is walking out as Nadya tries to rush past. She winds up bumping into him -- with her burnt, bandaged arm. She gives out a pained YELP. She STUMBLES.

Blaze CATCHES her by her good arm. For a moment, they're very close.

BLAZE
You're alright, right?

Nadya breathes hard. Damn, that hurts.

NADYA
Yeah. It's just... I burnt myself.

Blaze eyes her, knowing what really happened. Haunted by the Rider's handiwork, he pushes on, that much faster.

EXT. RURAL CLINIC PARKING LOT - DAY

As Blaze takes a few quick steps past Nadya, a BOTTLE OF PILLS drops from his jacket. Nadya immediately stoops down to grab it for him. When she does, she sees Blaze's BOOTS -- and the BULLET HOLE at the center of one of his buckles.

She stands up, shocked. Holy shit.

NADYA
Last night -- That was... I -- It was you.

BLAZE
I don't know what the hell you're talking about.

Blaze walks on, Nadya, desperate, grabs him.

NADYA
Those men took my son. You were there!

BLAZE
That wasn't me.

NADYA
It was! You can help me! You can get Danny back! Please!

BLAZE
Lady, you need to call the cops.

Blaze hops on his bike. Before Blaze can start the engine, Nadya steps in front of him.

NADYA

You have at least 600 Euros in medical supplies stuffed in your jacket.

(off Blaze's look)

Maybe I *should* call the cops.

BLAZE

Why don't you go ahead and do that?

Nadya thinks about this a moment. She doesn't care. Determined, she whips out a KNIFE from an ankle holster, slashes Blaze's carburetor line. Fuel spills out onto the ground. Blaze looks down at Nadya. He's not pleased.

NADYA

You need a ride to a repair shop.

(looking right at Blaze)

Listen, I know the stories about others who carried the curse before you... You were tricked. You made a deal. You're the Ghost Rider.

Off Blaze, resigned...

INT. NADYA'S TRUCK - DAY

Nadya and Blaze. Behind them, Blaze's wounded bike is visible in the cargo. Blaze uses the medical supplies he stole to tend to his wounds. Right now, he's STITCHING HIMSELF UP.

NADYA

I'm Nadya.

(no answer)

And you have a name, too.

Again, no answer. Nadya sees a POTHOLE up ahead. She veers the car over to make sure she hits it. KA-CHUNK. As they go over the pothole, Blaze STABS himself with the needle. He grunts in pain. Fine, he'll talk.

BLAZE

John Blaze.

NADYA

My son, the one you don't want to help -- his name's Danny.

BLAZE

I *can't* help him. I have to get away from here.

NADYA

What are you getting away from?

Blaze watches buildings roll by for a moment.

BLAZE
People.

NADYA
Why?

BLAZE
So the Rider won't have a reason to come out.

They ride on for a moment... As Nadya thinks.

NADYA
I know. You don't think you have a choice because you made a bad one a long time ago. John... I did too.

Blaze looks at Nadya.

NADYA (CONT'D)
Carrigan... The man you attacked last night --

BLAZE
The Rider attacked him. Not me.

NADYA
I was with him a long time. I was born in a refugee camp in Montenegro. Carrigan was a U.S. soldier. I sold stolen goods. He sold weapons. We started doing deals together... Doing drugs together...
(an edge of shame)
Match made in hell.

EXT. VACANT APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A younger, harder-edged Nadya (dark eyeshadow, dark clothes, eyebrow ring) lays on the floor of the dark empty apartment, BLEEDING and COUGHING. Two DEAD MEN lay on the floor...

NADYA (V.O.)
One of our deals went wrong... I got shot, Carrigan ran. And then --

We see the SHADOW of a MAN walk into the room.

ROARK
Looks like you could use some help.

INT. NADYA'S TRUCK - DAY

Blaze looks at Nadya. Holy shit. Roark got her, too.

BLAZE

Roark?

NADYA

If I would have his child... He'd
save my life.

Blaze eyes her, even more shocked. Danny's the devil's son?

NADYA (CONT'D)

Roark said he'd come to claim him
someday. So I stayed with Carrigan.

(a sad laugh)

I didn't tell him anything, but...
I thought... Maybe Carrigan could
protect us. Then we had to run
from him, too. And then, last
month... These monks found me.
Said they needed to keep us safe...
They couldn't.

BLAZE

Stop the truck.

Nadya hits the brakes. Blaze hops out of the cab, knocking a
BOX out onto the road. Nadya steps out after him.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Blaze jumps into the cargo and starts unloading his bike.

NADYA

You gonna ride on a rim?

Blaze doesn't respond. The tacit answer is, "Yes."

NADYA (CONT'D)

Don't you see? You're *supposed* to
help us. You think it's just chance
that you showed up when you did?

BLAZE

The Rider kills people and drags
their souls to Hell. That's what
he does, Nadya.

Blaze shoves his bike out of the cargo and onto the ground.

NADYA

Danny's just a boy. The Rider
almost saved him --

BLAZE

That wasn't what he was doing.

NADYA

But that's what happened. I think that's what was meant to happen. Just like us standing here, talking right now. All that bad... The good's gotta push back sometime.

Nadya puts her hand on Blaze's bike.

NADYA (CONT'D)

You and I, we both made deals. We both paid the price. Danny shouldn't have to.

Blaze, wavering, looks at the ground. He sees what he knocked out of the truck -- a TOY MOTORCYCLE with a CARD that reads, "DANNY." He looks away, to the horizon. And there, gliding in the sky, is a BONELLI'S EAGLE. It doesn't feel like a coincidence. It feels like an answer.

BLAZE

I'll help... For now.

Nadya turns to Blaze.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

We're going to Provence. There's a man you need to meet.

Nadya nods. These two have forged a relationship.

Up the sky, the Bonelli's Eagle arches its wings, suddenly diving towards the earth... Down faster, faster... Until it STRIKES, snatching up a hapless RABBIT and flying away...

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - DAY

Having driven through the night, Carrigan and his men have pulled over to stretch their legs and empty their bladders.

Everyone except Danny. He stays sitting in the car, staring at the seat in front of him. He looks like he's been crying.

CARRIGAN

Piss break, kid.

Danny doesn't acknowledge him... His lip starts to quiver.

CARRIGAN (CONT'D)

Stay there if you want, but we're not stopping for the rest of the day. You piss your pants, you'll be sitting in it 'til dinner.

Gargulo, eating from a can of SPAGHETTIOS, looks sheepish.

GARGULO
Boss, those are cloth seats... I
mean, it'll go right through.

Carrigan, annoyed, throws the car door open, pulls Danny out.

CARRIGAN
TAKE! A! PISS!

Danny breathes hard, angry... Is he going to cry? Then --
his breathing slows... A look of calm evil crosses his face.

DANNY
He's coming for you, Carrigan.
You're a dead man.

CARRIGAN
Who?

DANNY
The man with the fire... Who
attacked you on the road. He's
coming for you.

His calm affect, his confidence... The guys are struck dumb.

ODELL
He's freaking me out.

CARRIGAN
Shut up.

DANNY
My mom taught me to read shadows.
Yours is dead. Same with your
friends. You have maybe one, two
days to live.

CARRIGAN
Okay, Danny Boy. We're dead. What
do you suggest we do about that?

A creepy smile spreads across Danny's face.

DANNY
Dig four graves.

Silence. Even Carrigan can't help but get shivers down his
spine. He takes a beat, then pulls out his phone and dials.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CHALET - DAY (INTERCUT AS NECESSARY)

Roark picks up the phone. He looks a little more worse for wear than what we saw in Blaze's flashback. But he still has the air of someone you wouldn't want to fuck with.

In the background, you can just barely hear a coyote's howl.

ROARK
Do you have the boy?

CARRIGAN
Son of a bitch just told me to dig myself a grave.

ROARK
Well... I wouldn't take anything the boy says for granted. He's a very special young man.

CARRIGAN
Something attacked us outside Andalusia. Something... It looked like it came right out of hell. My head's straight. Never seen a shrink my life... But that thing? Its head was just a skull. On fire.

Roark stares forward for a BEAT, clenching his jaw. Silent, simmering anger. And then, back to business.

ROARK
Be advised, that "something" may pose a continuing problem.

CARRIGAN
That's all you got for me on that?

ROARK
Ahead of my arrival tomorrow at your base of operations, yes.

CARRIGAN
This kid keeps talking back to me, he might not make it 'til then.

ROARK
That's not our arrangement.

CARRIGAN
It's called leverage, bud. And I've got it. You want us to take Sixth Sense here the rest of the way, I want double the money.

Roark doesn't raise his voice. But the threat is powerful:

ROARK

At this juncture, it would be
unwise to alter any of the
specific, previously negotiated
points of our agreement.

Silence from Carrigan... he's been appropriately chastened.

ROARK (CONT'D)

If you want the boy to behave
appropriately, let me speak to him.
And, while I do... Hold him.

Carrigan looks puzzled, but he'll do what he's told: he puts
the phone to Danny's ear. Danny tries to wriggle away, but
Carrigan forces him to be still.

ROARK (CONT'D)

Danny. I know you're scared and
you miss your mother. But you have
a choice right now. You can either
be good or you can be bad.

Roark actually sounds somewhat paternal... and Danny is
calming down. Could the devil actually have a soft side?

ROARK (CONT'D)

Your mother had a similar decision
to make nine months before you were
born. She could either accept my
vile proposition... or keep her
self-respect.

DANNY

SHUT UP, YOU BASTARD!

Danny kicks and squirms, but Carrigan is much too strong. As
Roark continues to taunt Danny, his tone never wavers.

ROARK

She chose to be bad, Danny.

DANNY

NO! NO! SHUT UP!

It sounds crazy, but Danny is so angry, so full of hate, that
it looks like he is literally about to EXPLODE.

ROARK

And so did I.

Whatever anger that's been building up... Danny opens his
mouth to scream. But it's not a scream that comes out...

A SCARY, HELLISH SOUND comes from the depths of Danny's
being. And it shakes every one of them to their core.

Even Danny is a little scared of what he just did.

The only person who isn't fazed is Roark. In fact, a thin SMILE curls up his face.

Carrigan takes the phone from Danny's ear, shouts into it:

CARRIGAN
I thought you were going to calm
him down.

ROARK
No. I told you he was going to
behave appropriately. And he's
finally beginning to do just that.

He hangs up, content. Whatever his plan is, it's working.

EXT. MONASTERY OF SAINT RUFINUS - DAY

Aquitaine, in the southeast of France. A simple, yet beautiful compound, with a vineyard. MONKS can be seen out in the fields, tending to the vines in the distance.

EXT. SANCTUARY - MONASTERY OF SAINT RUFINUS - CONTINUOUS

Blaze and Nadya pull up outside the ancient sanctuary. Nadya is a little hesitant.

NADYA
What do you know about him?

BLAZE
Just that he told me about you and
Danny. And -
(knowing this sounds bad)
He's an alcoholic monk with a gun,
Wayfarers, and an 1973 Moto Guzzi.

NADYA
He sounds like a Black Sabbath
album cover.

Blaze chuckles. Nadya, looking at the monastery, squirms.

NADYA (CONT'D)
I've never been inside a church.

Blaze is struck by Nadya's admission.

BLAZE
It's a monastery. The only thing
inside here are a bunch of guys who
don't talk much and never get laid.
(MORE)

BLAZE (CONT'D)

(then)

It's kind of like a biker bar.

Nadya smiles, comforted by Blaze's joke. As they approach the door, they hear a muffled GROWLING from inside. Blaze and Nadya look to each other. What the fuck?

INT. MONASTERY OF SAINT RUFINUS - DAY

Blaze throws open the door. A pack of LARGE COYOTE BEASTS is in the middle of the CANDLE-LIT monastery. And they've surrounded Moreau in the center of the room.

Moreau is fending them off with a LONG METAL SANCTUARY LAMP. In fact, he pulls the base from the rest of it, revealing it to be a LONG, THIN SWORD. He swings his weapon at the beasts, but he's so outnumbered, all he can do is defend.

Blaze rushes to the other side of the room, grabs a CENSER. He twirls it around like a flail. Blaze puts his fingers in his mouth and WHISTLES. The coyotes turn. Two of them peel away from Moreau and gallop towards Blaze.

Blaze BASHES ONE IN THE SKULL, killing it instantly. The other snaps at Blaze and he pops it square in the mouth.

That only seems to have pissed it off. The coyote bares its RAZOR SHARP TEETH, sinks them into Blaze's arm.

Blaze groans in pain, tries to get the thing off him, but it won't let go. Then... THWIT! The coyote falls to the ground, REVEALING Nadya's KNIFE sticking out of its back.

BLAZE

Nice shot.

Nadya runs over and retrieves her blade, when...

MOREAU

Look out!

Nadya turns around, sees ANOTHER COYOTE racing towards her. She throws her knife at the coyote.

We're with the SPINNING BLADE... it's heading towards the coyote's head, about to slice it in two.

But the coyote CATCHES THE KNIFE IN ITS TEETH as if it were a frisbee. It's becoming increasingly evident that these animals are not of this earth.

The coyote spits out the knife and continues racing towards Nadya... it doesn't even break stride. It leaps towards Nadya, FANGS READY TO STRIKE.

Blaze jumps in the way, TACKLES the Coyote away from Nadya. But the Coyote is up in a flash, before Blaze can get up.

The Coyote walks towards Blaze, forcing him to back into a corner. In fact, Nadya and Moreau's coyotes are doing the same thing... they're all being backed into the same corner.

NADYA
What are these things?

MOREAU
They're hunters. I don't need to tell you what that makes us.

They back into the wall. Further retreat is impossible. Blaze turns to Moreau, an idea forming.

BLAZE
You got any anointing oil?

MOREAU
No.

BLAZE
How about some booze?

MOREAU
(hesitant)
Don't you?

BLAZE
You finished mine!

MOREAU
There must be another way --

BLAZE
MOREAU!

Torn, Moreau reaches into his pocket, takes out a FIFTH OF WHISKEY. And ANOTHER. Blaze grabs them.

He throws the bottles towards the coyotes. CRASH. The bottles shatter and the liquid splatters all over the beasts.

Before the coyotes can react, Blaze reaches his arm up towards the ceiling. The FLAMES from the candles on the chandelier COME ALIVE, PLUNGE TOWARDS THE GROUND.

WHOOSH! The coyotes are ENGULFED IN FLAMES. Burnt alive.

MOREAU
A moment of silence for my dear departed Jameson.
(then)
I suppose I picked the wrong day to skip field duties.

BLAZE
Moreau, Nadya. Nadya, Moreau.

Nadya turns to Moreau.

NADYA
I need to find my son.

Moreau puts his sanctuary lamp down.

MOREAU
Yes. You do. Roark sent those
beasts here for a reason. He
doesn't want me to show you what's
downstairs.

Moreau cocks an eyebrow, as if to say, "Follow me."

INT. MONASTERY OF SAINT RUFINUS - PANTRY - DAY

Stacks of dry goods, neatly sorted.

Blaze and Nadya stand by as Moreau kicks up a rug on the
floor to reveal a TRAP DOOR. Moreau lifts it up.

MOREAU
This monastery isn't the first
structure to sit on this site.

Ancient stairs lead down into a black abyss.

INT. MONASTERY OF SAINT RUFINUS - CATACOMBS - DAY

As they descend the stairs, Moreau grabs a TORCH from the
wall, lights it to reveal a series of catacombs that were
constructed millennia before Christ was born.

A SMALL SPRING flows alongside them.

MOREAU
For thousands of years, this was a
sacred Pagan spring. People would
wash themselves in its water to be
spiritually cleansed.

Tapestries line the wall. Blaze stops short at one that must
be 1,500 years old. It depicts a man with a FLAMING SKULL
riding a HORSE. A pack of coyotes circle him.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
About 1,700 years ago, when the
temple that stood on these grounds
was destroyed, a new one was
eventually erected. They called it
a church.

