

'THE LAST WITCH HUNTER'

Written by  
Cory Goodman

FADE IN:

INT. A VERDANT LANDSCAPE - DAY

A SAVANNAH OF TALL GRASS -- Light DAPPLING the warm air --  
Everything shrouded in TENDRILS of HUMID MIST.

SUPERIMPOSE: 1647 A.D.

The veil parts to reveal a BATTALION OF SOLDIERS armed with  
BOWS and BROADSWORDS...and oddly...*SNOW DUSTS THEIR ARMOR,*  
*CHUNKS OF ICE in their beards* -- A FRANCISCAN MONK moving  
amongst them -- GROSETTE (21) -- MURMURING IN ANCIENT SPANISH.

GROSETTE (O.S.)  
(subtitled)  
*...remember your training, the*  
*'blighted' know no remorse...*

We follow his eyes upward: *Where there SHOULD be sky there*  
*are instead THOUSANDS OF BRANCHES ENTWINED...LIKE THE BIGGEST*  
*AND CREEPIEST BIRD'S NEST EVER...THE HEIGHT OF THE SUPERDOME.*

What is this place?

They head deeper into the 'savannah' -- TENSION BUILDING  
until...

THE LEADER

SILENTLY MOTIONS WITH HIS HAND, everyone behind him FREEZES  
-- In the NEAR DISTANCE, the long grass RUSTLES.

Another HAND MOTION.

THREE MEN thread ARROWS into BOWS, advancing toward the  
RUSTLING -- Everything quiet -- The Brigade's eyes ROOTED on  
that spot, none of them noticing as

AT THEIR FEET

A PALE HAND emerges from the ground, hooked fingers scuttling  
undetected over one soldier's leather boot -- Everything  
quiet -- Until...

WHAP! -- THE SOLDIER GETS YANKED DOWNWARD, PULLED INTO THE  
EARTH, DIRT QUICKLY CLOGGING HIS NOSTRILS AND MOUTH -- Before  
the men can react, another man gets GRABBED NEXT -- A SET OF  
CLAMMY HANDS erupting from below.

GROSETTE (CONT'D)  
(ancient Spanish, subtitled)  
Earthine Guards!

The soldiers PUSH past him, GRABBING valiantly onto the men, PULLING as hard as they can, but it's no use, the Guards' grip is UNBREAKABLE -- The GROUND SWALLOWS the men up!

LEADER  
(ancient Spanish, subtitled)  
*Use your fire!*

The soldiers pull SHAFTS OF WOOD from SHEATHES along their waists, STRIKING a READY MADE FLINT encased within -- WHOOSH! -- *The wood instantly blossoms with GREEN PHOSPHOROUS FLAME, becoming ready-made TORCHES.*

NOW REVEALED IN THE LIGHT: DOZENS OF HANDS ALL AROUND THEM.

THE SOLDIERS

Act fast, SETTING FIRE to the GRASS, casting everything in GREEN FLICKERING FLAME -- *The sound of an OTHERWORLDLY SCREECH* -- The Hands WORMING back into the ground.

The men HURTLE ONWARD, HEADING deeper into the structure, until all at once -- They emerge into a clearing -- TENDRILS OF MIST parting to reveal an AMAZING SIGHT before them:

A GNARLED TREE

Enormous -- The size of a TWENTY STORY BUILDING, the branches SPREAD wide like an UNEARTHLY CATHEDRAL -- The men stare, AWESTRUCK -- *This is why they're here* -- A QUIET BEAT -- Broken by the Leader.

LEADER (CONT'D)  
(ancient Spanish, subtitled)  
*Arrows.*

A GROUP OF ARCHER SOLDIERS nock their bolts -- LIGHTING THEM WITH THE GREEN FLAMMABLE FLUID -- They FIRE -- The arrows ARC upward toward the Tree -- But as they hit

THE FLAMING ARROW TIPS

FREEZE into CHUNKS OF ICE -- Worthless -- A BEAT -- Undaunted, a BURLY SOLDIER pulls

A BATTLE AX

He REARS back, ready to strike the trunk, but just before he can -- He STOPS -- Suddenly CHOKING -- WATER SPILLING FROM HIS NOSE AND MOUTH -- *He's drowning on dry land.*

LEADER (CONT'D)  
(calling out, subtitled)  
*SPELLS!*

WHAP! -- A BEARDED SOLDIER gets HIT by a SLICE OF AIR, the man SUDDENLY COLLAPSING, his CHAINMAIL CRUMPLING INWARD, SQUEEZING the AIR from his lungs, CRUSHING HIM ALIVE.

And now the attack REALLY starts.

WITH A BANSHEE SHRIEK

A BLURRED SHAPE appears from ABOVE -- SNATCHING a soldier UPWARD -- It happens faster than we can almost register.

THE BRIGADE

Snap into a CIRCULAR FORMATION -- Grosette INVOKING a PRAYER -- BARELY GLIMPSED FORMS racing PAST -- HORRIFIC SCREECHES -- SHARP TALONS QUICKLY SLITTING SEVERAL SOLDIERS THROATS -- The men DROPPING to the ground, The Leader amongst them -- DEAD -- They're getting picked off!

Without their leader, the hardened resolve of the group is faltering, *the circle quickly abandoned.*

It's only now we focus on

ONE LONE SOLDIER

He's handsome -- Steel grey eyes -- *Bound by a STRONG DETERMINATION* -- THIS IS OUR HERO -- This is KAULDER.

KAULDER  
(ancient Spanish, subtitled)  
HOLD formation!

The men LISTEN, reforming -- FLAMING ARROW BOLTS targeting the nest, everything bathed in HELLFIRE.

TIME SYRUPS

Kaulder not noticing a QUICKLY APPROACHING SHAPE charging toward him FROM BEHIND like a juggernaut -- Our first real look at an attacker: Limbs long and ribbony -- Alabaster FLESH -- *Slithering CLAWS*. In short? A Witch.

At the last second...

KAULDER

PLUNGES his blade *behind* him, STABBING the Witch -- It SHRIEKS -- INSTANTLY LIQUEFYING into a BLACK SLICK that falls like EBONY RAIN over Kaulder -- It's dead.

*Kaulder spies the fallen battle axe -- Decides to head for it, RAISING his SHIELD just as a CONCUSSIVE SPELL BLAST hits -- Kaulder FORMIDABLE and BADASS -- HE GRABS the AXE, SWORD in one hand, AXE in the other, SWIRLING THROUGH COMBAT, about to make it to the tree, until --*

CLAMMY HANDS

BURST from the GROUND -- EARTHINE GUARDS GRABBING ONTO KAULDER'S LEGS -- PULLING HIM DOWN -- ABOUT TO DRAG HIM DEEP INTO THE EARTH BUT BEFORE THEY CAN...

*The Hands STOP -- Instead of PULLING Kaulder down, they PIN him -- Surprised, Kaulder STRUGGLES, PHOSPHOROUS LIQUID from his sheathe spilling over his body -- Their grip IMPOSSIBLE TO BREAK as Kaulder SEES*

A TALONED HAND

SLITHERING from the FOLDS of the tree -- A FIGURE *emerging from WITHIN -- Something's coming for him -- Kaulder like a trapped fly before a spider.*

THE FIGURE

She's different than the rest -- Aquiline -- Skin GLISTENING with a milky lysergic fluid. A Witch Queen -- Time slowing to a crawl as she places a HAND on his head.

QUEEN  
(heard, not spoken)  
*You have a wife...a child...*

A FLASH OF IMAGES

*A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (late 20's) and a YOUNG GIRL (9) -- Kaulder playing with his WIFE and CHILD along THE HILLSIDE OF A BUCOLIC VILLAGE, a portrait of love and tenderness.*

YOUNG GIRL  
(ancient Spanish, subtitled)  
*Pick me up, daddy.*

BACK TO SCENE

The Queen smiles ICILY, eyeing Kaulder.

QUEEN  
(heard, not spoken)  
*With your last breaths know you will  
not die alone...THEY will join you.*

She rises, turning to the Tree, placing her PALM on the TRUNK, INVOKING A SPELL IN WITCHTOUNGE as...

WE FOCUS ON THE TREE

PLUNGING *through* its TRUNK, following its ROOTS deep UNDER THE EARTH, GLIDING along a network of VEIN-LIKE STRUCTURES that connect with an ORGANIC MATRIX of OTHER TREES -- We emerge back in ANOTHER PART OF THE WORLD:

EXT. OUTSIDE KAULDER'S VILLAGE - SAME TIME

A CHERRY TREE

Stands atop a LONE HILL, *overlooking the BEAUTIFUL VILLAGE we now recognize as Kaulder's* -- A SERIES OF BLOSSOMS fall from the tree, petals BLACKENING as...

WRAITHS OF PESTILENCE

Birth from the folds, the SPECTRAL CREATURES casting a SHADOW over the landscape, vegetation beneath INSTANTLY MOLDERING as the Wraiths approach the VILLAGE...

INT. BACK AT THE NEST - SAME TIME

Kaulder struggles violently, the Hands ready to claim him, dirt CLOGGING his mouth as the earth starts to SWALLOW him up.

KAULDER'S HAND

In a desperate move, coils around his TORCH, pulling the wood free, STRIKING the flint -- WHOOSH! -- The phosphorus liquid on his body instantly IGNITES into GREEN FLAME!

HE'S IMMOLATING HIMSELF.

With a SCREECH, the Clammy Hands LET GO -- Kaulder NOW FREE!

In one fluid motion, he RISES, *still on fire*, snapping up the battle axe, quickly APPROACHING the distracted Queen as --

She VEERS, SPINNING to ATTACK Kaulder but -- WHAP! -- He BURIES the AXE in her chest!

THE QUEEN

SPUTTERS black blood -- *Kaulder collapsing against the tree as the green flames consume him,, welcoming onrushing death.*

KAULDER  
(in Spanish, subtitled)  
*Today...we BOTH die.*

The Queen holds on, doing the last thing we'd expect...she grins back. A horrible rictus.

QUEEN  
(spoken now)  
*No. Only me.*

Her palm reaches toward Kaulder, *the FLAMES over him instantly GOING OUT* -- She CLUTCHES Kaulder's chest, her touch SIZZLING through his armor, INSTANTLY SCARRING A BLACK HANDPRINT ONTO HIS FLESH.

QUEEN (CONT'D)  
*...death is not YOUR choice...*

And with that final act, her life force drains, body deliquescing into an ebony slick -- But, unlike the others, the Queen leaves something behind...

A SPIRIT MARBLE

Obsidian -- Perfectly Smooth -- Her ESSENCE.

KAULDER

Collapses, WRITHING in unimaginable pain, skin scarred by flame -- His eyes lock on the Marble, *seeing life swirling within its glass skin* -- He reaches toward it, blackened fingers GRASPING to take it, but before he can...KAULDER DIES.

That's right -- He fucking DIES.

We HOLD on an UNMOVING Kaulder. Not a single goddamn breath.

A MASSIVE GROAN

THE GREAT TREE collapsing SPECTACULARLY, LIMBS and TRUNK CRUMBLING -- Kaulder's body DRAGGED BACK AT THE LAST SECOND by a BATTERED SOLDIER.

BATTERED SOLDIER  
(vowing, subtitled)  
*Your body will not rest in this  
ACCURSED place.*

EXT. OUTSIDE THE NEST - SAME TIME

The Battered Soldier emerges with Kaulder's lifeless body, joined by a few SURVIVING SOLDIERS and Grosette -- They are SURROUNDED BY ICE and SNOW.

We are on a WINTRY FJORD.

Grosette kneels before Kaulder's body -- Mournful.

GROSETTE  
 (in Spanish, subtitled)  
*This man has done what none have  
 ever dared -- He KILLED a QUEEN.  
 (makes sign of the cross)  
 At least, now, he is at peace.*

A BEAT -- The soldiers gather, solemn. Until, suddenly --

KAULDER

With a GREAT SUCKLING of breath, his eyes FLASH open -- He's ALIVE -- CHARRED SKIN starting to heal -- The men STARE, horrified, they've never seen anything like it.

SOLDIER  
 (in Spanish, subtitled)  
*Grosette, what devilry is this!?*

GROSETTE  
 (in Spanish, subtitled)  
*He is of the Unholy!*

He grabs one man's sword, ready to CHOP OFF KAULDER'S HEAD, about to cleave the blade down -- But at the last second

A HAND

Stops the blade -- Kaulder's -- A TENSE BEAT -- Kaulder eyeing the armed soldiers, wary.

KAULDER (V.O.)  
*Everything changed that day...but I  
 stayed the same.*

Kaulder moves fast -- He RISES, mounting a nearby HORSE, LASHING the REINS SHARPLY, the horse GALLOPING.

BEHIND HIM

The BURNING EARTHEN MASS OF THE WITCH NEST -- Kaulder and his horse dwarfed by the massive structure as they ride off, FRIGID BLASTS OF SNOW wiping across frame, DISSOLVING TO:

EXT. KAULDER'S VILLAGE - DAY

Kaulder, on horseback, approaching a hillside -- He stops -- *He is emaciated, his chin draped by a LONG BEARD* (denoting the duration of his journey) -- BELOW THE HILLSIDE: Kaulder's village.

KAULDER (V.O.)  
*1647. The first plague. The year  
 the war BEGAN.  
 (MORE)*

KAULDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(beat)

*Everyone thought rats bore the  
sickness, others God. But there  
were a few who knew the REAL  
truth...*

EXT. KAULDER'S VILLAGE - DAY

Kaulder rides through the town -- It's empty -- NO PEOPLE --  
The grass and trees all barren.

KAULDER (V.O.)

*It was them.*

EXT. KAULDER'S HOME - DAY

Kaulder stops outside a STONE DWELLING, JUMPING off the horse  
-- A BEAT as he eyes the beckoning DOORWAY -- A CROSS has  
been CARVED -- Words written in ancient Spanish: 'LORD HAVE  
MERCY ON US'

KAULDER (V.O.)

*Witches were a separate species --  
Churches of the world united in a  
singular cause, seeking out the  
covens...*

(beat)

*But this was a war mankind was  
destined to lose.*

Kaulder edges toward the doorway, hesitant -- Finally, he  
reaches it, peering inside. We don't see what he sees.

His face tells us everything.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Kaulder kneels BEFORE TWO FRESHLY DUG GRAVES -- One denoting  
an ADULT...the other a CHILD -- AN EMOTIONAL BEAT -- Kaulder  
staring into the distance. Lost. Alone.

ON A NEARBY RIDGE

Grosette and a GROUP OF SOLDIERS appear on horseback -- They  
approach -- Swords DRAWN -- They're here for KAULDER.

CUT TO:

INT. SPANISH CHURCH - DAY

Time has passed.

We FOLLOW a MONK as he moves down a stone corridor, an *OBLONG PIN* on his chest catching our attention -- This is DOLAN (54) -- Joined by Grosette, now an OLD MAN. (the following in Spanish, subtitled)

GROSETTE

Father Dolan, he has been kept  
under lock and key for over 50  
YEARS for a REASON -- I was *there* --

DOLAN

He is a MAN, Father Grosette --

GROSETTE

(cutting him off)  
-- What 'man' can't be burned, or  
drowned, or killed? You CAN'T let  
him out --

Dolan VEERS -- Sharp.

DOLAN

The Papacy disagrees.

He opens a FORMIDABLE WOODEN DOOR, entering...

INT. PRISON - DAY

An unearthly stillness -- We are behind Dolan as he passes  
ROWS OF EMPTY CELLS -- Finally he stops before the LONE  
OCCUPIED CELL, *we don't see who is inside*.

DOLAN

There is nothing I can say to make  
up for the suffering the Church has  
caused you -- I know this.

INSIDE THE CELL

Kaulder -- *He hasn't aged a day* -- He eyes Dolan -- A gaze  
that has learned to see beyond his iron bars into something  
unfathomable -- Most people would look away...but Dolan  
doesn't.

DOLAN (CONT'D)

Kaulder, my name is DOLAN. Please.  
Tell me. What can I do for you?

He UNLOCKS the cell door -- A BEAT -- Kaulder's voice. Deep.  
Gravelly. Weathered by time:

KAULDER

Bring me my sword.

And with that, he RISES -- Our title comes up:

# THE LAST WITCH HUNTER

EXT. PAPAL CHAMBER - DAY

A COLD SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT from a BASILICA -- Kaulder kneeling, COLORED SMOKE of FRANKINCENSE wafting from a RECEPTACLE as he is blessed by a HIGH RANKING PRIEST.

KAULDER (V.O.)

*For 53 years we were losing the war  
-- The witches started with the  
plague...and they had a lot more  
tricks up their sleeve...*

OVER CREDITS -- A HISTORY OF WITCHES MONTAGE -- BLACK LIQUID MOLTEN METAL IMAGES, FORMING IN CIRCULAR PATTERS, THE CAMERA TRAVELING AROUND TO REVEAL WITHERED CROPS OF CORN ...RIVERS LEADEN WITH BLOOD...FROGS FALLING FROM ROILING SKIES.

KAULDER (V.O.)

*But we had a trick of our own.*

THE TABLEAUS CONTINUE: KAULDER AS A BEZERKER, SWEEPING INTO BATTLES WITH MORE and MORE MODERN WEAPONRY -- First leading a BRIGADE OF MEDIEVAL JAPANESE WARRIORS, the peak of Mt. Fuji in the distance -- Then a BRIGADE OF AFRICAN WARRIORS toward a DISTANT WITCH NEST outside the ancient cities of Nigeria...

KAULDER (V.O.)

*There were six Queens -- One on  
each inhabited continent...All of  
them using Tribe Trees to cast  
globally -- I fought alongside men  
and their sons -- and their son's  
sons. Our weapons: Iron. Salt.  
Phosphorous light.*

*(beat)*

*It took generations, but, in the  
end, every Tree and Nest was  
destroyed.*

Kaulder STANDS in the RUINS OF A NEST, framed by ROILING SMOKE.

KAULDER (V.O.)

*Our enemy hid in the cracks of our  
world, breeding with humans,  
weakening the bloodline. In order  
to survive, they formed a truce  
with the Church. No crafting  
against humans.*

*(beat)*

*(MORE)*

KAULDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*What did they want in return?*  
*Sanctuary.*

We TRANSITION from STYLIZED BLACK LIQUID METAL into *reality*, revealing: AN ISLAND -- Green. Verdant. And, oddly familiar.

KAULDER (V.O.)  
*We sent them to an untouched far*  
*away land called the 'New World'.*  
*But the New World grew up...*

Suddenly, DWELLINGS appear across the island...TIME HURTLING FORWARD as the structures become an EVER GROWING VILLAGE... this is NEW AMSTERDAM -- We watch as the STRUCTURES grow LARGER and MORE MODERN...HORSES becoming CARS...a TABLEAU OF A SKYLINE stretching to the sky...

KAULDER (V.O.)  
*The center of it all? Manhattan.*  
*They live in secret. They're your*  
*mailman...your dry cleaner...your*  
*escort. Tiny stabs of magick*  
*unfurling around us while we go*  
*about our day. Unaware.*

We realize the skyline is actually a REFLECTION IN A WINDOW -- A FACE appearing in the glass, gazing out -- It's MODERN-DAY Kaulder. He hasn't aged a day.

WE PUSH INTO...

INT. COFFEE SHOP - SAME TIME

Kaulder sits at a table, perusing an IPAD NEWSPAPER in Russian -- He gets interrupted by an OLDER WAITRESS (mid-60s).

OLDER WAITRESS  
 How were the eggs?

KAULDER  
 Perfect. As always.

The Waitress looks at the screen of his Ipad.

OLDER WAITRESS  
 I remember when a 'newspaper' was  
 something my dad could use to wrap  
 a fish on Broadway & Canal.

Kaulder nods, *a man who remembers when 'newspapers' didn't even EXIST* -- But, of course, he can't say that -- So instead he just asks...

KAULDER  
How's business?

The Waitress looks to her empty tables -- She gestures...

OUT THE WINDOW

A LINE OF PEOPLE WAIT OUTSIDE A NOUVEAU-HIP CUPCAKE BAR.

BACK TO COFFEE SHOP

OLDER WAITRESS  
People want CUPCAKES instead of  
coffee these days.

KAULDER  
Yeah. Been meaning to do something  
about that.

Off her puzzled expression, Kaulder heads out -- Only now  
does she notice Kaulder has left a HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL as a  
tip -- She starts to call out...but Kaulder's gone.

EXT. NOUVEAU-HIP CUPCAKE SHOP - DAY

Kaulder ignores the LINE OF PEOPLE waiting, heading straight  
for the DOOR -- An IMPATIENT WALL-STREET-TYPE eyes him.

WALL STREET  
Hey. There's a LINE.

Kaulder shoots him a look -- It could melt steel -- Wall  
Street blinks. Shuts the hell up -- Kaulder entering...

INT. NOUVEAU-HIP CUPCAKE BAR (FRONT AREA) - DAY

It's PANDEMONIUM -- A THRONG OF PEOPLE BARKING out ORDERS -- A  
HARRIED WOMAN behind the counter SERVING UP cupcakes to  
OUTSTRETCHED HANDS, taking cash.

Kaulder takes it in, walking past the counter, heading into...

INT. BACK KITCHEN - SAME TIME

STEEL SHELVES stuffed full with ROWS OF ARCANES GLASS JARS --  
An odd mix of ANCIENT and MODERN.

A SVELTE WOMAN

Stands, dispersing a FINE GRANULATE POWDER into the latest  
batch of batter -- A WITCH-MARK TATTOO on her WRIST -- Seeing  
Kaulder, she FREEZES.

Kaulder gazes around the space. Casual.

KAULDER  
Thought I'd pop by for a cupcake.

He stops -- Focusing on a PANTRY DOOR.

A CHARGED BEAT -- Kaulder opening it to find a row of IVORY BOXES -- One by one, *he gently TIPS the boxes to the floor.*

KAULDER (CONT'D)  
Oops.

The boxes SMASH open, contents spilling into a pile to reveal PATTERNED MOTHS nested amongst FINE GRANULES, GLISTENING PEARLED EGGS adhered across their abdomens.

SVELTE WITCH  
(re: months)  
Please. These are very *specialized* items -- Very expensive -- And I'm just giving my customers what they want --

Kaulder's foot lightly TAPS the floor TWICE as --

ORNAMENTED WINGS

UNFURL from the startled Moth's BACKS, the 'insects' FLUTTERING out the kitchen and into the FRONT OF THE STORE -- WE HEAR SHOUTS of SURPRISED PATRONS, the DIN of a MAD SCRAMBLE for the front door.

Kaulder turns to go, stops -- Eyes a pile of brownies.

KAULDER  
One to go. Please.

The witch -- Nobody's ever bagged up a pastry faster -- Kaulder takes it, nods -- And with that, he heads out.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRINITY CHURCH CEMETERY - DAY

AN ANCIENT GRAVEYARD surrounded by Wall Street skyscrapers.

A FUNERAL

Sparsely attended -- A COFFIN being loaded into a CRYPT -- A SKINNY PRIEST (early 30's) stands nearby watching Kaulder as he enters the crypt.

INT. CRYPT - DAY

Kaulder eyes a wall of OCCUPIED BURIAL REPOSITORIES -- Oddly, each is marked with the same name: 'DOLAN', escalating ROMAN NUMERALS behind each one -- *Through the years, there've been a lot of Dolans.*

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
*My condolences, Captain Kaulder...*

Kaulder turns to find the priest, on his chest the same OBLONG PIN the first Dolan was wearing four hundred years ago -- *We will soon learn he's literally a 'HUMAN BACKUP' to the ORIGINAL DOLAN -- A.K.A DOLAN THE XXXIII.*

DOLAN  
 Though I imagine, at this point,  
 you're used to losing us.

A bit forced, his nervousness obvious -- Kaulder sizing up his new 'handler'.

KAULDER  
 Death dates -- Each Queen.

Dolan doesn't hesitate.

DOLAN  
 1647. 1651. 1687. 1703. 1754. 1801.

KAULDER  
 Names of the guilty in Salem?

DOLAN  
 (hedges, trick question)  
 There were no guilty in Salem.

Kaulder stares fixedly. This next one *serious*.

KAULDER  
 Drinking partner. Fall 1811.

DOLAN  
 Napoleon. Had a fondness for Tequila  
 Sunrises, I believe.  
 (off Kaulder's silence)  
 What? Too much 'mirth'?

His attitude is 'programmed', designed as a partner for the witch hunter, a constant in an ever-changing world -- But Kaulder doesn't need a partner...*he needs a friend.*

KAULDER  
 Do us both a favor. *Relax.*

DOLAN  
'Relax'?

KAULDER  
(pointed)  
Be. Yourself.

Dolan -- Not sure what 'yourself' even means.

DOLAN  
I was indoctrinated into the  
seminary as a *child* -- My *entire*  
*life* devoted to studying your  
history. I'm afraid my 'self-  
knowledge' is theoretical.

This guy's obviously gonna take some work -- Kaulder handing  
him the bag with the brownie.

KAULDER  
You'll do.  
(starts to go, stops)  
But next time, Father 'Dolan'.  
Leave the collar at the  
confessional.

He exits -- HOLD ON DOLAN -- Alone, he pulls out the brownie.  
Takes a bite.

A reward has never tasted sweeter.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY BLOCK - DAY

Kaulder walks, pedestrians locked in the minutia of their day  
-- But not Kaulder -- He stops before an ARCHAIC BUILDING...

INT. ARCHAIC BUILDING - DAY

Kaulder enters the building, steps through an UNMARKED SERVICE  
DOOR, it leads to an old CAGED ELEVATOR. He takes it up.

INT. ARCHAIC BUILDING (TOP FLOOR) - DAY

Kaulder SLIDES open the grate, stepping out. The hallway  
filled with empty offices and a single window.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

A SINGLE RAY OF SUNLIGHT SHINES, New York's last of the day --  
It ALIGHTS on a SMALL GLASS GLOBE affixed to a WOODEN DOOR at  
the end of the hall.

Kaulder approaches the door. Stands before it. From inside the glass globe, an IRIS opens, SNAPPING into place.

The door swings open...

INT. PARLOUR LAST LIGHT - SAME TIME

Dark and murky. Everything lit by hazy gaslight. LOW TABLES are flanked by CRUSHED VELVET PILLOWS, *clutters of GLASS GLOBES sitting atop.*

A HOSTESS

With KOHL EYES approaches. Raven Hair. Tousled. Punk-rock. This is CHLOE (21). *You could light a cigarette off her attitude.*

CHLOE

(dry)

The *witch* hunter. How 'nice'.

She's supposed to be letting him pass -- But she doesn't -- Obviously not happy to have Kaulder here -- Eyeing him.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

How old are you?

A BEAT -- Kaulder not up for this game.

KAULDER

Older.

Chloe relents, leading him to a CIRCULAR BAR backlit by rows of COLORED BOTTLES -- The place bustling with a bizarre kind of nightlife, otherworldly vice and back door dealings.

CHLOE

(walking off)

I'll let Düer know you're here.

The patrons? A curious mix of the coolest hipsters and the über wealthy -- A STOCKBROKER WITCH lies prostrate, GIGGLING like a little girl...A SOHO PAINTER WITCH dances in the corner with his eyes closed.

Seeing Kaulder -- Several make a hasty exit.

Finally, a RAVISHING WITCH with WILD STREAKS OF HENNA in her hair emerges, approaching Kaulder from behind the bar. This is DÜER (34).

DÜER

You make my clientele nervous.

KAULDER  
 Maybe they should find another  
 place to 'drink'.

Is this a bust? *Seems* like it -- But despite Kaulder's  
 demeanor, we sense these two have an affinity for each other.

DÜER  
 Maybe you should consider taking  
 the night off.

A SUDDEN GLINT

Catches Kaulder's eye -- Chloe working the other end of the  
 bar, a LONE DAGGER dancing effortlessly across her hand as  
 she dices NIGHTSHADE SPRIGS.

KAULDER  
 So. Your sister's back.

DÜER  
 For now. She's in a rough patch.  
 I'm helping her turn things around.

KAULDER  
 She's trouble.

DÜER  
 She's exhausting. There's a  
 difference.

KAULDER  
 Messing with illegal magicks?  
 Exhausting isn't the word I'd use.

DÜER  
 She's trying to get away from all  
 that.

She goes to a BOX kept on a SPECIAL SHELF, wood like sweet  
 polished chocolate...

DÜER (CONT'D)  
 I realized what today was. Figured  
 you'd be coming...

She pulls out an ANTIQUE BOTTLE with a faded label, MUDDLING  
 the elixir inside with WORMWOOD, deftly pouring the  
 concoction into a curved glass.

She pushes the glass in front of Kaulder.

DÜER (CONT'D)  
 I already had your 'room' prepared.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The walls dark and polished -- Kaulder entering with his drink -- He holds it before him, the smell of PEPPERMINT and CANDLE WAX wafting up -- Finally, he downs it.

The effect is immediate.

The air around him goes DARK at the edges, a muffled INSECT HUM rising, Kaulder seemingly PLUNGED backward...but instead of hitting concrete, he lands...

IN A GRASSY MEADOW

Tall and lush. The MURMUR OF CICADAS all around. He sits up, hearing the sound of a LITTLE GIRL GIGGLING.

KAULDER

Elisabeth...

He catches sight of a MOP OF CURLY HAIR bouncing through the grass, coming towards him. He ducks back down, reaching out with his hand, grabbing up a NAKED FOOT.

Kaulder pulls his daughter towards him.

ELISABETH (7) laughs with abandon, struggling playfully against her father's chest.

ELISABETH

Daddy, you scared me, you're supposed to be *hiding*. My BIRTHDAY. My wish.

(beat, looks to him)

What do you do when you're scared?

Kaulder touches her face. There's a lot of love here.

KAULDER

I imagine a special place. A *safe* place.

ELISABETH

Am I there?

(off Kaulder's nod)

And mommy?

KAULDER

Always.

In the distance: A WOMAN waves from a cottage doorway. Breathtakingly beautiful. Kaulder's wife. ANGELIKA (30).

KAULDER (CONT'D)  
C'mon. Mommy's waiting to give you  
your birthday gift.

He scoops Elisabeth over his shoulder, heading for her...but suddenly -- An OMINOUS TREMOR -- *The grass in the meadow SHIVERS* -- His daughter STEPS OFF, concerned.

ELISABETH  
Daddy?

Suddenly, a CLAMMY HAND (as seen in our opening) bursts from the EARTH, GRABBING Elisabeth, dirt CLOGGING her eyes as she's SWALLOWED by the earth!

ELISABETH (CONT'D)  
Daddy!

Kaulder REACHES for her, desperate, an UNHOLY SHRIEK from behind making him turn to see --

A NEST WITCH

LEAPING FROM THE GRASS, ATTACKING KAULDER as we CUT TO --

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Kaulder's eyes FLASHING open -- But unable to move -- *The effect of the drink leaving him momentarily paralyzed.*

CHLOE

Stands inches from him -- *Her finger waving just in front of eyes* -- Teasing -- Provocative.

CHLOE  
It's the junkies that have the  
hardest time waking up. Of course,  
I *could* help you with that...

In her hand a SMALL CIRCULAR BOX WITH TINY HOLES, pointedly keeping it away from Kaulder, toying with a 'sleeping tiger'.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Or not.  
(eyeing him)  
Not so scary now are you?

Done, she places the Box under his nose, *Kaulder's body 'waking' like with smelling salts* -- His hand SHOOTS UP SURPRISINGLY FAST. Grabs Chloe's wrist. Catching her off guard.

KAULDER  
How about now?

A BEAT -- Chloe pulls her hand away, intimidated -- Now seeing Düer in the doorway.

DÜER  
(to Kaulder)  
Excuse my sister. She knows *better*  
than to bother a customer.

CHLOE  
(rubbing her wrist)  
'Sociopath'. Has a more honest  
ring --

DÜER  
Chloe.  
(sharp)  
We *talked* about this.

Kaulder manages to sit up -- Rubs his temples.

KAULDER  
Been called worse.

He starts to head out, a little unsteady -- Stops -- Looks to  
Düer -- *Something dangling between them* -- Finally, he exits  
...Düer's eyes drilling into her sister.

DÜER  
What's the matter with you?

CHLOE  
Oh my God, with *me*? He hunts  
witches --

DÜER  
Stop making things complicated.

CHLOE  
You're a witch. You serve drinks to  
a witch *hunter*. I'm not the one  
making thing complicated. You know  
what happens if the wrong kind of  
witch finds out -- I lose you.

DÜER  
You won't lose me.

A BEAT -- Despite their differences -- There's a bond here.

DÜER (CONT'D)  
 He's a good man. Just a little  
 'broken'. Damaged.

CHLOE  
 No shit.

DÜER  
 Mom would talk about him when you  
 were little. She'd say *'To protect  
 the sheep you have to catch the  
 wolf.'*

CHLOE  
 (unfazed)  
 Wow. So *profound*.

A BEAT -- Düer steps closer -- Her next words continuing OVER:

EXT. STREET - DAY

A SCHOOL BUS pulling up to a sidewalk -- KIDS getting out.

DÜER (V.O.)  
*She'd ALSO say, 'Sometimes...it  
 takes a WOLF to hunt a WOLF.'*

A BOY (8) watches as OTHER CHILDREN disperse with their  
 PARENTS -- He sighs, no sign of his mom or dad -- Obviously  
 used to it -- Suddenly, something falls near his foot. He  
 looks down.

It's a GUMMI BEAR.

Another Gummi RATTLES off his shoulder, the Boy looking up,  
 seeing the tree above *flush with Gummi Bears*. Excited, he  
 eagerly scoops up the candy, stuffing his backpack -- Not  
 noticing he's now in the PRIVATE YARD OF A BROWNSTONE.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)  
 Excuse me...what do you think  
 you're doing?

The Boy turns to see a KINDLY OLD WOMAN (75) in the  
 Brownstone doorway. She smiles. Warm and inviting.

WOMAN  
 I'm sorry. Didn't mean to scare you.  
 Those are my gummi's. Would you like  
 to see what grows in the *back garden*?

She pulls out the LARGEST JAWBREAKER the Boy has ever seen.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Picked fresh...and there's plenty more. Whatever you can fit in your backpack. Would you like that?

She opens the doorway, motioning for the Boy to come in. A MEASURED BEAT -- This is a city kid, he knows better...but one look at the Gummi Trees and his resolve crumbles.

The Boy heads inside, door closing shut behind him.

ANGLE ON: THE YARD

The candy-colored gummis now just common acorns.

INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY

Bright and big. Filled with the things nine year-olds dream of, the Woman leading the Boy past ROBOTS and VIDEO GAMES.

WOMAN

You're welcome to come by and play anytime...Now, the garden's just back there...

She motions toward a door, the Boy heading forward -- *With each step, the technicolor surroundings behind him CRUMBLE into reality, the toys now nothing more than MOLDERED JUNK.*

THE WOMAN

In her hand, a WHITE HANDLED RITUAL KNIFE studded with SIGILS, curved like a sickle. We call it a Boline.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

I have something ELSE for you...

*She RAISES the blade, about to PLUNGE it down, enjoying the sudden look of fear RIBBONING across the Boy's face, but, at the last second, a HAND grabs her WRIST:*

KAULDER

With a SHARP TWIST and WET SNAPPING SOUND, the blade CLATTERS to the floor -- The Woman SCREAMING IN PAIN -- The SOUND nothing like an Old-Lady -- LOW, SCARY and MASCULINE.

THE BOY

Terrified, RUNS for the door.

Kaulder SHOVES the Woman sharply against the wall, the IMPACT revealing WHAT 'she' truly is:

A FERAL-EYED YOUNG MAN (24)

This is ELLIC. A witch. Sinewy muscles. Piercings -- Kaulder eyes him. Cold.

KAULDER

Your first problem? Picking on a little boy. Your second...

(beat)

Bringing a knife to a GUN fight.

He reveals a MODERN-DAY TECHNOLOGICAL MARVEL HAND-CANNON OF A GUN. The 'PURIFIER' -- Ellic grins -- Obviously taking a perverse pleasure in the proceedings.

ELLIC

(offering his hands)

Go ahead. Bring me in, Witch Hunter...

But his words are just a ruse...

THE BLADE

SNAPS UP from the floor as if by an INVISIBLE FORCE, TARGETED at Kaulder's forehead -- Kaulder RAISES his HAND at the last second, the BLADE burying into it -- Kaulder's reaction? *He merely pulls out the blade, grimacing with pain, the wound instantly healing into JAGGED SCAR TISSUE as...*

His other hand comes up FIRING -- BLAM! -- IRON-FRAGMENTED BULLETS *blast* from the gun's chamber -- Ellic DIVING behind a bureau, moving SURPRISINGLY FAST. *His speed otherworldly.*

Kaulder FIRES A SERIES OF ROUNDS *into* the bureau, BLASTING FIST-SIZED HOLES, the sound ECHOING through the brownstone.