(MORE)

MOREAU (CONT'D)
 People could still use the water to
 cleanse themselves. Only now, it
 was called a baptism.

Blaze moves over next to Nadya, stares at the tapestry.
 There he is. An even more PRIMITIVE GHOST RIDER. It's
 unmistakably the same spirit that inhabits his body today.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
 Then, the words "God" and "Satan,"
 were introduced. But as you can
 see, those ideas have been around a
 lot longer than that.

They pass the last tapestry and move on to CAVE PAINTINGS.
 The same themes, though: spirits, Ghost Rider, coyotes.

BLAZE
 Roark.

Blaze's eyes focus in on the COYOTE. It stalks the Ghost
 Rider from a distance. Just as Roark does to this day.

NADYA
 If he's been around so long, if
 he's so powerful... Why didn't he
 just take Danny himself?

MOREAU
 Roark's power doesn't translate on
 this plane; the full force of his
 spirit can't be contained by a
 human vessel. Like trying to pour
 a bottle of whiskey into a shot
 glass... it's too much. Thus, *when*
he uses his power, there is a cost:
 wielding his ancient force withers
 his earthly form. So he must rely
 on others doing his bidding.

BLAZE
 Why does he want Danny... Why now?

Moreau indicates the final painting in the series. It's
 Roark (and others) performing some elaborate ceremony.

MOREAU
 Samhain. Every October 31st, the
 boundary between this world and the
 next becomes a hair's breadth. On
 that night, if the devil finds a
 host strong enough to hold his
 entire spirit -- one that is both
 of this world and the next --

NADYA
 His child?

Moreau nods, solemn.

MOREAU
If he finds such a host and has his
shadow fall over theirs by the
fires of Hell, the devil will take
that host and walk the earth.

NADYA
And what happens to Danny?

MOREAU
What will eventually happen to the
rest of us, when Roark is done with
this world... He is destroyed.

Nadya looks at Moreau...

NADYA
How could Danny contain that power?
To be that "host?" He's just a boy.

MOREAU
Not in Roark's eyes. When is
Daniel's 10th birthday?

NADYA
On Friday.

BLAZE
October 31st. Samhain.

Oh shit.

MOREAU
Roark has been planning for this
moment for a long time. Find the
child. Before he does.

EXT. RENT-A-CAR OFFICE - DAY

A BLIZZARD. Snow falling by the bucketful. But it's not a
Christmas card tableau. The wind whips. The cold is bitter.

The streets are deserted except for one solitary figure.
ROARK steps in front of a rental car office.

INT. RENT-A-CAR OFFICE - DAY

A portly rental agent, PETR PETROWSKY, is closing up shop.
As he does, he hears the door CHIME. Roark enters, putting
an ELEGANT LEATHER CARRY-ON BAG on the counter.

PETROWSKY
(in Russian)
Sorry, I'm just closing up.

Roark looks to a clock on the wall -- it's 4:55.

ROARK
According to the hours posted
outside, you're still open.

PETROWSKY
(In English, exasperated)
Look, Mister. There is a storm. I
want to get out of here.

Roark stares at Petrowsky, examines his name tag.

ROARK
I would like to rent a car, "Petr."

Something in Roark's tone gives Petrowsky pause. He glances to the window and the growing storm beyond. We SEE a COYOTE out there -- this one completely WHITE -- watching from across the way. Petrowsky relents.

PETROWSKY
Sit. Please.

Roark sits. Petrowsky moves behind his desk.

PETROWSKY (CONT'D)
What type of car would you like?

Roark picks up a laminated placard featuring various cars.

ROARK
Hmmm. These prices seem a little
high to me.

Roark deliberates. Outside, the storm grows stronger. Petrowsky shifts in his seat, trying to mask his impatience.

PETROWSKY
You want the Taurus? Give you the
small car price. 38 a day.

ROARK
That's the best you can do?

PETROWSKY
(annoyed now)
I'll throw in GPS. Deal?

Another beat as Roark stares Petrowsky down. After an agonizing beat, Roark nods. Petrowsky smiles, relieved.

PETROWSKY (CONT'D)
May I see your driver's license?

Roark reaches into his jacket, hands over his license. Petrowsky types in the required information, trying to ignore the vague feeling of uneasiness settling over him.

Petrowsky enters the final data, hits PRINT. As the contract begins printing we hear a HONK. Roark turns. A mini-van parks outside. A WOMAN sits behind the wheel, a GIRL beside her. The coyote is still there, but it pays no attention.

ROARK
You have a daughter?

Petrowsky nods. Roark smiles, not saying a word. Petrowsky looks at him a BEAT. The exchange sets him further on edge.

ROARK (CONT'D)
Children. We get such a short time here... The only way we get to live on is through them....

Petrowsky slides the agreement to Roark, takes out a pen:

PETROWSKY
Just sign here.

Petrowsky offers Roark a pen. He doesn't take it. Instead, he pulls out a pair of bifocals, begins to read the contract.

PETROWSKY (CONT'D)
Is there a problem?

ROARK
I'm reading.

PETROWSKY
(rolling his eyes)
It is a standard contract --

Roark looks up. Not happy.

ROARK
Petr. I know contracts. Every one of them is a transfer of power. To call one "standard"... Disgusts me. Now, the price you quoted was 38, the "small car" rate. But you've listed the daily rate here as 63.

Roark turns the agreement around for Petrowsky to see.

PETROWSKY
I apologize. You are correct. A simple mistake --

Petrowsky reaches for the contract. Roark grabs his wrist.

Roark looks up at Petrowsky over the rim of his bifocals, the timbre of his voice taking on a decidedly frigid turn.

ROARK

Were you trying to defraud me?

PETROWSKY

No, no, not at all --

ROARK

Then I'd like a new contract specifying the appropriate rate.

PETROWSKY

To do so, I will need to enter all your information again and...

Petrowsky squirms. For in this moment, without either man uttering a word, the entire dynamic seems to have changed.

Petrowsky points to the existing contract.

PETROWSKY (CONT'D)

We use this contract. I will make a note of the change and give you one day free. What do you say?

ROARK

I say the Devil's in the details.

EXT. RENT-A-CAR - DAY

CRASH! Petrowsky flies through the plate glass window. He lands on the sidewalk, stunned, bleeding.

MASHA PETROWSKY bolts from the mini-van. The girl watches as her mother rushes to her husband's side.

MASHA

(in Russian)

Petr?! Petr, what happened?!

Petrowsky clutches at his wife's arm, trying to speak. A shard of glass has penetrated his larynx.

PETROWSKY

-- M-masha -- get -- a--away --

Petrowsky's eyes widen in horror. Masha follows his gaze --

ROARK strides towards them, his carry-on over his shoulder, his face a veil of contempt. The blizzard has taken on Biblical proportions, becoming an extension of his fury. And suddenly, there are --

COYOTES. All around Roark, loping out of the swirling snow. In the chaos, their half-glimpsed shapes seem to alter, becoming even more monstrous. One LEAPS at Masha, knocking her down. The others follow, swarming over husband and wife.

Roark squares his jaw -- the pleasure of inflicting pain mingles with the pain of inflicting it. DARK AGE SPOTS appear along the sides of his face, down to his neck, WITH WISPS OF SMOKE rising from them, -- summoning the power of hell through this mortal vessel causes it to burn from within... And age... Roark just advanced ten years, easy.

Roark DROPS his carry-on, now too heavy for him. Steeling himself, breathing hard, TENDRILS OF SMOKE rising from him... He turns, looks inside the mini-van. The girl is gone.

EXT. RENTAL CAR LOT - DAY

We are low on the ground, tracking with the terrified GIRL as she squirms her way beneath the cars. She pauses, nervous.

GIRL'S POV (UNDER CAR): The HEELS of Roark's shoes are a few yards away, gradually closing in on the girl's hiding spot.

Roark kneels, bending down, smiles at the girl. The girl turns to squirm back the other way --

-- and A COYOTE is right there, lips snarling to expose its jagged teeth. It LUNGES towards us and we SMASH TO...

EXT. MONASTERY OF SAINT RUFINUS - DAY

Blaze fixes his bike in the cargo of Nadya's truck. Moreau sits nearby, drinking from a flask. Nadya paces, nervous. Monks can be intermittently seen in the background, carrying firewood, casks, speaking to each other...

MOREAU
Credit cards, phone?

NADYA
Carrigan's knows what he's doing. He's using cash and a disposable phone. Nothing he's got can be traced... Except...

Moreau and Blaze look over to her.

NADYA (CONT'D)
Those RPG's he shot at you last night. To get them across the border, it had to be arranged.
(then)
Cono.

BLAZE

Where?

NADYA

Who. Cono. Carrigan's arranger.

MOREAU

You know where to find him?

NADYA

Give me two minutes.

She takes her phone, dials, and walks down the driveway.

Blaze watches her go... the only sounds are those of him fixing that fuel line. Once she's out of earshot...

BLAZE

When are you going to tell us the whole story?

Moreau furrows his brow. What is Blaze talking about?

BLAZE (CONT'D)

Samhain's been around a long time. You expect us to believe Roark's never tried this before?

MOREAU

He has. Many times. The priests always were able to stop him by themselves. You were only to be sought out as a last resort.

BLAZE

So you're the last resort who finds the last resort...

MOREAU

Yeah. Something like that.

Blaze shakes his head.

BLAZE

You could have just told me he was Roark's son back in Spain.

MOREAU

I asked if you wanted to save an innocent child. I didn't think you'd need to be talked into it. Maybe I had too much faith in you.
(then, with a grin)
But then again, I'd say this worked out famously.

Blaze turns his attention to the bike. Just as he finishes fixing the fuel line, Nadya returns.

NADYA
I found Cono. He's in Corsica.
Ajaccio... where he deals.
(then, to Blaze)
I'm driving. Moreau... Thank you.

Blaze hops out of the cargo, looking at Moreau.

BLAZE
We'll find the kid. We'll get him.
And we'll bring him back here.

Nadya gets into the truck. Blaze hops into the passenger side of the truck. Moreau walks up to the open window.

MOREAU
Godspeed.

BLAZE
Yeah. Something like that.

Nadya peels out of the gravel driveway, leaving Moreau looking after them. He takes another pull off his flask.

INT. ESCALADE - DAY

Odell drives. Carrigan is shotgun. Danny is between Gargulo and Landsdale in the back. Gargulo eats more Spaghettios.

Tedium. Carrigan stares out at the passing landscape. Up ahead, he sees a BEAUTIFUL, LONG EUROPEAN BRIDGE.

DANNY
Is it all right if I open a window?

Carrigan looks back at him, a sneer on his face.

CARRIGAN
You see, that's the problem. Right there. You think you can just talk?

Carrigan takes an empty RPG launcher from under the seat and JABS the BUTT right into Danny's stomach. Danny doubles over. Odell, seeing this, doesn't like it.

CARRIGAN (CONT'D)
New rules. You speak when spoken to. Discipline equals order.

Danny, once again, changes. His face grows calm. Cold.

DANNY
He's coming for me.

CARRIGAN
You don't learn.

DANNY
The Ghost Rider is coming. And
he's angry.

Landsdale and Gargulo seem more annoyed than anything else at Danny's chatter. Odell, on the other hand, grips the wheel a little tighter... He's scared.

DANNY (CONT'D)
If you let me go right now, I'm
sure he'll make your deaths quick.

CARRIGAN
Okay. Talking is done.

CRACK! Carrigan jams the EMPTY RPG LAUNCHER right back into Danny's chest. Odell looks in the rear view mirror. Danny looks up, pathetic. Locks eyes with Odell.

After a beat, Odell begins to open one of the back seat window. Carrigan barks at him:

CARRIGAN (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing?

ODELL
He said he needed air.

CARRIGAN
What do you care?

ODELL
I don't want him to puke! He
pukes, I puke, everybody pukes!

The breeze from the open window tousles Danny's hair. He sits up... all symptoms of being injured are gone. As is the wheeze in his voice. He was faking the whole thing!

DANNY
Thanks, Odell.
(then)
I'll tell him you were nice.

In a flash, Danny is LEAPING to the FRONT SEATS -- he GRABS Odell's arm and YANKS, SHARPLY PULLING THE STEERING WHEEL!

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

The SUV suddenly JERKS to the side, about to tip.

Odell overcorrects and the ESCALADE ROLLS OVER. It SMASHES through the guardrail and FLIES towards the river below.

INT. ESCALADE - DAY

Anything not bolted down is flying all around the car as it continues to spin. The four men SCREAM and CURSE. Danny, however, is perfectly calm. Seat belt buckled, in crash position. He just awaits the inevitable.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Three tons of metal WHISTLES through the air. Then --

INT. ESCALADE - DAY

SPLASH. Half the roof crushes in, SMASHING Odell into the windshield. Bodies bang into seats. Air bags deploy.

Water GUSHES into the car through the VENTS and the OPEN WINDOW. While the three men shake the cobwebs off, Danny calmly undoes his seatbelt and heads towards the window.

GARGULO

Not so fast!

Gargulo grabs Danny's leg. Danny kicks Gargulo in the mouth with his other leg. Gargulo's grip weakens... Danny's free.

As Danny starts swimming towards safety, Gargulo tries to follow him... but Gargulo is TOO FAT to fit through the window. He's stuck, like Winnie the Pooh in Rabbit's door.

By now Carrigan and Landsdale are getting their bearings. Carrigan tries to open the door, but the pressure against the water makes that option impossible.

Carrigan tries rolling down his window, but midway down, it stops. The Escalade's radio suddenly turns on at the same time, starts BLARING "Whoop! (There It Is)."

CARRIGAN

(almost to himself)

Water fried the circuits.

GARGULO

GET ME OUT OF HERE!

Carrigan jumps into the back seat, water starting to fill the front of the car. He nods to Landsdale and the two of them try to push Gargulo through.

Just as they get a little bit of movement... The Escalade DIPS a little further into the water and Carrigan's WINDOW BEGINS TO ROLL UP BY ITSELF. The radio cuts out.

Gargulo SCREAMS in pain, as his window tries to go up as well, crushing his giant gut.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Danny, halfway to shore, turns around when he hears Gargulo.

Danny stops, treading water to watch his handiwork play out. And then -- he smiles a slightly WICKED SMILE...

INT. ESCALADE - DAY

Water continues to gush in through the vents... they don't have much time; the front of the cab is nearly full.

CARRIGAN
Screw this.

Carrigan takes out his gun, FIRES a round into the other back window. It SHATTERS, sending even more water inside the SUV.

CARRIGAN (CONT'D)
(to Landsdale)
Let's go.

GARGULO
Guys, where are you going??? DON'T
LEAVE ME!

Landsdale climbs out of the other window as the Escalade begins to sink. Gargulo's legs swing as he makes a desperate attempt to free himself.

GARGULO (CONT'D)
CARRIGAN!

Carrigan can only shake his head.

CARRIGAN
Goddam SpaghettiOs.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Carrigan and Landsdale swim. Behind them, the Escalade disappears below the surface of the water. They focus up ahead, where Danny's closing in on the shore.

Carrigan turns into overdrive, his Army training evident as he closes on Danny... a hundred meters, fifty, twenty five.

Danny finally can stand up as he sloshes through waist deep water, Carrigan is only seconds behind.

EXT. SHORE - DAY

Danny reaches the rocky shore. He's spent, running on fumes. Carrigan, right behind him and takes out his gun.

Danny races over the rocks: two steps at a time and his ANKLE gets caught -- it SNAPS and Danny goes down in a heap. He YOWLS in pain at his broken ankle. Carrigan sidles towards him... looking incredibly pissed.