He steps forward, gun trained. Slowly, he edges past the bureau, gun leveled but --

Ellic's not there.

REVEAL: A BACK DOOR leading downstairs now open.

INT. BENEATH THE BROWNSTONE - DAY

Kaulder enters, finding himself in a SERIES OF MURKY CHAMBERS. Lots of wooden doors, SKITTERY HIP-HOP blaring from somewhere.

A modern-day witch lair.

Kaulder tries the knob on the first door. It's locked.

INT. CHAMBER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

WHAM! The door BURSTS inward from Kaulder's kick, the witch hunter entering to find...

ANIMAL BONES

Hanging from the ceiling -- *Creepy* -- He slowly navigates his way through, tension building -- The walls SPRAY PAINTED with WITCHSCRIPT SYMBOLS -- Hearing a sound, he SPINS.

A LITTLE GIRL (9)

Now stands in the doorway -- Her face smeared with grime -- She shakes, clutching a HELLO-KITTY doll.

LITTLE GIRL  
Is the bad man gone?

She seems so lost...so innocent. A BEAT. Kaulder crouches, something in him momentarily softening, until...

Kaulder BLINKS -- The Little Girl before him now gone, revealing her true form --

A SCRAGGLY MALE WITCH

The doll in his hand now a BUTCHER KNIFE, already VIOLENTLY SLASHING towards Kaulder!

The witch-hunter DODGES, gifted in all techniques of defense and combat -- Scraggly grins through yellowed teeth, LUNGING, butcher blade gleaming, but at the last second

KAULDER

Pulls a PHOSPHORUS-LIGHT WAND, SNAPS it on -- WHOOSH! *The room EXPLODES with green light.* The witch SCREECHES, body instantly ROASTING into a BLACK SLUDGE. Dead.

Only now does he see --

ELLIC

*Kneeling in the darkness, watching -- Beatific* -- As Kaulder approaches, he raises his head upward.

ELLIC  
(closes his eyes)  
I'm ready now.

Kaulder levels the 'Purifier' to mete 'justice' -- Until, all at once...HIS EXPRESSION SHIFTS, glimpsing an EXPOSED MARKING ON ELLIC'S UPTURNED NECK -- Sensing more, he TEARS ELLIC'S SHIRT to reveal:

A 'TREE' TATTOO

SPIDERING down the entirety of the witch's torso -- *Looks exactly like the tree in the nest from our opening.*

ELLIC (CONT'D)  
(in Witchtounge, subtitled)  
*The Queen RISES -- My death will be in Her name.*

Kaulder's eyes linger on the tattoo, troubled -- A BEAT -- He sheathes his gun, uncapping a RING on his finger -- A SMALL NEEDLE protrudes, capped by a DOLLOP of CLEAR LIQUID.

KAULDER  
You might feel a little sting.

WHAP! -- He BRUTALLY JABS the needle into Ellic's jaw with a HARD PUNCH -- Ellic collapses, everything going black.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

A dash of the old world surrounded by looming glass and steel skyscrapers -- Kaulder walks up the stone steps, a dazed Ellic in tow, a NASTY BRUISE blossomed on the witch's jaw.

INT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

Shafts of godly light illuminate Kaulder as he leads Ellic past a DOCENT and a GROUP OF TOURISTS.

DOCENT  
(to the group)  
...the archdiocese was criticized for building so far out...but as you can see, it's as if they somehow knew one day this would become the city center...

Kaulder shoves Ellic between a barrier, heading into a PRIVATE SECTION...a sign above reads: CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC...

INT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL (PRIVATE AREA) - DAY

Kaulder walks down a darkened stone hallway, obviously built a long time ago -- The odd thing?

It's lined with a DOZEN SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS. They HUM and CLICK, following Kaulder's every move.

He opens an OLD WOODEN DOOR.

A METAL PLATE slides from the wall, revealing a SCANNER, L.E.D light playing across Kaulder's face as a HERMETICALLY SEALED DOOR opens with a HISS to REVEAL...

INT. RICKETY ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Kaulder steps in with Ellic. Closes the grate. Heads down.

INT. LOWER HALLWAY - DAY

Kaulder leads Ellic off the elevator and into a stone hallway, obviously an OLDER, HIDDEN STRUCTURE lying beneath the city -- Along the wall, TAPESTRIES, PAINTINGS, ANCIENT ARTIFACTS.

DOLAN

Stands -- Waiting.

DOLAN

I have asked for access -- They've granted it.

Kaulder finds a STAIRWAY *made of roots and dirt*, forcing Ellic beneath the foundation of the building...the two of them finally emerging into...

INT. COUNCIL SANCTUM - CONTINUOUS

A giant earthen structure.

BIZARRE SYMBOLS and COMPLEX SEALS carved into the walls, *Middle Earth meets the Grimm Brothers*.

FIVE ELDER MEN AND WOMEN

Sit at the table. Amongst Manhattan's elite, they're the classiest socialites, the most generous philanthropists.

But down here...They are the Witch Council: A GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN with a Pomeranian, a EUROPEAN BARON-TYPE, TWIN AFRIKAAN ALBINO BROTHERS and an OVERWEIGHT GENTLEMEN sucking on a HOOOKAH.

Their leader sits amongst them, A DISTINGUISHED MALE WITCH named GLAESER. Head of the Untouchables, the Elders of Witchkind.

GLAESER

What do you bring us today?

Kaulder peels back Ellic's shirt, revealing the Tree tattoo.

KAULDER

He claims a *Queen* is coming back --  
And he BELIEVES it.

Glaeser absorbs this -- With a wave of his hand Ellic's 'dazed' expression instantly dissolves, waking up as if suddenly doused with ICE WATER -- He looks around, eyes wide, realizing where he is.

ELLIC

The Council...  
(kneels)  
Chancellor Glaeser, *please*, I --

With another wave of Glaeser's hand, Ellic FREEZES --  
Glaeser's eyes rolling up as he 'reads' the witch -- A BEAT --  
When he speaks, his voice strained by the effort.

GLAESER

Attempted Child Sacrifice.  
Loathsome. Though I see nothing  
else of concern within this boy  
...merely the delinquent exuberance  
of *misguided* youth.

Satisfied, his eyes roll down.

GLAESER (CONT'D)

(to the others)  
But for his crime? Prison.

He gestures to an ARCHED GATEWAY of BLACK ROSARY, BONE AND THISTLE -- Ellic 'waking' back up.

ELLIC

No. Please. Not the prison.

THE GATEWAY

SLITHERS down the wall, POOLING along the ground in a TANGLE  
as it assumes A WRITHING HUMANOID SHAPE, growing in SIZE --  
EIGHT FEET TALL.

This is The SENTINEL.

ITS EYES

Open to reveal a PITILESS BLACK VOID -- BARBED THISTLES AND  
BONE skittering amongst its form like UMBILICAL CORDS.

THE SENTINEL

WREATHES around Ellic, ENVELOPING him, branches WORMING into his nose and mouth -- *Without a word, the Sentinel ROILS to the ARCHWAY, disappearing with Ellic onto the other side, Ellic's SCREAMS growing fainter, until...He's gone.*

Glaeser's attention turns back to Kaulder.

GLAESER

I sense you're still troubled by this boy. Captain Kaulder, you destroyed the last of the Queens' Spirit Marbles centuries ago.

KAULDER

All except one.

Glaeser -- Correcting.

GLAESER

Obliterated in the nest at the time of your curse -- As acknowledged by the Church itself. You *know* this.

(smiles, measured)

Your vigilance is appreciated, witch hunter -- But rest easy. A dangerous witch has been brought to justice. Nothing more. Thanks to you no Queen will ever return.

Is there a HINT of malice in his voice? -- A BEAT -- Glaeser's contained stare somehow troubling the witch hunter more -- Finally, Kaulder turns...heads out.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH REPOSITORY - NIGHT

A VAST LIBRARY

The ceiling a tapestry of painted religious images, BLACK ORNAMENTED PILLARS OF WITCH HISTORY (from our titles) studding the edifice -- Amongst the towering shelves, a LONE FIGURE:

DOLAN

INSCRIBING an ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT -- He looks up, startled to find Kaulder, the witch hunter wordlessly grabbing Dolan's INK POT and QUILL.

DOLAN

What did the Council say?

KAULDER -- Focused on getting something down on parchment --  
Momentarily gazing up at an ANCIENT PAINTING of a BEARDED MAN  
beset by HORRIBLE SKULLED CREATURE.

KAULDER  
Bosch's version of St. Anthony. The  
first monk.  
(looks to the creatures)  
Most people think those are demons  
he's fighting.

DOLAN  
They're not?

Kaulder shakes his head.

KAULDER  
'Temptations'. Every man has 'em.  
Every man fights 'em. And the worst  
temptation is 'time'.

Dolan looks to him, doesn't understand.

KAULDER (CONT'D)  
Everyone thinks they have all the  
time in the world. Every day  
tempted to waste it.  
(eyeing struggling St.  
Anthony)  
Until it runs out.

Dolan absorbs this -- *Kaulder revealing what he's been working  
on: AN ETCHING OF ELLIC'S TREE TATTOO* -- Exquisite.

KAULDER (CONT'D)  
Check the texts for anything  
looking like this.

DOLAN  
Why -- What's going on?

But Kaulder's already gone -- HOLD ON DOLAN: Studying the  
image, unnerved -- The gnarled limbs of the tree like the  
claws that so tightly grip St. Anthony.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPANISH VILLAGE - DAY

Halfway around the world -- A bucolic town filled with  
ancient beauty.

EXT. CHURCH COURTYARD - DAY

Quaint. Old World.

A BEGGAR shuffles weakly into the space, we don't see his face -- But a RAGGED TWINE hangs from his waist, a series of COMMON EVERYDAY OBJECTS tied to it. Totems.

He approaches a KINDLY PRIEST wearing a SMALL METAL CRUCIFIX -- Through an OPEN DOORWAY we hear the faint sound of a MASS.

KINDLY PRIEST  
(in Spanish, subtitled)  
*Anything I can do to ease your  
suffering, my Son?*

BEGGAR  
(in Spanish, subtitled)  
*Yes. There is, Father.*

His hand LASHES forward -- Sudden and fast -- And when he opens his palm, *he's now holding the small crucifix*, dangling it between his fingers.

BEGGAR (CONT'D)  
(in Spanish, subtitled)  
*I could use a little faith.*

All at once, the Priest STIFFENS UNNATURALLY.

With a sly smile, the Beggar raises his head, giving us our first look at him. He's *magnetic*. A striking mix of ethnicities, a creature of the streets with a heart full of anthrax. This is BELIAL (30).

BELIAL  
Walk.

Like a puppet on a string, the Priest 'turns', MOVING UNNATURALLY, *as if trying to fight his own body*, approaching an unremarkable WEATHERED BOX affixed to the Church wall.

BEGGAR  
Open it.

The Priest does, hand tremoring as he presses a HIDDEN BUTTON -- A HIGH-TECH RETINAL SCANNER sliding into place.

BELIAL  
Place your eye before it.

The Priest struggles, but does as he's told -- With a HUM -- A DOOR OPENS.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Belial enters behind the Priest -- The two of them walking through darkened corridors that resemble more of a FORTRESS than they do a quaint church.

Belial drops back, the Priest turning a corner to find TWO GUARDS WEARING BADGES -- Guard #1 looks at the Priest, knows him well. Laughs.

GUARD #1  
(in Spanish, subtitled)  
*Out of cigarettes already?*

Instead of replying, the Priest pulls the gun from Guard #1's holster -- *Surprisingly fast* -- HE FIRES TWICE -- *Instantly killing both guards.*

With a mere flick of Belial's wrist, the Priest fishes out a CODED KEY from one Guard's pocket, putting it in a LOCK, turning it -- IMPOSING STEEL DOORS SLIDE OPEN with a HERMETIC SIGH revealing...

A VAULT

Beautiful. Pearl walled. The space blanketed in GREEN PHOSPHORUS LIGHT from OVERHEAD LAMPS, deadly for a witch.

Belial looks to the Priest.

BELIAL  
Bring it to me.

INT. VAULT - CONTINUOUS

The Priest enters against his own volition, awkwardly 'walking' under Belial's control -- He steps before a NUMERICAL PANEL.

BELIAL  
2-15-74-99.

The Priest ENTERS the numbers on his panel -- A SMALL METAL DOOR IN THE WALL POPPING OPEN, nested inside sits a SINGLE OBJECT...*we've seen it before:*

THE QUEEN'S 'SPIRIT' MARBLE

*Still perfectly intact even hundreds of years later* -- The Priest takes it, safely bringing the Marble out of the vault.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The Priest hands the Marble to Belial -- *Belial eyeing the SWIRLING LIFE locked inside its contents.*

He looks to the Priest, *SQUEEZING* the METAL CRUCIFIX with his other hand -- All at once, the Priest SEIZES UP, clawing at his CHEST, having a HEART ATTACK and COLLAPSING to the stone floor. DEAD.

INT. CHURCH (SMALL CATHEDRAL) - DAY

A BISHOP stands, leading a SMALL CONGREGATION in Mass -- All at once, he STOPS, as:

BELIAL

Advances to the pulpit, snatching up the Priest's ROSARY -- *Instantly the man falters, a thin line of blood leaking from his nose* -- Belial looking to Jesus on the Cross.

BELIAL

*His time is over. It's our time.*

He REVEALS the Spirit Marble in his palm, the congregation DRAWN to its OBSIDIAN SURFACE -- Their EYES GOING WHITE as a change overcomes them, they *collapse*, RETCHING horribly as...

SHADOWS

VOMIT from their mouths, POOLING onto the stone floor -- DARK and SCREECHING -- Entering our world with a BIRTHCRY as --

THE CONGREGATION'S BODIES

MOLDER to WHITE DUST, leaving behind only their unholy 'offspring' -- The FIGURES RISE -- LIVING -- BREATHING -- They are MURKS, they are OBSCURITIES.

They are...SHADOWS WITCHES.

With a MEWLING CRY they DISAPPEAR into the floor -- *And then REAPPEAR at Belial's feet* -- ENVELOPING HIM.

EXT. ALLEYWAY (NEW YORK) - NIGHT

A brick wall. Lit by SODIUM ARCLIGHT -- Its edifice emblazoned with GRAFFITI and POOLS OF DARKNESS -- Everything quiet -- Until, suddenly...one shadow RIPPLES -- Revealing the form of a SHADOW WITCH as --

BELIAL

BURSTS out from *within* it, GASPING, PULLING himself to the alley floor, covered in VISCOUS FLUID -- A BLUR OF VEHICLES and PEDESTRIANS rush past. The city's PULSING HEART all around him.

An ICY GRIN spreads across his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK - NIGHT

FROM OVERHEAD: THE CITY -- As night falls -- The CAMERA finding a GLITTERING HIGH-RISE.

INT. KAULDER'S SANCTUM - NIGHT

It's dark.

Kaulder enters, ROWS OF OVERHEAD LIGHTS clunking to life, revealing a sleek modern space.

KAULDER

Walks past a collection of artifacts: BOTTLES OF SPANISH RUM, STONE BUDDHA HEADS, ARTISAN WOOD BOXES, CIVIL WAR MUSKETS, the treasures go on and on -- Anywhere else? Priceless. Here? Keepsakes from a life gone by.

He heads down a corridor -- It's quiet -- Suddenly, he STOPS ...a SHADOW flickers from an open doorway -- Kaulder pulls the 'Purifier' -- A TENSE BEAT -- Kaulder edging forward, gun drawn as he heads into the doorway to find...

INT. KAULDER'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Düer -- She sits in a bathtub of warm water -- Waiting.

Kaulder puts the gun away.

KAULDER

I see you're bored of the banker.

DÜER

Maybe I just missed you.

An ORNATE BRASS KEY sits on the sink -- *It's obvious this isn't the first time she's been here.*

DÜER (CONT'D)

You just going to stand there?

Kaulder goes to the lip of the tub, touches Düer's naked back -- Her need palpable...tinged with regret.

DÜER (CONT'D)

It's frustrating I keep ending up here...

(glances away)

(MORE)

DÜER (CONT'D)  
 I know it can never happen...but I  
 can't help myself.

She splashes lightly at the water, beckoning -- Kaulder  
 taking off his coat as we CUT TO...

INT. KAULDER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kaulder lying in bed, awake, Düer next to him, asleep -- A  
 BEAT -- He gets up, going to a nearby drawer, pulling out

ELLIC'S BOLINE

*The blade recovered from the gummi brownstone* -- It GLINTS in  
 the dark -- Kaulder examining the witch markings along the  
 hilt, eyeing the Conical Symbol.

DÜER (O.S.)  
*Something wrong?*

Kaulder turns to find Düer now awake -- He puts the Boline  
 down -- Looks to her. Torn.

KAULDER  
 I need you to do something for me.

CUT TO:

INT. PARLOUR LAST LIGHT - NIGHT

Düer enters with Kaulder -- The bar closed, Chloe cleaning  
 up, alone -- Not happy to see her sister walking in with the  
 witch hunter.

CHLOE  
 Glad to see our little talk sunk in.

She shoots a look to Düer -- Withering -- Grabs her coat,  
 heads out -- A BEAT -- Düer quickly lighting a series of  
 candles, the mood shadowy and dark.

DÜER  
 ...Having another drink so soon  
 after the last one...*it's*  
*dangerous.* A body can only take so  
 much...

She goes behind the bar, reaching up to Kaulder's Special  
 Shelf, an ORNATE BRACELET on her wrist softly jangling...

DÜER (CONT'D)  
 Why even relive THAT day -- Most  
 people would want to BURY it.

KAULDER  
There's something I need to see.

Düer pulls down a FULL GREEN BOTTLE, covered in dust -- She pours it, adding a PLANT SPRIG, *muddling* it into the mixture.

DÜER  
Woodbine. It'll help you observe  
the memory instead of LIVING it --  
And this time...I'll be there when  
you wake up.

She finds the CIRCULAR 'WAKING SALT' BOX, putting it on the bar, her face etched with worry.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kaulder enters his 'room' -- A BEAT -- The witch hunter holding the amber mixture in the glass before him...and then in one swoop...he DOWNS it.

KAULDER

TUMBLES -- Falling backwards -- And when he OPENS his EYES, FAT SNOW FLAKES are FALLING across his face.

EXT. TUNDRA (MEMORY) - DAY

He SITS up, still clad in modern-day clothes, but he's now in a FROZEN WASTELAND -- In the near distance, HIS BRIGADE approaches

A LOOMING STRUCTURE

THOUSANDS OF BRANCHES entwined into an IMMENSE EARTHEN MOUND.  
Organic. Alive. The wood seemingly grown through the permafrost. It's the witch nest.

Modern-Day-Kaulder RISES to join them, getting hit by a FRIGID BLAST OF STINGING ICE and SNOW, Kaulder STRUGGLING, suddenly finding himself --

INT. WITCH NEST (MEMORY) - DAY

TRUDGING through TALL GRASS -- He looks around, getting his bearings -- Fires smolder around him, SOLDIERS engaging in SWIRLING COMBAT.

He's IN the witch nest.

The COLORS DESATURATED -- Letting us know this is a scene we've witnessed before.

KAULDER RISES AND TURNS

This is not the moment he wants to see -- He TRUDGES forward -- Memory DECAYING around his FEET, pooling in a THICK SLUDGE -- Kaulder STRUGGLING through, EVERYTHING VEERING UNSTEADILY in a FLUCTUATING HAZE, until, all at once, he STOPS --

Before him is 'MEMORY-KAULDER'

Being held down by the EARTHINE GUARDS as the Queen touches his head -- A horrible memory for Kaulder.

As before, the Queen rises, Kaulder forced to watch as she once again invokes the plague that will kill his family.

And there's nothing he can do about it.

The IMAGES around Modern-Day Kaulder JUDDERS and SKIPS -- Memory Kaulder breaking free from the Earthine Guards' grip by lighting himself on fire and burying the axe in the Queen.

She CURSES him...

QUEEN

'...death is not YOUR choice...'

Her life force drains, deliquescing into a black slick, leaving behind the SPIRIT MARBLE -- Modern-Day Kaulder steps forward, eyeing the Marble closely.

This is the reason why he's here -- To find out what happened to the Spirit Marble.

THE GROUND TREMORS

The Spirit Marble ROLLING, Kaulder keeping his eyes focused on it as a SHADOWY FIGURE approaches...until, all at once -- It's revealed to be GROSETTE -- The monk PICKING up the Marble, PLACING it into his robe.

Suddenly...A VOICE EMANATES...

DÜER'S VOICE (O.S.)

Kaulder...Kaulder...

Surprised, Modern-Day Kaulder turns to see a DYING SOLDIER -- The man is looking at him -- And when the Soldier speaks, IT'S WITH DÜER'S VOICE.

SOLDIER/DÜER

Kaulder...

(a SCREAM)

WAKE UP.

Modern-Day Kaulder realizes Düer has forced herself INTO his memory, SMOKE from the destroyed nest rising up around him.

*Kaulder needs to go.*

But he can't.

He struggles through the SMOKE -- COUGHING -- Looking for a WAY OUT -- PUSHING ONWARD -- Suddenly -- *He sees remnants from the bar...*A TABLE -- A MIRROR -- HIS EMPTY GLASS -- All litter the ground around him IN the nest.

AND WITH A SUDDEN SHARP COUGH --

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Kaulder IS BACK -- But he isn't fully OUT of the 'drink' yet.

He's LYING on his back on the couch -- LONG GRASS from the nest carpeting the floor around him -- BILLOWS of ACRID SMOKE shrouding the ceiling.

This is what it's like when you wake up from a memory drink.

He can't MOVE -- Momentarily paralyzed.

KAULDER'S P.O.V.: The doorway cracked open -- Allowing him to SEE

INTO THE BAR

A LIMITED VIEW -- ONLY AS WIDE AS THE DOORWAY.

AND WHAT HE SEES IS PURE HORROR.

DÜER

*Moving as if in a dream* -- CANDLE IN HAND, LIGHTING HER BAR ON FIRE, SETTING SPILLED LIQUID ABLAZE.

KAULDER

Tries to CALL out -- Can't. He's still FROZEN. Helpless to watch as DÜER continues, FLAME rising AROUND her.

KAULDER'S P.O.V.: CHLOE NOW ENTERING THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR -- SEEING HER SISTER AND

*SOMEONE ELSE*

THIS PERSON OUT of KAULDER'S FIELD OF VISION.

CHLOE pulls her DAGGER, THROWS it at the UNSEEN enemy.

A BEAT -- THEN SUDDENLY CHLOE IS THROWN BACKWARDS -- PINNED TO THE WALL BY AN INVISIBLE HAND.

She looks to her UNSEEN ASSAILANT.

CHLOE  
 (pointing toward Kaulder)  
 You want HIM -- He's RIGHT there.  
 He can't *move*. Just TAKE him and  
 let US go.

*Who the hell is she talking to?* A TERRIFYING BEAT -- FLAMES  
 ROARING IN SILENCE -- And then -- A FIGURE APPEARS in  
 KAULDER'S DOORWAY...

BELIAL

He approaches FRAME (Kaulder's P.O.V.) -- Looking right at us  
 -- His hand brushing past his totem twine, now affixed to it  
THE QUEEN'S SPIRIT MARBLE.

In his HAND -- CHLOE'S DAGGER (that's how he controls Chloe) --  
 He WAVERS the blade in front of Kaulder's face -- Menacing --  
*He looks back to Düer -- Then to Kaulder.*

BELIAL  
 (realizing)  
 A witch and a witch *hunter*. Our  
 kind has fallen so far.

He picks up the GREEN BOTTLE from the table -- Eyes it.

BELAL  
 And this is what I was looking for.

He SMASHES the bottle to the table -- Kaulder's precious  
memories SPILLING out, DRIBBLING onto the floor --

BELAL (CONT'D)  
 All I want is to kill you. And, of  
 course, I can't.  
 (sharp)  
 But I can hurt you.

He STRIKES a MATCH -- *Igniting Kaulder's memory.*

BELIAL  
 Do you know witch children tell  
 your stories? You're our boogeyman.  
 Our monster. I grew up hearing  
 every single one...and I vowed to  
 give your story a different kind of  
 ending.  
 (ominous)  
 We won't be 'slaves' to this world  
 anymore.

And with that, he reveals in his hand Düer's bracelet -- *This is how he's controlling her* -- He takes the BRACELET and THROWS it in the FIRE of Kaulder's MEMORIES.

At the same instance:

DÜER

SETS HERSELF ABLAZE, her DRESS like kindling!

CHLOE

SCREAMS -- HORRIFIED -- But she's still PINNED to the wall -- *Nothing she can do* -- Belial exits the room, leaving Kaulder alone.

NEW ANGLE

KAULDER'S FOOT MOVES -- *His body starting to WAKE.*

He CONCENTRATES -- And with SUPREME EXERTION --

HE TUMBLES OFF THE COUCH onto the FLOOR.

Kaulder tries to rise, STUMBLING back to the floor, his limbs NUMB as...

KAULDER

...düer...

He finally manages to STAND, LURCHING toward...

INT. PARLOUR LAST LIGHT (MAIN AREA) - CONTINUOUS

TIME SLOOOOWS AS...

KAULDER

SLUMPS in the doorway, hand going to the 'Purifier'.

And FIRES.

THE BULLET

Catches Belial in the SHOULDER -- He DROPS to the floor.

Gasping.

KAULDER

RACES toward Düer -- But he's TOO LATE -- She's DEAD. CONSUMED IN FLAME.

He SPINS back to Belial -- Targeting for the KILL as --

BELIAL

ON HIS KNEES -- Messianic -- Pulls open his SHIRT, revealing  
A TREE TATTOO

*Branches spread wide across his chest.*

BELIAL  
(grins darkly)  
This is just the *beginning*.

And that's when

A SHADOW WITCH

FLITTERS from a POOL OF DARKNESS, *snatching* Belial into it.  
Belial is gone.

CHLOE

Drops from the wall, finally RELEASED from Belial's 'grip'.  
TIME RAMPS TO NORMAL as...

CHLOE

Runs for Dürer -- SCREAMING...BUT --

A HAND

Grabs her -- PULLING Chloe ASIDE as  
The ROOF COLLAPSES where she was just STANDING.  
Chloe looks to see Kaulder  
He SAVED her.

He YANKS a VIOLENTLY STRUGGLING Chloe away.

She SHRUGS off his grip. SHARP. ANGRY.

The ROAR of FLAME drowns out Chloe's SCREAM as we CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Kaulder PULLING a STRICKEN Chloe outside -- She desperately  
FIGHTS against his grip, STRUGGLING to go back in.

CHLOE  
No. No. No. No.

Her whole world is crashing down -- Emotions consuming her --  
She looks to Kaulder, lost. Beyond emotion. Beyond reasoning.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
This is YOUR fault.

She SLAPS Kaulder. Hard.

Kaulder just takes it. Eyes her.

KAULDER  
What did he want?

CHLOE  
To destroy your memories.

KAULDER  
WHO WAS HE?

Chloe stares -- A shell -- Doesn't *know* -- Doesn't care.

A BEAT BETWEEN THEM...then

KAULDER

Turns, heading off - He has a JOB to do.

HOLD ON CHLOE: As her eyes rake to the top of the building,  
the edifice now on fire with roiling smoke -- She is alone.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

THICK BLACK MOSS covers an EARTHEN FLOOR -- Hard to make out  
if we're INSIDE or OUTSIDE -- There's something 'off' about  
this place...and we sure as hell aren't getting a good look.

A SHADOW ON THE GROUND

RIPPLES with COCENTRIC CIRCLES -- A glimpse of SHADOW WITCH  
*swirling within* as the SURFACE BREAKS -- A GASPING Belial  
DRAGGING himself out -- He staggers -- A DARK WOUND on his  
*shoulder from his encounter with Kaulder.*

He spreads a CIRCLE OF BLACK SAND across the floor.

BELIAL  
(in wicthtongue)  
*Notos slatai therondo...*

*The atmosphere darkens like a shroud, air thickening into  
primordial tendrils around him...*

We are in the TRANSOM...*the space between space* -- A SPECTRAL FIGURE is summoned from the ether, hard to make it out through the murk, Belial bowing.

BELIAL (CONT'D)  
I know you wished not to be  
contacted but I'm *hurt* -- I need  
help --

All at once, Belial's body SEIZES UP -- An UNSEEN FORCE lifting him -- His feet DANGLING as the transom FLICKERS with unearthly light.

SPECTRAL FIGURE  
*You weren't to engage the witch  
hunter. He'll SUSPECT everything  
now --*

Belial CHOKES, struggling to talk.

BELIAL  
He was *there*.

Beneath his feet -- A COTERIE OF BUGS and SPIDERS *scuttle* from cracks in the floor -- Drawn to the dark energy GRIPPING Belial. Whatever this force, it's POWERFUL.

SPECTRAL FIGURE  
*Many have sacrificed for this  
moment...many have died...*

A WET SOUND -- *Belial looking to see BLACK BUGS now crawling OVER his wound, the BULLET emerging from his flesh,* CLATTERING noisily to the floor.

SPECTRAL FIGURE (CONT'D)  
*Another mistake won't be tolerated.*

All at once, Belial VIOLENTLY PLUNGES to the floor in a HEAP -- The transom *severed*, YELLOW LIGHT flooding back into the room.

HOLD ON BELIAL

TENDRILS OF STEAM rise from his body, a byproduct of time in the transom -- He slowly collects himself -- And it's only now his hand goes to his shoulder, seeing his WOUND IS GONE.

He gets up, the CAMERA only now revealing

AN ENORMOUS PLANT

Hauntingly beautiful -- Wreathed in cardamon and coriander -- Carefully he peels back the folds to check in on

## A GLISTENING SEEDLING

Belial careful not to touch it, the CAMERA lingering on the plant's otherworldly cargo as we CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH REPOSITORY - NIGHT

Dolan working at his manuscript -- Until, all at once, Kaulder enters -- VIOLENT and SHARP -- He GRABS up Dolan, PRESSING him up against a shelf, books TUMBLING off -- A look in Kaulder's eye we haven't seen since that day in the nest.

KAULDER

No more LIES.

(edging forward)

The Church TOOK the Queen's Spirit Marble from the nest -- I want to know why --

DOLAN

(strained)

I don't know what you're talk --

KAULDER

You do.

(pointed)

-- A witch HAS it --

He THROWS the terrified priest onto the table, books CLATTERING NOISILY to the floor -- Kaulder's wrath at full throttle, Dolan terrified.

DOLAN

Alright.

A FROZEN MOMENT -- The culpability plain on Dolan's face -- Kaulder staring -- *A part of him has been hoping he was wrong, the truth somehow more terrible.*

DOLAN (CONT'D)

They knew if you found out, you'd destroy it. So they hid it.

(beat)

The Church figured if the Spirit Marble could create a plague, maybe it could stop it. It took generations but eventually they figured it out. *Dozens* of diseases wiped out. *Polio. Smallpox.* Millions of lives spared. Surely that's worth something?

A CHARGED BEAT -- *Dolan wondering how Kaulder will react* --  
Silence HANGS between them, Kaulder STARING, his voice a  
WHISPER.

KAULDER

Who knew?

DOLAN

Every Dolan -- Including the first.

It's like a gut punch to Kaulder.

KAULDER

The Council?

DOLAN

No. They have no idea.

He lowers his head, frustrated and torn -- DESIGNED to HELP  
Kaulder, not hurt.

DOLAN (CONT'D)

Let's talk for a second about  
unintended consequences --

KAULDER

-- I lost everything that day.  
Sacrificed everything for the  
Church --

DOLAN

-- *Possession* of a Spirit Marble  
isn't enough. To bring a Queen back  
you need TWO THINGS: Someone of her  
bloodline. And someone with  
knowledge of the Resurrection  
Incantation -- Why do you think we  
had you WIPE out the entire  
bloodline and BURN every scrap of  
the Invocation?

(beat)

It's always been our fail-safe.

Kaulder -- If any of this is supposed to make him feel  
better, it doesn't, not one bit.

KAULDER

Alert the Council. Tell them  
everything.

DOLAN

What are you going to do?

KAULDER

*Her spirit's out there...waiting to  
come back -- I have to find it first.*

Dolan goes to him, solemn, face etched with guilt.

DOLAN

The Church should've told you.

Kaulder doesn't reply, heading out -- A ROARING SOUND --  
Growing LOUDER as it becomes...

EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

The RUMBLE of a PASSING BUS -- Kaulder emerging from the  
Church -- Heading into the night....

NEW ANGLE

A FIGURE watches him -- Following.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

A TENSION BEAT -- Kaulder walking through pools of darkness --  
The street deserted, everything lit by sodium-arc lights --  
Until -- Sharp and violent -- He SPINS, 'Purifier' leveled to  
find:

Chloe.

He eyes her. Puts the gun away. Starts to walk on.

CHLOE

(trailing after him)

I can't read your mind if that's  
your problem -- You got a 'wall'  
in there stronger than any I ever  
felt --

Kaulder -- Not even looking at her.

KAULDER

Go home.

CHLOE

You don't want my help? That's  
*funny*. Because I saw the witch who  
KILLED my SISTER get away. From  
you.

(Kaulder not stopping)

You OWE me.

Kaulder hesitates -- Just a half step -- Then he moves on --  
After the Church, absolutely not in the mood for this.

KAULDER

Go home.

Chloe, stops, frustrated -- Kaulder about to head around a corner -- But at last second Chloe yells out:

CHLOE

Belial.

Kaulder STOPS -- *She's got his attention.*

CHLOE (CONT'D)

The witch that killed my sister  
...His name's Belial.

(explaining)

My friends used to squat at this  
abandoned house -- He'd come by  
sometime, he was just a low-level  
totem witch, one of the  
'brotherhood' always talking  
'revolution'. No one ever took him  
seriously. He's different now. I  
didn't even realize it was him at  
first.

Kaulder absorbs this.

KAULDER

You're sure?

Chloe nods -- A BEAT BETWEEN THEM -- Finally, he TURNS,  
*heading in the opposite direction* -- HOLD ON CHLOE: Watching --  
Then hurrying to join -- And off the RISING THROB OF CLUB  
MUSIC we CUT TO:

EXT. SOHO BUILDING - NIGHT

The GLITZ and GLAMOUR of a RED CARPET -- Lots of ARM CANDY --  
COLORED LASER LIGHTS spilling across the edifice reading: **THE  
HOUSE OF IVANOV -- THE FIRST NAME IN FASHION**

Kaulder shoulders past the scene -- Chloe trailing in his  
wake, oblivious to why they're here -- Annoyed.

CHLOE

We're going in *here*? I didn't  
realize you were such a dedicated  
follower of fashion...?

(Kaulder doesn't answer)

Are you seriously not going to talk  
the *whole* night?

Seems like it -- Kaulder slicing through THROGS OF PEOPLE -- The entrance ahead blocked by FORMIDABLE DOORMEN, letting people with SPECIALLY EMBOSSED INVITATIONS past.

KAULDER

Approaching the Doormen -- *Only now do we see tattooed witch glyphs on their hands* -- With a SINGLE LOOK FROM KAULDER they let him pass -- *But they block Chloe.*

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
(calling out to Kaulder)  
Hey --

A BEAT -- Kaulder stops -- Looks to the Doormen...then her.

KAULDER  
Wait here.

HOLD ON CHLOE: Disappointed -- Beside her a 'LOST CAT' FLYER on a METAL LAMPPOST -- She watches as Kaulder heads inside...

INT. FASHION SHOW (MAIN AREA) - NIGHT

A cavernous night-club studio.

The MUSIC is ear-splitting. Pulsing. Lights flash. In the audience: Kanye West, Kim Kardashian and Robert Pattinson.

ON THE CATWALK

The most LUSTED AFTER CLOTHES EVER as worn by the MOST BEAUTIFUL MODELS we've ever seen. Long legs. Strut for miles. The epitome of style and attitude. Exquisite -- What is worn tonight will be copied for years to come.

As Kaulder passes the catwalk, a STUNNING BLONDE MODEL gives him the eye, any man would kill to earn that look.

Kaulder just keeps moving.

AHEAD

A DOOR leading to a WALLED OFF PRIVATE AREA -- TWO GORGEOUS BRUNETTE MODELS ENTERING -- After a BEAT, Kaulder approaches the FORMIDABLE WITCH GUARDS at the door -- They let him pass.

INT. PRIVATE AREA - NIGHT

A HIVE OF ACTIVITY -- The space where the models prepare to go on, everyone hurrying about.

A BEAUTIFUL MODEL

Strides past Kaulder, all dolled up -- She shoots him a look -- But when she walks past a mirror we catch SIGHT OF...