Just then, a figure emerges from the woods by the beach. A SKINNY TWENTYSOMETHING wearing a CHOP TOP HEAD BANDANA FEATURING A SKULL and an INSANE CLOWN POSSE JERSEY approaches, concerned. He addresses them in German.

SKINNY TWENTYSOMETHING
Are you all right?

Carrigan turns towards him, feigning panic.

CARRIGAN
Do you speak English?

SKINNY TWENTYSOMETHING
Yes. Are you okay, bro? I saw it all... On the bridge...

CARRIGAN
I need help. My boy... he's hurt.

Danny is in too much pain to offer additional information.

SKINNY TWENTYSOMETHING
I called the ambulance, little man.

CARRIGAN
I don't know what happened... I just lost control...

Carrigan sees a lone vehicle (a black Mercedes Sprinter Van) parked about a hundred meters away.

CARRIGAN (CONT'D)
That your van?

SKINNY TWENTYSOMETHING
Yeah. Why?

Just as the man gets that last word out, the dime drops. He sees LANDSDALE emerge from the river. Danny's fearful expression. Carrigan's GUN. The Man turns around, terrified and begins to run away... as we SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MERCEDES SPRINTER VAN - DAY

Carrigan drives, intense and angry. Landsdale rides shotgun. Who knows what the fuck happened to the guy on the beach; Danny is bound up with his SKULL BANDANA.

For the first time, he looks genuinely scared. As they drive, the sun gets a little heavy in the sky.

LANDSDALE
Hell of a paint job.

Carrigan glares at Landsdale. He's not amused.

EXT. MERCEDES SPRINTER VAN - DAY

We see the exterior of the van now: A 1970s style airbrush of a heavy metal wizard in Insane Clown Posse makeup, standing in a field of mushrooms, firing lightning from a wand.

EXT. CASINO MUNICIPALE - CAFE - CORSICA - DAY

Blaze and Nadya sit at a table in an upscale indoor cafe, just off the casino floor. Nadya steals glances at the gaming tables as Blaze drinks coffee. Nadya turns to see TWO ELEGANT ITALIAN WOMEN looking at her and whispering to each other. Nadya looks away, unconcerned. But Blaze is.

BLAZE
That happen a lot?

NADYA
I deserve it.
(off Blaze's look)
I'm the stereotype. I'm a thief.
A cheat. A "gypsy swindler."

Nadya steals another glance at the tables.

NADYA (CONT'D)
I'm what they think I am... Any
other Roma I know, they'd be wrong.
But I'm out here, proving those
ignorant women right.

BLAZE
Maybe what you are isn't what you
think you are.

NADYA
Maybe.
(then)
He's almost done with his shift.

Nadya and Blaze stand, their eyes on a BLACKJACK TABLE. They start off, when Blaze stops.

BLAZE
Hold up.
(then, smiling to the
Elegant Italian women)
Piss off. Grazie.
(back to Nadya)
'Kay.

A hulking dealer stands at the table. The nametag reads CONO. His head is shaved, and regardless of his expression, his eyes stay the same: ice cold. Finishing a hand, he slaps his hands together, waves them over the table. His shift is done.

As another DEALER takes his place, Cono walks across the casino floor. REVEAL Blaze and Nadya are following him. Growing closer to Cono, Blaze's brow furrows... It looks like something is creeping over him... Pain.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
You said this guy connects people
with guns, people with drugs, to
people who want them.

Nadya nods.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
But he does worse than that.

NADYA
How do you know?

Blaze squares jaw, a sweat growing on his brow.

BLAZE
The Rider can feel it.

EXT. NEAR SERVICE ENTRANCE - CASINO MUNICPALE - DAY

Cono stands in the deserted alley next to the building. He lights up a cigarette. The flame from his Zippo is BENDING SIDEWAYS. He tries a couple more times. Same thing. Weird.

Cono grabs a WAD OF MONEY from his pocket, starts to count it. A couple bills in, he hears a WHISTLE and turns towards the sound, revealing Nadya standing right next to him.

NADYA
Cono.

Before Cono can react, Blaze GRABS him from the OTHER DIRECTION. Cono's cell goes FLYING from a clip on belt.

Blaze drives Cono into his knee, SLAMS him against the wall. Even though the now-bleeding Cono doesn't know what the fuck just happened, his eyes -- as ever -- remain ice cold.

Blaze holds him against the wall, breathing heavily as Nadya picks up Cono's cell. Blaze shakes a bit. Cono is the source of the struggle within his body.

CONO
Who the hell are you?

BLAZE
You got the "hell" part right.

NADYA
(checking Cono's phone)
He's been talking to Carrigan. The
past two days... And today.

Cono sees Blaze sweating and shaking... Nadya sees it, too.
Worry creeps over her face.

NADYA (CONT'D)
John --

BLAZE
You talked to Carrigan.

CONO
I talk to a lot of people.
(re: Blaze's shaking)
What's the matter? You a junkie?

Blaze jams his eyes shut, struggling in pain, and FIRE bursts
out from under his lids. Cono's cold eyes grow wide.

BLAZE
Carrigan must've told you about the
thing that killed his men a few
days back... That thing is inside
of me.

Nadya, fear creeping over her face, steps back.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
The stuff you make happen... The
"connections" you arrange... You're
a bad man, Cono... And the thing
inside me -- the Rider -- he *feeds*
on bad men... And that thing is
hungrier than it's been... in
years. That's why I'm shaking...

Blaze's skin FLICKERS in and out of TRANSPARENCY... Revealing
his SKELETON -- THE GHOST RIDER -- underneath...

BLAZE (CONT'D)
Right now, the only thing standing
between you and the Rider is me.
He's scraping at the door... And if
you don't tell me what I want to
know, I'm going to let him out.

Despite the threat, Blaze's eyes almost seem to plead with
Cono... Until they leak out more FIRE. Cono tries to recoil,
feeling the heat of the FLAMES -- the money in Cono's hand
STARTS BURNING... He lets it go.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
 When he's done with you... There
 won't be anything left.
 (then)
 Where's Carrigan?

Cono swallows, unsure, the fear almost overtaking him.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
 I'm holding on by my fingernails...
 Give me a reason to hold on.

Blaze shakes, skin flickering to skeleton and back, fire
 leaking from his eyes. His hand, phasing from SKIN to BONE,
 grows tight on Cono's throat. Cono's cold eyes finally break.

CONO
 Ansbach. The quarry. For more
 guns... More men.

NADYA
 I know where he's talking about.

BLAZE
 (to Cono)
 You're not going to tell him about
 this conversation.

Sweating, and in agony, Blaze goes in close.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
 You're gonna be judged... Not
 today, Cono. But you will.

With that Blaze CRACKS Cono across the face, knocking him out
 cold. Nadya pockets his cell phone... Blaze looks amazed.

NADYA
 We're going into Germany. There's a
 car ferry we can catch back to the
 continent. We can get to
 Carrigan's by tonight.
 (off Blaze's amazement)
 Is that the first time you've held
 it back like that?

BLAZE
 Yeah.

NADYA
 Maybe what you are... Isn't what
 you think you are.

Nadya smiles. He smiles back. When Nadya turns to walk on,
 Blaze's smile fades. As he follows, we see a few DROPS OF
 FIRE fall from his fingertips.

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN SEA - FERRY - DAY

Blaze sits at a table above deck. There aren't many people around. He looks out to the water, rolling his coin over his fingers, thinking.

He looks at the coin. Puts it on the table, spins it.

It SPINS on, instantly surrounded in that THIN AURA OF FLAME, marking the formica it passes over. The COYOTE and the EAGLE each FLICKER TO LIFE, shifting into one and then the other... It slows... And falls.

Blaze doesn't look at it for a BEAT. Finally... COYOTE. He looks at it like an enemy. After another BEAT...

BLAZE
(quietly, to the coin)
Screw you.

NADYA (O.S.)
(you okay?)
You're talking to your money, John.

Blaze looks up to see Nadya standing by the table. She puts down a coffee for him, holds one for herself.

NADYA (CONT'D)
Coyote. What's on the other side?

Blaze SLAPS HIS HAND over the coin. He doesn't want to talk about it. Then he relents.

BLAZE
An eagle.

NADYA
Why?

BLAZE
I don't know. I got it... When I started with the Rider.
(then)
Where I come from, the coyote represents trickery, evil, darkness...

NADYA
Roark.

BLAZE
The eagle represents goodness.

NADYA
Light. You.

Blaze looks at her, skeptical.

BLAZE
Yeah, I don't think so.

NADYA
You're out here to fight the
darkness.

Blaze hesitates. It's as if he can't let the possibility enter his head that he's a hero. He holds up the coin.

BLAZE
Every time I spin it... *Every*
time... It comes up coyote.

A sad truth. No getting around it. Or is there?

NADYA
But you keep spinning it, right?
That means something.

Blaze knows Nadya's not going to like what he's going to say.

BLAZE
When we hit Ansbach, you're telling
me how to get to the quarry... But
you're not coming with me.

NADYA
(sharp, defiant)
Blaze I'm --
(knows he holds the cards)
-- *I can help*. Let me. They could
kill you.

Blaze shakes his head knowingly.

BLAZE
I don't even think that's an option
for me anymore.

Nadya looks at Blaze... Starting to comprehend the scope of the curse.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
Just so you understand what you're
asking, this thing inside me -- the
Rider -- I can't control him when
he comes out. When he does, it's
like I'm a prisoner in my own body.
There's no reasoning with him. He
doesn't have a conscience. He
doesn't even have a personality.
It's just a hunger.
(then)
Where we're going, the Rider's
going to come out.
(MORE)

BLAZE (CONT'D)
And when he does, he'll destroy
whoever's got it coming.

NADYA
Are you worried about Danny?

BLAZE
Danny'll be fine... I can't say the
same for you.

Nadya looks at Blaze with what seems like pity. Then, anger.

NADYA
You don't believe what Moreau told
you, do you? That if you had faith--
(off Blaze's look)
You're still afraid.

Blaze takes his hand off the coin, still COYOTE side up.

BLAZE
Damn right I am.

EXT. ABOVE THE QUARRY - NIGHT

The place is a mean little boy's GI JOE dreams come true: a mini military base built inside an abandoned quarry. Carrigan's Skoda is the only passenger vehicle parked there.

Some CONSTRUCTION VEHICLES (crane, bulldozer) are also here, along with, oddly, a HEARSE. The main building is being renovated -- expanded with military-style trailers.

A convoy of TWO BMWs and TWO high-end PICKUPS makes its way down the steep drive to the quarry's floor.

The cars park, cut their engines, and their ten or so occupants step out: soldiers of the Nikasevic Organization: cold, efficient up-and-comers in the Montenegrin Mafia. We see the pickups have CRATES in their cargo.

TOMA NIKASEVIC, the suited "made man" of the group, approaches Landsdale who escorts Toma inside -- along with TWO of his MEN, carrying one of the CRATES.

Blaze, next to his bike, watches this all go down from a bluff above the quarry. He's focused, but we can see he's already feeling the Rider scratching at the door. He starts down a path to the quarry floor.

INT. QUARRY OFFICE - NIGHT

Landsdale escorts Toma inside, accompanied by two of his men carrying a heavy CRATE. Carrigan, waiting, has his deck of cards out, compulsively cutting them.

TOMA
Nice hearse. You in the funeral
business now?

CARRIGAN
Ain't we both?
(then)
Best thing I ever bought. Rides
like a goddam dream. You wanna
move a body, no one looks twice.

He notices Toma's two men still haven't put down the crate.

CARRIGAN (CONT'D)
You know, they can put it down.

TOMA
Yeah, I don't think so, guy.

CARRIGAN
Fine. What do you got?

One of Toma's men opens the crate. A particularly evil-
looking ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADE LAUNCHER is inside.

TOMA
That's a thermobaric RPG. Right out
of prototype, from the Russians.
It'll set the air itself on fire.
(then)
Fifty large a piece. And they come
with lovely straps for carrying.

CARRIGAN
I'll take four.

Toma's eyes go momentarily wide, impressed.

TOMA
How many men you going up against?

CARRIGAN
One... But he's a special guy.

EXT. QUARRY COMPOUND - OFFICE - NIGHT

TWO OF TOMA'S MEN linger by a side entrance.

WHACK! Blaze elbows THUG #2 in the face. As the gangster
drops, we SEE that Blaze has already disabled THUG #1. Blaze,
squaring his jaw in pain from the effort of holding back the
Rider, -- *the Rider can sense the evil* -- slips inside.

INT. QUARRY COMPOUND - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Blaze moves with purpose while he pushes back against the Rider trying take control within him. It's getting harder -- the further he goes, the more he feels the agony of holding back. The Rider... so close to such evil.

He lifts a hand before his face -- BLUE FLAMES dance over his fingertips. He braces himself against the drywall. When he takes his hand away, REVEAL a singed palm-print on the wall.

He turns the corner: THREE of Toma's men cleaning their guns.

Blaze drops back. Gritting his teeth with his mouth closed, he face contorts, starts to assume that awful skullish quality. The Ghost Rider wants out. Now.

Down the hall, he hears a DOG BARKING. An unexpected sound in this locale. He goes to check it out.

EXT. ABOVE THE QUARRY - NIGHT

Nadya pulls up in her pick-up truck, headlights off, next to Blaze's motorcycle. She cuts the engine and, from inside the vehicle, surveys the vast compound below.

INT. QUARRY COMPOUND - ANOTHER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Blaze walks down the hall. The dog's barks are getting louder. With each bark, Blaze FLAMES UP a little bit. He comes to a door at the end of the hallway, throws it open.

It's a dark room. Danny sits CHAINED to the wall... His pantleg is rolled up; on his ankle is a HUGE, BLOOD-CAKED GASH, surrounded by a SWOLLEN WELT.

He's dirty, hungry and curled into a ball. A nasty DOBERMAN seems poised to attack if Danny were to move an inch.

Danny looks up, weak. He meets Blaze's eyes. Blaze is disgusted... further proof that there really is no light.

That's it... Blaze can't hold it back any longer.

A RUSH OF FIRE courses through Blaze's body -- lighting up the dark room. A giant FIREBALL SHOOT OUT BLAZE'S BODY and EXPLODES through the ceiling. The walls around it CATCH FIRE.

This transformation is different than his others. More INTENSE. The fire around the Rider burns even HOTTER.

The Rider wants to feed. Now.

The Doberman goes from fight to flight in two seconds flat. It breaks out of its collar and races down the hallway.

It passes a couple of Toma's men who had run down to see what the commotion was. That was their final mistake.

CHAINS fly out from the Rider the length of the hallway. In a blink of an eye, the chains are taut around the men's chests... CRUSHING their insides.

Without moving a muscle, the Rider's chains whip back to him. But far from sating the Rider, these two kills have merely whet his appetite. He begins to walk down the hall.

DANNY
Wait! Please!

But the Rider has more pressing concerns. As it walks away, Danny quickly realizes the reality of his situation.

He's trapped in a room that's beginning to catch fire.

INT. QUARRY COMPOUND - OFFICE - NIGHT

We hear a high-pitched BEEPING. Toma turns.

CARRIGAN
Smoke alarm.

TOMA
And it is smelling of burnt feces.

CARRIGAN
It's him!

Carrigan GRABS the RPG out of the crate and races out of the room with the men.

EXT. ABOVE THE QUARRY - NIGHT

As SMOKE BILLOWS out from one corner of the compound, men scatter out of the building like ants on a rainy day. From this distance, you can't distinguish one from the other... except for the walking skeleton who's ON FIRE.

But Nadya's pick up truck... it's no longer parked there... We see it's RACING down the steep road into the compound.

INT. QUARRY OFFICE - DANNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Danny watches in horror as the FLAMES FULLY ENGULF the far wall. The BLACK SMOKE filling the room gets thicker, making it harder for him to breathe.

DANNY
Help me! Help!