HER REFLECTION

It isn't HER -- It's a SEEDY RUSSIAN MALE -- This is what 'she' REALLY looks like. The power of 'glamours'.

A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS

Throughout the space -- Models in front of mirrors -- *Their reflections completely different people, all SORDID RUSSIAN MALES* -- Kaulder moves on, heading toward a DOOR in back, guarded by TWO FORMIDABLE MEN wearing EARPIECE MONITORS.

MAN #1  
(stops Kaulder)  
No one allowed in when  
Konstantin's working --

Before Kaulder can get into it -- A VOICE CRACKLES over the man's earpiece.

KONSTANTIN (O.S.)  
(transmitted)  
*It's alright.*

Kaulder's eyes tick to a SECURITY CAMERA above the door -- Man #1 nods, opens the door, Kaulder entering...

INT. V.I.P. ROOM - NIGHT

Glorious HIP-HOP OPULENCE -- Even the bling has bling -- BEAUTIFUL 'MODELS' getting dressed, everything feverish with adrenaline.

At the center of it all --

KONSTANTIN IVANOV (32)

Russian -- Exceedingly YOUTHFUL and HANDSOME -- He is the king and this is his court -- Seeing Kaulder, a wide grin spreads over Konstantin's face.

KONSTANTIN  
Captain Kaulder -- A lovely  
surprise!  
(gesturing to room)  
It's all MY kind here -- Nothing  
but witches and bitches.

In case you haven't noticed -- He's loud -- Oily -- A STUNNING 'MODEL' in a SLEEK BLACK DRESS appearing before him, Konstantin sizing her up -- Making small adjustments.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)  
Delicious.

The Stunning 'Model' slinks away, ready for the catwalk --  
Konstantin gestures around the room, eyeing Kaulder.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)  
Pick one. They're yours --

KAULDER  
Not my type.

Konstantin -- Mock indignation.

KONSTANTIN  
'Business'? How disappointing.

He motions to a waiting 'girl' to come over, Kaulder catching  
her reflection, revealing a SEEDY MALE WITCH as we CUT TO:

EXT. FASHION SHOW - SAME TIME

Chloe approaching the Doormen -- They look at her, annoyed,  
blocking her way.

DOORMAN #1  
You already know the answer --

CHLOE  
My fault. Left my invitation in my  
limo. Silly, really...

She shows them an EMBOSSED INVITE -- Doorman #1 looks at  
Doorman #2, surprised -- Having no choice, they take the  
invitation, stepping aside, letting Chloe in.

As she passes, WIPING frame, we get a NEW LOOK at the  
'Invitation', revealing it's the 'LOST CAT' FLIER -- *Chloe*  
*using her 'mind' witch abilities to trick the Doormen.*

INT. FASHION SHOW (MAIN AREA) - NIGHT

Chloe surveys the crowd, looking for Kaulder -- Doesn't see  
him -- Then her eyes find the doorway to the PRIVATE ROOM --  
*The one place Kaulder could be.*

INT. V.I.P. ROOM - SAME TIME

Kaulder and Konstantin. A 'girl' placing a DARK BOTTLE  
containing an AMBER MIXTURE onto a table before them.

KONSTANTIN  
I'm due on stage in fifteen  
minutes. Just enough time.  
(MORE)

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)  
 (pouring two shots)  
 1833 Wormroot. Black Forest  
 distilled. I worked very hard to  
 get this.

He downs his drink in one gulp -- Kaulder doesn't --  
 Konstantin taking mild offense.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)  
 Are you my friend? Or my enemy? We  
 drink, we talk. This is what we do.  
 Then we get down to 'business', no?

Obviously a tradition between them -- Kaulder reappraising  
 his glass -- SWALLOWS it down -- Konstantin enjoying his  
 reaction, satisfied.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)  
Now. My friend. What can Konstantin  
 do for you?

KAULDER  
 A witch named Belial. Where can I  
 find him?

KONSTANTIN  
 ...'Belial'? I don't think I know  
 this one.

Most people wouldn't pick up on it but a small degree of  
 tension is now passing between them, Kaulder leaning forward  
 -- Simmering

KAULDER  
 Oh. I think you do.

This could get nasty -- But then, all at once, Kaulder  
 BLINKS -- Distracted -- His gaze shifting as he sees:

ANGELIKA (HIS WIFE)

Now stands in the room -- Just behind Konstantin.

Konstantin smiles at Kaulder, noting his expression.

KONSTANTIN  
 See something you like after all?

He leans forward, all pretense gone.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)  
 Tell me something. All these  
 years...you come to me with  
 questions. And I give answers...  
 (MORE)

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)

(beat)

But what does it get ME?

Something's obviously 'off' with Kaulder, a sheen of sweat now across his brow -- A BEAT as Kaulder blinks...*again seeing*

ANGELIKA

Now sitting next to Konstantin -- The Russian witch's gaze raking to the empty glass sitting before the witch hunter.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)

I wonder...have you ever had Mandrake...? It's a very rare breed of compound. My father spent years scouring the earth: Deserts... mountain regions. Nothing.

(beat)

But then he heard reports of a village. Not dead...but not alive. *Their minds gone.* Something got into the drinking supply. Mandrake. He found the root, dug it up...and nurtured his own stock.

He looks to Kaulder, the witch hunter obviously faltering -- Konstantin relishing his moment of power.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)

I save this drink for SPECIAL occasions -- I think you'll appreciate it...

And with that, Kaulder's eyes close...and when he opens them...

INT. KAULDER COTTAGE - DAY

It's 1646.

Kaulder's now sitting at a wooden table, a plate before him. Freshly cooked meat and fruit. He looks around: A cozy fire burns in a stone hearth, his armor and sword hung along the wall in the corner.

He's *home*.

The front door opens. Kaulder spins, a wedge of golden light spilling through the doorway as --

ANGELIKA

Enters. Eyes sparkling. Full of joyous life.

ANGELIKA  
You Cur! The brigade came back  
early and you didn't find me?

She rushes to Kaulder, embraces him -- A long moment. Kaulder staring. He smooths his wife's hair, warmth radiating between them.

KAULDER  
I've missed you.

ANGELIKA  
And, I you.

He scoops her up, Angelika laughing blissfully. He takes her toward the bed...and as they both FLOP down they're now...

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Lying on a rock next to a BURBLING STREAM. He stares into her eyes. It's a beautiful day. Kaulder's horse is nearby.

ANGELIKA  
What are you thinking?

Kaulder doesn't answer, Angelika sensing his mood.

ANGELIKA (CONT'D)  
You've heard from the Church. The  
Brigade's leaving again, isn't it?

KAULDER  
(nods)  
The Taurus mountains. Grosette  
hears rumors of a roving tribe of  
Hussites. There's stories, nobody's  
seen a people such as this.

ANGELIKA  
Grosette. I don't trust that monk --  
He's always taking you away from me.

A SUDDEN SPLASH OF COLD WATER interrupts their conversation. Kaulder looks up: Elisabeth stands in the middle of the brook. Big smile on her face.

ELISABETH  
I snuck up on daddy!

Kaulder splashes through the water after his daughter. Angelika watches, cheering Elisabeth on as Kaulder playfully grabs her up, PLUNGING them both underwater...but when Kaulder BREAKS THE SURFACE he's now...

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Walking through a MARKETPLACE with Angelika. It's bustling. Filled with life. Angelika looks to him, BELLY SWOLLEN WITH CHILD.

ANGELIKA  
She'll be beautiful.

KAULDER  
Ah, so she's a girl? You know this for sure?

ANGELIKA  
Of course, it's a girl. She'll have her mother's fire. And her father's stubbornness...

Kaulder notices a FIGURE walking through the crowd, following them...It's Chloe...he doesn't seem to recognize her as she steps in Kaulder's way, confronting him.

CHLOE  
Listen to me. You need to wake up.

Angelika turns to him, confused.

ANGELIKA  
You know this girl?

Kaulder stirs, as if trying to remember a strange dream.

KAULDER  
I'm not sure...

CHLOE  
Konstantin tricked you. You're caught in a dream trap. You need to wake up.

Kaulder looks at her, starting to remember.

KAULDER  
What if I want to stay here?

CHLOE  
You can't -- If you do, you'll be here forever. Tumbling through moments of your past.

KAULDER  
...And what's wrong with that?

CHLOE

None of this is *real*. They're just memories.

Kaulder looks at Angelika, the marketplace. The smells. The sounds. It *feels* real. In fact, it feels perfect.

KAULDER

I'm staying.

Fast as a flash, Chloe PLUCKS a knife from the market stall -- She LUNGES -- Kaulder's faster. He grabs her arm, the two of them TUMBLING over a table. Grappling.

CHLOE

I cut you with this knife, the shock will bring you back.

Kaulder FLINGS her off, Chloe springing back up, Kaulder surprised by her abilities.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

This is a *memory*. I'm stronger here.

Our two heroes go at it in a no-holds barred fight SPILLING not only through the marketplace but through Kaulder's memories...

He SLAMS her against a wall, now back at the cottage...

She fights back, both of them rolling across the stone floor, SPLASHING into the brook...It continues on like this: Both gifted at combat, neither able to get the upper hand.

Until, they're back at the marketplace.

And this time, Chloe has a plan.

*She snatches up Angelika, POINTING the edge of the knife into her neck.* Draws a pinprick of blood -- Angelika looks to her husband, scared -- And it's here, for the first time, we hear Kaulder's FIRST name.

ANGELIKA

Marcos?

Kaulder freezes, time slowing to a heartbeat -- Chloe keeps the blade poised.

CHLOE

Time to wake up.

She lifts the blade as if to use it against Angelika...but at the last second, she FLINGS it at Kaulder, the knife BURYING in Kaulder's chest! He GASPS, overcome -- And as he PLUNGES to his knees --

INT. V.I.P. ROOM - NIGHT

Kaulder's eyes FLASH open. He's back with Konstantin. *Chloe now in the room with him, held by two Guards* -- Kaulder recovers -- Instantly RISING up, SMASHING the TABLE as

WITCH GUARDS FROM ALL OVER THE ROOM

Converge -- Obviously no match for the witch hunter -- Kaulder gifted at martial arts -- A SERIES OF KICKS and PUNCHES -- Every move clean and precise -- And in a HEARTBEAT ...it's over.

KONSTANTIN

Absolutely terrified -- Kaulder looming over him -- Eyes boring into him.

KONSTANTIN

(shaking)

I'm sorry -- For years you come to me, I always help -- Whatever you want to know -- I know everything on this island -- I made a mistake tonight -- A *big* mistake -- Please --

KAULDER

What's Belial doing?

KONSTANTIN

I don't know. No one does. He was a joke -- But then something happened -- He hooked up with powerful 'friends' -- Nobody knows who --

Kaulder edges closer -- Fucking scary.

KAULDER

WHERE is he?

KONSTANTIN

-- All I know is rumors -- Sightings -- What I hear most is Chinatown.

*This means something to Kaulder* -- A BEAT -- Konstantin cowering -- What will Kaulder do? -- Finally...the witch hunter relents, giving him some breathing room.

Konstantin blinks, letting out a relieved breath.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)  
You're not going to kill me?

In response, Kaulder's hand comes up with a SMALL WOODEN BOX.

KAULDER  
I knew your father. He was an  
asshole.

And with that, he opens the box, *DUMPING out a BATCH OF RED GRANULES* -- Konstantin reacts with HORROR.

KONSTANTIN  
No -- PLEASE -- Not that --

Too late -- Kaulder BLOWING the RED POWDER on him, clouding Konstantin in a fine mist.

WHEN IT CLEARS...

KONSTANTIN is revealed to be an OLD MAN -- *Liver spots and varicose veins latticing his mottled flesh, his hair mere wiry wisps* -- The rest of the room stares in utter disbelief -- Konstantin enfeebled...whimpering...

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)  
....d-don't look at me...

Kaulder turns to Chloe -- Moving on.

KAULDER  
Let's go.

All the invite Chloe needs -- They head out the door --  
Together.

CUT TO:

EXT. FASHION SHOW - NIGHT

Kaulder and Chloe emerging outside -- Chloe looks to him.

CHLOE  
Hey.

But Kaulder ignores her, keeps on walking.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
In case you didn't know...this is  
the part where you thank me for  
saving YOUR ass.

Kaulder turns. His voice sharp as a razor.

KAULDER

My memories are my own. Stay out of  
my head.

The pain on his face -- Kaulder still clinging to the vestiges  
of the dream experience with his 'family' -- Chloe can feel  
all of it.

CHLOE

I'm sorry. Dürer taught me.  
Memories...they're permeable.

At this mention of Dürer, Kaulder stares...her name having the  
effect of calming him.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

You looked real concerned in there  
when he said Chinatown -- Why?

KAULDER

It means Belial doesn't just want  
to bring the Queen back. He wants  
the Queen to finish what she  
started: The black plague -- The  
end of humanity.

Chloe blinks -- Struck -- Joining Kaulder as he moves on.

CUT TO:

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Dolan entering before the entirety of the Council -- In  
Glaeser's hand a SERIES OF BLACK RUNIC STONES -- A HAUNTING  
LOW HUM issuing from the minerals, each riddled with powerful  
magicks.

DOLAN

You wished to see me?

Glaeser nods, face lined with concern, the stones SLIDING  
across his palm and onto the table with OTHERWORLDY DEXTERITY  
-- *It's only now we see the wood is actually a vestige of a  
long dead PETRIFIED TRIBE TREE still anchored into the earth.*

GLAESER

The portents tell of disconcerting  
signs -- Yet our collective vision  
is clouded. Blocked.

(beat)

What of the witch hunter? Any news?

DOLAN  
He's working with a witch.

Glaeser eyes him, surprised.

GLAESER  
An eventful night indeed.  
(beat)  
Keep us appraised -- Grant him  
access immediately upon his  
arrival. We have much to discuss.

DOLAN  
Of course.

He turns to go -- But Glaeser calls out.

GLAESER  
One more thing, Father. The Spirit  
Marble. We understand the Church  
keeping it's existence from the  
witch hunter...but why was this  
Council not informed?

Dolan -- On the spot -- Deciding it's best to go with truth.

DOLAN  
I assume it's because the Church  
was concerned it might fall into a  
witch's hands.

A BEAT -- Glaeser figured -- Though disappointed all the same.

GLAESER  
In all these centuries since the  
truce...it'd be good if the Church  
would consider this Council its  
ally and not it's enemy.

And with that he goes back to focusing on his Druid Stones --  
He and the Council obviously troubled as Dolan heads out.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHINATOWN STREET - NIGHT

A midnight 'Ghost Market'.

The CAMERA moves through the cacophony, cutting past STALLS  
selling ROAST DUCK, TEXTILES and FIREWORKS, until finally we  
find...

KAULDER AND CHLOE

Walking through the market -- Chloe watching TWIN YOUNG GIRLS (9) playing with SHADOW PUPPETS, their FATHER buying them one each.

KAULDER

Obviously knows where he's going, the two of them heading across the bustling street, entering...

INT. DIM SUM RESTAURANT - NIGHT

This place is HUGE -- MORE LIKE A BANQUET HALL -- And PACKED Even at this hour -- HARRIED SERVERS bringing SMALL PLATES on CARTS and BROTHY BOWLS filled with DARK LIQUIDS.

ON THE TABLES

Very exotic Chinese food -- Plant based -- Odd colored meats -- Looks kinda like something a Klingon might eat -- The restaurant obviously catering to a very particular 'taste'.

CHLOE

Think I just lost my appetite.

Kaulder and Chloe walk past a table, a WOMAN plucking something out of her soup -- *Could be an egg, could be an eyeball*. Hard to tell. The woman slurps it in her mouth.

INT. DIM SUM RESTAURANT (KITCHEN) - NIGHT

Vast -- Industrial Sized -- Kaulder and Chloe moving through DOZENS OF WORKERS -- VENTS OF STEAM and HEAT welling up from burners and stoves -- An occasional WORKER eyeing Kaulder as he passes -- LOTS OF INDECIPHERABLE CHINESE bantered.

KAULDER

Heads into a CRAMPED HALLWAY, away from the noisy din -- TRASH BAGS PILED UP -- The floor covered with soapy water.

He eyes a BROOM CLOSET.

Kaulder tries the door -- It's locked -- Using his muscle, he FORCES it open.

INT. BROOM CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

It's dark. Hard to see anything...but one thing is for sure ...*this is no mere broom closet* -- Instead it's a DARK HALLWAY.

They head into the murk, Kaulder putting his hand to a STONE WALL in the back.

KAULDER

It's warm.  
(pointed)  
There's a spell here.

CHLOE

Someone hiding something?

KAULDER

Absolutely.

He levels the 'Purifier' -- Finger coiling to the trigger --  
About to use it...but, at the last second --

CHLOE

Wait.

She pulls something from her pocket -- A PIECE OF WHITE CHALK  
-- Ancient and earthen.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Cuts through protective wards --  
Borrowed it from a graybeard  
alchemist on the west side.

Kaulder knows by 'borrowed', she means stolen -- He takes the  
chalk, feeling the wall with his palm, running his fingers  
over the masonry, senses attuned.

KAULDER

Here...

In one particular spot on the wall, he uses the chalk to  
SCRAWL the outline of a small doorway...he PUSHES against it --  
*And then something amazing happens* -- The door OPENS --  
Revealing

A HIDDEN CAVERN

Too dark to make anything out -- A SWARM OF RATS pouring out,  
SCREECHING and ROILING OVER EACH OTHER IN A SEETHING PILE.

KAULDER

Advances, the rats SCREECHING over his feet in an agitated  
state -- Chloe STAYING BACK, intimidated by the creatures --  
Kaulder looking to her.

KAULDER (CONT'D)

You coming?

CHLOE  
 (shakes her head)  
 Rats. Kinda got a 'thing' about  
 them.

Not easy for this punk-rock girl to admit -- But Kaulder  
 gets it -- Chloe watching as Kaulder heads into the cavern,  
 'the door' *SEALING SHUT* BEHIND HIM.

INT. CAVERN - NIGHT

Jagged. Moist. Water dripping down the walls, the rats  
 nipping Kaulder's feet, until, finally he emerges into...

A BREATHTAKING VISTA

Darkly beautiful -- We see an UNDERGROUND RIVER buffeted by  
 BLACK SHALE and LUMINOUS ROCK -- Outdoor topography in an  
 indoor space, here since the island was settled -- And in the  
 center of it all:

AN ORNAMENTED GREENHOUSE

Constructed *within* the earth -- It looms before Kaulder like  
 a NETHERWORLD TEMPLE -- Baroque wired forms constructed in  
 impossible geometry, ILLUMINATED within by UNEARTHLY LIGHT.