EXT. QUARRY COMPOUND - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

As if hearing her son's call, Nadya passes in front of her parked truck and races inside.

None of Toma's men really seem to notice, though. They've got more pressing concerns. Namely, a flaming demon who wants to drag their souls to hell.

The Nikasevic man nearest him tries to empty an UZI into the Ghost Rider. The Ghost Rider reaches for the weapon. As he grabs the barrel, his HEAT AURA bursts out from him, refracting the light and making the area within it visually RIPPLE. The aura HITS the gangster and INSTANTANEOUSLY REDUCES HIM TO ASH.

The Ghost Rider FLIPS the UZI in his BONY HAND and FIRES at the NIKASEVIC MEN racing away. They stumble, clawing at their smoking wounds. In seconds, the entire weapon turns WHITE HOT, melting apart in the demon's hand.

The Nikasevic men try to climb into their vehicles, but the Ghost Rider moves, WHIPPING his RED HOT CHAINS.

As the Ghost Rider looks around for his next victim... A nonstop GUSH OF WATER blasts the Ghost Rider's head. The Ghost Rider SQUEALS -- and for a split-second, the demon's flames are actually snuffed out. The cloud clears. The Ghost Rider glimpses LANSDALE holding a FIRE HOSE.

The Rider's sockets CONTORT into a frown. His FLAMES SHOOT right back up. He climbs onto the nearest vehicle -- A combination of a WRECKING BALL CRANE and EARTH MOVER.

As the Rider sits down, the vehicle transforms... just like Blaze's bike. But instead of a hellcycle, the Rider controls the most badass mode of destruction anyone's ever seen.

The wrecking ball is now a GIANT SPHERE OF FIRE. The earth mover is a MANGLED, SKELETAL HAND. And the Rider is in the driver's seat, about to have a whole lot of demonic fun.

INT. QUARRY COMPOUND - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nadya races through the smoke-filled compound.

NADYA
Danny? DANNY?

A few agonizing beats of silence before she hears...

DANNY (O.S.)
MOM?

NADYA
Danny! I'm coming!

INT. QUARRY COMPOUND - DANNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The fire SURROUNDS Danny. He hears footsteps. In front of him, a SILHOUETTE.

DANNY
Mom! Get me out of --

The silhouette takes a couple steps forward. It's not Nadya... it's CARRIGAN! He has the new RPG over his shoulder.

CARRIGAN
You didn't think I'd let you go
that easy, did you?

Carrigan UNLOCKS Danny's CUFFS, throws him over his other shoulder. Danny fights as best he can to no avail.

INT. QUARRY COMPOUND - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nadya turns a corner just in time to see Carrigan disappear outside with Danny over his shoulder. She races after them.

EXT. QUARRY COMPOUND - NIGHT

One of the Nikasevic trucks PEELS OUT, heading towards the EXIT when THE RIDER'S FLAMING WRECKING BALL flies in from out of nowhere and SMASHES IT into an EXPLOSION OF FIRE -- the CRATES in the cargo sending FLAMES high into the sky.

The Rider is continuing his assault with his HELLCRANE.

Lansdale, with limited options, tries to run away. The Rider swings the FLAMING WRECKING BALL out a hundred yards, then sweeps it back towards the deserters. As the sphere passes through the bodies, each one of them simply becomes ASH.

We're with Lansdale as he tries to avoid the sphere. But it's too big. From his POV: a giant orange circle that just gets bigger and bigger until it FILLS FRAME.

Toma jumps into a BMW, begins to drive. But the Ghost Rider intercepts him with the CLAW SHAPED EARTH MOVER and lifts the BMW off the ground.

The car immediately turns WHITE HOT. Toma tries to escape, but the handle SEARS his hand when he touches it. He's trapped inside as the car MELTS DOWN TO NOTHINGNESS.

As the Rider moves on to his next victim, Carrigan tosses Danny in the back of the Mercedes Sprinter Van...

Carrigan jumps in, turns the ignition key, but the van won't start. He pops the hood, hops out to look under when: CLICK.

Carrigan whips around. Sees Nadya with a GUN pointed to him. She reveals a SPARK PLUG in her palm, tosses it to his feet.

NADYA
Didn't think any of those Nikasevic
boys would be caught dead driving
that van.

Carrigan's in a tight spot. But he does have a GUN in drawstring of the back of his pants.

CARRIGAN
Now look, baby...

NADYA
You think you're gonna talk your
way out of this?

Carrigan doesn't respond. A tense beat.

The next moment is a blur... Carrigan reaches for his gun. Nadya is about to squeeze the trigger when out of nowhere...

CHAINS GRAB Carrigan by the legs and torso and drag him fifty feet away where the Ghost Rider stands.

Nadya knows the danger of being in such close proximity to the Rider. She grabs Danny, carries him to her truck.

Carrigan, being dragged along the ground, manages to grab the THERMOBARIC RPG. He swings it around and FIRES it -- but it's a wild shot -- it connects with the ground far past the Rider, SETTING THE AIR ITSELF AFLAME... Suddenly giving the Ghost Rider an INFERNO for a backdrop. Welcome to Hell.

The Ghost Rider, with his CHAINS gripping Carrigan tight, takes a moment to consider his victim.

CARRIGAN
You faceless, eyeless --

Carrigan spits at the Rider; it EVAPORATES before it can hit. Enough. The Rider picks him up, considers him for a second.

CARRIGAN (CONT'D)
Go ahead. Finish it.

Carrigan's shirt IGNITES. Carrigan tries to keep a straight face, but it's hard when you're being burned alive. Carrigan bites his lip, unwilling to let the Rider see him in pain.

CARRIGAN (CONT'D)
What are you waiting for?

His pants burn, his belt buckle melts. Finally, Carrigan can no longer take it. He SCREAMS in agony.

CARRIGAN (CONT'D)
Make it stop. PLEASE.

That's what the Rider wanted to hear. The Rider's face has a look of satisfaction on it. But he doesn't give in to Carrigan's request. Instead, he tosses him fifty feet into the heart of the raging inferno.

INT. NADYA'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Nadya looks in the rear view. Total darkness. She exhales, turning to Danny, staring out the back.

NADYA
Danny?

She touches him, SNAPPING him out of his trance. He looks at her, tears in his eyes, like he's woken from a nightmare.

NADYA (CONT'D)
Baby, listen to me, you're with me
now. You're gonna be --

Before she can finish the sentence, she glances in the rearview mirror. Oh. My. God.

THE GHOST RIDER is coming after them. HOWLING, plowing through the night on his HELLCYCLE. Nadya floors the gas. But the pickup is already maxed out.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The Ghost Rider easily gains on the truck, leaving a wake of BURNING ASPHALT. He LASHES OUT with his CHAINS, SNAGGING the back bumper. The chain-links SLICE deep into the chassis.

The Ghost Rider YANKS the chain and the truck LURCHES BACK -- its wheels still spinning as fast as they can. But the truck isn't going anywhere. In fact, the Rider begins retracting his chains. The truck moves BACKWARDS towards him.

INT. NADYA'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Nadya is in full panic mode. But before she can pull herself together, the Rider IS RIGHT OUTSIDE HER WINDOW. She screams as the Rider PUNCHES through the window, yanking her outside.

DANNY
MOM!

Nadya can barely whisper, but she tries to talk to the Rider.

NADYA
 John. It's me, Nadya. I know
 you're in there.

The Ghost Rider tilts his head, seems to consider her.

NADYA (CONT'D)
 Remember what Moreau said.
 (quiet)
 You can fight it.

Amazingly, it looks like Nadya's words might be piercing through... Somehow landing within the Rider's psyche. The bond between Blaze and Nadya may be enough to save her life.

NADYA (CONT'D)
 All you have to do is --

Or not. The Rider stares into Nadya's eyes, his sockets starting to GLOW with the Penance Stare. She's hit with A BLAST WAVE OF LIGHT, no longer able to move.

Danny struggles to move out of the truck; he gets the door open but TUMBLES TO THE GROUND, his broken ankle preventing him from standing.

DANNY
 Mom! NO! HELP! HEEEEELP!

But no one is within earshot. Seemingly nothing can stop the Ghost Rider from adding Nadya's soul to his collection. Anger creeps over the boy's face. A dark deadness. Evil. He SCREAMS to the Rider:

DANNY (CONT'D)
 Leave her alone!

Ghost Rider doesn't mind the name-calling. He's focused on Nadya. The FIRE in his EYE SOCKETS grows more INTENSE. NADYA stares back... TEARS form in her eyes. She's about to die.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 (deep evil)
 STOOOOOOP!

As Danny screams, an UNSEEN FORCE BLASTS the Rider back and to the ground, skipping along the dirt, landing in a heap! Nadya drops down, safely to the side of the road.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 LEAVEHERALONE!!

The Ghost Rider gets to his feet and starts walking over. Nadya GASPS for breath. Danny stands, eyes intense at the Rider. Holy shit -- the Rider is coming right at him.

NADYA
 (weakly)
 Danny... DANNY! We need to get out--

And then -- the Rider stops in front of the boy... Looking *curious*. Who the hell is this kid? They just stare at each other. A tense, screwed-up standoff. Nadya sits, shocked.

DANNY
 (eyes locked on the Rider)
 Just. Stop.

Suddenly, the Rider's flames EXTINGUISH... He transforms to Blaze, who COLLAPSES in front of Danny and Nadya.

Danny instantly snaps out of his trance. Nadya EXHALES. And the darkness of the night consumes them as we...

FADE OUT.

INT. NADYA'S TRUCK - HEIDELBERG - DAY

Blaze opens his eyes, unsure of his surroundings. It takes him a moment to recognize he's in Nadya's truck... parked on the small street off a busy thoroughfare.

Blaze looks behind him, sees his BIKE in the cargo. He looks up and down the small street. *No sign of Nadya and Danny.*

EXT. DM DROGERIE MARKET PARKING LOT - DAY

Danny, with the assistance of a STICK, limps alongside Nadya into the parking lot. His ankle is in a HOMEMADE SPLINT of WOOD and RAGS. As they pass a PICKUP TRUCK --

A TERRIFYING MASTIFF starts BARKING THUNDEROUSLY at Danny and Nadya. Danny stumbles back; Nadya catches him from falling. They can see the dog is held back by a THICK CHAIN.

NADYA
 It's okay, honey, it's okay...

They approach the DM -- Slovenia's answer to a Walgreen's. The store is modern and clean, with cafe tables in front.

NADYA (CONT'D)
 I'm gonna get you some aspirin and
 a real splint for that ankle.

Danny nods. Nadya sits him down at one of the tables, putting a hand on his cheek, so happy to have him back.

NADYA (CONT'D)
 Everything's gonna be alright now.

DANNY

I know, mom.

She kisses him on the forehead and walks inside. Danny pulls something out of his pocket... BLAZE'S COIN.

Danny examines it for a bit... The markings on the coin... *Something about the coin itself* -- makes him a little afraid... But also full of wonder.

Finally, he gives the coin a SPIN on the table... As it spins, it's instantly surrounded with its AURA OF FLAME. Danny watches, entranced. The EAGLE and COYOTE flicker to life... The moving image on the coin shifting from the FLYING EAGLE to the LOPING COYOTE.

Soon, the loping coyote takes over, becoming the single image on the coin. Danny's eyes are glued to it... The coin isn't slowing down; rather, it begins SPINNING MORE QUICKLY -- the LOPING COYOTE becomes more FERAL and MONSTROUS... *Like the beasts who attacked Moreau's monastery...*

As the coyote transforms, Danny's expression CHANGES... It becomes darker, stripped of its innocence. Not the frowning grin of a mustache twirling villain, no -- cold.

In the pick up cargo, the Mastiff EXPLODES WITH TERRIFIED BARKING -- even more FRANTICALLY than before... Danny UNWRAPS his homemade leg splint. We can see his ANKLE: it's unbruised, without a scratch on it. He's HEALED.

Danny STANDS UP, taking a few steps towards the dog... The dog is going CRAZY -- HOWLING, PULLING AT ITS CHAIN.

Danny shoots one look up at the dog -- silencing it. It lets out a couple SMALL, PATHETIC WHINES. Danny doesn't stop looking at it. The dog's whines become more frantic. It's terrified. And then, the spell is broken when -- from out of nowhere - Blaze steps between Danny and the dog.

BLAZE

What's going on, Danny?

Danny looks at Blaze... Suddenly back from wherever he went. He's confused, a little angry at the rude awakening. A BEAT.

DANNY

I -- I don't know.

Just then, Nadya walks out of the store, carrying a BAG, seeing Danny walking without a limp...

NADYA

Danny -- your ankle!

Nadya goes to Danny, and checks: his ankle is back to normal.

DANNY
It healed.

NADYA
How?

DANNY
It just... did.

Nadya searches for an explanation to this. But Danny's ready -- and desperate -- to move on.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Can I get a juice or something in there?

Nadya sees Blaze... This is the first time they've really seen each other since the events of last night. Nadya gives Danny a couple Euros. He walks inside.

NADYA
(calling after)
No soda.

BLAZE
Where are we?

NADYA
Slovenia.

BLAZE
You didn't listen to me last night.
The Rider... he tried to take you,
didn't he?

Nadya looks back at Blaze. He knows the answer.

NADYA
He did. But... He stopped, Blaze.

BLAZE
What?

NADYA
When the Rider came after me, it was like Danny turned into... something else. Danny had this *scream*, and -- he threw the Rider back without even touching him. Danny was so angry... But when the Rider got up... He stood in front of us and he just... looked at us. He stopped.

Blaze nods, a bit grim.

NADYA (CONT'D)
 I can think that my son has the
 power of the devil inside him and
 he used that power to control the
 Rider...

Nadya pushes past that possibility, making another choice.

NADYA (CONT'D)
 Or I can think that the Rider saw a
 son trying to save his mother.
 That the Rider saw love and he
 stopped.
 (then)
 That's what I'm going to believe.
 (eyeing Blaze)
 What are you going to believe,
 John?

Blaze looks at her... Not knowing the answer. But by the
 look in his eyes... She's made some progress. She see this,
 and smiles.

NADYA (CONT'D)
 I'm going to go see what's taking
 Danny so long.

Nadya walks inside, leaving Blaze to think. Something
 catches Blaze's eye: his COIN, still SPINNING, but slowing.
 It finally wobbles to a fall. COYOTE side up. Of course.

EXT. QUARRY - DAY

In the light of day, the devastation is even more pronounced.

Fire and ambulance teams are beginning to tackle the disaster
 area. Only the building's frame remains, but small fires
 continue to burn throughout the compound.

EXT. QUARRY - RUBBLE PILE - DAY

In the middle of the wreckage, Carrigan lies -- mostly
 burned, unable to move. But somehow -- miraculously -- he's
 alive. Barely. His breath is shallow and fading. He
 SURROUNDED by pieces of FLAMING WRECKAGE.

Carrigan tries to get the attention of the rescue crew, but
 he's unable to make a sound any louder than a whisper.

CARRIGAN
 Over here... please. Over here.

ROARK (O.S.)
 You look like you could use some
 help.

Carrigan's eyes widen. Roark stands over him, his gaze stoic and pitiless.

ROARK (CONT'D)
You said you had the boy.

CARRIGAN
I did. I tried --

ROARK
You failed.

Carrigan knows excuses are useless. So he tries begging.

CARRIGAN
Help me... I don't want to die.

ROARK
I'm afraid you haven't left me much
of a choice.

Roark kneels, TOUCHING A HAND to Carrigan's chest. Carrigan closes his eyes, awaiting the inevitable. It really looks like Roark is about to kill him.

LIVER SPOTS and WRINKLES begin to pop up on Roark's face... SMOKE RISES from his skin... He's using up a great deal of energy to do what he's doing...