This is the Night Garden.

Kaulder heads for it as we CUT BACK TO:

INT. DIM SUM KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Chloe. She stands along the wall, waiting for Kaulder --  
 Observing the bustle of the kitchen, watching as ONE ASIAN  
 COOK cuts off a DUCK'S HEAD with a BUTCHER KNIFE.

CHOP! -- The blade comes down -- Head TUMBLING into a plastic  
 bin atop a pile -- ANOTHER WORKER picks up the bin, replacing  
 it -- Both them SPEAKING LOUD and FAST in MANDARIN.

CHLOE

Watches -- Trying not to lose her lunch -- CHOP! CHOP! CHOP!  
 Until suddenly, the Cook STOPS -- Looks at Chloe. Staring.

All at once, he STEPS toward her, almost *mechanical*, like a  
PUPPET -- Blade in hand -- And he says to Chloe the last  
 thing she'd expect:

COOK  
 (in perfect English)  
Hello, Chloe.

Chloe -- Surprised...and a little unnerved.

CHLOE  
We know each other?

Chopper nods -- Holding an object out to her.

COOK  
A peace offering.

Chloe looks down, surprised to see *her* DAGGER -- The one Belial took from her -- Chloe FREEZES -- If you look closely the man's eyes are terrified, not matching his 'casual' smile -- A BEAT -- Chloe all at once realizing she's talking to

CHLOE  
Belial.

And off the Cook's 'smile' we CUT BACK TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND GREENHOUSE - SAME TIME

Kaulder entering. Surrounded by ORDERED CLUSTERS OF STRANGELY BEAUTIFUL PLANT FORMS -- All wreathed by a latticed nest of GLASS TUBES and BEAKERS (NOTE: WE RECOGNIZE THIS PLACE AS THE LOCATION BELIAL CALLED FORTH THE 'TRANSOM').

KAULDER

CROUCHES, now spying something on the ground.

A CIRCLE OF TRANSOM SAND

The earth SCORCHED beneath it -- He pick up a few granules, running the sand between his fingers -- He SCOOPS more up -- POCKETING IT as we CUT BACK TO...

INT. DIM SUM KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Chloe taking her dagger from the outstretched hand of the Cook -- The man staring eerily.

COOK/BELIAL  
I've been wanting to talk to you, Chloe.

Suspicious and fearful, Chloe slides past him -- But all at once, a DISHWASHER lurches in her way, the same 'expression' on his face. This guy speaking perfect English too.

DISHWASHER/BELIAL  
I think you're playing for the wrong team, Chloe.

CHLOE

And what 'team' is that?

DISHWASHER/BELIAL

The witch hunter's.

All along Chloe's looking *past* him, knowing Belial must be close, gazing through the KITCHEN DOORS -- *She glimpses a DARK HAired FIGURE at a table, his back to her -- It COULD be Belial* -- Very stealthily, she poises the DAGGER in her hand, heading for the Figure as we CUT BACK TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND GREENHOUSE - SAME TIME

Kaulder eyeing the LOOMING PLANT STRUCTURES coiled in haunting otherworldly patterns -- *Strewn along the base are SKELETON BONES and RUSTED CHILDREN'S TOYS.*

We realize it's ALL one gigantic plant.

And it's been very hungry.

He approaches a section of the plant that looks familiar to us (the same BLACK MOSS PETAL Belial touched when he checked on the seedling).

KAULDER

Peels back the petal, reaching inside -- *But there's no SEEDLING. It's gone. Already HARVESTED.*

And that's when --

A CLAMMY HAND

BURSTS from the ground at his feet -- CLAMPING onto him -- AN EARTHINE GUARD pulling him into the earth as we CUT BACK TO:

INT. DIM SUM RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

Chloe shouldering her way past a couple BUS BOYS and WAITERS, keeping her eyes on the back of the Dark Haired Figure at the other end of the dining area when all at once --

A SMALL HAND

Tugs at her leg -- Chloe turning to find the TWIN LITTLE GIRLS from the market and their FATHER sitting at a table, *ALL looking at her with that same 'Belial expression'.*

TWIN GIRL 1/BELIAL

Chloe. don't do this. You'll be on the losing side of history...Our kind were Gods...We were caretakers of this world...

TWIN GIRL 2/BELIAL

And the humans?...We BOTH know they deserve everything they're going to get...I've been watching you. You're a clever witch...

FATHER

...And it would be a shame to have to kill you...

They're FINISHING each others sentences. Spooky.

Chloe just SLIDES on, moving past them, finally making it to the DARK HAired FIGURE still with his back to her (really looks like Belial) -- All at once, fast and sharp, she SPINS him around to find...

It's NOT Belial. It's just a guy who looks like him.

And then...OUTSIDE THE RESTAURANT WINDOW...ACROSS THE STREET...CHLOE DOES SEE HIM -- WATCHING HER.

DARK HAired GUY/BELIAL

(smiles, glacial)

This is your last chance, Chloe.

Holy shit -- This guy's under Belial's control too -- *He's really fucking with her* -- Undaunted, Chloe HURTLES for the front door, on a mission to get the REAL Belial, BURSTING out --

EXT. DIM SUM RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

The front door -- She sees Belial across the street as -- VOOM! -- She lets her dagger fly.

THE BLADE

Navigates THROUGH the crowd -- *Chloe able to use her mind to control it like a pet* -- Moving at impossible angles, until finally -- THUNK! -- The dagger BURIES in the wall where Belial was *just* standing.

He's not there anymore.

Chloe looks around, doesn't see him in the crowd, until suddenly the TWIN LITTLE GIRLS are standing before her.

TWIN GIRL 1/BELIAL  
Remember one thing, Chloe...

TWIN GIRL 2/BELIAL  
...YOU brought this on yourself.

All at once, Chloe is GRABBED by UNSEEN ASSAILANTS, pulled into an alley as we CUT BACK TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND GREENHOUSE - SAME TIME

Kaulder. BATTLING the EARTHING GUARD -- Dirt CLOGGING his MOUTH as MORE HANDS BURST up -- Trying to pull him down -- Kaulder managing to pull a

LIGHT WAND

He snaps it up in the air -- WHOOOSH! -- It BURSTS like a SUPERNOVA -- BLASTING the space with INCANDESCENT GREEN PHOSPHOROUS LIGHT.

THE EARTHINE GUARDS

SHRIEK HORRIBLY -- The Hands SIZZLING -- Letting go all at once -- Kaulder able to PULL himself out -- Recovering as we CUT TO...

INT. PAWN SHOP (BACK AREA) - SAME TIME

A dusty dark space -- Shelves lined with BOTTLES and BOXES filled with EXOTIC SPICES -- A squirming Chloe STRAPPED onto a table...

CHLOE  
 Wait...

The UNSEEN FIGURES don't -- Chloe now seeing JARS OF MURKY PRESERVATIVE LIQUID filled with BODY PARTS -- Eyeballs -- Fingers -- Ears.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
 What is this...

She STRUGGLES, but the bonds are too tight -- A LONE FIGURE STEPPING into the LIGHT -- REVEALING a TATTOOED CHINESE WITCH.

TATTOOED CHINESE MAN  
 You're a 'mind witch' -- Any idea what your parts are worth on the street? \$100 just for a fingernail. Imagine what I can get for your kidney...your heart...your brain.

We let the TENSION play out a BEAT -- Chloe STRUGGLING but *unable to move* -- The witches going about their jobs -- Silent -- Methodical -- Like doctors prepping for surgery.

CHLOE  
(batshit terrified)  
Please...you don't have to do  
this...

TATTOOED CHINESE MAN  
I'm afraid I do -- *Belial sends his  
regards.*

And with that, he PEELS back Chloe's shirt, *bringing the blade to her naked stomach*, about to do something horrible, but at the last second --

KAULDER

Bursts through the BACK DOOR -- The men come at him with their knives -- But Kaulder is BADASS -- He starts with the 'Purifier', BULLETS blasting into WITCHES and GLASS JARS alike, murky fluid DRIBBLING to the floor.

And then it devolves into a FURY OF KICKS AND PUNCHES -- Clean and tight -- Kaulder working through the survivors and then, as fast as it started, it's over.

Kaulder is the only one standing.

He goes to Chloe, cutting her bonds -- She looks to him -- tries to be tough -- But she can't, the terror from her ordeal writ across her face.

And then she does the last thing we'd expect:

*She CRUMPLES against Kaulder's chest -- Sobbing --* Chloe nothing more than the lost, vulnerable young girl she forever tries to hide -- A BEAT BETWEEN THEM -- Kaulder stoic...And then all at once, *he* does the last thing we'd expect...

He puts his arm around her.

The moment holds -- Chloe gathering herself -- Looks to Kaulder.

CHLOE  
I saw Belial. He was here. I was  
able to 'read' him. Just for a  
split second. I got a word. A *name*.  
(looks to him)  
'Marbas'. Mean anything to you?

Kaulder stares, it obviously does.

KAULDER  
It means I have to see an old  
'friend'.

A LOW RUMBLE -- Growing LOUDER as we CUT TO...

INT. SUBWAY CAR -- NIGHT

The ROAR of a TRAIN CAR -- Kaulder and Chloe sitting across from each other -- In silence -- Chloe still recovering from her ordeal -- Looks to him.

CHLOE  
Thank you.

Kaulder nods -- Nothing needed to be said -- The only sound the RATTLE of the car -- Chloe's eyes drift out the window, watching the lights of the tunnel slide by -- Dreamlike.

She turns to Kaulder...

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Your wife was beautiful.  
(considering)  
Düer knew she was just a 'place holder'. She never talked about it. Sisters know. And sisters like us know everything. She really cared about you.

Her words weigh on the witch hunter -- Chloe glimpsing a RAILROAD OF SCARS along his wrists.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
(realizing)  
Your family -- You tried to *join* them?

KAULDER  
After the Queens were dead. There was nothing. No revenge. No purpose. Just eternity.  
(looks to wrists)  
I spent a lifetime trying... nothing worked. Nothing ever worked.

Chloe stops, all at once she truly understands how *alone* he is, feeling something for the witch hunter she never thought she could: Sympathy.

CHLOE  
You were alive when Shakespeare was writing his plays.  
(MORE)

CHLOE (CONT'D)

When New York *became* New York. When the Yanks won their *first* World Series. Of all the people walking around on the planet you're the *only* one. You ever think about that?

Kaulder stares, infinity echoed in his eyes.

KAULDER

Every day.

A SCREECH OF BRAKES -- The train pulling to a stop -- Kaulder and Chloe both rise, it's time to exit as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

The towers of the cathedral LOOM in the night, fingers reaching to the night sky -- Kaulder and Chloe approaching.

INT. CORRIDORS UNDER ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Kaulder and Chloe step off the rickety elevator leading to the bowels of the Church -- *Every nook, every cranny dripping with a sense of time and history* -- Chloe marvels, a bit intimidated, this is a side of things few witches ever see.

CHLOE

Feel like I should say five Hail Mary's or something.

She follows him into...

INT. CHURCH REPOSITORY - NIGHT

Chloe gaping at the vast library, drawn to the BLACK METAL COLUMNS depicting witch history (from our opening) -- She runs her hand along an IMAGE OF WITHERED CROPS -- Faces of STARVED WOMEN AND CHILDREN frozen in anguish.

CHLOE

Did we really *do* this?

And by 'we' she means her 'kind' -- Kaulder nods.

KAULDER

It was a different world when Queens were alive. It was war.

*'And it could be again'* -- Chloe absorbing this -- Realizing how truly warped Belial's world view really is -- The moment interrupted by...

DOLAN

In over four hundred years an  
outsider has never set foot in this  
room, let alone a *witch*.

He just arrived, eyeing Chloe -- Shocked at this 'defilement'  
of his sanctuary -- Kaulder shooting him a look.

KAULDER

Hey. She's okay.

'Is she?' Dolan wanting to trust Kaulder's judgement...his  
emotions perhaps tinged by a little jealous -- A BEAT BETWEEN  
THEM -- Kaulder moving on...

KAULDER (CONT'D)

I need you to take me to the  
Council.

DOLAN

Why?

Kaulder pulls out the BLACK TRANSOM SAND he grabbed from the  
underground greenhouse, spilling the granules onto a table.

KAULDER

Belial isn't working alone -- I  
think the Council is letting him  
communicate with Marbas.

DOLAN

Impossible.

KAULDER

I want to know Marbas is still  
locked up. And if he is I want him  
as far from the Council as I can  
get him.

Hearing this, Chloe looks to the two of them.

CHLOE

Wait -- 'Marbas' is in prison?

DOLAN

Not just any prison. *The kind of  
prison no witch ever comes out of.*  
The deepest darkest hole. Never  
allowed to see sun or sky again.

CHLOE

That's inhumane.

DOLAN  
Witches aren't 'human'.

Chloe -- Getting in his face.

CHLOE  
Neither are you, asshole.

Kaulder steps in -- A BEAT -- Dolan catching himself -- He lowers his head. Cowed.

DOLAN  
Alright. Let's talk to the Council.

A BEAT BETWEEN KAULDER AND DOLAN -- Unease ribboning across the priest's face as we CUT TO:

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - MOMENTS LATER

Dolan, Kaulder and Chloe entering into the Council Chambers -- Glaeser and the Council caught off guard by this sudden intrusion -- Surprised at Chloe's presence.

GLAESER  
Captain Kaulder -- You bring a witch into this chamber unannounced --

KAULDER  
We need to get into the prison.

A BEAT -- Glaeser -- Smiles tightly.

GLAESER  
You know as well as I that's not possible -- The rules of the truce stipulate no humans allowed entry.  
(beat)  
I'm disappointed Father Dolan would grant you entrance in such a agitated state.

He and Dolan share a look -- Dolan uncomfortable and intimidated by what's transpiring.

GLAESER (CONT'D)  
Perhaps if the Captain would be good enough to inform this Council of his intentions, as well as the name of the prisoner of interest, we could discuss --

Kaulder's hand goes to the 'Purifier' -- Pulls it -- Eyes sliding to the THISTLE AND BONE GATEWAY -- The sleeping emanation of the Sentinel.

KAULDER

And I want you to disarm your pit-bull.

Glaeser looks to the gun -- Holy shit, *this is a first* -- The witch hunter daring to threaten the Council.

GLAESER

It's obvious the events of this evening have left the witch hunter a bit on edge.

Kaulder levels the gun at a Council Member -- FIRES -- The bullet MISSING by a hair, blasting a CHUNK OUT OF THE STONE WALL behind the member.

KAULDER

Who knows what I'll do next?

The Council shifts uneasily in its seat -- All eyes on focused on Glaeser -- What will he do? -- A long moment -- Then finally, he nods.

GLAESER

You have one hour -- After that, my ward on the Sentinel will automatically be removed.

(beat)

But, be clear about one thing, witch hunter. This isn't over.

A threat? Possibly -- Kaulder. Cool.

KAULDER

See. There's one thing we can agree on after all.

And with that, he steps across the gateway -- INSTANTLY HE DISAPPEARS INTO DARKNESS -- Chloe sliding a look to Dolan, both equally intimidated -- Finally...they follow.

INT. WITCH PRISON - NIGHT

Illumination happens only on THIS side of the Gateway -- TORCHES *blossoming* automatically to life as they pass, flickering light SPLITTING the GLOOM.

NOW VISIBLE BEFORE THEM:

*A vast labyrinthine structure composed of EARTH and STONE built in secret beneath the island of Manhattan.*

They turn a corner, ENTERING...

INT. PRISON CENTRAL CORE - CONTINUOUS

A CAVERNOUS CHASM lined with antechambers, interconnected by ROPE AND WOOD WALKWAYS and LADDERS OF BONE -- None of which look particularly secure.

KAULDER  
(looks to Chloe)  
Did you get anything from him?

CHLOE  
No way. That guy's mind has more walls up than you.

Kaulder considers this, troubled.

KAULDER  
This way...

He leads them across a WALKWAY -- On either side a DIZZYING PLUNGE into the earth, the walkway SWAYING UNSTEADILY as they HEAD into the BOWELS OF THE PRISON.

CHLOE  
(sweating)  
It's hot.

Dolan -- Pointing over the edge of the walkway.

DOLAN  
'Godfire'. A gift from the Council.  
It POWERS this place. Hasn't  
stopped burning for over four-  
hundred years.

Chloe gazes down, now seeing FAR, FAR BELOW

ENORMOUS ROILING TIPS OF ORANGE FLAME

Like the world's largest and most ancient furnace -- Glowing with *unearthly* HEAT and LIGHT -- Chloe's never seen anything like it -- She moves on, WALKWAY shifting under her feet as we CUT TO...

INT. CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

Deeper in the bowels of the prison -- Our heroes finally arriving at their destination, stepping off a ladder of bone, entering an earthen corridor.

DOLAN  
Marbas is here.

CELLS

Line both walls -- Each studded with 'viewing windows' --  
Inside NEBULAS OF ASHEN 'CLOUDS' TURGIDLY ROIL -- Tempests on  
a tiny scale -- Glimpsed amongst the murk, PALLID FIGURES --  
The PRISONERS -- Forever shrouded in a gray world.

As Chloe passes one cell --

A HORRIBLE FACE presses against the glass -- Scaring the shit  
out of her -- The visage quickly enveloped in inky tendrils,  
disappearing like a wraith -- Dolan amused by her fear.

DOLAN (CONT'D)  
Witches from all centuries are in  
here -- The *clouds* bind them in  
ancient logicks.

Chloe -- A mental shiver -- Dolan moving on.

DOLAN (CONT'D)  
Marbas is the exception. The only  
prisoner here who isn't a witch.

CHLOE  
He's *human*?  
(struck)  
Why's he in here?

DOLAN  
He learned the truth about witches.  
It drove him insane. He wanted to  
*become* one.  
(beat)  
He sacrificed five women,  
misinterpreting an old witch text,  
thinking it would do the trick...  
but it only made him a serial  
killer.

Chloe absorbs this -- Dolan enjoying telling the tale.

DOLAN (CONT'D)  
He's dangerous. Knows more about  
crafting than most witches.

CHLOE  
How long has he been in here?

DOLAN  
A *long* time.

They finally stop in front of...

EXT. MARBAS' CELL - CONTINUOUS

Its OCCUPANT hidden by ROILING CLOUDS -- We catch only glimpses of a FIGURE, hard to make out anything specific -- Kaulder pulls a DAGGER, using it to SCRAPE at a SERIES OF PROTECTIVE WARDS etched over the doorway, obliterating them.