Carrigan's charred skin begins to LOSE ITS COLOR... The BURNS DISAPPEAR as his skin shifts to a GHOSTLY WHITE. After a few moments, Carrigan opens his eyes... and his irises, too, are now COMPLETELY WHITE.

Something is going on inside him... some supernatural change. He's so freaked out he can't speak... He can't breathe.

ROARK (CONT'D)
Take a breath. I've gone to more
than a bit of trouble to make you
fully able to do that again.

Roark wasn't killing Carrigan, he was *transforming* him.

Carrigan slowly sits up... he's healed, but changed. Bigger. Stronger. His fingernails, now long and sharp.

ROARK (CONT'D)
Do you remember the promise you
made to me?

Roark reaches into his pocket, pulls out a COIN -- just like the one Roark gave Blaze so many years ago.

Roark leans in, HANDING Carrigan the COIN.

ROARK (CONT'D)
That's your marker. You will get
that boy for me.

CARRIGAN
I... I don't know if I can.

A thin smile curls up Roark's face.

ROARK
The Ghost Rider is possessed by a
fire that can be extinguished only
by a spirit equally powerful.

Roark picks up a BURNING PIECE of WOOD from nearby (in doing
so, he causes a larger pile of rubble to tumble over). Roark
tosses the wood to Carrigan.

Carrigan catches it... immediately, the flame DISAPPEARS.
Like it was sucked out. Then, the wood begins to ROT AWAY.

Carrigan looks at Roark, amazed at his newfound power.

An EMT WORKER rushes over, having heard the commotion.

EMT WORKER
(speaking German)
*Sir -- are you an employee here?
We need you back behind the cordon!*

And then the EMT Worker sees Carrigan, yells out:

EMT WORKER (CONT'D)
We've got a survivor!

The EMT approaches Carrigan... When he gets within a few
feet, Carrigan instinctively reaches out and grabs his WRIST.

The EMT Worker's wrist turns a sickly WHITE -- the exact
color of Carrigan's, as the flames nearby begin to flicker.

Within seconds, the EMT's coloration has drained from his
other arm and face: it's as if the EMT's very LIFE FORCE is
being sucked away. The EMT looks at Carrigan, terrified in
his helplessness -- he can't even scream.

With that, the EMT's lifeless body falls to the ground.

ROARK
You're a quick study... Now get
moving. You have a contract to
uphold, William.

Carrigan smiles. The flames FLICKER once more, finally
EXPLODING into FIREBALLS before completely extinguishing.

CARRIGAN
Call me Blackout.

And that's what we'll call him now, too.

EXT. QUARRY - DAY

Blackout plods past the wreckage. Shocked EMT'S race up to him. But Blackout brushes past them, barely having to lift a finger... They turn a SICKLY WHITE and DROP to the ground.

He continues walking... straight for the HEARSE parked nearby, grabbing a lunch pail off the hood of an ambulance.

INT. HEARSE - DAY

When Blackout gets in, the vehicle TRANSFORMS, much like Ghost Rider's. But instead of fire... this vehicle is cold. Its BLACK FINISH turns WHITE... FROST covers the exterior.

Blackout sees a BLACK SUIT draped across the passenger seat, along with a LUNCH PAIL. He dumps the pail out on the seat, revealing a sandwich, a small bit of cheese and a TWINKIE.

Blackout reaches for the food... the sandwich ROTS away to nothingness. The cheese SPROUTS mold. The Twinkie... well, actually nothing at all happens to the Twinkie.

Blackout grabs it, regards it for a moment with a satisfied smile, and takes a giant bite as he guns the motor.

EXT. AUTOBAHN - GERMANY - DAY

Germany's world famous highway. NADYA'S truck speeds along.

INT. NADYA'S TRUCK - DAY

Blaze drives, Nadya sleeps in the passenger seat. Danny, in the middle, stares ahead, troubled. Blaze doesn't notice.

BLAZE
Could I have one of those
sandwiches your mom made?

Danny reaches into the grocery bag and grabs a SANDWICH, for Blaze. Blaze takes a bite. He raises an eyebrow.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
What is this?

DANNY
(distracted)
It's an atomic sandwich. Nutella
and hot sauce.

Blaze chews, puzzled, unsure. Then "getting it." Liking it.

BLAZE
It's good.

Danny doesn't say anything. A few beats pass, and:

DANNY
The Coyote and the Eagle. What
does it mean?

Blaze thinks for a moment, wondering if he can avoid the conversation. He can't.

BLAZE
The coyote represents evil. The
eagle represents good.

DANNY
Which side did it land on? Back at
the drug store?

Blaze looks at Danny.

BLAZE
You admitting you took it from me?

Danny looks at Blaze like he needs to know the answer to his question. Then:

DANNY
Which side did it land on?

BLAZE
I didn't look.

Danny doesn't know what to say for a moment, but it's obvious something's on his mind.

DANNY
Are you... *him*? I mean, when you
change?

Blaze can see the answer is gonna mean something to Danny.

BLAZE
He's someone else. Something else.

Danny nods, the answer not comforting him.

DANNY
Where do you go?

BLAZE
I don't know.

DANNY
You ever wish it would just stop?

BLAZE
(with a sad chuckle)
Everyday.

Danny looks out the window, at the world passing by...

DANNY
It's happening to me.

BLAZE
What?

DANNY
What you saw me do. In the parking lot with the dog. It's like you and the Rider... There's this other side of me that's starting to come out... Since Carrigan took me.

Danny turns to Blaze.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Those men were so scary... They hurt my mom. It felt good to hurt them. It felt so good...
(then)
That other side of me... He's worse than the Rider, Blaze. I think he's stronger. He -- I threw the Rider back with just... a thought.

Blaze is shocked.

DANNY (CONT'D)
I mean... If I could do that... If it feels so...right... Maybe I'm supposed to be this way. Maybe this is what I am...

Danny just looks down at the ground, looking like he doesn't have any options at all, just bad things coming. Blaze wants to help... But talking to people... It's new to him.

BLAZE
That isn't who you are.

DANNY
How do you know? You don't know me, man.

Blaze gestures with his head.

BLAZE
Yeah... But she does.

Danny thinks a moment, silent. It's hard to argue that point. Danny looks over to his peacefully sleeping mother. His eyes settle on her AMETHYST EARRINGS glinting in the sun...

As they ride on, we TIME CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION - OUTSIDE STRASBOURG - DAY

Blaze gasses up the truck as Danny sits on Blaze's bike in the cargo, looking out to a view of the ocean... and the SUN SETTING behind it. Nadya looks at it, too.

BLAZE
Sun's going down.

NADYA
Yeah. And you're gonna be okay.

BLAZE
For tonight.

NADYA
Gotta work on the optimism, John.

Blaze lets out a weary chuckle. She's right.

NADYA (CONT'D)
You're smiling.

And then Blaze realizes it, giving a chuckle.

NADYA (CONT'D)
I know you haven't used those muscles in a while. Try not to cramp.
(then)
How much longer to Provence?

BLAZE
Three... Four more hours.

NADYA
I'm going to get some coffee. You guys want anything?

Blaze shakes his head, "no."

DANNY
I'm cool, mom.

Nadya looks at her son, touching his face. He looks back, musters another sad smile. She kisses him on the forehead and walks off. Blaze looks at Danny.

BLAZE

Danny.

Danny turns to Blaze.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

That other side of you, don't give into it. Don't give up like I did.

Danny looks at Blaze. He gets that things just got very, very personal -- it's a place Blaze doesn't usually go to.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

I hid from the world, from people... So the Rider couldn't have any reason to come out. I did that... for years.

Danny looks out to the horizon, not liking what he's hearing.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

Then I met this guy. The guy you're going to meet. He told me if I just believed I could control the Rider... That maybe I could. I thought he was full of shit.

Danny raises his eyebrows at the swear word.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

We're having an adult conversation.

Blaze smiles... Danny smiles back.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

'Cause of him and your mom, I gave it a shot. I started believing I could control the Rider... *And I started controlling him.* If I didn't try, I'd still be alone in the woods, hiding. Eating squirrel stew instead of atomic sandwiches.

Danny can't help but smile a bit.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

The reason I started believing was because someone started believing in me. Now, your mom doesn't just *believe* in you. She loves you.

DANNY

Do you have that? Someone who loves you?

A beat. Blaze catches up to the moment.

BLAZE

I did.

Blaze looks at Danny.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

Listen. I think we control the other sides of us. That we can use that power. And when we have to... We can be badder than the bad guys.
(re: the motorcycle)
Hop off for a minute.

Danny steps off the motorcycle. Blaze undoes its moorings and hops on it, coasting it off cargo and onto the ground.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

When you ride a bike fast, it kinda feels like you're out of control. But you're not... Just as long as you don't think you are. As long as you believe you can hold on.

DANNY

No shit?
(off Blaze's look)
We're having an adult conversation.

BLAZE

Want to see what I mean? Hop on.

Blaze starts the motorcycle up and roars out of the station, into an ADJOINING PARKING LOT, causing a GIANT FLOCK OF GULLS to fly away. Blaze, with Danny holding onto him, rides around in circles, WHOOPING and YELLING, making Danny LAUGH.

Nadya walks out of the mini-mart, COFFEE in hand, and sees the two riding around under the orange sky... She smiles...

EXT. MONASTERY OF SAINT RUFINUS - NIGHT

As the moon rises over Provence, Blaze, Nadya and Danny approach the monastery.

DANNY

Hey, Blaze...

BLAZE

Yeah?

DANNY

I've been wondering... When you change into the Rider, your bike changes, too, right?

BLAZE
Yeah. His ride changes with him.

Danny thinks for a minute.

DANNY
What if he took a taxi?

BLAZE
(genuinely stumped)
I... don't know.

DANNY
What about a roller coaster?
(off Blaze's shrug)
What about a ski lift?

Once again, the kid's stumped him. Just as they reach the FRONT ENTRANCE, Moreau opens the door with a smile, thrusting an OPEN BOTTLE OF WINE into Blaze's hand -- and then raises a FLASK in a toast.

MOREAU
To the prodigal sons... er... and
daughter... returning.

BLAZE
Let's not start drinking just yet.

MOREAU
Too late for that. By about thirty
six years.

BLAZE
This isn't over, Moreau. If you
don't think Roark is going to come
after us...

MOREAU
Roark can't. Roark won't.
(off Blaze's look)
His spirit would be ejected from
its host if he ever stepped a foot
inside a church.

NADYA
But he has people... And things
that are worse than people...

Moreau takes another swig from his flask.

MOREAU
That's why we've made arrangements.

NADYA
We?

As Nadya follows inside, momentarily confused...

INT. MONASTERY - NIGHT

Alrek and the six priests in the shadows, their NOBLE GUARD standing nearby. Moreau nods to Blaze, Nadya and Danny.

MOREAU

The three of you will stay in the catacombs until Samhain has passed, along with the danger of Roark attempting to possess Danny--

DANNY

(to Nadya)

What does he mean, "possess?"

NADYA

To take you away again.

Nadya can feel Blaze eye her -- this isn't quite the truth.

MOREAU

There's only one way in, and the fortifications for that entrance have been greatly enhanced.

Moreau leads Blaze, Nadya and Danny through... The Elders, lead by their Noble Guard, silently follow.

INT. MONASTERY - PANTRY - NIGHT

Moreau opens the HATCH on the floor of the pantry.

MOREAU

We've provided two weeks worth of food, drink, and alcoholic drink. Samhain is tomorrow night, but...

Moreau glances out the pantry WINDOW, to the vineyards. They're empty. Moreau senses something his wrong.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

Where... Where are my brothers?

Alrek discreetly nods to one of the Noble Guardsmen. Then, in a sudden, brutal move, the Guardsman immediately SMASHES Blaze in the head. Blaze goes down and then, all at once --

Blaze is KICKED DOWN into the catacombs! The CATACOMB HATCH SLAMS SHUT! Moreau, Nadya and Danny are all GRABBED AND RESTRAINED by some of the Elders' Noble Guard.

ALREK
(to Moreau)
Your brothers are safe.

MOREAU
(shocked)
What are you doing?

ALREK
That which needs to be done.

Alrek leads the other Elders, along with the Guardsmen holding Moreau, Danny, and Nadya, out of the pantry. As he goes, he pulls a WOODEN LEVER and A HUGE SLAB OF MARBLE descends from the ceiling, lowered by a web of ROPES and PULLEYS, blocking the hatch to the pantry.

INT. MONASTERY - NIGHT

Alrek turns to face Moreau and Nadya, as they're restrained by the Noble Guardsmen. Danny struggles to get free.

DANNY
LET ME GO!

The Noble Guardsman restraining Danny throws a hand over the boy's mouth so he cannot speak. Alrek GRABS the scabbard with Augustus' sword from Moreau's side.

ALREK
We thank you for your help, Moreau.
But there is only one true way to
ensure Roark does not take this
child's body.

Moreau pales. Holy shit. They want to kill Danny.

MOREAU
No...

NADYA
What are they talking about? They
don't mean...

MOREAU
This... this is apostasy!

ALREK
Church doctrine is quite unsettled
in this regard.

MOREAU
THAT BOY IS ONE OF GOD'S CHILDREN!

ALREK
That's the point. He's not.

NADYA
You can't do this!

MOREAU
You would stain this sanctuary with
his blood?

ALREK
Don't be silly.
(to Priests)
Bring him outside.

NADYA
NO! NO!!!!!!

The Priests bring Danny outside with them. And with that, Alrek is out the door. As the Noble Guardsmen who have Moreau and Nadya hustle them to a back room...

INT. CATACOMBS - NIGHT

Blaze comes to, trapped in the pitch black catacombs, bloody and dizzy. He can hear the faint screams from upstairs.

NADYA (O.S.)
Danny!!! They're going to kill my
son!

The pain in her voice, the desperation... Blaze can feel the Ghost Rider coming.

But instead of resisting it, Blaze knows the Rider is now the only thing that can save Danny. Blaze closes his eyes and lets the Rider's spirit overtake him -- WHOOSH!

The walls of the catacombs -- the paintings and tapestries that portray the Spirit of Vengeance in its earlier forms -- shine with an orange glow.

The FLAMES from the Rider light up the darkness of the cave as the Rider, his face contorting into a hellfire-angry frown, lets out an inhuman, unthinkable SCREAM...

He heads directly for the HATCH. He pushes, STRAINS with everything he's got -- but he still can't make it budge.

The Rider, summoning a BARRAGE OF HELLFIRE, tries to melt the metal... but even the Ghost Rider's flames aren't hot enough to get through the marble, at least not in the time he has.

The Rider HISSSES in frustration, then walks back downstairs. He stands in the middle of the catacombs.

He raises his arms out and CHAINS SHOOT OUT of his body in twelve different directions and SLAM through the TAPESTRIES and CAVE PAINTINGS!

The chains EMBED themselves a foot deep into the rock walls.

As the HELLFIRE from the chains begins to ENGULF the ANCIENT TAPESTRIES, the Rider prepares himself for the next move.

The Rider tenses. As he does, the chains pull TAUT. The Rider clenches his jaw, exerts as much energy as he can.

In an instant, the chains return to him. And when they do, the WALLS of the catacombs come CRASHING DOWN -- along with the FIVE TON MARBLE SLAB, falling, breaking, taking out whatever is left standing. In fact, all that's left intact is the staircase and the hatch above it.

The Rider is BURIED in rubble... just for a second though. There's an EXPLOSION from within the pile. Rocks go flying. Only the Rider remains standing. He looks up, through the caved-in ceiling, to the sanctuary above...

EXT. MONASTERY - VINEYARD CLEARING - NIGHT

In a clearing amongst the vines, the Priests stand in a TORCH-LIT circle. Nearby, on the ground sit the DOZEN OTHER MONKS of St. Rufinus -- TIED UP, BLINDFOLDED, and GAGGED. In the middle of this clearing is Danny: his legs and arms bound by THICK ROPE. A HOODED MAN (one of the Noble Guardsmen) raises an unbelievably sharp looking, ORNATE DAGGER.