KAULDER

Stand back -- The clouds are  
poisonous if you're not a prisoner.

With a COUPLE OF TARGETED SHOTS of the 'Purifier' he BLASTS the lock, KICKING the door in -- Kaulder HOLDS HIS BREATH, PLUNGING into the tempest.

A BEAT -- Chloe and Dolan. Waiting. Faces lined with concern.

Finally, with a LOUD COUGH -- Kaulder emerges, *carrying a BODY slumped over his shoulder* -- He quickly SHUTS the cell door, lowering the body to the ground, revealing:

A EUROPEAN MAN

Clad in 18TH CENTURY DRESS -- This is MARBAS (75) -- The first thing we notice...his eyes have been SCRATCHED OUT -- His lids MOTTLED and SHUT -- Hair UNKEMPT and MATTED, face lined with SELF-MADE SCARS, like WAR-PAINT.

Marbas COUGHS and GASPS -- 'Waking up' -- LAUGHING in a LILTING TONE.

MARBAS

*(in Latin, translated)*  
*How nice -- It has been forever*  
*since I had visitors.*

This guy is CLEARLY insane -- Kaulder stepping up to him, SPEAKING FLUID LATIN, *but getting no response* -- The MOMENT CUT OFF by

A DISTANT SHARP SKITTERING -- Approaching.

Dolan shoots Kaulder a look -- No time to react as...

A SLITHERY SNAPPING BARRAGE

ERUPTS from the wall in a WILD TANGLE of BONE and THISTLE, forming a FAMILIAR SHAPE:

THE SENTINEL

It LOOMS -- A ROILING TIDE of DIRT and DECAYING MATTER --  
Kaulder realizing he's been betrayed by the Council.

DOLAN

Run!

No need to say it twice -- Fast as anything, a SEA OF BRAMBLES  
AND BONES slither across the floor, *coming right for them* --  
Kaulder pulls the 'Purifier' -- FIRING at the 'heart' of the  
creature.

THE BULLETS

Get SWALLOWED in the churning dirt of the creature's flesh,  
SCORCHING THE AREA BLACK -- Kaulder's slowing it down...but  
this thing ain't stopping.

KAULDER

(looks to Chloe)

Go -- I'll buy time.

CHLOE

(worried)

What about you?

KAULDER

I'll catch up.

(Chloe doesn't move)

Go!

Dolan GRABS Marbas, the prisoner BLIND and UNSTEADY ON HIS  
FEET, Dolan FORCED to HELP him along, Chloe reluctantly  
following as they race down the corridor toward the walkway.

KAULDER

VEERS for the Sentinel, SLAMMING into it with BARRELLING  
FORCE, driving it into...

MARBAS' CELL

He JAMS the DOOR CLOSED -- BLASTING the LOCK so it can't open  
up -- He's TRAPPED the creature.

THROUGH THE CELL WINDOW

Glimpses of the Sentinel -- Now enveloped in POISONOUS CLOUDS  
-- It struggles -- Making HORRIBLE CHOKING NOISES --  
Completely SWARMED by BILLOWING BLACK TIDES, until, all at  
once, it goes quiet.

KAULDER

Stares -- Watching for any signs of movement -- Sees none --  
Until...

THE CELL WINDOW

EXPLODES in a SHOWER OF GLASS, the Sentinel ROILING through  
the opening like a WRAITH -- Kaulder RUNS, broken glass  
CRUNCHING beneath his feet, FIRING bullets behind him -- The  
Sentinel in pursuit as...

INT. PRISON CENTRAL CORE - NIGHT

CHLOE, DOLAN AND MARBAS

Hurtle across a WALKWAY -- The structure SWAYING back and  
forth, all around them a DIZZYING DROP.

CHLOE  
Which way?

Dolan POINTS to a CHAMBER up ahead -- The three of them  
moving as fast as they can -- Until, behind them they see  
Kaulder, quickly gaining.

DOLAN  
Where is it?

KAULDER  
(doesn't know)  
It was behind me -- Then it  
disappeared into the ground.

Somehow that's even more disturbing -- They collectively stop  
-- Suddenly, realizing how OMINOUSLY QUIET everything is --  
The only sound the CREAK of the walkway.

DOLAN  
Keep moving.

He turns to head on -- Only to find now in front of him:

THE SENTINEL

THIS MOMENT SCARES THE SHIT OUT OF US -- It SNATCHES Dolan,  
QUICKLY ENTANGLING him, BARBED THISTLES ENVELOPING with an  
otherworldly speed.

KAULDER

LUNGES -- THWACK! -- Burying his KNIFE in the creature,  
SPLINTERING the BRANCHES, HACKING AWAY WITH EVERYTHING HE'S  
GOT, managing to FREE Dolan as --

A MASSIVE BRANCH-FIST

SWINGS toward them -- Chloe SAVES Dolan, pulling him away at the last second, the fist SLAMMING into the walkway, everyone HOLDING ON FOR DEAR LIFE, wood slivers SHOWERING everywhere!

KAULDER

Go!

He LEAPS onto the Sentinel, keeping the creature BUSY as the rest of the group make it off the walkway, Chloe taking a last look back at Kaulder as

THE WALKWAY

WITH A GROAN, SNAPS A MOORING, Kaulder and the Sentinel still locked in battle -- Now dangling on the side of the central core chasm!

CHLOE

Kaulder!

KAULDER AND THE SENTINEL

Grapple -- The creature's branches ANCHORED into the fallen walkway, the only thing keeping both of them from plunging to their doom!

Every time a TANGLE OF BARBED THISTLES tries to ENSNARE Kaulder he manages to AVOID them -- The Sentinel's maw right in front of him -- He won't be able to keep this up, until finally --

WITH A WELL PLACED KICK

Kaulder sends the creature tumbling -- The Sentinel losing its grip -- Kaulder managing to GRAB onto the walkway at the last second as

THE SENTINEL

PLUNGES -- WHEELING INTO THE CHASM, SWALLOWED by the VAST FIERY SMOLDER of 'GODFIRE'.

It's gone.

KAULDER

Pulls himself up the dangling walkway -- Chloe helping him onto the ground, eyeing the roiling flame below.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Is it dead?

The answer comes as

FAR BELOW

Skittery LIMBS emerge from the flames -- The Sentinel unbowed and unbroken -- Relentless -- Climbing up the pit.

KAULDER

Knows they can't STOP this thing or OUTFIGHT it -- Time to come up with a different plan -- He looks up at the ROCK WALL above their heads, he reaches up, able to touch it.

DOLAN

What are you doing?

Kaulder doesn't answer -- Busy making a quick series of calculations -- All at once, he pulls something from his pocket -- THE WHITE PIECE OF CHALK.

CHLOE

Brilliant.

The sound of the Sentinel closer -- Kaulder quickly SCRAWLS a DOOR with the chalk onto the rock -- Reaching up, pressing his hand against it, Chloe excited at this clever idea until...

The 'door' doesn't open.

KAULDER

The Wards are too strong.

Time for PLAN B.

He pulls the Purifier, fires a BULLET into the wall.

DOLAN

What are you doing?

KAULDER

Getting us out of here.

He *jams the CHALK into a SMALL NITCH in the WALL created by the bullet* -- All at once, Chloe realizes what he's going to try to do.

CHLOE

Get back.

Everyone does -- Faaaaar back -- Kaulder leveling the gun at the magical artifact, FIRING as...

THE CHALK

EXPLODES with an OTHERWORLDLY BOOM -- LIKE A BUNDLE OF INTER-DIMENSIONAL TNT -- Blowing a LARGE HOLE in the WALL.

On the other side, beckoning darkness.

Kaulder helps Chloe up into it, Chloe pulling herself through -- Reaching a hand back for someone to take it.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

C'mon.

Dolan takes Chloe's hand -- Getting pulled up -- Now it's just Marbas and Kaulder -- *The witch hunter seeing the first tendrils of the Sentinel skittering up from the pit.*

Dolan and Chloe reach, GRASPING onto Marbas, PULLING him up.

Now it's just Kaulder. He looks back as...

The Sentinel now SLITHERING toward him like a freight train of BONE and THISTLE.

KAULDER

GRABS onto Chloe and Dolan's hands -- They PULL him up, Kaulder's legs dangling, the creature REACHING for him, mere inches away...until, finally...

INT. DARKNESS ON OTHER SIDE -- CONTINUOUS

KAULDER

Makes it through -- The last thing he sees is the maw of the Sentinel as it EXPLODES APART WITH A RAGING HOWL, RAINING DEBRIS OVER THEM.

Everything goes quiet -- Our heroes now covered in debris.

CHLOE

What happened?

KAULDER

(shakes his head)

Prison fail-safe. It's unable to leave.

They MADE it -- But where the hell are they?

Everyone looks around -- Trying to figure it out...until, all of the sudden...

A LOW RUMBLE

Chloe shoots a looks to Kaulder -- The SOUND growing LOUDER as, in the near distance...A GHOSTLY YELLOW LIGHT APPEARS ...steadily approaching...the ACCOMPANYING SOUND now almost DEAFENING.

And that's when Kaulder realizes what it is.

KAULDER (CONT'D)

Move!

He SHOVES everyone aside at the last second as...

A SUBWAY TRAIN

THUNDERS past -- CLATTERING -- The massive machine missing our group by mere inches -- And then it's gone.

The tunnel fills with welcome silence.

SPLIT by the sound of MARBAS' madhouse laughter as we...

CUT TO:

INT. KAULDER'S SANCTUM - NIGHT

The group having recently arrived -- Marbas is TIED to a CHAIR -- *Singing an ancient song in Latin* -- Eerie and odd -- Chloe watching him, unnerved -- Dolan approaches. A mug of BLACK TEA in his hands.

DOLAN

You saved me there.  
(not easily said)  
Thanks.

He hands her the tea, Chloe drinking it -- The ice thawing between them as Kaulder quickly advances on Marbas.

KAULDER

*(in Latin, translated)*  
*Time for answers: A prisoner communicating with a witch on the outside. What's the Council's involvement?*

MARBAS

*(in Latin, translated)*  
*Witch Hunter -- I talk with no one.*

Kaulder looks to him -- Sharp.

KAULDER

*(in Latin, translated)*  
*Tell me what you know about Belial.*

Marbas puzzled, stares.

MARBAS  
*(in Latin, translated)*  
*I know no such name.*

A BEAT -- Chloe steps forward -- She's been 'reading' Marbas.

CHLOE  
 He's telling the truth. He doesn't  
know Belial.

Kaulder -- Not so sure.

KAULDER  
 Really?

He whips out the 'Purifier' -- Presses it to Marbas' forehead.

KAULDER (CONT'D)  
 Don't need to know English to  
 understand this, right?

Chloe REACTS -- Kaulder just eyes her.

KAULDER (CONT'D)  
*(in Latin, translated)*  
*I'm going to count to five.*

Marbas FLINCHES -- Sobering up immediately -- Chloe looking to the witch hunter.

CHLOE  
 Kaulder --

KAULDER  
 Stay out of it.

He steps back -- Keeping the gun pointed at Marbas' forehead.

KAULDER (CONT'D)  
*(in Latin, translated)*  
 1-2-

Marbas is SHAKING -- *Dolan stepping forward now.*

DOLAN  
 You can't do this.

KAULDER  
 Watch me.  
*(in Latin, translated)*  
 3 --

TENSION RATCHETING -- Dolan more insistent -- Edging closer.

DOLAN  
Kaulder. STOP.

Kaulder DOESN'T -- Fingers the trigger.

KAULDER  
(in Latin, translated)  
4 --

DOLAN -- NOW PUTTING HIMSELF BETWEEN HIM AND MARBAS.

DOLAN  
(sharp)  
You CAN'T KILL HIM.

A BEAT -- Kaulder's GAZE raking to DOLAN'S.

KAULDER  
(measured)  
I thought you would say that.

He lowers the gun to Dolan's BELLY -- FIRES! -- HOLY SHIT --  
HE SHOT DOLAN IN THE STOMACH!

DOLAN

DOUBLES OVER with a CRY -- Chloe running to the priest,  
SHOCKED and HORRIFIED, hands feverishly going to Dolan's  
robe, wanting to check his wound.

CHLOE  
(looks at Kaulder)  
Are you CRAZY --

But all at once, she STOPS, her hand coming up covered in  
BLACK BLOOD

As she watches, the blood transforms into MEWLING INSECTS --  
*The blood on Dolan's stomach doing the same, the insects*  
*HEALING him. This is VERY DARK MAGICKS.*

What happens next, happens fast:

A SHADOW WITCH

Emerges from a POOL OF DARKNESS, PULLING MARBAS INTO IT --  
CHAIR AND ALL -- All at once, Kaulder REACTS, DIVING,  
managing to GRAB onto a SHRIEKING Marbas.

A split-second later:

## SHADOW WITCHES

ERUPT from the floor around Kaulder, CLUTCHING onto him, breaking his grip with Marbas, PULLING him down into a POOL OF DARKNESS.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Kaulder!

She stares, HORRIFIED -- Kaulder's gone on a SHARP CUT TO:

EXT. THE ETHER - SAME TIME

Kaulder GASPING -- CHOKING -- *Now finding himself in an endless void of black water.*

But he's not alone.

BLACK HANDS

Clamp onto his leg, pulling him deeper.

It's The Shadow Witches.

Kaulder is unable to break the Shadow's powerful grip as FRIGID LIQUID fills his lungs -- He struggles. Feet kicking. Not getting anywhere.

With one final desperate surge, he gives it all he's got, breaking FREE, lungs ready to erupt, until finally...

He sees a HAND. *Chloe's hand.*

CHLOE (O.S.)

*(distorted by water)*

*Kaulder...*

With everything he's got, Kaulder reaches, GRABBING Chloe's hand as...

INT. KAULDER'S SANCTUM - NIGHT

He BURSTS UP -- Swallowing a GULP of precious air -- *Chloe pulling him on to solid floor back in his sanctum, covered in a VISCOUS FLUID. In our world only a SPLIT SECOND has passed.*

He looks around -- **NO DOLAN...AND NO MARBAS.**

CHLOE

Those things took 'em both.

A RECOVERING BEAT -- Kaulder staring -- The magnitude of the situation hitting him like bullet between the eyes.

KAULDER  
 It was Dolan all along.  
 (beat)  
 We just delivered the one human in  
 the world who knows the  
 Resurrection Incantation to bring  
 back the Queen.

And off this HORRIBLE PRONOUNCEMENT...

CUT TO:

EXT. CITYSCAPE - NIGHT

The SKYLINE along the Hudson.

GLAESER (O.S.)  
*The theft of the lone surviving  
 Spirit Marble...*

INT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

FROM ATOP THE BASILICA, gazing down.

GLAESER (O.S.)  
*The witch hunter gone rogue,  
 freeing prisoners, to what ends, no  
 one knows...*

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Dolan kneels before Glaeser and the Council -- Their session  
 already engaged -- It is obvious Glaeser is agitated,  
berating Dolan.

GLAESER  
 What answers do you have...Father  
 Dolan?

Dolan stares, veiled -- We see no injury from Kaulder's  
bullet -- *In fact, there's a measure of confidence and poise*  
*he seemingly did not possess earlier.*

DOLAN  
None. Only a question of my own.  
 Hundreds of years ago this Council  
 negotiated a truce with the  
 Church...  
 (edged)  
Why?

Not the response Glaeser was expecting.

GLAESER

It was instrumental for the  
survival of Witchkind --

DOLAN

Really? You call this 'survival'?

Glaeser begins to COUGH -- Almost IMPERCEPTIBLE at first but QUICKLY growing STRONGER -- Dolan ignoring it.

DOLAN (CONT'D)

I call it slavery.

And now Glaeser is practically CHOKING -- Retching -- *Until, sudden and sharp, he VOMITS up his FIVE BLACK RUNIC STONES onto the table* -- The Council stares, aghast -- As does Glaeser.

Hearing a SOUND...

Glaeser looks to the see the Council Member to his left suddenly CHOKING VIOLENTLY, PLUMES OF ASH falling from his mouth -- To his right *another Member COLLAPSES, BUGS and BEETLES crawling from his mouth and ears.*

GLAESER

What dark magicks are this?

Horrificed and dismayed, he looks to Dolan -- *Only now realizing IT'S HIM* -- Before Glaeser can act -- His body SEIZES up -- *The remaining members of the Council choking on WATER and DUST* -- Dolan enjoying their torment.

DOLAN

WE were keepers of dark woods, gods  
of African veldts, ghosts of black  
mountains.

(beat)

WE will be again.

Glaeser's body CONTORTS in impossible positions, like a puppet with broken strings -- Dolan revealing an OBJECT in his hand: THE SPIRIT MARBLE

DOLAN (CONT'D)

It is YOU who are now judged for  
YOUR crimes.

*And with that, Glaeser suddenly BURSTS into a PLUME OF FIRE -- DYING* -- The FLAMES reflecting DARKLY in Dolan's ominous gaze as...

BELIAL

Enters the chamber, Marbas with him -- He goes to Dolan.  
Kneels -- *Opening his shirt to reveal the Tree Tattoo.*

It's time.

CUT TO:

INT. KAULDER'S SANCTUM (BACK AREA) - NIGHT

Kaulder moves HURRIEDLY about the space, fully activated,  
 Chloe trailing him...

CHLOE  
 -- Belial gave me Marbas' name  
 because he WANTED you to free him  
 from prison...?

KAULDER  
 (nods)  
 ...They're holed up in the Council  
 Chambers -- The one spot a Tribe  
 Tree can take root...

He approaches a STEEL DOOR -- Punches in a CODE -- And with a  
 HERMETIC SIGH -- It opens -- Kaulder entering as...

INT. SANCTUM ARMORY - CONTINUOUS

A reinforced door SLIDES back, light hitting a DAZZLING  
 DISPLAY OF KICK-ASS WITCH WEAPONRY:

Guns, blades, grenades, explosives, throwing implements...  
 you name it, it's here in some kind of modified design --  
*Hand-smithed by Kaulder himself.*

Chloe takes the array in.

CHLOE  
 Let me come with you.

They've been here before -- *But this time both the stakes and  
 their relationship are elevated* -- They're not strangers  
 anymore.

KAULDER  
 We make it out of this...maybe I'll  
 tell you how old I am.

He presses a button -- With a CLICK, a HERMETICALLY SEALED  
 DOOR POPS open...