HOODED MAN

If you are still, it will be
without pain.

Danny, scared shitless, looks at the blade... At the Hooded Man. Danny's expression changes -- his fear turns to anger...

DANNY

(quietly)
You're worms...

Danny's no longer the sweet -- even scared -- boy he was.

DANNY (CONT'D)

(darkly evil)
You're all worms and you're going
to SUFFER!

The Priests begin to chant a prayer of forgiveness in Latin.

As the sound of the chanting grows, the Hooded Man takes a breath. A twitch of movement -- this is it: as Danny eyes the Hooded Man in terror... a BLUR OF FLAME flies over him. The dagger drops to the ground...

The Ghost Rider TACKLES the Hooded Man... his robe IGNITES. He instantly drops to the ground, ASHES, BURNT TO A CRISP.

The Ghost Rider turns his focus on the circle of Priests. The real sinners. Alrek fumbles with a VELVET BAG at his side -- Balaam, the dark haired priest, steps forward.

BALAAM

Let the lord forgive our
trespasses!

The Ghost Rider looks at Balaam, considers him for a moment, and then GRABS him, beginning the PENANCE STARE.

Just as the Rider locks eyes with Balaam, the sockets of his skull beginning to glow -- Alrek rushes over, and shoves the ultra-polished, mirror-like Cross of Aridai (the ancient gold cross from the beginning) directly in front of the Rider --

It's a simple maneuver that has catastrophic consequences. The Ghost Rider's awesome power is turned upon *himself* --

It's too much... The Ghost Rider HOWLS -- truly in pain.

The Rider's EYE SOCKETS glow bright as he faces himself... BRIGHTER... The Rider is AFLAME... His eyes go even BRIGHTER... The Rider's howl becomes a SHRIEK as he SHAKES... The cross actually CRACKS and then SHATTERS INTO PIECES --

In what sounds like a SONIC BOOM, THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE -- A MASS OF RIPPLING FLAME -- IS EJECTED FROM BLAZE'S BODY -- it just shoots up towards the sky as Blaze is sent flying into the vineyard, DISAPPEARING into the rows of vines.

Wherever he lands, the last of the Rider's energy bursts out of him -- the SPIRIT OF FLAME explodes out of the field, shaking the ground and instantly dissipating...

Alrek spies the DAGGER on the ground and rushes towards it.

ELDER

Deus meus, credo in te, spero --

Just as the Alrek picks up the blade and moves towards Danny... an ominous CHORUS OF CRACKING BRUSH is heard...

As the sound grows closer, we see that it's actually coming from the vines around them... TURNING to SICKLY BROWN. Their plump grapes SHRIVEL into RAISINS.

The TORCHES surrounding them DIM.

Suddenly, Blackout appears making a beeline towards them!

Before any of the Priests can react, Blackout (wearing the jacket and pants of the hearse's BLACK SUIT) GRABS each of them as he passes, not breaking stride, DRAINING THEM TO WHITE HUSKS, TOSSING THEM TO THE GROUND, smiling.

Alrek, dagger in hand, rushes towards the Danny -- he *will* kill the boy... He DRIVES the dagger down towards Danny's neck when Blackout GRABS HIM by the arm. Alrek drops the blade, wide eyed in horror. And then... he's but a HUSK.

Blackout walks to Danny; the torches he passes GO OUT.

DANNY
Get away from me!

BLACKOUT
Do you think I woulda spent all
this time tracking you down if I
wasn't here to help?

Blackout touches the ROPE binding Danny. It ROTS AWAY to nothingness. A wave of relief washes over Danny.

BLACKOUT (CONT'D)
See?

From Danny's POV, we see Blackout's smile fade and then, suddenly, Blackout DESCENDS on Danny, filling frame to BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. STREET CORNER - LICHTENBERG, GERMANY - NIGHT

Not a car on the street. This is a depressed area; the East Baltimore of Berlin. There, on the street corner, under a humming STREETLAMP, stands Roark, playing with his PHONE.

He's in an island of light, surrounded by DARKNESS. And then, down the pitch black block, under another STREETLAMP, in another pool of fluorescence...

Four young SILHOUETTES stand, talking to each other. We can't see them very well, but their SHAVED HEADS are apparent, even as shadows -- these are GANG MEMBERS.

Roark doesn't seem troubled at all. He looks up as headlights appear. Blackout's HEARSE. Blackout hops out.

BLACKOUT
Got somethin' for you.

Blackout opens the back door of the hearse and pulls out the STILL-BOUND Danny. Roark kneels down to the boy. Danny isn't afraid, or angry. He's nervous. And very quiet.

DANNY
Let me go.

Roark can't help but be impressed by the kid's defiance.

ROARK

I want to have him untie you, but if he does that, I imagine you may run. And we can't have that. In this part of town? No. Too dangerous. So I need to keep you tied up just a little longer, so I can show you that you don't want to run. So I can show you that you want to be with me. Your father.

After a moment, Danny nods. A couple more SHOUTS from the gang members down the block.

ROARK (CONT'D)

Good... Your mother loves you. But she hasn't taught you real strength. You know what I'm talking about, Danny.

And Danny just might.

ROARK (CONT'D)

When you caused that car to go over the bridge. It felt *good*, right?

Danny doesn't say anything. He doesn't move.

ROARK (CONT'D)

I haven't been there for you, Danny. I wasn't there... to teach you all this. And, then... I found out those "holy" men were coming to take you... To try to *kill* you...

Roark smiles, as if to repress a sneer.

ROARK (CONT'D)

I knew I needed to teach you how to be strong very, very quickly. That's why everything's happened the way it has. Here's the thing...

Roark starts to untie Danny.

ROARK (CONT'D)

This is just the beginning, my son. You're ready to become so much stronger... To never let anyone hurt you again...

The ropes fall and Danny stands unbound. A beat, then --

Danny shoves Roark away -- knocking him down -- making a break for it. But Blackout is instantly there -- grabbing Danny. Roark slowly stands, his frailness evident.

ROARK (CONT'D)
It's time to make your choice,
Danny. Blackout. Let him go.

But before Blackout can do anything --

GANG MEMBER #1 (O.S.)
HEY!

Roark turns to see the GANG MEMBERS aren't under their streetlight down the block. They race into the pool of light surrounding Roark, Blackout, and Danny, SCREAMING in GERMAN.

BLACKOUT
The hell are they saying?

ROARK
They're asking if you're selling me
Danny. They're making comments
about race and sexual orientation.
They're threatening us.

BLACKOUT
You speak German, too?

ROARK
I speak violence.

Blackout takes one step towards the gang members when Roark calmly raises an open hand to stop him. The gang members circle them, jittery, eyes wide, shouting more German... One of them -- GANG MEMBER #2 -- grabs Danny by his t-shirt.

Roark continues to keep his hand up, lowering all his fingers except his index, as if to say, *just a moment...*

Gang Member #1, yelling in German, RUSHES at him, who stands his ground. Just before Gang Member #1 connects with him...

A LOUD, INHUMAN GROWL DOPPLERS OUT OF THE DARKNESS AND THEN -- ONE OF ROARK'S COYOTE BEASTS LEAPS INTO THE LIGHT -- JUST A BLUR OF FUR AND FANGS -- GRABBING GANG MEMBER #1 IN ITS JAWS AND CARRYING HIM INTO THE BLACKNESS...

Gang Member #1 can be heard SCREAMING, being TORN APART in the darkness, as his friends stand frozen, shocked. Blackout smiles, his eyes on the horrified other gang members.

Danny feels the excitement in his chest. *He likes it, too.*
He knocks away Gang Member #2's hand from his chest.

And then -- THREE MORE BEASTS. THREE MORE LEAPS OUT AND BACK INTO THE DARKNESS, TAKING EACH OF THE GANG MEMBERS.

Then, out of the blackness, the sounds and screams of their destruction. And, all the while, Roark standing with his index finger raised... Just a moment.

Finally, he lowers his finger.

ROARK (CONT'D)
That's strength, Danny. And, as my son, that is your birthright... Let him go, Blackout.

Blackout lets Danny go. The boy doesn't move. Roark looks at him, confident.

ROARK (CONT'D)
For the rest of your life... You can run. Or you can be someone people run from.
(then)
It's time to choose, Danny.

Danny looks at Roark. The screaming has stopped. The unseen coyote beasts growl as they feed. Roark smiles at his son.

EXT. MONASTERY - DEEP WITHIN THE VINEYARD - DAY

Morning. Blaze opens his eyes. Nadya stands over him. Her eyes red, face pale. It's been a hard night for her.

NADYA
John. Thank God.

EXT. MONASTERY - VINEYARD CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Blaze and Nadya step out from the dead vines. Blaze sees the dead elders. The signs of a monumental struggle. Moreau, dead-eyed, STARES at AUGUSTUS' SWORD, taking a swig off a BOTTLE OF SCOTCH. He looks at the words on the handle: "Bear Thy Standard Dread." Blaze races up to him.

BLAZE
Where's Danny?

Moreau can't meet his eyes. Blaze turns to Nadya. Her lip is quivering.

INT. HEARSE - DAY

CLOSE ON: Danny. He's in Blackout's hearse, sitting between Roark and Blackout. They ride up a winding, wooded road.

Up ahead, the forest clears to a cliffside -- and just beyond the high cliff, a finger of ROCK, rising from the water, with A GIANT, ANCIENT STONE CHURCH, built atop it, two hundred feet above the choppy sea. A shoulder of stone rises above the church. TREES grow out of it, seemingly holding in place massive BOULDERS that, together, look like an eagle's head and beak... This is why it's called the Eagle's Nest.

A MASSIVE STONE BRIDGE connects the cliff to the church's perch. As they grow closer, Danny's eyes widen...

DANNY

What is that?

ROARK

Every prince needs his castle.
This is yours, Danny... Welcome to
the Eagle's Nest.

EXT. MONASTERY - DAY

Nadya is finishing telling Blaze the story.

NADYA

And then someone... something. It
took Danny away.

Moreau takes another swig from his bottle. Blaze, beginning to anger, turns to him.

BLAZE

And you're just sitting there
getting drunk?

Moreau stares at the bottle in his hand. He's utterly broken.

MOREAU

It's holy wine.

BLAZE

It's scotch.

MOREAU

It's holy scotch.

Blaze looks at Nadya: *He's useless.* Moreau keeps staring at the bottle, squaring his jaw, standing... Until finally -- he THROWS IT, SHATTERING IT AGAINST the monastery wall.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

I FAILED! The boy, you, the entire
world! I'm the Summoner Excelsis!

NADYA

Moreau -- it wasn't you.

MOREAU

I allowed myself to be deceived. I took no precaution. I kept my eyes shut and left it all to God.

(bitterly)

To his will.

Blaze pulls off Moreau's sunglasses; his eyes are teary...

BLAZE

Your eyes are open now... You're a man of God, and you put your faith in him. Maybe right now, he's telling you something you told me.

(off Moreau's look)

Start believing in yourself.

MOREAU

How?

BLAZE

There has be a way for you to help me to save Danny. To stop this.

MOREAU

You think you stand a chance going up against Roark without the Rider's power?

Blaze considers this, taking out the COIN, rolling it in his hand. He looks at the coyote... And then the eagle.

BLAZE

No.

Moreau's eyes open wide, understanding what Blaze is asking.

MOREAU

Stop. You feel lighter, don't you? The dark tug on your soul gone... The scream for vengeance silenced. This would be life without the curse. Without the burden.

Blaze looks at Moreau, tempted to abandon all of this.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

After everything you've done to rid yourself of the Rider... You would willingly accept the curse again... To live that way? Even if you win, even if you save us all... You lose yourself once more.

Blaze looks at Moreau. Everything inside him is telling him to get on his bike and go. He's not fucking going to.

BLAZE

I made a bad a choice a long time ago. This is a good one... You have to figure out a way to give it back to me.

(with resolve)

Can you do it?

Nadya swallows, astounded, grateful. Moreau looks at Blaze, afraid to fail again. Blaze isn't giving him a choice.

MOREAU

It's possible the spirit may have found another host... But if it hasn't... And...

(a tinge of fear)

If I summon that power and cannot properly harness it... we'll just be three sinners in its eyes... And *it will kill us.*

BLAZE

You said you gamble. Let's gamble.

Off Moreau, he nods. There is no choice but to believe...

INT. EAGLE'S NEST - DAY

Danny races inside, followed by Blackout. For a structure whose architecture is so imposing, the ancient church's interior is even more impressive. Roark stands outside.

The sunlight gives the place an airy, almost pastoral feel. Stained glass, ornate ironwork, stone carved angels... there's also an altar in the middle of the stone floor.

Danny turns around, calls to Roark.

DANNY

Why are you standing out there?

Roark checks his watch. It's 4:00 pm.

ROARK

I'll be in soon. Would you like your birthday present in the meantime?

Danny nods, excited. Roark WHISTLES... a COYOTE BEAST PUPPY appears from nowhere, rushes in the door and races towards the middle of the room. Danny's eyes light up.

Danny races to the center of the room. The coyote pup stands at attention. Danny begins to pet it as it wags its tail...

We don't know why, but Roark looks on, incredibly pleased...

INT. CATACOMBS - DAY

Blaze, ready, sits by a small BONFIRE. Nadya is next to him; Moreau is on the other side of the flames, crouching on the HEAD OF THE BROKEN STATUE.

Moreau takes a swig of scotch before POURING the rest over the fire, feeding the FLAME. He drops the bottle; it SHATTERS.

MOREAU

John Blaze, are you ready?

A flicker of hesitation. A wish that can't be.

BLAZE

Do it.

MOREAU

Do you renounce Satan?

BLAZE

Hell, yes.

Moreau lowers his head.

MOREAU

*Injincere laqueos libertati ejus et
nocere Ecclesiae desine...*

As the LIGHT of the fire grows BRIGHTER... The DARKNESS around it grows DEEPER. Soon, there are no walls, no floor, no ceiling, only BLACK.

All that can be seen beyond the blackness is the small FIRE: Blaze on one side of it -- with Nadya behind him, almost swallowed in the darkness -- and Moreau, on the other.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

*Propinare venenum perditionis
aeternae eisque, creaturas humanas
decipere cess...*

And then -- the Rider's INHUMAN SHRIEK rattles our trios' teeth. Above them, in the infinite darkness... A SPARK, far, far into that infinity... And then it RUSHES DOWN to make a ceiling of FIRE, just fifteen feet over their heads, stretching into every direction -- this is the SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE, in its purest form -- infinite flame, infinite rage. The three REACT -- the heat is intense...

NADYA

You did it... The spirit...

BLAZE

(fighting his fear)

Welcome back.

Blaze feels the fire... It burns him more than the others...

MOREAU
*Aeternae vitam habeat sed pereat
 non, eum in credit qui, omnis ut,
 daret unigenitum suum Filium ut,
 mundum dilexit sic qui!*

The inferno above seems to be coming down towards them... The sky is falling -- and it's on fire.

NADYA
 Moreau --

Another SCREAM of the Rider can be heard.

MOREAU
DEUM PER SANCTUM! DEUM PER VERUM!

NADYA
 MOREAU --

The fire is getting LOWER. Blaze squares his jaw, in pain... Moreau and Nadya struggle to breathe... Their skin BLISTERS from the heat... Their CLOTHING and HAIR begin to SMOKE.

BLAZE
 C'mon, you sonofabitch. Come home.

The HOWL of the Rider goes on and on... The flames even lower... About to consume them all.