INT. HIDDEN CHAMBER - SAME TIME

Obviously hasn't been opened for a long time -- Kaulder stands framed in the doorway...before him lie two pieces of ancient weaponry:

*Kaulder's sword and shield. Battle-tested. Emblems of time. He takes them up. A bringer of war.*

CUT TO:

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Dolan stands amongst the remains of the Witch Council -- In his hands BOTH the Seedling and The Spirit Marble...

DOLAN

Covens across the globe will witness  
our first strike...*Dutch Toverheks*  
...*Spanish Brujas...Hindi Jadoogarni*  
...*the Revenants in the sands...the*  
*Jadis in the mountains...all* will be  
called...

He approaches a waiting Belial -- Marbas nearby -- Sitting cross legged, CHORTLING madly, rocking back and forth -- Innately understanding his part in the proceedings...

BELIAL

(looks to Dolan)  
I'm ready.

DOLAN

Yes.

He places the SEEDLING in Belial's mouth -- Belial SWALLOWING it down.

DOLAN (CONT'D)

You of her blood, will be reborn in  
Her name -- Her power will be your  
power.

Marbas begins speaking in an ANCIENT TONGUE -- Uttering the Invocation -- The words foreign, almost indecipherable to the human tongue, continuing on as...

BELIAL

Takes the SPIRIT MARBLE in his hand -- A strange effect overcomes him -- He drops to his knees, sensing a change, messianic.

THE SPIRIT MARBLE

Begins to FUSE with his hand -- ENVELOPING into his palm.

BELIAL

I feel it.

He watches as the Marble becomes a PART of him -- His eyes GLIMMERING -- THE PLEASURE AND POWER BEYOND ANYTHING HE'S EVER FELT.

BELIAL

Her Power. My Power.

Then, all at once, his face falls, CRYING OUT, OVERCOME with AGONY --

BELIAL (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

DOLAN

Nothing -- *Everything's happening just as it's supposed to.*

Belial realizes he made a HORRIBLE MISTAKE -- CRUMPLING to floor, wracked with EXCRUCIATING PAIN.

A WISPY TENDRIL

SPROUTS from Belial's chest -- LIKE A PLANT SHOOT -- Almost ethereal in its beauty -- *Everything going quiet --* Until an ANGUISHED CRY from Belial SPLITS the silence.

THE TENDRIL GROWS

The stalk WIDENING and THICKENING, quickly becoming a TRUNK, WIZENED ROOTS *bursting* like MOTTLED FINGERS from Belial's torso, DIGGING into the EARTHEN FLOOR with a HUNGRY FEROCITY.

The last thing Belial sees before he DIES...

AN ENORMOUS WITCH TREE

Born from his FLESH and BONE, RAPIDLY RISING into the air, GROWING TALLER at INCREDIBLE SPEED, until -- WHAM! --

A CANOPY OF BRANCHES

Break through the UNDERGROUND CEILING of the CHAMBER, RISING UP and filling the ENTIRETY OF ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL.

MARBAS

LEERING -- Now finished with his incantation -- Can feel the POWER IN THE ROOM -- Dolan beside him, gazing at the amazing sight as --

## A TALONED HAND

Bursts from the TRUNK OF THE TREE -- Something UNHOLY being born from the NETTLED FOLDS, emerging into our reality with a CHILLING BIRTH-CRY:

## THE QUEEN

She stands -- Looking exactly as she did in the nest at the opening of our film -- *Terrifying -- Beautiful* -- Glimpses of NAKED PATTERNED FLESH -- Dolan kneels, lowering his head...

DOLAN (CONT'D)  
(in Witchtongue,  
subtitled)  
*I am your servant...*

A LONG MOMENT...The Queen eyeing her subject...How odd this creation before her...she *senses* a witch...but sees a human.

DOLAN (CONT'D)  
(in Witchtongue,  
subtitled)  
*Give humanity one last gift...A  
pestilence to blacken their  
shriveled hearts.*

The Queen's face twists into a 'smile', turning to the tree, placing her hand upon the trunk...

## THE GREAT TREE

*Its branches SHUDDER*, stirring to life like gnarled fingers -- The chamber RUMBLING with an UNHOLY SOUND -- We FOCUS on the Tree, pulling LIGAMENTS OF ROOTS from the earthen floor as...

## THE CAMERA

*PLUNGES* through the soil below, WHIPSAWING across a VAST NETWORK of shoots and tendrils, extending throughout the world, THE PLAGUE BEING DELIVERED.

## EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - SAME TIME

Kaulder and Chloe -- Geared up and ready for war -- About to head up the stone steps -- A DEEP RUMBLE beneath their feet.

KAULDER  
The plague. It's starting.

EXT. VARIOUS SHOTS/AROUND THE WORLD - SAME TIME

As in our opening, we see PLAGUE WRAITHS BIRTHED from FALLING TREE BLOSSOMS but this time it's IN VARIOUS MODERN LOCATIONS (TOKYO, LONDON, JOHANNESBURG), the WRAITHS casting forward, about to UNLEASH their BIOLOGICAL THREAT on the populace.

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - SAME TIME

THE QUEEN

Removes her hand from the tree -- Looks to Dolan.

QUEEN

It was you who brought me back?

DOLAN

Yes, my Queen.

QUEEN

Then allow me to thank you.

Dolan smiles -- Eyes closing -- Ready for his great reward as

THE QUEEN

Plants her TALONED HAND on his FOREHEAD -- Dolan closing his eyes -- Beatific -- Until, all at once, he SEIZES up in PAIN -- THE PALM MARK SIZZLING into his FLESH as the Queen PULLS her hand away, BOILING with IRRADIATED HEAT from the inside.

DOLAN REACHES OUT

DESPERATE -- Beseeching -- But he watches with horror as his hands begins to CRUMPLE to WHITE DUST, a DISSOLVING TIDE cascading up his body, the rest FOLLOWING thereafter.

Cremated in an instant.

The Queen turns toward the GIGGLING Marbas -- The man to be her next victim -- But before she can -- A SOUND makes her look up as

KAULDER

LANDS before her, having LEAPED from one of the branches HIGH ABOVE in the cathedral, his BLADE slicing a GASH across her face.

Hell of a way to make an entrance.

THE QUEEN

Shrieks -- Seeing Kaulder standing before her -- Armed with his SWORD and SHIELD, body BRISTLING with the latest MODERN 'TECH' -- Badass -- A 'Special Forces knight'.

Time seems to stop.

QUEEN (CONT'D)

I see the fight has not left you.

Kaulder -- Looks the 'devil' in the eye.

WITH A WAR CRY

He LAUNCHES -- Right Hand? *His shield* -- Left hand? *The 'Purifier'* -- It's INTENSE -- PHYSICAL -- Beyond anything we've seen -- Kaulder locked in combat with a foe ten times more powerful in every way -- Somehow holding his own -- Firing away as --

THE QUEEN

CLAWS along the CHAMBER walls -- Feral -- Animalish -- And incredibly fast -- *BULLETS chewing up the stone around her.*

SHE LEAPS

TEARING into KAULDER -- Talons SHREDDING his armor -- Kaulder getting TOSSED like a RAGDOLL across the chamber -- SLAMMING into a SERIES OF COLUMNS -- His body ABSORBING the blow. PAINFUL. PUNISHING. BUT HE HEALS.

THIS IS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE HIM.

The Queen knows there's only one WAY to STOP him.

Remove the CURSE.

She advances -- AIR BLURRING as she unleashes a CONCUSSION SPELL -- Kaulder DODGING, but the wall VIOLENTLY FRAGMENTS behind him, REDOUBLING INTO A BLAST WAVE that EXPLODES into Kaulder.

HIS BODY

SCRAPES across the chamber floor, finally coming to a STOP as

THE QUEEN'S TALONS

COIL to Kaulder's neck -- *She has him* -- Grips tightly --

QUEEN (CONT'D)

Your wife. Your child. Died ALONE.

Crying. Begging.

(MORE)

QUEEN (CONT'D)  
 Cursing their God because you  
 weren't there to save them.  
 (beat)  
Go to them.

*HER MAW opens for a 'DEATH KISS' -- But just before she can*

A SWORD TIP

Emerges through the Queen's STOMACH -- She SPINS to find CHLOE!  
*-- Defiant -- Bravely holding the weapon (grabbed from  
 Kaulder's place), dwarfed by the POWERFUL CREATURE before her --  
 Chloe backs up, unknowingly moving toward the Tribe Tree as*

THICK BRANCHES

Snap Chloe up -- ENSNARING all around her -- Holding her --  
 SQUEEZING the air from her lungs.

CHLOE  
 (straining)  
Kaulder!

Chloe's given him a reprieve -- Kaulder grabbing up his  
 sword, recovering, ready to unleash hell but before he can --

THE QUEEN'S TALONS

CLUTCH into him -- The Queen getting nice and close -- AIR  
RIPPLING from her mouth as she SUCKS the BREATH from Kaulder's  
mouth -- SHE'S TAKING BACK THE LIFE SHE GAVE TO HIM.

A HIGH-PITCHED TONE

SHRIEKS through KAULDER'S HEAD LIKE A WHIRLWIND, GROWING  
 LOUDER, until...

Sudden silence.

A SINGLE SWEET VOICE pierces the quiet.

ELISABETH (O.S.)  
*Daddy?*

Pools of blackness burst to light -- And then...*only blue*  
*sky, the sound of WIND GENTLY BLOWING THROUGH LONG GRASS...*

Kaulder's eyes FLASH open...finding himself --

EXT. GRASSY MEADOW - DAY

Kaulder sits up...sees SOMETHING in the distance.

A COTTAGE

*His* cottage. He heads for it.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

Kaulder opens the door, steps in. Finds a PLATE OF COOKED LAMB waiting for him. It's perfect.

Too perfect.

A SMALL FIGURE now stands framed in the doorway, STREAMS OF SUNLIGHT making it impossible to see who it is.

FIGURE

...Daddy?

It's Elisabeth. She SQUEALS, running happily to her father, burying her head in his stomach.

KAULDER

What is this?

ELISABETH

It's our safe place, remember?

She quickly pulls him toward the door, excited.

ELISABETH (CONT'D)

C'mon. Mommy's waiting for you...

And off her PEALS OF LAUGHTER...

EXT. STREAM - DAY

Elisabeth guides Kaulder down to a bubbling brook.

ELISABETH

You can stay, daddy. It's what you always wanted.

Kaulder look to see --

ANGELIKA

Encapsulated in sunlight -- She looks radiant. Beautiful. Kaulder takes her in...but Angelika senses his hesitation.

ANGELIKA

What is it, my love? Isn't this what you want?

It is...'but' -- Kaulder stares -- Angelika GRABBING onto him. Desperate.

ANGELIKA (CONT'D)  
We're here. Together.

She BURIES her face into Kaulder's chest, CLUTCHING him tight, not wanting to let go -- Kaulder touches her hair, burying his nose in it -- All of the sudden, he STOPS -- *Reality returning like a cloud passing over the sun.*

KAULDER  
I shouldn't be here.

He looks to his wife and daughter.

KAULDER (CONT'D)  
I can't be with you anymore.

And even though HE KNOWS this is the RIGHT thing, it doesn't make it any less heartbreaking.

KAULDER (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry.

A MOURNFUL BEAT, Angelika's delicate shoulders visibly slumping against him -- Finally, she pulls back, revealing her face has CHANGED...

*It's rotted* -- Moldering.

ANGELIKA  
We're dead.  
(pointed)  
And now...so are you.

A SWORD TIP

SLICES the air -- Kaulder PIVOTS, ducking away just in time -- He SPINS -- Surprised to see...

ELISABETH

*White bone sits where her mouth should be, a permanent skeleton grin* -- Her tiny fingers grip a BROADSWORD.

ELISABETH  
You CAN'T leave, Daddy.

She SLASHES at him, her strength and poise otherworldly, belying her tender age, Kaulder bringing HIS sword up at the last second, deflecting it.

ELISABETH

Fights with a FEROCIOUS INTENSITY, completely surprising Kaulder -- The warrior fighting back but doing his best not to hurt his 'little girl', until while this is going on...

ELISABETH STARTS TO CHANGE...

Creeping down onto her HAUNCHES, becoming more beast like, her body ELONGATING, TRANSFORMING into...

A HIDEOUS NEST WITCH

She SHRIEKS horribly -- Kaulder disconcertingly eyeing this thing that used to be his daughter -- The Nest Witch LOPING toward him in a SUDDEN BLUR OF MOTION, catching Kaulder off guard, about to POUNCE on him, until, at the last second --

A DAGGER

Buries in the creature's neck, the thing INSTANTLY SLICKING, black ick spattering the ground -- A FIGURE steps froward:

CHLOE

She grabs up her dagger from the mess -- Looks to Kaulder.

CHLOE

For someone who hunts witches. You should learn to watch your flank.

THUNK! Kaulder SPINS -- Coolly KILLING ANOTHER SPRINGING NEST WITCH that was just his wife -- Saving Chloe.

KAULDER

We're even.  
(beat)  
What're you doing here?

CHLOE

I should ask you the same question.  
Right now, back in our world,  
you're DYING. Is that what you want?

MORE SHAPES

Moving along the rocks above, approaching stealthily -- Chloe steps to Kaulder, eyes him sharply.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

We die here. We really die. So I suggest we find our way back home.  
(nods toward his dwelling)  
That door.

## THREE NEST WITCHES

LEAP from the rocks -- Kaulder and Chloe fighting back to back -- Kaulder with his sword, Chloe armed with a SHEAF OF DAGGERS.

They work well together -- Dodging and parrying -- Sensing each other's moves, working their way through the SWIRL OF COMBAT -- In the end, the surrounding ground runs black with WITCH BLOOD.

They've won.

But for how long?

IN THE DISTANCE

DOZENS OF SHAPES

DARTING through the landscape, quickly advancing.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

C'mon.

They RUN -- Racing up from the water and through the meadow leading to Kaulder's dwelling, the AIR thick with SHRIEKING PACK OF NEST WITCHES -- The creatures almost on them as they approach the door.

Until, all at once, Kaulder sees --

ELISABETH AND ANGELIKA

Standing on the edge of the meadow, clinging to each other.

HOLD ON KAULDER: Staring at his family, THEIR VISAGES NORMAL AGAIN -- Kaulder looks to them one last and final time.

KAULDER

Goodbye.

And with that, he SPINS, BURSTING through the doorway along with Chloe just as they're about to be attacked by the WITCH PACK, Kaulder TUMBLING through the door, finding himself back in...

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Was it real? A vision?? No time to wonder. The Queen is CROUCHED OVER HIM, her MOUTH inches from his as SHE SUCKS the LIFEFORCE FROM HIM.

In our world, only a SPLIT SECOND has passed.

KAULDER

Taps into the last of his strength -- Managing to SPIN away -- CRAWLING -- Exhausted -- That's all he can do.

THE QUEEN

Watches in triumph -- He seems so PATHETIC -- *Grabbing Kaulder up by the back of the neck, pulling him close with his back to her, raking her TALONS across his throat* -- The wound not HEALING -- And now that's he's MORTAL she's about to go in for the kill.

QUEEN

(mouth at his ear)

Today you die.

Kaulder -- Strained -- Eyes looking toward her.

KAULDER

No -- Today we BOTH die.

NEW ANGLE: Kaulder grips his sword in his hand -- *THIS IS WHAT HE WAS CRAWLING TO* -- And in ONE SINGLE SWIFT MOVE -- HE PLUNGES THE BLADE INTO HIS STOMACH, KNIFING STRAIGHT INTO THE QUEEN'S HEART.

THE QUEEN

SPUTTERS black blood -- MOUTH WIDE IN A SILENT SCREECH -- Only now realizing Kaulder has WON -- Kaulder managing to pull the sword from his stomach, turning to watch as the Queen deliquesces to the chamber floor, an ebony slick.

She's DEAD.

ALL AT ONCE

THE BRANCHES clutching Chloe RELEASE HER -- She TUMBLES to the GROUND, looking up to see GNARLED BRANCHES of the Tribe Tree starting to WITHER as we CUT TO...

EXT. VARIOUS SHOTS/AROUND THE WORLD -- SAME TIME

The advancing Plague Wraiths, now *APPROACHING the edge of the modern cities* (Tokyo, London, Johannesburg) -- All COLLECTIVELY DISSOLVING WITH A FINAL HAUNTING SHRIEK as...

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - SAME TIME

A DEEP RUMBLE

Rocks the chamber, the ground giving way! The Great Tree GROANING, DYING WITHOUT THE QUEEN as its 'HOST' -- Chloe RACING toward Kaulder in time as it COLLAPSES, the whole thing DISAPPEARING into a MASSIVE SINKHOLE.

NEW ANGLE: MARBAS

A HORRIFIED SCREECH as he PINWHEELS into the BLACK VOID -- Disappearing into the sinkhole as...

A SUDDEN SILENCE

Fills the Chamber -- Kaulder and Chloe the only things left alive in it, their bodies at the edge of the precipice.

KAULDER

He's DYING -- The WOUND on his stomach not healing -- This is it -- Chloe CRYING -- Clutching his hand -- Wanting to be there for him in this moment...and, then, all at once, she pulls out a

SMALL WOODEN BOX

INSIDE: THE EXACT BUG THAT HEALED DOLAN FROM THE SANCTUM -- *She saved it* -- SHE CUPS THE BUG IN HER HAND -- Knowing this could heal Kaulder's wound -- She looks to him -- A decision needing to be made.

CHLOE

What do you think?

A BEAT BETWEEN THEM -- Life or death?

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - MORNING

Kaulder and Chloe emerge from the remains of the cathedral -- dwarfed by a cloud of debris -- The morning sun casting everything in an ethereal haze. It's beautiful.

*Kaulder's wound is healed. He made the decision to live.*

CHLOE

So you're MORTAL. Just like the rest of us slobs.

(pointed)

What do you do now?

Kaulder stares up at the sun, as if seeing it for the first time -- It could be a trick of the light...but Chloe could swear there's a renewed glimmer in his eyes, a grim spark of life as we hear the SOUND OF APPROACHING SIRENS.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Alright, old man.  
(beat)  
See if you can keep up.

And with a final shared look, our heroes head into the netherworlds of the city.

Together.

And as they do, we HEAR...

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Ok. So you promised you'd tell me  
how old you were...

KAULDER  
(beat)  
Older.

Chloe PROTESTS -- Their conversation fading as they become distant figures on the horizon.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK ALONG THE HUDSON...

Manhattan skyline now spread before us, jumbled structures reaching up to greet the morning sun.

FADE OUT