MOREAU
*DEUM PER VIVUM! DEUM PER TE
 ADJURAMUS DIABOLICA LEGIO OMNIS ET
 MALEDICTE DRACO ERGO!*

It's like the plug of a bath is pulled and the small bonfire
by Blaze is the drain -- SUDDENLY, the INFINITE CEILING OF
 FIRE rushes into the bonfire and then, DIRECTLY INTO BLAZE!
 The FIRE GROWS BRIGHTER and BRIGHTER as the rush of FLAME
 CONSUMES Blaze -- his broken silhouette finally disappearing
 into the light -- IS HE GONE? -- and then, suddenly:

Everything is plunged into DARKNESS. A match is struck... By Moreau. We can see little else. He relights the bonfire...

And we see the CATACOMBS -- with its TAPESTRIES and CAVE
 PAINTINGS -- are INTACT. Blaze, Moreau, Nadya -- their skin
 is unblistered. Their clothes and hair unscorched.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
 All is as it once was... And ever
 will be.

Moreau reaches down to where the EMPTY BOTTLE OF SCOTCH shattered. It's there, intact and FULL. Moreau pulls out the cap and takes a drink, relieved. Nadya turns to Blaze.

NADYA

It worked?

BLAZE

(nodding solemnly)

Yeah. He's back... And he's ready.

Blaze stands. He's back, too.

MOREAU

We're all still alive. That's going to be helpful.

Nadya looks at Moreau... *Are you serious?*

MOREAU (CONT'D)

Now...

Moreau stands up and walks past the VARIOUS TAPESTRIES, studying them quickly, and finally, settling on one. He runs his fingers along the lines of the CRUDE MAP sewn into it.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

Yes.

Moreau PULLS the TAPESTRY off the cave wall and walks quickly towards the stairs. Blaze and Nadya follow.

BLAZE

What are you doing?

MOREAU

Finding out where we're going.

Moreau bounds up the stairs, carrying the tapestry.

INT. SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Blaze and Nadya follow Moreau into the sanctuary as he makes a beeline to the ancient, well-like CISTERN.

MOREAU

There are only a handful of places where Roark can do the possession ceremony... The planets, tides, the year... It all comes into play...

Moreau tosses the tapestry into the cistern, SOAKING IT.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

Holy water. Usually don't touch the stuff.

He pulls the wet tapestry out, flicking it out on the ground, sending a spray of HOLY WATER into Nadya and Blaze's faces. The drops SIZZLE into STEAM off of Blaze's skin.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

Place your hand on the edge of the tapestry.

Blaze, accepting the weirdness, takes a knee. He puts his hand on the tapestry. It begins INTENSELY STEAMING... DISINTEGRATING... Leaving only a SHRED of it intact. Moreau grabs the shred. Ancient text on it reads, "*Aquila Cubile*."

MOREAU (CONT'D)

Aquila Cubile. Latin. For the "Eagle's Nest." We're going North. We need to get there by midnight.

Moreau leads Nadya and Blaze towards a CLOSET. He opens it, revealing a SMALL ARMORY full of weapons -- both ANCIENT, MODERN, and OVER THE TOP. Nadya and Blaze are floored.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

We don't just pray and make wine here.

Blaze smiles. They may just pull this thing off.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

Blaze, along with Moreau and Nadya (who rides in the sidecar on Moreau's Moto Guzzi motorcycle), roar down a TALL BRIDGE built across a green valley. Below, in the distance, is an OLD VILLAGE... And the sun growing LOW in the sky.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Blaze, Moreau, and Nadya stand in the shadows of a forest, their bikes parked. Surf can be heard CRASHING the distance. They look to the Eagle's Nest well in the distance... and to Roark standing outside its open door, the light falling on him, making his shadow grow long down the STONE BRIDGE.

NADYA

What is he doing?

MOREAU

He's waiting to go inside.

BLAZE

You said he can't go into a church.

MOREAU

It's almost midnight... Soon, that place won't be a church...

(MORE)

MOREAU (CONT'D)

(then)

At least, not until the sun rises
once more. We need to hurry.

Moreau moves to his Moto Guzzi's sidecar, unloading DUFFEL BAGS. In the distance... Roark takes out his POCKET WATCH...

EXT. THE EAGLE'S NEST - NIGHT

...standing outside the doorway of the church. It's 11:59. He looks up to see Danny inside, sitting on the floor of the altar petting his COYOTE BEAST PUPPY. Blackout sits in a pew, scratching at the wood with his sharp fingernails.

ROARK

Do you feel it, Danny? The power.
That's why I brought you here.

With that, the Coyote Beast Puppy cocks its head, sensing something... It steps away.

ROARK (CONT'D)

Watch.

Roark's watch hits 12:00 midnight. And starting in the red circle, THAT'S WHERE THE TRANSFORMATION STARTS... the WOOD AND LIMESTONE changes to SHINY SLATE and ONYX...

The church's COLUMNS and ARCHWAYS transform from simple and ancient to GOTHIC and NIGHTMARISH. SAINTS transform to DEMONS. The STAINED GLASS WINDOWS now portray SATANIC TABLEAUS. The ANCIENT, ORNATE WROUGHT IRON of the GATES behind the altar now REPRESENT SNAKES and SWORDS.

The Coyote Beast puppy begins to GROW... soon, it's transformed into an ADULT COYOTE BEAST -- far bigger, grotesque, and more badass than the others we've seen.

Danny stands, astounded. Fascinated. Excited.

It's a new day. It's Samhain. Roark, with a victorious smile, walks inside and approaches Danny.

ROARK (CONT'D)

This place is much more than it
appeared to be. Just like you.
Just like me.

Danny sees the fire leaping out from behind the gates.

ROARK (CONT'D)

Open the gates, Danny. Let the
fire touch you. Don't be afraid.

After a beat of hesitation, Danny walks to the gates and throws them open, revealing a VISTA OF FIRE.

This is the gateway to Roark's true realm. The fire rushes in... but Danny doesn't burn.

ROARK (CONT'D)
That's my boy.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Just at that moment outside, the LIGHT of the HELLFIRE POURS OUT the church's stained glass, casting it out on the ground, flickering, the color of blood. Blaze FEELS it. He squares his jaw and wipes sweat from his brow.

BLAZE
Something's happening.

MOREAU
(all business)
The gates of hell have been opened.

Moreau finishes unloading his IMPOSSIBLY FORMIDABLE WEAPONS from the duffels. Moreau looks to Blaze.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
You don't need a weapon. You are a
weapon.
(then)
Give me a moment to pray.

Moreau steps away, kneeling. Blaze turns to Nadya, looking at the daggerbow.

BLAZE
You don't have to go in there with
us.

NADYA
I do. You're going to be fighting
them off. And I'm going to make
sure Danny gets out of there.

Nadya doesn't look at Blaze.

NADYA (CONT'D)
If it takes me dying to make sure
he lives... As *Danny*, as the kid I
raised... I'm fine with that.
(then)
Danny's the one good thing I did in
this life.

Blaze puts a hand on Nadya's shoulder, making her face at him. He looks at her square in the eye.

BLAZE

No. Nadya... You're wrong. You helped me. You showed me things I wasn't seeing.

Nadya looks at Blaze, puzzled.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

The eagle. The light.

(then)

The Rider and me... We're connected. When he was gone, I felt it. Like part of me was gone. You saw the spirit. It was just... *fire*. But the Rider, he rides a motorcycle, takes the form of a man. There's the Spirit. There's me. Together, we're the Ghost Rider.

Blaze seems almost... proud.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

I don't think Danny stopped the Rider when he tried to take you. I think the Rider saw the good in you because I do. I'm not afraid to become the Rider in front of you... Because of everything that happened... Because of you.

Nadya looks at him. Hoping he's right.

Moreau approaches, holding what look to be TWO STAFFS, with long SCYTHE BLADES feathered down their sides. He flicks his wrists and their LONG SCYTHE BLADES at their very tops SNAP INTO PLACE.

MOREAU

God is with us. The hour grows long and Samhain that much closer. Our time for attack is now.

Blaze looks to Nadya. She nods. The step out from the shadows of the forest, towards the Eagle's Nest to them.

EXT. CLIFFSIDE - NEAR THE CHURCH - NIGHT

Nearing the stone bridge to the church, Blaze, Nadya, and Moreau see the light from the hellfire spill out from the church. The RIPPLING ORANGE LIGHT is cast across the ground -- falling over Blaze. He doubles over, stumbling.

BLAZE

The Rider's gonna come out...

A HEAT HAZE surrounds the shaking Blaze. The hand he uses to hold himself up BURNS the ground... He turns to Nadya, FIRE leaking from his eyes...

BLAZE (CONT'D)
But this time... I'm gonna be here,
too. Somehow. I know it.

Blaze takes a few breaths... A look of resolve creeping over his face... And then:

WHOOOOOOOSH. The fire from inside Blaze ENGULFS him. Hunched over on the ground, Blaze TRANSFORMS to the Ghost Rider. Nadya and Moreau watch in wide eyed shock... To be this close to it... It's unthinkable. The Rider finally stands...

He looks to Moreau and then to Nadya, the Rider's sockets contorting to a FROWN. An excruciating moment of uncertainty. And then: The Rider NODS to them... And turns to the church.

INT. EAGLE'S NEST - NIGHT

Danny stands, his Coyote Beast next to him, staring at the VISTAS OF HELLFIRE that can be seen through the gateway... The power astounds him. Roark sees this and smiles.

ROARK
Step over here, Danny.

Danny obeys, stepping onto the altar.

ROARK (CONT'D)
This stone... it's where the
original priest of this church
would sacrifice animals. The
congregation here... they would
kill to please God.

Roark shakes his head with a bitter smile.

ROARK (CONT'D)
The people, they were so small.
True power doesn't come from
killing. True power comes from
turning someone. From transforming
them. But first, we have to
transform ourselves...

Roark looks at the GATES... He raises a finger, and the FIRE is drawn towards him.

The HELLFIRE races out of the gates in a STREAM, SURROUNDING Danny and Roark in a WALL OF FIRE. Shadows DANCE around the Eagle's Nest -- including Roark and Danny's.

ROARK (CONT'D)
It's time, Danny.

Roark takes a step towards Danny so that their shadows TOUCH. Danny's shadow gets BIGGER as Roark's shadow SHRINKS... Almost as if Danny is absorbing Roark's SOUL.

It's a VERY SLOW, methodical process. Roark eyes the shadows eagerly... wishing they could move faster.

THEN he looks out the window. In the distance, he hears the growing roar of a motorcycle engine, sees a TRAIL OF FIRE speeding towards him.

Roark turns to Blackout, uncharacteristically concerned.

EXT. EAGLE'S NEST - NIGHT

The sound dopplers towards us, and suddenly: THE GHOST RIDER tears across the stone bridge. *And he's fucking pissed.*

He shoots towards the church's open door like a flaming bullet. Then -- another gunning engine sound and -- CRASSSHH!

Out of nowhere, BLACKOUT'S HEARSE (headlights off) SMASHES into the Ghost Rider's motorcycle. The Rider and his bike go FLYING -- landing with a THUD fifty feet away.

Blackout RACES towards Ghost Rider. Ghost Rider, getting to his feet, shoots a STREAM OF HELLFIRE at Blackout, stopping him in his tracks... The flames dissipate around him -- Blackout's energy siphoning gives him a protective aura from the Rider's flames -- but the force is strong enough to keep him from moving forward. It's a STALEMATE.

Moreau and Nadya scramble over the bridge, survey the scene. Nadya stares at the man she used to know as Carrigan.

NADYA
He's...

MOREAU
A being of hell, now. A demon. Good thing these weapons are blessed.

Moreau takes out a BOW, loads up an ARROW and FIRES. THWICK.

We're with the arrow as it flies towards Blackout. SUPER SLOW MOTION. Blackout, still repelling the Rider's flames, turns and merely LOOKS AT THE ARROW.

Immediately, the arrow's wood shaft begins to ROT AWAY. As it approaches Blackout's face, the shaft completely CORRODES, the arrow head falling harmlessly to the ground.

Back to real time: Moreau can't believe what's just happened. He looks at the rest of his weapons. All wood. Worthless.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

That didn't go quite as planned.

Moreau looks to Nadya, but she's already in action. In one motion, she takes her KNIFE and throws it with all her might.

The knife CONNECTS, embeds itself into Blackout's ARM, splattering out BLACK BLOOD. It doesn't faze him as he continues for push back the Rider's inferno: Blackout removes the knife from his arm and tosses it aside.

But the moment he takes to do that... everything changes.

THE RIDER, still blasting FIRE at Blackout to a draw, looks inside the Eagle's Nest, to the WALL OF HELLFIRE encircling Danny and Roark, drawn from the gates behind the altar.

He reaches a TWITCHING, BONY HAND UP...

INT. EAGLE'S NEST - NIGHT

Roark takes another look at the shadows... Danny's shadow is TWICE AS BIG as Roark's. Not much longer now...

Suddenly, the FIRE surrounding Danny and Roark is suddenly PULLED AWAY from the stone circle -- snuffing away their shadows. THE STREAM OF FIRE SAILS DIRECTLY DOWN THE CHURCH'S AISLE AND OUT THE DOOR. The ceremony has been stopped.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The STREAM OF HELLFIRE races out of the church, towards Ghost Rider. He deftly controls it with one hand and JOINS IT with the STREAM OF FLAME HE'S SENDING AT BLACKOUT!

The COMBINED STREAMS OF FLAME KNOCK Blackout back... Having gained the upper hand, the Rider keeps at it, MARCHING TOWARDS BLACKOUT, hitting him with the combined HELLFIRE.

It's too much for Blackout to hold back. His protective aura is gone; the flame is getting closer and closer to his body.

Moreau looks on as the Ghost Rider closes in on Blackout. Nadya, however is distracted -- there's a clear sight line into the church. A clear view of DANNY.

Nadya begins to run for the church, Moreau grabs her arm.

MOREAU

Not yet.

NADYA

But Roark...

MOREAU

Roark doesn't have much power left.
But what he does have... we don't
stand a chance without his help.

Moreau gestures to the Rider, who's advanced so far his flame singes Blackout's eyebrows. Blackout, desperate, sees Nadya and Moreau right behind him. Blackout DROPS to the ground.

Before Ghost Rider can react, his flame SHOOTs out, HITS MOREAU and knocks him OVER THE CLIFF.

Nadya's eyes go wide with horror... She runs to the cliff, looks over. No sign of Moreau. Only the choppy, rocky water a hundred feet below. There's no way he could have survived.

Simultaneously, we see something we have yet see -- the Rider is affected: his streams of hellfire cease, his sockets contort into sympathy. As Nadya screams, the Rider does, too.

And, in the moment the Rider is distracted, Blackout SHOOTs UP, ready to exact some revenge. With a SUCKING HOWL of ENERGY, Blackout uses his power to DOUSE the RIDER'S FLAME...

Before the Rider can recover, Blackout GRABS him by the arm -- **and the Rider begins turning back into Blaze!** Bone turns to skin, which turns deathly, sickly pale. His once flaming chains fall to the ground, inert.

Nadya sees her would-be savior withering away. It doesn't look like Ghost Rider can help her anymore, so she decides to go after her son. As she races towards the Eagle's Nest --

NADYA

Danny! Help us!

Blackout hears Nadya, turns to see her running for the church. Blackout tosses Blaze aside... fifty feet aside.

Blaze flies through the air, hitting the base of the EAGLE'S NEST ROCK FORMATION with a THUD.

INT. EAGLE'S NEST - NIGHT

Danny stares as his mother, still outside, races towards him.

NADYA

Danny, I'm here! Please --

Roark points his finger at the door. It CLOSES. A wisp of SMOKE rises from Roark's hand. That cost him.

ROARK

You don't have to listen to that nonsense. Unless... you want to. Do you want to go with her, Danny?

A pregnant beat... is he going to go with her? How much control does Roark have over him? The answer? A lot. Danny turns his back on the door, gazes back at Roark.

Roark smiles, satisfied. He draws the HELLFIRE back from the gates and reignites the CIRCLE around them. Roark's shadow touches Danny's again. Danny's SHADOW starts to GROW.

EXT. EAGLE'S NEST - NIGHT

Nadya is almost to the door. Suddenly, a CHAIN wraps around her waist like a LASSO. Her body is WHIPPED BACKWARDS.

Behind her, Blackout has the other end of the Rider's chains. He drags Nadya towards him until he towers over her. Nadya looks up at him, defiant.

NADYA

Carrigan, it doesn't matter what power he gave you... You're still just little man with a little gun --

Blackout GRABS her throat. It immediately turns WHITE.

BLACKOUT

Carrigan died. There's only Blackout now. And you still talk way too much.

EXT. EAGLE'S NEST - NIGHT

Blaze struggles to stand up. As he does, he sees Nadya's body, badly injured, on the ground several yards away.

Blaze kneels next to her. They both know she's dying. He searches for the words, and finds the ones Nadya told him:

BLAZE

What you are... It isn't what you think you are.

She manages a gentle smile at this... After what Blackout did to her, she can barely speak.

NADYA

John... I didn't show you the light. You are the light. You're the only thing that can fight off the darkness. Go save Danny. Please.

And those are the last words Nadya will say.

BLACKOUT (O.S.)
She's wrong.

Blaze whips around. Blackout stands not ten feet away.

Blaze clenches his jaw, tenses his muscles... he's trying to become Ghost Rider. Little bursts of flame leak off his fingers, but it's not sustained.

BLACKOUT (CONT'D)
There is no light. Only darkness.

Blackout steps towards Blaze. As Blaze backtracks, he continues to try to become the Rider, but it's not happening.

Blaze is forced to back up until he's flush against the rock formation that gave the Eagle's Nest its name. Blaze looks up at the trees, the boulders above them. And for some reason, Blaze doesn't look scared.

BLACKOUT (CONT'D)
You killed me once. Now it's my turn.

Before Blaze can blink, Blackout grabs him by the shirt, lifts him up in the air. Immediately, Blaze starts to turn SICKLY WHITE. Blackout is draining the life out of him.

Blackout chuckles... nearly masking the sound of a CRACKING sound in the general area.

Blaze's pale spot continues to grow... down his arms, up his face. Despite it, a smile creeps over Blaze's face.

BLACKOUT (CONT'D)
You enjoying this? You're one sick puppy.

More cracking. Blaze can barely talk. With his last breath.

BLAZE
Don't... look...up.

Blackout furrows his brow, then looks up.

Blackout's force has affected the trees. The thick TRUNKS holding the giant eagle-sized rocks in place have SHRIVELLED into TWIGS. That's the cracking sound that they had heard.

Before Blackout can register what happens, the trees give way... and the rocks come TUMBLING DOWN.

Blaze, knowing what was coming, is able to jump out of the way. Blackout is not so fortunate. The MASSIVE ROCK that creates the eagle's "beak," begins falling.

It's like a massive arrowhead. It LANDS directly on Blackout, like a shoe coming down on a bug.

Blackout is INSTANTLY CRUSHED... And then -- *Blackout is gone* in AN EXPLOSION OF SUPERNATURAL FURY -- It's a giant VACUUM of ENERGY, sucking in everything amidst a HOWLING WIND.

Blaze looks up. As he sees the GLOWING Eagle's Nest he's reminded that a much larger obstacle remains.

The pale and weak Blaze has no choice. He tries once more to change into Ghost Rider... but now he can't even leak fire. Just a wisp of smoke.

Still, he plods towards the door of the church. As he passes Nadya's body, he considers her.

INT. EAGLE'S NEST - NIGHT

Each step is agony, but Blaze pushes forward towards Roark and Danny. He reaches his hand out toward the flames -- relighting the Rider is his only hope.

That TINY BIT OF FLAME is only inches from Blaze's quivering, outstretched hand, when --

The flames suddenly PART, revealing the greatly-diminished Roark looking at Blaze, angrier than we've ever seen him. Danny actually doesn't look too happy, either.

ROARK

Blaze. It's done! It's over!

BLAZE

(weak)

It's not over. You're still you...
Danny's still Danny...

As the Coyote Beast SNARLS at Blaze, Roark SWINGS his arm at him: the motion sends Blaze FLYING through the air, into a STONE PILLAR. Blaze crumples to the ground. The THIN SKIN of Roark's CHIN and CHEEKBONES BURNS away in a WISP of SMOKE.

Roark CLENCHES his hand and Blaze GROANS... It's as if his insides are being crushed. The effort costs Roark, as SKIN burns away from Roark's hands...

Blood runs from the corner of Blaze's mouth... Summoning the last of his strength, Blaze TOSSES something to Danny... The objects skid across the stone circle...

Danny looks down to see NADYA'S AMETHYST EARRINGS at his feet. He picks them up.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

She's dead, Danny...

Danny looks at Roark, who looks more monstrous than ever...

ROARK

She's dead because of the way she lived. She was keeping you from your power. The reason you're alive right now is you chose strength! It's not good and evil, it's not darkness and light, *it's who wins.*

BLAZE

(weak)

You don't need him for the power, Danny. You already have it. All this, it's about him *taking* it from you. That's how he does it... You stop believing in the world, you stop believing in yourself... And the devil gets it all...

Danny has that cold look on his face. That evil countenance. The church SHAKES more. Another window SHATTERS.

ROARK

You've won. You know you have. Who's standing now? Who's bleeding? Who's alive and who's dead? *You've. Won.*

(then)

The opposite of a victim is a victor. Draw the hellfire, son. Let's take the final victory together.

Danny looks at Blaze, then Roark. He nods. Blaze's face falls... Was Alrek right? Would Danny be better off dead?

Danny raises his hand and pulls the HELLFIRE from the GATES. Blaze watches, broken... The last thing he gets to see is the end of a child. And the end of the world...

Two RIVULETS of HELLFIRE RACE AROUND THE CIRCLE, meeting at the end, GLOWING INCREDIBLY INTENSE AND BRIGHT -- A MINI SUPERNOVA, and then join into a single STREAM... Danny then suddenly thrusts his arms in Blaze's direction --

DANNY

BLAZE!

...AND, OFF THAT GESTURE, DANNY SENDS THE HELLFIRE DIRECTLY INTO BLAZE! DANNY HAS TRICKED THE DEVIL! Blaze raises his head... A determined smile crossing his face... And --

WHOOOOOOSH! The GHOST RIDER burns BRIGHTLY. He walks calmly, slowly towards Roark.

Roark, shocked, throws up his hands to KNOCK THE RIDER back with an UNSEEN FORCE -- but the mere act of summoning that power causes Roark's skin to SMOKE. He falls to his knees.

The Ghost Rider GRABS Roark and HEAVES HIM INTO THE GATES -- and the endless fire beyond them -- CREATING A MASSIVE EXPLOSION OF FLAME!

For a moment, it seems as though the explosion has engulfed Danny and Blaze. But after a few seconds, the Ghost Rider marches out... Holding Danny in a PROTECTIVE BUBBLE -- impenetrable to the fire. The Coyote Beast was not so lucky.

Marching out, the Ghost Rider SHOOTs OUT several chains... They WRAP THEMSELVES around the HANDLES of the GATES at the ALTAR... He YANKS THEM... CLOSING THE GATES TO HELL!

And then -- just as the Ghost Rider crosses the threshold with Danny... The church TRANSFORMS back to its ancient innocence -- onyx back to wood, demons back to saints...

The church is a place of God once more. But the wood, the tapestries -- the church is ON FIRE, BURNING OUT OF CONTROL.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE EAGLE'S NEST - DAWN

The Rider quickly turns to Danny with... A smile? Before we can even think about it, the Rider switches back into Blaze. Danny looks a little worse for the wear. Shaken, sweaty...

BLAZE

You hurt?

DANNY

No... Not really, but...
(you know what I mean)
Yeah.

Now outside, they see the sky turning orange... The darkness has almost passed. They hear someone COUGHING... and turn to see a hand reach over the side of the cliff. Another. And then, Moreau pulls himself up. Blaze and Danny rush to him.

BLAZE

Moreau!

MOREAU

(seeing Danny)
We won?

DANNY

Yeah, we did.

BLAZE

How did you --

Moreau smiles gently. He holds up Augustus' sword.

MOREAU
My sword... It caught me on a tree
branch as I fell. It's why I live
and it's not even mine.
(nodding)
We won.

EXT. EAGLE'S NEST - SUNRISE

Blaze Danny, and Moreau look at the church burning... Solemn.
Danny's eyes are red from emotion... A section of the church
BUCKLES and GROANS as the FLAMES consume it.

BLAZE
You're gonna be okay... You know
that?

Danny doesn't answer.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
Danny?

DANNY
(quiet but urgent)
Blaze, I'm --

It's like Danny cut himself off. He leans against some rocks.
Blaze exchanges a look with Moreau and turns back to Danny.

BLAZE
You're not okay, are you?

DANNY
(breathing hard)
I'm fine.

BLAZE
I wasn't talking to you, Roark...

Against the rippling orange light of the CHURCH'S FLAMES, we
see Danny's SHADOW. It isn't his: it's ROARK'S.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
...I was talking to Danny. You did
it somehow. You made the change.
(proud)
But he's still in there somewhere,
fighting you.

DANNY
(shaking)
Not for long.

BLAZE

I have faith in the kid. But I'm still gonna give him a little help.
(gesturing to Moreau)
He told me you don't like going to church...

MOREAU

Actually -- I told you that he can't. But Danny can.

Danny's face contorts into a WIDE, EVIL SMILE, even as he shakes, fighting his own body...

DANNY

That church is almost gone... Just like Danny. He's dying... And I feel my power growing...

Danny, now half-possessed by the devil's soul, shoots out his arms, BLASTING BLAZE AND MOREAU BACK! He leaps down the cliffside, with NOW-INHUMAN speed. Moreau looks to Blaze.

MOREAU

Get the boy into the church and Roarke will be ejected!

WHOOOOOOSH! Blaze switches to the Ghost Rider and RACES after the unthinkably fast and agile Danny, gaining on him.

Danny swings his arm behind him, RIPPING A MASSIVE TREE FROM the GROUND and SHOOTING IT RIGHT at the Rider, who avoids it!

A ROAR! The Rider's Hellcycle leaps into the Rider's path, PACING HIM -- in a deft move, the Rider SHOOTs out a chain ahead of himself and LEAPS onto the CYCLE simultaneously...

THE CHAIN whips around Danny, YANKING HIM OFF his feet.

THE GHOST RIDER, clutching the other end of the chain, STEERS his cycle around trees, LANDING back on the path up to the Eagle's Nest. As he ROARS towards the church...

THE STRUCTURE IS AFLAME, BUCKLING, AND FALLING APART!

DANNY

YOU'RE TOO LATE! THE BOY IS MINE!
THIS WORLD IS MINE!

The Rider races towards the massive STONE BRIDGE...

He lifts his bony hands from the handlebars, and SENDS OUT A FIREBALL at the BASE of the BRIDGE. Its closest end COLLAPSES, making it into a massive RAMP. The Ghost Rider guns his Hellcycle, hits the makeshift RAMP and flies into the air in front of the COLLAPSING, BURNING CHURCH --

Its SPIRE sticks up, intact and not yet aflame, with its windows shattered and open.

In mid-air, the Ghost Rider WHIPS back his chain holding Danny -- snapping it back so it SAILS through the AIR, DIRECTLY INTO THE CHURCH SPIRE'S WINDOW!

WE FOLLOW DANNY as he SHOOTS through, the CHURCH on FIRE BELOW -- as soon as Danny crosses INSIDE the spire, a SHADOWY-FIERY EXPLOSION shoots out from him -- flames, fire, pulsing energy -- **this is Roark's soul being ejected from Danny...**

OUTSIDE THE SPIRE: The explosion momentarily BLACKS OUT THE SKY -- AND BRIEFLY FLICKER INTO A DEVILISH IMAGE OF SMOKE, SHADOW, AND FIRE...

An unconscious Danny SAILS out of the WINDOW on the other side of the SPIRE -- AND IS SNATCHED OUT OF THE AIR BY the GHOST RIDER! The Rider lands on the other side and RACES DOWN A MOUNTAIN PATH AS THE EAGLES'S NEST COLLAPSES and in an MASSIVE BURST of ROCK and FLAME!!!

And the Rider keeps riding...

EXT. CLIFFSIDE, OVERLOOKING THE COAST - DAY

The sun is up, and Blaze and Danny stand, looking at the ROCKS PILED over a MAKESHIFT GRAVE. Some time has passed. But not enough for things to be all smiles yet. In fact, Danny looks utterly broken. Moreau sits nearby, WHITTILING.

MOREAU

He tricked you. That's what he does.

BLAZE

But you didn't give up, Danny. You fought. You didn't let him win.

Danny swallows. Trying to hold back the tears.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

Thing is, we may have been the ones that sent Roark home...

(then)

But your mom was the one who beat him. Your mom was the one who saved you.

The tears come. He shakes, wracked by sobs. Blaze looks at him... and reaches out, putting a hand on his shoulder.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

Danny. She saved me, too.

Danny walks to the grave and places something on the LARGEST STONE covering it: her AMETHYST EARRINGS. Blaze walks up and stands beside him. Danny turns to Blaze, hugging him. Blaze looks uncomfortable for a moment... But only for a moment.

Moreau joins them. He places what he whittled in the rocks: a CARVED CROSS, simple yet elegant, with an "N" on its face.

EXT. MONASTERY OF SAINT RUFINUS - DUSK

Blaze stands with Moreau, looking on as Danny watches the MONKS of SAINT RUFINUS training DOGO ARGENTINOS.

MOREAU

He has power. We can teach him to use it.

BLAZE

Like you taught me to use mine?

MOREAU

I didn't teach you anything. I just reminded you of some things.
(then)
And then you reminded me.
Sometimes God's will is for us to find our own.

Blaze walks over to Danny.

BLAZE

I want you to take good care of Moreau, Danny, okay?
(off Danny's smile)
I'll be by to look after you, too. Until you can look after yourself.
(realizing)
I don't even know your last name.

DANNY

Ketch.

BLAZE

(gently playful)
Danny Ketch. That's a weird name.

DANNY

John Blaze is a pretty a weird name, too.
(then)
Is Roark gone?

BLAZE

He never left. We've just made things a lot harder for him. He's always trying to take this world.
(MORE)

BLAZE (CONT'D)
That's his role. Stopping him is mine.

Blaze turns away to his MOTORCYCLE. Danny follows.

DANNY
Where are you gonna go?

BLAZE
Don't know... Here -- catch.

Blaze flips Danny the coin. Danny catches it.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
Give it a spin.

Danny looks hesitant. Blaze looks confident. They both know this means more than a simple roll of the dice.

DANNY
You sure?

Blaze smiles at Danny, confident. He STARTS up his bike.

BLAZE
I'll see you around, Danny.

DANNY
Don't you want to see --

BLAZE
Don't need to.

Blaze smiles and ROARS off. Taking a breath, Danny sits at the stump and SPINS the coin... That AURA OF FLAME appears.

The image of the COYOTE lopez... It transforms to the image of the EAGLE flying... And back again. And back again.

Danny stares at it without losing himself. He's in control, but appears almost obsessed with finding out an answer.

Danny pries his eyes away to look at Blaze, riding off.

Danny looks down at the coin. We go CLOSE on it... Slowing down... Its FLAME extinguishing as it drops...

It lands on EAGLE.

EXT. PROVENCE ROAD - DAY

Blaze rides up the road, towards the SETTING SUN. The background BLURRING INTO SHADOW as Blaze rides into the sun... A broken silhouette... Disappearing into the LIGHT.

THE END